



BU geologist El-Baz digs deeper into Darfur conflict

David Cogger

It's unusual for geologists to have an impact on an international crisis. But then again, Farouk El-Baz is not your usual geologist.

El-Baz is a professor at Boston University and the director of its Center for Remote Sensing, where the latest in satellite and radar imagery is being used to map and classify earth, lunar and Martian surfaces.

El-Baz's desert research has led to the recent discovery of an underground lake in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The 11,873-square-mile lake is roughly the size of Massachusetts. Lying beneath a former highland lake, El-Baz theorizes the water has sunk into the sand and become part of the groundwater.

El-Baz also believes that water is the root of much of the conflict between nomads and sedentary farmers that have plagued Darfur since 2003 and have resulted in the deaths of more than 200,000 people.

Over the last 20 years, Darfur has suffered two seven-year droughts.

With a new source of water, such as the underground lake, the nomads could support their lifestyle and sedentary farming communities would

For most of his life, El-Baz has been interested in thinking about the surface of things — and what lies beneath.

be able to increase food production using irrigation.

Egypt will drill the first 20 wells in Darfur, and a United Nations mission to the region will require additional wells to support their activities. El-Baz recently met with U.N. Secretary-

General Ban Ki-moon to explain the steps required to get to the water.

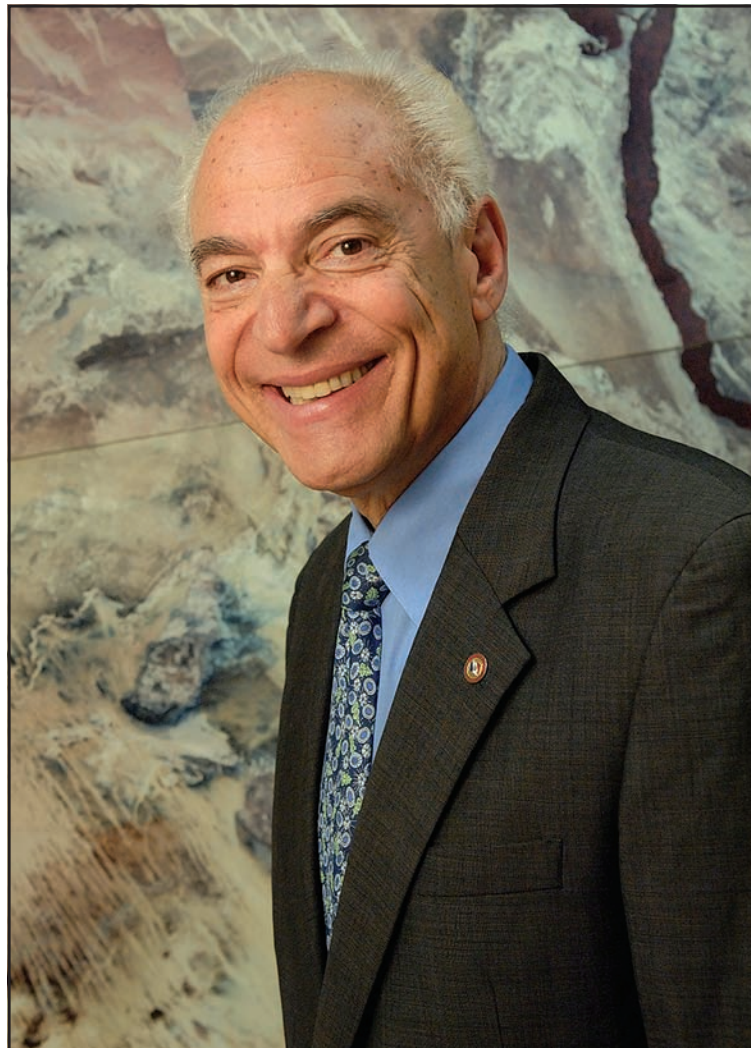
"I told him about the Sudanese initiative for 1,000 wells for Darfur. He will continue to seek my advice for the selection of sites for U.N. forces and the local population," El-Baz said.

El-Baz will use data gathered from space images, geophysical surveys and "on-the-ground" field analysis to determine the best drilling sites.

Although he is excited about the lake and its potential to relieve some of the distress in Darfur, El-Baz takes issue with the American media — specifically, its apparent lack of interest in the lake.

"The whole thing fascinates the Europeans," he said. "I've had calls from The Economist [magazine] and other European publications. But if it's not horrendous, if American people are not dying, this event, in the middle of nothing that could create a whole new life, is of little interest to the American media."

Growing up in Egypt, El-Baz began collecting and classifying ob- **El-Baz, continued to page 12**



Farouk El-Baz, professor of geology at Boston University and director of its Center for Remote Sensing, used remote satellite images and field studies to locate an underground lake in the Darfur region of Sudan. (Photo courtesy of Boston University)

A year later, still no teeth for Hub cop review

Dan Devine

It's been 364 days since Mayor Thomas M. Menino first announced his plans for a three-member civilian board to review allegations of misconduct by members of the Boston Police Department (BPD). One year

later, the panel is finally open for business. That much is known.

What is not known, however, could fill a warehouse.

According to a published report, the renamed "Community Ombudsmen Oversight Panel and Complaint Mediation Program" had, at long last,

hung up its shingle at the end of July — outside the front door of the BPD's Internal Affairs Division (IAD), where the panel's offices are located.

That work address is somewhat troubling to Urszula Masny-Latos, executive director of the Massachusetts chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG).

In a letter dated Jan. 30, the NLG, the American Friends Service Committee and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law of the Boston Bar Association sent the city and each of the appointed panel-

ists a list of recommendations for the structure of the civilian review board — among them the suggestion that the review board be located at a neutral territory, rather than at City Hall or a police facility.

The reasoning for the suggestion, Masny-Latos said, was not only the potential of police intimidation deterring aggrieved citizens from bringing their complaints forward for appeal, but also the danger of having the objectivity of the ombudsmen compromised by working so closely with the very officers they are charged with overseeing.

"We were a little surprised, because the whole idea behind a civilian review board — the one that we

had in our minds — was to create an independent body that would provide some oversight and look at complaints that come against the department or individual police officers," she said. "How can you have people who are supposed to look at complaints about the department actually work within the department?"

Masny-Latos is quick to point out that her concerns stem not from a negative perception of the panelists' character, calling them "incredible people" for whom she has a lot of respect.

"I really don't question their integrity," she said. "But at the same time, the structure in which they are sup- **Review, continued to page 23**



Eleven-year-old J.D. Niles, dressed as an Amazonian medicine man complete with plastic skulls and lion heads, competes for the King award in this year's Kiddie Carnival, held last weekend. That event is a precursor to the Boston Caribbean Carnival, which will be held this Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please see our story on pg. 3. (Yawu Miller photo)

Nightly patrols reduce crime in Chinatown

Jin-ah Kim

Under overcast skies one recent Friday afternoon, Gilbert Ho and a half-dozen people came together near the famed Chinatown Gate. Armed only with walkie-talkies and blue vests reading "Chinatown Crime Watch," the group started to walk the streets near the Gate, beginning their daily voluntary vigil to keep Chinatown safe.

"We are the eyes and ears of police officials," said Ho, a 49-year-old Chinese American.

Every night for a little over two years, Ho has come home from his day job as an information technol-

ogy professional at a law firm and hit Chinatown's streets to walk with the crime watch. Night after night, Ho and the other community members keep their eyes peeled for criminal activity, using their walkie-talkies to inform local police at the first sign of trouble.

Ho says that it's the ceaseless dedication that sets Chinatown's crime watch apart from those in other communities.

"I know everyone has his or her own life and job," he said, in halting English. "Most of the crime watches I've seen in other neighborhoods, **Chinatown, continued to page 14**

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