

Conjoined Sudanese twins doing well after separation: medics

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British surgeons said Monday that one-year-old conjoined twins from Sudan were recovering well despite huge odds following four [operations to separate](#) the girls' fused heads.

Rital and Ritag Gaboura were born on September 22, 2010, in Khartoum with their [skulls](#) joined. They were flown to London in April for surgery funded by the British charity Facing the World.

The final operation to separate them was on August 15 and doctors said the girls were now successfully getting used to life apart and did not appear to be suffering any [neurological side effects](#).

Lead surgeon David Dunaway told a news conference said it was a "real surgical challenge, a very rare and complex operation, drawing together many different disciplines."

"For them to survive going through this process straightforwardly, complete and intact with, OK, some hiccups along the way, but we hope no serious ones, and to be a few weeks later smiling, developing, acting appropriately, has been wonderful for us," Dunaway said.

Rital and Ritag are craniopagus [twins](#), meaning they were born joined at the head, a rare condition of which only one in 10 million sufferers survive to [infancy](#).

Their parents are both doctors and approached the charity for help but

by the time they arrived in London in April Ritag's heart was already failing as it did most of the work for both girls.

The separation was carried out in four stages by a surgical team working for free. Two operations were performed in May and tissue expanders were inserted in July before the final separation was carried out last month.

"It is a delight to see how well the girls are doing," said Simon Eccles, secretary of Facing the World and himself a craniofacial surgeon.

"Rital was up and holding her own milk bottle again within days of surgery. Ritag took a day or two longer, but she too is back to her laughing self," he said.

Both girls were slightly delayed in sitting up and standing because of the limits of having to lie on their backs for so long but have "achieved good neck control in just a few weeks," Eccles added.

The twins' mother, Enas Gaboura, said the children were still coming to grips with their new condition.

"They take a long time to understand that they are related to each other as sisters," she told the BBC.

As he lovingly held one of the [girls](#) up in the air, their father Abdelmajeed Gaboura said he hoped they would now live a "normal life and be treated as normal human beings.

"I was preparing myself to live with conjoined twins forever but I think we are lucky to have two normal separate children," he said.

Surgeons said the twins would need further surgery when they are older

to improve the shape of their skulls.

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