



Security Council

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Situation in Abyei

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution [2708 \(2023\)](#), in which the Council requested to be informed of progress in implementing the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). It covers the period since the issuance of the previous report of the Secretary-General ([S/2024/354](#)), from 16 April to 1 October 2024. The report provides updates on, inter alia, political and security developments, women and youth and peace and security, human rights and the humanitarian situation, as well as on the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. It also provides updates on the impact of the ongoing conflict in the Sudan on Abyei and on UNISFA operations.

II. Abyei

Political developments

2. The Abyei political process continued to be affected by the ongoing conflict in the Sudan, as well as the political uncertainty in South Sudan, with no progress regarding the resolution of the final status of Abyei and border issues during the reporting period. The United Nations continued to engage with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to reiterate its readiness to support re-engagement on the final status of Abyei and border issues once conditions permit, in coordination with the African Union. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, continued to engage the parties, as well as interlocutors in Abyei and other stakeholders, to stress the need for stability in Abyei.

3. As at the end of the reporting period, an estimated 400 South Sudanese security personnel, comprising approximately 300 South Sudan People's Defence Forces personnel and 100 South Sudan National Police Service members, were deployed in southern Abyei. In meetings with UNISFA, South Sudanese authorities have indicated that their aim is to deescalate intercommunal violence in southern Abyei. This deployment represents a decrease from the levels estimated at the end of the previous reporting period. Nonetheless, the presence of South Sudanese security personnel is a violation of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area of 20 June 2011.



4. UNISFA engaged the Government of South Sudan both in person and in a note verbale on 17 May to call for the withdrawal of South Sudanese security forces from the Abyei area, stressing that their presence constituted a violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and the demilitarized and weapons-free status of Abyei.
5. UNISFA leadership conducted two visits to Juba to meet with senior representatives of the Government of South Sudan to discuss priority issues, including tensions between the Ngok Dinka and Twic Dinka communities in southern Abyei, the presence of South Sudanese security forces in southern Abyei and challenges in the implementation of the mission's mandate. UNISFA continued to call for the support of the Government of South Sudan in re-establishing the presence of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in its Sector 1, including the Sector headquarters in Gok Machar and its two team sites.
6. UNISFA continued its engagement with the Government of the Sudan regarding the situation in Abyei and the implementation of the mission's mandate. On 3 July, the Sovereign Council of the Sudan appointed Hamed Manan Mohammed Mirghani as Co-Chair of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee. On 3 August, the Sovereign Council of the Sudan issued a constitutional decree appointing Salouma Musa Yahya Boushara as the Sudan-appointed Chief Administrator for Abyei.

Conflict dynamics and the security situation

7. The security situation in the Abyei Area remained tense. While incidents of animal rustling, kidnapping and armed robberies were recorded at a smaller scale than in previous reporting periods, there were 82 arms-related incidents during the reporting period, resulting in an estimated 27 deaths and 51 injuries. In addition, 10 incidents of cattle rustling were reported during the dry season in April and May, resulting in 25 casualties. Of significance is an incident on 3 May in which suspected Nuer and Twic Dinka community members rustled about 500 cattle belonging to the Misseriya community at Majok Alieu, south-east of Rumamier, with eight Misseriya and five Nuer killed. In the aftermath of the incident, UNISFA engaged the communities to prevent further escalation and protect civilians.
8. The number of kidnapping cases decreased from 14 in the previous period to 5, with the victims comprising three men and two women. UNISFA, in coordination with the community protection committee and traditional leaders, conducted search and rescue operations, resulting in the recovery of three of the kidnapped persons and negotiations for the release of another victim.
9. Following a spike in intercommunal violence involving the Ngok Dinka, Twic Dinka and Nuer in Abyei in late 2023 and early 2024, no clashes between these communities were reported during the reporting period. Nonetheless, tensions between Ngok Dinka and Twic Dinka communities remained high. From 9 to 11 July, rumours of an attack prompted 756 people from Awolnhom and Athony to seek refuge at UNISFA camps in Sector South. On 27 August, South Sudan People's Defence Forces personnel and Twic Dinka elements clashed near Madul in southern Abyei after soldiers approached Twic Dinka members to remove illegal checkpoints erected on the main supply route, with casualties reported that could not be verified by UNISFA.
10. Intercommunal violence between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities continued its downward trend. Compared with the previous period during which only one clash was reported, no intercommunal clashes between the two communities were recorded during the current reporting period. Among other reconciliation efforts undertaken by UNISFA was a post-migration conference between the two communities in Noong in central Abyei in May. The conference, which was facilitated by the mission in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration

(IOM), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Concordis International, concluded with an agreement aimed at furthering peaceful coexistence.

11. The ongoing fighting in the Sudan continued to have an impact on the security situation in Abyei. During the reporting period, arrivals in Abyei of people displaced by the Sudan conflict continued, with a total of 691 people, including 188 women and 275 children, increasing the strain on already limited resources. The ongoing conflict in the Sudan is also a factor in the ongoing arms proliferation inside Abyei, including both small arms and higher calibre weapons.

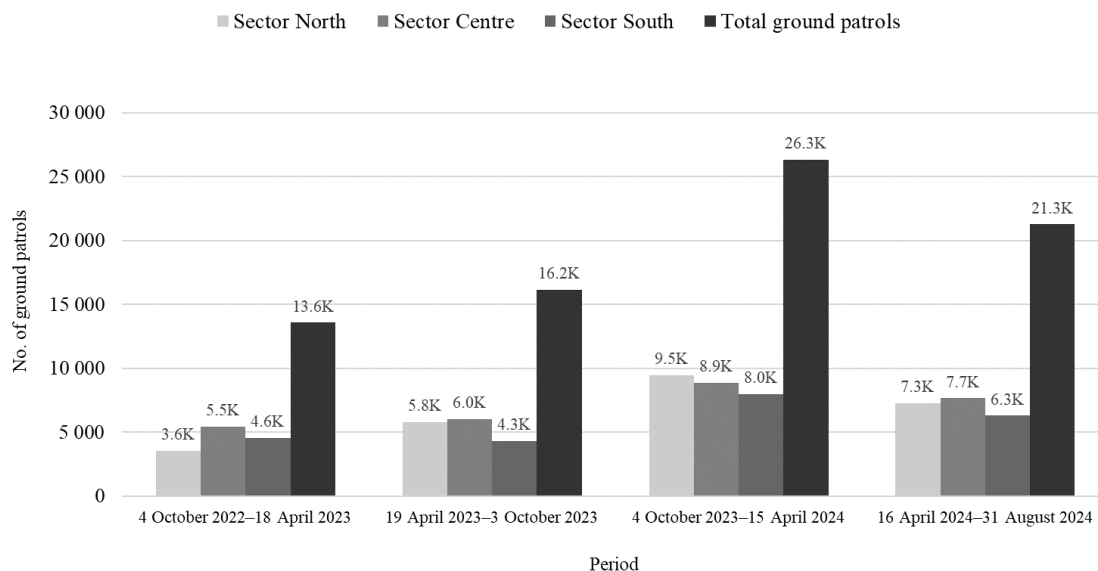
12. On 11 June, a UNISFA quick reaction force between Al-Malmm and Bedheni in Sector North interrupted the planned sale of an armoured personnel carrier in non-functional condition by suspected Rapid Support Forces elements to the Ngok Dinka youth self-defence group in Abyei. UNISFA confiscated the armoured personnel carrier. On 4 August, the vehicle was dismantled, and its mounted gun and ammunition were destroyed.

13. The South Sudanese security forces, assessed at approximately 400 personnel, maintained a presence in southern Abyei, located mainly in Agok, Athony junction and Juljok. South Sudanese security forces set up checkpoints at Korioch and Athony junction, including erecting thatched structures at Athony junction, and persisted in occupying civilian structures, including the community protection committee station and three primary and secondary schools in the Agok area. On 6 May, the Chief of Defence Forces of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, the Inspector General of Police and other senior South Sudanese security officials visited Abyei. On 19 April, the Abyei Civil Society Organization held a peaceful demonstration to denounce the displacement of Ngok Dinka resulting from the presence of South Sudan People's Defence Forces in southern Abyei. In September, South Sudan deployed a Commissioner of Police in charge of Abyei, a newly established position. In a note verbale addressed to the Government of South Sudan on 21 August, UNISFA stressed that the establishment of the position was a violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and reiterated its call for the withdrawal of all South Sudanese security forces from Abyei.

14. UNISFA continued to prioritize the protection of civilians, conducting a total of 21,271 ground patrols and 28 air patrols in the Abyei area during the reporting period, including joint patrols involving peacekeepers from multiple sectors, military observers and United Nations police, to enhance safety and security in areas with increased tensions and rising criminal activities. The decrease in ground patrols compared with the previous reporting period is due to poor road conditions during the rainy season.

15. UNISFA recorded six incidents of intrusions into the mission headquarters and its bases at Noong and Highway camp and Kadugli, the Sudan. UNISFA troops apprehended the suspects in all cases except in Kadugli, where the intruders made away with stolen fuel.

Ground patrols in the Abyei Area, by sector, October 2022 to August 2024



Source: UNISFA and Joint Mission Analysis Centre.

Reconfiguration of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

16. The deployment of all peacekeepers as part of the reconfiguration of UNISFA was completed during the reporting period, with the arrival of Chinese quick reaction force personnel. Deployments of contingent-owned equipment for the reconfiguration are also in their final stages, with the equipment of the Indian infantry battalion, the Ghanaian infantry battalion, the Nigerian base defence company and most of the equipment of the Chinese quick reaction force reaching the mission area from April to June. UNISFA is collaborating with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to facilitate the movement of the remaining contingent-owned equipment of the Chinese quick reaction force, whose deployment was impacted by heavy rains and poor road conditions between Wau, South Sudan, and Abyei.

Freedom of movement violations

17. The presence of South Sudan People's Defence Forces personnel continued to result in freedom of movement restrictions for UNISFA in the areas of Abyei south of Athony junction at Kilo 27, in violation of the status-of-forces agreement, with freedom of movement violations recorded on 16 April, 29 April, 12 May, 21 May, 6 June and 11 June 2024. On 14 July, South Sudan People's Defence Forces soldiers at Athony junction denied access to a UNISFA patrol intending to travel to the south, leading to a confrontation that necessitated the deployment of a UNISFA quick reaction force. In addition to affecting patrols, the presence of South Sudanese security forces has hindered UNISFA operations to maintain the main supply route between Athony junction and Kilo 31 in southern Abyei, as well as provide support for the movement of logistics and resupply convoys. On 24 July, armed Twic Dinka elements located in the proximity of South Sudan People's Defence Forces troops blocked the movement of UNISFA personnel in the same area on 24 July. On 9 September, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces stopped United Nations-contracted fuel trucks en route to mission headquarters between Athony junction and Kilo 27, as well as at Korioch.

Intercommunity dialogue

18. UNISFA continued to support the joint community peace committee. During the reporting period, the committee, comprising 28 Ngok Dinka and Misseriya representatives, including 2 women, held 21 regular weekly meetings and 2 ad hoc meetings. The regular meetings addressed habitual conflict and compensation-related matters, while the ad hoc meetings were organized to respond to cases of killings and kidnapping.

19. From 14 to 18 May, UNISFA helped to facilitate a four-day post-migration conference between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities in Noong, central Abyei, in coordination with IOM, FAO and Concordis International. Some 145 community representatives, including 41 women, attended the conference, whose aim was to strengthen peaceful coexistence and social cohesion between the two communities. In a joint communiqué following the conference, participants agreed to coordinate the entry of livestock into grazing areas, promote peaceful trade, adhere to security protocols at Amiet market and maintain peaceful farming and grazing. Participants further pledged to increase the involvement of youth and women in peace processes, protect natural resources and prevent harmful activities such as bush burning and illegal tree cutting. The outcomes of the conference were widely circulated among the communities to build peace and promote peaceful coexistence.

20. On 7 June, UNISFA facilitated a meeting between a Misseriya delegation, led by the Deputy Paramount Chief of the Misseriya and the Paramount Chief of the Ngok Dinka. The participants at the meeting discussed the need for vaccines to protect livestock from diseases during the wet season and welcomed the mission's ongoing facilitation of meetings between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka traditional leadership to deliberate on ongoing concerns, including the impact of the conflict in the Sudan. Separately, on 3 August, UNISFA held consultations with the leader of the Nuer community in Amiet market to assess and support conditions of peaceful coexistence with other communities in Abyei.

21. UNISFA held three workshops on conflict resolution and mediation at the Women's Centre in Abyei town, in Todach and in Difra from 12 to 27 June, targeting the local authorities, traditional leaders, community protection committee, the joint protection committee, the joint community peace committee, women and youth groups, persons with disabilities, traders and community members. A total of 150 people, including 65 women, participated. On 17 September, UNISFA sensitized 40 members of the joint community peace committee, the Joint Traditional Court and the Joint Protection Committee, including 5 women, on the UNISFA mandate and the agreements signed to date by the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities on peaceful coexistence.

22. UNISFA continued to conduct quick-impact projects to benefit the local population, with seven projects implemented from May to September. These include the installation of three boreholes with handheld pumps in northern Abyei. Two projects in support of the Juba-appointed administration of Abyei were conducted, including the construction of an office building for the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission to facilitate the coordination of humanitarian activities and the replacement of solar panels and a submersible pump for a slaughterhouse meant to improve safety and hygiene. Two community-led projects were also completed, namely, the rehabilitation of solar panels and a submersible pump for a solar-powered water yard at Kolom and the distribution of essential non-food items to beneficiaries, including Misseriya and Ngok community members, community protection committee members, joint protection committee members and personnel of the Joint Traditional Court at Amiet. Quick-impact projects implemented during the reporting period benefited approximately 84,000 people. Three construction projects were initiated

during the period, including a teacher training centre and a primary school at Dokura and a secondary school at Abathok, as well as offices, a cell for detainees and latrines at the community protection committee facility at Abathok.

23. Peacekeeping contingents also worked to address the needs of the local population through civil-military cooperation activities, including providing medical care, holding regular classes for children in core academic subjects and facilitating the distribution of non-food items and access to shelter. During the reporting period, contingents also distributed 2.5 million litres of water to the local population.

Rule of law

24. No progress was made on the establishment of the Abyei Police Service, as envisioned in the Agreement of 20 June 2011. The presence of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces continued to hinder the work of the United Nations police in southern parts of Abyei. The community protection committee facilities in Agok, including the detention centre and the sexual and gender-based violence desk, continued to be occupied by South Sudanese security forces. The presence of South Sudan National Police Service personnel in the community protection committee facility has continued to make it impossible for the United Nations police to co-locate with and mentor the community protection committee in Agok.

25. The influx of displaced persons into Abyei has strained resources and created economic hardship. Increasing deprivation has led to an increase in crime, with a significant rise reported in Amiet market from 16 April to 29 September. This includes 13 major crimes, comprising four robberies, three murders, two stabbings, one kidnapping, one assault on a joint protection committee member and two shootings, as well as 567 general crimes. The United Nations police guided the community protection committees and the joint protection committee in investigating cases and handed over two suspects to the local authorities who had been detained for intrusions into United Nations camps.

26. A total of 707 suspects, including 59 women, were arrested by the joint protection committee in Amiet market under the guidance of the United Nations police during the reporting period. Members of community protection committees and the joint protection committee continued to face challenges when conducting investigations and undertaking arrests, including threats and physical assaults. On 22 June, some 40 members of the Ngok Dinka youth self-defence group, Tit Baai, entered the main community protection committee station in Abyei town and forcefully released five detainees to prevent them from being transferred to South Sudanese authorities in Wau, South Sudan.

27. UNISFA increased its coordination with the United Nations country teams in the Sudan and South Sudan to implement the mission's rule of law support strategy. This includes coordination regarding the response to serious crimes, detentions carried out by UNISFA, the handover of suspects to national authorities and support for dispute resolution on the ground. Coordination was also focused on ensuring a common approach to addressing capacity-building and infrastructure needs, including efforts to enhance the capacity of traditional justice actors and community-based protection mechanisms in Abyei. During the visits of the United Nations Standing Police Capacity and the Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity to UNISFA in August, September and October, experts conducted five training sessions for 260 UNISFA military personnel, including 35 women, of which two were on public order management and crowd control and three on the handling of detention for the military component.

28. UNISFA continued efforts to enhance the rule of law through support for the 53 community protection committees, which have 1,223 members, including 181

women, and one joint protection committee station in Amiet market, with 56 members, including 4 women.

29. Fifteen training sessions were conducted for 486 community protection committee and joint protection committee members, including 139 women, on human rights, community-oriented policing and traffic management. The United Nations police also provided prison security management training to 24 community protection committee members, including 10 women. Materials and equipment were provided by the mission to enhance the operational capabilities of the community protection committees and joint protection committee.

30. In August 2024, the United Nations police and IOM collaborated to provide capacity-building sessions on leadership, governance, conflict management and human rights to community protection committee and joint protection committee members. A total of 87 members, including 20 women, were trained.

31. The United Nations police conducted 1,206 community interactive patrols to mobilize community members in support of protection efforts. These included 856 joint patrols conducted in collaboration with UNISFA military observers and the national monitors of the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as 27 air reconnaissance patrols. In addition, the United Nations police conducted 350 independent security observation patrols.

32. UNISFA corrections officers made 340 visits to two detention facilities in Abyei to provide mentoring to the community protection committee and joint protection committee members on detention administration. The United Nations police continued to co-locate with the community protection committee at the detention centres in Abyei town and Amiet market. At the onset of the rainy season in May, UNISFA provided seeds for a farming initiative at the Abyei detention facility, where detainees are engaged in farming to address urgent food needs at the detention centre. A total of 192 awareness-raising campaigns for local community members were held to help address safety and security in Abyei.

Human rights situation

33. To address the challenging human rights situation in Abyei, UNISFA engaged in a range of activities, including human rights advocacy and promotion, capacity-building workshops and the monitoring of human rights violations and abuses, including in community protection committee and joint protection committee detention facilities. UNISFA highlighted the principle of the safe and voluntary movement of displaced populations from the Sudan to interlocutors, including members of the Juba-appointed administration.

34. From 29 April to 13 May, the mission organized seven training sessions on practical skills in preventing and handling sexual and gender-based violence and child protection cases in Banton, Goli, Diffra, Todach, Noong and Marial Achak. A total of 182 participants (133 women) drawn from gender focal points and other members of community protection committees and the joint protection committee, as well as community members, attended the training.

35. UNISFA conducted 191 awareness-raising programmes to prevent sexual and gender-based violence in the community, reaching 4,606 people (811 women, 385 men, 1,736 girls and 1,674 boys). Similar campaigns were held at nine selected schools, with the participation of 1,040 pupils, including 579 girls.

36. The UNISFA community-based gender desk continued to function as a referral system for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, especially women and girls who are most at risk. Nine cases of such violence were documented during this period, including two incidents of rape and seven cases of domestic violence. One rape case

was dropped by the survivor from the traditional court, while another is still being investigated. Regarding the domestic violence cases, one was resolved outside of court by family members, three led to convictions with perpetrators being fined, one suspect fled, and two cases are still under investigation.

37. The holding of detainees for minor offences by the community protection committee continued to be a problem. During the reporting period, 234 detainees were held for minor offences, namely, theft, public nuisance, assault and failure to appear before court. Through UNISFA intervention, 163 men, 7 juveniles and 8 women suspected of minor offences were released. UNISFA also conducted 8 awareness campaigns for detainees and 17 detention management campaigns for the community protection committee and joint protection committee to raise awareness about the rights of detainees.

38. On 7 May, UNISFA adopted a standard operating procedure for the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces to ensure that support provided to the community protection committees and joint protection committee complies with the policy. A technical working group established under the mission Chief of Staff to implement the human rights due diligence policy conducted a risk assessment of two proposals aimed at providing technical and logistical support to the community protection committee in northern and southern Abyei.

Humanitarian situation

39. As at 26 September, IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded at the Amiet market a total of 5,517 households comprising 22,748 individuals (11,601 male and 11,147 female), composed of refugees, asylum-seekers and South Sudan returnees fleeing the conflict in the Sudan. In addition, about 2,000 individuals arrived spontaneously and were not captured at the IOM flow monitoring desk. UNHCR processed and assisted 840 individuals to move to the Wedweil refugee settlement in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal State, South Sudan. Some of the South Sudan returnees travelled to other destinations, such as Juba, Wau, and Aweil and Kuajok in South Sudan. Those who remained in Abyei integrated into the community and were supported by humanitarian actors.

40. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs facilitated the transportation of humanitarian personnel and cargo to Abyei with the support of UNISFA. As at 10 September, 200 staff had benefited from that facilitation to travel between Abyei and Wau, including 18 staff who travelled to Kadugli from Abyei. Humanitarian organizations operating in the Sudan are increasingly using Abyei as a transit route to deliver assistance to South Kordofan.

41. From 9 to 20 June, FAO, in collaboration with Abyei Community Action for Development, distributed staple crop seeds to 4,681 households (approximately 23,000 individuals) as part of the Emergency Livelihood Response Programme. In July, FAO conducted a mass livestock vaccination and treatment campaign against septicaemia, anthrax, smallpox and black quarter in both northern and southern Abyei, reaching more than 50,000 cattle and 140,000 small ruminants (80,000 sheep, 60,000 goats). A total 300 dogs were also vaccinated for anti-rabies.

42. On 31 July, the Ministry of Health of the Juba-appointed administration of Abyei declared a hepatitis E outbreak in Abyei. This followed the confirmation of 36 positive hepatitis E cases. Of these, 80 per cent were reported in Amiet market and Abyei town, and included six deaths, two of which were of pregnant women. The shortage of reagents to test suspected cases remains a challenge.

43. The health and nutrition cluster conducted a health and nutrition screening during the month of August in Goli and Diffra, northern Abyei. They treated and provided vitamin A and deworming to 18,424 children. In addition, they screened 2,456 children for malnutrition. Among them, they found 138 with moderate acute malnutrition and 8 with severe acute malnutrition. The main cause of morbidities recorded at health facilities included malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia. Immunization against preventable diseases reached 187 children. Furthermore, 17 health facilities supported by humanitarian organizations delivered 18,045 curative consultations in Abyei. As at September, 23,000 people have been impacted by flooding owing to torrential rains in Abyei. From July to September, the highest numbers of malaria and pneumonia infections, were recorded, to which partners responded.

44. From May to August, the World Food Programme (WFP) assisted an average of 9,000 people (5,070 women) per month on asset creation and livelihood activities; an average of 79,667 people (48,898 women) per month benefited from general food distribution, including people who had fled the Sudan conflict; an average of 14,151 schoolchildren (7,611 boys and 6,540 girls) per month in 18 schools also benefited from the school feeding programme, in addition to an average of 9,400 malnourished children and pregnant and lactating mothers per month.

Women and peace and security

45. During the reporting period, advocacy with stakeholders on promoting women's participation resulted in a significant increase in women's involvement at the post-migration conference in Noong in May 2024 (137 participants, including 41 women), compared with the pre-migration conference in November 2023 (118 participants, including 22 women). A session was focused on gender concerns in migration, highlighting the challenges and risks faced by different gender groups and the impact and significance of women's engagement in decision-making.

46. Advocacy sessions on women and peace and security were delivered at the joint community peace committee meetings in June, July and August, with the objective of increasing women's membership and meaningful participation in the joint community peace committee. During the reporting period, only two women (one Misseriya and one Ngok Dinka) participated regularly in the joint community peace committee meetings.

47. In June, the mission supported the internal elections of the Abyei Women's Union, a local civil society organization which seeks to empower women, improve the lives of women and increase women's participation in decision-making. A total of 799 women participated in the elections of its board members for the four local branches located in Mijak, Alal, Mading-Achueng and Dokura/Rumajak. A leadership training course was organized in August for the elected board members, in which 65 women participated. The training course included sessions delivered by UNISFA on women's engagement in decision-making, on increasing women's participation in the community protection committees and on sexual exploitation and abuse.

48. UNISFA organized two workshops on gender equality and women's participation in coordination with the women leaders in northern Abyei, including on harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, which continue to impact women in the area. Participants at the workshops comprised 85 women and 55 men from seven villages. UNISFA distributed essential non-food items, including buckets, solar lanterns and slippers, to the women participating in the events with a view to mitigating risks of violence.

49. The mission conducted 1,615 patrols, which included peacekeepers serving with the female engagement teams. Since 1 July, female peacekeepers have deployed at the Rumajak checkpoint in response to increased movement of women and children

on the main supply route to ensure that female soldiers could respond to the needs of any women and girls approaching the checkpoints.

Youth and peace and security

50. In June, IOM facilitated youth-led dialogues in Abyei to promote conflict prevention between Ngok Dinka youth and Misseriya cattle herder youth in Amiet. The aim of this initiative was to equip the youth with the necessary skills for identifying, analysing, and planning action to mitigate conflict arising between youth from migrant cattle herder communities and youth from host communities in Abyei.

51. From 19 to 23 August, UNISFA supported the commemoration of International Youth Day in Abyei and Diffra. Several events were conducted, including round-table discussions on issues affecting youth contribution to peace and security, a workshop on youth and disability inclusion, training on information technology and business skills and awareness of misinformation and disinformation. A total of 89 young people, 34 of whom were young women, participated in these events. On 11 September, UNISFA and IOM facilitated a workshop on disability inclusion for 21 representatives of the youth and persons with disabilities unions, including 9 women.

Operations of the Mine Action Service

52. During the reporting period, no movements or deployments by UNISFA, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, humanitarian actors or civilians were interrupted or cancelled owing to landmines or explosive remnants of war. The Mine Action Service assessed 166,473 square metres of land and 8 km of routes in the Abyei Area as safe for UNISFA, humanitarian actors and the local population. The land assessed included UNISFA temporary operating bases and patrol routes, as well as borrow pits (spoil earth material) used by the UNISFA Engineering Unit for road rehabilitation and construction. Clearance of the Luki contaminated area was completed on 14 June, with two machines used to accelerate and complete this task prior to the wet season. All explosive remnants of war and landmines recovered during clearance activities were destroyed.

53. The Mine Action Service continued to support UNISFA in destroying confiscated weapons and ammunition, with two assault weapons and 118 rounds of ammunition destroyed during the reporting period. The Service also destroyed 299 rounds of 30 mm explosive ammunition and dismantled an armoured personnel carrier seized by UNISFA forces.

54. The Mine Action Service continued to deliver explosive ordnance risk education, with 94 sessions delivered to 839 people in the Abyei Area (155 men, 182 women, 321 boys and 181 girls). In addition, 235 explosive ordnance risk education briefing sessions were conducted in the communities, reaching 2,612 people (965 boys, 744 girls, 515 men and 397 women). Approximately 90.9 per cent of the participants demonstrated increased knowledge to distinguish between safe and unsafe behaviour. In addition, the Service delivered 30 safety training sessions to 921 United Nations personnel and humanitarian actors, 150 of whom were women.

55. To familiarize troop-contributing country drivers with mine-protected vehicles, the Mine Action Service delivered six training sessions to 38 drivers. The Service also provided support to the UNISFA Integrated Force Mobility Team based on its self-sufficient clearance team deployment concept.

Joint Programme of the Resident Coordinators in the Sudan and South Sudan in Abyei

56. The implementation of the Joint Programme of the Resident Coordinators in the Sudan and South Sudan continued with the goal of helping to build the conditions necessary for peace in Abyei. While continuing to face operational challenges due to the conflict in the Sudan, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes carried out projects with UNISFA either directly or indirectly through local implementing partners.

57. Following the establishment of a nutrition site in Amiet by WFP in April 2023 and the completion of activities of WFP under the United Nations Joint Programme in Abyei in June 2024, WFP has continued to provide support beyond the programme's framework, which continues to benefit both communities. From April to June, 699 children from the age of 6 months to 59 months (339 girls and 360 boys) were assisted with nutritious food, and 346 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls were also assisted after being screened. From July to August, 203 children (120 girls and 83 boys) and 64 pregnant and breastfeeding mothers from both communities benefited from WFP services. The Amiet primary healthcare unit is now operational as a static nutrition site supported by WFP. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), through its implementing partner, the African Christian Ecumenical Alliance, distributed 200 dignity kits to vulnerable women and girls in Abyei town during the reporting period. UNFPA further provided psychosocial support to 72 beneficiaries (57 women and 15 girls). It also provided psychosocial support to 22 survivors of gender-based violence (17 women and five girls), including nine cases of physical assault, three cases of sexual assault and five cases of psychological violence.

58. IOM continued to support livelihood skills development by providing vocational courses in tailoring, catering, masonry and computer skills through the Abyei Vocational Training Centre. IOM also established a restaurant on the premises of the Centre for five catering graduates (all women), offering substantial livelihood support and enhancing the visibility of the Centre and vocational training as a tool for fostering resilient livelihoods in Abyei. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the establishment of small business cooperative groups as part of the empowerment programme under the United Nations Joint Programme in Abyei. Through this initiative, the business skills of 250 individuals (177 women) were enhanced through training by subject matter experts. Individuals were also provided with start-up kits. UNDP further supported inter- and intracommunal dialogues for peace and conflict mitigation by bringing together 350 women and young people; the aim was to contribute to violence reduction efforts through peaceful coexistence among communities. A total of 170 individuals (including 80 women) were further brought together and trained in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. WHO supported health officials of the Juba-appointed administration of Abyei in recruiting qualified health workers. To date, 54 health workers (including 24 women) have been verified and recruited. WHO has also initiated the procurement of medical supplies and the renovation of Abyei's civil hospital.

59. In northern Abyei, UNFPA delivered training on gender-based violence case management and psychosocial support services and conducted community-based awareness-raising activities on maternal and reproductive health issues at the women- and girls-friendly space in Diffra, reaching a total of 35 critical health workers (28 women and 7 men) including midwives and clinical staff. IOM continued to support access to and the availability of clean and safe water for both domestic and livestock use in Mekines and Diffra.

III. Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism: progress on benchmarks

60. The implementation of the mandate of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism continued to be affected by the conflict in the Sudan. Sudanese airspace has remained closed since the outbreak of fighting in April 2023, preventing any aerial monitoring operations. Nonetheless, during the reporting period, the Mechanism continued to conduct ground monitoring missions and situation assessment patrols from team sites 21 (Tishwin) and 22 (Abu Qussa/Wunkur). Sudanese authorities continued to grant the Mechanism security clearances for air and ground movements from Abyei to the Mechanism headquarters in Kadugli, the Sudan, and its two team sites for the purpose of resupply and personnel movement.

61. On 10 June, the local administrator of Panyikang County, South Sudan, threatened to attack team site 22 (Abu Qussa/Wunkur) following demands that UNISFA pay rent for the land on which the team site sits, in contravention of the status-of-forces agreement signed between the Government of South Sudan and the United Nations in 2011. UNISFA informed South Sudanese authorities of the situation both in a note verbale on 19 June and during successive engagements in Juba. South Sudanese security forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) remained deployed in Fanikan and Koubre, near Abu Qussa/Wunkur. There remained no South Sudanese national monitor deployed at team site 22 (Abu Qussa/Wunkur), with the team site conducting situation assessment patrols in lieu of ground monitoring missions. Civil-military cooperation activities, including providing medical care to local patients and distributing water to the community, continue to be conducted.

62. UNISFA leadership continued to engage officials of the Government of South Sudan to call for the re-establishment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism Sector 1 headquarters in Gok Machar, South Sudan. On 13 July, UNISFA received a letter from community leaders in the Gok Machar area, including women and youth representatives, expressing their agreement for the reoperationalization of the Mechanism Sector 1 headquarters in its former location. This issue was subsequently raised by UNISFA leadership in engagements with senior officials of the Government of South Sudan during their visit to Juba from 12 to 15 August.

63. There were no significant activities regarding border demarcation and border crossing corridors during the reporting period, and neither the Joint Border Commission nor the Joint Political and Security Mechanism met. However, border crossing corridors between the Sudan and South Sudan remain open to returnees and other displaced persons fleeing the conflict in the Sudan.

IV. Administrative aspects and mission support

64. As at 30 September, the number of civilian staff in UNISFA stood at 306, comprising 180 international staff, 36 United Nations Volunteers, and 90 national staff, against an authorized total of 201 international staff, 38 United Nations Volunteers and 96 national staff. Women accounted for 28 per cent of the civilian component, including 26 per cent of senior staff positions, and the mission continues to focus on the recruitment of women.

65. As at 1 October, the United Nations police strength stood at 57 Individual Police Officers, of whom 22 were women. From April to August, the Government of South Sudan approved visas for 24 individual police officers and three experts, all of whom

were deployed. No progress was made on the deployment of the three formed police units approved by the Security Council.

66. As at 30 September, UNISFA had 3,250 military personnel, (277 women and 2,973 men). The total comprised 2,990 troops, 131 staff officers and 129 military observers. Included in these figures, Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism personnel accounted for 535 military personnel (31 women and 504 men), with 491 troops, 14 staff officers and 30 military observers. Women represented 8.5 per cent of all military personnel, including 25.7 per cent for staff officers and military observers and 7 per cent for contingent troops.

67. The mission continued smart camp construction with the inauguration of the Highway camp in May and the Agok camp in June. The smart camp construction includes renewable energy and waste management systems, with a view to leaving a positive legacy in the host community for the future. Both camps are at a high level of completion, with accommodation for male and female personnel. The construction of the Ghanian infantry battalion headquarters in Athony and the company operating base of the Pakistani battalion in Diffra are ongoing, with approximately 89 per cent of personnel at both locations being accommodated in newly constructed units. The Chinese quick reaction force camp expansion at the mission headquarters was also completed during the reporting period. Construction of a bulk ammunition storage area for contingent personnel in the mission headquarters commenced in July.

68. While planning for the reconstruction of the company operating bases in Goli, Marial Achak, Tajalei and Noong is nearing completion, procurement of prefabricated units and construction materials was not initiated owing to the need to reprioritize resources in order to provide for increased costs in other areas, including with regard to rations and mission subsistence allowance for military personnel. Similar requirements, as well as challenges related to the overall liquidity situation, have also impacted the reconstruction of the Nepal headquarters support company camp in the mission headquarters, with construction work on the partially reconstructed camp currently on hold.

69. Owing to the ongoing conflict in the Sudan, the mission continues to rely on the southern supply route to access Abyei. This diversion continues to negatively affect the mission's supply chain, resulting in increased freight and transportation charges, additional customs and clearance processes and new security risks.

Culture of performance

70. In collaboration with the Department of Peace Operations, UNISFA established a working group to report, monitor, analyse and implement preventive and responsive actions related to misinformation and disinformation. The mission continued to collect data in the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System platform and work to enhance alignment with the Situational Awareness Geospatial Enterprise database. In May, staff from the Department of Peace Operations conducted a temporary deployment to Abyei to support the third Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System impact assessment undertaken by UNISFA.

71. UNISFA continued to enhance its capability to use technology for driving data-based decision-making. The smart (field remote infrastructure monitoring) technology deployed in UNISFA camps improves efficiencies through the real-time monitoring of the consumption of resources such as fuel, electricity and water. This helped support the mission's successful management of fuel challenges in May, enabling the mission to project the need for power cuts to conserve resources while fuel deliveries were delayed amid discussions with the Government of South Sudan related to fuel taxes. In addition, UNISFA adopted a supply-chain approach to replenish goods based on data analysis, using historical consumption rates and lead

time-based analysis to enable the mission to improve on-time in-full delivery and reduce slow-moving inventory.

Conduct and discipline

72. UNISFA continued to actively implement its strategy to prevent prohibited conduct, in particular sexual exploitation and abuse. A total of 65 training sessions were delivered to 2,078 United Nations personnel, including three simulation exercises for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and three risk assessments which resulted in recommendations for mitigating measures. UNISFA also organized four monthly meetings with the Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Network, a group composed of community members, UNISFA personnel and representatives of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes that aims to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and strengthen the community-based complaint mechanism. In June, one case of alleged sexual exploitation and abuse was reported and referred to the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services for further action. Efforts to identify potential victims are ongoing. UNISFA recorded 17 misconduct allegations, which have been referred for investigation to the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services and/or national investigation officers.

Public information

73. During the reporting period, UNISFA recorded seven incidents of misinformation and disinformation propagated by local actors through various social media channels. The misinformation and disinformation was centred around the protection of civilians, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces presence in Abyei and changes in mission leadership. UNISFA issued six background briefings to Abyei FM radio, a non-profit community radio station managed by local journalists, and conducted two international media briefings and several direct online engagements during which UNISFA provided information on its mandate and made other clarifications. From April to October, four training and sensitization sessions were delivered to local media practitioners, local authorities and youth, educating them about the dangers of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. The training was also aimed at promoting professional and ethical journalism. In May, a media capacity-building programme, in collaboration with the Mine Action Service, used cartoons to convey the mission's mandate to local community members. In the same month, three Abyei-based journalists, including one woman, attended a week-long training course facilitated by UNISFA at Eye Radio in Juba.

V. Financial aspects

74. The General Assembly, by its resolution [78/297](#) of 28 June 2024, appropriated the amount of \$297.8 million for the maintenance of UNISFA for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

75. As at 5 September 2024, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNISFA amounted to \$96.9 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$2,746.3 million.

76. Reimbursement of uniformed personnel and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the period up to 30 June 2024.

VI. Observations and recommendations

77. The challenges facing the Sudan and South Sudan have continued to limit prospects for engagement between the parties on the Abyei political process, and no progress has been achieved towards the resolution of the final status of Abyei and border issues. Nonetheless, the United Nations remains committed to supporting the parties in resuming inclusive dialogue on Abyei, including revived meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, once the situation permits.

78. The ongoing conflict in the Sudan continues to exacerbate security risks, hinder development and contribute to economic hardship in Abyei. With a steady flow of people arriving in the area since the outbreak of the conflict in April 2023, the increased population has strained the limited resources and added to intercommunal tensions. In response, UNISFA has worked with the United Nations country teams of the Sudan and South Sudan and other actors to meet the needs on the ground, including by facilitating transportation of humanitarian personnel and cargo. At the same time, the Abyei area has witnessed a proliferation of small arms and light weapons that have contributed to crime and increased the potential for intercommunal violence to lead to loss of life. The discovery of higher calibre weapons, such as the non-operational armoured personnel carrier seized by peacekeepers in June and dismantled by UNISFA, highlights the need for vigilance in maintaining the area's weapons-free status.

79. The presence of South Sudanese security forces in the southern part of Abyei constitutes an ongoing violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011. I call upon the Government of South Sudan to respect the demilitarized and weapons-free status of Abyei by withdrawing all security personnel. Simultaneously, with the presence of South Sudan People's Defence Forces personnel resulting in restrictions on peacekeeper movements in southern Abyei, I urge the Government of South Sudan to ensure full freedom of movement for UNISFA in line with the status-of-forces agreement. It is also critical that South Sudanese security forces end the occupation of schools and the community protection committee detention facility in Agok. At the same time, I am grateful for the continued support of the Government of South Sudan in facilitating the movement of equipment and cargo to Abyei through South Sudan, which is essential for maintaining the operations of UNISFA.

80. I also appeal to South Sudanese authorities to work with the local community and UNISFA to allow for the reoperationalization of Sector 1 of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, including the Sector headquarters in Gok Machar, South Sudan, and its two team sites. The expression of support from representatives in the local community in Gok Machar for this undertaking represents an opportunity for progress in this regard. I am deeply concerned about threats made to the Mechanism team site 22 (Abu Qussa/Wunkur) and urge the Government of South Sudan to act to address the situation in line with the status-of-forces agreement.

81. It is heartening to see the reduction in intercommunal violence during the reporting period. I applaud representatives of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities for their willingness to pursue peace through dialogue, coming together for the successful post-migration conference facilitated by UNISFA and other partners in Noong in central Abyei in May. At the same time, the downturn in clashes between the Ngok Dinka and Twic Dinka communities demonstrates the potential for peace in southern Abyei, and I reiterate the support of the United Nations for the leadership of the Government of South Sudan in calming tensions and working towards dialogue between these two communities. Nonetheless, I remain greatly concerned about the continuing intercommunal tensions in southern Abyei and the possibility of further

violence. I call upon all stakeholders, including local authorities and community leaders, to redouble efforts towards de-escalation and peaceful reconciliation. Particularly important in this effort will be to ensure the full participation of women and youth in the interest of an inclusive process and lasting peace.

82. No progress has been made on the establishment of the joint institutions envisioned in the Agreement of 20 June 2011. The absence of rule of law institutions, such as the Abyei Police Service, continues to hinder the creation of a cohesive criminal justice system and efforts to address human rights abuses. The support of the United Nations police is essential, particularly as the influx of displaced persons fleeing conflict in the Sudan and economic conditions in the area contribute to increased demand for rule of law services in Abyei. I reiterate my call upon the parties to immediately support and facilitate the full deployment of the mandated strength of UNISFA individual police officers and formed police units. Similarly, I urge the parties to facilitate the deployment of the civilian deputy head of mission, as authorized by the Security Council, and to consider the reoperationalization of the Abyei airstrip for use by UNISFA.

83. I thank the acting Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNISFA, Major General Robert Yaw Affram, for his tireless efforts towards peace and security in Abyei. I also express my appreciation to my Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, who completed her assignment during the reporting period, for her sustained support for the cause of peace in Abyei during her term in the position. I also take this opportunity to thank all UNISFA personnel and the personnel of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Abyei for their commitment to improving the lives of the people of Abyei under conditions that remain very challenging.

Map

