



General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 April 2020

Original: English

Seventy-fourth session

Agenda item 149

Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2018/19	\$263,858,100
Expenditure for 2018/19	\$259,766,300
Unencumbered balance for 2018/19	\$4,091,800
Appropriation for 2019/20	\$260,177,000
Projected expenditure for 2019/20 ^a	\$253,949,800
Projected underexpenditure for 2019/20	\$6,227,200
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2020/21	\$270,747,800
Adjustment recommended by the Advisory Committee for 2020/21	(\$4,963,900)
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2020/21	\$265,783,900

^a Estimates as at 31 January 2020.



I. Introduction

1. During its consideration of the financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 15 April 2020. The comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations are contained in its report ([A/74/737](#)), and those pertaining to the findings and recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 can be found in its related report ([A/74/806](#)).

II. Budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

2. By its resolution [72/289](#), the General Assembly appropriated an amount of \$263,858,100 gross (\$261,020,700 net) for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. Expenditure for the period totalled \$259,766,300 gross (\$256,878,000 net), for a budget implementation rate of 98.4 per cent. The resulting unencumbered balance of \$4,091,800, in gross terms, represents 1.6 per cent of the overall level of resources approved for the period.

3. The unencumbered balance of \$4,091,800 reflects the combined effect of lower-than-budgeted expenditure under military and police personnel (\$2,762,800, or 1.8 per cent) and operational costs (\$2,661,800, or 3.6 per cent) and higher-than-budgeted expenditure under civilian personnel (\$1,332,800, or 3.8 per cent). Summary information on the redeployments (\$1,333,800, or 0.5 per cent) from group III to group II, as a result of reprioritization of resources, is provided in section III.B of the report of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the Force for 2018/19 ([A/74/579](#)).

III. Information on performance for the current period

4. With regard to current and projected expenditure for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 January 2020, expenditure amounted to \$200,099,300. At the end of the financial period, the estimated total expenditure would amount to \$253,949,800, resulting in an estimated unencumbered balance of \$6,227,200.

5. The Advisory Committee was informed that claims for the reimbursement of troop costs had been settled up to September 2019, leaving an outstanding balance of \$26,685,000 as at 31 December 2019. Contingent-owned equipment had been paid up to September 2019, leaving an outstanding balance of \$29,436,000 as at 31 December 2019. With regard to death and disability compensation, as at 31 January 2020, an amount of \$1,904,000 had been paid to settle 72 claims since the inception of the Force, and there were seven pending cases. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the outstanding claims will be settled expeditiously.**

6. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, as at 6 March 2020, a total of \$2,444,995,000 had been assessed on Member States in respect of the Force since its inception. Payments received as at the same date amounted to \$2,337,132,000, for an outstanding balance of \$107,863,000. The Committee was further informed that, as at 2 March 2020, the cash available to the Force amounted to \$59,462,000, which was

sufficient to cover the three-month operating reserve of \$41,518,000, as well as the next scheduled reimbursements to troop- and police-contributing countries.

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

A. Mandate and planning assumptions

7. The mandate of the Force was established by the Security Council in its resolution 1990 (2011) and extended most recently, until 15 May 2020, in resolution 2497 (2019). The planning assumptions and mission support initiatives of the Force for 2020/21 are summarized in paragraphs 8 to 24 of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget for the Force for that period (A/74/723).

B. Resource requirements

Financial resources

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category	Expenditure (2018/19)	Apportionment (2019/20)	Cost estimates (2020/21)	Variance	
				Amount	Percentage
Military and police personnel	151 255.4	137 372.8	131 539.4	(5 833.4)	(4.2)
Civilian personnel	36 716.1	36 394.4	46 013.6	9 619.2	26.4
Operational costs	71 794.8	86 409.8	93 194.8	6 785.0	7.9
Gross requirements	259 766.3	260 177.0	270 747.8	10 570.8	4.1

Note: Detailed information on the financial resources proposed and an analysis of variances are provided in sections II and III of the proposed budget.

1. Military and police personnel

Category	Authorized 2019/20 ^a	Proposed 2020/21	Variance
Military observers	225	225	–
Military contingent personnel	3 620	3 325	(295)
United Nations police officers	185	148	(37)
Formed police unit personnel	160	492	332

^a Represents the highest level of authorized strength.

8. The proposed resources for military and police personnel for 2020/21 amount to \$131,539,400, reflecting a decrease of \$5,833,400, or 4.2 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2019/20. The decrease reflects reductions under military contingents and United Nations police, owing mainly to reductions in authorized strength in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2469 (2019) and 2497 (2019). The reductions would be offset in part by increases attributable mainly to higher cost estimates for mission subsistence allowance for military observers, owing to the anticipated sharing of accommodation, and the deployment of two additional formed police units, comprising approximately 160 personnel each, in accordance with the above-mentioned Council resolutions (*ibid.*, paras. 69–72).

9. The Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for military and police personnel.

2. Civilian personnel

Category	Approved 2019/20	Proposed 2020/21	Variance
Posts			
International staff	165	177	12
National Professional Officers	3	3	—
National General Service	83	83	—
Temporary positions ^a	1	1	—
United Nations Volunteers	34	39	5
Total	286	303	17

^a Funded under general temporary assistance.

10. The proposed resources for civilian personnel for 2020/21 amount to \$46,013,600, reflecting an increase of \$9,619,200, or 26.4 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2019/20. The Secretary-General indicates that the increase is attributable to higher requirements under international staff, with an increase of \$9,523,000, or 31.6 per cent, owing to the following: (a) an increased post adjustment multiplier as at 1 January 2020 (44.6, compared with 30.5 in 2019/20); (b) the application of a lower vacancy rate (8 per cent, compared with 15 per cent in 2019/20); (c) the proposed establishment of 11 international posts (1 D-2, 8 P-4 and 2 P-3); and (d) the application of a higher percentage of common staff costs (105.2 per cent of net salaries for 2020/21, compared with 98.2 per cent in 2019/20). The increase is also attributable to higher requirements under United Nations Volunteers, with an increase of \$94,700, or 5.1 per cent, owing to the proposed establishment of five positions (*ibid.*, paras. 73–74).

Recommendations on posts and positions

11. The Secretary-General indicates that the budget proposal for 2020/21 provides for 303 civilian posts and positions, including the establishment of 11 international posts (1 D-2, 8 P-4 and 2 P-3), one general temporary assistance position (P-3) and five United Nations Volunteer positions, the conversion of one general temporary assistance position (P-3) into an established post, the redeployment of one international post (Field Service) and the reassignment of one international post (P-3) (*ibid.*, paras. 31–36, 43, 45 and 49–53).

Establishment

12. It is indicated in the proposed budget that, in line with paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 2469 (2019) and paragraph 6 of resolution 2497 (2019), the Secretary-General is proposing the establishment of a civilian post of Deputy Head of Mission to: (a) support the implementation of the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area and to achieve a political resolution of the status of Abyei; (b) further facilitate liaison between and engagement with the parties in a manner consistent with the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements, including agreement to establish the Abyei Police Service; and (c) function as the main focal point on community liaison in Abyei with both traditional leaders and the existing administrative structures, and for the provision of support for humanitarian partners and the African Union (*ibid.*, para. 31).

13. The Secretary-General also proposes the establishment of the following posts in the Office of the Deputy Head of Mission: one post of Special Assistant (P-4), to support the Deputy Head of Mission; three posts of Political Affairs Officer (P-4), one each in Khartoum, Juba and Addis Ababa, to provide political analysis related to the duty station, liaise with the relevant stakeholders and assist the leadership of the Force as needed; two posts of Political Affairs Officer (P-4), in each of the two Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism localities of Kadugli and Gok Machar to enhance the capacity of the Office and increase outreach in the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone; and two posts of Political Affairs Officer (P-3), located in Abyei, to assist the Deputy Head of Mission in analysing the political aspects of mandate-related information in the three capitals and the two Mechanism sector headquarters (ibid., paras. 32–36).

14. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that UNISFA and the Secretariat had previously engaged with the Government of the Sudan on various occasions on the appointment of a civilian Deputy Head of Mission at the D-2 level, that the Force would continue those discussions and, once the appointment was accepted and a suitable candidate identified, would launch the recruitment process for the other posts proposed for establishment in the Office of the Deputy Head of Mission.

15. The Advisory Committee notes from the information provided to it that the appointment of a civilian Deputy Head of Mission is still at the early stage of consultation between the relevant parties. The Committee therefore considers that the Force should prioritize this process and adopt a gradual recruitment approach to the subsequent staffing of the Office of the Deputy Head of Mission, in terms of both the number and levels of the proposed posts.

16. In this context, the Advisory Committee recommends that the post of Special Assistant (P-4) in Abyei be established at the P-3 level. The Committee also recommends that only one of the two proposed posts of Political Affairs Officer (P-3) in Abyei be established at this stage.

17. The Advisory Committee also recommends a phased recruitment for the proposed establishment of three posts of Political Affairs Officer (P-4) in Juba, Khartoum and Addis Ababa, as well as the two posts of Political Affairs Officer (P-4) in Kadugli and Gok Machar. Consequently, the Committee recommends that a vacancy rate of 75 per cent be applied to these five new posts in 2020/21.

18. The Secretary-General also proposes that a post of Facilities Management Officer (P-4) be established in the Engineering Unit. The incumbent would analyse and advise on the planning, design and maintenance of major systems and facilities such as living and office facilities and related structures and oversee water and sanitation, environmental activities and facilities management (ibid., para. 51). **While noting the proposed increase in resources for facilities and infrastructure to support the expansion of the uniformed personnel camps (ibid., para. 76), the Advisory Committee also notes that the Engineering Unit is already staffed with 35 posts and positions (1 P-4, 3 P-3, 12 Field Service, 14 national General Service and 5 United Nations Volunteer). The Committee considers that the existing staffing complement of the Unit should be able to handle the additional requirements for facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, the Committee recommends against the proposed establishment of a post of Facilities Management Officer (P-4).**

19. It is also proposed that five international United Nations Volunteer positions be established, as follows: one position of Gender Officer in the Office of the Chief of Staff, one position of Staff Welfare Officer in the Human Resources Unit, two positions of Air Operations Officer, to be stationed in Abyei and in Gok Machar, and

one position of Technical Compliance Officer in the Aviation Unit. **Taking into consideration the repeated call by the General Assembly to improve the ratio of substantive to support staff, with particular attention to the feasibility of nationalizing functions (see resolutions 59/296, 61/276 and 65/289, as well as resolution 70/286, para. 20), the Advisory Committee recommends that the proposed position of Gender Officer (United Nations Volunteer) in the Office of the Chief of Staff and the two positions of Air Operations Officer (United Nations Volunteer), to be stationed in Abyei and in Gok Machar, be established as National Professional Officer posts.**

Conversion

20. The Secretary-General proposes the conversion of one position of Engineer (P-3), funded under general temporary assistance, into an established post at the same level. The incumbent would oversee force mobility projects within the Abyei box, thereby freeing up engineering resources to oversee construction projects elsewhere (ibid., para. 50). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, since the establishment of that general temporary assistance position, the mission had faced significant difficulties in identifying suitable highly qualified candidates owing to the temporary nature of the position.

21. The Advisory Committee is not convinced that the conversion of a general temporary assistance position of Engineer into an established post in one location would free up engineering resources to oversee construction projects in other locations. Moreover, the Committee is not convinced that the temporary nature of the funding source of a position prevents the recruitment of qualified candidates. Therefore, the Committee recommends against the proposed conversion of a general temporary assistance position of Engineer (P-3) into an established post.

Vacancy rates

22. The table below provides a summary of the vacancy rates for civilian personnel in 2018/19 and 2019/20, as well as those proposed for 2020/21. The Advisory Committee notes from the proposed budget that information on vacancy factors applied in the cost estimates for 2020/21 continues to reflect a common statement for most peacekeeping operations, rather than detailed explanations for the specific rates applied for each category of the civilian personnel of the Force. In particular, the Committee notes the lack of justification for the application of rates that differ from the actual vacancy rates during the current period.

Category	Actual 2018/19	Approved 2019/20	Actual 31 January 2020	Actual average 31 January 2020	Proposed 2020/21
Civilian personnel					
International staff	11.3	15.0	9.1	8.5	8.0
National staff					
National Professional Officers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
National General Service staff	10.8	12.0	9.6	9.6	10.0
United Nations Volunteers	0.0	3.0	5.9	14.7	3.0
Temporary positions					
International staff	100.0	15.0	100.0	100.0	10.0

23. The Advisory Committee reiterates its view that proposed vacancy rates should be based, as much as possible, on actual rates. In cases in which proposed

rates differ from actual rates, clear justification should be provided systematically in the proposed budget and related documents (see also [A/73/755/Add.11](#), para. 19).

Vacant posts

24. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, as at 20 March 2020, five posts (1 Force Commander (Assistant Secretary-General) and 4 Assistant (national General Service)) had been vacant for more than two years. Upon enquiry, the Committee was also informed that the post of acting Head of Mission/Force Commander was currently encumbered by a staff member at the D-2 level receiving a special post allowance. The Committee was further informed, upon enquiry, that job openings for the four posts of Assistant had been published, with interviews scheduled in April 2020 for three of them.

25. The Advisory Committee expresses concern at the prolonged vacancy of the post of Force Commander. The Committee recalls the request of the General Assembly, expressed consistently in its resolutions on peacekeeping budgets, that the Secretary-General ensure that vacant posts be filled expeditiously ([A/71/836](#), para. 108).

26. The Advisory Committee reiterates that posts that have been vacant for two years or longer should be proposed for either retention, with full rejustification, or for abolishment (see also [A/73/755/Add.11](#), para. 19, [A/69/839](#), para. 67, and General Assembly resolution [66/264](#)). The Committee notes that the Secretary-General did not rejustify the four above-mentioned posts of Assistant that have been vacant for two years or longer. Accordingly, the Committee recommends the abolishment of those four posts.

27. Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 16 to 19, 21 and 26 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for civilian personnel. Any related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.

3. Operational costs

(United states dollars)

	<i>Apportioned 2019/20</i>	<i>Proposed 2020/21</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Operational costs	86 409 800	93 194 800	6 785 000

28. The proposed increase of \$6,785,000, or 7.9 per cent, for 2020/21 for operational costs reflects higher requirements under facilities and infrastructure and communications and information technology, offset in part by lower requirements under air operations, ground transportation and other supplies, services and equipment ([A/74/723](#), paras. 76–80).

Facilities and infrastructure

29. The proposed increase under facilities and infrastructure of \$7,939,300, or 25.3 per cent, is attributable mainly to: (a) the construction of prefabricated structures for formed police unit personnel and the alteration, renovation and maintenance of existing incomplete and aging sites (\$4,497,200); (b) the acquisition of prefabricated facilities (\$1,022,100); (c) the acquisition of generators and electrical equipment (\$508,100); (d) the acquisition of water treatment and fuel distribution equipment (\$628,300); and (e) provisions for security services, which were previously provided

for under other supplies, services and equipment (\$1,020,000). The increases would be offset in part by reduced requirements for spare parts and supplies.

30. **The Advisory Committee recalls that UNISFA has historically experienced difficulties in carrying out construction and maintenance projects as planned. The Committee considers that it would not be realistic to assume that the execution of the full scope of construction projects planned for 2020/21 will proceed as planned. The Committee is of the view, therefore, that the proposed level of requirements for 2020/21 is not fully justified and recommends a reduction of 50 per cent, or \$3,969,650, to the proposed increase in resources for facilities and infrastructure (see also A/73/755/Add.11, para. 29).**

31. With regard to the acquisition of new generators, the Secretary-General indicates that that acquisition will contribute to a reduction in fuel consumption, resulting in efficiency gains in the amount of \$36,700 (A/74/723, para. 55). The information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that, in 2020/21, the Force plans to acquire other equipment for environmental management and use and generation of energy, including solar-powered systems, but does not identify any related efficiency gain. **The Advisory Committee is looking forward to reviewing additional information regarding the environmental projects, including their costs, capacity and foreseen efficiency gains, in the next budget report on UNISFA.**

Official travel

32. The information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that the proposed resources for official travel for training in 2020/21 amount to \$326,200, reflecting an increase of \$20,000, or 6.5 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2019/20. **The Advisory Committee considers that the Force should increase its effort to rely on remote training technology, including videoconferencing. Consequently, the Committee recommends a reduction of 20 per cent, or \$65,240, to the official travel budget for training.**

Communications and information technology

33. The proposed increase under communications and information technology of \$511,100, or 5.7 per cent, is attributable mainly to the planned acquisition of equipment, including to support the additional formed police personnel who will be deployed during the period. The information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that, in the current period, of an apportionment of \$1,039,900 for communications and information technology equipment, only \$332,600 had been expended as at 31 January 2020. **In view of this underutilization of resources, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 10 per cent, or \$51,110, to the proposed increase in resources for communications and information technology.**

Consultants and consulting services

34. The proposed resources for consultants and consulting services in 2020/21 amount to \$461,900. The information provided to the Advisory Committee shows an underexpenditure of \$265,200 under that budget line in 2018/19. Moreover, for the current period, none of the requirement of \$31,500 for consulting services had been expended as at 31 January 2020. **In view of these elements, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 15 per cent, or \$69,285, to the proposed resources for consultants and consulting services.**

35. **Subject to its observations and recommendations in paragraphs 27 and 30 to 34 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for operational costs.**

V. Conclusion

36. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly with regard to the financing of the Force for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 are indicated in section V of the performance report ([A/74/579](#)). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of \$4,091,800 for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, as well as other income/adjustments amounting to \$3,277,900 for the period ended 30 June 2019, be credited to Member States.**

37. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly with regard to the financing of the Force for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 are indicated in section IV of the proposed budget ([A/74/723](#)). **Taking into account its observations and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the proposed resources be reduced by \$4,963,900, from \$270,747,800 to \$265,783,900. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate the amount of \$265,783,900 for the maintenance of the Force for the 12-month period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.**
