



Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 25 of Security Council resolution 2179 (2014), in which the Council requested that I continue to inform it of progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and bring to its attention any serious violations 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 (S/2011/384, annex) dated 20 June 2011. The present report provides an update on the situation in Abyei and UNISFA operations since my previous report of 30 September 2014 (S/2014/709) and outlines progress made in the implementation of the additional tasks mandated to UNISFA under Security Council resolution 2024 (2011) related to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

II. Security situation

2. The security situation in the Abyei Area remained relatively calm during the period under review, despite the underlying tensions and volatility. The Government of the Sudan continued to maintain between 120 and 150 oil police personnel inside the Diffra oil complex (northern Abyei), in violation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement and multiple Security Council resolutions. There was no reported presence of South Sudanese forces in the Abyei Area.

3. The southward migration of Misseriya nomads through the Abyei Area commenced on 11 October, in line with the arrival of the dry season. The movement of people and livestock took place in a peaceful and orderly manner, with no security incidents recorded. As at 19 November, approximately 15,000 Misseriya nomads had entered the territory, concentrated mainly in the northern areas of Diffra, Mekines, Farouk, Dumboloya and Goli. With regard to Ngok Dinka previously displaced within Abyei, there was no significant increase in the number returning to their places of origin. The total number of Ngok Dinka in the Abyei Area remained at approximately 81,000.

4. To ensure a peaceful and orderly migration, as well as the safe return of displaced persons, UNISFA continued to implement its multifaceted conflict prevention and mitigation strategy. That consisted of monitoring and early warning assessments, the deployment of troops in potential flashpoint areas, robust day and



night deterrence patrols; aerial monitoring and frequent engagement with local communities (through Joint Security Committees) and the authorities in the Sudan and South Sudan. Further, with the onset of the dry season and improved road conditions, UNISFA expanded its troop deployment to enable greater coverage of the area of operations. Owing to the continued absence of inter-community dispute resolution mechanisms, the Force maintained a disengagement line between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to prevent security incidents between them.

5. The prevalence of small arms within the communities remained a source of instability. UNISFA troops temporarily apprehended and disarmed a Ngok Dinka man near Agok, southern Abyei, on 10 October, after he fired in the direction of a nearby Force base. On 18 October, UNISFA disarmed a Misseriya nomad in Farouk, northern Abyei, confiscating an AK-47 rifle and ammunition. On 9 November, UNISFA peacekeepers disarmed a Misseriya nomad carrying an AK-47 at Abu Ghazala, northern Abyei. The confiscated weapons were taken into the custody of the Force.

6. On 10 October, Misseriya community members passed by a UNISFA checkpoint in Diffra while transporting two dead bodies north. The community members stated that the victims were Misseriya traders who had been shot and killed by unidentified gunmen in Shegeg village, along the Baloom to Thurpader road (north-eastern Abyei), while travelling to Unity State, South Sudan. The traders' belongings were reportedly looted in the incident. UNISFA convened a joint security meeting with local Misseriya leaders to urge the community to refrain from retaliatory violence. A lack of independent sources hindered the efforts of the Force to corroborate the information.

7. The absence of law and order institutions continued to undermine the safety and security of community members, as well as their human rights, particularly in informal detention centres. In this context, UNISFA police provided advice and support to the Head of Mission and the military component on law and order issues, and supported community-based crime prevention and reduction through training and advice to unarmed and voluntary community protection committees. They advised the committees on, inter alia, community safety, crime management and crime prevention and awareness techniques. In addition, UNISFA police provided induction training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse to newly deployed military and police personnel.

III. Political developments

8. On 4 November, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and President Salva Kiir Mayardit held a summit meeting in Khartoum, at which they agreed, with regard to Abyei, to the resumption of Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meetings. President Kiir pledged, in that connection, to appoint a new Committee Co-Chair for South Sudan. The Committee last met on 3 May 2013, one day prior to the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief, Kuol Deng Kuol. The leaders did not provide a timeframe for holding the meeting.

9. Pursuant to the recommendations of the strategic review of UNISFA (see [S/2014/336](#)), which were welcomed by the Security Council in its resolution 2156 (2014), the African Union Commission, the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations Secretariat and UNISFA conducted a follow-up mission to Khartoum and Juba, from 4 to 8 November, to engage with officials from the Government of the

Sudan and the Government of South Sudan. The delegation encouraged the two Governments to take concrete steps to promote the consolidation of peace and security in Abyei and to explore creative approaches, based on mutual understanding, for the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, as called for in the communiqué of the 456th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council held on 12 September 2014.

10. The Government of the Sudan welcomed the outcome of the 4 November presidential summit and agreed to work towards the expeditious resumption of AJOC meetings without preconditions regarding their location. Furthermore, the Government of the Sudan stated that it was ready to consider creative approaches to addressing the current public administration and law and order vacuum in Abyei, within the framework of intercommunal dialogue and under the supervision of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee. The Government of the Sudan further reiterated its position that the oil police units should remain inside the oil complex in Diffra until the formation of the Abyei Police Service provided for in the 20 June 2011 Agreement.

11. The Government of South Sudan confirmed its intention to appoint a new Co-Chair of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and resume meetings provided that they initially take place outside the Abyei Area, due to continuing intercommunal tensions following the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief. While also agreeing to explore creative approaches to addressing the current situation in Abyei within the framework of intercommunal dialogue, South Sudan stated that a number of preconditions must first be fulfilled. First, the findings of the African Union-led investigation into the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief must be made available and the issue resolved through traditional mechanisms. Second, the Government of the Sudan must withdraw its police units from Diffra. In regard to the latter, the Government of South Sudan described the continued presence of the oil police as a significant security concern for the Ngok Dinka community and noted that should the police not be withdrawn, South Sudan could deploy its own police elements in the territory to address its security concerns.

12. Following several rounds of consultation with the parties, the United Nations Secretariat and UNISFA invited the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan, along with the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia, to participate in a high-level security meeting on Abyei in Addis Ababa on 17 November. The objective of the meeting was to encourage the two Governments to recommit to working jointly with UNISFA on addressing security concerns in Abyei ahead of the upcoming migration season and, in view of the deteriorating security situation in its immediate surroundings, to reactivate the security mechanisms agreed to in the 20 June 2011 Agreement. On 12 November, the Government of South Sudan confirmed its participation in the meeting. On 13 November, the Government of the Sudan requested that UNISFA postpone the meeting without explanation. On 18 November, the acting UNISFA Head of Mission met with Sudanese officials in Khartoum and urged them to participate in the meeting, which was rescheduled for late December.

13. After the postponement, the Government of Ethiopia reiterated to UNISFA, on 14 November, that should the Sudan and South Sudan continue to fail to meet their obligations towards the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, the Government of Ethiopia would withdraw its troops from UNISFA. Ethiopia explained

that it would not maintain its military contribution to UNISFA in the absence of cooperation and dialogue between the two Governments to address security and the law and order vacuum in Abyei.

14. Following the announcement, on 7 September 2014, by the Sudan National Election Commission of its intention to include Abyei as a constituency in the 2015 elections, the Chairman of the Western Kordofan State election commission, Abdul Jabar Ibrahim, was quoted in the media, on 18 October, as stating that the Area was not among the State's constituencies for national or state polls. The Government of the Sudan considers the Abyei Area a district within the administrative boundaries of Western Kordofan State. Four days later, the media cited the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee Co-Chair for the Sudan, Hassan Ali Nimir, as reiterating that the citizens of Abyei would be included in the elections. Government officials declined to comment on the matter to UNISFA. As such, the Government's intentions remain unclear in this regard. On 17 November, the National Electoral Commission announced that the registration of voters for the 2015 elections had concluded. No registration was conducted in the Abyei Area.

IV. Status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism

15. The Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism conducted just one aerial verification patrol during the reporting period due to the temporary unavailability of aircraft, which were required for a major rotation of UNISFA troops. The patrol, which was conducted over the western "14-mile" area on 13 October, did not observe any military presence. As at 6 November, UNISFA, the Sudan and South Sudan had 15, 32 and 34 monitors deployed, respectively, to the Mechanism. Of the 121 UNISFA force protection troops deployed to the Mechanism, 83 are in Kadugli and 38 in Gok Machar.

16. Regarding outstanding border issues, Presidents Bashir and Kiir reaffirmed at the summit meeting on 4 November their commitment to implement the 27 September 2012 Agreements between the Sudan and South Sudan. In particular, they agreed to convene a meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism in November to enable progress in the full establishment of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and determination of its centreline. They also committed to establishing the previously agreed upon mechanisms to address the harbouring of and alleged support of one another's rebel movements. Furthermore, they agreed to enable the opening of the previously defined 10 border-crossing corridors between the two countries. As at 17 November, the Joint Political and Security Mechanism had not yet met.

V. Humanitarian situation

17. Humanitarian actors continued to provide assistance in the Abyei Area to approximately 81,000 people, in particular in the sectors of food security and livelihoods, health and nutrition, education, protection, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene. This included the distribution of life-saving food aid by the World Food Programme (WFP) to vulnerable communities in northern Abyei, from 27 October to 3 November. This was the first WFP food distribution in northern Abyei since May 2011. It followed a rapid assessment of the area in June that found a fragile

food security situation among communities living in north-eastern Abyei owing to three consecutive poor harvests.

VI. Personnel deployment and mission support

18. As at 16 November, the UNISFA military component stood at 3,942 of the authorized strength of 5,326 (see annex I). In accordance with its conflict prevention and mitigation strategy, the Mission commenced implementation of its 2014/2015 dry season deployment plan (see annex II). In addition to the locations included in last year's plan, the Force will establish six additional temporary operating bases to ensure effective coverage of the area of operations.

19. As at 16 November, the strength of the UNISFA police component stood at 24 out of the authorized strength of 50 police officers. The recruitment of a civilian head of mission is ongoing.

20. In support of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, UNISFA completed the construction of accommodation units and facilities for all personnel presently deployed to Gok Machar. The construction of additional accommodations that will house the yet to be fully deployed force protection company at the base continued. Preparations for the construction of Mechanism sites in Malakal and Buram remained ongoing. The Force commenced the repair of the main supply route from Diffra to Agok.

21. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) mobilized additional demining assets, in the light of the arrival of the dry season. That involved providing training and accreditation to various clearance and route verification teams. UNMAS had been maintaining only an emergency response capacity for explosive ordnance disposal tasks during the rainy season and had undertaken planning and internal capacity-building. In addition, UNMAS continued to support the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism through the clearance of 107,093m² of land at Gok Machar camp. Route verification and clearance teams were deployed to Kadugli and integrated clearance teams were mobilized in preparation for clearance activities in the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone.

VII. Follow-up mission to the strategic review of UNISFA

22. In early November, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (on behalf of the United Nations Development Group), finalized the report of the follow-up mission on the strategic review of UNISFA, which was originally concluded in May 2014. In its report, the follow-up mission identified areas in which UNISFA and the United Nations country teams in the Sudan and South Sudan could safeguard and consolidate the gains made thus far in terms of security and stability in Abyei through the provision of support to a number of community-based stabilization initiatives. The implementation of these initiatives would require the support of the Sudan and South Sudan, which would be sought through the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee.

23. Specifically, to address the prevalence of small arms within the communities, which was identified as a significant security concern in Abyei, the mission

recommended that UNISFA adopt a more standardized and systematic approach to confiscating weapons from small armed groups or individuals. Such an approach would be consistent with the decision of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee of 3 May 2013 to make Abyei a “weapons-free zone”. While UNISFA currently performs this task on an ad hoc basis, a policy on civilian disarmament should be developed and systematically implemented, including through the destruction of the confiscated weapons.

24. The strategic review of UNISFA had previously underscored the importance of inter-community dialogue to address the tensions and deep divisions that presently exist between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, particularly to achieve closure over the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief and the establishment of dispute resolution and small arms control mechanisms. In order to promote these initiatives, the follow-up mission recommended the deployment of a small number of UNISFA Community Liaison Officers for which the Force is already authorized. Once deployed, these personnel would support the Force military and police components on facilitating such dialogue. In support of the small arms control, for which the traditional mechanisms should be revived through the inter-community dialogue, UNISFA would potentially assist with the destruction of confiscated weapons, while the Force police component would assist with its incorporation into community protection committees.

25. Rising levels of criminality continued to have an impact on the safety and security of communities in the Abyei Area in the absence of any formal law and order mechanisms. To address this, the mission recommended that UNISFA support community-oriented crime prevention and crime management mechanisms within the context of its protection of civilians mandate.

26. Finally, to help safeguard and consolidate the gains made thus far in terms of stability, the review proposed measures to strengthen recovery and resilience programming in Abyei through, inter alia, the development of a collective framework that more effectively brings together the activities of UNISFA and the United Nations country team around a shared set of early recovery objectives.

VIII. Financial aspects

27. The General Assembly, by its resolution 68/258 B of 30 June 2014, appropriated the amount of \$318.9 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

28. As at 14 November 2014, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNISFA amounted to \$154.9 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to \$2,616.0 million.

29. Reimbursement to the contributing Government for troop- and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the period up to 31 August 2014 and 30 June 2014, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IX. Observations

30. I remain deeply concerned about the sustainability of the status quo in the Abyei Area, in particular the potential for tensions between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to seriously escalate during the migration period. The entry of large numbers of Misseriya nomads and their livestock into Abyei in search of water and grazing lands, continuing acrimony between the communities over the unresolved killing of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief and political efforts by the Sudan and South Sudan to exercise exclusive sovereignty over the territory are contributing to an environment in which a minor incident could easily trigger larger clashes, with a commensurate deterioration in relations between the two countries. At the same time, the continued failure of the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to implement the outstanding provisions of the 20 June 2011 Abyei Agreement leaves the territory without the formal public administration and law and order institutions needed to help manage disputes and prevent conflict.

31. In this context, and pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2156 (2014) and 2179 (2014), the African Union Commission, the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations Secretariat and UNISFA continued their engagement with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to encourage concrete steps that would ease tensions and consolidate security in Abyei. I am encouraged that both Governments declared themselves open to creative approaches to address the law and order vacuum in Abyei within the context of intercommunal dialogue. I call on the parties to meet to work out the modalities for such dialogue and create an enabling environment that includes, for the Sudan, the withdrawal of the oil police; for South Sudan, re-engagement in Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meetings; and for both, resolution of the dispute over the killing of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief.

32. I welcome the outcomes of the summit meeting between President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and President Salva Kiir Mayardit. I urge both Governments to reach an agreement on the modalities for the resumption of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meetings without preconditions and the Government of South Sudan to promptly appoint a new Committee Co-Chair. The reconvening of the Committee would demonstrate the commitment of both parties to the joint management of the Abyei Area.

33. The presence of Sudanese police units in northern Abyei remains a significant source of tension between the two Governments and the communities on the ground. I therefore urge the Government of the Sudan to undertake, with UNISFA, a joint assessment of the security requirements for the Diffra oil complex. On that basis, proposals could be developed to enable the withdrawal of the police units while still ensuring the security of the oil installations, in accordance with the 20 June 2011 Abyei Agreement.

34. The issue of the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief is another major source of tension at both the local and national levels. The lack of a public pronouncement with respect to the results of the African Union-led investigation into the incident has, in part, contributed to the maintenance of those tensions. I call upon the African Union Commission to urgently report the conclusions of the investigation to the African Union Peace and Security Council. This would initiate the process of bringing closure to the incident, thereby contributing to the creation of more conducive conditions for intercommunal dialogue.

35. Now that the two Presidents have agreed to proceed with the full implementation of the 27 September 2012 Cooperation Agreements, I urge the parties to engage without delay through the Joint Political and Security Mechanism to enable the full establishment of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and determination of its centreline, as well as the activation of border security arrangements and the opening of the border crossing corridors. Such steps could facilitate increased trade and travel between the two countries, thereby strengthening relations between their peoples and enabling increased development along their shared frontier.

36. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Halefom Moges, and all the women and men of UNISFA for their sustained efforts to promote peace and stability in the Abyei Area in what are often challenging and arduous conditions. I also commend my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkerios, as well as President Thabo Mbeki, the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia, and thank them for their active engagement in support of the stabilization of Abyei.

Annex I

**Composition of the United Nations Interim Security Force
for Abyei military component (including the Joint Border
Verification and Monitoring Mechanism)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Total</i>
Benin	Experts on mission	1	2
	Contingent troop	1	
Brazil	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	
Burkina Faso	Experts on mission	1	1
Burundi	Experts on mission	1	1
Cambodia	Experts on mission	3	3
El Salvador	Experts on mission	1	1
	Contingent troop	1	
Ecuador	Experts on mission	2	3
	Contingent troop	1	
Ethiopia	Experts on mission	73	3 978
	Contingent troop	3 905	
Ghana	Experts on mission	3	5
	Contingent troop	2	
Guinea	Experts on mission	1	1
Guatemala	Experts on mission	2	3
	Contingent troop	1	
Indonesia	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	
India	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	
Kyrgyzstan	Experts on mission	1	1
Mali	Contingent troop	1	1
Malaysia	Experts on mission	1	1
Mongolia	Experts on mission	2	2
Namibia	Experts on mission	3	4
	Contingent troop	1	
Nigeria	Experts on mission	2	5
	Contingent troop	3	
Peru	Contingent troop	2	2
Russian Federation	Experts on mission	1	1
Rwanda	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	
Tanzania	Experts on mission	1	1

<i>Country</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Total</i>
Ukraine	Experts on mission	4	
	Contingent troop	2	6
Yemen	Experts on mission	3	
	Contingent troop	2	5
Zambia	Experts on mission	1	
	Contingent troop	1	2
Zimbabwe	Contingent troop	1	1
Total		4 046	4 046
