



Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 21 of Security Council resolution [2104 \(2013\)](#), in which the Council requested that I should continue to inform it of progress in implementing the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), and to bring to its attention any serious violation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement between the Government 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).

2. The present report provides an update on the situation in Abyei and on the deployment and operations of UNISFA since my previous report of 27 September 2013 ([S/2013/577](#)). In addition, it provides an update on progress made in the implementation of the additional tasks mandated to the Force under Security Council resolutions [2024 \(2011\)](#) and [2104 \(2013\)](#) with regard to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

II. Security situation

3. The security situation in the Abyei Area remained highly unpredictable and tense. Sources of tension included the organization of a unilateral referendum by the Ngok Dinka community, a large influx of people from South Sudan in advance of that referendum and the early commencement of the Misseriya migration southward through the Area.

4. While no serious intercommunal security incidents were observed, there was an incursion into the Abyei Area by unauthorized elements during the reporting period. On 16 October, the Inspector General of the South Sudan National Police Service, Pieng Deng Kuol, visited Agok from Warrap State, South Sudan, along with a convoy of 24 uniformed and armed members of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in six vehicles. He left on the same day by air, while the armed convoy left by road. The Sudan Oil Police also maintained some 120 to 150 personnel inside the Diffra oil complex in violation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement and Security Council resolutions [1990 \(2011\)](#), [2032 \(2011\)](#), [2046 \(2012\)](#), [2047 \(2012\)](#), [2075 \(2012\)](#) and [2104 \(2013\)](#).

5. From 16 September to 30 October 2013, more than 6,000 people travelled to the Abyei Area, using in excess of 100 chartered flights and vehicles from South



Sudan. The rapid influx of people was reportedly organized by members of the Abyei community in Juba. South Sudanese representatives maintained that the new arrivals were all members of the Ngok Dinka community of the Area who were returning to their places of origin. Neither the International Organization for Migration, which registered the arrivals, nor UNISFA were, however, able to ascertain whether that was indeed the case. UNISFA also observed unarmed members of the national armed forces and national police of South Sudan among the returnees.

6. The rapid and disorganized influx of people into the Abyei Area placed a strain on resident communities and posed a considerable challenge for UNISFA in its effort to maintain security.

7. In the lead-up to the unilateral community referendum in the Abyei Area from 27 to 29 October, both the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities staged peaceful demonstrations. The Ngok Dinka community held protests, attended by several thousand people, in Agok on 5 and 8 October and in Abyei town on 26 October. During the latter protest, members of the community issued a petition in which they stated that they would not consider the results of their community referendum to be final if the African Union Peace and Security Council would immediately form an Abyei referendum commission and come up with a realistic time frame and detailed schedule on when the referendum should be conducted, before the end of December 2013. On 25 October, some 250 members of the Misseriya community in Diffra demonstrated in front of the local UNISFA battalion headquarters, submitting a petition in which they rejected the unilateral referendum process. On 28 October, a Khartoum-based youth group composed of both Misseriya and Ngok Dinka members announced its intent to organize a counter-referendum if the unilateral referendum were to proceed. After the Misseriya traditional leadership distanced itself from any such move, that step was not taken.

8. In the meantime, the annual seasonal migration of the Misseriya through the Abyei Area began. On 4 October, UNISFA observed the arrival of an advance party consisting of some 40 Misseriya, including women, children and traders, in Diffra, Mekines and Farouk in the northern Abyei Area, mainly from Southern Kordofan in the Sudan. As at 2 November, more than 7,000 Misseriya, with in excess of 100,000 head of livestock, had entered the Abyei Area. They are currently concentrated in Diffra, Mekines and Farouk, with only a few hundred having reached Baloom. On 11 November, UNISFA observed trenches prepared by members of the Ngok Dinka community at Noong village in the northern Abyei Area. The proximity of this location to the Misseriya migration could make it a potential flashpoint for intercommunal tensions.

III. Political developments

9. The period under review was marked by the unilateral conduct of a referendum by the Ngok Dinka in the Abyei Area. On 18 October, the Ngok Dinka population in the Area held a general conference in Abyei town, issuing a declaration of intent to organize a community referendum. The conference participants called upon the international community, the media and relevant organizations to observe the referendum. Further to that announcement, on 19 October, the community established an Abyei referendum commission comprising Ngok Dinka leaders. From

20 to 26 October, UNISFA observed that the commission was registering Ngok Dinka voters in 11 centres in Abyei town and 4 in Agok. According to the commission, a total of 64,775 people were registered to vote.

10. On 26 October, the African Union Peace and Security Council issued a statement in which it, among other things, urged all stakeholders in Abyei to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from taking any unilateral action likely to complicate the situation. It noted that the Government of the Sudan had not yet accepted the proposal made by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel on 21 September 2012 with regard to the final status of Abyei, calling upon both parties to step up their efforts to come to an agreement thereon.

11. That call from the African Union Peace and Security Council notwithstanding, voting in the unilateral community referendum was conducted in 29 centres in Abyei town and 6 in the Agok area from 27 to 29 October. On 31 October, the Ngok Dinka leadership announced that 99.99 per cent of eligible voters had opted for the Abyei Area to become part of South Sudan and that, from that day forward, the Area would be part of South Sudan. In doing so, they appealed to South Sudan, the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations to recognize the outcome of their referendum.

12. On 28 October, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, condemned the unilateral referendum, noting that it could further complicate efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution to the Abyei dispute. The Government of South Sudan refrained from publicly commenting on the vote, while the Government of the Sudan and the Misseriya community termed the referendum illegitimate and in contravention of the agreements between the two parties. The Sudan Co-Chair of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee stated that the Government of the Sudan did not support any unilateral vote, whether by the Ngok Dinka or by the Misseriya.

13. The visit of a delegation of the African Union Peace and Security Council to the Abyei Area, after several postponements at the suggestion of the Government of the Sudan, was conducted on 5 and 6 November. The members of the delegation met the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya traditional leaders and communities, the Co-Chairs of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (representing the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan) and UNISFA. In a press statement issued at the end of the visit, the members of the delegation reaffirmed the determination of the Peace and Security Council to continue to support the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities in seeking a lasting solution for their peaceful coexistence. With regard to the community referendum, the Peace and Security Council acknowledged the inalienable right of the people of Abyei to self-determination in accordance with the Abyei Protocol to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, but stressed that there was a need for continued efforts by the parties to resolve the final status of Abyei within the context of the proposal of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel of 21 September 2012.

14. The Sudan and South Sudan made no further progress on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement. In the light of the increasing security challenges in the Abyei Area, the UNISFA Head of Mission and Force Commander, Lieutenant-General Yohannes Tesfamariam, continued to impress upon both Governments the urgent need for the meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee to resume. He also requested the Chair of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, Thabo Mbeki, to use his good offices to facilitate their resumption. On 2 October,

the Chair wrote to the President of the Sudan, Omer Hassan A. Al-Bashir, and the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, requesting them to ensure that the Committee would meet immediately to implement the commitments that they had made during their summit meeting of 3 September in Khartoum. He also impressed upon them the need to reach an agreement on the procedures and modalities for disarming the population in Abyei, in accordance with the decisions taken during the meeting of the Committee of 3 May 2013. He appealed to them to issue directives to their respective communities and to ensure that the Abyei Area was free of weapons.

15. On 22 October, the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan met in Juba and agreed to expedite the establishment of the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council and the Abyei Police Service. They reaffirmed that a 2 per cent share of the territory's oil revenue, including arrears, would be paid to the Abyei Area Administration. To date, there has been no progress on the implementation of that decision.

16. The report of the Abyei Area Joint Investigation and Inquiry Committee, tasked by the African Union Peace and Security Council to investigate the circumstances surrounding the killing of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief on 4 May 2013, was submitted to the African Union Commission for review on 1 October. It was, however, inconclusive, given that the parties failed to agree on its content and recommendations. The representatives of the Government of South Sudan refused to sign the final report and provided a separate dissenting opinion on the events of 4 May, while the representatives of the Government of the Sudan signed the report but expressed reservations regarding the recommendations.

IV. Status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism

17. The operationalization of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism continued in accordance with the implementation plan agreed upon between the Sudan and South Sudan through the Joint Political and Security Mechanism in Addis Ababa on 8 March 2013 (see [S/2013/168](#), annex). The deployment of the additional troops authorized by the Security Council in its resolution [2104 \(2013\)](#) for the force protection unit of the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism began during the period under review. On 29 September, UNISFA deployed an advance party of the force protection unit, consisting of 117 troops, to the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism sector headquarters in Kadugli. The Secretariat and the Government of Ethiopia continued their efforts to expedite the deployment of two additional full companies, including through the procurement of necessary equipment for the troops and for the establishment of the entire initial operating capability in Kadugli and Gok Machar. The deployment of the remaining two companies to the sector headquarters in Buram (South Darfur, the Sudan) and Malakal (Upper Nile State, South Sudan) will depend on the progress made in the construction of Verification and Monitoring Mechanism sector headquarters infrastructure in those locations during the current dry season. The full deployment of the force protection unit will enable the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism to conduct ground verification missions and patrols within the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone.

18. Meanwhile, integrated Verification and Monitoring Mechanism teams completed five aerial monitoring missions inside the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone during the reporting period. They were conducted in the El Megines area on 24 October, in the western part of the 14-mile area on 27 October, in the area between Upper Nile and White Nile on 30 October and in the Tishwin area on 5 November. No presence of armed forces was observed in those areas. The South Sudanese monitors disagreed with the report prepared and signed by UNISFA and the Sudanese monitors following the aerial monitoring mission conducted on 3 November in the eastern part of the 14-mile area, during which a military presence was observed. The Verification and Monitoring Mechanism was unable to complete a monitoring mission in the Jau area on 3 October as a result of weather conditions.

19. No specific progress has been made since agreement was reached between the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan in Khartoum on 3 September to establish the centreline of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone in accordance with the determination of the Technical Team of the African Union Border Programme. The dispute over the location of the centreline remained an obstacle to the full operationalization of the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. On 7 September, the President of South Sudan and the Chair of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel discussed the issue and agreed that the Government of South Sudan would send a delegation to the border area to explain to the communities concerned that the establishment of the centreline would not prejudice the demarcation of the border. During their summit meeting in Juba on 22 October, the Presidents of the two countries agreed to expedite the determination of the centreline before mid-November and the opening of border crossings once the centreline had been established.

20. From 24 to 26 September, the Joint Security Committee, co-chaired by the chiefs of military intelligence of the national armed forces of the Sudan and South Sudan, met in Juba and recommended that the Co-Chairs of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism should accelerate the implementation of the proposals of the Technical Team and proceed with the opening of border-crossing corridors within two weeks. Efforts to establish the centreline by the Technical Team had been suspended in August when Southern Sudanese communities located in the disputed border areas, in particular along the Heglig-Bentiu and Kosti-Renk corridors, blocked their work, fearing that it would be tantamount to demarcation of the border.

21. On 13 November, a joint planning workshop of the Technical Team was organized by the African Union Commission in Juba with the participation of the ministers of defence of the Sudan and South Sudan. Following the meeting, both ministers reaffirmed the commitment of their Governments to expediting the determination of the centreline. On 22 November, the Chief of Staff of the South Sudanese national armed forces sent a letter to UNISFA in which he announced a temporary suspension of participation in the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism patrols along the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. He raised concerns over the absence of an agreement between the Sudan and South Sudan on the zero line of the Zone and complained that the patrols had been carried out only on "the territory of the Republic of South Sudan". He further stated that the suspension was temporary, until the Joint Political and Security Mechanism met and agreed upon the exact location of the zero line.

22. No date has yet been set for the next meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism. The most recent meeting, scheduled to be held in Juba on 5 June, was cancelled owing to disagreements over the implementation of the oil and security agreements.

23. The United Nations Mine Action Service continued its activities in support of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. It conducted training for Mechanism monitors from the Sudan and South Sudan on procedures for conducting patrols with mine action teams in mine-protected vehicles, to raise awareness with regard to weapons and on personal security. Training was also provided to Mine Action Service patrol support teams in the Kadugli and Gok Machar headquarters to maintain their mine action skills. National staff from the Sudan and South Sudan will participate in the UNISFA mine action programme for 2013-2014. Their deployment is under way, with 24 South Sudanese staff already recruited.

V. Humanitarian situation

24. During the reporting period, the World Food Programme continued to provide monthly rations to some 81,000 beneficiaries, in addition to food assistance to more than 7,000 people who arrived in Abyei to participate in the unilateral community referendum. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations completed the distribution of seeds and tools to more than 4,000 farm families to support cultivation during the rainy season.

25. United Nations agencies, coordinated by the International Organization for Migration, provided non-food items, including plastic sheeting, blankets and mosquito nets, to an estimated 19,000 people. Agencies also provided significant non-food assistance to people who travelled to Abyei to participate in the unilateral community referendum.

26. The health and nutrition situation remained precarious. Mobile health clinics in Abyei town, which were suspended early in 2013 owing to security concerns, have restarted. Nonetheless, the lack of health facilities throughout the Abyei Area continues to limit the level of health monitoring, leaving populations exposed to possible outbreaks of diseases.

VI. Protection of civilians

27. No intercommunal conflict was reported during the period under review, primarily owing to the lack of interaction between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities during the rainy season. Nonetheless, in anticipation of the heightened risks associated with the new migration season and the increased presence of the Ngok Dinka in central Abyei, UNISFA modified its multifaceted conflict prevention and mitigation strategy in accordance with the new dry season deployment plan. The plan is based on UNISFA acting as a buffer between the local communities in the central part of the Abyei Area, maintaining credible deterrence and employing highly mobile patrols, checkpoints and temporary operating bases.

28. As was the case during the previous two migration seasons, the UNISFA conflict prevention and mitigation strategy also included monitoring, early warning assessments, day-and-night patrols and constant interaction with the Ngok Dinka

and Misseriya communities and the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan. In the absence of any institutions of local government in the Abyei Area, the UNISFA Head of Mission and Force Commander continued to engage with both Co-Chairs of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and other officials to ensure that their respective communities did not bring weapons into the Abyei Area. On 22 and 30 October, UNISFA representatives met Misseriya leaders in Diffra to discuss the conduct of the migration, including its pace and routes, and emphasized that the Force would not tolerate the carrying of weapons inside the Abyei Area.

29. There have been no new developments with regard to the operationalization of human rights monitoring in the Abyei Area, as provided for in paragraph 18 of Security Council resolution [2104 \(2013\)](#).

VII. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

30. As at 15 November, the military component of UNISFA stood at 4,061 of its authorized troop strength of 5,326, as set out in annex I to the present report. The remaining personnel are earmarked for the aviation unit and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism force protection unit, or for service as military observers and staff officers. The current troop deployment is predicated on the fast-approaching dry season and the onset of the full-scale Misseriya migration through the Abyei Area (see annex II to the present report). The Force has retained its three-sector structure in order to provide sufficient deterrence capacity and facilitate humanitarian access. From 29 September to 21 October, a total of 1,617 military personnel were repatriated and replaced with 1,627 incoming troops. The process of rotation of additional troops began on 6 November 2013.

31. A total of 15 of the 50 authorized police personnel remained deployed in UNISFA. The shortfall is attributable to the lack of progress in the establishment of the Abyei Police Service. The police component continued to provide support and advice to the UNISFA Head of Mission and Force Commander and the military component on public order management, crime analysis and community security issues within the Abyei Area. On 1 November, it provided training on riot control and convoy escorting to the Force's military component in Dokura, central Abyei. The police component also promoted local community security initiatives through unarmed and voluntary neighbourhood watch mechanisms and conducted community-based interactive patrols to monitor issues relating to public order and to serve as a conduit between UNISFA, humanitarian agencies and the local communities.

VIII. Mission support

32. With the onset of the dry season, UNISFA began the repairs and maintenance of supply routes between nine sites (Farouk, Diffra, Todach, Dokura, Abyei, Abyei highway, Banton, Athony and Agok), in addition to dry season deployment sites (Noong, Dongoup, Tajalei and Marial Achak). Other logistical tasks include the expansion of the team site in some of those locations to relocate one of the multi-role logistics military companies and the expansion of the site on which the

UNISFA headquarters is located to allow the relocation of the helicopter apron within the camp.

33. In the Abyei Area, delays in the delivery by vendors of construction materials, including for the drilling of eight water wells and long-term earthworks and road repairs, persisted owing to security concerns. Those concerns intensified following the incidents on 4 and 5 May in the Abyei Area that involved the killing of the Paramount Chief of the Ngok Dinka and a UNISFA peacekeeper. The new rations contractor was unable to meet the deadline for the construction of food storage facilities in the Abyei Area, but UNISFA delivered rations by air.

34. Along the border area, the continuing hostilities between the Sudanese national armed forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/North continued to affect the activities of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. As a result of the overall instability in the area, the movement of troop rations and fuel from El Obeid (Northern Kordofan, the Sudan) to Kadugli and the Abyei Area remained unpredictable. The fighting between armed rebel groups and the Sudanese national armed forces along the main supply routes to Kadugli resulted in serious shortages in supplies for the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. UNISFA continued its efforts to establish the full operating capability of the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism in Kadugli. The advance party of the force protection unit was accommodated on arrival on 29 September in renovated, prefabricated structures. Construction and renovation work in Kadugli and the expansion of the camp in Gok Machar and site preparation are in progress.

35. During the reporting period, the Government of the Sudan issued 63 visas to UNISFA personnel (14 international civilian staff, 18 military officers, 10 police personnel and 21 international contractors).

IX. Observations

36. The situation in the Abyei Area is becoming increasingly volatile. The unilateral referendum organized by the Ngok Dinka community served only to heighten tensions between the local communities and has the potential to seriously undermine the modest progress made by the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan in resolving the Abyei issue. The security situation was further complicated by the onset of the dry season and the Misseriya migration, in addition to the large and disorganized influx of people from South Sudan.

37. I commend the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan for their stated commitment to expediting the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, as expressed during their summit meeting held in Juba on 22 October 2013. Local communities have, however, demonstrated a growing propensity to take matters into their own hands because of the continued failure of the Governments to take any specific steps towards the implementation of the Agreement and the resolution of the final status of the Abyei Area. This risks further complicating the situation.

38. In the absence of any governance institutions in Abyei, UNISFA is doing all that it can to ensure that communities do not bring weapons into the Abyei Area and that the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee reassume its responsibility for the provision of political and administrative oversight in the area on behalf of the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan. UNISFA, however, cannot, without the

support of the parties, control all movements from all directions into the Area, nor can it guarantee that it remains a weapons-free zone. A political solution to the final status of Abyei needs to be found urgently and should be based on the proposal of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel of 21 September 2012.

39. It is critical that the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan immediately resume their discussions, agree upon the final status of the Abyei Area under the auspices of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, move forward with the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, including the establishment of the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council and the Abyei Police Service, and ensure the resumption of meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee. I also urge the two Governments to support the efforts of UNISFA to protect civilians and maintain security in the Area by issuing the directives necessary to ensure that it remains free of weapons, in accordance with the decisions of the Committee taken at its extraordinary meeting held in Abyei town on 3 May 2013.

40. I am encouraged by the relative stability on the border between the two countries. I am also encouraged by the parties' continued commitment to implementing the security arrangements and using agreed-upon mechanisms to resolve any outstanding disputes. The expedient deployment of the force protection unit, enabling the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism to conduct ground patrols, will serve as an additional confidence-building measure in this regard. Nonetheless, the full operationalization of the Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the establishment of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone require the two Governments to make tangible progress towards resolving the dispute over the centreline of the Zone. As I noted in my previous report, the determination of the centreline will not ultimately define the border between the two countries. I urge the parties to move forward with both processes by implementing the terms of the African Union Border Programme proposal and establishing a joint border commission.

41. Lastly, I should like to commend my Special Envoy, Haile Menkerios, and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel led by Thabo Mbeki for their sustained efforts to assist the Sudan and South Sudan in resolving the outstanding issues between them, including those relating to Abyei. I should also like to express my gratitude to the UNISFA Head of Mission and Force Commander, Lieutenant-General Yohannes Tesfamariam, and his staff for their continued efforts to enhance peace and stability in the Abyei Area and to support the parties in the implementation of their security agreements.

Annex I

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

<i>Country</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Total</i>
Benin	Experts on mission	2	3
	Contingent troop	1	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Experts on mission	3	4
	Contingent troop	1	
Brazil	Experts on mission	3	4
	Contingent troop	1	
Burkina Faso	Experts on mission	1	1
Burundi	Experts on mission	1	1
Cambodia	Experts on mission	2	2
Ecuador	Experts on mission	1	2
	Contingent troop	1	
Ethiopia	Experts on mission	64	3 984
	Contingent troop	3 920	
Ghana	Experts on mission	3	5
	Contingent troop	2	
Guatemala	Experts on mission	1	1
India	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	
Kyrgyzstan	Experts on mission	1	1
Malawi	Contingent troop	1	1
Mongolia	Experts on mission	2	2
Mozambique	Experts on mission	1	1
Namibia	Experts on mission	3	4
	Contingent troop	1	
Nepal	Experts on mission	3	5
	Contingent troop	2	
Nigeria	Contingent troop	2	2
Paraguay	Experts on mission	3	4
	Contingent troop	1	
Peru	Experts on mission	2	3
	Contingent troop	1	
Philippines	Contingent troop	1	1
Rwanda	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	

<i>Country</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sierra Leone	Experts on mission	3	3
Sri Lanka	Experts on mission	5	6
	Contingent troop	1	
Ukraine	Experts on mission	2	2
United Republic of Tanzania	Contingent troop	1	1
Uruguay	Contingent troop	1	1
Yemen	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	
Zambia	Experts on mission	1	2
	Contingent troop	1	
Zimbabwe	Experts on mission	2	2
Total		4 060	4 060

