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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 27 of Security Council resolution 2205 (2015), in which the Council requested me to continue to inform it of progress in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and to bring to its immediate attention any serious violation of the 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, of 20 June 2011 (S/2011/384, annex). It provides an update on the situation in Abyei and on the deployment and operations of UNISFA since the issuance of my previous report, of 29 April 2015 (S/2015/302), as well as on progress made in the implementation of the additional tasks mandated to UNISFA under Council resolution 2024 (2011) relating to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

### II. Security situation

2. The security situation in the Abyei Area remained relatively calm but unpredictable during the reporting period. The Government of the Sudan continued to maintain between 120 and 150 oil police personnel inside the Diffra oil complex in northern Abyei, in violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and multiple Security Council resolutions. In addition, the presence of small numbers of armed personnel of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was observed in parts of southern Abyei, in contravention of the same Agreement and Council resolutions. Several incidents relating to the presence of unauthorized armed elements in the Abyei Area, as well as armed members of the Ngok Dinka community in civilian clothes in the vicinity of Abyei town, were reported.

3. On 7 May, UNISFA was informed about an attack on nine Misseriya traders in Shegeg that had left six dead, one wounded and a truck destroyed. According to the survivors, they were travelling to Mayom in Unity State, South Sudan, when they were stopped by between 10 and 15 unidentified militiamen who forced them out of the truck and fired at them. The six bodies were found 50 to 100 m from the main road. The injured person and the two survivors were given first aid by UNISFA and taken to hospital in Diffra for further treatment. UNISFA did not succeed in locating the perpetrators. Investigations into the incident are continuing and UNISFA patrols are monitoring the security situation.



4. On 13 May, in Sink, a Misseriya herdsman who had been shot in the abdomen was given first aid by UNISFA and taken to hospital in Diffra for further treatment. UNISFA troops deployed to the area could not locate the perpetrator. While returning to base, UNISFA arrested an armed Misseriya individual, who was disarmed and subsequently handed over to community leaders. On the same day, UNISFA investigated a report that a villager had been killed and 35 cattle rustled in Awang Thou in the southern sector. On the way to the scene, the UNISFA patrol was stopped by individuals who claimed that the area was part of South Sudan. UNISFA observed 10 armed SPLA soldiers behind the villagers. Awang Thou is located south of the Abyei Area, close to the border with South Sudan. On seeing the UNISFA troops, the SPLA soldiers ran towards South Sudan. On 18 May, UNISFA investigated reports that some 30 armed SPLA soldiers were present in Mijak and Mabok in the southern sector, but found no soldiers.

5. On 20 May, two young Ngok Dinka men were killed by four unknown assailants in Dar, 10 km west of Athony. UNISFA troops were unable to locate the perpetrators. UNISFA has launched an investigation.

6. On 26 May, UNISFA investigated an attack by two armed men on a truck carrying rations from Abyei to the UNISFA base in Diffra. Owing to the increasing number of criminal incidents, UNISFA issued a security advisory stating that all movements north of Dokura must be escorted by force protection troops. On the same day, UNISFA was informed by a local resident of the presence of armed Misseriya on motorcycles in Soheib and Makir. UNISFA recovered five motorcycles hidden in a bush, which were sent to the Dokura company operating base. In that regard, there have been frequent reports of movement of armed criminal elements within the Abyei Area on motorcycles and, recently, motorcycles have been used in the rustling of cattle and other offences.

7. On 27 May, UNISFA was informed by a local resident of the theft of an unspecified number of goats belonging to the Ngok Dinka community in Oach by unidentified armed persons. UNISFA sent patrols to locate the goats and the perpetrators, but found the report to be false. On the way back, however, UNISFA observed a group of armed SPLA soldiers in the general area of Arik. Upon seeing the patrol, the soldiers fled into the bush. UNISFA is closely monitoring the activities of SPLA soldiers, mainly in the southern sector where their presence continues to be observed, notwithstanding the assurances from South Sudanese officials that all SPLA soldiers have vacated the Area.

8. With the onset of the rainy season, Misseriya nomads began their seasonal migration northward within the Abyei Area. The total Misseriya population in the Abyei Area is estimated at 11,000. As at 31 May, some 6,800 Misseriya and their cattle had left to the northern part of Abyei. Some 4,620 migrants from the Mizaqina tribe were reportedly seen moving to Farouk from the areas of Um Khariet, Goli, Wathgog and Dukra. Some 1,860 members of the Awlad Kamil tribe were observed migrating from Noong, Alal and Shigei to Tadama and some 320 Awlad Umran migrants moved to Dabib from Dumboloya and Shegeg. Some 4,200 Misseriya remain in various parts of the Area, however. There was no increase in the number of returns of internally displaced Ngok Dinka during the period.

9. To minimize the risks of intercommunal violence during the migration season, UNISFA continued to implement its multifaceted conflict prevention and mitigation strategy. It consists of the establishment of a disengagement area between the two

communities supported by constant monitoring and early warning assessments in relation to their locations and movements, the deployment of troops to potential flashpoints, robust day and night deterrence patrols, aerial monitoring, deployments specific to the rainy season and frequent engagement with local communities and the authorities in the Sudan and South Sudan to address differences and remind them of their responsibilities.

10. During the reporting period, UNISFA facilitated 31 joint security committee meetings in the various sectors to discuss and update members of both communities on security-related matters. Similarly, UNISFA carried out 7,759 day, night and special patrols in the Abyei Area.

11. UNISFA police personnel continued to provide advice and support to the UNISFA Head of Mission, the Force Commander and the military component on issues relating to law and order and the protection of civilians. In addition, United Nations police officers conducted seven induction training sessions in which some 62 UNISFA uniformed and civilian personnel were briefed on gender-related matters, including gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence prevention policies. With regard to UNISFA efforts to support and strengthen community protection committees, 150 Ngok Dinka in Agok and 15 in Abyei town have applied to become committee members. The vetting of the applicants began on 1 May in Agok by cross-checking the backgrounds of the candidates and verifying whether they had previously belonged to the military or committed criminal offences.

12. The process of establishing community protection committees within Misseriya communities in Diffra is also under way and will be supported by the United Nations police team site at the UNISFA base in Diffra, which became operational in April. UNISFA police officers have already received a list of 50 Misseriya young people who have volunteered and been selected by community leaders to represent the committee in the Diffra area. The vetting process is about to begin.

13. UNISFA police officers, in close coordination with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, have drafted a manual on supporting the community protection committees. It will provide a comprehensive policy framework for UNISFA operations in assisting the committees on law and order processes and to strengthen the capacities of existing unarmed committees through the training, mentoring, monitoring, advising and co-location of committee members.

14. During the reporting period, the United Nations Mine Action Service continued to clear and verify routes and survey and dispose of explosive hazards throughout the Abyei Area, facilitating freedom of movement for United Nations personnel, humanitarian actors and local communities. Teams continued to collect information on the presence of explosive hazards by conducting non-technical surveys in 37 villages, resulting in the removal of 650 items of abandoned explosive ordnance. Teams also delivered mine risk education to some 7,280 community members, raising their awareness of the dangers posed by explosive remnants of war.

15. In support of the expanded mandate of UNISFA on weapon confiscation and destruction, the Service procured storage containers and shears for cutting weapons and developed standard operating procedures for weapons storage and destruction. The construction of the small arms and light weapons site is continuing and the destruction of confiscated weapons has not yet begun. In addition, the Service continued to coordinate with the UNISFA demining platoon to ensure its conformity

with international mine action standards, enabling the platoon to assist the Force in delivering its mandate more effectively.

### **III. Political developments and intercommunal dialogue**

16. At its ninth meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 29 and 30 March, the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee had agreed to convene a meeting of traditional leaders during the last week of April. The meeting has since been rescheduled for 20 to 23 June. UNISFA will actively support this initiative, which affords an important opportunity to help to reconcile the two communities. Both the South Sudanese and Sudanese members of the Committee concur that the participants in the meeting should address substantive issues, such as the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief in May 2013. The meeting is expected to be followed shortly thereafter by the tenth meeting of the Committee.

17. In the meantime, UNISFA has continued to engage with the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities inside the Abyei Area. During the reporting period, UNISFA troops were involved in intracommunity dialogue initiatives in the northern, southern and central parts of Abyei, in keeping with the mandate of maintaining peace and security in the Area. The intracommunal dialogue is being reinforced by the civilian Head of Mission and newly recruited civilian community liaison officers.

### **IV. Status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism**

18. During the reporting period, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism continued to carry out its mandate of aerial verification and monitoring. The aerial verification and monitoring plan for May 2015 was cleared and signed by the two sides for implementation. Of the six planned aerial monitoring missions, however, one was cancelled due to unavailability of aircraft and two due to the refusal of the local SPLA brigade commander to provide landing clearances.

19. The Mechanism headquarters and the sector headquarters in Kadugli, Sudan, and Gok Machar, South Sudan, are fully operational and ready to accommodate two additional force protection companies, which are currently being deployed. On 8 June, the first 71 troops arrived in Kadugli to begin induction training. Their deployment and the establishment of the team sites in each sector will see the finalization of the initial operating capacity phase of the Mechanism and will allow the Mechanism to undertake envisaged ground patrols. The establishment of two additional sector sites in Malakal and Buram, with two additional force protection units, has been suspended pending the conclusions of the Mechanism operations assessment conducted from 17 to 29 May.

20. In that regard, an assessment team from UNISFA, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support conducted a detailed assessment of the Mechanism's operations, with the purpose of determining whether the Mechanism was meeting the objectives laid out in the Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan on Border Security and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism of 29 June 2011 and the Agreement on Security Arrangements of 27 September 2012. As part of its

assessment, the team was received by officials of the Government of the Sudan in Khartoum, but its request to meet officials of the Government of South Sudan in Juba was declined. Field visits were conducted to the Mechanism's temporary headquarters in Kadugli, the UNISFA headquarters in Abyei and the Mechanism's sector headquarters in Gok Machar.

21. Political impediments represent the most important challenge to the Mechanism's operations. The Mechanism was first agreed upon in June 2011 as a confidence-building mechanism on border security management between the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan, but its operationalization did not initially receive the requisite attention from the parties. To avoid a resumption and escalation of hostilities following the confrontation of April 2012 in Heglig, the deployment of the Mechanism and the establishment of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone became of the utmost importance. Between May and September 2012, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel expended considerable effort to find an agreement on the delineation of the Zone. In the meantime, the United Nations focused its efforts on working with the parties to make the Mechanism operational.

22. Following the signature of the memorandum of understanding on non-aggression and cooperation on 10 February 2012 and the confrontation at Heglig, the Government of South Sudan began to express concern over the zero line of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. Its overriding concern was that the proposed line would eventually be adopted as the actual border between the Sudan and South Sudan. The signature of the cooperation agreements of 27 September 2012 notwithstanding, disagreements continued on the definition of the Zone and on the demarcation of the border itself, including the disputed areas and the tabling of contested areas. As fighting intensified between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and with the beginning of the conflict in South Sudan, accusations of support and harbouring of each other's rebel groups were made afresh. Continuous disputes over the Zone centreline undermined the Mechanism's ability to become fully operational. Although both parties have nominally agreed on the coordinates of the centreline, and notwithstanding the call of the Security Council in resolution 2046 (2012) for the parties to implement the agreed border arrangements in accordance with the administrative and security map presented to them by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in November 2011, there has been no tangible progress on the issue since the agreement on the implementation matrix in March 2013. Concurrently, there has been no forward movement in demarcating the 80 per cent of the border that was agreed upon in 2010, nor on the finalization of the non-binding opinion by the African Union technical experts in March 2013. The experts continue to await the submission of documents by the two sides.

23. In addition, the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, established by the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan as a part of the Agreement of 29 June 2011 to resolve political and security issues, has not met since May 2013, even though the parties agreed in April 2013 that ordinary meetings would be convened every 45 days. In January and March 2015, the two Governments requested the Panel to convene an extraordinary session of the Mechanism, raising concerns that their divergent views were impeding their ability to reconvene. Once again, they both expressed concern over alleged support and harbouring of each other's rebel groups. The African Union High-level Implementation Panel is currently engaged in discussions with the two sides to convene the next extraordinary session.

24. In 2013, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism conducted four reconnaissance patrols to identify border crossing markings in three locations. No conclusive results were obtained, owing to a lack of participation on the part of the South Sudanese authorities. Following an alleged sighting of SPLA forces by the Mechanism within the 14-mile area on 4 November 2013, the Government of South Sudan claimed that the position in question was actually outside the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and suspended its participation in the Mechanism, resuming only in May 2014. The Government has since routinely denied flight clearances for verification missions over the 14-mile area, where rebels from the Justice and Equality Movement also reportedly cross the border regularly.

25. Since 23 March 2013, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism has conducted only 47 of 111 planned aerial monitoring patrols, with most of the cancellations related to delayed approval or non-approval by the South Sudanese authorities of aerial patrol plans and flight clearances. The parties' decision that the Mechanism's patrol plans should be approved by their capitals one month in advance also undercuts the chances of verification missions based on real-time information and reports of violations.

26. On the ground, the Mechanism is reaching initial operating capability. Two Ethiopian force protection companies are currently being deployed to provide the force protection required for ground monitoring and verification patrols envisaged under the initial operating capability; the patrols are likely to begin on a limited scale by the end of June. The United Nations Mine Action Service also continues to support the Mechanism, with the patrol support teams fully accredited and ready to deploy. To date, the United Nations has spent \$26.3 million on the development of infrastructure and in support of the Mechanism. Such investment cannot continue if the parties do not themselves invest in the success of the Mechanism.

27. The assessment team reviewed the Mechanism's concept of operations and support concept. The findings could not be discussed with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan before the publication of the present report and will be presented in my next report.

## **V. Humanitarian situation**

28. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations continued to provide humanitarian and recovery assistance to some 81,000 internally displaced persons and returnees in southern areas of Abyei, in addition to 6,810 people displaced from Unity State in South Sudan. Food rations have been cut by half since March owing to a lack of funding, with the exception of the more recent arrivals from Unity State, who continue to receive full rations. Owing to restrictions of access imposed by the Government of the Sudan, more limited support is being provided to some 15,000 vulnerable people in northern areas. Concurrently, planning for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need during the upcoming rainy season is in progress. Around 80 per cent of the food rations that will be required during the rainy season have been pre-positioned in warehouses.

29. Efforts to support livelihoods continued alongside the provision of food aid in the southern Abyei Area. Key activities include vocational training and the provision of agricultural and fishing inputs and equipment. In the health and

nutrition sectors, 17 health facilities, including two hospitals, continued to provide basic health and nutrition support services. Following a recent humanitarian and recovery needs assessment, the provision of health services was extended to two clinics in the northern Abyei Area. The lack of government health staff remained a key challenge. It is expected that the rainy season will lead to an upsurge in cases of malaria and waterborne diseases, in particular in the southern Abyei Area.

30. Educational support included the provision of basic teaching and learning materials, recreational kits and the rehabilitation of classrooms. Furniture, uniforms and supplies are being sent to schools in the northern Abyei Area. As in the health sector, a key challenge has been the shortage of government staff in the central and southern areas of Abyei, especially with regard to teachers fluent in English.

31. In the south of Abyei, 205 shelters for the most vulnerable people are being constructed. Locally sourced materials were provided to support the construction of houses that had been destroyed following the attack of 2 March on Marial Achak. Furthermore, 26 hand pumps were rehabilitated and the installation of 22 new pumps is continuing, bringing the total number in the area to 249. Forty-two water yards were built or rehabilitated in all parts of the Area. To meet the safe water needs of the two communities, water yards in some areas were supplemented by the construction of water points. Two water yards were rehabilitated in the north of the Area and are at the disposal of seasonal nomads to prevent intercommunal conflict. There remains an urgent need to scale up sanitation and latrine use. While efforts continue to promote safe hygiene and sanitation practices, funding shortfalls, a lack of implementation capacity and restrictions by the Government of the Sudan on the delivery of construction materials are complicating efforts to increase assistance in that regard.

32. Activities to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable from violence, exploitation and other abuses continued throughout the Area. Thirty-six child-friendly spaces, 22 community-based child protection networks, 26 community protection networks and a community policing mechanism were maintained. The civilians displaced from Marial Achak on 2 March have begun to return to the village and the four abducted children reunited with their families have received regular support.

## **VI. Personnel deployment and mission support**

33. During the reporting period, the UNISFA military component stood at 4,064 personnel (119 military observers, 101 staff officers and 3,844 troops), of an authorized strength of 5,326. The strength of the UNISFA police component stood at 28 police officers (21 men and 7 women) from six police-contributing countries, of an authorized strength of 50. UNISFA plans to increase the number of deployed police officers to 35, including two corrections officers. In view, however, of the failure by the parties to establish the Abyei Police Service, which UNISFA is mandated to advise and train, the remaining authorized officers will not deploy. The total number of civilian staff stands at 219.

34. In support of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, UNISFA continued with the extension of the camp and earthwork construction in relation to hard-wall accommodation and infrastructure in Gok Machar. The construction of the road from Gok Machar to the UNISFA camp is in progress. The construction of a helipad in Gok Machar was finalized and is currently awaiting

commissioning. The fuel tank and associated fuel services distribution point in the Gok Machar camp is almost complete.

35. In the Area, UNISFA finished the construction of the required facilities and the deployment of troops in Agany Toak. Dry season deployment camps in Um Khariet, Alal, Noong, Dungop, Agany Toak and Marial Achak were made operational.

36. The construction of office space and living accommodation for the deployment of United Nations police officers in Diffra was completed, with officers deployed to the team site on 25 April. Offices and living accommodation for United Nations police officers deployed in Banton are being constructed. Meanwhile, the completion of the airport at Athony was suspended owing to a lack of suitable soil to finish the runway and a demand by the Government of the Sudan to halt work, claiming that it had never provided clearance for construction.

## **VII. Financial aspects**

37. The General Assembly, by its resolution 68/258 B, appropriated the amount of \$318.9 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. As at 2 June 2015, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNISFA amounted to \$56.6 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to \$1,958.8 million. Reimbursement to the contributing Government for troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the period up to 28 February 2015 and 31 December 2014, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

## **VIII. Observations and recommendations**

38. Although the security situation in the Abyei Area remained relatively calm during the reporting period, events occurring outside the Area continued to have an impact on its peace and stability. The continuing conflicts in South Sudan, Southern Kordofan and Darfur have the potential to spill over, given that military or civilian groups may seek refuge in the Area. UNISFA has to date been able to maintain calm, but a large influx of internally displaced persons or armed groups would affect its efforts to maintain peace and stability.

39. I wish to thank the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan for ensuring that the Co-Chairs of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee met in March 2015. This is a positive development. I call upon both Governments to support the convening of the meeting of traditional leaders, which was originally scheduled to be held in April. That meeting will determine the conditions necessary for consolidating stability in the Area. The various meetings held by the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya communities over the past months have demonstrated the desire of the two communities to re-establish good relations and live side by side in peace. In that regard, it is my sincere hope that the issue of the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief in May 2013 will be settled amicably through the traditional leaders conference. The delays in the establishment of the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council and the Abyei Police Service negatively affect the provision of essential services to the population. I appeal to the two

countries to address those issues during the next meeting of the Committee and to commit themselves to making demonstrable progress in that context.

40. The continued presence of armed Sudanese police officers at the Diffra oil field constitutes a violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and Security Council resolutions. I again urge the Government of the Sudan to work with UNISFA in conducting a joint security assessment of the security requirements for the complex and the development of proposals that would allow for the withdrawal of Sudanese police units while ensuring the security of those installations, consistent with the Agreement.

41. The recurrent entry of armed SPLA elements to Abyei is a worrying trend that endangers the stability of the Area. I urge the Government of South Sudan to ensure that its security forces do not enter the Area. UNISFA intends to once again invite both Governments to a high-level security meeting in the coming weeks to address the security environment. I call upon both Governments to commit themselves to participating constructively in the meeting.

42. Regarding the Athony airstrip, which is 95 per cent complete, I request the Government of the Sudan to relinquish its objection to its finalization. The airstrip has seen significant financial investment from the United Nations and will contribute greatly to the operations of UNISFA. Similarly, I call upon the Government to ensure that humanitarian agencies have access to all parts of the Area and to ensure the speedy granting of entry visas to United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel who serve the people of Abyei.

43. With regard to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, I recommend that the continued investment of UNISFA in achieving full operating capability be based on a set of conditions that the parties must meet in order for the Mechanism to achieve its objectives. First, the parties must resolve their dispute over the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. Second, border demarcation discussions should resume, and the documents required for the finalization of the non-binding opinion on the disputed (and then the claimed) areas of the border should be provided by the parties to the African Union technical experts. Third, the parties must initiate regular meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, as agreed in Addis Ababa on 23 April 2013. As the body responsible for providing, among other things, oversight of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, the lack of regular meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism leaves the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism without proper oversight, support and direction. Lastly, the parties must commit themselves to providing full freedom of movement for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. No restrictions can be placed on its aerial or ground patrols, and forces under the control of both Governments must refrain from any hostile action against its personnel and assets. I recommend that the parties make a formal declaration to that effect at the next meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism. A fully functioning Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism will also assist in providing early warning capacity for border incidents that could escalate into international conflict. Should the parties meet those conditions, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism can indeed become an effective tool to increase confidence between the Sudan and South Sudan and help to generate positive momentum on key issues relating to the border area. Effective border security and increased confidence between the Sudan and South Sudan are integral to the internal security and stability

of both countries and will ultimately help to reduce any further suffering of local communities, who bear the brunt of conflict.

44. As the Security Council considers the renewal of the mandate of UNISFA, I am encouraged by the parties' commitment to maintaining a spirit of constructive dialogue with my new Head of Mission. I would therefore request the extension of the mission's mandate for six months in order to maintain the momentum recently created.

45. Lastly, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Head of Mission, Haile Tilahun Gebremariam, and to the Force Commander, Lieutenant General Birhanu Jula Gelalcha, who continue to work towards the establishment of peace and stability in the Abyei Area. I wish to also commend and thank my Special Envoy, Haile Menkerios, the former President of South Africa and Chair of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, Thabo Mbeki, the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia for their support and continued engagement towards the same end.

