



Security Council

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Resolution 2497 (2019)

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 8663rd meeting, on
14 November 2019**

The Security Council,

Reaffirming all previous resolutions and Presidential statements concerning the situation in Abyei and along the border between Sudan and South Sudan and underlining the importance of full compliance with and implementation of these,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Sudan and South Sudan, and to the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and recalling the importance of the principles of good neighbourliness, non-interference and regional cooperation,

Reiterating that the territorial boundaries of States shall not be altered by force, and that any territorial disputes shall be settled exclusively by peaceful means, affirming the priority it attaches to the full and urgent implementation of all outstanding issues from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and *underscoring* that the future status of Abyei shall be resolved by negotiations between the parties in a manner consistent with the CPA and not by the unilateral actions of either party,

Underscoring that continued cooperation between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and Government of the Republic of South Sudan is critical for peace, security and stability and the future relations between them, *encouraging* progress on improving bilateral relations and holding regular meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) and other joint mechanisms, and *calling on* both governments to implement prior agreements,

Commending the continued assistance provided to the parties by the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA),

Acknowledging that over the course of the eight years since establishment of UNISFA the mission has contributed towards the stabilization and demilitarization of the Abyei Area and together with the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) played a stabilizing role along the borders between South Sudan and Sudan, and *taking note* of the need to reconfigure the mission to create the space for a viable political process that would also serve as an exit strategy,



Underlining that over the course of eight years the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan have not made meaningful progress on the political process including failure to establish joint institutions in Abyei,

Expressing concern that the delayed full deployment of UN police to the level authorized by the Council prevents UNISFA from fulfilling its security mandate and holds the potential to create a security vacuum in Abyei, and *further expressing concern* about Sudan and South Sudan's efforts to impede UNISFA from fully executing its mandate, including by withholding visas for police, blocking appointment of a civilian Deputy Head of Mission and denying access to Athony airport, which would ease UNISFA's logistical challenges, reduce transport costs, and enhance safety and security for UNISFA personnel,

Commending the efforts of UNISFA, notwithstanding the impediments referred to in the previous paragraph, in its attempts to carry out its mandate effectively, including by its ongoing facilitation of peaceful migration throughout the Abyei Area, conflict prevention, mediation and deterrence, and *strongly underscoring* the unacceptability of any attack on United Nations personnel, and reiterating that such attacks, which may constitute a war crime, should be swiftly and thoroughly investigated, and that those responsible should be held to account,

Recalling that the Secretary-General's October 2019 Report on the situation in Abyei (S/2019/817) highlights the need for a UNISFA civilian Deputy Head of Mission,

Bearing in mind that people in the Abyei Area continue to rely on humanitarian assistance, recalling that floods in October 2019 displaced approximately 40,000 people, that access for humanitarian organizations to reach people in need remains of crucial importance, and that humanitarian actors continue to provide assistance to 182,000 people in the Abyei Area,

Recalling resolutions 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace, and security and emphasizing that persistent barriers to full implementation of these resolutions will only be dismantled through dedicated commitment to women's empowerment, participation, and human rights, and through concerted leadership, consistent information and action, and support,

Recognizing that the current situation in Abyei and along the border between Sudan and South Sudan continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security,

1. *Decides* to extend until 15 May 2020 the mandate of UNISFA as set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 1990 (2011) and acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, *further decides* to extend until 15 May 2020 the tasks of UNISFA as set out in paragraph 3 of resolution 1990 (2011);

2. *Decides* to extend until 15 May 2020 UNISFA's mandate modification set forth in resolution 2024 (2011) and paragraph 1 of resolution 2075 (2012), which provides for UNISFA's support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), and *further decides* that this shall be the final such extension unless the parties take the specific measures described in paragraph 3;

3. *Determines* that both parties should continue to demonstrate measurable progress on border demarcation, specifically by taking the measures listed below:

- (1) UNISFA and JBVMM Patrols: Maintain standing clearance and achieve full freedom of movement for all air and ground patrols,
- (2) JBVMM Team Sites: Support to establish and operate a fourth team site in Abu Qussa/Wunkur,

- (3) JPSM: Convene two meetings of the Joint Political Security Mechanism (JPSM) that provide clear guidance to JBVMM, and ensure conclusions of meetings are widely disseminated,
- (4) Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ): Immediately withdraw from the SDBZ as both parties committed to do in the 18 March 2019 JPSM, and to provide notification of such withdrawal to UNISFA for UNISFA verification,
- (5) Border Crossing Corridors: Immediately open the remaining border crossing corridors per the resolutions of the 18 March 2019 JPSM, and together with UNISFA verify their functioning and free movement across the border,
- (6) Border Demarcation: Hold two meetings of the Joint Demarcation Committee, develop a detailed work plan and budget for demarcation discussions, including negotiations on the disputed areas within the framework of the signed agreements,
- (7) National Monitors: Maintain deployment of national monitors to participate in JBVMM operational activities;
4. *Maintains* the authorized troop ceiling at 3,550, and *decides* to allow postponement in the withdrawal of 295 troops above the authorized troop ceiling until 15 May 2020;
5. *Maintains* the authorized police ceiling at 640 police personnel, including 148 individual police officers and three formed police units, *requests* the United Nations to take necessary steps to deploy additional police sequentially in order to meet the authorized police ceiling of 640, and *expresses* its intention to reduce the authorized police ceiling as the Abyei Police Service is gradually established and providing effective law enforcement throughout the Abyei area;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian Deputy Head of Mission for UNISFA and add additional civilian staff within existing resources to further facilitate liaison between and engagement with the parties in a manner consistent with the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area of June 2011, including agreement to establish the Abyei Police Service;
7. *Demands* that the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan provide full support to UNISFA in the deployment of UNISFA personnel, including by promptly issuing visas without prejudice of their nationalities, and *expresses* its serious concern that the Government of Sudan has not issued visas promptly to support personnel critical for the mandate of UNISFA, including police;
8. *Urges* that the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan facilitate basing arrangements for UNISFA in the Mission area including Athony airport, and provide necessary flight clearances, and notes that the utilization of Athony airport will reduce UNISFA's transport costs and logistical challenges, facilitate MEDEVAC, official travel and air cargo needs for the Mission, increase humanitarian access, and enhance safety and security for UNISFA personnel, and *further calls upon* all parties to fully adhere to their obligations under the Status of Forces Agreements;
9. *Expresses* disappointment that the parties have obstructed full implementation of UNISFA's mandate and taken few steps to implement the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area and to achieve a political resolution to the status of Abyei, and *requests* the Secretary-General consult with the parties and the African Union related to:

1. Steps Sudan and South Sudan are taking to enable UNISFA to fully execute its mandate,
2. The state of engagement by the African Union and African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on political mediation of the Abyei dispute and Sudan and South Sudan border issues, and provide recommendations on the most appropriate framework, structure or organizational mandate for the region to provide support to the parties that will enable further progress in these areas,
3. Enhancing the role played by the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa to support the African Union and help the parties to establish temporary administrative and security arrangements for Abyei and to achieve a political solution to the status of Abyei;

10. *Urges* continued progress towards the establishment of the Abyei Area interim institutions, in accordance with the Agreement on Temporary Administrative and Security Arrangements for the Abyei Area of June 2011, *takes note* that UNISFA continues to be the only entity providing policing services, *demands* that the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan participate in joint planning toward the establishment of the Abyei Police Service, and *requests* that both parties, including in particular South Sudan, participate in developing a roadmap on the establishment of the Abyei Police Service by May 2020 with support from UNISFA;

11. *Encourages* the African Union, AUHIP, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to continue coordinating efforts to facilitate full implementation of the 2011 agreements, and *further encourages* UNISFA to coordinate with the African Union, AUHIP and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on reconciliation, community sensitization, and political peace processes;

12. *Welcomes* renewed efforts to determine conclusively the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) centreline on the ground, and reiterates that the centreline of the SDBZ in no way prejudices the current or future legal status of the border, ongoing negotiations on the disputed and claimed areas, and demarcation of the borders;

13. *Underscores* that UNISFA's protection of civilians mandate as set out in paragraph 3 of resolution [1990 \(2011\)](#) includes taking the necessary actions to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source of such violence, and in that regard *underlines* that peacekeepers are authorized to use all necessary means, which includes the use of force when required, in order to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, in accordance with mission mandates, the United Nations Charter and other applicable international law, and *stresses* the importance of continued and further engagement by senior mission leadership, with a view to ensuring that all mission components and all levels of the chain of command are properly informed of, trained for, and involved in the mission's protection of civilians mandate and their relevant responsibilities; and commending UNISFA's efforts in that regard;

14. *Condemns* the intermittent presence of South Sudan security service personnel and the deployment of Diffra Oil Police units in the Abyei Area, in violation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, as well as any entry of armed militias into the territory, and *reiterates* its demands that immediately and without preconditions the Government of South Sudan fully redeploy its security service personnel from the Abyei Area and that the Government of Sudan redeploy the Oil Police in Diffra from the Abyei Area, and *further reiterates*, in accordance with relevant resolutions, in particular resolution [1990 \(2011\)](#) and resolution [2046 \(2012\)](#), that the Abyei Area

shall be demilitarized from any forces, as well as armed elements of the local communities, other than UNISFA and the Abyei Police Service;

15. *Urges* the two governments to take all necessary steps to ensure that Abyei is effectively demilitarized, including through disarmament programmes as necessary;

16. *Reaffirms* that UNISFA may undertake weapons confiscation and destruction in the Abyei Area as authorized under resolution 1990 (2011), consistent with its mandate and within its existing capabilities, in coordination with the signatories of the June 2011 Agreement on the Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, the AJOC, and the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities and consistent with the previous AJOC decision to establish the Area as a “weapons free area”, *calls upon* the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, the AJOC, and the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities and all other groups to extend full cooperation to UNISFA in this regard;

17. *Welcomes* UNISFA initiatives to support community dialogue and efforts by the Misseriya, Ngok Dinka, and all other communities, such as local peace committees, to strengthen intercommunal relationships and facilitate stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area, and *invites* UNISFA to coordinate with the Juba-appointed administration in Abyei and the Misseriya administration in Muglad, using appropriate civilian expertise, to maintain stability, foster intercommunal reconciliation, and facilitate the return of displaced persons to their villages and the delivery of services;

18. *Urges* the two Governments immediately to take steps to implement confidence-building measures among the respective communities in the Abyei Area, ensuring the full, effective, and meaningful participation of women, regardless of area of origin, at all stages, including through reconciliation processes at the grass-roots level as well as through ongoing efforts of non-governmental organizations and by fully supporting UNISFA’s efforts in promoting community dialogue;

19. *Expresses* concern that women remain absent from the leadership of local peace committees, *calls upon* all parties to promote the full, effective, and meaningful participation of women, including at all levels of intercommunity dialogue, to ensure a credible, and legitimate process, and *welcomes and encourages* UNISFA’s efforts to integrate women into peace discussions;

20. *Welcomes* UNISFA’s continued efforts, within existing capabilities and resources, and in close coordination with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, to strengthen the capacities of Community Protection Committees in order to assist with management of law and order processes in Abyei, while ensuring the humane and dignified treatment of suspects and other detainees, and to continue engaging with both governments on this issue;

21. *Calls upon* all parties to cooperate fully with the findings and recommendations following the Abyei Area Joint Investigation and Inquiry Committee’s investigation into the killing of a UNISFA peacekeeper and the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief, following the release of findings by the AU Commission, welcomes the 24 March 2015 AUPSC press statement requesting the AU Commission to engage the parties on the findings and recommendations, and looks forward to the release of the African Union Commission’s report on the killing of the Ngok Dinka chief, as agreed to by the traditional leaders, and for the report to be used as a basis for reconciliation between the communities, bearing in mind the need to promote stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area;

22. *Calls upon* all Member States, in particular Sudan and South Sudan, to ensure the free, unhindered and expeditious movement, to and from Abyei and

throughout the SDBZ, of all personnel, as well as equipment, provisions, supplies and other goods, including vehicles, aircraft, and spare parts, which are for the exclusive and official use of UNISFA;

23. *Demands* that all parties involved allow all humanitarian personnel full, safe and unhindered access to civilians in need of assistance and all necessary facilities for their operations, in accordance with international law, including applicable international humanitarian law, and consistent with United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance;

24. *Welcomes* the Abyei UN Joint Programme Initiative supported by the Sudan and South Sudan UN Country Teams, particularly given recent flooding and resulting forced human displacements;

25. *Encourages* the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to continue to facilitate the deployment of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to ensure freedom of movement, as well as the identification and clearance of mines in the Abyei Area and SDBZ;

26. *Strongly urges* that all parties cease all forms of violence, human rights violations and abuses, violations of international humanitarian law, and violations of other international law, as applicable committed against civilians, including women and children, and bring perpetrators of such abuses or violations to justice;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that effective monitoring of violations and abuses of human rights is carried out, including of sexual and gender-based violence and other violations and abuses committed against women and children, and *reiterates* its call upon the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to extend their full cooperation to the Secretary-General to this end, including by issuing visas to the concerned United Nations personnel;

28. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek to increase the number of women in UNISFA in line with resolution 2242, and ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations, to implement a gender mainstreaming plan in line with resolution 1325, and *calls upon* UNISFA to sustain adequate expertise on women and child protection;

29. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken by the Secretary-General to standardise a culture of performance in UN peacekeeping, recalls its requests in resolution [2378 \(2017\)](#) and resolution [2436 \(2018\)](#) that the Secretary-General ensure that performance data related to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations is used to improve mission operations, including decisions such as those regarding deployment, remediation, repatriation and incentives, and *reaffirms* its support for the development of a comprehensive and integrated performance policy framework that identifies clear standards of performance for evaluating all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel working in and supporting peacekeeping operations that facilitates effective and full implementation of mandates, and includes comprehensive and objective methodologies based on clear and well-defined benchmarks to ensure accountability for underperformance and incentives and recognition for outstanding performance, and *calls* on the United Nations to apply this framework to UNISFA as described in resolution [2436 \(2018\)](#);

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to take necessary measures to ensure full compliance of all personnel in UNISFA with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to keep the Council fully informed about the Mission's progress in this regard, and urges troop- and police-contributing countries to take appropriate preventative action including vetting of all personnel, pre-deployment and in-mission awareness training, timely investigations of allegations, as appropriate, and to take appropriate steps to hold perpetrators

accountable and repatriate units when there is credible evidence of widespread or systematic sexual exploitation and abuse by those units;

31. *Notes* the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure close cooperation among United Nations missions in the region, including UNISFA, the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), as well as his Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa;

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32. *Requests* the Secretary-General to inform it of progress in implementing UNISFA's mandate, in a note, no later than 31 January 2020 and report on progress with the increase in police, appointment of a civilian Deputy Head of Mission, planning for the reduction of troops, usage of Athony airport, and the issuance of visas to support implementation of the mandate;

33. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to inform it of progress in implementing UNISFA's mandate, in one written report, no later than 15 April 2020 and include reporting on:

- the state of engagement by the African Union and AUHIP on political mediation of the Abyei dispute and Sudan and South Sudan border issues, and recommendations on the most appropriate framework, structure or organizational mandate for the region to provide support to the parties that will enable further progress in these areas,
- the efforts deployed by the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa to support the African Union and help the parties to establish temporary administrative and security arrangements for Abyei and to achieve a political solution to the status of Abyei,
- progress in implementing any steps taken per paragraph 3,
- progress with the reduction of troops, increase in police, appointment of a civilian Deputy Head of Mission, usage of Athony airport, and the issuance of visas to support implementation of the mandate,
- the opening of Athony airport in line with paragraph 8,
- results of human rights monitoring as requested in paragraph 27, including information, analysis, and data on violations and abuses of human rights,
- steps that have been taken in line with paragraphs 27 and 28,
- a summary of actions taken to improve mission performance and address performance challenges including lapses in leadership, national caveats that negatively affect mandate implementation effectiveness, and demanding operational environments;

34. *Decides* to remain actively seized of this matter.