

# the Beacon

UNISFA Quarterly News Magazine

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Brigadier General  
**Mulu Girmay Gebrehiwot**  
UNISFA New Deputy Force Commander

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## UNISFA welcomes new acting Head of Mission and Force Commander

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) senior leaders and staff welcomed Major General Mehari Zewde Gebremariam on 28 April 2019 at the Force Headquarters in Abyei. Major General Gebremariam has assumed the duties of UNISFA Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, replacing Major General Gebre Adhana Woldezigu who completed his assignment on 22 April 2019.

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Major General Gebremariam has a distinguished military career with the Ethiopian Armed Forces spanning more than 37 years, most recently as Head of Human Resources Main Department of the Ethiopian National Defence Force, responsible for all aspects of management of human resources for the land army and general defence forces. He is also a Council Member of the Ethiopian Ministry of National Defence since 2007. He served as Deputy Commander of the Ethiopian Air Force (2001-2007), West Air Base Commander in the Ethiopian Air Force (1998-2001) and Division Commander (1989-1997), among other appointments within the Ethiopian Armed Forces.

Meanwhile, Brigadier General Mulu Girmay Gebrehiwot took over as the UNISFA Deputy Force Commander also in April this year succeeding Brigadier General Deriba Mekonnen Hateu.



Deputy Force Commander Brigadier General Mulu Girmay Gebrehiwot at the Medal Parade of the 20th Motorized Battalion held in Diffra, 29th of June 2019. He is accompanied with the Battalion Commander and Senior Police Adviser.

## the **Beacon** UNISFA

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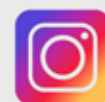
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## Strengthening women's participation in peace and conflict resolution processes in Abyei

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) through its Gender Advisory Team conducted a training on basic gender and human rights concepts, women's rights, and women, peace and security as well as the critical role of women's participation in reconciliation processes and conflict resolution for Misseriya community leaders in Todach and Diffra on 13 and 14 May, respectively.

Twenty-three community leaders (17 women leaders and 6 male traditional leaders including judges) drawn from six localities of the Northern part of Abyei attended the training.

The participants identified the gender and women's rights issues in Abyei, the different community leadership structures as well as the status of women's representation at decision-making levels in the Northern part of Abyei. Challenges to women's participation at decision-making levels were also discussed including the patriarchal nature of the society, high illiteracy rates amongst women, disunity amongst the women, as well as competing priorities for women.

The participants were supported to develop a strategy to address women's issues in Abyei including, promotion of women's rights and participation, protec-

tion of women from Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and local community level strategies to promote women's economic empowerment.

The participants also agreed on a strategy to engage women leaders from the Ngok Dinka (ND) communities including mobilization of women at the grassroots levels, peace letters to the ND communities as well as direct engagement with Abyei administration, among others.

Additionally, a "Traditional Leaders Gender Champion Network" comprising six male traditional leaders was established to support women's peace initiatives and advocate for women's rights in Abyei. The network will be expanded to include other influential male traditional leaders from the Northern part of Abyei. Women leaders also agreed to establish a women leaders' coordination mechanism that will include representatives from 18 identified villages in the Northern part of Abyei.

The training was one of a series of joint trainings planned for women leaders from the Misseriya and ND

communities to promote reconciliation and women's participation in conflict resolution in Abyei. The ND participants were, however, unable to attend the workshop.

The Misseriya leaders encouraged UNISFA to conduct a similar workshop for the ND leaders and continue with efforts towards bringing the women from both communities together to engage in dialogue. They noted that without dialogue between the two communities, realizing peace in Abyei was impossible.

UNISFA will continue its engagement with both communities to promote women's role in reconciliation and conflict resolution and support the Misseriya community to operationalize its strategy.





## Misseriya and Ngok Dinka hold seasonal movement conference in Todach

A three-day conference jointly organized by United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), FAO and IOM was held in Todach 18 kms north of Abyei mission Headquarters. A total of 85 participants from both Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities including 14 women representatives attended the conference.

The objective of the conference was to strengthen peaceful coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflicts between the two communities. UNISFA Force Commander and acting Head of Mission, Major General Gebre Adhana Woldezgu, informed participants that, the United Nations believes in dialogue in resolving disputes, and emphasized on the need for collaboration between the local communities, UNISFA and UN FAPs in achieving sustainable peace and security for Abyei community.

General Woldezgu, who was represented by UNISFA Spokesperson, Mr. Daniel Adekera, stressed on the need for continuous dialogue between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities in the search for peace and security in Abyei, adding that UNISFA and the UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes are in the area to facilitate discussions that would lead to peace and security without which they could be no development.

The conferences deliberated on ways to minimize insecurity during the migration and reversed migration and how to strengthen historical relations and built trust between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities.

Participants resolved that all challenges to peace in Abyei should be resolved in a collaborative way through dialogues, meetings and conferences such as the current one. Consequently, they called on UNISFA, IOM and FAO to conduct capacity building of the Joint Pace Committee members, youth and women and other relevant actors through training on conflict transformation, prevention, early warning system and negotiation.

There were also presentations from UNPOL and United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) on crime prevention in Abyei area and challenges face UNPOL in achieving its mandate and mine awareness respectively. A communique is to be signed by members of the two communities.







## Four kidnapped women rescued by UNISFA

Four Dinka women kidnapped on 22 March while they were out to fetch thatch grass at Tol Mach few kilometers from Abyei town have been rescued by the Ethiopian 21st Battalion. The rescued women were yesterday handed over to the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief at a ceremony at the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) Headquarters in Abyei.

Speaking during the handing over ceremony, UNISFA Force Commander and acting Head of Mission, Major General Gebre Adhana Woldehgu, assured the community of UNISFA's commitment to its protection of civilian mandate and to ensure that Abyei Area is free of arms. General Woldehgu also pledged the Mission's preparedness to pursue its mandated tasks until peace returns to the area, and further advised the people to always provide the mission with timely information to enable them to arrange quick intervention whenever they notice strange movements in their area.

Receiving the released women, the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief, Mr. Bulabek Deng Kuol,

commended UNISFA for its tireless efforts at ensuring peace and security within the Abyei community. Chief Bulabek specially applauded the 21st Battalion for their gallantry in the successful operation which resulted in the rescue of the kidnapped women. He said the proactive deployment as well as the day and night patrols have combined to reduce criminal activities in the area despite the influx of people from all parts of the country and even beyond.

The Deputy Chief Administrator, Kon Manyiet Maticok, commended the efforts of UNISFA, stressing that the people of Abyei highly appreciate the sacrifices of

troops in restoring peace and security in the Abyei area, adding that this is not the first time the troops have intervened to rescue kidnapped persons, retrieve rustled cattle or abort criminal activities.

Deputy Chief Administrator Kon stated that an operation to rescue abducted persons from armed elements is not always an easy task stressing that UNISFA troops must be commended for their bravery in successfully carrying out the operation. He advised UNISFA to exercise more vigilance especially during the Reverse Migration since it is usually accompanied by more criminal activities affecting lives and property.



A total of six women out to fetch grass for domestic use were on 22 March 2019, abducted by armed men. One of the women managed to escape while another, who is pregnant, was released by the kidnappers. The reason for the kidnapping is not very clear, but the abductors asked the released pregnant woman to inform the community that they were keeping the abducted women until the Ngok Dinka returned their rustled cattle.



Protecting Communities, Protecting Peace



# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

29 May 2019

#PK70

#PKDay

#PKDayUNISFA

#ProtectingPeace

#A4P

1948-2019

United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei



# Honouring the UN Peacekeepers

On 29 May 2019, the Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) honoured the more than 5,000 peacekeepers working in Abyei area. Hundreds of soldiers, UN Police as well as civilians serving in Abyei observed the International Day of UN Peacekeepers with a staff march, a contingent parade, as well as the laying of wreaths for the departed peacekeepers.

"UNISFA remains determined and committed to its mandated task of maintaining peace and security in the Abyei Area and to keep the area free of arms despite obvious environmental and political challenges," said Brigadier General Mulu Girmay Gebrehiwot, UNISFA Deputy Force Commander who represented the Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander. "It is in the course of achieving this great task that many of our colleagues have sacrificed their lives. We owe them no better tribute than to continue in the struggle for which they sacrificed their lives until peace is finally restored in Abyei."

Community leaders led by the Abyei Deputy Chief Administrator, the Paramount Chief and the community women representative joined the celebration held at the UNISFA Mission HQ in Abyei. Both Sudan and South Sudan National Monitors joined hands with UNISFA in paying tribute not only to the UN Peacekeepers serving in Abyei, but also to the more than 100,000 brave men and women serving in 14 UN peacekeeping missions in 4 continents.

In Abyei, the peacekeepers gathered in the evening to highlight the importance of unity in a very diverse working environment. Several countries and regions presented musical songs, dance and videos as entertainment to hundreds who were present. The observance of the UN Peacekeepers Day was also held in UNISFA Sectors in Kadugli, Diffra, Athony and Gok Machar.

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**UNISFA remains determined and committed to its mandated task of maintaining peace and security in the Abyei Area and to keep the area free of arms despite obvious environmental and political challenges**

Brigadier General  
Mulu Girmay Gebrehiwot

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**It is in the course of achieving this great task that many of our colleagues have sacrificed their lives. We owe them no better tribute than to continue in the struggle for which they sacrificed their lives until peace is finally restored in Abyei**

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Brigadier General  
Mulu Girmay Gebrehiwot





# International day of UN Peacekeepers





## New JBVMM Chief visits Abyei area

Brigadier Geneneral Gebremikael Beyene who took over as Chief of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) arrived in Abyei on 11 June 2019 to conduct a week-long familiarisation visit.

The JBVMM Chief was received by the Deputy Force Commander and Acting Head of Mission Brigadier General Mulu Girmaye and was also briefed on operational aspects at the UNISFA Force HQ in Abyei.

The JBVMM Chief, accompanied by the Deputy Force Commander, also carried out an orientation visit to all the three sectors including important areas in UNISFA's operation namely Farooq, Diffra, Dukra, Antony, and Banton, where he was briefed by respective Battalion Commanders. He also visited Amiet Market, a socio-economic hub of two main communities in Abyei, the Dinka and the Misseriyas. The visit also included a formal interaction with the members of the National Monitors of Sudan and South Sudan.

The mandate of the JBVMM is to ensure peace and safety in the demilitarized zone along the border between Sudan and South Sudan. He commended the efforts of UNISFA in maintaining peace and stability in the region and also for supporting various developmental projects in support of the local population. Brig Gen Gebremikael Beyene departed for JBVMM HQ at Kadugli on 17 June 2019.



## UNISFA conducts 7th round of SSafe Training

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) held a three-day Security's Safe and Secure Approach to the Field Environment (SSAFE) training between 20 and 22 May 2019 in Abyei with Eighteen (18) participants in attendance.

The objective of SSafe is to raise staff members awareness of prevailing threats in their operational environments and equip them with pertinent knowledge and skills required to prevent and respond appropriately to various security incidents that they might encounter in the field.

UNISFA and UNMAS facilitated the training with the support of national staff from all Mission units. Eight standard modules were covered during the two days of classroom presentations and discussions including on UN Security Management System; History, Background & Cultural Awareness; Personal Security; Fire Safety; Radio Communication (Theory and Practical); Weapons Awareness; Travel, Convoy & Vehicle Security; Hostage Survival; incident management & Basic Life Support.

Participants also undertook practical field exercise featuring security scenarios such as Illegal Checkpoint, ERW/Landmine as well as Carjacking and Abduction. Each of the two groups went through all the security scenarios.

The 7th round of SSafe Training was supported by the different sections of the Mission including Field Technology Service, Transport, Medical, Strategic Communication and Public Information Office, Chief of Mission Support Office, as well Commander of the Central Sector - Ethiopian Battalion 19 and U3 Operations.





## Fostering Synergy and Sharing Best Practices

MINUSCA - UNISFA Field Technology Services Inter-mission cooperation

With the objective of continuous development and as part of its annual strategic planning, United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) Field Technology Services took the initiative to reach out to United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) under the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) / Operations Support Division.

MINUSCA embarks on various pilot

projects which aim to provide technological solutions to both existing and anticipated ICT-related requirements in its mission area. These projects generally involve Unmanned Aerial Systems and MINUSCA Owned Surveillance Cameras, for monitoring and enhancing the security in Bangui.

An FTS Team from UNISFA visited MINUSCA to study and assess the feasibility of adopting the underlying technological principles of the said projects to address the needs of its own mission area.

The visit started with a two-day workshop on Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) held at MINUSCA Log Base, from 14 – 15 January 2019, under the support of the OICT/Operations Support Division in UNHQ. Among the participants were from the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT), UNISFA and Aeronautics Ltd. – the contractors providing UAS services.

### Benchmarking exercises between missions

MINUSCA FTS Chief Osama Matalqa worked with UNISFA ITU Team to share best practices between its units by comparing notes and SOPs of their operations.

UNISFA ITU greatly appreciates the hospitality provided by MINUSCA GITTS Team and has benefited greatly. The solutions and best practices shared by the hosts will be of great help to UNISFA FTS that will support the mission's mandate in promoting peace and strengthening security in UNISFA MHQ, Abyei, Sudan.

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In this day and age, Innovations and Technology is at a convergence. As we strive to improve our services while maximizing resources on ground, we need to be creative with the way we deal with challenges and see this as a collaborative effort within the Organization.

Salim Chehab, FTS Chief

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UNISFA FTS Chief Salim Chehab meeting with the Aeronautics project team on UNISFA's proposed project.



After the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) workshop, near the Skystar Aerostat set-up. (l to r): Sally Courtin, OMA UNHQ; Florence Keter, OICT; Emmanuel Ntanganira, UNISFA UNPOL; Roie Segal and the Aeronautics project team; Osama Matalqa, MINUSCA CFTS; Stefan Lemm, OSD; Salim Chehab, UNISFA CFTS; Rami Eid, MINUSCA Innovations and Technology; MINUSCA Aerostat Tethered Balloon Project Team; and Arvin Fajardo, UNISFA Innovations and Technology





# UNPOL @ work



To achieve its mandate as stipulated in UNSCR 2469 of 14 May 2019, UNISFA UNPOL, in the absence of the Abyei Police Service, has fostered intercommunal dialogues through:

- Engaging community leaders into intra and inter community peace dialogue
- Conducting joint security meeting with the military and community leaders
- Conducting community confidence building interactive patrols
- Collocating with Community Protection Committees [CPCs], advise and mentor them on cardinal policing issues such as arrest, detention, investigation, human rights, gender mainstreaming, among others
- Undertaking CPCs capacity building workshops
- Conducting awareness campaigns

Over the last three months, UNPOL conducted several activities in all the sectors such as fire campaigns, road safety cam

paigns, crime awareness and preventive campaigns, trained CPC's on human-rights, rights of detainees, law and order, investigations. They also conducted child awareness campaigns in several schools and a gender workshop and presented on women's rights, peace and security.



To address challenges faced in missions and promote UN best practices, Police Commissioners and top officials from UNMISS (South Sudan), MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of Congo), UNISFA (Abyei), UNAMID (Darfur), AMISOM and UNSOM (both from Somalia) as well as the UN headquarters and UN Office to the African Union, among others.

The three-day intermission retreat, the second to be held in Rwanda, brings together Police Commissioners and top officials from MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), UNAMID (Darfur), UNMISS (South Sudan), UNISFA (Abyei), AMISOM and UNSOM (both from Somalia) as well as the UN headquarters and UN Office to the African Union, among others.



## UNPOL retreat held in Rwanda

Between 22 and 24 May 2019, Deputy Commissioner General Mary Gahonzire, UNISFA's Senior Police Advisor, together with two UNPOL Officers attended the fourth UN intermission retreat for Heads of Police Component from all peacekeeping missions across Africa. They presented on UNISFA UNPOL mandated tasks and activities, operational environment, challenges, performance evaluation and SPA's strategic review just to mention but a few.





# TCC News in photos

Meiram  
Tomkieu

ABYEI

UN  
UNISFA HQ



Early this year, the Light Field Engineering completed two major road recovery works: the 30-kilometer road recovery work from Banton to Rumameier and Ataya-1 and the six-kilometer road work from the UNISFA camp in Athony to Korecha village.



To ensure peace and security in Abyei area, one of the troops approaches of engagement is helping the community clean the surroundings. A clean environment plays an important role in community's health. Many diseases can be prevented by eliminating environment related risk- factors.

Moreover, cleaning up forests and backyards of dead and decaying matters helps avoid fire. Recently, troops belonging to the 19th, 20th and 21st Battalions in UNISFA's Central, North and South Sectors helped communities put out quickly the grass fire incidents in the area which avoided damaging any properties and lives.



To support the implementation of UNISFA's mandate, the Ethiopian troops engage regularly with communities in Abyei area. In carrying-out their tasks, refresher courses are conducted to improve knowledge and skills, and introduce to new approaches and techniques.

Troops in Athony under Ethiopia's 21st Battalion attended two separate refresher courses on human rights law and crowd management to reduce involvement in any violations of community/individual rights, as well as practice crowd control drills.



Ethiopia is the sole Troop Contributing Country of UNISFA. The Mission has around 4,000 Ethiopian troops in different sectors within the Abyei box supporting the implementation of UNISFA's mandate. In June this year, the regular rotation of troops under the Multi-Role Logistics Unit as well as the Light Field Engineering Unit was carried out successfully with support from various sections of the Mission.





# Mission Newsbits



The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) Chief of Mission Support (CMS) Mr. Robert Kirkwood along with the Mission Support's Heads of Sections visited UNISFA's Kadugli Logistics Base to meet and to look into issues of the log base and its personnel. The CMS also met with the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission's (JBVMM) senior leadership and the National Monitors of Sudan and South Sudan to discuss support issues for JBVMM, including the requirements for the establishment of the new team sites.

A two-day Protection Workshop was held in Diffra from 27 to 28 May 2019 for the youths, women and men from both Ngok Dinka and Misseriya organisations, Joint Peace Committee (JPC) as well as Traditional Courts. Protection is at the heart of UNISFA's mandate, based on the applicable Security Council Resolutions and international laws. The workshop was held in time for the celebration of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers under the theme "protecting civilians, protecting peace."





## Mission News Bits

Due largely to the absence of the mainstream media of mass communication in Abyei Area, UNISFA's Strategic Communications and Public Information (SCPI) has focused much of its communication strategy on community outreach programs and capacity building of battalion Information contact persons who work directly with members of the community. SCPI Section held two separate training sessions for uniformed personnel on how to improve the Mission's visibility and communication with communities in the absence of the conventional media. A total of 51 participants drawn from the TCC, UNPOL, Military Observers and Liaison Officers benefited from the training program.



The United Nations Security Council extended the mandate of United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) by unanimously adopting Resolution 2469 (2019). UNMAS-UNISFA marked the mandate extension by destroying weapons and ammunition confiscated by UNISFA peacekeepers.

UNISFA's senior officers and staff led by Major General Mehari Zewde Gebremariam, UNISFA's Acting Head of Mission/Force Commander, as well as Brigadier General Mulu Girmay Gebrehiwot, Deputy Force Commander, and the National Monitors from both governments of Sudan and South Sudan took part in the destruction of weapons and ammunition.



## Mission News Bits



The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) leadership, as well as civilian and uniformed personnel, commemorated the 25th International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi that took place in Rwanda in UNISFA Mission Headquarters in Abyei.

Between April and May 2019, the Office of the Principal Officer (OPO) of UNISFA carried out civil society mapping of the Ngok Dinka to track and record the number of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), their areas of engagement, achievements and outcome, relations with local institutions, challenges and opportunities. A series of individual and group sessions with CSOs were conducted, as well as missions to Abyei, Agok, and Amiet Market. The mapping activity was fully supported by the CSOs and necessary information were provided to the UNISFA team.

The civil society, including non-governmental and social organizations, has progressively established and broadened their activities. In Abyei, 15 CSOs are reportedly established and are functioning in the area.

The exercise revealed that the Abyei local administration supported and registered only five CSOs including youth and women organizations while others are still under registration processes with the South Sudan law regulation. Youth groups, local elders and community members realize the essential role and engagement of CSOs in representing communities and interacting with state institutions and international stakeholders, to advocate



for communities' needs, as well as influence political and socio-economic development.

Limited access to information, low organizational capacity, lack of co-operation of local administration counterparts, and inadequate understanding of areas of work are important challenges for CSOs. To achieve this, CSOs established relations with local partners as well as authorities. UNISFA will extend strong engagement with CSOs to strengthen their role in coordination and peacebuilding process in Abyei.



# the Beacon

**T**he United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) bid farewell to acting Head of Mission and Force Commander (aHoM/FC) Major General Gebre Adhana Woldezgu and his Deputy, Brigadier General Deriba Mekonnen, who completed their assignments on 23 April 2019.

The UN Secretary-General expressed his gratitude for their tireless dedication, invaluable service and effective leadership of UNISFA. Major General Woldezgu also expressed his gratitude to the UN Secretary-General and his country for giving him the opportunity to offer his service to the people of Abyei.

During a simple farewell gathering, UNISFA's senior officers and staff commended the work he undertook throughout his mission.

UNISFA's former aHoM and FC applauded the commitment, resilience and courage of the officers, service personnel some of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice while protecting the communities of Abyei.

Major-General Woldezgu was succeeded by Major General Mehari Zewde Gebremariam. He enjoined UNISFA staff to give the same support to his successor.



United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei  
Strategic Communications and Public Information Section