

# the Beacon

UNISFA Quarterly News Magazine

3RD QUARTER 2019



 **unite FRIM**  
Field Remote Infrastructure Monitoring  
**PROGRAMME**

story on page 9

**FIRST IN  
UNISFA!**

## UNISFA Force Commander leads tree planting campaign to mark International Day of Peace

| story on page 2



United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei  
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## UNISFA Force Commander leads tree planting campaign to mark International Day of Peace

On the occasion of this year's International Day of Peace UNISFA Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Mehari Zewde Gebremariam, on 23 September 2019 led Mission's leadership and staff members in a tree planting campaign and environmental cleaning exercise to mark the Day.

The exercise was in line with the Secretary-General's clarion call for global climate action and this year's International Day of Peace theme "Climate Change for Peace". The tree planting exercise also flagged off a campaign which we see over 10,000 trees planted at various UNISFA locations.

The tree planting campaign by UNISFA is an excellent example of a concrete action. Newly planted trees are estimated to contribute up to 1/3 of the CO2 reduction necessary to reach the goals of the Paris Climate Accord. In addition, trees also provide shade, decoration and improve the air quality.

In a message read on the Day, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, identified 'climate emergency' as a new danger to collective peace and security and a threat to livelihood and lives. He called for concrete actions, emphasizing "this is a race we can and must win".



Deputy Force Commander  
Brig. General  
Mulu Girmay  
Gebrehiwot



Chief of  
Mission Support  
Robert  
Kirkwood



Chief of  
Staff  
Alexander  
Rose



Deputy  
UN Police  
Commissioner  
Mary  
Gahonzire

### Table of Contents

**Force Commander leads tree planting | p2**

**UNISFA Conducts Fair Trial Workshop | p3**

**Helping locals recover from flooding | p4**

**Integrating Gender Issues in Peace Support Operations | p5**

**Leadership Visits Kadugli Base | p7**

**UNPOL Embarks on Crime Awareness Campaign | p8**

**FRIM Phase 2 | p9**

**UNISFA Donates Items to CPCs | p10**

**News Bits | p11**

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## UNISFA conducts fair trial workshop

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) held a Fair Trial Workshop at the operational base of UNISFA in Rumajak, Abyei area on 1-2 August 2019. Conducted by UNISFA's Community Liaison Office (CLO) with support from the Gender Office and UN Police, the workshop was attended by 41 participants including traditional judges, women union and youth union representatives, as well as Bar Association and Community Protection Committee members.

The workshop provided the participants with legal concepts on fair trial as guaranteed by both South Sudan legal frameworks and International Law including an understanding of South Sudan constitutional Bill of Rights provisions on fundamental Human Rights of the people including the rights to a fair trial.

The workshop covered topics such as the importance of upholding human rights to protect the society within traditional laws in line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011 and International Human Rights Standards.

Further, the facilitators shared with participants the international best practices on fair trial and judicial independence, as well as an overview of the International Criminal Principles and interviewing techniques.

The traditional justice practitioners were also sensitized and advised on fundamental human rights and women rights, standards in the rule of law and fair trial. Some case scenarios of unfair traditional trials against women were discussed such as “the adultery case” while providing concrete examples on how the traditional justice cases/ proceedings are against women’s rights and human rights; providing the audience with specific legal provisions on women’s protection and women’s equality as set in South Sudan Constitution and other national legal frameworks.

The final part of the workshop included practical working group sessions for participants to come up with shortfalls and practical recommendations on how to address them.

The Ngok Dinka's Deputy Paramount Chief committed to include women as advisers in traditional trials as impartial actors.

Additionally, the judiciary personnel reiterated the supremacy of South Sudan Constitution and Statutory Law emphasizing on the traditional trials shortfalls and pledged for alignment with South Sudan Constitution and laws.





## UNISFA helps locals recover from flooding

The return of the rainy season in the Abyei Area is always characterized by unimaginable menace ranging from serious flooding to massive destruction of human lives and property. Needless to say, that human and economic activities literally come to a standstill during the four or five months of rainfall in this area. It is not uncommon also, to find that a number of lives are lost to overflowing or collapsed of buildings each year. Thus, the people living in Abyei Area battle to survive the menace of rainy season every year. Even neighboring Sudan is not left out in this rainy season hazard. For instance, the death toll in the recent heavy rains and floods in Sudan as announced by the country's Health Ministry rose to 62 persons.

This year, the current rainy season has already taken its toll of the people of Abyei. Many have been rendered homeless. food crops are terribly destroyed while the threat of famine appears imminent.

Recently, after an all-night downpour, UNISFA's 21 Ethiopian Battalion initiated a ground patrol to assess the extent of its impact on the vulnerable communities. The result was a devastating destruction of living structures, foodstuff and near total displacement of the entire community.

In response, the battalion, commanded by Col Amsalau Kumsa Roro, mobilized its troops to help in reconstructing temporary shelters on dry grounds in the general area of Athony and, provided relief items to those affected. The troop also assisted the local population in salvaging their crops from being totally destroyed. This is not the first time the battalion will be assisting local communities in Abyei Area improve security and living conditions. UNISFA troops have had to wade through crocodile infested waters to search and retrieve rustled cattle and return them to the owners.

Col. Amsalau assured the local population of UNISFA's continued support in the relief operations during the rainy season, adding that besides the troops' task of protecting civilians and ensuring peace in the community, the troop would always spend their extra time to assist communities in distress, stressing that UNISFA is fully committed to its mandated task of ensuring that the Abyei Box is free of arms, and that people are free to live their normal lives.

The residents of the village were overjoyed with the display of solidarity and assistance by UNISFA troops and expressed their deep gratitude to them and pledged support and cooperation with the mission.







## Integrating gender issues in peace support operations

A workshop under the theme Integrating Gender Issues in Peace Support Operations was recently organized for members of the Quick Reaction Force (QRF). The workshop was aimed at equipping participants with appropriate response mechanisms do different gender related issues that take place in conflict situations. This, according to Major Asteway Samuel, the Force Gender Adviser, is based on the fact that the troop mostly work with the communities and therefore, their knowledge of gender bases issues was very critical to their work.

Based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the workshop focused on how to protect women and girls from gender-based violence that are always associated with conflict environments, especially given the fact that they are always the most vulnerable. The soldiers were made to understand how

to communicate with victims taking into consideration the trauma and their confidentiality.

Also included in the workshop curriculum was reporting mechanisms detailing how victims could report violations and abuses each time they occur assuring them of protection and confidentiality. The troop were also briefed on the United Nations zero tolerance for gender-based violence and the consequences of getting involved in such acts, emphasizing that UNISFA as a mission will not hesitate to take serious disciplinary actions against any erring soldier.

Major Asteway stressed the advantage of, and called for, more women in peacekeeping operations noting that women are always the victims of sexual abuse and gender-based violence in any conflict situation.

The training workshop will continue in other units in UNISFA.







**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE**  
**21 SEPTEMBER 2019**

[un.org/peaceday](https://un.org/peaceday) | [#peaceday](https://twitter.com/peaceday) [#climateaction](https://twitter.com/climateaction)

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**UNISFA**

United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei





## UNISFA leadership visits Kadugli logistic base

On 4 and 5 July, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) senior leadership led by acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Mehari Zewde Gebremariam, visited UNISFA's Kadugli Logistics Base. General Zewdu was accompanied by the Deputy Force commander, Brig Gen Mulu Gebrehiwot, and the Chief of Mission Support, Mr. Robert Kirkwood as well as Mission Support heads of sections.

The senior leadership addressed the challenges facing the logbase, as well as the logistical requirements of the team sites, including the newly established sites under the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM).

General Mehari applauded the peacekeepers who are securing the border area and commended the service and sacrifices of hundreds of troops and uniformed personnel who are deployed along the joint border area.







# UNPOL @ work



## UNISFA UNPOL embarks on crime awareness campaign

UNISFA UNPOL recently conducted awareness campaigns on crime, child abuse, as well as gender issues at the Akenghial and Agok B Primary Schools in Abyei area.

The campaign was aimed at sensitizing the students to refrain from criminal activities like alcohol/drug abuse, theft, as well as public fighting. They were advised to report any criminal activities to the local leaders and Community Protection Committees.

The objective of the campaign was to also help the children embrace values that are nondiscriminatory based on gender orientation but rather those that respect hard work, honesty and gender sensitive.

During the campaigns, school teachers were urged to give equal treatment to students regardless of their gender. On child abuse issues, the students were presented with examples of child abuse cases. They were encouraged to report such cases to teachers, parents or guardians. Moreover, teachers and students' roles in peacebuilding were emphasized and participants were requested to come up with crime prevention initiatives within the community.







## First in UNISFA: FRIM moves to the next phase

The Unite Field Remote Infrastructure Management (FRIM) is a realization of maximizing and improving resource services using innovative technology. A look back on its inception, it was a means to measure the use of power and water by connecting these resources through a network cable, the first steps towards implementing an Internet of Things (IoT).

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) was the first peacekeeping mission to implement United FRIM with the pilot phase completed in March 2019. Since then, 17 other missions & UN Secretariat entities have expressed interest and are at some stage of Unite FRIM planning, POC and implementation.

### FRIM automation

UNISFA's Chief of Mission Support, Mr. Robert Kirkwood, has envisioned FRIM to be automated with metrics taken real time and processed to study equipment behavior predicting possible outages and down times.

### Phase 1 – Lessons and Understanding the Interface

Throughout the first phase of FRIM's implementation, only a small fraction of the total resources (both power and water) generated was being used by the 300 smart-meters installed in accommodation units. This concluded that a great amount of resource was still unaccounted for from other users, this being the group users within UNISFA HQ and team sites.

Recently deployed equipment was also discovered to be 'internet' ready. Aside from the obvious devices such as UPS, it was found that some waste water plants already had interfaces that were ready to be tapped and integrated to the FRIM interface.

### Phase 2 – Moving Forward

Expanding the scope beyond its initial target, FRIM is being looked at as a means to influence consumption behaviour. Having acquired sensor driven insights, more details rather than just consumption and generation or whether a particular resource is running or not is being envisioned.

Realized benefits now include:

1. Theft and its prevention; inefficiency – producing more than what we need;
2. power loss;
3. water – source to end leakages;
4. Internet of Things assisted Machine Learning.

### Integration to Mission Environmental Action

FRIM is being eyed to be extended to monitor the practical aspects of environmental protection and safety in UNISFA by:

1. Solid waste and gas incinerators data interpretations by FRIM as a backend system;
2. Output analysis on critical equipment – all generators, water sources, and others, including Water Towers;
3. Complete the whole consumer package inside UNISFA by getting the generation / consumption ratio, as well as
4. Environment: extending senses such as atmospheric sensors.





### UNISFA donates items to CPCs

The Community Protection Committee (CPC) under the supervision and mentorship of UNISFA's UNPOL has been filling the gap in the provision of law and order services to the community in the absence of the Abyei Police Service. The CPC members, who are volunteers with no remuneration, are supported by, and receive professional mentorship from, UNISFA in the conduct of their daily activities. These include how to operate under human rights and other professional ethics that pay due attention and respect to the dignity of the people they arrest and detain.

To enhance their daily operations as well as support the Joint Peace Committee, UNISFA's Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander Maj. Gen. Mehari Zewde Gebremariam, recently donated logistical items necessary for the daily operations of the CPC and JPC. The items were received on their behalf by the Acting Paramount Chief Akonon Ajuong Deng.

In attendance at the ceremony which took place at the Abyei CPC were officials of Abyei Local Administration led by the Deputy Chief Administrator, Hon. Kon Manyiet Maticok and other members of the community.

Items including whistles, gumboots, reflective jackets, raincoats, and torches were donated to the CPCs in Abyei, Agok and Banton.





# Mission Newsbits



**S**trengthening engagement with communities living around the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) of Sudan and South Sudan has been identified as a key priority for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

JBVMM troops in Kadugli and Gok Machar reached out to women and children in the communities. During the recent Ashenda festivity, the Ethiopian female peacekeepers raised funds to purchase and distribute textbooks, pens, sports materials, as well as clothes to communities. The troops also helped families who lost their homes to fire by supporting them rebuild their 'tukuls' (houses).



**I**n Abyei, troops of UNISFA's 19th Motorized Battalion of Ethiopian Army under the leadership of Col. Abraham Girmay bid farewell and expressed gratitude to the community they have served for a year. The female peacekeepers donated food, clothes, sporting materials to women and school children living around Dokura / Rumajak areas of Abyei. Donations were raised through the funds mobilized during the Ashenda celebration as well as those shared by the officers of the battalion and UNISFA.

The event held on 28 September 2019 was witnessed by UNISFA's Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, the Deputy Force Commander, the Principal Officers, the Senior Police Advisor, as well as other senior officers of the Mission.





## Mission News Bits

In a community of diverse groups, cultural traditions, as well as religious practices, are respected and observed. In Abyei, the Ethiopian troops of UNISFA celebrated **Irreecha** or Thanksgiving. Every year, Irreecha is celebrated by the Oromo people in Ethiopia at the beginning of spring to give thanks to Waaqa (God) for the blessings received throughout the year.

During the celebration, they also welcome the new season of plentiful harvests after the dark and rainy winter season.



The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) continues to engage with the NgokDinka and Misseriya communities to build capacity and advance civil society. UNISFA Senior Police Advisor (SPA) Mary Gahonzire met with traditional leaders and a national monitor to discuss UNISFA's engagement and collaboration with traditional leaders and their respective communities on crime prevention, timely reporting of incidents, and engagement in peace and security issues in Abyei.



The team from UNISFA also met with the Misseriya representatives of youth, women and the non-government organizations constituting the civil society in Northern Abyei. The meeting was a part of the mapping of civil society within the Abyei Administrative Area, as well as the review of key activities of non-state actors lined up, to strengthen inter-communal dialogue and facilitate stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area.



## Mission News Bits



Following the heavy rains in Banton and surrounding areas, where most places are flooded, community members are left with no choice but to use makeshift boats to cross the flooded points. The situation has left school children to use small boats to cross to and from schools exposing them to the danger of being drowned.

To steer clear of this danger, UNISFA's UN Police (UNPOL) conducted awareness campaigns among community members including school children on drowning.



The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) supported the multi-sector assessment conducted by the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes in affected areas in the counties of Alal, Rumamir, Majak, as well as in Agok in Abyei area. Security and logistics requirements of the assessment teams were provided by UNISFA.

The assessment was conducted to identify the urgent needs of affected communities. Results of the assessment assisted the emergency response for food and shelter needs of affected communities and will also help the humanitarian community to better plan for interventions across all sectors including water and sanitation, health and livelihood. The assessment was conducted to identify urgent needs of affected communities. Results of the assessment assisted the emergency response for food and shelter needs



of affected communities and will also help the humanitarian community to better plan for interventions across all sectors including water and sanitation, health and livelihood.



## UNISFA STAFF WELFARE TRIP

### *Cape Town, South Africa*

Twenty-four UNISFA staff traveled to Cape Town, South Africa on 29 August up to September 2019 for the second UNISFA Staff Welfare and Recreation Committee (SWRC) sponsored trip.

The group experienced exciting sights and sounds of Cape Town - from beaches, winelands, and mountains (including the famous Table Mountain) to charming neighbourhoods, museums, as well as excellent shopping and nightlife. Cape Town, also known proudly as the Mother City, is the southernmost city in Africa and among the world's most iconic destinations. For UNISFA staff, there was never a dull moment exploring South Africa's second-biggest city.

Through SWRC's initiative, welfare trips have been organized to provide an opportunity for staff to avail of a subsidized travel package. Traveling including experiencing cultures and visiting new places helps staff feel better, both physically and psychologically.

SWRC is now preparing for the next UNISFA Staff Welfare Trip to Seychelles on 30 January up to 4 February 2020.



**NEXT STOP**

## *Seychelles*

30 Jan to 04 Feb 2020



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Strategic Communications and  
Public Information Section