

20 Anniversary
UNSCR 1325
Voices of Abyei Women



1325

women | peace | security

UNISFA
United Nations Interim
Security Force for Abyei



1325 @ 20

Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Abyei Administrative Area

Two decades ago, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 (SCR1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The resolution was the first to link women's experiences of conflict to the international peace and security agenda, focusing attention on the disproportionate impact of conflict on women, and calling for women's engagement in conflict resolution and prevention. The Security Council recognized the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and securing peace and reaffirmed the importance of the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for maintaining and promoting peace and security. The Security Council has since reinforced this decision by adopting 9 additional resolutions on women, peace and security.

However, deep-rooted prejudice still stands in the way of gender equality globally, and Abyei Area has not been spared. The traditionally patriarchal system ascribing to norms that affect social frameworks such as power-sharing, gender roles and decision-making has resulted in biases against women and girls that influence their roles in the local communities. The result has been women's absence from decision-making roles at the community level as well as conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. UNISFA has also continued to receive reports of sexual and gender-based violence.

To address these challenges, UNISFA has consistently undertaken activities toward the implementation of the WPS agenda in Abyei Administrative Area. UNISFA including its leadership have continued to highlight women's participation and protection from sexual and gender-based violence as a priority. In implementation of the WPS mandate, UNISFA stands by the Secretary General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative which views the WPS agenda as critical to enhancing peacekeeping operation's performance. UNISFA has done this through support towards women's participation, strengthening the capacities of civil society particularly women CSOs and creating awareness on WPS as well as making the mission more gender responsive through the appointment of a Mission Focal Point for Women and an Alternate to support the Head of Mission in implementing the UN System-wide strategy on parity.

The 20th anniversary of SCR 1325 will not mark the end to our efforts, but UNISFA in the implementation of its mandate will continue to recognize and push for the full realization of women's rights including protection from gender and sexual based violence as well as realization of the rights of women to sit at both the political table and as the protectors of peace. As highlighted by the United Nations Secretary General, empowering women to end and prevent conflicts is essential and urgent. UNISFA remains committed to this cause and will continue to ensure that it puts women's leadership and the protection of women's rights at the forefront in the implementation of its mandate.

A portrait of Samah Musa Mohamed, a woman with dark skin, wearing a bright pink headscarf and a matching long, flowing robe. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a light blue sky with soft, wispy clouds. The portrait is framed by a blue border on the left and bottom, and a yellow border on the right.

Samah Musa Mohamed

Women Leader

Women Union in Diffra

Ms. Samah Musa Muhamed is from the Misseriya communitiy and she is the Chairperson of the Women Union in Diffra. She has worked very closely with UNISFA on women, peace and security issues in Abyei Area, particulalry Diffra. She has coordinated and moblized women to advocate for their rights and she has stood for and voiced women's concerns and priorities in Diffra to the international community and other local NGOs as well as traditional leaders in the area. Ms. Samah, will always show up. She will walk miles under rain or the scorching sun with her barely 2 year old baby to attend trainings, moblize women and represent the women she leads at different forums. She is a champion for the women, peace and security agenda in Diffra and she has supported UNISFA's efforts in raising awareness on the same, efforts to protect women's rights as well as advocacy with traditional leaders for women's participation. Ms. Samah is driven by the desire for women's equal access to opportunities as their male counterparts in all areas and cessation of all forms of violence against women and children. She applauds UNISFA's role in creating awareness and advocating for the protection of children and women's rights and support towards the implementation of the broader women, peace and security agenda.

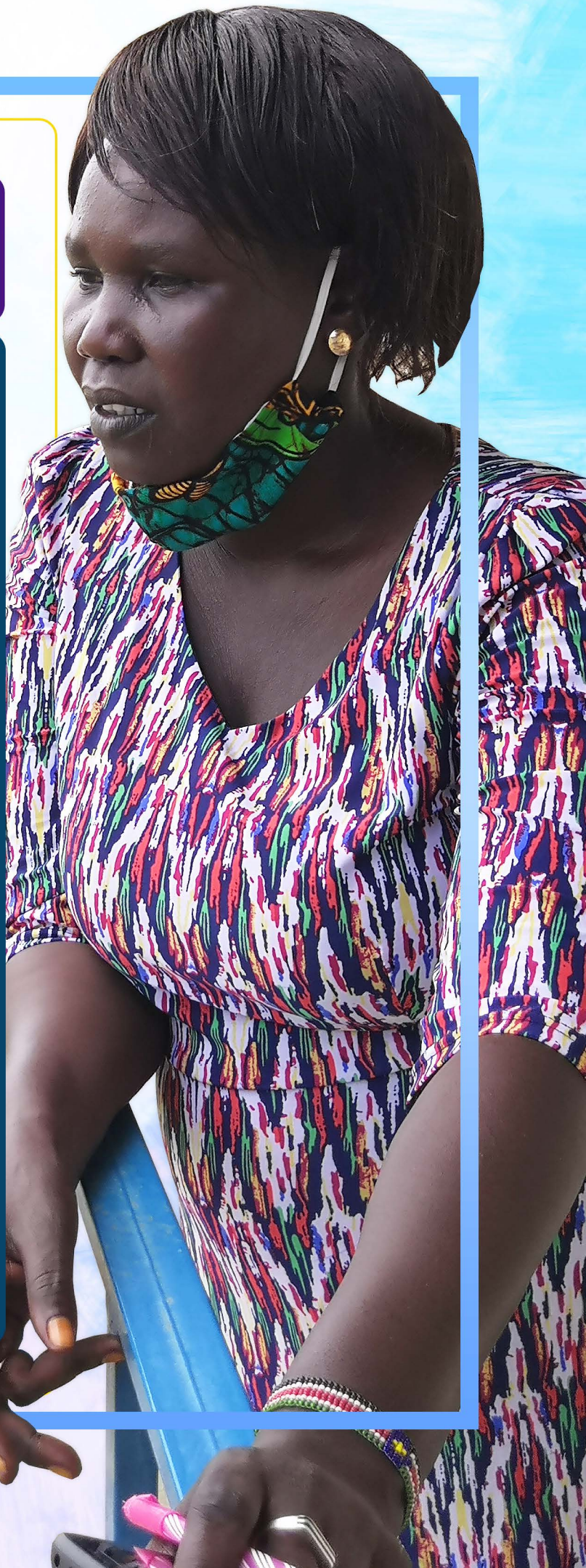
Her message to the world is that
“...empowering women is key to
success for any society. Their
contributions to maintainance of
peace and social well being should
never be undervalued in any society.
If you empower a woman, you have
empowered a society...”

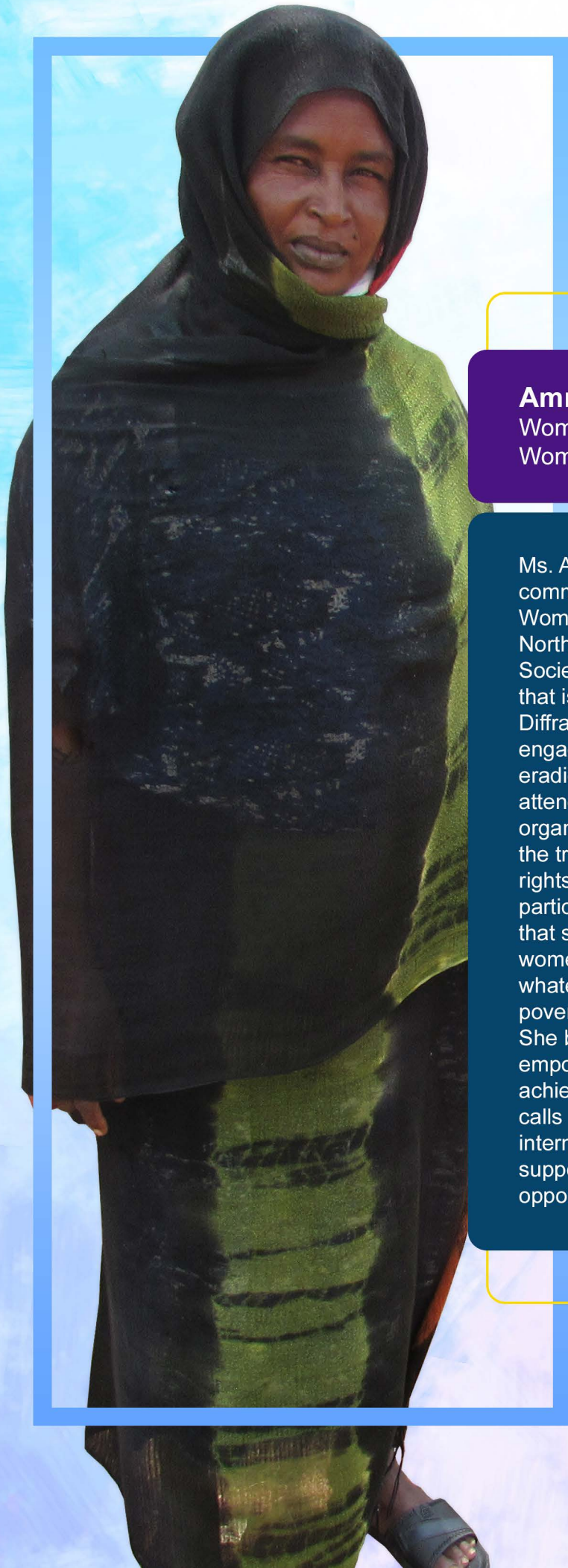


Lou Amal Abdallah

Deputy Chair Person
Women Association of Abyei

Ms. Lou Amal Abdalla also known as Anyang is the Deputy Chairperson of the Abyei Women Association of the Ngok Dinka community in Abyei area. She was elected into the role in May 2019 during a general assembly of the Women Association that brought together over 1000 women from different parts of Abyei to elect their leaders. Since then Ms. Lou has worked hard to mobilize, mentor and support grassroots women in Abyei. She has also actively engaged UNISFA and other UN entities in Abyei on issues concerning women's empowerment. Her contributions have been more visible in the active role she has played in advocating for women's participation in community decision making mechanisms and local administration, mobilizing women to issue a press release calling for peace in Abyei, leading community awareness activities on COVID-19 and its gendered impacts, and advocating for women's rights particularly protection from sexual and gender-based violence, among others. In addition to her role as a woman leader, Ms. Lou is the Secretary to the Mayor of Abyei area in the Southern part of Abyei and her interests are to empower women and promote the protection for their rights. She believes that when women are united, they can solve any problem and that is what motivated her to work as a woman leader. She is calling for women's unity in Abyei to drive for change.



**Amna Koul**

Women Leader

Women Society in Diffra

Ms. Amna Koul is from the Misseriya community and is the chairperson of the Women Society in Diffra located in the Northern part of Abyei. The Women Society is a grassroots women initiative that is a member of the Women Union in Diffra. She has mobilized women to engage in income generating projects to eradicate poverty in the community. She attends events and training workshops organized by UNISFA and has facilitated the transfer of information on women's rights to the grassroots women, particularly those in the Women Society that she leads. Her key message is for women to come together and mobilize whatever resources they have towards poverty eradication in their communities. She believes that women's empowerment is the key to the achievement of gender equality and calls on all community members and the international community to empower and support women and accord them equal opportunities.

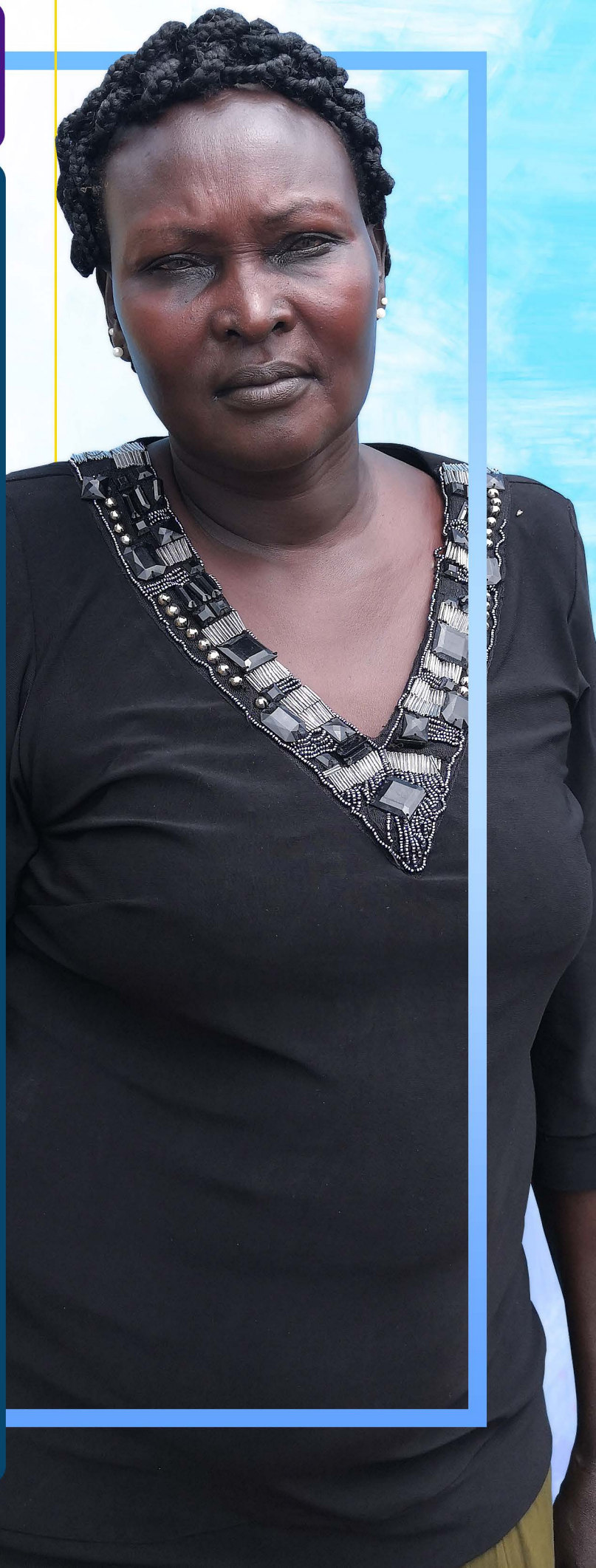
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Atoc Dau Deng

Female Team Leader

Community Protection Committee

Ms. Atoc Dau Deng is from the Ngok Dinka tribe and is the only female Team Leader in the Community Protection Committee. Community Protection Committees established with UNISFA's support are a local mechanism established to assist with the management of law and order processes in Abyei in the absence of Abyei Joint Police Service. Ms. Atoc has served as a CPC team-leader since 2015. Despite the high turnover of CPC members because of the voluntary nature of their work, Ms. Atoc has continued to serve with dedication and commitment. She is known by the local communities for her thoroughness and dedication to tackling sexual and gender-based violence in the local communities. She has continued to support and work closely with UNISFA on issues affecting women in Abyei particularly – gender-based violence. Her passion and dedication to the advancement of women's rights has been demonstrated through her commitment to further serve on voluntary basis at the SGBV Desk established in Abyei to handle related cases affecting women and children in the area. Before joining the CPC in 2015, Ms. Atoc was an active member of the Women Association in Agok, where she mobilized women and advocated to the local leaders on issues affecting them. Her dedication to advocate for women's rights is what inspired her to join the Women Association, work as a CPC member and man the SGBV Desk in Abyei town, all done on a voluntary basis. Her message to the peoples of Abyei is "life is difficult in conflict and post conflict situations; all people in Abyei should join efforts to resolve community conflicts. If we all join our hands and work hard towards peace in Abyei, we shall have a better future". She dreams about a time when a solution for Abyei is "defined and achieved" and people are free to move around and about without fear!



**Fatuma Suliman**

Member

Joint Protection Committee

Ms. Fatuma Suliman is from the Misseriya community in the Northern part of Abyei and has been working as a member of the Joint Protection Committee in Amiet Common Market since 2017. Ms. Fatuma is one of the several thousands of women in Abyei Area that witnessed and experienced the effects of conflict in the area. Her experiences motivated her to voluntarily join the JPC to advocate for women's rights and participate in conflict resolution and prevention in Abyei. Her aspiration is to play a key role in building peace and promoting social cohesion amongst the two predominant tribes in Abyei – the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka. Her contributions to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda have been observed in Amiet Market where she has contributed to the handling of females and juveniles in conflict with the law. She has actively followed up on sexual and gender-based violence cases reported in Amiet market and advocated for the arrest of suspects. She has also taken a keen interest in the rights of children and has facilitated the homeless children to access to assistance from NGOs in the area. She dreams of a conflict-free Abyei and peaceful operations in Amiet Common Market as well a strong and effective judicial system and a strengthened education and health sector in Abyei Area. Her message to the community leaders and local communities at large is that "...gender inclusivity is central to the attainment of peace in the home, the market, the community and in Abyei area as well as globally".

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Myanguék Padalla Dau

Tailor of Masks

UNISFA-IOM project

COVID-19 pandemic posed particular challenges and strains on the local communities in Abyei. To prevent its spread, UNISFA worked closely with grassroots women to promote their role in the prevention of COVID-19 in Abyei area. As a result, women have played a major role as conduits of information on COVID-19 and its gendered effects in the communities. Additionally, with joint support from UNISFA and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), women associations from the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities engaged in the local production and free distribution of 30,000 cloth face masks to identified vulnerable persons in Abyei, playing a crucial and visible role in COVID-19 prevention at the local-level. The project will be transformed into a tailoring project by IOM for the women associations from both communities to strengthen their economic base post COVID-19.

Ms. Myanguék Padalla Dau from the Ngok Dinka community is one of the tailors that participated in the mask production. She has seven kids and currently the bread winner in her household. During her engagement with UNISFA, she said that "...if there is work, there is life..." I am grateful for this opportunity to be able to play a crucial and visible role in my community through the production of face masks while at the same time providing food to my children." She called on the international community to pay attention to the specific needs of women in responding to the pandemic and also opined that "peace can only be achieved with the full participation of all members of the society and if there is peace, there is stability and with stability, the economy will improve".



UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

UNSCR 1325

2000

The first resolution to recognize the differential and disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls and affirm the importance of women's participation as active agents in peace and security processes.

UNSCR 2106

2013

Focuses on accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict and stresses women's political and economic empowerment.

UNSCR 1820

2008

Recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war and a matter of international peace and security that necessitates a security response.

UNSCR 2122

2013

Addresses persistent gaps in implementing the WPS agenda; recognizes the differential impact of all violations in conflict on women and girls and calls for consistent application of WPS across the Security Council's work.

UNSCR 1888

2009

Strengthens efforts to end sexual violence in conflict by establishing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and team of experts on the rule of law and improving coordination among stakeholders on sexual violence in conflict.

UNSCR 2242

2015

Establishes the Security Council's Informal Experts Group (IEG) on WPS; addresses persistent obstacles to implementation including financing and institutional reforms; emphasizes links between WPS, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism.

UNSCR 1889

2009

Stresses the need to strengthen implementation and establishes indicators for monitoring SCR 1325; calls for the SG to submit a report to the Security Council on women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding.

UNSCR 2467

2019

Stresses justice and accountability, calls for support for women's civil society organizations, and requests a gap assessment and recommendations on support for local, national and regional efforts for survivors of sexual violence in conflict.

UNSCR 1960

2010

Establishes a monitoring and reporting mechanism on sexual violence in conflict.

UNSCR 2467

2019

Calls for the implementation of the previous nine resolutions, and incorporates the WPS Commitments in Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.



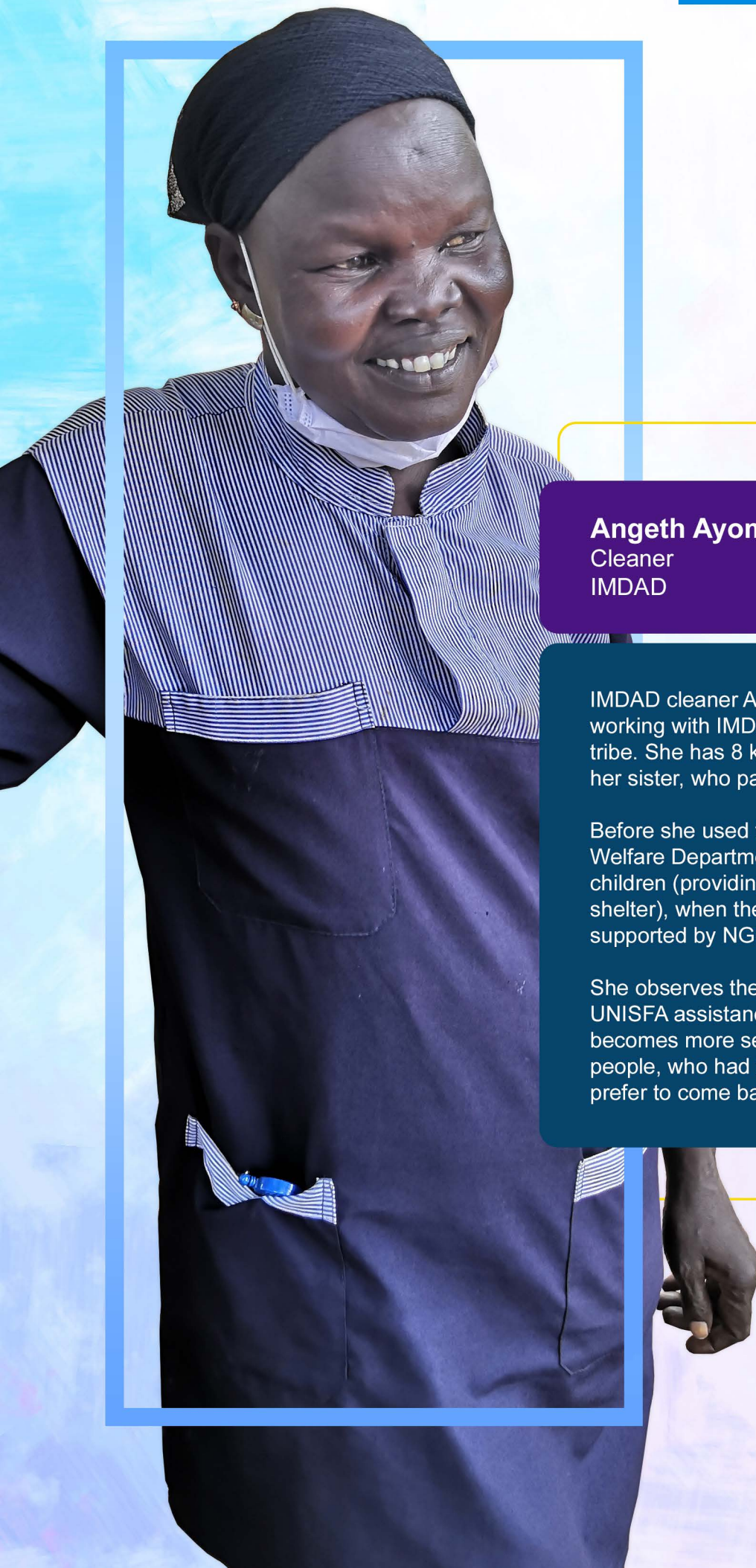
Martha Alek Aguer

Security Officer
Security Office, UNISFA

Security Officer Martha Alek Aguer, 8 years with Security Office of UN. Ngok Dinka Tribe. Her husband is Pharmacist, they have 1 son, 3 more kids are planned. She is planning to study international affairs. Her expectations from life is education and development.

“ When you are educated all the doors are open for you. In the country, where education is good, there is a lot of space for development. ”



**Angeth Ayom Galuak**

Cleaner
IMDAD

IMDAD cleaner Angeth Ayom Galuak, working with IMDAD 1 year. Ngok Dinka tribe. She has 8 kids: 4 hers, 4 – from her sister, who passed away.

Before she used to work with Social Welfare Department, assisting street children (providing them with food and shelter), when the local government was supported by NGO “Save the children”.

She observes the positive dynamics with UNISFA assistance. The situation becomes more secure, after conflict people, who had to leave their houses, prefer to come back to Abyei.

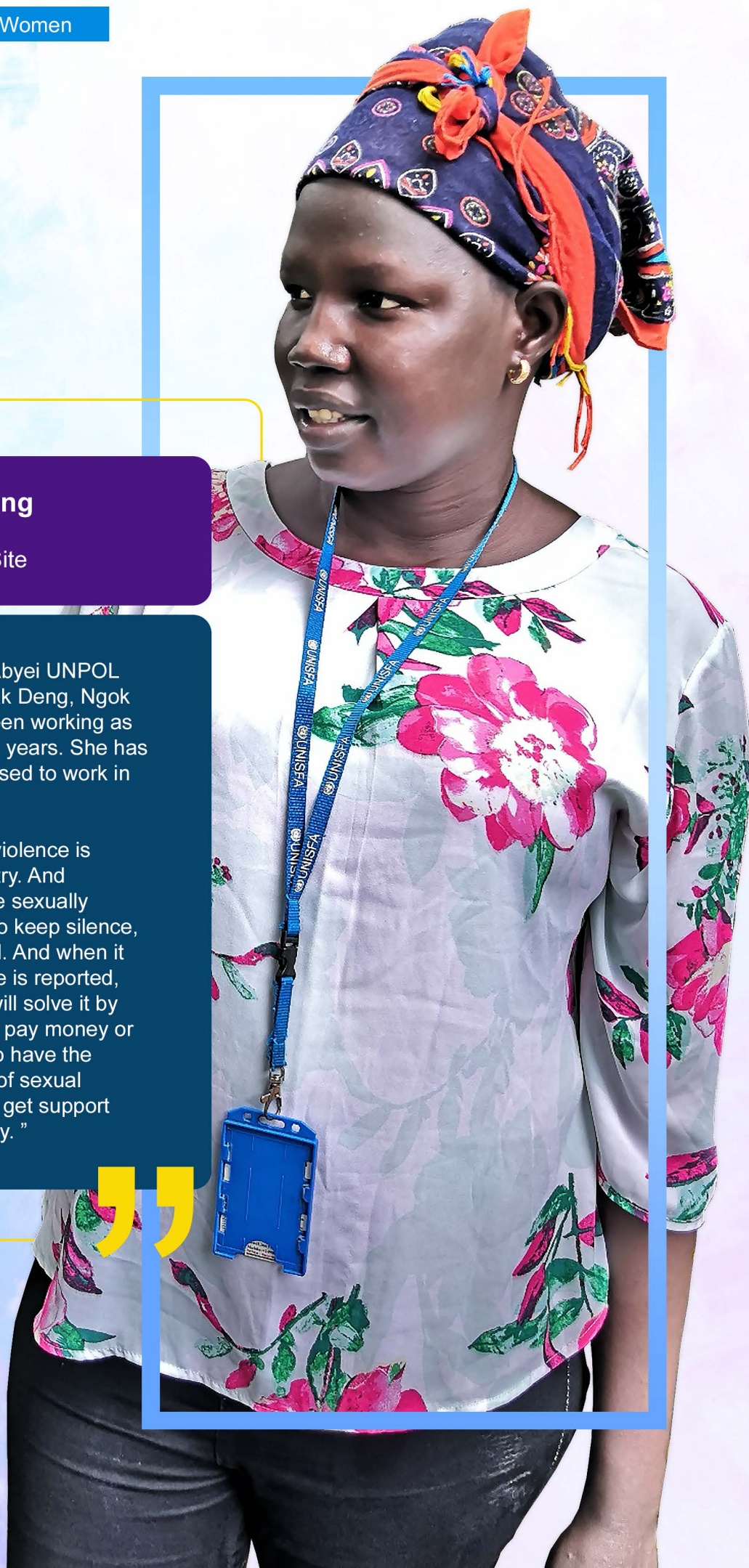
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Rebecca Adak Deng

Language Assistant
Abyei UNPOL Team Site

Language assistant of Abyei UNPOL Team Site Rebecca Adak Deng, Ngok Dinka Tribe. She has been working as language assistant for 7 years. She has 2 children. Before she used to work in SGBV desk.

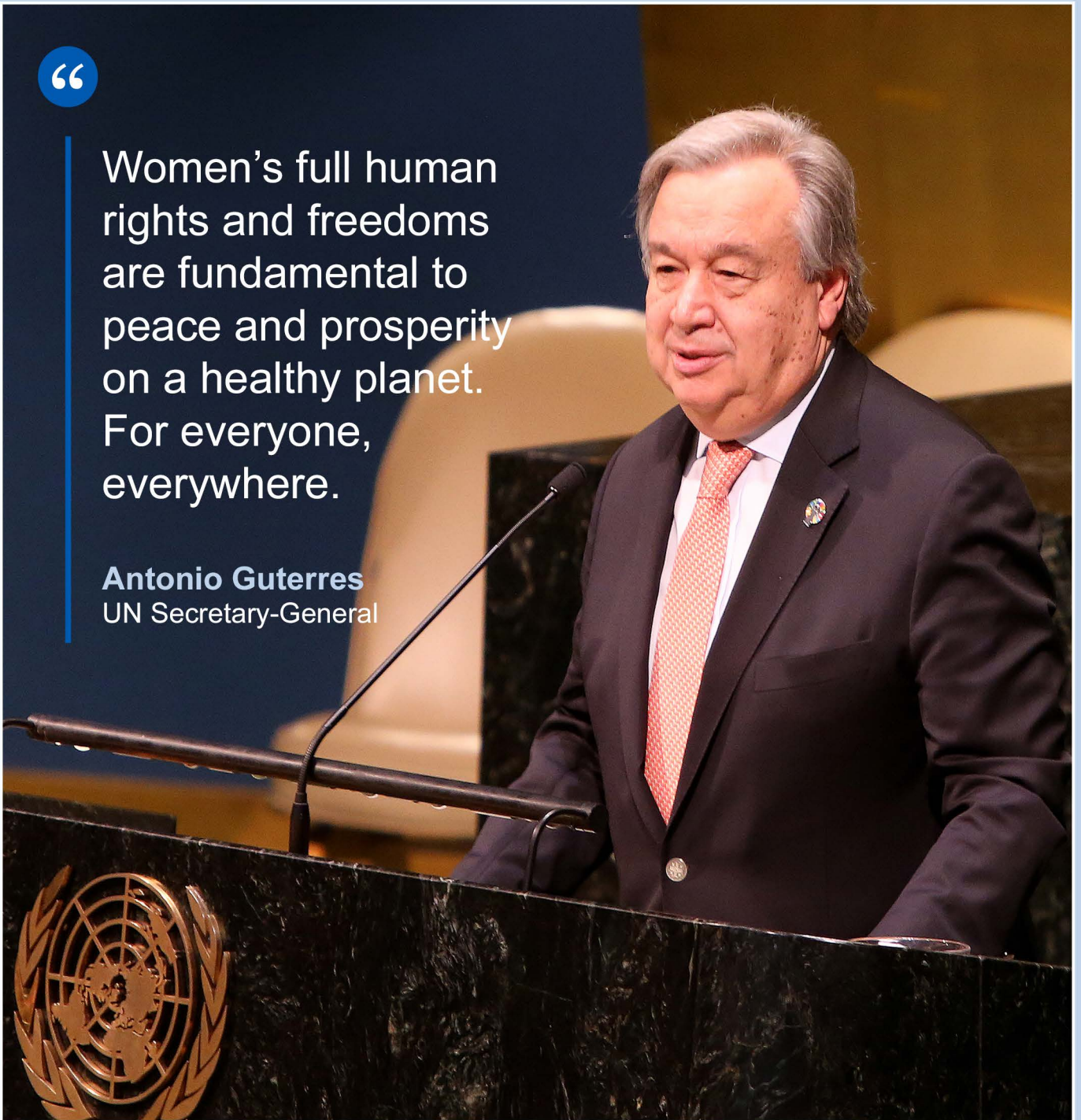
“ Unfortunately, sexual violence is traditional in our country. And women, when they are sexually abused would prefer to keep silence, because it is shameful. And when it happens, that the case is reported, Community Leaders will solve it by obligating a violator to pay money or cows. I would prefer to have the place, where a victim of sexual violence could go and get support physically and mentally. ”



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Women's full human rights and freedoms are fundamental to peace and prosperity on a healthy planet. For everyone, everywhere.

Antonio Guterres
UN Secretary-General



As we prepare to mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, our continued support to women leaders and their transformative work is critical.

When women's priorities are at the heart of peace processes and decision-making, from planning to monitoring, prevention will be strengthened, conflicts will be less likely to recur so peace can last longer.



Women from diverse backgrounds should be engaged to inform, influence and transform decisions and strategies on peacekeeping, including in non-traditional areas such as security priorities.





CALL TO ACTION

WOMEN TRANSFORMING PEACE AND SECURITY

We are united this year to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that recognizes the importance of women as equal and active participants and leaders in international peace and security. Progress of its implementation has been slow and unsteady. I, therefore, urgently call for concrete and bold actions to ensure the full implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in peacekeeping contexts by all partners including Governments, the United Nations system, Regional and Civil Society Organizations.

I urge all peacekeeping partners to embrace and build on feminist approaches to international peace and security. In particular, I call on everyone to enhance women's leadership and full participation to transform peace and security, through the following actions:

António Guterres
United Nations
Secretary-General



Prioritize and invest in community-based local women's networks:

By engaging, amplifying, resourcing and strengthening the role of local women as partners and agents for transformation, we increase their leadership at all stages of peace and security processes.



Harness data and gender analysis for accountable decision-making:

By closing the data gaps, bridging the digital divide and recognizing the value of women's experiences, knowledge, understanding and expertise, we improve investments and accountability in decision-making, thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness in sustaining peace.



Accelerate and leverage women's mobilization to transform peace and political processes:

By recognizing the transformative vision of women's movements to challenge unequal power relations, harmful structural gender norms and value systems that perpetuate exclusion, we prioritize the inclusion of women rights defenders, women peacebuilders, women in security institutions, women ex-combatants, to assert their leadership in decision-making.



Systemize women's leadership to inform conflict prevention and resolution, mediation, and protection:

By institutionalizing women's leadership at all levels and recognizing their community-led conflict resolution efforts and mechanisms, we put women at the heart of peace and security, increase the credibility of processes, and leverage women's potential to secure more sustainable peace for all. By increasing efforts to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, ending impunity and investing in women rights defenders and peacebuilders we reduce their heightened risks to sexual and gender-based violence and political violence.



Create dynamic and innovative partnerships to enhance women's participation:

By forging creative partnerships for cooperation between policymakers and practitioners, and demonstrating political will, making resources available for technical gender experts we leverage our different comparative advantages to centralize women's direct participation in peace and political processes.

On this 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), we take stock of the progress, evaluate the barriers and forge a collective way forward. There is no time to lose. We must join forces with the women's movements including young women who against all odds have been consistently at the forefront in advancing international peace and security. This is evidenced by the several decades of advocacy before and since the Security Council adoption of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in 2000. Despite the disruptive consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, women have continued to play critical roles on the front lines. Their powerful networks, from local to national levels, have been resilient and shown effective leadership in reshaping and adapting their peacebuilding roles.

My Action for Peacekeeping declaration of shared commitments prioritizes women, peace and security as an intrinsic and indisputable political commitment for effective peacekeeping and sustaining peace. The Department of Peace Operations has translated this framework into practice by focusing on strengthened accountability through data-driven evidence generation and analysis, enhanced field-focused partnerships, improved gender-responsive actions across all its functions and components and concerted efforts to increase the number of women in peacekeeping; to deliver tangible results on women, peace and security. While there has been promising progress, much remains to be done. At this important juncture, the Department of Peace Operations remains committed to accelerating and sustaining the momentum on Women, Peace and Security as a political imperative and a shared commitment.

**ACTION
FOR PEACEKEEPING**



UNISFA

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Security Force for Abyei