

Message from the Head of Mission and Force Commander

Dear Colleagues,

We have now entered the fourth month since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Currently, there are no confirmed cases in UNISFA, although a suspected case in Kadugli is being investigated by the WHO. Colleagues, these are unprecedented times, and I urge each and every one of you, to remain vigilant in the fight against the spread of the Covid-19.

I will continue to ensure that the Mission takes all necessary measures and steps to prevent the spread of the virus. I encourage everyone to follow the basic preventive measures and use the psychosocial support available to all staff if need be.

In line with the UN Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, UNISFA continues to facilitate inter-communal dialogue and reconciliation, albeit in a reformatted arrangement. The objective is to encourage parties to come together urgently and resolve their differences. You will receive regular updates on what the Mission is doing in this regard.

I wish to thank you all for your support and vigilance.

UNISFA C19 News Brief

Regular updates on the Mission's response to COVID19

COVID-19 Mission Update

COVID-19 Task Force continues to sensitize personnel on preventive measures and is closely monitoring the situation within neighboring countries. Quarantine area for uniformed personnel has been selected and under renovation.

One (1) UNISFA personnel who came from Entebbe remain under self-quarantine after expiration of the initial 14 days. One UNISFA staff officer who underwent 14 days quarantined at UNMISS HQ Juba has been cleared and is awaiting the next available flight to join the mission. Additionally, 12 uniformed personnel remain in Entebbe under self-isolation at their various hotels since 24 March 2020. One Sudanese Soldier suspected for COVID-19 remain quarantined near Kadugli. JBVMM HQ, in Kadugli has been on lockdown effective 31 March 2020 awaiting the test results of the Sudanese soldier.

Mission is practicing remote working effective 31 March 2020. Currently passenger flights to Khartoum, Kadugli, Wau, and Entebbe have been suspended.

“ I encourage everyone to follow the basic preventive measures and use the psychosocial support available to all staff if need be. ”

Major General
Mehari Zewdie
Gebremariam





What exactly is Social Distancing

Many are responding to the covid-19 pandemic, and social distancing is a central aspect of plans to limit the spread of the virus. But what exactly is social distancing?



“Social distancing is maintaining safe distance between people to prevent the spread of viruses from one person to another even before symptoms are not visible. This was advised to be a distance of 2 meters, but current realities may require a distance of 5 meters.”

“There is nothing like social distance. The term is funny and absurd. What it actually means is physical distance. Social distance does not make sense especially when you say social distance and are still socializing.”

“It seems that recently WHO prefers using "physical" rather than "social" (the reasoning being that you can socialize through the internet, skype, WhatsApp and the such, but it is physical distance that will spare you the infection). So, to me distancing, social or otherwise, is keeping two meters (six feet) from others. Abyei or Fifth Avenue – tough to keep distance at Amiet Market or Lord & Taylor...”

“Social distancing is the art of maintaining a non-fraternal, non-affectionate distance with ALL.”

“Social distancing today, hope for tomorrow.”

Okaaay..... whatever your definition guys, keep practicing social distancing!!!!



COVID-19 and the Rule of Law: Perspectives from the experts

What are the three key areas which are likely to pose great challenge in the wake of the COVID-19

1. Detention facilities
2. Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Why do you consider these areas to be the key areas of concern?

There are three detention centers in Abyei and even without COVID-19, there are many challenges either in relation to the state of detention facility or the holding conditions of detainees, because of the underdeveloped nature of Abyei. In most cases, the detention centers are overcrowded, and hygiene conditions are appalling. They lack ventilation, water and sanitary facilities. Also, you know detention centers generally attract a lot of traffic either because of inflow of new detainees or relatives and friends coming to visit detainees. This pose a grave challenge when it comes to preventing and containing infectious diseases including COVID-19.

Internally displaced persons, are particularly exposed to the outbreak of COVID-19, given their harsh living conditions and limited access to basic necessities including water, food, soap and health care. Following the 19th and 20th armed attacks in Nai Nai and Kolom, there are over 4000 IDPs in the Abyei area.

What has the Mission done in this regard:



On the detention centers: understanding the difficulty in meeting the prescribes hygiene standards, UNISFA has taken this opportunity to explore together with the Abyei Public Prosecutor the possibility of decongesting the detentions, by releasing detainees on prolonged detention or those that have committed minor offences. We are also discussing ways to come up with Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods. So far, 5 people have been released, and hopefully in the coming days about 20 more will be released in line with current on-going global practice to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The plan is to release all detainees except those sentenced for serious crimes. Let me also add that awareness materials on Covid-19 have been distributed by the Mission in all medium of communication. Finally. the mission has engaged WHO based in Khartoum to extend medical services in case it gets to level two.

With regard to the IDPs: to prevent any eventualities, UNISFA has continued to work with the UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes to address the plight of the IDPs. In particular, UNISFA is actively engaging the Paramount Chief and other Local Administration officials, to discuss the return of the IDPs. This is all in the efforts to prevent possible outbreak as well as fight against arbitrary deprivation of liberty.



COVID-19 RELATED BROADCAST

- UNISFA Covid-19 psychosocial support for staff: **practical advice to bring down stress levels to a manageable level**;
published on 05/04/2020
- COVID-19: Underlying Medical Conditions and Practical Human Resource Matters: **procedures to be followed in the event of COVID-19 Infection outbreak in UNISFA AOR**;
published on 01/04/2020
- Prevention and Report of SEA and/or Sexual Misconduct: **sexual misconduct is prohibited in UNISFA including under the current COVID19**;
published on 31/03/2020
- Suspension of Movements in and out of Kadugli Camp: **movements in and out of the Kadugli camp are suspended until the soldier is cleared from quarantine and his COVID-19 status is known**;
published on 31/03/2020
- Recording Telecommuting in Umoja: **how to record approved telecommuting in UMOJA**;
published on 29/03/2020

Be Aware: Myth Busters

Below are some advice regarding common myths on (COVID-19)

- 1 **Exposing yourself to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25C degrees DOES NOT prevent the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).** From the evidence so far, the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in ALL AREAS, including areas with hot and humid weather.
- 2 **Catching the coronavirus DOES NOT mean you will have it for life.** If you catch the disease, make sure you treat your symptoms. If you have cough, fever, and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early – but call your Medical facility by telephone first.
- 3 **Drinking alcohol DOES NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous.**
- 4 **Thermal scanners CAN NOT DETECT people who are infected but are not yet sick with fever.** The best way to confirm if you have the virus producing COVID-19 disease is with a laboratory test.
- 5 **Spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body WILL NOT kill viruses that have already entered your body.** Both alcohol and chlorine can be useful to disinfect surfaces, but they need to be used under appropriate recommendations.
- 6 **Eating garlic DOES NOT prevent infection with coronavirus.** There is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus.
- 7 **People of ALL AGES CAN BE infected by coronavirus.** Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.
- 8 **Antibiotics DO NOT work against viruses, only bacteria.** The new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus and, therefore, antibiotics should not be used as a means of prevention or treatment.
- 9 **There is NO SPECIFIC medicine recommended to prevent or treat coronavirus.** However, those infected with the virus should receive appropriate care to relieve and treat symptoms, and those with severe illness should receive optimized supportive care.

Source: World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-buster>

Key Contact Telephone Numbers

Coordinator COVID-19 Task Force

3979

CMO / FMO

3283/3940/3319

Call Center (Hotline)

3030

Bar assistant

4891

GCC

3293 / 4493

PX

3291

How to Put on, Use, Take-off and Dispose of a mask

UNISFA COVID-19 AWARENESS

Preventive Measure

When to use a mask



For healthy people, wear a mask only if you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCov infection

Wear a mask, if you are coughing or sneezing

Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

If you wear a mask then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly



Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask



Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water



Replace a mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks

Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water



To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of the mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water



UNISFA
United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

UNISFA COVID-19 Task Force

For Questions



Kindly send an email to the UNISFA COVID-19 Task Force :

UNISFA-COVID-19-Task-Force@un.org