

## Message from the Head of Mission and Force Commander

Let me start by extending my warmest wishes to each and everyone one of you. As we all try to navigate through this global pandemic, please know my thoughts are with each and every one of you.

We are facing this biggest global crisis together!

Fortunately, there is still no reported case in UNSFA since the suspected case in Kadugli has also been cleared by WHO. However, globally, the rate of confirmed new cases and death of Covid-19 is still at a rise and this is parallely reflected in this region.

COVID-19 is currently affecting everyone without any prejudice on race, gender, or age. Early studies have however shown that more men are dying from COVID-19 than women, but as rightly stated by the UN Secretary-General “the pandemic is having devastating social and economic consequences for women and girls” and the need to ensure gender equality and women’s rights are key to getting through this pandemic.

I wish to recognize the efforts that everyone is putting in but particularly, I wish to thank the female personnel who are spearheading the efforts to prevent the crisis of Covid-19 from becoming a major hindrance in the safety and well-being of girls and women.

I invite you all to read the UN Policy Brief on the Impact of Covid-19 on women which underscores three cross-cutting priorities to consider for an impactful response, resilience and recovery efforts.

I wish to thank you all for your continued resilience during this difficult time.

“  
Put women and girls at the centre of efforts to recover from COVID-19”

António Guterres  
UN Secretary-General



The UN chief highlighted the pandemic’s devastating consequences of COVID-19 on women and girls, which cross every sphere: from health and the economy, to security and social protection. He has thus called on women’s leadership and contributions to be at the heart of #coronavirus resilience & recovery efforts.

The SG further notes that forced lockdowns and movement restrictions also mean that women suffering gender-based violence are now trapped at home with their abusers at a time when support services are disrupted or inaccessible.

COVID-19 is thus, not only a challenge to global health systems, but also a test of our human spirit and a better world must emerge following the pandemic.

Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061452>

# UNISFA C19 News Brief

## Regular updates on the Mission’s response to COVID19

UNISFA women’s contributions at the heart of #coronavirus Mission response



### Implementing women, peace and security mandate in the context of COVID-19

UNISFA Gender Advisory Team has joined efforts with other Mission components to raise awareness on COVID-19. Issues such as the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has on women and girls and specific roles that women at all levels of decision-making can play as relates to COVID-19 preparedness, prevention and response have been at the epicenter of the awareness campaigns.

The Abyei Women Association have taken a leap in addressing the local populations in different localities. In her remarks, the Deputy Chairperson of the Association – Ms. Anyang Amal Kuor Lou has called upon the people of Abyei to join the rest of the world to fight this unseen enemy.

The Gender Advisory Team will continue its engagement with UNISFA leadership and women in Abyei on COVID-19.





## HR Strategies to manage coronavirus in UNISFA

A message from the HR Chief

Considering the unprecedented circumstances, we are currently facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNISFA Human Resources Unit maintains a consistent dialogue with Headquarters and other Missions in the region to learn from them and come up with Mission specific HR policies and procedures. UNISFA's unique location and circumstances, has necessitated the need for us to go the extra mile to ensure staff concerns are addressed. I therefore wish to assure all staff, that we try as best as possible to respond to the situation for the betterment of all employees and the Mission at large. I am happy to highlight to you some of the adjustments that HR has made in this regard.

### 1 Flexible working arrangements and alternate work arrangements

It is important to understand the distinction between flexible working arrangements and alternate work arrangements. Flexible working arrangements include any arrangement, such as telecommuting, where a staff member makes the decision to request to work or take advantage of an option to work, in a location other than their official duty station.

Alternate work arrangements, on the other hand, include situations where staff members are mandated by the Mission to work from an alternate location, such as instances where UN offices have been physically closed and some or all staff members are required to work from another location.

At present, UNISFA has not implemented alternate work arrangements. Flexible work arrangement options are still available to all staff members at their request. Individual staff members should submit a request to their Supervisor/Section Chief and Human Resources for further consideration. Staff members are reminded that the ability to telecommute is directly related to the actual functions of a position; some functions may not be conducive to remote work and may not be approved. For more details on the Organization's flexible work policies, please refer to ST/SGB/2019/03 and ST/IC/2019/15.

### 2 Carry-over of annual leave

Under normal circumstances a maximum of 60 annual leave days are carried over into the new leave cycle, beginning on 01 April of every year. In order to provide additional support to staff members, the Organization has exceptionally carried over all leave days into the new leave cycle. This allows those currently away from their duty station with more than 60 days of annual leave at the end of March to take advantage of their additional days as an alternative to remote work or leave without pay.

### 3 Deferred Rest & Recuperation (R&R)

As previously announced, in order to compensate staff members who are obliged to defer their Rest & Recuperation entitlement due to travel restrictions, any staff member who is unable to take their R&R will be granted five days of special leave with full pay in addition to their normal R&R entitlement.

## Let us see how critical people can think

Scenario: A Military Observer was on patrol and met Ethiopian troops on their way on patrol. He greeted them; Hello hundred!

They replied. We are not hundred, we need half of us plus you to make us hundred

Question: How many Troops were on their way on patrol?

Possible answers: (a) 198 | (b) 49 | (c) 66 | (d) 51 | (e) 101 | (f) 199

Send your answers to [kamwela@un.org](mailto:kamwela@un.org), the first 5 correct answers will receive a gift.

### 4 Uncertified sick leave

The Organization has also exceptionally granted all staff members an additional 7 days of Uncertified Sick Leave in the new leave cycle. The primary purpose of this additional entitlement is to support staff members who are unable to obtain sick leave certification due to COVID-19 related movement restrictions and lack of access to medical facilities. The entitlement can also be used for other COVID-19 related emergencies.

### 5 Health Solutions

*There are various aspects to this.*

- First there are those staff with underlying medical conditions that place them at greater risk in case the virus strikes. Many of them have left the mission and arrangements have been made for them to work remotely.
- Arrangements for enhanced access to doctors via telehealth applications, telephone or video calls, depending on the insurance plan have been made. An important improvement relates to the possibility of accessing services of psychologists and psychotherapists remotely, with the specific modality depending on the type of insurance plan. I encourage staff to find out more at: [Cigna International \(UN WWP\) – Cigna Global Telehealth](#)
- A new portal called the [EarthMed](#) portal has been launched and you can find it on [iSeek](#). This is a secure and confidential portal that enables staff to provide information on coronavirus symptoms directly into their own medical record. It will then register you in a special coronavirus programme, and medical staff will then be able to reach out to you personally with tailored care and advice no matter where you are in the world.

### 6 Travel

Staff members have already been encouraged to delay or defer any travel during this period, and government restrictions on international travel through Sudan and Uganda are still in place. Staff are also encouraged to limit domestic travel by road or air transportation.

#### (a) Personnel stranded in transit or quarantine while travelling to the Mission

As earlier advised, staff members should contact Human Resources, who will consider each situation on a case-by-case basis. Staff are also advised to contact and inform their supervisors as soon as possible to discuss their individual circumstances. In general, options available to staff members include additional leave, advance leave, or telecommuting.

#### (b) Personnel that have not departed from their destinations

As earlier advised, any staff member currently away from their duty station should stay where they are until advised otherwise. Staff members should not embark on a

back to UNISFA either by road or air without notifying their supervisor or Human Resources to discuss their particular situation and the options available to them.

(c) **Critical Staff**

Staff away from their duty station who have been deemed critical may be asked to report for duty. This process will be coordinated through Human Resources and the relevant Section and Pillar Chiefs.

**Finally, we encourage staff to familiarize themselves with the following:**

- Crisis Preparedness Guide for Staff and Families which is a practical tool that provides essential information in the unfortunate case of service-incurred injury and illness, or in the more tragic circumstances of death, of a staff member.
- Policy Guidance on Education Grant ( EG ) Flexibility which provides information in light the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the normal Education Grant ( EG ) cycle with regard to: Attendance and determination of School Year; Boarding Assistance/ Capital Assessment; Supporting Documentation; Timelines for submission of claims and recovery of advances; Education Grant Travel and School Refunds of tuition or other admissible expenses.



**UNISFA HR is open for business!**

Should you have further queries, please contact Ms. Doris Munoko at [munoko@un.org](mailto:munoko@un.org) or Ms. Ifeoma Morah at [morah@un.org](mailto:morah@un.org)

## Places with the best coronavirus responses have one thing in common - **Women Leaders**

Reports have shown that countries such as Germany, New Zealand, Denmark, Iceland, Finland and Norway are doing a disproportionately better job at handling the pandemic.

For example:

- New Zealand's prime minister Jacinda Arden took early action to shut down tourism and impose a month-long lockdown on the entire country, limiting coronavirus casualties to just four deaths. According to CNN, as of Monday 27 April, the country claimed it had "eliminated" the coronavirus.
- Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany took the bug seriously and the country began testing right from the get-go.
- Iceland, under the leadership of Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir, is offering free coronavirus testing to all its citizens. ...They haven't had to lockdown... or shut schools!



There is something about women leadership that we need to name and appreciate: **“They seem to handle crises better. Some studies also suggest that women leaders tend to have compassion and society at heart.”** Women leaders are being applauded for their apparent **quick thinking and fast action** to control the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Still, women make up less than 7 per cent of world leaders. Why? Because they have to do twice as well as their male counterparts to be taken seriously as leaders!

**It is time for the world to bring in more women leaders.**

## 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**



## COVID-19 RELATED BROADCAST

Policy Guidance on Education Grant (EG) Flexibility: **Education Grant and Related Benefits during COVID-19**;  
published on 23/4/2020

Recorded Townhall Meeting - 20 April 2020: **Mission Updates on COVID-19 - 20 April 2020**;  
published on 21/04/2020

Coronavirus: New pages on un.org the new go-to place for information for staff and the public: **The link is: [www.un.org/coronavirus](http://www.un.org/coronavirus) where you can find many COVID-19 related information**;  
published on 18/04/2020

Exception to Staff Rule 6.2 (c) on uncertified sick leave: **an exception to staff rule 6.2 (c) on uncertified sick leave has been approved**;  
published on 16/04/2020

Supplies and Reserves: **a minimum of 120 days of fuel, rations and provisions at the PX and Cafeteria...bulk purchases at PX are not permitted**;  
published on 16/04/2020

Exception to Staff Rule 6.3 (b) (11) on paternity leave: **Secretariat staff members will be allowed to avail of paternity leave within an extended period beyond one year following the birth of a child**;  
published on 16/04/2020

## For Questions



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

**[UNISFA-COVID-19-Task-Force@un.org](mailto:UNISFA-COVID-19-Task-Force@un.org)**