



Security Council briefing on UNISFA, 5 November 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President, and I also thank ASG Pobee for her briefing.

Malta is deeply concerned that no progress was reported towards the resolution of the final status of Abyei in this period.

We recognise that Abyei's settlement hinges on the political will of Sudan and South Sudan to engage and discuss. Yet, the ongoing conflict in the former and political uncertainty in the latter have only further postponed these goals. We strongly encourage both Sudan and South Sudan to revive discussions.

We also reiterate our call for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire between the warring parties in Sudan, and call on South Sudan to meaningfully commit to elections in the context of the recent transitional extension. A clear pathway towards governance stability in both nations is essential for regional security.



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As we begin negotiations for UNISFA's renewal this month, we strongly support its protection of civilians' mandate, and strengthened initiatives to support local peace committees, including by women and youth-led organisations.

We commend the Mission for remaining committed to facilitating community-led dialogue while completing its reconfiguration. In this light, we welcome the post-migration conference facilitated by UNISFA, in collaboration with the IOM, FAO and other partners, which sheds light on the downtrend trend of intercommunal violence between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities.

We regret, however, that no progress has been made in establishing the Abyei Police Force, which is an integral element of a cohesive criminal justice system. This lack of progress undermines Abyei's security and stability. We call for the mandated full deployment of UNISFA's police units to fill these gaps.



President

Malta strongly supports the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of women in security and conflict management structures in Abyei.

Advocacy sessions on WPS at joint community protection committee meetings, and workshops in coordination with women leaders in Abyei to address harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, are key examples of UNISFA's important role at operationalising the WPS agenda.

We also support UNISFA's community-based gender desk, acting as a referral system for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

The protection of women and girls must remain a priority, and these efforts must be matched by strengthened local capacity and resources dedicated to addressing gender-based violence.



The impacts of climate change in Abyei manifest themselves in the proliferation of health diseases and acute malnutrition, as well as damaged infrastructure. Up to 23,000 people were impacted by flooding due to torrential rains, in addition to the influx of displaced persons from the conflict in Sudan.

These figures add to Abyei's already dire humanitarian needs. We reiterate our support to the partnership between UNISFA and the UN Country Teams in Sudan and South Sudan, including the facilitation of transportation of humanitarian personnel and cargo.

President

We are deeply concerned by the proliferation of arms and weapons, increasing the potential of intercommunal violence and crime. The discovery of an armoured personal carrier in non-functional condition, linked to suspected RSF elements, which was eventually dismantled by UNISFA, threatens Abyei's weapons-free status.

The need for sustained vigilance and stronger measures to prevent arms flows into Abyei cannot be understated.



It is also critical that South Sudanese security forces end the occupation of schools and community protection committee detention facilities, namely in Agok. We call on all security forces to withdraw from the region, and to uphold the 2011 Agreement.

Relevant authorities also have their SOFA obligations, including the respect of freedom of movement of UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM).

To conclude, President, the people of Abyei remain trapped by the status quo, while facing immense humanitarian needs and threats of inter-communal violence. They deserve better. They deserve peace, stability, and prosperity, and this Council's support towards achieving these aspirations.

I thank you.