



Blue Sentinels

UNISFA Newsletter

Apr 2025

PEACEKEEPING IN ACTION

Nepal-FHQ Support Unit

POC ON GROUND

Noong Crises

STORIES THAT INSPIRE

How a Soldier's Vision
Forged a Path to Wellness

A MARKET AT RISK

UNISFA's Fire Safety Drive
in Amiet

EMPOWERING THE

PROTECTORS

CPC Uniform Launch



11	21	31	41	51	61	71	81	91
12	22	32	42	52	62	72	82	92
13	23	33	43	53	63	73	83	93
14	24	34	44	54	64	74	84	94
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On the cover : A peacekeeper from INDBATT engages with children at the Ek Onkar Learning Center, Tajalei — an initiative bringing education and hope to local communities.

Foreword

EDITION 4.0

“It is a privilege to introduce the **fourth edition of BLUE SENTINELS** as the Mission enters a critical phase of transition from the dry to the wet season. This period brings with it not only operational demands—such as intensified community engagement and seasonal migration monitoring—but also logistical challenges that test our preparedness and coordination.

Throughout the dry months, our peacekeepers have operated with vigilance and professionalism across the Mission area. As access to remote locations improved, we maximized patrols, strengthened support to local institutions, and reinforced our early warning and response systems. The stories captured in this edition reflect both the visible and behind-the-scenes efforts that sustain peacekeeping in a complex environment like Abyei.

At the same time, we have remained committed to nurturing strong ties with local communities, celebrating shared cultural moments, and promoting inclusive initiatives. These engagements remind us that beyond operational mandates, peacekeeping also involves building trust and solidarity—especially as the rains begin and access becomes more constrained.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all who contribute daily to UNISFA’s mission. Your dedication remains the cornerstone of our progress as we continue working together for a peaceful Abyei.”



Brigadier General Ameer
Muhammad Umrani
Deputy Force Commander, UNISFA
& Editor-in-Chief

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GLIMPSES : PEACEKEEPERS AT WORK

At a Glance

Welcome to the fourth edition of Blue Sentinels.

Over the past few months, Abyei has seen a sharp shift in tempo—marked by volatile security dynamics and the arrival of the wet season. These realities have tested the mission's operational agility and deepened the demand for responsive, community-rooted peacekeeping.

In this edition, we spotlight the perseverance of our peacekeepers who continue to adapt, innovate, and lead from the front. From flood relief and fire prevention to new infrastructure initiatives and patrol innovations, each story reflects a mission constantly evolving to meet the moment.

The In Focus section offers insight into the distinct roles of our Troop Contributing Countries, while our field reports and feature stories speak to the challenges and triumphs shaping UNISFA's work today.

Thank you for journeying with us.

Happy Reading!

Lt Col Rahul Naithani

Ms. Antonette Miday

Maj Ujjawal Gupta

EDITORIAL TEAM



In Focus

Nepal FHQ Support Unit

The Nepal Force Headquarters Support Unit (FHQSU-III) was deployed to Abyei under UNISFA on 15 June 2024. Since then, the unit has been actively supporting the Force Headquarters by undertaking a wide range of mandated tasks with discipline, professionalism, and dedication.

Their primary responsibilities include providing escort and security for the Acting HOM & FC, senior mission leadership, and visiting delegations. The unit also mans the Force Radio Room round the clock, ensuring seamless communication between Force HQ, Sector HQs, and Team Sites. In addition, they perform Force Military Police duties, enforcing traffic rules within the HQ premises.

“Our role may be behind the scenes, but it’s essential. We’re here to ensure UNISFA operations run smoothly and effectively. Serving in Abyei alongside peacekeepers from around the world is a responsibility we’re proud to carry.”

**Lt Col Bhupendra Godar,
CO, NEP-FHQSU**



The Nepalese troops play a crucial role in supporting troop rotations by inspecting and facilitating luggage at the air terminal. They also provide ground transportation and driver support to visiting officials, including members of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) and Joint Community Peace Committee (JCPC).

Their support goes beyond operational roles. FHQSU-III actively participates in community outreach activities, such as delivering clean drinking water to local residents, and provides timely administrative support whenever needed.

FHQSU-III has continuously displayed a high level of commitment, performing all assigned duties without any caveats and to their full capacity. Their quiet efficiency has made them a vital asset in UNISFA’s day-to-day functioning.

Did You Know?



Nepal is the only country in the world that does not have a rectangular flag! The national flag of Nepal consists of two stacked triangles, representing the Himalayas and the two major religions—Hinduism and Buddhism

The Driving Force

MOVCON

Movcon professionals are the backbone of mission logistics, effectively ensuring the seamless movement of personnel and equipment across challenging environments. Their tireless dedication keeps operations running smoothly, often behind the scenes. From facilitating rapid troop deployments to maintaining the flow of critical supplies, Movcon's complex tasks are vital to operational success. By coordinating troop rotations with precision, they sustain morale and peak performance, while their swift execution of CASEVAC operations in crises saves lives with unmatched reliability.



“MOVCON’s precision and tireless efforts are the unseen force behind every successful mission, turning logistical challenges into seamless operations.”

Lt Col Syed Muhammad Raza Sherazi,
SSO MOVCON



Beyond personnel movement, MOVCON expertly manages the Air Terminal Operations, orchestrate flight schedules, and oversee cargo handling to ensure flawless task execution. They maintain operational readiness by streamlining the transportation of Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) and UN Owned Equipment (UNOE), providing complete visibility of freight movements. The UNISFA Movcon team, in particular, works relentlessly to support both military and humanitarian efforts, their expertise and commitment serving as the linchpin of mission success through meticulous coordination and unwavering dedication.

A Market at Risk

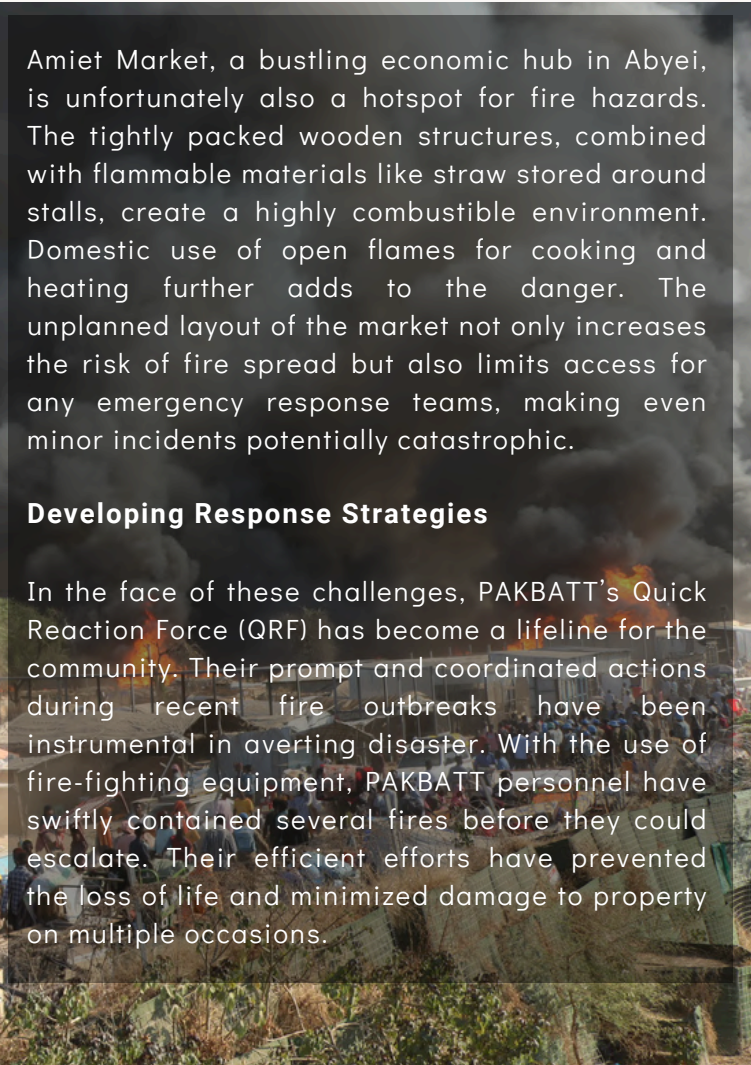
UNISFA's Fire Safety Drive in Amiet



Amiet Market, a bustling economic hub in Abyei, is unfortunately also a hotspot for fire hazards. The tightly packed wooden structures, combined with flammable materials like straw stored around stalls, create a highly combustible environment. Domestic use of open flames for cooking and heating further adds to the danger. The unplanned layout of the market not only increases the risk of fire spread but also limits access for any emergency response teams, making even minor incidents potentially catastrophic.

Developing Response Strategies

In the face of these challenges, PAKBATT's Quick Reaction Force (QRF) has become a lifeline for the community. Their prompt and coordinated actions during recent fire outbreaks have been instrumental in averting disaster. With the use of fire-fighting equipment, PAKBATT personnel have swiftly contained several fires before they could escalate. Their efficient efforts have prevented the loss of life and minimized damage to property on multiple occasions.



Proactive Civilian Protection

Recognizing that firefighting alone is not enough, PAKBATT has expanded its role to focus on fire prevention. The battalion has initiated community outreach aimed at educating vendors and residents on safer practices. These efforts include discouraging the storage of straw near open flames, promoting basic fire-safety behaviors, and encouraging vendors to clear flammable debris around their stalls.



Towards Long-Term Solutions

In the absence of a structured local firefighting service, PAKBATT is helping to build community-led safety mechanisms. Peacekeepers have conducted informal training on how to extinguish small fires and how to react in emergencies. There are also efforts underway to establish simple firebreaks and install water drums in key market areas. The long-term aim is to empower the community to respond to fire hazards even in the absence of peacekeepers—an essential step towards self-reliance.

Noong Clashes: Peacekeepers Act Swiftly to Shield Vulnerable Populations

Humanitarian aid, medical support, and round-the-clock vigilance prevent civilian casualties

Noong, Abyei – On May 6, 2025, intercommunal violence erupted near Noong village between elements of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities. In response to the developing security situation, UNISFA troops, led by INDBATT from the Noong Permanent Operating Base (POB), launched immediate protective measures in line with the mission’s mandate to protect civilians under threat. Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs), mounted on Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs), were rapidly deployed to evacuate villagers to safety before the conflict escalated. A total of 103 civilians—including women, children, and the elderly—were provided refuge within the POB. INDBATT troops established a secure perimeter and maintained a protective presence around the village throughout the period of heightened tension. In addition to ensuring security, INDBATT also facilitated basic humanitarian support, including access to drinking water, medical assistance, and power supply. Particular care was extended to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, the elderly, and children.



“We stood firm not just to guard lives, but to restore hope.”

INDBATT Peacekeeper, UNISFA

The situation remained volatile for several days, but due to the sustained presence and restraint shown by the peacekeepers, tensions gradually subsided. From 6 to 13 May, no civilian casualties were reported, and those sheltered within the POB returned safely to their homes once conditions stabilized. Throughout the incident, UNISFA personnel conducted themselves with professionalism and neutrality, consistent with the mission’s principles of impartial engagement. Their response helped to prevent further escalation and provided reassurance to the affected communities during a period of uncertainty. The Noong incident highlights the continuing importance of a rapid and measured peacekeeping presence in high-risk areas and reflects UNISFA’s ongoing commitment to safeguarding civilian lives in accordance to its mandate.

Raising Bars, Lifting Spirits

How a Soldier's Vision Forged a Path to Wellness

When Sgt Samson Elias arrived in Abyei with NBDC 2 in April 2024, he brought with him the discipline and focus expected of a soldier assigned to the Camp Protection Team (CPT). As Guard Commander, he was responsible for coordinating the personal security of the Acting Head of Mission/Force Commander, managing daily routines, and ensuring the welfare of his team. But what made him stand out wasn't just how well he executed orders—it was what he did after hours.

In a remote environment where resources are limited and routines repetitive, Sgt Elias noticed something missing: a space where peacekeepers could not only train their bodies, but also relieve stress and find a sense of routine beyond duty. So, using salvaged metal, scrap wood, and some ingenuity, he began assembling a makeshift gym. There were no blueprints—just a vision and a willingness to start.



Bit by bit, the space began to take shape. A pull-up bar welded from spare pipes. Dumbbells crafted from concrete-filled cans. A squat rack improvised from old vehicle parts. It wasn't fancy—but it worked. And more importantly, it was used.

Soon, the gym became a focal point in camp. Soldiers began to gather, not just to exercise, but to encourage one another, trade training tips, and find camaraderie beyond patrols and routines. For many, the space offered a break from the pressures of mission life—something small but meaningful in a place where morale can often feel fragile.

Sgt Elias didn't stop there. In between his official responsibilities, he helped build drainage channels and pathways, and even planted flowers around the camp perimeter. But it's the gym that continues to stand as a quiet legacy—a space born from one soldier's initiative, benefitting many.

His story is a reminder that peacekeeping is not only about patrols and mandates. Sometimes, it's about seeing a need, rolling up your sleeves, and building something that brings people together.



Empowering Women and Transforming Lives



UNPOL



UNPOL marked a proud moment in Abyei with the graduation of its first group of tailoring trainees, highlighting the mission's ongoing efforts to empower local communities. The event also included the launch of the Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Book, a vital initiative aimed at improving health education and breaking taboos around menstrual hygiene. The Honorable Nyinkwang Aguer, Minister of Education, attended as Chief Guest on behalf of the Abyei Chief Administrator, alongside Maj. Gen. Robert Yaw Afram, Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, UNISFA, and UNPOL Police Commissioner Ms. Violet Lusala.



The six-month training program saw 23 participants—22 women and one man—gain practical and theoretical skills in tailoring. The graduates, many of whom had limited economic opportunities before the program, are now equipped to start small businesses or secure jobs, creating new paths toward financial independence. Their achievement not only empowers them individually but also boosts the broader economic development of their communities.

This initiative reflects UNPOL's dedication to building local capacity and promoting inclusive growth. By combining vocational training with health education, UNPOL is addressing key challenges faced by women and youth in Abyei. The launch of the Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Book further demonstrates a holistic approach to community support, ensuring that empowerment goes hand in hand with dignity and informed choices.



UNMAS in collaboration with the SCPIO launched a unique art training program in Abyei from March 24 to 26, 2025, led by local cartoonist Adija Acuil. The initiative brought together 19 young participants to explore themes of peace and safety under the banners “Safe Futures Begin Here” and “Peace Begins With Me.” The workshop encouraged self-expression and community engagement through creativity.



Five standout artists, supported by TCC personnel and mission staff, created seven murals on the UNISFA Headquarters’ perimeter wall, promoting peacebuilding and mine risk awareness. Unveiled on April 3 in a ceremony attended by local leaders and officials, the initiative aimed to celebrate youth voices and strengthening community bonds.

UNISFA’s OIC Acting Head of Mission & FC, Brigadier General Ameer Muhamad Umrani, underscored the long-term dangers of unexploded ordnance, stating -

“Even when the guns fall silent, these remnants of war remain, threatening the lives of innocent civilians.”



KEY LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENTS

HIGHLIGHTS



USG Lacroix visits Abyei

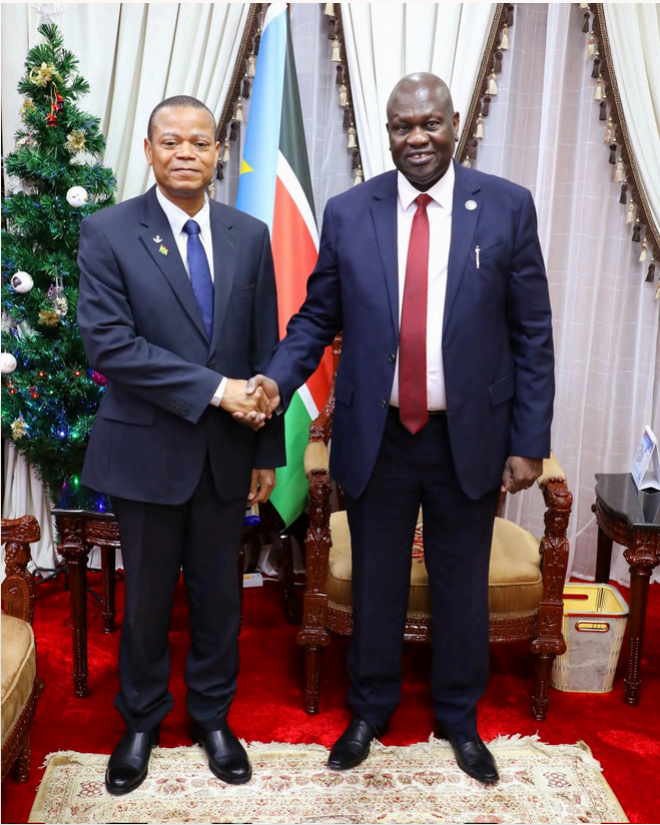
Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix concluded a significant two-day visit to Abyei on June 20, 2025, reaffirming the United Nations’ commitment to stability in the region, engaging with local and international stakeholders, including Sudan and South Sudan administrators, traditional leaders, civil society groups, women’s organizations, UN agencies, and UNISFA peacekeepers to focus on the mission’s protection efforts amid the escalating humanitarian crisis driven by Sudan’s conflict, flooding in South Sudan, and the proliferation of arms. USG Lacroix advocated for increased humanitarian support, stressed grassroots engagement and peacebuilding, and fostered dialogue between Sudan and South Sudan to shield Abyei from regional conflicts, with his visit to both southern and northern regions highlighted by symbolic gestures like receiving a ceremonial gift from Pakistani peacekeepers, reinforcing UNISFA’s dedication to the region’s stability.

Strengthening Abyei Stability

The leadership of the UNISFA has consistently engaged with the Juba-appointed local administration in Abyei to foster cooperation and address regional challenges as of January 13, 2025. These regular meetings focus on coordinating efforts to maintain peace and stability, particularly in managing intercommunal tensions. By building a collaborative framework with local leaders, UNISFA reinforces its commitment to supporting the region amidst the ongoing complexities of the Sudan-South Sudan conflict.

The engagement also addresses the humanitarian crisis driven by the influx of a large number of refugees from Sudan into Abyei since April 2023, a key priority for both UNISFA and the local administration. These discussions aim to enhance resource allocation and peacekeeping strategies to protect the population and mitigate the impact of regional instability. Through these efforts, UNISFA continues to play a vital role in stabilizing Abyei, ensuring that the voices of the local administration are integrated into broader peacebuilding initiatives.





Acting HOM & FC meets Dr. Riek Machar, the first Vice President of South Sudan

UNISFA continues to advance regional peace through strategic diplomatic engagement. In the month of December, 2024, UNISFA Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Robert Yaw Affram, held constructive talks with His Excellency Dr. Riek Machar, First Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan. The discussion focused on enhancing security coordination, operationalizing the Malual Aleu Airport to improve mobility and humanitarian access, and addressing key humanitarian concerns in the Abyei region. Both leaders emphasized the importance of sustained collaboration to support affected communities and reinforce long-term stability. The meeting represents a meaningful step in strengthening ties between UNISFA and the Government of South Sudan.

Strengthening Ties in Port Sudan

On November 20, 2024, the Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander led a delegation to Port Sudan, engaging with key Government of Sudan (GOS) officials to address critical issues surrounding the Abyei region. In a productive meeting with Sudan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the delegation discussed revitalizing dialogue between the governments of South Sudan and Sudan to resolve ongoing Abyei-related challenges.

The delegation's visit also included a strategic meeting with the Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator in Sudan, focusing on enhancing humanitarian activities and joint programming efforts in Abyei. With an influx of refugees fleeing Sudan's conflict into South Sudan via Abyei since April 2023, these discussions highlighted the urgent need for coordinated support to address the region's humanitarian crisis. Additionally, the delegation connected with UNISFA staff stationed in Port Sudan, reinforcing the mission's operational cohesion and dedication to maintaining peace and security in the region amidst challenging circumstances.



UNISFA Leads the 2nd RHoMCC

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) hosted the 2nd Regional Heads of Military Component Conference (RHoMCC) on January 28-29, 2025, at RSCE in Entebbe, uniting Force Commanders from UNMISS, MINUSCA, and MINURSO to boost peacekeeping collaboration across Africa. Major General Robert Yaw Affram, UNISFA's Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, showcased the mission's adaptability in overcoming logistical challenges and highlighted the Smart Camp Project as a model for improving troop welfare and efficiency. The conference reinforced a shared commitment to innovation and effectiveness in addressing evolving security landscapes.



UNMAS Director Visits UNISFA

During a recent visit to Abyei, UNMAS Director Ms. Ilene Cohn met with UNISFA Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander Maj. Gen. Robert Affram to discuss the transition of UNMAS to the UN Secretariat and outline key mine action priorities for the region, addressing the ongoing threat of explosive remnants of war. As part of her commitment to supporting local development, Ms. Cohn handed over broadcast equipment to representatives of local journalists, enhancing their ability to combat mis/disinformation and raise awareness about explosive ordnance risks. This initiative not only boosts community safety but also fosters a more informed public, empowering residents to participate actively in peacebuilding efforts amidst the region's complex security challenges.



Strengthening the Frontlines



In continuation of his engagement with the Mission area, UNISFA Force Commander Major General Robert Yaw Affram conducted follow-up visits to key locations across the area of responsibility. These visits provided an opportunity to review operational readiness, interact with ground commanders, and discuss the evolving security dynamics on the ground. Emphasis was placed on coordinated action during the dry-season migration period, force protection, and community engagement. The Force Commander acknowledged the efforts of all contingents and encouraged continued professionalism and adaptability in support of the Mission's core objectives.



THE SENTINELS OF PEACE AND SECURITY

OPERATIONS



Reverse Migration: Operational Preparedness in the Rainy Season

As the rainy season approaches, Abyei enters the return phase of its seasonal migration cycle, with Misseriya herders moving northward alongside their livestock. This post-migration period signals the end of dry-season grazing and is operationally significant for UNISFA. While the movement is vital for the livelihoods of both Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, it also places pressure on already stretched resources—such as grazing areas, water points, and access roads. The return often brings increased tension over land use and resource sharing, particularly as rains begin to limit mobility. To manage these dynamics, UNISFA intensifies patrols, strengthens community liaison efforts, and coordinates closely with local actors to prevent flare-ups and ensure a secure environment during this critical phase of seasonal transition.



Aerial Recce of Sector North

On 18 December 2024, Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander Major General Robert Yaw Affram, accompanied by the PAKBATT Commander and other mission officials, undertook an aerial reconnaissance of northern Abyei. The mission aimed to assess the security and humanitarian landscape amidst the ongoing dry season migration. Flying over key areas of concern, the team reviewed patterns of movement, terrain conditions, and possible flashpoints. The reconnaissance formed part of UNISFA’s broader strategy to maintain operational readiness and informed response, ensuring peacekeepers remain alert and adaptive in a dynamic environment.



Taking over of Tajalei POB by INDBATT

On 25 December 2024, the INDBATT formally took over the Tajalei Permanent Operating Base (POB) from the Ghanaian Battalion. This transition expanded INDBATT’s operational area further east within the Abyei Box, enhancing its ability to respond swiftly to emerging security challenges and engage more effectively with remote communities east of the Main Supply Route. GHANBATT’s redeployment to Sector South bolstered the mission’s strategic reserves and rapid deployment capability. The handover was conducted in line with the Mission re-sectorisation plan guided by the Military and Police Capability Study Report. This reconfiguration has strengthened UNISFA’s overall deployment posture by reinforcing both its forward presence and central reserves.

Carjacking Incidents in the Box

During a period marked by several vehicle hijackings across Abyei, two UN vehicles taken on 5 and 12 March 2025 were recovered by Indian Battalion quick-reaction teams within hours of each incident. Acting on short notice, the teams tracked the stolen vehicles, blocked escape routes, and retrieved them intact— the first such recoveries within 24 hours since the mission began in 2011. While carjacking remains a broader challenge in the Box, these recoveries provide a practical example of rapid response and coordination aimed at safeguarding UN personnel and assets.



Operational Assessment of Amiet Market

As part of ongoing efforts to enhance security and streamline functionality in high-traffic areas, the Ag HoM & FC, Major General Robert Yaw Affram, conducted an operational visit to Amiet Market on 16 December 2024. Accompanied by PAKBATT Commander, the Force Commander received a comprehensive briefing on structural challenges, fire risks, and crowd management issues within the market. The visit included an inspection of the Benzene Market zone and the JPC Detention Centre, highlighting key concerns related to market congestion and enforcement capacity. Discussions with traditional leaders centered on strengthening cooperation to address emerging threats and improve community-level coordination. This field assessment contributes to shaping responsive operational measures aimed at ensuring civilian safety and maintaining stability in one of Abyei's busiest commercial hubs.



Fire Risk Response in Abyei Town

Apart from Amiet market, fire outbreaks remain a recurring threat in Abyei town, particularly in densely populated areas with flammable building materials and limited firefighting infrastructure. In such instances, peacekeepers from INDBATT have frequently been among the first to respond, assisting in controlling the flames and preventing further damage. Their presence in affected areas has helped to stabilize situations, support evacuations when necessary, and ensure that immediate risks to civilians—especially vulnerable groups—are mitigated. These efforts underline the growing need for coordinated fire risk management and improved emergency response capacities within the region.

Managing Sector South

In Sector South, peacekeepers continue to maintain stability through sustained area domination and community-focused patrols. Regular joint operations with UNMOs, UNPOL, national monitors, and local authorities strengthen engagement with communities while monitoring potential threats. These missions are particularly critical in remote areas, where visibility and presence serve as deterrents against armed elements. The operational environment presents unique challenges—ranging from difficult terrain and limited infrastructure to seasonal migration and intermittent security concerns. Despite these hurdles, the troops have adapted effectively, intensifying patrols along key routes and vulnerable points. By fostering trust through dialogue and maintaining consistent outreach, the peacekeeping presence remains central to upholding safety and preventing escalation in the region.



In Pursuit of Excellence

TRAINING

Advancing Gender Equality Through Leadership Training in Abyei

On 16 December, UNISFA’s Public Information Office and Gender Unit organized a comprehensive workshop on gender-sensitive reporting for 23 journalists—four of whom were women—from local Abyei media and the Juba-appointed Ministry of Information. The workshop provided in-depth training on key topics such as gender-sensitive reporting, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) reporting, and awareness of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Participants learned how to avoid stereotypes, treat gender equality as a broader societal issue, use appropriate SGBV terminology, and adopt a survivor-centered approach in their coverage. The session also highlighted UNISFA’s mandate on Women, Peace, and Security, reinforcing the importance of gender considerations in peacekeeping contexts.

Furthermore, the Conduct and Discipline Unit addressed critical aspects of SEA, including definitions, prohibitions, accountability measures, and reporting mechanisms, emphasizing community-based options for reporting. This workshop marks the first in a series aimed at sensitizing journalists on these vital topics. Future sessions will build on this foundation, focusing on SGBV response activities, referral pathways, gender-positive reporting, and increasing women’s participation in peace and security processes.

Training is STRATEGIC

At UNISFA, every drill, every lesson, every rehearsal is more than routine—it’s preparation with purpose. From the frontline to the field radio, continuous training equips our peacekeepers to think fast, act right, and serve with precision. Because readiness isn’t a moment—it’s a mindset.



11-day capacity-building program

The UNISFA Community Liaison Office, in partnership with UNPOL and Concordis International, launched an 11-day capacity-building program in Abyei. The program engaged over 600 participants from the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities, focusing on strengthening community-based rule of law, traditional justice, and local law-and-order mechanisms. Designed to be culturally sensitive yet aligned with international standards, this initiative aims to foster cooperation and peaceful coexistence by enhancing grassroots justice and security structures in the box.

Training for Emergency Response

To strengthen local emergency response capacities during the dry season, a fire safety training was conducted at UNISFA Headquarters for 42 Abyei-based firefighters, including 26 women. Organized by UNPOL in collaboration with UNMAS and the Security Section, the training focused on fire prevention and response techniques tailored to the region's specific risks. In addition to firefighting skills, participants were also sensitized on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) awareness, enhancing their preparedness to handle multiple hazards. The session reflects a targeted effort to improve community resilience and safety through practical, inclusive training.



Induction Training

The Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC) remains at the forefront of preparing newly arrived personnel at UNISFA through its comprehensive seven-day induction program. Conducted regularly, this training ensures that all inductees are well-versed in the mission's mandate, operational procedures, safety protocols, and the unique challenges of Abyei. The program emphasizes cultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and the importance of community engagement, equipping personnel with the necessary skills to navigate the complex dynamics of peacekeeping in the area. Through interactive sessions, case studies, and practical exercises, the training fosters a deep understanding of the mission's objectives and enhances collaboration across various components. This ongoing effort by IMTC ensures that UNISFA personnel are fully prepared to contribute effectively from day one, maintaining the Mission's high standards and operational readiness in pursuit of sustainable peace in Abyei.



Strengthening Military Capabilities

UNISFA'S CONTINGENT TRAINING



Contingent troops across UNISFA regularly undergo a comprehensive range of training to ensure operational readiness, adherence to international standards, and responsiveness to emerging challenges in the Mission area. Routine military drills—including weapon handling, tactical maneuvers, and situational response exercises—form the foundation of daily preparedness. In addition, specialized sessions focus on Rules of Engagement (ROE), riot control, and crowd management to align with peacekeeping mandates.



Troops are also trained in Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), gender sensitivity, and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda to foster respectful and inclusive engagement with local communities. CASEVAC drills, communications handling, and familiarization with mission-specific technology further enhance the capacity of peacekeepers to act swiftly and effectively in complex situations. These layered training efforts contribute significantly to the professionalism, discipline, and operational effectiveness of UNISFA's military component.



Community Outreach

Education and Community Building Efforts

Recent efforts have quietly contributed to bridging the gap in education availability for the community. Troop Contributing Countries have supported various grassroots initiatives that aim to provide safer, more structured learning environments for children. The Indian Battalion constructed a six-classroom school to replace makeshift facilities, offering a space where students can pursue their studies with greater consistency.

The Pakistani Battalion supports IQRA/KUEN Primary School in the Ameit Market area, which serves over 400 children from diverse communities. Their involvement includes organizing events such as annual prize distributions, fostering motivation among students and reinforcing the importance of education within the local community.



Additionally, as part of broader stabilization efforts, two Quick Impact Projects—a Community Protection Committee (CPC) Station and a Secondary School—were recently handed over to local authorities in Abathok Village. These projects were designed to strengthen both rule of law and education services. Their inauguration, attended by traditional leaders and government representatives, was marked by a strong sense of community ownership and calls for similar initiatives elsewhere in Abyei. Together, these targeted efforts underscore a practical understanding that education not only builds futures but also fosters resilience, particularly in regions where conflict has disrupted the basic fabric of society.

Supporting Growth Through Infrastructure

As part of its continued engagement with local needs, UNISFA has supported several key infrastructure developments across Abyei. Among recent efforts, the construction of new premises for Abyei FM by PAKBATT –with support from Vietnamese engineers–has restored the community’s only functioning radio station, closing a critical gap in public communication. The Nigerian Contingent also contributed by building two new bus stations in Abyei Town, enhancing local transportation facilities. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese Engineering Company carried out essential road leveling around Abyei Hospital, addressing long-standing access challenges, particularly during the rainy season. These contributions, while not exhaustive, reflect UNISFA’s steady and practical involvement in strengthening the area’s basic infrastructure.



Breaking the Cycle

MOBILIZING ACTION TO PREVENT DRUG ABUSE BEFORE IT TAKES ROOT

UNISFA continues to play an active role in promoting community well-being in Abyei, including addressing the growing concern of drug abuse. Through targeted awareness efforts, the Mission supports local communities by encouraging healthy, informed choices, especially among young people. These initiatives highlight the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of education as a path to a better future. As part of these ongoing efforts, INDBATT recently organized a Anti-Drug Awareness Campaign at the Paramount Chief Post in Abyei. The event featured a special lecture on “Say No to Drugs and the Power of Education” and drew an encouraging participation from the locals. The initiative was warmly received by Paramount Chief Dr. Bulabek Deng and members of the local community, who expressed their appreciation.

More Than Just a Celebration

Moments of festivity serve as powerful reminders that peace is not only built through operations and dialogue but also through shared joy. The Mission regularly joins hands with the local communities to celebrate occasions that bring people together.

These gatherings often include sports, games, music, and traditional performances—fostering a sense of unity that transcends background or belief. They provide not only recreation but also informal platforms for engagement and mutual understanding. Last Christmas saw hundreds of community members—men, women, and children—gather for a vibrant day of football matches, traditional games, and dancing. The celebration sparked conversations about the need for better recreational infrastructure and underscored how such events can nurture aspirations.

Through these simple but meaningful acts of participation, UNISFA strengthens its connection with the people it serves—reminding all that peacekeeping is also about being present for moments of joy.



Supporting Women's Wellbeing

Women's health and wellbeing have become a central focus of several community outreach efforts carried out by peacekeepers and partners in Abyei. Through awareness sessions on menstrual hygiene, general sanitation, and women's rights, large segments of the local population—particularly in remote areas—have been engaged. These activities not only distribute essential hygiene supplies, but also create safe spaces to discuss sensitive issues like early marriage and gender-based violence. Outreach by Female Engagement Teams, UNPOL, and Troop Contributing Countries like INDBATT and GHANBATT has helped break long-standing taboos and promote inclusive dialogue. These efforts, conducted at scale, represent a steady move toward dignity, equal opportunities, and healthier futures for women and girls in Abyei.



Medical Outreach

MEETING BASIC NEEDS, ONE VISIT AT A TIME

In areas where public health infrastructure is limited, regular access to medical and veterinary care remains a challenge for many communities in Abyei. To help address these gaps, peacekeepers from various TCCs, in coordination with local health authorities, conduct outreach activities that provide basic medical support and animal health services. These include general check-ups, vaccinations, and awareness sessions on hygiene and disease prevention. The veterinary support is particularly important in a region where livestock remains central to livelihoods. Such joint efforts aim to improve community well-being and ensure early intervention where formal healthcare systems are hard to reach.



Empowering Local Security Staff

UNIFORM DISTRIBUTION MARKS A NEW CHAPTER IN COMMUNITY SECURITY

UNISFA marked a major milestone on January 29, 2025, by officially launching and handing over uniforms and identity cards to members of the Community Protection Committee (CPC) and Joint Protection Committee (JPC). Held in Abyei Town and Amiet Market, the ceremony symbolized more than formality—it was a celebration of trust, empowerment, and grassroots leadership. With strong backing from local leaders and under the guidance of Police Commissioner Violet Lusala, the initiative reflects UNPOL’s vision of community-led policing and sustainable peace. As newly uniformed volunteers step forward, they embody a renewed commitment to security, dignity, and justice in Abyei.



Mission Activities and Updates

Arrival of FCOS to the Mission

On 10 December, Colonel Alexandre Grangeiro de Lima arrived in Abyei to assume the role of UNISFA Force Chief of Staff. With nearly three decades of military experience, Colonel Grangeiro brings extensive expertise in jungle operations, asymmetric warfare, and strategic leadership. He has served in key command and instructional roles and holds a Degree in Defense Studies from the Higher Defense School of Brazil. Proficient in Portuguese, Spanish, and English, Colonel Grangeiro's appointment is a valuable addition to UNISFA's leadership team.



Bidding Adieu to CMUHU-2

On 4 January 2025, UNISFA organized a formal farewell parade in honour of the Chinese Medium Utility Helicopter Unit (CMUHU) as they concluded their deployment with the Mission. The ceremony marked a moment of appreciation for CMUHU's professionalism, reliability, and steadfast support to peacekeeping operations in Abyei. UNISFA extends its sincere gratitude and best wishes for continued success in future assignments.



PAKBATT-2 Farewell

A farewell ceremony was organised on 02 March to bid adieu to PAKBATT-2 which left the Mission area post completion of a distinguished tour of duty. UNISFA community wishes them good fortune for all their future endeavours.

Armed Forces Day, Nigeria

On 15 January 2025, a commemorative ceremony was held at UNISFA Headquarters to mark Nigerian Armed Forces Day. The event brought together UNISFA leadership, Nigerian peacekeepers, and local community representatives in a shared moment of respect and reflection. The observance honoured the courage, dedication, and sacrifices of the Nigerian Armed Forces—both at home and abroad—in promoting peace and stability. The ceremony served as a reminder of the important role played by Nigerian troops in international peacekeeping, including their ongoing commitment within the UNISFA mission.



Republic Day, India

On 26 Jan 2025, INDBATT marked India's Republic Day with a vibrant celebration at Dokura, joined by the Paramount Chief as Guest of Honour. The occasion featured a ceremonial flag hoisting, Guard of Honour, and cultural performances by local children, blending tradition with community spirit. A veterinary camp was also organized as part of the outreach, reinforcing the peacekeepers' connection with the local population. The event reflected India's commitment to heritage, unity, and its enduring role in international peacekeeping.

Spring Festival, China

On 28 January 2025, the Chinese Contingents in UNISFA ushered in the Chinese Spring Festival with a vibrant cultural gala. The celebration featured traditional performances and festive displays, offering fellow peacekeepers a glimpse into China's rich heritage. Beyond the joy and colour, the event fostered cross-cultural understanding and strengthened camaraderie among troops from diverse backgrounds. It served as a reminder of how shared traditions can unite peacekeepers.



Lunar New Year, Vietnam

On 28 January, UNISFA joined the Vietnam Military Construction Engineering Company in celebrating the Lunar New Year. The event, attended by UNISFA Mission Leadership and representatives from the local administration, highlighted the spirit of unity and cultural exchange. Traditional performances and shared festivities underscored the strong bonds between peacekeepers and the host community, reflecting a shared commitment to peace, partnership, and mutual respect.



262nd Army Day, Nepal

On 26 February, the Nepal Contingent at UNISFA commemorated their 262nd Army Day with a ceremonial medal parade, highlighting their longstanding tradition of discipline and service. The event served as a moment of pride and reflection, celebrating the contingent's dedication to global peace efforts and their vital contributions within the mission.



End-of-Year Festivities, 2024

To mark the end-of-year festivities, UNISFA Mission Headquarters hosted a cheerful gathering featuring a cake-cutting ceremony, led by Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Robert Yaw Affram. The event brought together civilian and uniformed personnel in a moment of light-hearted celebration, reinforcing a sense of camaraderie and team spirit across the mission. In the spirit of the season, the gathering offered a welcome opportunity for colleagues to come together in unity and good cheer.



Eid-al-Fitr, 2025

On 31 March, the OIC Acting Head of Mission and FC, Brig Gen Ameer Muhammad Umrani celebrated the festival of Eid-al-Fitr at Todach with the troops of PAKBATT.

Together for Impact

STANDING UNITED FOR OUR SHARED GOALS OF PEACE, PROTECTION, AND PROGRESS



16 Days of Activism

UNITED AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

In commemoration of the global campaign '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence', a vibrant, community-driven event was held in Diffra with support from UNISFA. On 4 December, three caravans carrying participants from Todach, Goli, and surrounding areas of northern Abyei converged in Diffra, gathering over 700 individuals, including women's civil society groups, community leaders, and local gender focal points. The day featured powerful cultural performances by a local drama and music association, which used drama, poetry, and music to spark dialogue on sensitive issues like child marriage and gender-based violence. The event fostered awareness, solidarity, and local ownership in addressing GBV concerns across communities.

A Step Toward Peaceful Coexistence

NGOK DINKA AND MISSERIYA REAFFIRM PEACEFUL INTENTIONS THROUGH A MISSION DRIVEN AGREEMENT

On 12 December, the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities signed a landmark agreement to ensure a peaceful migration season, following a four-day conference in Noong village attended by 154 representatives. Facilitated by UNISFA and partners, the conference focused on conflict prevention, sustainable resource sharing, and inclusion of youth and women in migration corridor committees. UNISFA's Force Commander, **Maj. Gen. Robert Yaw Affram**, commended the communities' collaboration and inclusive approach, highlighting it as a key step toward lasting peace in Abyei.





Volunteers Lead the Way

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY WITH ACTION AND IMPACT

UNISFA marked International Volunteer Day on 5 December with a meaningful tree-planting activity at Mission Headquarters. Led by the Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, Brig. Gen. Ameer Muhammad Umrani, UN Volunteers planted fruit-bearing trees for the second consecutive year, contributing to local greenery and food security. The event brought together staff and volunteers in a spirit of collective action, reinforcing their commitment to environmental care. Observed annually, International Volunteer Day celebrates the vital contributions of volunteers worldwide in advancing peace, development, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recognizing the critical role of women in building peace and security

UNISFA MARKS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On 13th Dec, UNISFA observed International Women's Day with a series of activities that brought together peacekeepers and community members to highlight the vital contributions of women in advancing peace and development in Abyei. The day began with a solidarity march led by uniformed and civilian female personnel, symbolizing collective action for gender equality. This was followed by a formal ceremony featuring remarks from mission leadership, representatives of UN agencies, and local partners, all emphasizing the importance of women's leadership and participation. The celebration served not only as a moment of recognition but also as a reminder of the ongoing efforts needed to support gender-responsive leadership within peacekeeping and the wider community.



GLIMPSES PEACEKEEPERS AT WORK









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