



Security Council

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Letter dated 30 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of the briefings provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference convened on Tuesday, 28 April 2020. Statements were also delivered by the representatives of the Sudan and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) José Singer Weisinger
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations**

I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the developments pertaining to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), including its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). I will also update the Council on recent developments since the publication of the Secretary-General's report before the Council (S/2020/308).

Despite the improving relations between the Sudan and South Sudan, it remains very unlikely that progress will be made in determining the final status of the Abyei Area in the short to medium term. Given that the African Union (AU) Commission and the AU High-level Implementation Panel are stretched dealing with other priorities, the enhancement of the United Nations support to the African Union through the appointment of a deputy head of mission for UNISFA has become more important while the Special Envoy works with the AU to seek ways to revitalize the political process. In that regard, in a positive development, on 4 March, UNISFA held consultations with Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok of the Sudan to resolve the issues of the Athony airstrip and the appointment of a deputy head of mission. The Prime Minister has expressed his willingness to support the mission in those areas.

At the local level, the security situation in the Abyei Area remains volatile, with episodes of heightened tensions between the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya communities, an increase in criminality and the presence of armed elements in UNISFA's area of responsibility. UNISFA strove to contain insecurity and to keep the Abyei Area a weapons-free zone through rapid response and presence in sensitive areas. However, the movement of armed men reported by the local population on several occasions during the reporting period remained a source of concern.

UNISFA troops have also been subject to attacks by armed elements. In the latest incident, on 24 April, in Sector Centre, UNISFA forces challenged an armed Misseriya herdsman in Nainai, who fired upon them. In a separate incident on the same day, also in Sector Centre, a Misseriya armed group, with automatic assault rifles, engaged with UNISFA troops at the Alal post.

With regard to the major escalation of violence between communities, in which, on 19 January, three Misseriya were killed at Nainai by attackers suspected to be Ngok Dinka and, on 22 January, 33 Ngok Dinka were killed by Misseriya armed elements at Kolom in what is believed to be a retaliatory attack, UNISFA established a joint investigative team to conduct a preliminary investigation into the incidents in the aftermath of the attacks. Tensions, which had rapidly escalated, are now slowly easing thanks to the preventive deployments and engagement of the mission with the local communities.

On 16 March, a traditional leaders' conference, comprising both Ngok Dinka and Misseriya Paramount Chiefs, took place in Diffra, Sector North. The two sides acknowledged the need for peace and agreed not to escalate the situation. A follow-up meeting with the two Paramount Chiefs took place in Diffra on 9 April. While no agreement has yet been reached on the southern migration of Misseriya herders for the forthcoming dry season, these meetings managed to bring together the traditional leaders of the two sides for the first time since the Kolom attacks in January. They were also the first meetings in that format since November 2017, when the leaders met in Addis Ababa during an Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meeting. Although still insufficient to restore stability to the area, these are encouraging steps taken by the two communities. Our paramount concern is to sustain the positive dialogue restored between the two communities. Following the completion of the Kolom

investigation report by the mission, I will be discussing with the Force Commander what other steps may be undertaken to prevent the repetition of such incidents in the future.

In other developments, the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism made some progress towards reaching the benchmarks specified by resolution 2497 (2019). Clear guidance for the operational activities of the JBVMM was provided in the outcome document of the ordinary session of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, held in Juba on 19 February. Both parties have now fully deployed the complete number of national monitors, as per the agreement. Freedom of movement for aerial and ground monitoring missions was also fully guaranteed. The team site at Abu Qussa/Wunkur was then successfully established on 13 January.

With respect to the current police generation process, the deployment of the three authorized formed police units (FPUs), expected to be on the ground by July, is facing serious delays due to the travel restrictions decided by the Government of the Sudan to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The process for the deployment of the first identified FPU from Ethiopia was well advanced by early March, with the completion of the predeployment visit to the mission area. However, all further steps had to be suspended in view of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

Although no cases of COVID-19 have been recorded within UNISFA, the UNISFA COVID-19 task force medical teams are visiting all team sites and sectors to verify the state of preparedness in the mission. Engineering work has been completed to establish a 16-bed quarantine area for uniformed personnel. I welcome the Prime Minister's assurance that he will soon put together a team to conduct the necessary consultations with the Ministry of Defence and Intelligence for the use of the Athony airstrip, which would significantly improve UNISFA's medical evacuation capability and address its current logistical challenges.

At the local level, on a daily basis UNISFA conducts sensitization with a large section of interlocutors, including civil society, women's associations, communities coming to the different marketplaces and dedicated meetings with Paramount Chiefs, judges and prosecutors, to encourage hand-washing and social distancing. As a result of the discussions in detention centres, the chief criminal court decided to release 13 detainees convicted of petty crimes to help decongest the cells and to comply with the World Health Organization guidelines on social distancing. Agencies are also in discussions with the local administration on requirements for screening sites in several locations of the Abyei Area.

While the months ahead will no doubt bring new and unprecedented challenges as we grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNISFA leadership will continue to engage with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to facilitate the implementation of the pending aspects of their previous agreements and the UNISFA mandate. UNISFA will also continue to play a stabilizing role in the Abyei Area and along the border regions.

I would therefore seek the continued support of the Security Council for the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNISFA for a further period of six months, until 15 October 2020.

Annex II**Statement by Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa**

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to once again brief the Security Council on the progress made in the implementation of resolution 2046 (2012), which concerns the outstanding bilateral issues between the Sudan and South Sudan and the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

This briefing is taking place at a time when the world community is facing a deadly global pandemic in the form of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In the Sudan and South Sudan, the COVID-19 pandemic has wide-ranging health, human and socioeconomic implications, compounded by plummeting oil prices, a desert locust invasion and climatic vagaries. Urgent external support will be needed to help both countries offset those challenges. The pandemic will also likely have a negative effect on the peace processes in the two countries, including by significantly slowing down engagements. My Office is currently coordinating United Nations-wide technical support to enable the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) secretariat to formulate a regional strategy and develop an action plan in response to the pandemic pursuant to the decisions of the IGAD virtual summit meeting of 30 March, chaired by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.

Since my previous report to the Council, in October 2019 (see S/PV.8644), I have had opportunities to engage with the authorities in the Sudan and South Sudan as well as with regional actors. My joint visit with Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix to Abyei last February, in the aftermath of the tragic Kolom incident, was part of these efforts. Undeniably, both countries have been consolidating their improved relations, notably through the constructive roles played in each other's peace process. In that regard, South Sudan has continued to host and facilitate the Sudanese peace process under the auspices of President Salva Kiir Mayardit. Conversely, the Government of the Sudan's mediation contributed to the compromise between President Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar that led to the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity on 12 March 2020.

Furthermore, having inherited the South Sudan file as the new IGAD Chairperson at a time when the opposition and the incumbent Government were deadlocked on the number and boundaries of states, Prime Minister Hamdok, alongside his co-guarantor President Museveni of Uganda, is credited with having helped to resolve the issue by encouraging President Kiir, on the sidelines of the African Union summit in early February, to return South Sudan to 10 states. Prime Minister Hamdok thereafter congratulated the South Sudanese leader on "the courageous decision" he took on 15 February, which espoused the IGAD position. Demonstrating the changed spirit of the relationship, President Kiir condemned the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Hamdok in Khartoum on 9 March. In the same vein, the Sudan, while guaranteeing the security of Mr. Machar in Khartoum, ensured that Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, accompanied him to and from Juba for consultations, including during his face-to-face meetings with President Kiir during the period from September 2019 to February 2020.

The strength of the improved relations between the two countries was put to the test by two sad developments. The first was a deadly armed attack perpetrated by Misseriya herdsmen in the Kolom locality of Abyei on 22 January against a community of Ngok Dinka, and the second was the sudden death from natural causes on 25 March in Juba of the Sudanese Minister of Defence, General Jamal Al-Din Omar, after he had jointly chaired the meeting of the Joint Political and Security

Mechanism, along with his South Sudanese counterpart. Admittedly, the emphasis put by both parties on deepening their cooperation and supporting each other's stability and peace is commendable.

In the Sudan, where Prime Minister Hamdok is leading a challenging transition, his attention is largely directed at defusing tensions and finding consensus between political players in Khartoum, including on issues resulting from the increasingly dire economic situation. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is also seeking to deliver on his commitment to peace through negotiations with the armed movements. In this regard, the recent statement by General Al-Burhan, the President of the Sovereign Council on the unity of the leadership of the transition is encouraging. In South Sudan, President Kiir and First Vice-President Riek Machar are striving to re-establish a partnership that has twice shown its limits, while striving also to overcome the political stalemate on the sharing of states and the allocation of governors.

Otherwise, cooperation in oil management between the two countries has remained strong. After a decision to extend the agreement on oil beyond its December 2019 deadline to March 2022, South Sudan has been steadily making payments relating to the transitional financial arrangement by providing the Sudan with 28,000 barrels of oil per day. Of the initial amount due of \$3.02 billion, South Sudan now owes approximately \$500 million and will continue to use the facilities based in the Sudan and to export its oil through Port Sudan against payment of a fixed processing, transit and transportation fee. The effect of the drastic fall in oil prices this month on this cooperation has yet to become clear.

As most Sudanese armed opposition movements settled for President Kiir's facilitation of their negotiations with Khartoum, and with the possibility of moving them to a third country ruled out, the talks resumed in Juba in January and are ongoing. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the talks have proceeded in a virtual format. Prime Minister Hamdok remains open to discussing all issues and the root causes of the Sudan's many conflicts in the hope of reaching an agreement that unites all Sudanese. Encouragingly, opposition movements have also restated their irreversible determination to achieve peace.

Crucially, despite disagreements between the parties on issues such as secularism, autonomy and self-determination that have resulted in several extensions to the initial deadline for concluding the talks, significant progress has been achieved globally, as evidenced, inter alia, by the renewed commitment to unilateral ceasefires by armed movements. At the behest of President Kiir, the South Sudanese lead mediator has travelled occasionally to Khartoum to brief the Sudanese authorities on progress in the peace process. The talks are now scheduled to end on 9 May, but it remains to be seen whether this deadline will be met under the current circumstances.

So far, the Government has signed framework agreements with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North) (Agar), as well as with armed movements from Darfur and eastern Sudan. The agreements address the key concerns pertaining to marginalization, lack of development and participation in governance institutions. However, they do not completely address the issue of the separation of religion and the State, which SPLM-North (Agar) sees as critical. The next negotiation phases will be concerned with security arrangements and participation in transitional institutions.

Negotiations with Darfuri armed movements delivered a major outcome when agreement was reached with the Government on 11 February to establish a special court for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur and to seek justice through the International Criminal Court. Notwithstanding progress on the

Darfur track, the absence of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Abdel Wahid from the talks remains a source of grave concern.

Similarly, talks with the SPLM-North faction of Abdelaziz Al-Hilu (SPLM-North (Al-Hilu)) do not appear to have made any headway. Although present in Juba, Al-Hilu has refused to engage with the Government unless it agrees to a secular Sudan and self-determination for Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. The Government's position is that these issues should be addressed by the constitutional conference and not through the negotiations in Juba. A joint committee on reforms established on 6 April has been mandated to, inter alia, meet with Al-Hilu in a bid to break the impasse.

Despite their support for each other, the Sudan and South Sudan have undertaken minimal bilateral engagements within the framework of their cooperation agreements as they have continued to focus on their internal conflicts. However, they have stopped accusing each other of supporting or hosting their respective rebels. Instead, they are mutually reinforcing each other's efforts aimed at ending internal conflicts. While both countries are careful to avoid dealing with any points of conflict amid the challenges of their respective transitions and the COVID-19 pandemic, it is hoped that the rapprochement and strengthened relations will subsequently provide the incentive for them to address the outstanding issues under the cooperation agreements, including the situation in Abyei. In this regard, the announcement on 23 January by President Salva Kiir and General Hemedti of the establishment of a joint mechanism to protect civilians, the deployment of a disengagement force to the area, and the creation of a committee to investigate the Kolom incident are all positive steps. It is hoped that these issues will feature on the agenda of the next Joint Political and Security Mechanism session in Khartoum, which was postponed to an unspecified date due to concerns over COVID-19 and the sudden death of the Sudanese Defence Minister in Juba.

With regard to the Two Areas, Prime Minister Hamdok's visit to the area on 9 January and his openness to discussing all issues have raised hope that conflict there may soon be a thing of the past. However, the wrangling between the two SPLM-North factions must cease and forward movement is required on the negotiation track involving the SPLM-North (Al-Hilu).

At my meeting with President Kiir on 17 January, I congratulated him on his mediation of the Sudanese peace process, which was beginning to see concrete results, and stressed the importance of sustained engagement with Sudanese authorities on various bilateral issues. The President agreed and assured me that once peace is achieved in both countries they would be in a better position to discuss outstanding issues in view of a mutually beneficial relationship. The Foreign Minister noted that the two countries would also prioritize reconciliation in Abyei for now. Accordingly, during the meetings with Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities in Abyei on 12 and 13 February in the company of Under-Secretary Lacroix, I stressed the importance of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

My Office will continue to engage with the authorities of both countries, as well as with key regional actors, including the African Union and IGAD, as appropriate, in order to encourage them not only to build peace and stability within their territories but to also advance the implementation of all binding cooperation agreements.

Annex III**Statement by Mrs. Karen Van Vlierberge, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations**

I thank the briefers for their briefings.

As always, a discussion of Abyei cannot take place without referring to developments in both the Sudan and South Sudan. The transitions taking place in both countries can positively influence efforts to resolve the question of Abyei. We welcome the positive steps taken in the past months.

We understand also that these transitions, alongside with dealing with the human and economic impact of the coronavirus disease crisis, require the full attention of both Governments. However, we urge them to keep the matter on their agendas in order to reach a final settlement on the status of Abyei. The full and complete commitment of both Governments is required for a sustainable peace in the area to be reached. This includes creating the conditions for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to carry out its mandate.

We note that the security situation remains fragile, with some tragic outbursts of violence having taken place. We call on the parties to bring the perpetrators to justice.

We agree with the Secretary-General that UNISFA continues to play a crucial role in curbing violence and increasing crime and in protecting civilians, including through the mitigation of intercommunity tensions. We also welcome UNISFA's efforts to foster peace, dialogue and conflict resolution, including by supporting the African Union High-level Implementation Panel.

UNISFA cannot be an open-ended substitute for the normal administrative and public services that the population of Abyei is entitled to receive. This is why a solution through political dialogue is needed. We call on all parties to remain engaged to that end and seize the momentum of transition. Pending a final settlement on the status of Abyei, a responsible exit of the mission is difficult to envisage.

Finally, previous Security Council resolutions must be implemented, in particular by appointing a civilian deputy head of UNISFA and by increasing the police component of the mission. We look forward to greater progress in this regard.

Annex IV**Statement by Mr. Yao Shaojun, Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations**

I thank Under-Secretary Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga for their detailed briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representatives of the Sudan and of Ethiopia at today's meeting.

At present, the situation in the Abyei Area remains generally calm and stable. The political situation in the Sudan and South Sudan has witnessed positive progress. The two sides have strengthened their interaction and cooperation on Abyei and have been actively cooperating with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). These positive developments have not come easily, especially during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Secretary-General notes in his report that the Abyei Area still faces many challenges and that the security situation remains fragile (S/2020/308). The proper resolution of this issue is of vital importance to the stability of the Sudan, South Sudan and the entire region.

The Security Council should continue to fully respect the leading role of the Sudan and South Sudan in resolving the Abyei issue, listen carefully to the views of both sides and support the efforts of regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. We hope that the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan will continue to seek a political solution to this issue, including through the establishment of administrative, judicial and public security institutions. The international community should provide assistance to both sides, especially on fighting COVID-19.

We continue to support UNISFA in implementing its mandate. The mission has an important role to play in maintaining the stability of the Abyei Area. China welcomes the efforts that Ethiopia has undertaken as one of the main troop-contributing countries, notes the Secretary-General's recommendations, and supports the extension of UNISFA's mandate. In this regard, we should listen carefully to the views of the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan, the AU and the troop-contributing countries. At the same time, we appreciate the efforts being undertaken by the Secretariat to address the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage it to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers in UNISFA.

China stands ready to work with African countries and the international community to contribute to resolving the Abyei issue and to promote peace, stability and development in that region.

Annex V**Statement by Mr. José Singer Weisinger, Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic**

We thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings.

This reporting period has been marked by positive steps influenced by the peaceful transitions in both countries. Nevertheless, the recent violent attacks that have taken place in Abyei, which have resulted in deaths, kidnappings and burnt villages, in addition to other fatalities, are highly concerning. Owing to the insecurity, humanitarian agencies have been unable to implement aid projects in some territories. The very fragile situation is exacerbated by recurrent armed attacks, the effects of climate change and, now, the threat of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which requires united efforts in order to contain its spread.

Since the conflict started, the Sudan and South Sudan have paid limited attention to their responsibilities in respect of Abyei as they face other pressing issues. More needs to be done to allow for the consolidation of peace and security by fostering a viable political process that ultimately leads to the full implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011. Accordingly, it is also critical that the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) be provided with an appropriate mandate, capabilities and resources. The appointment of a civilian deputy head of mission and other key civilian and police staff, as well as the operationalization of the Athony airstrip, would be a great boost to that end.

We welcome the progress made on the deployment of the joint military observer teams across the Abyei area and on the implementation of the benchmarks of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

The people of Abyei expect solutions to their priority needs, including health care, nutrition, food and water, as well as their human rights to be protected. It is concerning that cases of sexual and gender-based violence involving minors are being reported and that women in the Abyei area lack representation in decision-making processes. In that regard, we welcome the reappointment of a female representative on the Ngok Dinka joint community peace committee and the ongoing drafting of an action plan to promote coherent implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

To conclude, we would like to highlight the initiative to convene a conference of traditional leaders on 9 April, as well as the scale and comprehensiveness of advocacy for the protection of human rights, especially those of women and children. In order to achieve sustainable peace, the Sudan and South Sudan must take concrete action to fulfil their commitments and the Council should turn its attention back to that issue. The upcoming discussions on UNISFA's mandate present us with the perfect opportunity to do that.

Annex VI**Statement by Mr. Gert Auväärt, Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations**

I also would like to thank the briefers.

Estonia welcomes the positive developments that have taken place over the past six months. Allow me to also express our gratitude to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and Ethiopia for their contributions.

We recognize that the transitions in the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, require the full attention of both Governments. However, we call on the parties to capitalize on their improving relationship to push for progress on the question of Abyei. Most importantly, it cannot be overemphasized that there is no substitute for a meaningful political process between the parties. The more that process is delayed, the worse the situation seems to get on the ground. The deteriorating security situation is a stark reminder of that; so is the worsening humanitarian situation. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic is only amplifying that threat. Therefore, we call on the Sudan and South Sudan to revive a viable political process leading to the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011. That could be significantly helped by the appointment of the civilian deputy head of the mission. In addition, we encourage regional actors to actively engage the parties on the Abyei question.

Meanwhile, it is the responsibility of the Security Council to tackle the negative security trends decisively now. In that connection, Estonia has three recommendations.

First, in the light of increasing criminality and intercommunal violence, it is crucial to expedite the deployment of the remaining authorized UNISFA personnel, especially the police component. While we recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing delays, we call for the issuance of the visas needed for the deployment of all UNISFA personnel without further delay.

Secondly, we need to institute as much accountability as possible to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice. In that context, we call upon the authorities to launch joint investigations into the deadly incidents in Kolom in January. Accountability will not only deter persons from causing future incidents but will also help to build much-needed trust among communities.

Thirdly, we need to deploy human rights expertise to UNISFA. That will help strengthen the capacity of the local authorities to address human rights abuses and thus prevent further violence.

Estonia supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNISFA for the next six months. However, the parties must show their willingness to make progress towards resolving the Abyei question.

To conclude, we welcome the recent encouraging signs of progress. Nevertheless, we also call on the parties to urgently build on that positive momentum, especially through a meaningful political process towards a final resolution of the Abyei question. Further delays will only continue to prolong the plight of the people of Abyei.

Annex VII

Statement by Mrs. Anne Gueguen, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga for their very informative briefing.

I will be brief and limit my remarks to three points.

First, France condemns in the strongest terms the escalation of intercommunal violence and recent violent clashes in Kolom. In that context, I would like to stress our deepest concerns over reports of sexual violence against women and children and of internal displacements. We call on the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan alike to coordinate an investigation as announced and recall that those responsible must be held accountable and brought to justice. Those terrible events confirm that the situation in Abyei is still fragile and that the deployment of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) remains absolutely necessary.

However — and this is my second point — only a genuine political process to address the issues of Abyei and the border demarcation can really stabilize the security situation there. France calls on both Governments to seize the opportunity inherent in the improvement of their bilateral relations to tackle the Abyei question and launch a serious dialogue with the aim of achieving a political solution, in accordance with the Agreement of 20 June 2011. We welcome the progress in the peace processes in both countries, as reported by Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga, and encourage all armed groups in Darfur to join the negotiations.

France also encourages the African Union, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the United Nations Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa to intensify their mediation roles with a view to achieving a political solution between the Sudan and South Sudan, in accordance with the 2011 Agreement. We should all do our best to prevent the situation in Abyei becoming a new frozen conflict and UNISFA an open-ended mission — as the Secretary-General writes in his most recent report (S/2020/308), the international community can neither accept nor afford that.

My final remarks address the reconfiguration of UNISFA, pursuant to the relevant decision of the Security Council. We deeply regret that the three formed police units are still pending deployment. We call on both Governments to provide full support to UNISFA in the deployment of its personnel, including by issuing the requested visas. The three formed police units must be deployed as soon as possible; that is the only way to deal with the high level of criminality in Abyei, and to adapt the force to the current challenges. At the same time, both parties should engage to implement the Abyei police service, in line with the 2011 Agreement.

Lastly, France urges the United Nations and all the stakeholders to do their best to deploy the civilian deputy head of mission and the civilian team. UNISFA must be able to support the peace process, including at the communal level, and to engage with the African Union and the relevant stakeholders in Juba and Khartoum.

Annex VIII

Statement by Mr. Jürgen Schulz, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) is crucial for stabilizing the Abyei area as long as there is no lasting political settlement and hence no governance structure that can address the many challenges for the population arising from a lack of socioeconomic development, humanitarian needs and rising criminality and intercommunal violence.

The mission must be adequately equipped to address these challenges. In this context, let me express our gratitude to Ethiopia for contributing high-quality peacekeepers.

Regarding the forthcoming UNISFA mandate renewal, we agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation that the mandate should be extended by six months. However, as we have said here again and again, the mission must be calibrated to effectively respond to the changing realities on the ground. The mission must have the capacity to address the rise in criminal activity; support community-level peace processes, mediation and dialogue; and advance its support to the African Union Commission and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, as well as to the two parties.

To address rising crime rate and deteriorating overall security situation, we underline the urgent need to strengthen the police component. We note with great concern and disappointment that the mandate adaptations made by the Security Council have not been implemented. On a positive note, female officers account for almost 30 per cent of the police component. This percentage should be maintained once the enlargement of this component is finally implemented.

We strongly urge the Sudan to issue visas without further delay, in particular to allow the mandated increase in UNISFA's police personnel as soon as the current restrictions imposed in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) allow for their deployment.

We also see a continued need to strengthen the civilian component of the mission in order to support the efforts of the communities in Abyei to reconcile and create enduring peaceful relations. Particular support is needed for initiatives for the full and effective participation of women at all stages of the peace process.

The mandate needs to ensure continued effective human rights monitoring, including of any sexual and gender-based violence and violations and abuses of human rights, including those committed against women and children. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation to deploy more human rights expertise to UNISFA.

Regarding the political process, Abyei needs a political solution and both parties — the Governments of the Sudan and of South Sudan — are in the driver's seat. Sustainable peace in both countries, which are so closely intertwined, cannot be achieved without a constructive solution to the Abyei question. To date, little progress has been made by the parties on the issues of border demarcation or the process leading to a final status of Abyei.

We commend the efforts of the UNISFA leadership to convene peace conferences in the Abyei Area to bring together the traditional leaders of both the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya and urge the parties to support these efforts.

We further urge the parties to jointly investigate the attacks of 19 and 22 January, which left 36 civilians dead, and to jointly bring the perpetrators to justice. Such action would be a sign of responsible ownership by both parties.

The question of Abyei cannot be solved by the international community but only by the Governments of the Sudan and of South Sudan. We offer our support, but local stakeholders must not operate under the false impression that they can hide behind the international community forever.

We encourage regional actors to actively engage the parties on the question of Abyei. We would welcome more detailed reporting in the Secretary-General's reports on the engagement of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and of the Special Envoy.

There is a need to make tangible progress and define a finite timeline. We call on the parties to hold regular meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and to consult on Abyei at the ministerial level.

To conclude, echoing the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, it is paramount that differences be resolved with a view to dedicating all efforts to curbing the spread of COVID-19.

Annex IX**Statement by Mr. Muhsin Syihab, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations**

We thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga for their important briefings.

Indonesia commends the positive engagement between the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as their respective transitions and hopes for their continuation in Abyei. However, the fragile security situation in Abyei remains cause for concern. Unless checked effectively, it could exacerbate the existing socioeconomic and humanitarian challenges.

This is especially perilous amid the looming coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We hope that the current grave situation will be used by both Governments to intensify peacemaking and put all energies behind ensuring that the effects of the pandemic on the people of Abyei and those within their domains are minimized. On this note, I would like to underline three key issues.

The first is enhancing the capacity of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). UNISFA's presence remains essential to maintaining stability in Abyei. Thus, enhancing UNISFA's ability to fully discharge its mandate remains our utmost priority. UNISFA's reconfiguration must be geared towards enabling the mission effectively to respond to the challenges on the ground and meet them with appropriate personnel and capability support. It is especially important to enhance UNISFA's readiness for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indonesia supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to renew the UNISFA mandate for six months, and looks forward to working with other Council members on the mandate renewal.

Secondly, on cooperation between the Sudan and South Sudan, both countries need to seize the positive momentum in their bilateral relations to propel the negotiations on Abyei forward. We join the Secretary-General in his call for the two countries to resolve outstanding issues expeditiously, including the implementation of their Agreement of 20 June 2011. Abyei's peaceful resolution is a test case of the political transitions in the Sudan and South Sudan. This also requires further effective engagement from countries of the region, the African Union and the United Nations.

Thirdly, it is vital to promote intercommunal dialogue. Indonesia notes with concern the recent clashes in Abyei, most notably in Kolom. We call for an immediate joint investigation followed by remedial actions to help the two communities heal.

UNISFA's role in enhancing intercommunal dialogue in Abyei through the Joint community peace committee is commendable. The traditional leaders conference last month was also a positive initiative. More such undertakings, topped with enhancing the rule of law, are critical for peacebuilding.

Hence, UNISFA's work on capacity-building for the community protection committees and its support of traditional justice mechanisms must continue. The additional deployment of the remaining authorized United Nations police and formed police units is also of critical importance.

In conclusion, Indonesia fully supports the efforts of the Sudan and South Sudan to reach a peaceful solution in Abyei as a part of their journey to peace.

Annex X**Statement by Mr. Niandou Aougi, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations**

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Abyei (S/2020/308).

In his report, dated 16 April 2020, the Secretary-General draws attention to the need for the Sudan and South Sudan to build positive momentum in their bilateral relations in order to make progress towards resolving the border dispute between them over Abyei. In that regard, the Niger welcomes the political progress made in both countries, including the peacebuilding process under way in the Sudan and the formation of a Transitional Government of National Unity in South Sudan. Those developments are conducive to peace in Abyei.

Congratulations are due to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), on the one hand for the efforts made in the prevention of inter-community conflicts, particularly through the implementation of quick-impact projects to support the local population, and on the other hand for the efforts it has kindly made to organize several rounds of peace conferences in the Abyei region — conferences that brought together the traditional chiefs of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya.

My country strongly condemns the tragic events that took place in the Kolom region on 19 and 22 January and calls on the parties to jointly investigate those events and take measures to bring the perpetrators to justice. That would promote a rapprochement between the two warring communities.

We call on the parties to continue the process of border demarcation, focusing on bilateral political consultations leading to the establishment of a political administration. We also call on them to consider meetings with both the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to facilitate and render effective the border demarcation process within the framework of the Joint Border Monitoring and Verification Mechanism. In addition, we support the appointment of a civilian head for UNISFA and call on the Abyei partners to opt for a compromise solution in the border demarcation process.

In conclusion, my country supports the extension of the mandate of UNISFA for six months and commends the mission for the preventive measures implemented in the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Given that culture of performance, the Niger is pleased to note that the mission has appointed a COVID-19 coordinator, assisted by a working group, not only to protect personnel but also, above all, to ensure that its activities continue unabated for the greater good of the people of Abyei.

Annex XI**Statement by Mr. Dmitry Polyanskiy, First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**

Allow me to thank our briefers — Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy Parfait Onanga-Anyanga — for their interventions.

Despite the fragility of the security situation in Abyei, peacekeeping efforts contributed to making the Area more stable. We commend the activities of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in maintaining good relations with local communities. The measures taken by the Blue Helmets to prevent intercommunal conflicts and ensure cooperation on law enforcement and economic activities in the area of the Amiet common market are also commendable. The 19 February meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and the 16 March traditional leaders conference helped promote much-needed dialogue among all the parties.

The Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) is an integral element of the system for preventing incidents between the parties. UNISFA's support for the Mechanism significantly contributes to stabilizing Abyei.

We would like to highlight the professionalism and courage demonstrated by the Ethiopian peacekeepers, who serve in one of the most difficult and logistically complex peacekeeping operations in the world.

The joint efforts of all parties are required in order to successfully promote a long-lasting settlement between the Sudan and South Sudan. There is an international legal basis for that — well-known resolutions of the Security Council and the African Union, as well as a package of bilateral agreements concluded between the two countries in September 2012 in Addis Ababa. In that regard, we expect the African Union High-level Implementation Panel to continue its valuable work with the Sudanese and South Sudanese parties.

We note steady normalization in relations between the Sudan and South Sudan. The participation of Khartoum, together with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan made a significant contribution to the settlement process in that country. We also highlight President Salva Kiir Mayardit's mediation efforts to promote negotiations between the Sudanese authorities and armed groups. The accumulated positive momentum in bilateral relations should be used to resolve the Abyei issue.

We understand that in current conditions there are objective factors that prevent Khartoum and Juba from accelerating the settlement of the final status of Abyei. In such circumstances, maintaining the presence of UNISFA is still very important. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's proposal to extend UNISFA's mandate, including its support for the JBVMM, for six months.

Annex XII**Statement by Ms. Halimah DeShong, Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations**

My delegation thanks Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings on the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the positive political developments in both the Sudan and South Sudan. We remain hopeful that this momentum will translate into greater cooperation and a renewed commitment between the two countries to find a just political resolution to the final status of Abyei.

We acknowledge the progress and challenges highlighted in the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2020/308). In particular, we note the fragile security situation in Abyei, including the ongoing intercommunal violence — as evidenced in the Nainai-Kolom attacks on 19 and 22 January. We condemn those attacks and lament the heightened tensions between the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya communities. We welcome UNISFA's efforts to investigate those violent incidents and encourage the authorities to proceed with the joint investigation as agreed during the 19 February Joint Political and Security Mechanism meeting in Juba.

Equally, we urge the Abyei communities to exercise the utmost restraint, and we call on the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to cooperate fully with UNISFA. UNISFA's tireless efforts to ensure peace and stability in the region, including to maintain Abyei as a weapons-free zone, are laudable. We commend UNISFA for its regular constructive engagements with the administrative and traditional leaders, as well as with the joint community peace committee. We also welcome the advances within the framework of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, and we urge the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee to convene regular meetings.

The difficulties in Abyei will not be resolved unless the key drivers of intercommunal conflicts are robustly tackled. We therefore urge the parties to fulfil their obligations as stipulated in the 2011 agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area and the 2012 cooperation agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan.

We remain concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Abyei, which is expected to be exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic. Likewise, the dreadful environmental conditions in the region, which are compounded by the adverse effects of climate change, continue to negatively alter the security, economic and social landscape. Amid these immense challenges, we emphasize the need for unhindered humanitarian service delivery to those who require urgent assistance.

My delegation encourages the inclusion of women in the decision-making process in Abyei. We welcome the work of UNISFA in support of the women and peace and security mandate. We also note marginal progress on the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and some progress on the benchmarks specified by resolution 2497 (2019). We call on all parties to adhere to the stipulations outlined in the outcome documents of the ordinary sessions of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism held in Juba on 13 October 2019 and 19 February 2020.

UNISFA remains an interim security force, and therefore it is critical to resolve the status of Abyei. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stands in solidarity with the people of Abyei and reaffirms its commitment to UNISFA. We also thank Ethiopia for its invaluable contribution through its peacekeepers, and we reiterate our support for the critical mediating role played by the African Union.

Annex XIII**Statement by Mr. Jerry Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations**

I would like to express my delegation's gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga for their enlightening briefings today. Allow me to make the following key observations on the political developments as well the status of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

South Africa welcomes the positive political developments that have taken place both in the Sudan and South Sudan in the recent past, including those highlighted in the Secretary-General's report for the period of 16 October 2019 to 15 April 2020 (S/2020/308). With the positive developments that have taken place in the Sudan thus far, we emphasize the continued need for unity in the Sudan's ruling political coalition.

We continue to urge the two countries to use the renewed rapprochement to finalize the outstanding issues with regard to Abyei. The tensions reported earlier this year highlight the volatility of the region and its potential to unravel the progress made to bring about stability in the Area.

South Africa encourages the Sudan and South Sudan to continue inclusive political dialogue in order to implement their agreements on border issues and to meet the benchmarks previously set by the Security Council.

With regard to the developments pertaining to UNISFA, South Africa appreciates and welcomes the importance of the stabilizing role that UNISFA and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) continue to play along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan. South Africa welcomes the progress that has been made by the JBVMM on benchmarks specified by resolution 2497 (2019).

Furthermore, South Africa welcomes and encourages the continued work of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee. We note the Secretary-General's mention that, in this time of the coronavirus disease pandemic, engagement in the foreseeable future may need to take on new modalities.

My delegation is encouraged by the UNISFA-facilitated meetings between the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya on 16 March and 9 April to discuss putting an end to the intercommunal tensions. We welcome their renewed commitment to peace and security in Abyei. We hope that continued interactions between the two sides will lead to an agreement on resolving outstanding issues.

Lastly, South Africa welcomes the progress that UNISFA has made in promoting the women and peace and security agenda in the Abyei region by promoting women's participation at all levels of decision-making, including in conflict prevention and resolution processes. We also thank Ethiopia for its continued efforts in contributing to the easing of security tensions in Abyei.

Annex XIV**Statement by Mr. Tarek Ladeb, Deputy Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations**

I would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, for their briefings. We welcome the participation of the representatives of the Sudan and Ethiopia.

We express our appreciation for the stabilizing role of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in the Area and along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan, including its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). We would also like to commend Ethiopia and its peacekeepers for their dedicated contribution.

The ongoing political transitions in the Sudan and South Sudan represented pivotal developments over the past few months, which inspired hope in positive change and comprehensive peace. The Governments of both the Sudan and South Sudan have been actively engaging with each other through reciprocal visits by their leaders and mutual support for their respective peace processes. We believe that it is important for the Sudan and South Sudan, and for the Security Council, to capitalize on those positive developments so that the pursuit of just and sustainable peace in both countries extends to the Abyei Area.

We encourage both Governments to foster rapprochement and mutual trust, with a view to reaching a lasting settlement of the status of the Abyei Area. We also urge them to revitalize their cooperation, including with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, so as to resolve outstanding issues, as outlined in the cooperation agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan of 2012.

Tunisia notes the overall progress in the implementation of the UNISFA mandate in Abyei and along the border, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/308). We commend in particular the continuous engagement of the mission with the officials in Khartoum and Juba, as well as at the Abyei local level.

However, despite the encouraging political trends, challenges remain in view of the, sadly, avoidable intercommunal violence, the threat of armed groups and the widespread weapons within the Abyei Area.

We are concerned about the escalation of attacks across intercommunal lines, the latest of which was on Mabok village in southern Abyei on 13 April. We express our support for UNISFA's efforts in pushing local peace processes forward to resolve seasonal migration issues and promote intercommunal reconciliation. We also praise UNISFA's efforts to empower women's participation in local peace committees in order to enhance the prospects for lasting peace.

The spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has forced a priority shift for many affected countries across the globe. We reiterate the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and call on parties to exercise self-restraint within the Abyei Area, so that the Sudan and South Sudan can focus on carrying out their challenging State-building tasks.

On the way forward for the United Nations presence in Abyei, we would like to endorse the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report on the extension of UNISFA's mandate and its support for the JBVMM for a further period of six months, which remain vital for the stabilization of the Abyei Area and along the border.

We are of the view that UNISFA's mandate needs to be calibrated and contextualized so as to align with the priority shifts of and the pace maintained by the parties in order to bolster peace, security and development endeavours and effectively counter the COVID-19 pandemic.

We stand ready to engage constructively in the upcoming negotiations on further modalities for such extension.

Annex XV**Statement by Mr. David Clay, Political Coordinator of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations**

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and both of our briefers this morning.

I would like to start by expressing the United Kingdom's support for the peoples and the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan in their efforts to respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

As the Council discussed on Friday in relation to the Sudan, the damaging impacts of the pandemic will only add to the already significant humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges faced by both countries. We welcome the quick responses of the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to COVID-19 and their efforts to mitigate its effects. So far the United Kingdom has contributed approximately \$6 million to the United Nations COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts in the Sudan and more than \$4 million to the efforts in South Sudan.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic is also taking a toll on peacekeeping missions and on the brave personnel serving in them around the world. In this regard, we once again commend the Ethiopian Government for its continued contributions to the Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). COVID-19 underlines the importance of ensuring swift provision of medical evacuation for United Nations personnel and the maintenance of supply chains. That is particularly the case for UNISFA, given its remoteness.

We recognize that the COVID-19 response will dominate the agendas of the Governments in Khartoum and Juba for some time, as is the case for countries around the world. But we continue to urge both Governments not to lose sight of their respective peace processes or of the importance of finding a final settlement on the status of Abyei.

We welcome the progress made in South Sudan on the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011, with the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, and in the Sudan as the civilian Government continues to implement the Constitutional Declaration.

In Abyei, we welcome the efforts made by UNISFA on a range of activities, including engagement with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan, the implementation of the quick-impact projects, mediation of local community dialogues, raising awareness of gender issues and the removal of explosive hazards.

But despite those efforts, we remain very concerned by the fragile security situation in Abyei. Of particular concern is the increase in intercommunal violence and attacks on mission personnel. The recent episodes of heightened tensions, increased criminality and the presence of armed elements in UNISFA's areas of responsibility have left civilians displaced and highlighted the continued absence of law and order in Abyei. All this underlines the need for progress to be made towards a final settlement. It is a matter of deep regret that this has been lacking so far.

Turning to the mission itself, the United Kingdom supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNISFA for a further six months. The mission continues to have a vital role not only in ensuring stability but also in facilitating work towards a settlement of the situation in Abyei. The Council has long highlighted the need to boost the civilian and police components of the mission in order to contribute to that effort. We welcome the update from Under-Secretary-General Lacroix on the deployment of police to UNISFA, and, like other

Council members, we hope to see further progress soon. We are disappointed by the delay in issuing visas for police and urge the Government of the Sudan to expedite this process.

In the meantime, the Council should ensure that UNISFA remains adequately resourced to deliver on its mandated activities. We look forward to working with members of the Council to ensure that the mission continues to be able to maintain the stability of Abyei and to assist in the achievement of a final settlement on its status.

Finally, regarding the two areas, we welcome the commitment of the Government of the Sudan and of a number of armed movements to engage in peace talks aimed at achieving a comprehensive peace across the Sudan. Here we continue to urge all sides to engage constructively, immediately and without preconditions in these negotiations so as to deliver a peaceful and swift solution to the conflict areas, including the two areas. Meanwhile, we also continue to urge all parties to respect international humanitarian law and allow humanitarian actors to deliver aid to those most in need, without hindrance.

Annex XVI

Statement by Ms. Cherith Norman-Chalet, Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations

I thank Under-Secretary Lacroix and Special Envoy Onanga-Anyanga for their briefings and for their joint visit to Abyei in February.

We commend the activities of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) during this difficult period of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including its vital support for local peace and protection committees, as noted in the Secretary-General's report of 16 April (S/2020/308).

The United States recognizes Ethiopia's leadership and welcomes the Ambassador today in support for UNISFA, as well as some positive steps that the Sudan and South Sudan have undertaken to address insecurity in Abyei, such as joint security monitoring. We welcome the Ambassador to the Sudan here today as well.

However, despite those steps, the United States is concerned about the recent violence in Abyei, as was outlined. In January, attacks in the area of Kolom led to the killing of more than 30 civilians. In mid-April, there was an armed attack on Mabok village. This violence, the brunt of which has been borne by women and children, is unacceptable.

Perhaps most troubling, though, is that it demonstrates the lack of political progress made by the Sudan and South Sudan in resolving outstanding border issues. The people of Abyei and those along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan deserve better. This violence should serve as a call to action for the Sudan and South Sudan. Their leaders should capitalize on the improving relationship and agree on the implementation of arrangements for security and the administration of Abyei.

The Council has repeatedly mandated a reconfiguration of UNISFA to address current security dynamics. Today we call on the parties to remove the obstacles preventing UNISFA from realizing its mandate.

Moving forward, the United States encourages senior United Nations officials to redouble their efforts with the parties and with the African Union to allow UNISFA's mandate to be fully implemented. Furthermore, we urge them to push for progress in establishing joint security and administrative arrangements. The participation of women is absolutely critical in these discussions.

The United States remains committed to peace and security in Abyei and across the region, especially in these challenging times.

Annex XVII**Statement by Mr. Dang Dinh Quy, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations**

At the outset, allow me to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their insightful briefings. Viet Nam would like to commend and express our support for the work of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and the Special Envoy. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of the Sudan and of Ethiopia in our meeting today.

Viet Nam is closely following the situation in the Sudan and South Sudan and strongly welcomes the recent progress made in the political and security spheres of both countries as well as in the relations between them. We believe these achievements can create important momentum for both sides to actively engage in addressing the Abyei issue. We are pleased to see that, according to the most recent report on the topic (S/2020/308), Abyei has become more stable and secure. However, the security situation in Abyei remains fragile due to increasing intercommunal violence, crime and the presence of armed elements. We are also concerned about the threat of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Abyei, as the Sudan, South Sudan and many countries in the region have reported confirmed cases. I would like to emphasize the following five points.

First, we underline the importance of a timely and appropriate resolution of the issue of Abyei, which we believe is of vital importance to the peace, security and stability of the Sudan, South Sudan and the region. In this regard, we call on the Sudan and South Sudan to resolve the issue at any early date through peaceful means, in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, of 20 June 2011. At the same time, the Security Council should continue to take into full account the views of the two sides on this issue.

Viet Nam warmly welcomes the efforts of UNISFA aimed at promoting cooperation and dialogue between the Sudan and South Sudan. We acknowledge UNISFA's robust support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and note that progress has been made on the benchmarks of resolution 2497 (2019). We are also aware of the challenges posed by COVID-19 to this process and encourage UNISFA to continue to support both countries in conducting dialogue via remote means.

Secondly, while the final solution to Abyei is still pending, it is important to ensure security and sustainable livelihoods for the people in the Area, given the increasing impact of climate change and the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The presence of UNISFA has been essential to maintaining stability in Abyei. Viet Nam calls on the Governments of both the Sudan and South Sudan to continue to support UNISFA in carrying out its mandate, as well as to support the appointment of a civilian deputy head of mission and the establishment of the Abyei police service, as recommended by the Secretary-General. Cooperation between both Governments and UNISFA in combating COVID-19 should also be strengthened.

Thirdly, we highlight the role of the regional and subregional organizations, namely, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in supporting the resolution of the Abyei issue. We also commend the role of neighbouring countries, especially Ethiopia, for their vital contributions to UNISFA. Further cooperation between the United Nations and regional actors will provide synergy to help the Sudan and South Sudan resolve their outstanding issues.

Fourthly, with regard to the mandate of the mission, Viet Nam supports its extension, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report. We look forward to working with Council members on the renewal of the UNISFA mandate in the coming weeks. We believe it is important also to take into consideration the views of the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan, the AU, IGAD and troop-contributing countries in this matter.

Fifthly, we would also like to commend the strong role of women in UNISFA, which we see as a strong example of female participation in United Nations peacekeeping. The current female-to-male ratio in UNISFA is 10.9 per cent, much higher than the average representation across all missions. This is a solid foundation for UNISFA to further strengthen its activities in promoting gender equality as well as the empowerment of women on the ground, which is already very commendable.

Annex XVIII**Statement by Mr. Omer Mohamed Ahmed Siddig, Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations**

Let me begin by thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing. Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/308) on the progress in implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), I would like to emphasize the following points.

We commend UNISFA's leadership and personnel for their efforts aimed at preserving peace and stability in Abyei. I take this opportunity to once again assure the Security Council of my Government's support for the mission so that it may carry out its mandate and functions in an effective and efficient manner.

The Sudan reaffirms its commitment to all agreements signed with the Republic of South Sudan and their terms of reference, foremost of which is the agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, which was signed on 20 June 2011, and the cooperation agreement between the Sudan and South Sudan of 27 September 2012. It is to be noted that the 20 June 2011 agreement remains the principal basis for negotiations on the final status of Abyei.

Following a meeting last January between the President of South Sudan and the Deputy Chairman of the Sovereign Council of the Sudan, the two countries agreed to establish a joint mechanism to protect civilians in Abyei. A couple of weeks later, the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, which comprises high-level representatives from the two countries, met in Juba and was briefed by the Force Commander of UNISFA. The Joint Mechanism agreed on a set of arrangements designed to avoid any relapse or escalation between the communities. The Mechanism also agreed to refer the following issues to the leadership of the two countries: the increase in the number of joint police forces, the appointment of a civilian deputy head of mission, and the use and operation of the Athony airstrip. The Joint Mechanism was supposed to have held a follow-up meeting in Khartoum on 13 April 2020, but it was postponed owing to the outbreak of coronavirus disease.

In conclusion, the new political order in the Sudan offers a major positive paradigm shift in the relations between our country and the brotherly South Sudan. Building on that paradigm shift and on the constructive outcome of the meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, these two neighbouring countries will be able to prevent escalations of tensions or violence, resolve any communal clashes and achieve a lasting and amicable solution to the final status issue of Abyei in accordance with the agreed terms.

Annex XIX**Statement by Mr. Taye Atskeselassie Amde, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations**

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the Dominican Republic's successful presidency of the Security Council despite the difficulties caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Special Envoy Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their comprehensive briefings. We also welcome the presence of our brother the Permanent Representative of the Sudan.

Following the adoption of resolution 2497 (2019), my Government continued to meet its commitments with regard to the deployment and mandate delivery of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). The new political dynamics in the Sudan and South Sudan have created an encouraging atmosphere for all of us. Ethiopia greatly appreciates the two Governments for their continued support to UNISFA's leadership and peacekeeping force.

The mission faced serious difficulties over the past year, especially after the two unfortunate helicopter accidents in 2019 and the subsequent suspension of those operations by the United Nations Secretariat, which has significantly constrained the mission's air operation capability. As we all understand, UNISFA is one of the most remote peacekeeping missions, but it continues to rely solely on civilian helicopters. I want, therefore, to draw the attention of the Council to the fact that our contingents are often exposed and overstretched in their efforts to cover the vast territory, including in the context of the work of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

Reviewing the conception of operations in the dry season and increasing foot and mobile patrols alone cannot prevent threats or secure every inch of the Area. Furthermore, we are extremely concerned that armed groups and individuals remain present in the weapons-free zone. The security situation continues to suffer from the failure to stop murders, livestock rustling and intercommunal clashes. The lack of respect and serious observance of the weapon-free-zone provision is becoming dangerous, especially in the volatile migration season.

We are encouraged by the political will and support of the leadership of the two countries. The Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, the joint military observer teams and the joint community peace committee are also showing progress in their respective tasks. However, more needs to be done to ensure the success of UNISFA and its continued ability to fulfil its heavy responsibility. In that regard, more concrete actions by the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as by the United Nations and the African Union, are needed to expedite a resolution of Abyei's final status.

To put things into perspective, UNISFA was facing security challenges one month after the adoption of the current mandate, with troops subjected to active fire, including by well-armed groups. The challenge was further aggravated by more volatility in the Abyei box, and, as noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/308), incidents on 19 and 22 January regrettably claimed 36 lives. Following the Kolom incident, my Government encouraged UNISFA to rigorously conduct wider discussions and engage with the Dinka and Misseriya communities with the objective of curbing the escalation of violence.

Late this month, UNISFA forces were engaged in ambushes and armed assault incidents in Nainai and Alal, where two assailants lost their lives. The troops abided by the rules of engagement and acted in self-defence. Again, on 24 April, three armed

Misseriya men riding a tricycle opened fire at the UNISFA team operation base in Alal. In response to those seemingly connected incidents, UNISFA has intensified ground patrols, including search and recovery operations in the Kolom and Youra bridge areas. It is extremely worrisome that the mission has so far recovered 27 assault rifles, 48 magazines, 1,220 rounds of ammunition and seven war-like equipment kits, in addition to similarly worrisome quantities since 28 November 2019.

UNISFA troops remain on high alert in anticipation of additional attacks. The mandated protection of the Abyei Area from aggressive armed attacks and different forms of crime is becoming a daunting task that requires an organized response by the mission, the host countries and the United Nations.

Ethiopia recognizes the importance of strict compliance with international humanitarian law by all parties. We uphold the role of the monitoring and reporting mechanism in tracking grave violations against women and children in the context of UNISFA's mandate and pledge our full support. In the same vein, the authorities, including the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, must intensify their outreach to the communities in Abyei and assist UNISFA in ensuring that the Abyei box remains a weapons-free zone as required by the Security Council.

In view of the above, I wish to highlight the following four critical measures that are instrumental to the delivery of the mission's mandate.

First, UNISFA-facilitated meetings between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya leaders in Diffra should be complemented by maintaining momentum on the discussions in order to reach an agreement on the final status of Abyei and to resolve the stalled southward movement of herders. That will help in easing the current high level of tension.

Secondly, the troop cuts in favour of the planned deployment of three formed police units (FPUs) is impacting UNISFA's capabilities. Its forces are overstretched, especially in the light of the increase in crime. In that regard, we wish to emphasize the need to suspend the withdrawal of the additional 295 troops scheduled for 15 May until restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted and the planned FPU replacements are on the ground to assume the security responsibilities. We expect that UNISFA will be adequately resourced, including funds for preventive and preparedness measures in relation to COVID-19 and the desperately needed funds for quick-impact projects. In that connection, alleviating the situation of arrears remains not only a matter of principle but also a moral obligation.

Thirdly, we trust that all the relevant authorities will be continuously consulted regarding the decision of the Council on the appointment of a civilian deputy head of mission and the operationalization of the Anthony airstrip, the latter being very important to improving UNISFA's medical evacuation capability, particularly in this difficult time of global pandemic.

Fourthly, it is important that the tragic events in the Kolom area and several other criminal cases be jointly investigated with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice. That will not only help with remedial actions, but it will also contribute to trust- and confidence-building measures between the two communities and ensure long-term interdependence and fraternity.

Finally, I would like to conclude by reiterating the firm commitment of the Government of Ethiopia to ensuring that UNISFA succeeds in delivering on its mandate. In that regard, we will further strengthen our close coordination with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as with the United Nations.