



BLUE SENTINELS

UNISFA NEWSLETTER VOL.2 | JULY 2024

INSIGHTS

IN FOCUS

Stories of dedication and diversity from UNISFA's TCCs & agencies.

THE SENTINELS OF PEACE AND SECURITY

Activities undertaken by UN Peacekeepers towards the mission mandate.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

Honoring Our Peacekeepers : A Tribute to their selfless service.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

UNISFA celebrates the spirit of World Environment Day, June 5th.

On the cover : Captain Mili leads the BANBATT-2 contingent during the annual ' International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers' parade.

FOREWORD

EDITION 2.0



Brigadier General Ameer
Muhammad Umrani
Deputy Force Commander
UNISFA

'I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the editorial team for the successful release of the second edition of our quarterly newsletter, "**BLUE SENTINELS**." This edition marks another significant milestone in our mission's journey and continues to highlight the dedication and hard work of our peacekeeping community.

As we strive to make this publication more inclusive, we are excited to showcase the diverse voices and experiences within our mission. "BLUE SENTINELS" serves as a valuable platform to highlight the tireless efforts of our peacekeepers here at UNISFA in fostering peace and stability in Abyei. Despite the recent operational and security challenges in the Abyei Box, our resolve remains steadfast. With the unwavering support of the UN leadership, we are committed to overcoming these obstacles and fulfilling our mission mandate.

During this period, we also had the privilege of celebrating the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. This day allowed us to honor and recognize the invaluable contributions of our peacekeepers who work tirelessly to maintain peace and security. These celebrations not only unite us but also remind us of our broader responsibilities and the impact of our work.

I commend the initiatives undertaken by our peacekeepers, which exemplify our unwavering dedication to the service of humanity. As we navigate through these challenging circumstances, I urge all peacekeepers operating under the UNISFA umbrella to continue their work with the same zeal and enthusiasm.

Finally, I express my deepest appreciation to every member of our peacekeeping team for their unwavering commitment and resilience. Your contributions are vital to our mission's success, and your dedication to promoting peace and security is truly inspiring.'

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to the second edition of the UNISFA magazine!

In this issue, we celebrate the diversity and dedication of our peacekeepers. From International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers and World Environment Day celebrations to key leadership engagements and training initiatives, each page highlights our commitment to excellence and harmony. Our "In Focus" section features compelling stories from peacekeepers and insights into the contributions of various Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), showcasing the unique efforts and collaboration that drive our mission forward.

Discover stories of operational activities, leadership support, and cultural events that enrich our mission and foster unity. Join us in saluting the unwavering efforts of our peacekeepers who sculpt a better world every day.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

Happy Reading !!

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PEACEKEEPING IN ACTION

CMUHU-4

ELEVATING PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS



The Pillars of Aircraft Readiness

Equally important to the success of CMUHU-4 are the maintenance personnel who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Their rigorous attention to detail in performing tasks like rotor replacements and routine inspections using specialized lifting equipment ensures that the helicopters are always in optimal condition and flight-ready. This meticulous maintenance is crucial for the safety and efficiency of the unit's operations.

The demanding nature of their mission requires exceptional courage and resilience. The men and women of CMUHU-4 exemplify these qualities daily, demonstrating professionalism and dedication in every task they undertake. Their collective efforts significantly contribute to the overall success of UNISFA's peacekeeping initiatives in Abyei.

In the mission area of Abyei, CMUHU-4 stands as the only military aviation unit, undertaking critical tasks that are central to the peacekeeping operations of UNISFA. This unit is responsible for a wide range of operations, including troop deployment, search and rescue, emergency evacuation, and air patrols, making them an indispensable asset to the mission.

Since their deployment in November 2023, CMUHU-4 has achieved 1,431 flight hours, transported 494 tons of cargo, and carried 9,551 passengers. These accomplishments underscore their essential role in maintaining regional peace and security.

A typical day for CMUHU-4 involves meticulous planning and coordination to ensure each flight is undertaken smoothly and safely. The unit's operations span a variety of activities, from transportation of military & civilian personnel in and out of mission area, deploying troops to strategic locations to conducting aerial surveillance and ensuring rapid response to emergencies. Each mission is a testament to the unit's readiness and capability to handle diverse and challenging tasks.





The Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), a crucial element of UNISFA, has been on the frontline since its establishment in 2011, tasked with the critical mission of monitoring and verifying the disputed border.

Under the able leadership of **Brig. Gen. Alobawone Atogebakoga**, the JBVMM undertakes thorough preparation and coordination, focused on their mission: **ensuring both nations adhere to the demilitarized border agreement and preventing potential conflicts.**



OBJECTIVES

The JBVMM's objectives are straightforward and essential:

- Verification of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ): Ensuring both Sudan and South Sudan adhere to the demilitarization agreement.
- Monitoring the SDBZ: Conducting regular patrols to prevent any unauthorized military presence, reducing the risk of conflict.
- Early Warning System: Detecting and addressing tensions before they escalate.
- Facilitating Dialogue: Encouraging communication and cooperation between the two nations.

"WORKING UNDER BLUE HELMETS AT JBVMM IS A VERY NEW AND KNOWLEDGEABLE EXPERIENCE FOR ME. CHALLENGES AND HARDSHIPS ARE THERE WITH NEW DIMENSIONS, BUT THE TRUST, RELIANCE AND SATISFIED FACES OF THE LOCALS REPRESENTS THE REWARD FOR THAT."

- CAPT HAMIDA AKHTER, MTO, BANBATT-2

SECTOR 2 : THE FRONTIER OF PEACE

The JBVMM operates primarily in Sector 2, with team sites at Tishwin and Abu Qussa serving as hubs for mission planning and data analysis. Despite challenges since May 2021, including being denied clearance for missions in Sector 1, the JBVMM remains committed to its mission. The planned expansion into four sectors aims to enhance monitoring capabilities and conflict prevention efforts. In the broader context of UN peace operations, the JBVMM exemplifies hope and perseverance, embodying the core values of UNISFA and the UN. Their efforts not only ensure stability and peace along the Sudan-South Sudan border but also focus on building trust with local communities through confidence-building measures and assistance with local issues, fostering a sense of security.



Protecting Lives - Building Peace

Explosive remnants of war and landmines have caused immense sorrow in Abyei communities, disrupting livelihoods and disturbing peace. **Every 4th of April**, the efforts of the Mine Action community are honored, raising awareness about landmines and working towards their elimination. This day remembers victims and pays tribute to humanitarian mine action personnel, including deminers, who strive to create safer lands for communities.

At UNISFA, the event began with a procession to an exhibition at the MHQ. Dignitaries highlighted the importance of Mine Action Activities and urged support for mine action personnel. UNMAS presented a skit on explosive ordnance risk education and hosted an interactive exhibition. The exhibition featured demining demonstrations, allowing attendees to experience using metal detectors and protective equipment. Inert models of landmines and explosive remnants were displayed, with deminers answering visitors' questions. Static displays included CASSPIR mine-protected vehicles, a hydraulic weapon shear, and a remote-controlled mechanical demining machine. These exhibits showcased the operational capabilities and techniques used to clear mines and explosive ordnance.

Mr. Salim Chehab, UNISFA Chief of FTS, praised the UNMAS team's efforts. Brigadier General Alobawone, the OIC Acting HOM & Force Commander, thanked UNMAS for their work and commitment to peace. The day concluded with a live music show and an award ceremony, recognizing colleagues' achievements. This International Day underscores the importance of mine action in protecting communities and ensuring safe grounds for all.



BRIDGING GAPS, BUILDING FUTURES

In the quiet village of Rumajak, as the sun rises, Maj Nitesh Kumar, COB (Company Operating Base) Commander, begins the day with his team, brainstorming and reflecting upon the day's agenda.

Very soon, local community leaders and villagers approach the officer in the COB with their basic needs—clean water, medical supplies, better education, to name a few. Each conversation builds trust and understanding. The commander nods, promising support with a quiet determination.

Post this interaction, the commander and his team walk through the village paths, observing daily life. It's a chance to see firsthand how their efforts can make a difference beyond the base's walls. He stops to chat with children playing and elders resting in the shade, forging connections through genuine interest.



Back at the base, amidst the daily hustle, the team reflects on the morning's insights. They discuss practical solutions—a medical camp, a school project, vocational training—whatever can empower the community and address immediate needs.

As the sun begins to set, the commander joins village youth for a game of soccer. Laughter fills the air as friendships form on the makeshift field. These moments are not just about recreation; they are investments in the village's future leaders.

In the evening calm, under a colorful sky, the commander contemplates. Beyond the tactical aspects of peacekeeping, their approach is about fostering understanding and opportunity across borders and cultures.

IN THE REALM OF UN PEACE OPERATIONS, THE COB COMMANDER'S APPROACH EMBODIES A SIMPLE TRUTH - **PEACE THRIVES WHERE COMMUNITIES ARE SUPPORTED AND EMPOWERED.**

UNPOL'S RELIEF EFFORTS IN ABYEI

Sr Capt Izabella, PPIO, UNPOL

"There are no limits to supporting humanity, except those imposed by our own lack of passion." Despite the challenges posed by torrential rains affecting road mobility in parts of the Abyei Box, UNPOL (United Nations Police) demonstrated their unwavering commitment to humanity. On 1 July 2024, they visited Rupyin near the Minyang village in Sector South, donating essential relief items including flour, sugar, fruits, and tea bags to support the surviving victims of the 23 June 2024 incident, which tragically claimed the lives of seven civilians, including an 11-month-old boy.

In Rupyin village, where time seems to stand still, Ayak Miyen Deng, aged 50, exemplifies resilience amidst life's challenges. Her small dog stands as a silent family member, sharing her fateful journey. Ayak arrived in the village with her family in 2008, only to have her world shattered by conflict, disease, and the cruel hand of fate, which took her husband, two sons, and daughter, leaving her to bear the burden of grief alone in her humble camp.



In this village, life flows with the seasons. During the rainy season, the landscape is painted lush green, and the community unites to toil on the soft land, earning money by cutting grass for sale and farming without modern techniques. Despite their simplicity, they found happiness. The dry season, however, brings harsh challenges, with the sun beating down mercilessly on the arid land, drying the bushes, and forcing some villagers to seek temporary labor in the Abyei or Amiet markets. Each season brings its own rhythm and purpose, but a defining incident shattered their illusion of tranquility, leaving behind a scarred landscape and a community grappling with harsh realities.

Through Ayak Miyen Deng's story, the UNPOL team witnessed the raw and unyielding spirit of a woman tested by tragedy and upheaval. Her unwavering resolve in the face of insurmountable odds serves as a beacon of hope in Rupyin village. She thanked the UNISFA Police Commissioner, **Ms. Violet Nasambu Lusala, UNPOL Chief of Operations, Chief Superintendent Mr. Jinggang Bi, and the entire UNISFA UNPOL Team for their support during these difficult times.** Ayak expressed her hope that UNISFA would continue to protect her and her community from future harm.



The presence of peacekeepers from different nationalities and units, wearing diverse uniforms, symbolizes not only material assistance but also compassion, solidarity, and the stability of peace. Their presence signifies a commitment to supporting communities in need, fostering belief in a brighter future, and nurturing love and unity in what may seem like a desolate landscape.

In Abyei, where these blue-uniformed individuals are making a difference, their actions inspire resilience, hope, and the spirit of togetherness. By demonstrating care, empathy, and a shared vision for progress, these individuals help instill faith in the community and sow the seeds for growth and positive change.



THE SENTINELS OF PEACE AND SECURITY

OPERATIONS

Amidst the turmoil that engulfs the heart of Abyei, the Blue Sentinels of UNISFA stands as a beacon of hope for a peaceful tomorrow free of conflicts. The committed efforts of UNISFA have been instrumental in maintaining stability despite the complexities and uncertainties within the box.



Transition to Wet Season Deployment

The second quarter of the year marks a significant phase of operations in the heart of Abyei with a transition from dry to wet season deployment. With the onset of rains, Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs) such as Dungop & Kolom have been concentrated considering the deterioration of supply routes which has a cascading effect on maintenance of these locations. However, the contingents continue to dominate these sectors through Vehicle and Foot Based patrols.





Reverse Migration

The onset of wet season also marks the reverse migration of Misseriya Tribe from the Box to the Southern States of Sudan. This transition is generally highly volatile and a cause of security concern. Sudan crisis has further complicated the situation, with delayed reverse migration being observed in certain pockets. To counter this, the mission has increased the frequency of seasonal movement patrols, with our contingents incorporating niche technology such as drones to effectively monitor such movements.



Area Domination

Area Domination remains the mission's primary focus, with our contingents maintaining constant, around-the-clock vigilance in their respective Areas of Operation. This continuous presence is crucial for ensuring the safety and security of both civilians and UN personnel. Our forces conduct regular patrols, establish checkpoints, and engage with local communities to deter criminal activities and respond swiftly to any threats. While securing key routes like the Main Supply Route (MSR) is important, our broader strategy involves comprehensive control of the entire operational area. This approach helps create a secure environment, reduces the likelihood of incidents, and fosters stability in the region. The dedication and effectiveness of our contingents in dominating their areas underscore their vital role in the mission's success and the well-being of all within the region.





Enhancing Footprints in Abyei

With the aim of enhancing UN Peacekeeping forces' footprints within the box, a **new COB at Rumamier** was established despite the logistical constraints which is a testimony of the will and dedication of each lateral of the mission towards achieving the mission mandate. The new Team Site has augmented the posture of the forces within the box, while strengthening the confidence of the local community in UNISFA.



Seizure of APC by UNISFA forces

On 11 June 2024, a PAKBATT Quick Reaction Force (QRF) discovered a hidden Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) based on local intelligence. The APC's crew fled upon sighting the QRF, and the vehicle was subsequently recovered and transported to the Todach COB. This operation highlights the importance of vigilance and rapid response in maintaining security in the region. Preliminary investigations revealed an attempted illegal transaction involving the APC, which was successfully interrupted by the UNISFA QRF. Coordination efforts are now underway with relevant authorities to trace the origins and intended use of the APC, demonstrating UNISFA's commitment to ensuring peace and stability in the region.



IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

TRAINING



TRAINING ENHANCEMENT VISIT

The recent Training Enhancement Visit to UNISFA by the Integrated Training Service from the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), UN Headquarters, spanned five days and included a series of comprehensive meetings and discussions aimed at improving the training framework within the mission. Starting on Sunday, May 12, the visit began with an initial movement from Entebbe followed by a detailed review session with the Training Chief. Over the subsequent days, the team engaged in high-level consultations with various UNISFA representatives, including the CMS, Military CoS, and Police Commissioner. These discussions focused on refining the induction training for personnel, examining the nature and effectiveness of ongoing training activities, and exploring methodologies to enhance training delivery. The visit also included a dedicated awareness generation session, a hybrid meeting on the implementation and reporting mechanisms, and an open forum to address training concerns directly with staff. The visit concluded on Thursday, May 16, with a debriefing session, ensuring that all insights and recommendations were aligned for immediate implementation to foster an environment of continuous learning and development within UNISFA.



Enhancing Protection of Civilians: UNISFA Training Visit

From June 16 to 27, 2024, UNISFA hosted a significant training session aimed at enhancing the Mission's protection of civilians (POC) strategy, which was adopted on November 29, 2023. In response to a recent OIOS evaluation that highlighted the need for integrated and context-specific training, POC training consultant Mr. Stein Ellingsen, alongside DPET colleagues Mr. Yishak Tefferi and Ms. Zefroon Afsary, conducted a comprehensive three-day training course. This training was followed by strategic engagements with Mission and Sector headquarters to support the implementation of the new POC strategy and strengthen in-mission POC coordination mechanisms. The program, developed by the DPET POC team in collaboration with the Mission's POC focal point, provided both civilian and uniformed personnel with a holistic understanding of POC principles and clarified their roles and responsibilities. This visit underscored the Mission's commitment to protecting civilians and improving operational effectiveness in complex environments.



Integrating Gender Perspectives: Training by UNISFA's Military Gender Advisor

From May to August 2024, UNISFA's Military Gender Advisor, Squadron Leader Sharon Mwinsote Syme, is conducting training sessions titled "Integrating Gender Perspectives into Peacekeeping Operations" for UNISFA military personnel. The training has already been delivered to the Nigeria Base Defense Company, INDBATT, CHN-QRF, and the Vietnam Mechanical Construction and Engineering Company (VMCEC). Prior to sessions with the China QRF and Vietnam Company, Squadron Leader Syme met with their Commanding Officers to discuss the UN's Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy and the Elsie Initiative, focusing on the deployment of uniformed female military personnel. Gender-disaggregated data about the troops was collected afterwards. These interactive sessions, lasting 60 to 90 minutes, aim to improve the integration of gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations, enhancing coordination and support for military branches and the Abyei community. The training has been well-received, with future sessions scheduled for other TCCs and the GHANMED Level 2 Plus unit.



UNISFA'S CONTINGENT TRAINING



Our peacekeepers must be ready to handle highly volatile situations that could necessitate operations under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Mastery in weapon handling and firing is therefore crucial, ensuring that our personnel are well-prepared to respond effectively in critical circumstances.

UNISFA'S CONTINGENTS ENGAGE IN CONTINUOUS TRAINING PROGRAMS TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THEIR PEACEKEEPING CAPABILITIES. THESE SESSIONS FOCUS ON ESSENTIAL MILITARY SKILLS, STRATEGIC OPERATIONS, AND EFFECTIVE COORDINATION, ENSURING THAT PEACEKEEPERS ARE ALWAYS PREPARED TO MEET THE DYNAMIC CHALLENGES OF THEIR MISSION IN ABYEI. THIS PERSISTENT TRAINING REGIMEN UNDERSCORES UNISFA'S COMMITMENT TO OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND READINESS.



Rules of Engagement (ROE) training is critical for contingents involved in military operations, emphasizing the precise guidelines governing the use of force. This training ensures that personnel understand the legal and operational boundaries within which they must operate, aiming to minimize civilian casualties, adhere to international laws, and prioritize mission objectives while maintaining the safety of all parties involved. Effective ROE training equips contingents with the knowledge and judgment necessary to make split-second decisions in complex and often volatile situations, ultimately enhancing mission success and fostering trust within the communities they serve.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

UNISFA is dedicated to more than just peacekeeping; it actively engages in various civil welfare activities to support the local communities in the Abyei area. By providing essential services such as medical care, educational assistance, and infrastructure development, the mission strives to improve the quality of life for residents. These efforts reflect UNISFA's commitment to fostering a safe, healthy, and prosperous environment, demonstrating a holistic approach to peacekeeping that addresses the broader needs of the community.



Education and Community Building Efforts

Education forms the core of our community engagement initiatives. Through meticulously planned CIMIC activities, we prioritize enhancing basic education in local communities. GHANBATT oversees institutes like Marial Achak and Wayeng Pre-schools, where we actively teach children essential skills such as sentence construction, rhyming, and body part identification. Responding to community needs, VMCEC is currently constructing classrooms at schools like Abyei Boys Primary School and Kuol Adol Memorial School. These efforts are aimed at fostering enriched learning environments and empowering local youth through education and community interaction.



Furthermore, our commitment to education extends beyond classrooms. At the Ek Onkar Learning Center, alongside academic subjects, women and children in Abyei engage in activities like Taekwondo and boxing, promoting physical fitness and confidence. These holistic programs aim to empower individuals across all aspects of life, fostering a resilient community where education is key to personal and collective growth.





Veterinary Initiatives

In addition to our educational initiatives, UNISFA places a strong emphasis on veterinary services to support the agricultural communities of Abyei, where cattle and livestock hold immense cultural and economic importance. Collaborating closely with local authorities and community leaders, we conduct comprehensive veterinary programs aimed at ensuring the health and well-being of livestock. These efforts include vaccination campaigns, disease prevention measures, and workshops to educate local farmers on sustainable animal husbandry practices. By promoting the health of cattle and other livestock, we contribute not only to sustainable agricultural development but also to preserving cultural traditions and enhancing the economic stability of communities in the region.



Promoting Sustainability

Promoting sustainability is at the core of UNISFA's mission in Abyei. Through a variety of initiatives, we aim to enhance environmental stewardship and resource management practices. These efforts include promoting renewable energy sources, implementing waste reduction and recycling programs, and advocating for sustainable agricultural practices. By fostering a culture of sustainability, we strive to preserve natural resources, mitigate environmental impact, and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.



Medical Outreach

UNISFA conducts vital medical outreach programs in Abyei, reaching out to remote communities with essential healthcare services. These initiatives include mobile clinics, vaccination campaigns, and health education sessions aimed at improving community health and well-being. By bringing medical care directly to those in need, UNISFA strives to address healthcare disparities, promote preventive care, and contribute to the overall health resilience of the region.



UNISFA's PAKBATT unit leads a Free Medical Camp in Al Askar Village, providing essential healthcare services and fostering community engagement

BANBATT-2 spearheads several Free Medical Campaigns in Kadugli, delivering essential healthcare services to the local community.



INDBATT's Medical Outreach program in Dokura & Noong via it's Level-1 hospital has been providing the locals with essential healthcare services, including patient transport with armored APC ambulances, ensuring safety and care.

KEY LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

MISSION RETREAT

From April 15th to 19th, 2024, UNISFA Mission Leadership convened for a five-day retreat at Kampala, Uganda. The retreat focused on enhancing operational effectiveness, cohesion, and strategic alignment within UNISFA's Mission Headquarters. Facilitated by two UNHQ representatives and the SEHoA, the agenda included intensive collaborative discussions on current operational challenges, strategic planning sessions to align mission goals with UNISFA's overarching objectives, and workshops aimed at optimizing resource allocation and risk management strategies. The opening remarks by the Ag HoM/FC emphasized the retreat's significance in recalibrating strategies and fostering unity of purpose among all participants, highlighting its role in enhancing mission readiness in the complex operational environment of Abyei.



Visit of CPAS Delegation

The UNHQ Comprehensive Planning & Performance Assessment System (CPAS) delegation arrived in Abyei on 30 April 2024 to conduct its third CPAS Impact Assessment from 1 to 2 May 2024. Upon arrival, they briefed the MLT on the purpose and objectives of their visit, which included a CPAS Impact Assessment for all focal points, meetings with Force and UNPOL staff, and CPAS uniformed introduction training. The visit concluded on 4 May with a CPAS Basic Methodology presentation and a Table-Top Exercise for military personnel. Throughout the visit, the delegation commended the active participation of the mission staff. The Ag HoM/FC expressed appreciation for the training, noting its importance in enhancing the quality of information for CPAS and informed decision-making. Additionally, on 1 May, the delegation met with UNISFA CPAS Focal Persons at Mission Headquarters to discuss key CPAS Impact Assessment indicators, focusing on the physical protection of civilians and support for political processes between Sudan and South Sudan related to Abyei.



On 13 May 2024, Maj Gen Cheryl Ann Pearce, the Acting Military Advisor from the Office of Military Affairs at UNHQ, began a two-day official visit to UNISFA in Abyei. She first paid a courtesy call to the Acting Head of Mission/Force Commander and received an operational and security update from the Mission Leadership Team. She also toured the newly inaugurated Vietnamese Smart Camp. On 14 May, Maj Gen Pearce visited several key locations within UNISFA, including PAKBATT, INDBATT, and GHANBATT. Each contingent briefed her on their peace and stability initiatives, operational and training matters, and CIMIC activities. She also witnessed a QRF demonstration by PAKBATT. Sector Commanders provided updates on the security situation in their respective areas. During her visit, Maj Gen Pearce met with the Juba-appointed Chief Administrator and the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief. They acknowledged UNISFA's efforts but requested increased force strength, the redeployment of SSPDF troops, and the operationalization of the Athony airstrip. Maj Gen Pearce assured the local authorities of the UN's commitment to addressing their concerns and urged continued cooperation with UNISFA. Maj Gen Pearce departed Abyei on 15 May, concluding her visit.



Visit of MPCS Team

From 23 June to 1 July 2024, a Military Police Capability Study (MPCS) Team from UNHQ visited Abyei to assess UNISFA's operational environment and capabilities. The team conducted meetings with Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), mission support, and various sections at the Mission Headquarters. Upon arrival, the MPCS Team received briefings from the UNDSS and the Acting Head of Mission/Force Commander. They engaged in discussions on logistics, security, and operational matters with different units and contingents including PAKBATT, INDBATT, GHANBATT, BANBATT, and VMCEC.

The visit included comprehensive site tours and interactions at various locations such as Todach, Diffra COB, Highway Camp, Athony COB, Rumamier POB, and Tajalei COB. The team also visited JBVMM HQ in Kadugli, and multiple UNPOL and military facilities including detention centers, operational bases, and Quick Reaction Force units. Each unit provided detailed briefings on their operations, capabilities, and challenges.

During the visit, the MPCS Team observed training demonstrations, operational briefings, and CIMIC activities. They also discussed the impact of their assessments with sector commanders and local authorities. The visit concluded with final briefings to the Ag HoM/FC and other mission component heads, followed by a courtesy dinner before their departure on 1 July.



Engagement with SSPDF

Mission leadership maintains regular interactions with the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) to address concerns and ensure transparent communication, particularly in light of the heightened SSPDF presence in Sector South. These engagements are vital for discussing operational challenges, emphasizing the protection of civilians, and reinforcing adherence to peacekeeping mandates. By fostering a collaborative dialogue, UNISFA underscores the importance of SSPDF's cooperation in maintaining stability and security in the region. The consistent engagement also serves to convey the mission's expectations and the need for SSPDF's compliance with international peacekeeping standards.



Interactions with Juba & Khartoum appointed Chief Administrators

Regular interaction between UNISFA's leadership and the Chief Administrators is essential for navigating current challenges and fostering cooperation in Abyei. These engagements address pressing issues such as evolving security dynamics, administrative concerns, and the management of humanitarian crises. Discussions also focus on joint efforts to mitigate tensions, facilitate the return of displaced populations, and promote community resilience. By maintaining a continuous dialogue, all parties collaborate on strategic initiatives that support governance structures, enhance stability, and promote sustainable development in the region. These interactions highlight UNISFA's commitment to working closely with local authorities to address immediate needs and build a foundation for long-term peace and prosperity in Abyei.



MISSION ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES

On 2 April, the UNISFA community welcomed Brigadier General Ameer Mohammad Umrani as the new Deputy Force Commander. Brigadier General Umrani, a distinguished officer from the Pakistan Army, brings with him a wealth of experience and a highly esteemed career.



On 14 April, UNISFA bade farewell to the **Nigerian Base Defence Company** post a successful tour of duty. UNISFA community will forever be grateful for their invaluable contribution to the mission.

A farewell ceremony was organised on 07 May to bid adieu to **INDBATT-I** who left the mission area post completion of a distinguished tour of duty. UNISFA community wishes them good fortune for all their future endeavors.



On 20 June, UNISFA honored NEPHQSU-1 as they concluded their tour of duty. The mission deeply appreciates their dedication and significant contributions.



On 23 June, UNISFA bid a heartfelt farewell to GHANBATT-2 and Ghana Level-2 Hospital after their successful tour of duty. The entire UNISFA community deeply appreciates their remarkable service and dedication to the mission.

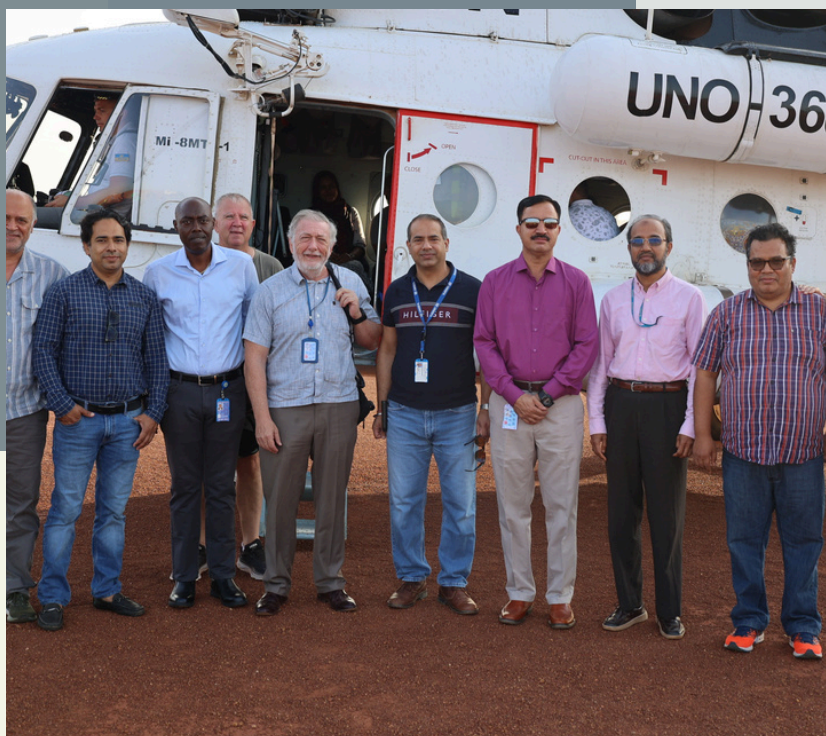
KWIBUKA 30

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REFLECTION ON 1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST TUTSI

The International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi (07 April), was observed in UNISFA on May 15th with a poignant ceremony attended by personnel from across the mission. Mr. Joseph Twine, the most senior Rwandan present, delivered a moving speech reflecting on the tragedy's impact and significance. Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander led the laying of wreaths and lighting of candles, symbolizing remembrance and respect. Civil dignitaries from the Abyei Administration joined in solidarity, underscoring the international community's commitment to honor the memory of the victims and prevent such atrocities in the future.



ODE TO AN ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER



On June, 7th, 2024, UNISFA organized a grand farewell ceremony for Mr. Robert Kirkwood, the outgoing CMS. The event commenced with a musical performance by GHANBATT II, followed by a series of heartfelt remarks from esteemed colleagues and dignitaries, including Mr. Joseph Twine, Mr. Nico Bosman, Col Prasad Venkatesh, and Mr. Alexander Rose. The ceremony featured musical interludes and performances by the Welfare Unit, adding a celebratory touch to the occasion. Key representatives, such as Ms. Violet Lusala and Mr. Michael Swen Blamo, shared their reflections, while Mr. Robert Kirkwood expressed his gratitude and sentiments in his farewell speech. The event concluded with a cake-cutting ceremony and a toast, encapsulating the warmth and camaraderie within the UNISFA family. Attendees were invited to present gifts, take selfies with the celebrant, and capture group photos, creating lasting memories of a significant chapter in UNISFA's journey.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

COMMITTED TO A GREENER FUTURE



OUR LAND. OUR FUTURE. WE ARE #GENERATIONRESTORATION

Through a series of run-up events along with awareness and plantation drives, UNISFA celebrated the World Environment Day with tremendous zeal and enthusiasm underscoring the need to save our planet for our future generations. In line with this year theme, “**Land restoration, combating desertification and drought resilience**”, the events focused on raising awareness towards climate change owing to consistent degradation of our ecosystem.


The celebrations commenced with the **"Save Our Planet March"** at all COBs, where soldiers and civilians united, carrying banners and signs with powerful messages about sustainability and protecting our planet. Awareness lectures highlighted the importance of preserving natural resources and the devastating effects of environmental degradation, aiming to educate the local populace. In line with this, a cleanliness drive was organized, with volunteers picking up litter and ensuring the surroundings were pristine. The events underscored the mission's commitment to **"A greener, cleaner, and more developed Abyei."**

A fashion show promoting sustainable living was organized at Highway Camp by the Vietnam Military Construction and Engineering Company. The celebrations concluded with a plantation drive, symbolizing the commitment to greening the earth and combating deforestation, with the hope of **fostering a greener, healthier environment for future generations.**



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

SALUTING THE GUARDIANS OF PEACE AND STABILITY

A photograph of UN peacekeepers in camouflage uniforms and blue berets. In the foreground, a peacekeeper on the right is looking off to the side, holding a white cloth. Another peacekeeper in the center is shouting with his mouth open. To the left, a peacekeeper is holding a large Pakistani flag. In the background, other peacekeepers are visible, some holding a red flag, and a person in a red shirt is operating a video camera on a tripod. The scene is outdoors on a dirt field under a cloudy sky.

UNISFA proudly celebrated the International Day for UN Peacekeepers on May 29, a day dedicated to honoring the unwavering dedication, remarkable courage, and profound sacrifices of our peacekeepers. This occasion allows us to pay homage to those who have lost their lives in the noble pursuit of building a more peaceful world. The day began with a Peacekeepers Day Parade in the morning, showcasing the unity and discipline of our diverse contingents. In the evening, we hosted a vibrant cultural event featuring performances by various contingents, highlighting the rich cultural heritage they bring to our mission. Food stalls representing different countries added a delightful culinary experience for all attendees. Leading up to this day, a week of sports events saw enthusiastic participation from contingents, civilians, and Force HQ teams, fostering camaraderie and teamwork. On this day, we recognized and expressed our deepest gratitude for the invaluable contributions and steadfast resolve of our peacekeepers in the face of adversity.

The week long celebrations commenced with plethora of sporting events that left behind a trail of excitement, thrill, and memories. The events witnessed healthy participation from all sections of the mission i.e Military, UNPOL and Civilians. A visual feast, the sporting events saw a plethora of nail-biting moments filled with adrenaline rush. The venue became nothing less than a colosseum with our peacekeeping gladiators showcasing the best of human spirit, athleticism, and sportsmanship.



On the morning of May 29th, Mission HQ witnessed an impressive display of drill, discipline, and coordination. The parade featured contingents from our TCCs, UNPOL, UN Military Observers, and civilian staff at UNISFA, all led by Captain Hamza of PAKBATT-2, with the stirring tunes of the Pakistani Contingent Band. Wreaths were laid to honor and remember the peacekeepers who lost their lives in the pursuit of peace. This parade was a powerful testament to our unwavering commitment to bringing peace to the contested region of Abyei.



Celebrating Diversity

The week long celebrations culminated by a remarkable cultural evening. A stunning display of traditional dresses, cultural performances and scrumptious delicacies from around the world stole the hearts of the audiences. The event witnessed the entire mission gathered together to celebrate unity, diversity, and the spirit of togetherness.



INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

CELEBRATING #YOGAFORPEACE



As an ode to the ancient art of Yoga, UNISFA celebrated the 10th International Yoga Day on June 21, 2024. This event highlighted the holistic benefits of Yoga for both physical and mental well-being. Yoga, an ancient physical, mental, and spiritual practice that originated in India, derives its meaning from the Sanskrit word 'Yog,' which means to join or to unite. This symbolizes the union of body and consciousness. This ancient art weaves the soul with the body, leading to a rejuvenated spirit, clarity in thoughts and actions, and enhanced physical well-being. By embracing Yoga, individuals can experience a profound sense of harmony and balance, fostering overall health and inner peace.

Towards a healthier Abyei

A Yoga drive, spearheaded by INDBATT-2, was organized for the local community at Rumajak. The drive aimed to raise awareness about maintaining a balanced, healthy life where both body and mind are free from ailments. This initiative seeks to promote the transition towards a healthier, disease-free Abyei.



Yoga Day Celebrations at Mission HQ

International Yoga Day was celebrated at Mission HQ in Abyei under the leadership of INDBATT-2. The event, which saw enthusiastic participation from peacekeepers of various backgrounds, emphasized the need for adopting healthier and more sustainable lifestyle choices that nurture both mind and body.



MEDAL PARADES

RECOGNIZING SERVICE AND DEDICATION

Regular medal parades are a significant tradition within UNISFA, serving as formal recognition of the dedicated service of our peacekeepers. These ceremonies are held periodically to honor military personnel, police officers, and civilians who have met the eligibility criteria. During the parade, recipients are awarded the United Nations Medal, symbolizing their commitment to promoting peace and security in the Abyei area. Mission leaders and representatives from contributing countries attend these events, underscoring the importance of international cooperation and unity. The medal parades not only boost the morale of the peacekeepers but also reinforce the core values of duty and service, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose among all participants.



GLIMPSES PEACEKEEPERS AT WORK



