

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	579
Land:	Sudan
Kilde:	UN Security Council
Titel:	Meetings Coverage. Security Council Extends Mandate of United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2609 (2021)
Udgivet:	15. december 2021
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	9. februar 2022



United Nations

SECURITY COUNCIL MEETINGS COVERAGE

8932ND MEETING (PM)

SC/14738

15 DECEMBER 2021

Security Council Extends Mandate of United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2609 (2021)

The Security Council today extended the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) mandate until 15 May 2022, urging the Governments of Sudan and of South Sudan to take all necessary steps to ensure the area is effectively demilitarized.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2609 (2021) (to be issued as document [S/RES/2609\(2021\)](#)), the 15-member Council decided to extend for six months the UNISFA's mandate modification set forth in resolutions 2024 (2011) and 2075 (2012), providing for the Force's support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, and determined that both should continue to demonstrate measurable progress on border demarcation, specifically by taking the certain measures. They include that UNISFA and the Monitoring Mechanism patrols achieve standing clearance and full freedom of movement for all air and ground patrols, and operationalize the reopening of border crossing corridors, in line with decisions taken in October 2020 and September 2021.

The Council decided to reduce the authorized troop ceiling to 3,250 until 15 May 2022, and maintained the authorized ceiling at 640 police personnel, including 148 individual officers and three formed units. It also expressed its intention to reduce the authorized police ceiling as the Abyei Police Service is gradually established and providing effective law enforcement throughout the area.

The 35-paragraph resolution contained a range of provisions and several requests for the Secretary-General, including that he ensures the implementation of 16 UNISFA activities — from strengthening early warning mechanisms for human rights abuses and attacks on civilians to encouraging the use of confidence-building and community engagement to support the mission's protection and its information gathering efforts.

By other terms, the Council expressed its serious concern that the Government of Sudan has not issued visas promptly to support personnel critical for the mandate of UNISFA, including police. It also condemned the intermittent presence of South Sudan security service personnel and the deployment of Sudan's Oil Police in Diffra, in the Abyei area, in violation of the 20 June 2011

Agreement, as well as any entry of armed militias into the territory. It reiterated its demands that immediately and without preconditions the Government of South Sudan fully redeploy its security service personnel from the Abyei area and that the Government of Sudan redeploy the Oil Police in Diffra.

Further, the Council demanded that all parties involved allow, in accordance with international law, all humanitarian personnel full, safe and unhindered access to civilians in need of assistance and all necessary facilities for their operations. It also strongly urged that the parties cease all forms of violence, human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed against civilians, including women and children, and bring perpetrators to justice.

Urging the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to take steps to implement and facilitate confidence-building measures among the respective communities, the Council also expressed concern that women remain absent from the leadership of local peace committees.

The Council urged renewed efforts to determine conclusively the Safe Demilitarized Buffer Zone centreline on the ground, and reiterated that this line in no way prejudices the current or future legal status of the border, ongoing negotiations on the disputed and claimed areas and demarcation of the borders.

Following the adoption, the representative of the Russian Federation, expressing support for the resolution, said that the work of the Mission is relevant for the region. She expressed regret that the United States penholders insisted on maintaining an accusatory slant regarding both States. It cannot be denied that issues remain when it comes to police and civil management, she said, adding that pressure and accusations towards the parties regarding blocking the implementation of the mandate will not solve these problems. She called on the leaders to establish constructive dialogue between Khartoum and Juba and noted the need to strictly comply with the underlying principles of peacekeeping.

The representative of South Sudan, welcoming the resolution's adoption, said the Government appreciates UNISFA's presence and role in the region. In terms of renewed concerns on the final status of Abyei, he pledged South Sudan's commitment to peaceful actions to reach that point, including a free and fair referendum on the issue. However, as UNISFA is an interim arrangement pending final status decisions, Sudan is making use of the passage of time to attempt to make changes on the ground. This dangerous trend is sowing the seeds of violent conflict in the area, and Sudan must heed the Council's demands. The ultimate resolution of the situation and the UNISFA exit strategy hinges on deciding the final status of Abyei, he said, calling on the Council to do its part in ensuring this is achieved.

The meeting began at 3:04 p.m. and ended at 3:16 p.m.

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