

# Unveiling UNISFA's Efforts at Managing Law and Order in the Contested Abyei Area in the Absence of the Abyei Police Service.

Daniel Terzungwey Adekera

United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), Sudan

Formerly, Head, Mass Communication Department, Fourah Bay College,  
University of Sierra Leone, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

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## ABSTRACT

Both the Agreement signed between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) on the temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area and, the subsequent United Nations Security Resolution 1990 (2011) that established the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) made provision for the establishment of the Joint Abyei Police Service among other institutions. However, the non-implementation of this important body has created a law-and-order vacuum in the Abyei Area and a security nightmare for UNISFA. This study critically examined the impact of the absence of the Abyei Joint Police Service on law and order, with particular emphasis on UNISFA's initiatives in managing issues of criminality in the area. The work used primary and secondary sources including UN documents for data collection and analysis using qualitative design. The findings revealed that the establishment of the Community Protection Committee (CPC) and the work of the Community Liaison Office significantly reduced criminality in the Abyei Area leading to the de-escalation of the conflict. The paper recommends greater capacity building and logistical support to the CPC to ensure its continuous functionality and efficiency.

**Keywords:** Law and order, community protection committee, Abyei Police Service, Abyei Area, security vacuum

## INTRODUCTION

Abyei Area is the disputed area between Sudan and South Sudan. The area straddles 10,546 km<sup>2</sup> and it is defined as the land of the nine Ngok Dinka chiefdoms transferred to Kordofan in 1905. Abyei Area has been accorded "special administrative status" by the 2004 Protocol on the Resolution of the Abyei Conflict in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the Sudanese second civil war. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement that gave autonomy to South Sudan deferred the status of Abyei to be decided later through a referendum. (Sunday Tribune: 2022)

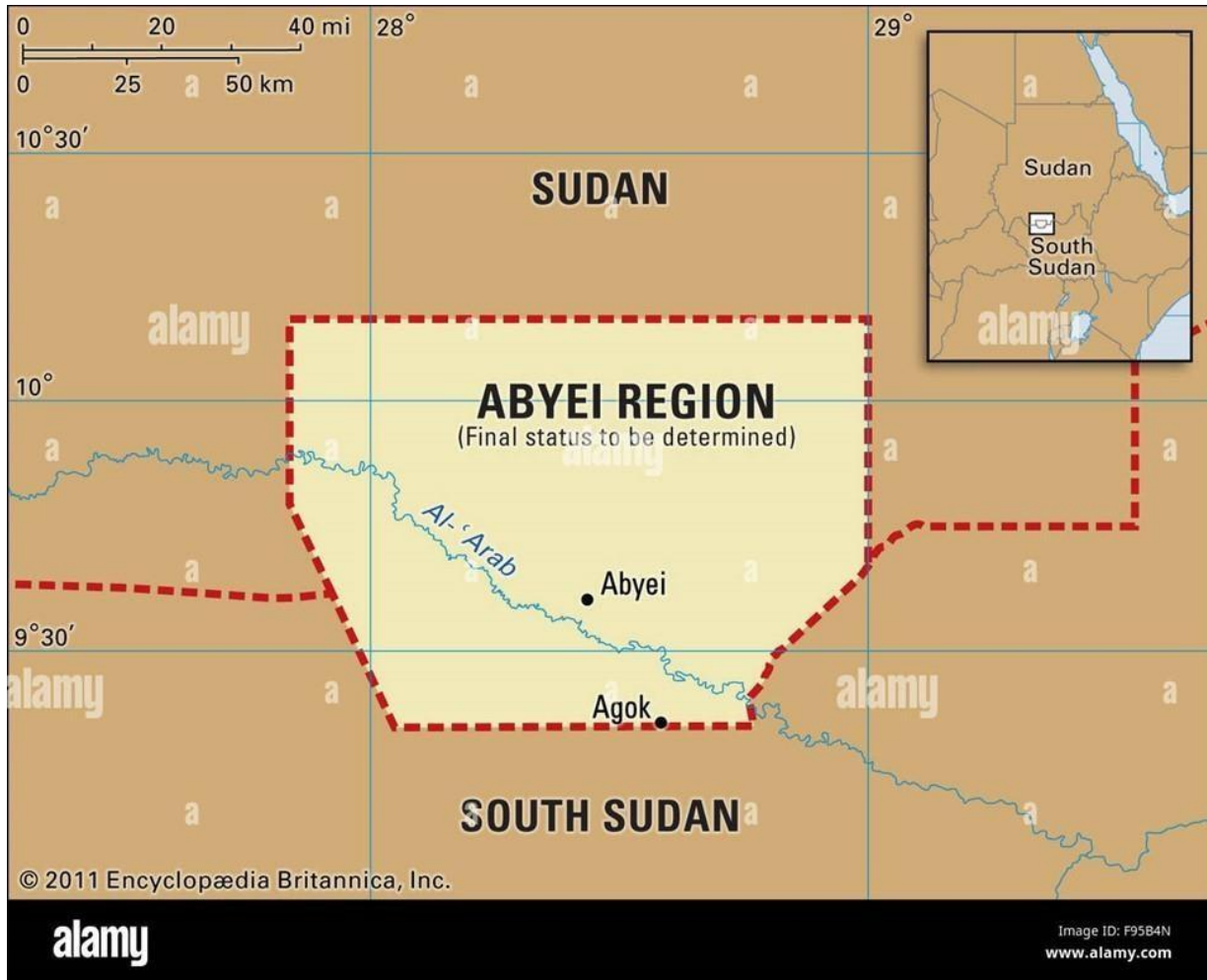


Fig. 1 The Map of Abyei between Sudan and South Sudan. Source: Alamy Cartography Stock Photos and Images

The end of 2010 witnessed increased tensions in the Abyei area which resulted in a series of violent incidents in the area in early January 2011 and a build-up of forces from the north and the south. In response to the situation, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, with the support of the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations Mission in Sudan, and other stakeholders, facilitated high-level meetings between the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which led to the signing of the 20 June 2011 Agreement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area. The Agreement stipulated the withdrawal of all security forces from Abyei and the establishment of temporary administrative and security institutions including an Abyei Police Service. (UNSCR 1990 of June 27, 2011). To support the Agreement, and to provide security in the Abyei, the parties requested for the United Nations to deploy an interim security force for the Abyei area. In response, the United Nations Security Council via Resolution 1990 of June 2011 established the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). The mission was mandated to, inter alia; strengthen the capacity of the Abyei Police Service through the provision of support, including the training of personnel, and to coordinate with the Police Service on matters of law and order.

## LAW AND ORDER DEFICITS AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN ABYEI AREA

Law and order, according to Igbal: 2023 refers to a situation characterized by adherence to a system of laws, regulations, and norms. It signifies a society where individuals respect the rule of law, and authorities work

diligently to uphold it.

The Abyei Area suffers from a lack of security and a perception of impunity. Additionally, there is a lack of regular interaction on threats and security needs between community interlocutors and UNISFA, including communication and feedback on how early warnings are responded to. Inter-communal violence is predominant and often linked to migration and associated competing land use and trust deficits between the communities. In the market areas, theft, aggravated assault, and other acts of criminality are significant concerns destabilizing market activities. In some instances, criminality rises to a level that could be described as “criminality with a military capacity”, particularly regarding cattle rustling. Violence against women, including rape, is a common recurring issue. Furthermore, since February 2022, the arrival into the Abyei Area of Dinka Twic from Warrap State, South Sudan, has seen increasing tensions and armed conflict between the Ngok Dinka and Dinka Twic. This disturbing scenario is exacerbated by the fact that there is a near absence of a functional criminal justice system (courts, police, prisons, or correction officers) In some of the more serious incidents, UNISFA Forces have, under the mandate and rules of engagement, detained alleged perpetrators, who are subsequently handed over to authorities of, or associated with, one of the two host States. Nevertheless, this often results in the immediate or almost immediate release of the individuals by the receiving authority, creating a culture of impunity for serious incidents, distrust, and lack of confidence that the Mission can deliver its core mandate of security and protection of civilians. Fundamentally, impunity alludes to a situation where perpetrators circumvent punishment for violations that inflicted suffering upon someone and, a failure to bring such perpetrators of human rights violations to justice. (Mejia: 1999). This dire situation has negatively impacted UNISFA’s operations within the context of its mandate implementation.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) foresaw the establishment of a dedicated administration for Abyei. It did not contain any provisions on the legislative or judicial powers in Abyei. Further, it remained silent on the jurisdiction of either the new “southern Sudan” or Sudan’s proper judiciaries over the Abyei Area (CPA: 2005). The 2011 Abyei Agreement contains no explicit reference to any judicial mechanisms. Regarding the executive, it reiterates that, except as explicitly modified therein, the CPA applies until the final status of Abyei is resolved. It also stipulates the establishment of several joint institutions, in particular the Abyei Police Service which has not been established to date.

The current positions of the Parties to the 2011 Abyei Agreement are divergent and may be encapsulated as Sudan’s insistence (in principle) on the establishment of the joint institutions to the exclusion of other temporary solutions, as juxtaposed with South Sudan’s de facto support for expansion of South Sudanese institutions into the Abyei Area, as exemplified by the presence of four County Administrations, various ministries, two prosecutors and a magistrate in southern and central Abyei and, more recently, the South Sudan People’s Defense Forces (SSPDF) in and around Agok.

Under the South Sudan Local Government Act (2009), there are mechanisms whereby traditional courts can become formal institutions of South Sudan, a process that Ngok Dinka’s traditional chiefs have signaled they are planning to initiate. Similar provisions exist under Sudanese law. Various quasi-law and order mechanisms and/or arrangements have de facto come to exist in different parts of Abyei. These range from South Sudanese authorities in southern Abyei, a combination of traditional and statutory mechanisms, and limited exercise of jurisdiction by Sudan in Sudan proper over cases from the Abyei Area. There is interaction between statutory institutions and traditional mechanisms of ‘associated’ communities (e.g. Ngok Dinka with South Sudan, Misseriya with Sudan), but no interaction between the statutory mechanisms of the two host States, Sudan, and South Sudan. Certainly, with this current lacuna, the handling of law-and-order issues by a neutral organization has proved Herculean.

## **UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH THE JOINT ABYEI POLICE SERVICE LEADING TO LAW-AND-ORDER VACUUM.**

Crime and criminality thrive in conflict areas where law and order institutions are destroyed or absent. Abyei Area suffers the same fate. Only the presence of appropriate law and order structures, particularly a functional criminal justice system can guarantee peace and stability in the area. This operose task of maintaining law and order naturally falls on the police service where it is available. However, concerted efforts to establish the Abyei Police Service (APS) have met with political and logistical challenges. The two countries appear to differ on the quintessence and modalities for setting up the APS as provided for in the Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area. During the eighth meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) in Addis Ababa on 12 and 13 January 2013, the Co-Chairs agreed to instruct their respective police experts to begin work on proposals to determine the size and composition of the Abyei Police Service and to discuss a joint proposal at the next meeting of AJOC. The parties' police technical teams met in Abyei town on 4 February 2023 to discuss the size and composition of the Abyei Police Service but failed to reach an agreement. On 5 February, at the request of both Sudan and South Sudan, UNISFA presented them with a draft concept note on the Abyei Police Service which could serve as the basis for future discussions on its framework.

On 27 March 2013, the Sudan AJOC Co-Chair informed UNISFA that the Government of Sudan had finished a draft framework for the Abyei Police Service based on the concept note UNISFA presented to the parties the previous month. Similarly, South Sudan informed UNISFA that it had formulated its concept for the APS. When the AJOC next met on 2 and 3 May 2013, the committee urged the two governments to speed up establishing the APS. No decision was made at the meeting on the timetable for implementation. However, following the killing of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief on 4 May 2013, the Ngok Dinka community rejected further discussions on any joint institutions between Sudan and South Sudan including the Abyei Area Administration institutions and the Abyei Police Service. Throughout the remainder of 2013, the Government of South Sudan refused to participate in any further meetings of AJOC. The party's refusal to establish the temporary institutions in Abyei, including the APS resulted in the administrative and law and order vacuum.

Meanwhile, the security situation in the area continued to deteriorate. There was an increase in intercommunal crime following the return to Abyei of thousands of people displaced by the violence of 2011. There were also sporadic incidents of serious and violent crime perpetrated by armed groups. Consequently, UNISFA national monitors of the Joint Military Observer Committee (JMOC) from Sudan and South Sudan in August 2013 to discuss the negative impact of the absence of these institutions. The JMOC representatives agreed to form neighborhood watch committees in consultation with local community leaders to protect their respective communities. Accordingly, UNISFA, in July 2013 assisted in establishing an unarmed community-based crime prevention and reduction initiative named Community Protection Committees (CPC). This was to be a temporary measure to help address some of the common law and order problems in Abyei in line with UNISFA's mandate to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.

## **LAW AND ORDER MANAGEMENT VIA THE COMMUNITY PROTECTION COMMITTEES (CPCS).**

The Abyei Police Service (APS) and other joint institutions provided for under the June 2011 Peace Agreement and other relevant instruments have not been established since the establishment of UNISFA. As a result, the Abyei area experiences a vacuum in terms of law and order and by extension the rule of law. As a temporary measure to provide community policing services, manage law and order, and control crime and



violence, UNISFA supported the establishment of a community protection committee (CPC). The creation of these community structures was based on a participatory process, via inclusive consultation and dialogue sessions with the communities in question.

The main objective of the CPC in Abyei is to help improve civil security in a crisis context. In practice, this structure undertakes, through its members, to implement actions to assist and guide people who need protection. It also helps to improve the knowledge and ability of communities to face protection-related risks and contribute to reducing risks and threats. Communities are the main drivers of change and play a key role in creating a climate of security. The members of a CPC are responsible for implementing individual and community protection interventions in their zone. Their work also involves carrying out reception and referral tasks, day-to-day monitoring of protection cases referred to care structures, as well as sensitization to protection-related threats and risks.

Abyei CPCs are community-based mechanisms comprised of Ngok Dinka members who exercise police-like functions. Comprised of unpaid volunteers, the CPCs maintain order, investigate incidents, register cases, transfer them to customary or civil courts, and apprehend and detain individuals. Ngok Dinka CPCs cover 32 locations in the southern part of Abyei, which report to both their local chiefs and the CPC leadership based in Abyei town, which reports both to the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief and to the Juba-Appointed Chief Administration. CPC members are nominated by their respective Chiefs to the Paramount Chief for appointment, although UNPOL has been involved in their recruitment for at least some periods. There are currently 848 CPC volunteer members in southern Abyei as of October 2023, of which 94 are women. The appointment criteria are not firmly set but appear to include being physically able to do the job and being endorsed by the relevant Chief. UNISFA has provided CPC members with basic training, including on human rights, in addition to operational logistical materials like raincoats, reflective jackets, flashlights, gumboots as well as polo shirts and hats that mark them as CPC members. UNISFA has been mandated to strengthen the capacities of the CPCs to assist with the management of law and order, which is to be undertaken in close coordination with both the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities and to assist with the management of law-and-order processes in Abyei. Traditional justice is the most used mechanism to resolve disputes.

Engaging communities in search of answers to complex security challenges in conflict environments has proved to be overly critical. This is because community members themselves can better take action to guarantee their protection. The community-based protection approach is often used to strengthen communities' self-protection capacities. It enables the creation of protection mechanisms/structures that will be run by the affected communities, equitably (with the active involvement of women and men) and with the necessary technical support. This approach is considered part of logic of proximity and participation and engages the communities, who then become the principal actors of their protection and security in a crisis.

The concept of Community Protection Committees (CPCs) first appeared in 2011, following the withdrawal of the Sudanese Police Force. It was initially promoted by UN Police (UNPOL) as "local community security initiatives through unarmed and voluntary neighborhood watch mechanisms". Consequent to the April 2014 Strategic Review, and September 2014 Technical Assessment Mission of UNISFA mandate the Secretary-General requested the Security Council to formally authorize the mission to provide support to CPCs. The Security Council in Resolution 2205 of 26 February 2015 therefore, mandated UNISFA, within its existing capacities and resources and in close coordination with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to strengthen the capacities of the CPC to assist with the management of law-and-order processes in Abyei. The concept is like community policing which uses partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Discoverpolicing.org). It encourages interactive partnerships between law enforcement agencies, their officers, and the people they serve. However, in the absence of a

standing police service as is the case in Abyei, Community Protection Committees stand on their own with the supervision and support of the UNISFA UNPOL

Since 2015/2016, the CPCs have been widely adopted by the Juba-appointed administration and implemented in sectors of the south and central of the Abyei Box. However, the Khartoum-appointed authorities for a long time remained skeptical about the establishment of CPC in the Misseriya community and rejected the idea, thus depriving the sector North of such an informal but useful and effective mechanism, in the absence of the Abyei Police service. After the May 2022 Traditional Leaders Joint Peace Conference, UNPOL and the Community Liaison Office (CLO) intensified consultations to promote the CPC in the north. In this context, on 2 June in Diffra, a workshop was organized to discuss the report of the Entebbe conference and chart a peaceful co-existence between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities. On 30 June, CPC was officially launched in the northern town of Diffra. This was celebrated as a positive development.

## **MANAGEMENT OF LAW AND ORDER THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING & SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY PROTECTION COMMITTEES (CPCS), DETENTION CENTERS, AND TRADITIONAL COURTS.**

Under Security Council Resolution 2416, par. 18 UNISFA in close coordination with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka is called upon to strengthen the capacities of Community Protection Committees (CPCs) to assist with the management of law-and-order processes in Abyei while ensuring the human and dignified treatment of suspects and other detainees. The CPC is a de-facto policing body whose main role is to provide policing functioning: i.e. carry out the arrest, and detention of suspected criminals and hold criminals in custody as well as carry out correctional duties and reform services of the detainees. One of the critical aspects of the CPC is that they are taken from among the community members and that they work on a 'no-pay' voluntary basis. The CPC is more predominant on the Southern side of the Box i.e. Ngok Dinka side but joint operations take place in the Amiet area. CLO engages CPCs on diverse Rule of Law (RoL) issues relating to human rights, holding conditions, and treatment of detainees (often subject to unsanitary detention centers) and on issues of prolonged detention and arbitrary arrest. We also support CPCs by providing capacity building and mentoring to CPC Members on arrests, detention, and proper arbitration of offenders.

### **Protection of Civilians**

UNISFA POC mandate, as highlighted in resolution 1990 (2011) tasks the mission to take the necessary actions to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, including the use of force when required, in line with the mission mandate, the United Nations Charter, and other applicable international laws. CLO supports the implementation of UNISFA's mandate to protect the Abyei Area from unauthorized elements, as defined in the Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area of 20 June 2011 (the 20 June 2011 Agreement), and to ensure security in the Abyei Area. UNISFA implements its POC mandate by the three tiers outlined in the DPKO/DFS Policy on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping: Protection through dialogue and engagement; Provision of physical protection; and Establishment of a protective environment.

Given the unpredictable security situation in Abyei and polarized rule of law mechanisms in the area, the protection of civilians continues to be a concern particularly given the rule of law and governance vacuum of Abyei Administrative Area.

## **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND, FACILITATION OF PEACEFUL MIGRATION THROUGH THE JOINT PEACE COMMITTEE (JPC), MIGRATION CONFERENCES, SUPPORT TO GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES, AND THE AMIET COMMON MARKET**

### **The Joint Peace Committee (JPC)**

The JPC is an informal locally led peace mechanism made up of eminent elders of the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities. It is a locally led process created to serve as a mechanism for resolving communal and inter-communal disputes and promoting inter-community harmony. It also acts as a bridge between the people, de facto officials on the one hand, and UNISFA on security matters, information sharing, and coordinating with community-related issues. UNISFA provides the administrative and logistics support for the JPC weekly Thursday meetings to discuss knotty issues likely to trigger conflict between communities come up with a solution or common ground and arbitrate on contentious issues. They also come up with a formula for the management and sharing of scarce natural resources that often act as triggers of conflict. They ensure perpetrators of inter-communal violence are brought to account through traditional justice mechanisms such as “the blood money” compensations and therefore dissipate tensions and prevent violence. Through the meetings, UNISFA supports the community-based peace committee process; engaging women and youth to empower their capacities to support inter-communal peace.

The JPC has an oversight arrangement over the Community Protection Communities (CPC), and the Joint Traditional Court in the Amiet market. It, therefore, sets the rules and regulations for minimum standards of good governance of the Amiet common market and settles criminal matters such as theft of cattle, blood compensation for murders, cattle rustling, etc. The main functions of the JPC regarding the management of law and order include settlement of disputes and agreements on terms of compensation; arrest of offenders and prosecution of same; making rules and regulations for the law, order, and management of Amiet Common Market. Others include making decisions on matters of importance affecting the communities and serve as CLO ‘early warning system’ on general happenings within Abyei likely to affect peace and security.

### **Facilitation of Peaceful Migration**

The migration season is always fraught with conflicts as the pastoralists move southwards with their animals across the East, West, and Central migration corridors. To stem this tide, CLO, in collaboration with the UN Agencies, Funds and Programs (UNAFP) has been organizing the Pre-Migration Conferences at the onset of the dry season, where participants including cattle herders across the three migration corridors, leaders of host communities, JCPC representatives and other stakeholders come together to deliberate on the conduct of the migration and mutually agree on the terms, after which a communique is signed. A Post-Migration Conference is also held at the end of the dry season to assess how the migration exercise has fared while reparations are made, including the payment of blood money to relatives of those killed during the migration process. Through this, the bond between the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka has been strengthened while conflict is mitigated.

CLO facilitates in collaboration with IOM and FAO the Joint Dinka-Misseriya Pre-seasonal migration dialogues (usually held in December) every year ahead of the start of the migration season (movement of cattle from North to South) and post-migration phase (usually held in May-June) of the following year before the movement of cattle from South to North part of the box. The forums target Leaders from three main migration corridors namely: Eastern, Northern, and Central, and provide a platform for parties to come up with ground rules which they commit to through a ‘Resolution’ on the use of scant natural resources such as water and pasture.

The aim is to provide an early warning system to prevent and deter potential conflict drivers during the dry migration season when nomads move southward to seek grazing land and water for their animals and during the reverse cycle.

### **Grassroots Initiatives Including Youths, Women, and Other Civil Society Actors.**

CLO works in collaboration with the Office of the Principal Officer to mobilize women and grassroots civil society actors in peacebuilding processes. UNISFA supports the implementation of the Gender Peace and Security Programme and advocates for Women by the mission's mandate. To further promote an inclusive peace process, efforts are made to engage the grassroots actors through their respective civil society institutions. On the side of the Ngok Dinka, discussions are taking place through the civil organization network, a coalition of associations and unions of the youth, women, chamber of commerce, livestock owners association, farmers, arts and artisans association, health professional association, human rights society, religious leaders, and others. Avenues to engage with actors on the Misseriya side are also underway. The main aim is to advance civic participation and engagement in peacebuilding and therefore broaden the space for civil society to play a meaningful role in the AAA peacebuilding and reconciliation processes.

### **Amiet Joint Common Market**

The Amiet Joint Common Market is currently the only common place where the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka Communities co-exist within the Abyei box. The initiative was born out of the 2016 Peace Agreement that was signed between the community leaders. It is also a flash point for several conflicts that have occurred between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities. This is essentially because large populations of Misseriya and Ngok Dinka traders gathers and ply the area as well as other community members from Sudan and South Sudan, including foreign nationals from Ethiopia, Uganda, and Eritrea making the market the nerve center of Abyei box.

Amiet Market and its surrounding areas suffer from additional layers of criminality on top of the crime and violations taking place elsewhere in Abyei. This includes attacks by militia groups, the functioning of criminal gangs, and increased levels of theft. In addition, there are frequent tensions between different communities regarding land ownership and/or use around the market and plot distribution within it. Amiet Market is the only place in Abyei where joint mechanisms exist. In 2015, local mediation efforts were initiated to address the lack of cooperation between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities resulting in a peace agreement being signed between the chiefs in February 2016. The main implementation mechanism for this agreement was the formation of the Joint Community Peace Committee (JCPC) comprised of an equal number of Ngok and Misseriya representatives. The JCPC functions include coordination with UNISFA and other organizations such as IOM, FAO, and Concordis, facilitating migration conferences, supporting conflict resolution, ruling on compensation, and overseeing the work of its sub-committees. These subcommittees include the Joint Protection Committee (JPC), a Joint Traditional Court (JTC), and a Trade Committee (TC). The Amiet mechanisms are the sole joint mechanisms that function in the Abyei Area and are not formally linked to the authorities appointed by either Khartoum or Juba, although the Ngok Dinka members of the JCPC seem to have a reporting line to the South Sudanese Minister of Peace in Abyei town. Among a myriad of priorities, interlocutors identified a lack of security and impunity as the two main risks to the functioning of the market and its joint mechanisms. They highlighted the cooperation they have with UNISFA, stressing that past and incoming UNISFA troops have not proactively engaged with them to collect the full information that they have, which could support increased prevention and early warning and response.

The biggest challenges in the area are the lack of baseline data in addition to poor basic infrastructures and



facilities, heightened security threats, and weak rule of law mechanisms and institutional frameworks to curtail crime and violence. The area is prone to inter-ethnic violence and with a growing youth bulge, it has a huge potential to generate new threats. The operation of the Joint market, on the one hand, provides an opportunity for trade and free movement of persons within Abyei but also can generate additional challenges if not well managed.

CLO continues to engage community leaders, particularly the JPC through the establishment and management of community joint mechanisms such as the Joint court; Joint CPCs; detention facilities, and other such mechanisms to reinforce peace and underpin reconciliation.

### **Conflict Management through Traditional Justice Mechanisms**

The Traditional Justice system is a mechanism that regulates human conduct and promotes social order in communities, and it plays a key role in restoring normalcy and order. Traditional and informal justice systems undoubtedly have gained an increasing interest in the international peacebuilding community (Peacebuildinginitiative.org). While the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya apply different justice systems (each embedded into their own respective national judicial system i.e. South Sudan and Sudan respectively), a de-facto joint traditional court based on customary practices of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya was established to adjudicate disputes and settle commercial transaction disagreement in the Amiet area. The two laws are however based on ancient traditions and cultural practices.

UNISFA does not have a specific mandate to support the judicial systems operating in the Abyei Administrative Area. However, CLO engages the traditional chiefs to ensure civilians are protected through the traditional judicial process and the human rights of the citizenry are protected. UNISFA provides and supports the traditional justice system through training, advocacy, mentoring, and technical advice to enhance, shape, and build their understanding of Human Rights, Rule of Law, and Justice issues as well as enhance the capacities of traditional justice leaders to handle natural resource conflicts within communities and inter-communal customs. Key areas addressed in capacity-building activities include the concept of a free and fair trial, Independent of the traditional courts, and the rights of the accused including the Presumption of the innocence of an accused. Other areas are the Jurisdiction of traditional courts, Limits, and powers of customary courts as well as Principles of decision marking.

### **THE ROLE OF THE BATTALION COMMANDERS**

The battalion commanders have played a very significant role in security management in the various areas of responsibility. Abyei Area is divided into three operational sectors. The Pakistani battalion is deployed in Sector North with headquarters in Todach (formerly in Diffra) Sector Central with headquarters in Numajak is manned by the Indian battalion, while the Ghanian battalion is deployed in Sector South with headquarters in Athony. The battalions have carried out extensive peacebuilding and confidence-building activities through their weekly peace meetings. In addition, they have embarked on quick-impact projects involving infrastructural rehabilitation and other civil-military activities. They are also engaged in mediation, negotiation, and reconciliation activities, especially during migration, post migration as well as in cases of cattle rustling and inter-communal clashes involving death. The activities of the battalions have brought to the fore the critical contribution of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) in peace operations.

### **CONCLUSION**

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei has managed to achieve law and order within the Abyei Box including high very serious criminal cases. This achievement, without the establishment of the Abyei Police Service as provided for in the Agreement on the temporary arrangements for the

administration and security of the Abyei Area between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), should be applauded as a major milestone towards the mission's mandate implementation. This apparent success required creativity and constant brainstorming. This resulted in the establishment of the Community Protection Committee which filled the vacuum created by the absence of the Abyei Police Service as well as the deployment of the mission's Community Liaison Office which coordinated the activities of the conflicting communities towards effective peacebuilding and peaceful co-existence.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The establishment of the community protection committees as a temporary measure to manage security in the Abyei Area in the absence of law-and-order institutions has proved to be a practical template for addressing security challenges in conflict areas with dysfunctional law and order mechanisms. Since community protection committee members are volunteers without any form of remuneration provision non-financial incentives for their day-to-day activities may go a long way in motivating them. This may also function to discourage and temptation to engage in corrupt activities by the volunteers. Furthermore, it is recommended that greater capacity building and logistical support be provided to the CPC members to ensure professionalism and efficiency.

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