

**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**

Statement by

H.E. Ms Karen Van Vlierberge, Ambassador,  
Deputy Permanent Representative  
of Belgium to the United Nations

**UNISFA Debate  
at the Security Council**

New York, 24/10/2019

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Mr President,

I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Horn of Africa, Parfait Onanga, for their informative presentations.

We are aware of the political situation in Sudan and South Sudan, and the Abyei issue cannot be isolated from this. Belgium continues to monitor developments very closely.

We wish the new Sudanese authorities every success in the vital missions they will have to accomplish, as stated in the Constitutional Declaration of 17 August. We welcome the priorities set out by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok during his speeches here in NY during the high-level week.

We exhort the stakeholders in South Sudan to make rapid progress on the key issues involved in the implementation of the peace process, particularly the introduction of security arrangements, the status of Juba, the finalisation of internal boundaries and the complete release of the implementation funds announced by the government.

We note that the security situation in the Abyei Area remains fragile, with inter-community tensions, an increase in criminal incidents and the presence of armed groups in the region. Widespread poverty, unemployment, insecurity in the neighbouring zones of the Abyei Area and the absence of functional institutions for governance and the rule of law are only making the situation worse. Some 202,000 vulnerable people still require humanitarian aid.

We share the analysis of the Secretary-General that the continued presence of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) remains crucial. We note the two options put forward by the SG in his report and we welcome a productive discussion within the Council.

I would like to highlight two points: (1) the need for a political solution, and (2) the role of UNISFA in this respect;

Mr President,

1.

Stability in the Abyei region remains our main objective. The main responsibility for the implementation of the 2011 and 2012 agreements lies with the governments of both countries. However, it must be noted that very little progress has been made in fulfilling the commitments agreed by the parties last April. The Security Council must encourage the governments of Sudan and South Sudan to continue the dialogue and, in the longer term, develop a political solution that will allow the final status of the Abyei Area and other border disputes to be resolved.

Mr President,

2.

As the name of the mission indicates, UNISFA was established as an interim security force in 2011. This Council must ensure that the dispute between Sudan and South Sudan over Abyei and the border region does not become another frozen conflict. We call on the parties to facilitate the mission's operations, including the issuing of visas and the strengthening of the civilian component of the mission, in order to facilitate the revival of the political process for the preparation of a timely exit strategy.

Mr President, there is no alternative to dialogue for resolving the Abyei issue. The presence of UNISFA remains crucial, but it cannot replace the role of the State. The Council must ensure that the mission has the resources it needs to help resolve the causes of the conflict and guarantee long-term stability in Sudan and South Sudan.

Thank you, Mr President.