

**A3+1 Statement delivered by
Ambassador Tarek Ladeb
Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the UN**

**Security Council Open VTC on the
UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), Sudan and South Sudan**

22 October 2020

Thank you, Mr President.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the A3+1 member-states of the Council, Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint-Vincent and the Grenadines.

I would like at the outset to thank Under-Secretary General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Horn of Africa, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for their comprehensive briefings.

I wish also to welcome to the Council the distinguished delegate of the Sudan.

The A3+1 commends the stabilizing role of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in the area, and along the Sudan/South Sudan border, including its support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM).

We also appreciate Ethiopia and its peacekeepers for their commitment and dedication towards ensuring security and building confidence in the area and the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone.

The African Union recognizes these commendable efforts and continues to stand by the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan and their people as they move along the path to comprehensive peace and sustainable development, while relying on the partnership and support of the Security Council and the wider international Community.

Mr. President,

The A3+1 notes with appreciation the mutually reinforcing relations between the governments of the Sudan and South Sudan, in light of the signing of the peace agreement between the Sudanese parties, on 3 October in Juba, as well as the Sudan's constructive engagement, as the incumbent Chair of IGAD, in the peacebuilding process in South Sudan.

We believe it remains useful for the Sudan and South Sudan, and for this Council, to capitalize on such dynamism, so that the pursuit of just and lasting peace in both countries extends to the Abyei area and, alternatively.

We urge the two Sudans to continue to foster rapprochement and mutual trust with a view to fully implementing their cooperation agreements and reaching a positive-sum settlement to the final status of Abyei.

In this regard, the A3+1 is encouraged by senior-level visits held over the last two months in Juba and Khartoum, and the commitment expressed by both sides to reinvigorate the peace process, and address the final status issue. We look forward to joint and swift progress on the issue.

We are further encouraged by the novel designation by Khartoum and Juba of their respective chief administrators for Abyei.

We stress the paramount importance of resuming, in the near months, regular meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) as per the decision reached at the 19 February 2020 Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) meeting.

Mr. President,

The A3+1 takes note that the COVID-19 pandemic has ground to a halt a number of UNISFA mandated activities, affected meaningful engagement of the Mission at the local and traditional-leader levels, and circumscribed progress on JBVMM benchmarks and the JPSM decisions, as outlined in the UN Secretary-General report.

We express our support for UNISFA's ongoing efforts aimed at energizing local peace processes and promoting intercommunal reconciliation. Further, we praise UNISFA's role in empowering women and youth participation at the local and grassroots levels, so as to enhance prospects for preventing, conflict, covid-19 and human rights abuses.

We underline the necessity of heeding potential new cycles of hostilities along communal lines, and working together to address the drivers of such violence and defuse tensions. It is essential also that utmost efforts be ensured so that Abyei and its safe demilitarised border zone become crime-free, weapon-free.

We further stress the importance that UNISFA's mandate and operational activities be facilitated, and its personnel protected, so that it performs its tasks in full capacity and in an efficient manner.

On the way forward for the UN presence in Abyei, the A3+1 views continued relevance for the UNISFA mandate, in stabilizing the Abyei area and along the border and bringing certainty amid these uncertain times.

Accordingly, we would like to endorse the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General in his report on the extension of UNISFA's mandate and its support to the JBVMM for a further period of six months

I thank you.