

Highlights November 2018

UNSC Resolution 2445
adopted on 15 November
UNISFA extended to 15 May 2019



4 ERWs destroyed



38 Mine Risk Education sessions
666 participants



4 Landmine/ERW Safety Training
sessions for UN personnel



94.97 km of roads
deemed safe from explosives



145,945 m²
deemed as safe from explosives

Mine action operations in support of UNISFA resumed in November, with UNMAS Integrated Road Assessment and Clearance Teams (IRACT) conducting Battle Area Clearance (BAC) and road assessment tasks at locations and on roads set as priority by the mission.

UNMAS teams assessed as safe from explosive hazards 94.97 kilometres of roads to UNISFA dry season temporary operating bases, including the Dokura - Doungap, Baloom - Rubakoc - Umkhariet, Sink - Umkhariet, Noong - Alal, Todach - Amiet - Sink - Tajalei and the Abyei - Highway - Doungap routes. UNMAS teams deemed the sites of UNISFA dry season temporary operating bases in Umkhariet and Alal as safe from explosive hazards, through BAC of 145,945 square meters of land. The teams also removed and destroyed four Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs) reported in Abyei town and along the Abyei-Agok route.

On 2 November, the governor of Lol state, South Sudan, visited the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) Sector 1 Gok Machar and Kiir Adem, for sensitisation of the local communities towards the re-establishment of UNISFA JBVMM team sites. The sensitisation initiative is in accordance with benchmark 3 of the latest UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution on JBVMM, S/RES/2438 (2018). Subsequent to the visit, the local authorities have agreed to allocate land for the establishment of a new team site. On 18 November, the UNISFA Acting Head of Mission/Force Commander and the Chief JBVMM visited Sector 1 Headquarters (HQ) in Gok Machar and the planned Team Site (TS) 11 location at Kiir Adem. Upon meeting with the local authorities, a decision has been made on 22 November to re-allocate the land for the TS to a more accessible location.

UNMAS PSTs in JBVMM Sector 1 thus commenced clearance operations of the original TS 11 area on 14 November, with additional support from the IRACT mechanical clearance team. Clearance operation at the new TS location commenced on 23 November. During the reporting period, a total of 27,968 square meters were assessed by means of BAC surface search, with no findings recorded.

The UNMAS PST at the Tishwin TS (TS 21) continued to support JBVMM GMMs. In November, 8 GMMs were conducted from Tishwin TS to the North Outer Limit and to the South Outer Limit of the Higlig-Bentiu border crossing corridor on 4, 5, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25 and 27 November 2018. On 27 November, one ERW was found in the SDBZ, and handed over to the South Sudanese police for later disposal, as demolition in the area is prohibited due to the predominant natural resources.

A three-member team of Dutch diplomats from Khartoum and Juba visited Abyei from 8-11 November. From 20-22 November, a delegation consisting of the British Ambassador to Sudan, the First Secretary of the Canadian Embassy in Sudan, the UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan, and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan visited Abyei. On both occasions, UNMAS provided an overview of UNMAS activities during the UNISFA brief.

On the night of 9 November, unknown armed men attacked residents in the Abyei Central Sector. UNMAS was requested to clear the area on 10 November and a burnt out rocket motor was recovered. The incident is being investigated by UNISFA.

The UNISFA mandate was renewed until 15 May 2019, through Security Council Resolution 2445, passed on 15 November. The new mandate reduces the troop ceiling from 4,500 to 4,140; increases the police ceiling from 50 to 345; and expresses the Council's intention to request the Secretary-General to appoint a civilian Deputy Head of Mission for UNISFA.

Mr. Samuel Gahigi has been appointed by the Secretary General as the new Principal Officer (PO) for the Sudan Integrated Operational Team (IOT), replacing former PO, Ms. Daniela Krosiak.

UNISFA Acting Head of Mission/Force Commander met with government officials in Khartoum between 25 and 27 November, to discuss the implementation of the new resolution 2445 (2018) and the handover of UNAMID's base in Buram.



Mine Risk Education (MRE) at Awalnhom Primary School



Mechanical Clearance at JBVMM Sector 1, Team Site 11: Safahah/Kiir Adem



Field Story: Enabling a Safe Working and Living Environment for UNISFA Personnel in Abyei

As part of the Dry Season Deployment Plan, UNISFA requested UNMAS to assess and verify the deployment locations including Temporary Operating Bases (TOB) and routes leading to deployment sites in the Abyei area. UNMAS tasked their Integrated Route Assessment and Clearance Teams (IRACTs) to carry out clearance activities, to ensure that there is no presence of explosive threats in those locations.

The TOB in Alal, situated approximately 37 km North-West of Abyei town, is one of the high priority locations indicated by UNISFA as a priority for the dry season deployment. Due to the rainy season, the area was abandoned for the previous six months. In order to respond to this emergency task, the team established a field camp in Noong area in the beginning of November. The security situation in the general area was unpredictable and the access route (15 Km) to the worksite was blocked due to vegetation and terrain conditions. Continuous community liaison activities were conducted with the nearest communities to gather adequate information regarding the ground situation in support of the threat assessments.

As part of mitigation measures, CASSPIR Mine Protected Vehicles (MPVs) were utilised to transport the teams during the route reconnaissance. With all reasonable efforts, the team successfully bypassed the obstacles after three complete days and reached Alal.



CASSPIR Mine Protected Vehicle passing by a swampy area near UNISFA TOB in Alal



Community liaison activities at Noong village - information gathering on ground situation regarding Noong-Alal route

On reaching the Alal worksite, the team set up the control point and established the Emergency Helicopter Landing Site. The team established the boundary lanes/firebreaks as the vegetation was too high at the worksite. Continuous threat assessment was conducted by the team managers while the team was conducting the task. The TOB is surrounded by heavily overgrown trees, thorn bushes and grass, mingled with concertina wire; thus, it took a greater amount of effort and time to search the area. The area inside the camp also had tall elephant grass, small bushes and a large amount of scrap metal, especially empty food tins. The team carefully checked every possible object and ensured the absence of explosive remnants of war (ERWs). The team was unable to search several water-logged areas within the trench line around the camp; these locations were demarcated as skipped areas and reported to UNISFA. In total 55,391 square meters have been released as low threat from explosive items.

UNMAS and their implementing partners are continuously supporting the mission by ensuring that there are no explosive threats in the UNISFA deployment locations including roads leading to the TOBs and patrol routes. The completion of the BAC visual search is providing confidence to the UNISFA staff that they are working and living in a safe environment.



IRACT team members conducting BAC visual search activities at UNISFA TOB in Alal

**IF YOU SEE AN ITEM OF CONCERN,
DO NOT TOUCH IT!
CONTACT UNMAS IMMEDIATELY!**
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