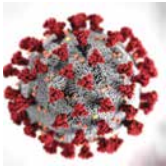




Highlights JULY 2020

Following the UNMAS-UNISFA plan of operations, two Integrated Route Assessment and Clearance Teams (IRACT) and one Integrated Clearance Team (ICT) are on stand down from 1 July for the duration of the wet season. During this period, one emergency Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) response team is operating from the UNISFA HQ in Abyei. Despite COVID restrictions, the wet season demobilisation of clearance teams was completed in July as scheduled. Staff rotations have been initiated and two UNMAS operational staff returned to the mission area on 26 July.



UNMAS continues to implement and comply with all UNISFA measures for mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure the wellbeing of staff and implementing partner personnel.

4 PATROL SUPPORT TEAMS OPERATIONAL AT FOUR JBVMM TEAM SITES



2 GROUND MONITORING MISSIONS (GMMS) CONDUCTED IN JBVMM SECTOR 1



UNISFA STAFF RECEIVED SAFETY TRAINING



Staff Profiles: JADA CHARLES LADO

Support Services Assistant

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

Even amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, there's still plenty of work that needs to be done and more reason to get up every morning. Aside from preparation and starting a new project/financial year, we still have internal audit queries from the previous year reports that we need to answer.

What does a typical day look like for you and what are you currently working on?

My mornings are not any special, as it starts with a light breakfast of either peanut butter sandwich and a cup of milk or a bowl of cornflakes for a really lazy Sunday morning. We have been working from home for nearly 2 weeks now since a few positive cases were reported among UNISFA staff who were traveling home through Addis. So its been a slight struggle to get up energized without the morning banter from my office mates and recaps of how everyone's evening, the day before, was. Nonetheless, together with the Entebbe Support Office team we are working on asset disposals and clearing backlogs of paper work that previously eluded us due to lots of programmatic activities. Support service is a fluid job, no matter how much we plan, things always change since we depend on so many actors such as vendors and MOVCON for transportation. Everyday comes with its own script.

How would you describe working for UNMAS and UNISFA for the past 5 months?

The past 5 months have been really hard to concentrate on my job and the daily tasks I have at hand because no matter what, its difficult not to wonder how long this pandemic is going to go on for. In the beginning, as the number positive cases for COVID-19 kept rising, I thought it was just overly hyped, but it would flatten soon, and everyone would get on with their normal lives. It felt distant when Europe was the epicenter. And then African countries went on lock downs and the reality hit home. I had to filter my information intake on news regarding the Coronavirus and concentrate on my work, read ebooks, watch movies and constantly stay in touch with my family and friends back home just to keep my sanity.

When was the last time you went home and saw your family?

It was two weeks after returning to Abyei from being in Uganda on leave, where my family is right now, that Entebbe airport was closed and I'd never see my family again since then. That was the 15th of March. Ever since, speaking to my 5-year-old son has been nothing but "Daddy, when are you coming back home?"

What has been the most challenging aspect for you over the past 5 months?

Missing out on my son's 1st birthday and only watching him taking his first steps on a video call. That broke me. Just as though that wasn't enough, two other birthdays go by, one for my daughter who turned 3 on April 4th, our own Mine Action Day baby, and my eldest son. I ran out of excuses for not being there with them because there isn't any simple way to put it for the kids to understand.



How have you coped with being in the mission for so long due to the pandemic?

I always stay in touch with my family and constantly on the phone for hours. I've been going to sleep unusually late for a few months now, so to ensure I listen to how each one's day was, as some of them take the opportunity to snitch on their siblings with hopes that I'll only come take them alone to the mall for being a good girl or boy. My wife has also been very supportive in this difficult time, always reassuring me that as much as they would want me home, we need to be safe and ride the storm.

What determined you to take a leading role in and represent the national staff union with UNISFA?

In early 2019, the national staff association was a little disjointed with an executive leadership that lost morale and the staff were now feeling underrepresented. Their term of office had come to an end by mid-year 2019 and still failed to organise a smooth handover to a new executive. To organize proper elections we had to amend the national staff association constitution, last drafted in 2015, of which I was elected by the General Assembly to be chairperson of the steering committee who would also double up as the National Staff Association chairperson. It has been a privilege to serve my fellow national staff, working with a great and dedicated team to ensure a strong and formidable national staff union in UNISFA.

“It has been a privilege to serve my fellow national staff, working with a great and dedicated team to ensure a strong and formidable national staff union in UNISFA”

What do you look forward to the most at the moment?

I can't wait to go home, it's the only single thing that is on my mind every day. I know it'll be a little longer but I'm hopeful that it's sooner rather than later. Also, we hope to pass the amended National Staff constitution in a General Assembly in the month of August and

probably another two months to have a new executive committee elected of which I'll be looking forward to organizing. Sadly, that would mean the end of the road for my position as the National Staff chairperson. Lastly, our office has never been the same again ever since half of our staff were locked out and couldn't return to Abyei due to the movement restrictions. I can't wait to have the UNMAS magic back in office and the endless packets of chocolates that we'll have to eat.



“Support service is a fluid job, no matter how much we plan, things always change”