



Beyond the blue line: Tackling climate, peace, and security challenges in Abyei

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Executive summary

In the volatile Abyei Area Administration or region, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) plays a crucial role in maintaining peace and security. Established in June 2011, UNISFA aims to foster peace, stability, and development in the disputed area that sits between Sudan in the North and South Sudan in the South. The mission's primary focus is on implementing the Abyei Protocol, protection of civilians (POC) in the box and supporting efforts on addressing border demarcation, security concerns and supporting local governance. As a result, the UN seeks to create conditions for sustainable peace and enhance the well-being of communities in Abyei by facilitating dialogue between communities.

Over the years, Abyei has seen changes in the region that have evolved from incidents of armed robberies, killings, and gender-based violence, including rape, to more systematic criminal activity, which has been influenced by dynamics both inside and outside of its area, especially from Sudan and South Sudan. While intercommunal violence between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok communities has died down, disputes between other communities and actors encroaching in the box—in part due to a trust deficit—have continued to evolve. Newer dynamics, including the rise of communal conflicts between new actors and communities entering the box has led to further tensions and raised wider questions about the mission's ability to protect civilians.¹ This is against the backdrop of budget cuts to the mission, compounded by the spill-over effects of the war in Sudan and rising political tensions in South Sudan, which have contributed to shifting dynamics in Abyei. The movement of people in and out of the box has increased and created new economic prospects for some groups, such as capitalising on the storage of fuel from South Sudan in Abyei, either in tankers or in fuel barrels.² The population of the box has also increased, and this is creating a problem for health, livelihoods, and food security. At the same time, the impact of climate change, like flooding, drought, shifting precipitation patterns, and extreme heat, makes it hard for communities to sustain their livelihoods.

In addition, UNISFA has been forced to implement a 15 per cent mandated budget cut, resulting in it having to reduce its operational footprint. Driven by a broader UN peacekeeping liquidity crisis, the spending reductions have forced the mission to scale back activities and adjust situational awareness capabilities. This is all at a time when the mission is already having to adapt to issues such as climate change, which impact the on-the-ground conditions, risks of violence and how the mission responds in

¹ Tchier, A. E. Y., and Edu-Afful, F. (2024). *A forgotten people in an unstable region: Assessing the effectiveness of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)*. Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON).

Tchier, A. E. Y. (2025). Neglecting Local Realities: the Negative Impact of Protection in Abyei. *Journal of International Peacekeeping*, 28(3), 304-333.

² It is important to note, that during the authors visit in May 2026, there had been the set-up of several petrol station in Abyei

crisis. For example, in 2026, scientists predicted that El Niño in Autumn will create strong rainfall variations, rises in surface air temperature and precipitation for the season May-July 2026, raising questions over how the mission will respond to these challenges amid declining funds for its work. The environment in Abyei has become more precarious with increased volatility across the mission areas, which may lead to further outbreaks of violence. Consequently, according to the Secretary-General's report, UNISFA recorded 196 security incidents between October 2025 and March 2026, resulting in 58 deaths and 69 injuries³, the majority of which occurred in Sector North.⁴ The analysis in the report also states that the dominant threat environment remained, which is fashioned by a combination of intercommunal violence, the proliferation of illicit weapons, criminality, and activities associated with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a Sudanese paramilitary group.⁵ The report also indicates that the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and South Sudan National Police Service personnel remain in Abyei, staffing six active checkpoints as of 7 April 2026.⁶ UNISFA estimated that approximately 350 SSPDF personnel remained deployed in the area, equipped with assault rifles, machine guns, and rocket launchers, including weaponry inconsistent with the area's demilitarised status. Finally, the presence of RSFs as witnessed first-hand by the authors in September 2025 during our field visit has noticeably increased at the time of writing in May 2026 in and around Sector North, particularly in Goli, Diffra, and Gibdud. As a result, UNISFA recorded 15 incidents involving the RSF, such as armed vehicle convoys and troop movements near civilian protection sites.⁷

This report sets out to not only map out the challenges of climate, peace and security (CPS) and its links to the missions' work on POC in the box but also to look at the work that the mission is doing to adapt to these issues with communities. The report is in no way an extensive survey of CPS issues in Abyei, as there has not been adequate data collected over the year. However, the intention of the report is to try and reflect on some of the lessons for how a mission like UNISFA, which is dissimilar to many current UN missions in Africa, is dealing with and responding to CPS issues. It is our hope that in doing so, we can bring together insights and reflections that allow this report to be a basis and an entry point for discussion on how UNISFA is attempting to respond to CPS in the box.

³ United Nations Secretary-General Report (2026). Situation in Abyei. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4114238?v=pdf>

⁴ Dabanga (2026). 167 killed, scores injured in an attack north of Abyei in the disputed area. Available at: <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/167-killed-scores-injured-in-attack-north-of-abyei-in-disputed-area-between-sudan-and-south-sudan>

⁵ United Nations Secretary-General Report (2026). Situation in Abyei. Available at: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/649>

⁶ Ibid.,

⁷ Ibid.,

Introduction

On June 27, 2011, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorised the deployment of a peacekeeping force to the disputed area of Abyei, which links Sudan and South Sudan and has been continually claimed by both sides. On November 14, 2025, UNSC members voted to renew the current mandate authorising the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Resolution 2802 (2025) extends the mandate of UNISFA and its support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism until 15 November 2026.⁸ The renewal of UNISFA's mandate is the thirteenth in a series of mandate renewals over a decade since the mission's inception. The UN Secretary-General has previously described the mission as "one of the best-performing peacekeeping missions"⁹, but for several reasons, UNISFA's latest mandate renewal was crucial for over 125,000 inhabitants within the disputed oil-rich Abyei area, which has recently seen a population boom.

Sudan and South Sudan are both undergoing political transitions and experiencing violent conflict, not only between the state and rival factions, but also between the states and selected communities. In Sudan, in particular, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) continue to battle with the RSF, which followed on from the military takeover in 2021 and the outbreak of war in April 2023 between SAF and RSF.¹⁰ Even before the war in Sudan erupted in April 2023, the country was already experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis that left 15.8 million people in need of aid.¹¹ The all-out war between SAF and the RSF, two factions of Sudan security forces has now three years on, drastically worsened these conditions, displacing approximately 14 million people. It has left 33.7 million people—two-thirds of the population—in need of humanitarian support.¹² The country's food system has been pushed to the brink, with millions of families now surviving on just one meal a day, or less.¹³

Another underlying dynamic is the fact that the territorial competition and continuous presence of military and police actors from both Sudan and South Sudan within the Abyei area have helped facilitate and exacerbate the militarisation and weaponisation of Abyei, but also fuelled further challenges over resources, conflict and violent dynamics in the box. This has led to increased pressure on UNISFA but

⁸ United Nations Security Council (2025). S/RES/2802 (2025) Available at: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2802\(2025\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2802(2025))

⁹ Letter dated August 20, 2018, from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/264/95/PDF/N1826495.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁰ Demonstrators return to the streets in Sudan (January 5, 2023), <https://www.africanews.com/2023/01/05/demonstrators-return-to-the-streets-in-sudan/>

¹¹ Relief web (2023). Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-november-2022>

¹² United Nations (2026). Sudan war leaves millions hungry and displaced as health system nears collapse. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/01/1166738>

¹³ Ibid.,

has also led to clear violations of the Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA), resulting in additional restrictions in movement for UNISFA personnel and other humanitarian actors.¹⁴ These challenges have also led to a worsening humanitarian situation in Abyei, exacerbated by frequent outbreaks of violence and insecurity in Abyei town and surrounding areas, especially the southern sector during different seasons.¹⁵

While the traditional conflicts of the past between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok communities, which had defined the general security situation in the Abyei area, have improved. Occasional inter-communal tensions, presence of armed elements, humanitarian difficulties, displacement and economic struggles persist, increasing POC challenges for UNISFA.¹⁶ The change in violence also connects with incidents of armed robbery, targeted killings, criminal and communal violence, animal rustling, sexual and gender-based violence, including rape. The violent conflict dynamics have evolved with each passing year, which in part has been triggered mainly by a 'trust deficit' between the communities, but also against a backdrop of increased climate change variability, which is changing how communities react to each other when tensions are high.¹⁷

As a result, this report sets out to answer two crucial questions:

- How are climate risks and related vulnerabilities impacting the ability of UN PKO to effectively implement one of its core tasks: the protection of civilians?
- What can be learned from adaptation efforts by local, national and regional actors to both protect civilians and anticipate climate-related risks?

The report aims to explore these questions by explicitly digging deeper into four related areas:

- a) How is UNISFA responding to climate-related security risks that impact local and regional conflict dynamics?
- b) How is UNISFA supporting local authorities to both protect civilians and anticipate climate-related risks?
- c) How can peacekeeping missions better support community-based protection mechanisms in the face of climate-related challenges?
- d) What lessons can we learn from UNISFA's climate, security risk response to climate-induced conflict, environmental damage and climate change?

¹⁴ United Nations Secretary-General Report (2026). Situation in Abyei. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4114238?v=pdf>

¹⁵ Security Council hears of 'trust deficit' in disputed Abyei region (April 21, 2022), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116602>; This was also predated by the Sudanese Government requesting the UN to withdraw its Ethiopian peacekeepers from Abyei.

¹⁶ See UNISFA condemns renewed intercommunal violence in Abyei (February 2, 2023), <https://sudantribune.com/article270268/>

¹⁷ NUPI-SIPRI (2025) Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Abyei. Available at: <https://www.nupi.no/news/climate-peace-and-security-fact-sheet-abyei>

The report is broken into five main sections. Section one briefly explores how UNISFA operates and the context of Abyei. It then moves to explore climate change in Abyei and what we can understand about its impacts on peace and security in the box. Section two explores UNISFA's approach to POC from a CPS lens and asks what can be learned from adaptation efforts by local, national and regional actors to both protect civilians and anticipate climate-related security risks. Section three looks at the response of the mission to climate peace and security (CPS) issues across Abyei by asking how UNISFA is responding to climate-related security risks that impact local and regional conflict dynamics.

Section four explores ways that UNISFA can improve its response to deal with the underlying challenges of CPS and what efforts the peacekeeping missions can make to better support community-based protection mechanisms in the face of climate-related challenges in a declining era of financing for new UN missions.¹⁸ Section five explores what lessons we can learn from UNISFA's climate-related security risks response to climate-induced conflict and explores some of the adaptations being done. The final section looks at some of the key recommendations and then moves to provide concluding thoughts.

The report draws on three core methods and tools to analyse information on CPS in Abyei in relation to the response of UNISFA to these issues. The first method draws on desk research on Abyei, which included engaging with experts who had worked in and around the context of Abyei. The team relied on online material, academic articles, books and policy reports on the political and institutional history of Abyei. Insights allowed us to refine the thinking but also conduct field research with an analytical understanding of the context. The second method draws on refining the desk-review process to allow an initial mapping and further identify actors within and beyond the UNISFA, Sudan, South Sudan and actors in the box, including the Government. The method allows for interview tools to be used to delve into the discussion with identified actors in Abyei. The methods were complemented with in-country and in-person interviews in September 2025 across all three sectors of Abyei. The authors engaged a broad spectrum of actors, including former vice presidents, political opposition leaders, CSO representatives, women leaders, POC experts, military personnel from all three sectors, police officers and local religious leaders. The number of respondents reflects those willing to provide their time and be interviewed. The intensity of the fieldwork—beginning early morning and running late into the evening—enabled the team to conduct over 40 interviews with UNISFA staff, locals and people outside of the mission over the course of four days. The interviews were insightful and allowed for a better conceptualisation of existing, emerging and evolving understanding of CPS issues that the mission is faced with. Finally, complementing this process were online interviews conducted from January 2026 to May 2026, before the researcher headed out for a second time to conduct field research on Protection of Civilians and

¹⁸ Tchie, A.E. Y (2023). 'African-led Peace Support Operations in a declining period of UN Peacekeeping Operations', *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 29 (2); 230–244.

Women, Peace and Security in Abyei in May 2026.¹⁹ Online interviews included in-depth discussions with various stakeholders on key themes identified during the desk review stage. The interviews were carried out over Teams and WhatsApp, leveraging past engagement with mission staff and military personnel in the mission. On average, interviews lasted for 35-45 minutes. During this stage of the data collection process, respondents were fully informed of the aims of the study and given the opportunity to opt out of the study.

¹⁹ EPON-TfP Report; Tchie, A.E.Y and Osei-Tutu, J, A. (2026) *Forthcoming*. From Primacy of Politics to Primacy of Benchmarks: UNISFA's approach to POC in Abyei.

UNISFA operating context in Abyei

The Abyei Area Administration (Abyei) having experienced conflict and tensions over the last 18 years. Despite international efforts, this dispute remains unresolved.²⁰ In June 2011, an agreement was made to establish joint administration,²¹ but this has yet to be materialised. As part of the agreement, Khartoum (Sudan) manages the north region and Juba (South Sudan) oversees the south region with joint institutions for the same area. Both of these administrations face challenges in providing services to their communities, which are affected by humanitarian crises, drought, infectious disease outbreaks, armed conflicts, and population displacement.²² While there were a few humanitarian partners available to support the area, over the last few years, the volume of humanitarian support has been decreasing, resulting in UNISFA having to do more Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities to support humanitarian efforts.²³ The overall delivery of humanitarian aid, and particularly health services, in north Abyei has been severely lacking despite the set-up of the UN mission for peacekeeping.

Over the last five years, there have been noticeable changes in weather patterns and environmental conditions in the area, with the subsequent impacts affecting how the mission can carry out POC tasks. In Abyei, rising temperatures and erratic rainfall are intensifying competition between farming and pastoralist communities, disrupting agricultural production, shifting migration patterns and worsening humanitarian impacts.²⁴ Extreme weather conditions, particularly floods, constrain UNISFA's mobility and access across its area of operations and complicate the resupply of equipment, and, in some cases, undermine the mission's ability to protect civilians.²⁵

While it has become recognised that climate change is increasingly a factor that can aggravate conflict dynamics and impact the realisation of POC mandates, climate change itself does not directly cause conflict, instead, its impacts are mediated through indirect 'pathways', which can increase civilian

²⁰ Ali Y, Siddig E, Ahmed A, North Abyei: the humanitarian and health crisis in Sudan
The Lancet, 404, 2045-2046 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02374-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02374-2/fulltext)

²¹ United Nations "North, south sign interim agreement to pull troops out of disputed Abyei region, Security Council told in briefing on Sudan" Available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2011/sc10286.doc.htm>

²² Ali Y, Siddig E, Ahmed A, North Abyei: the humanitarian and health crisis in Sudan
The Lancet, 404, 2045-2046 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02374-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02374-2/fulltext)

²³ Interview with Humanitarian Group in Abyei (2025).

²⁴ Craze, J., 'Attacked from both sides: Abyei's existential dilemma', Situation update, Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan (HSBA) and Small Arms Survey, July 2023; and NUPI-SIPRI (2025) Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Abyei. Available at: <https://www.nupi.no/news/climate-peace-and-security-fact-sheet-abyei>.

²⁵ Tchie, A., E.Y., E.Y and Edu-Afful, F. (2024). *A Forgotten People in an Unstable Region: The Effectiveness of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei* (pdf). EPON & TfP Report. Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt (NUPI).

vulnerabilities and the likelihood of violence and other security risks.²⁶ In Abyei, these climate-related pressures contribute to heightening the risk of intercommunal conflict.²⁷ Such climate-induced challenges not only elevate risks of violence against civilians, raising POC and wider protection issues, but also significantly impede the response capabilities of peacekeeping missions, often restricting access to communities in urgent need of both protection and humanitarian assistance. The complex relationship between climate change and conflict has several critical implications for the POC and other core mandated peacekeeping tasks, including increased civilian exposure to conflict in previously stable areas.

While the mandate of UNISFA since 2024 has recognised that climate and environmental risks are having adverse effects on stability and underscores the importance of improving knowledge about how climate change is intertwined with peace and security in these highly vulnerable regions. The mandate has never been explicit on the issues of CPS. The mission has in some ways tried to recognise these challenges through activities such as community-level green projects, waste treatment, power generation, and water purification all designed to support communities affected by climate change. Both the UNSC Resolution 2760 (2024) and UNSC Resolution 2802 (2025) commended the activities of the peacekeepers to assist flood-affected communities in these challenging conditions, but fell short of explicitly mentioning CPS challenges. As it stands UNMISS and UNISFA are the only two peace operations, (including SPMs/regional missions), that have had language in their operational paragraphs in relation to climate change.

UNISFA material and equipment are not spared from the effects of the rainy season in their operations. The primary and subsidiary roads in the Abyei box are not all-weather proofed, which means during heavy rains, vehicles become stuck on the main supply route (MSR). As a result, in the rainy season, the MSR is mainly unusable, which raises questions over the mission's ability to protect, deliver CIMIC activities, but also respond comprehensively to the intervening variable of CPS outside of the dry season. Consequently, as one senior military personnel noted, “UNISFA continues to face tremendous mobility challenges during the rainy season”.²⁸ The fluctuation and erratic weather patterns also led to delays in the arrival of Contingent Owned Equipment (COE), which is exacerbated by the conflict in Sudan and insecurity in South Sudan, but also the current status of Sudan ports as a result of the ongoing security crisis between the SAF and the RSF in Sudan. As one senior military official and another senior mission personnel member noted during the teams discussions that these conditions with

²⁶ Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (2024). Climate, Peace and Security Research Paper: Insights on Climate, Peace and Security. Available at: <https://www.nupi.no/en/news/climate-peace-and-security-research-paper-insights-on-climate-peace-and-security>; and Mobjörk, M., Krampe, F., and Tarif, K. (2020). Pathways of Climate Insecurity: Guidance for Policymakers. SIPRI Policy Brief, available at

<https://www.sipri.org/publications/2020/sipri-policy-briefs/pathways-climate-insecurity-guidance-policymakers>.

²⁷ NUPI (2025) Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Abyei. Available at: <https://www.nupi.no/en/news/climate-peace-and-security-fact-sheet-abyei>; and UN Development Programme (UNDP) Sudan, ‘Higher yields and incomes in Abyei show how development is possible in even the most challenging circumstances’, Jan. 2025.

²⁸ Interview with military personnel working on patrol data.

changes in predictability of the “weather limit flights but also severely impact on UNISFA's operational capabilities, especially the Troop Contributing Countries (TCC), Mission Support Division (MSD) supply chain and the Civilian and Military Utility Helicopter Unit (CMUHU) aircraft serviceability status for the conduct of flight operations”.²⁹

²⁹ Interview with senior UNISFA official.

Understanding climate change in Abyei

Abyei has a predominantly semi-arid climate, and the climate is marked by a long, harsh, dry season spanning from Nov to May each year, with soaring temperatures often above 40°C, water scarcity and declining pasture. This is followed by a rainy season from Jun to Oct with rainfall averaging 800 to 1,000 mm annually.³⁰ Changes have been happening over a longer period prior to 2019. However, since 2019, Abyei has been experiencing observable changes in weather patterns that have impacted the efforts of the mission. For example, the 2022 rainy season was unprecedented.³¹ At the peak of the rainy season, Abyei experienced a devastating Rift Valley Fever cow disease outbreak with over 2000 cattle dying while several other thousands suffered from the effects of the disease.³² This not only impacts communities in Abyei, but TCCs are also impacted and limited in their movements.³³ The area is also experiencing increasing climate variability, with a prolonged dry spell observed in 2025 that is expected to continue into 2026.³⁴

The impact of climate change also carries with it serious health and operational challenges for both peacekeepers and local communities, with distinct risks during the two seasons. In the dry season, dusty roads and recurring dust storms contribute to a rise in respiratory infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia among both troops and civilians.³⁵ Prolonged heat, often exceeding 40°C, causes dehydration, heat exhaustion and other heat-related illnesses. In addition, extended exposure to ultraviolet radiation increases cases of eye strain, conjunctivitis and long-term vision problems, while also heightening risks of skin-related conditions. Water scarcity during this period further undermines hygiene practices and heightens vulnerability to communicable diseases. While, during the rainy season, flooding contaminates water sources, triggering outbreaks of waterborne diseases including cholera,

³⁰ African Studies Centre Leiden and Commissioned by VIA Water, Programme on water innovation in Africa (2014). Water dynamics in the seven African countries of Dutch policy focus: Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, and South Sudan. Report on South Sudan. Available at: https://water.igad.int/resources/2024/11/asc_water_south_sudan_3.pdf

³¹ UNMAS (2022). Facebook Post. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/UnitedNationsMineActionService/posts/%EF%B8%8F-the-recent-rainy-season-brought-substantial-floods-to-the-abyei-area-the-unite/532277212275151/>

³² Interview with UNISFA official

³³ Interviews with UNISFA, conducted on 16 September 2025

³⁴ Interviews with UNISFA, conducted on 16 September 2025

³⁵ Korzeniewski K, Nitsch-Osuch A, Konior M, Lass A. Respiratory tract infections in the military environment. *Respir Physiol Neurobiol.* (2015) 209:76-80.

diarrhoea, typhoid and hepatitis.³⁶ This is matched with a surge of mosquitoes and tsetse flies, which spread malaria, sleeping sickness and other infections.

Due to limited local climate data, climate trends and projections are based on neighbouring areas with a similar semi-arid climate such as Ruweng and Southern Kordofan.³⁷ Historical mean annual temperatures between 1991 and 2020 ranged from 27°C to 29°C, while projections for 2020–2039 indicate average temperatures rising to above 33°C.³⁸ This is likely to increase the risk of more frequent and severe dry spells and droughts. While precipitation projections for 2020–2039 show a slight increase, there are raising concerns of increased risks of flooding.³⁹ These changes affect livelihoods, health, food security, and conflict dynamics. Extended dry spells reduce water availability for agriculture and livestock, intensifying competition and tensions over land and water resources. Conversely, heavy rains and flooding restrict movement, cause displacement, and heighten the risk of disease outbreaks, compounding the already fragile security and humanitarian situation in Abyei.

³⁶ MSF (2024). 'Fleeing danger, finding water scarcity': sanitary emergency threatens people in Abyei Special Administrative Area - South Sudan. Available at: <https://prezly.msf.org.uk/fleeing-danger-finding-water-scarcity-sanitary-emergency-threatens-people-in-abyei-special-administrative-area-south-sudan>

³⁷ World Bank, Climate change knowledge portal, 'Country Overview, Köppen-Geiger Climate Classification, Southern Kordofan, Sudan', <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/sudan>; and World Bank, Climate change knowledge portal, 'Country Overview, Köppen-Geiger Climate Classification, Ruweng Administrative Area, South Sudan', <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan>, accessed 7 October 2025.

³⁸ These projections are based on the Sixth Phase of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP6) and Shared Socio-economic Pathway (SSP) 5-8.5, see World Bank, Climate change knowledge portal, 'Future Climate, Projected Climatology of Average Mean Surface Air Temperature Southern Kordofan, Sudan (2020). -2039, SSP5-8.5'; <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/sudan/climate-data-projections>; World Bank, Climate change knowledge portal, 'Future Climate, Projected Climatology of Average Mean Surface Air Temperature Ruweng Administrative Area, South Sudan, (2020). -2039, SSP5-8.5'; <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan/climate-data-projections>, accessed 7 October 2025.

³⁹ World Bank, Climate change knowledge portal, 'Future Climate, Mean Projections, Projected Timeseries of Precipitation, Ruweng Administrative Area, South Sudan, 1950-2100', <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/south-sudan/climate-data-projections>; World Bank, Climate change knowledge portal, 'Future Climate, Mean Projections, Projected Timeseries of Precipitation, Southern Kordofan, Sudan, 1950-2100', <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/sudan/climate-data-projections>, accessed 7 October 2025.

UNISFA's Operationalising of CPS

UNISFA does not have an explicit, formalised CPS language integrated into its core operational mandate. UNISFA, like other UN missions in Africa have received climate-related language (explicit text related to climate change and other climate-related impacts that the mission was tasked with dealing with) in their mandate from 2024. UNISFA has generally focused on the demilitarisation of the area and border monitoring, with reports mentioning climate, such as the 2019 floods, without fully integrating climate-related security risk assessments into its planning, activities or in its reporting. However, the general pattern has been one where the impact of adverse floods and extreme weather conditions continues to impact and delay the mission's ability to carry out some of its core tasks related to POC activities linked to CPS. As a result, the mission's response to climate change has been largely reactive, focusing on addressing its impacts rather than adopting a forward-looking and strategic approach to understanding climate-related security risks and preparing to respond to their adverse effects. For example, in 2025, in Sector South, the rains frequently cause extensive flooding that isolates villages, cuts off supply routes, and hampers both local livelihoods and the mobility of peacekeepers. Conversely, prolonged drought during the dry season reduces arable land and grazing areas, intensifying seasonal migration and straining relations between farming and pastoralist groups. While these patterns are yearly, the mission did not, according to one senior military and political staff, "take the necessary step to pre-empt some of these challenges".⁴⁰ As a result, the mission was overwhelmed by the floods and reacted once it became clear what the damage of the floods was. These climatic patterns directly drive livelihood pressures and conflict risks within the Ghana Battalion Sector South Area of Operations (AO).⁴¹

For example, over the decades, the mission has been aware of migration patterns between the two main communities (Misseriya and Ngok Dinka) in Abyei, which in the past had led to violence. However, the frequent occurrence of irregular rainfall and rising heat undermines agricultural productivity, disrupts pastoralist routes and escalates competition for scarce land and water resources. Seasonal tensions over farming and grazing access often become flashpoints for inter-communal violence, but the mission from the respondent that the team engaged with did not always take a pre-emptive response in a holistic manner to deal with this. In some sectors, it was clear that resources followed by strategic sector leadership did result in the mission gaining wins. However, there was no evidence that this was adopted as a whole-of-mission approach designed to collectively deal with the challenges of CPS.

⁴⁰ Interview with senior political and military personnel.

⁴¹ GHANBATT 1 is formed from various units in the Ghana Armed Forces, with the 1 Signal Regiment as the nucleus.



Image 1.0: Floods in Abyei along the Main Supply Route; Source: GHANBATT UNISFA 1

The increase in floods means that vehicles belonging to UNISFA, UN agencies, funds, and programs (AFP) with their humanitarian partners, and commercial trucks often get stuck on the road in part because of the composition of the ground soil. This means that MSRs are often swampy roads, but that the most suitable assets to access the stuck vehicles are the COE and UNOE heavy engineering equipment, which can be accessed by road. Standard recovery vehicles cannot access the muddy roads, forcing the use of Battalions and Engineering Unit to recover vehicles, clear and open the road. For communities, prolonged dry spells reduce water availability for livestock and crops, while intense rainfall and recurrent flooding destroy farmlands and livestock, displace households, and cut off access to markets. Such shocks not only diminish income of ordinary people but also deepen poverty and food insecurity across the area and erode traditional coping mechanisms. Therefore, situational awareness and the ability to provide robust area domination, community protection, escort duties, and ground reconnaissance are compromised, especially for women and girls. This heightens insecurity and POC threats due to cattle rustling, weapon proliferation and constant attacks/clashes between the communities. These challenges negatively impact the mission's capacity to access populations and fulfil its POC mandate. In addition, UNISFA does not have enough air or sea assets to supplement patrols, air reconnaissance, monitoring, etc., which cannot be done using vehicular means due to flooding. All the mission components (Military, UNPOL, Mission Support, and Civilian/sections/Units) were severely affected.

When floods destroy grazing land and dry spells dry up water sources, competition over grazing areas and water intensifies, fuelling tensions between Misseriya pastoral communities and Ngok Dinka. Livelihood pressures also contribute to clashes and territorial claims between the Twic Dinka and Ngok Dinka. Cattle raiding and retaliatory violence often rise during the dry season, when scarcity is most acute.⁴² More broadly, the three MSRs from South Sudan and the primary route linking Sudan become flooded or deplorable, isolating communities and Command Operating Base (COBs) from Force Head Quarters (FHQ) and other COBs. This delays troop movement, patrol coverage and humanitarian services, leaving civilians vulnerable, while both UNISFA and civilian vehicles frequently become stranded or stuck in mud, increasing reliance on UNISFA for recovery. While peacekeepers compensate with foot patrols, river crossings, and aerial reconnaissance via helicopters and drones to maintain access and situational awareness. Overall, the combined effects of climate, environment and poor roads constrain operational effectiveness, slows response times to protection incidents, and limit access to vulnerable populations. In 2025, the Gender Unit led the request for MSD to repair the axis road leading to the women/youth centres to encourage peacebuilding initiatives during the rainy season.



Image 1.1: UNISFA vehicles stuck in MSR; Source: GHANBATT UNISFA 3

⁴² Interviews with UNISFA, conducted on 16 September 2025; and Interviews with UNISFA, conducted on 17 September 2025.

While flooding is not new in Abyei, its persistence and increase in variability mean that Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs) tend to have to be collapsed due to heavy rains and poor road infrastructure, which impacts the TCCs' ability to provide robust posture, security and protection to the civilians. The absence of UNISFA in these circumstances, as one civilian personnel noted, allows for "armed groups to be empowered and exploit the gap and launch inter-communal attacks that left so many civilians dead and injured".⁴³ As a result, armed attacks and violent confrontations between Ngok Dinka and Twic Dinka that extended to attacks on UNISFA troops have been an issue in 2025 and to some extent during the 2026 dry season. In 2024 and 2025, military personnel that the team interviewed also noted that "due to heavy flooding, there were delays in readjusting TOBs deployment in readiness for the dry season"; consequently, there was damage caused to UN-owned equipment due to delayed closure.⁴⁴ In addition, "UNISFA does not have all-terrain high mobility (trucks) vehicles" required for the rainy season terrain in Abyei. Some components of the mission have started to adjust to these issues, like the Vietnamese Engineering self-constructed boats to aid mobility.⁴⁵

⁴³ Interview with civilian mission personnel.

⁴⁴ Interview with senior sector military personnel.

⁴⁵ Vietnam Today (2024). <https://en.qdnd.vn/military/intl-relations-and-cooperation/vietnamese-engineers-build-classrooms-and-repair-boats-for-abyei-people-568448>; See also Facebook Post in May 2026. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/vietnamtodayinternational/videos/in-one-of-africas-most-conflict-affected-regions-vietnamese-peacekeeping-forces-/1466630461927121/>

What can be learned from adaptation efforts by local, national and regional actors?

Despite its oil resources and fertile land, Abyei remains one of the poorest regions, partly due to prolonged instability, conflict, and limited infrastructure and basic services.⁴⁶ Since the outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023, Abyei has also witnessed an increase in population due to the influx of displaced populations, refugees, and returnees, adding to and complicating the existing humanitarian pressures.⁴⁷ The security situation, though relatively calm, remains volatile due to long-standing intercommunal tensions, the war in Sudan, political instability in South Sudan, and the influx of armed actors and proliferation of small arms. For example, data from UNISFA noted that 91 incidents with 22 fatalities occurred from October 2024 to April 2025, including arms-related crimes, carjackings, and armed clashes.⁴⁸ While in 2025, UNISFA recorded 196 security incidents between October 2025 and March 2026, resulting in 58 deaths and 69 injuries⁴⁹, the majority of which occurred in Sector North.⁵⁰ The changing dynamics within the box indicate not only the challenge faced by the mission, but also how climate change is impacting wider peace and security dynamics.

These combined pressures of extreme weather, disease and environmental hazards strain TCCs' medical facilities, which cater for both peacekeepers and local populations. For example, one military nurse staff noted that "climatic pressures on already strained livelihoods intersect with existing conflict dynamics but increase the potential for disease to spread. But when attacks happen, TCCs' Level 1 Hospital and various Company Aid Posts are over-stretched and faced with a "dual burden, as locals frequently seek care alongside troops".⁵¹ This not only reduces operational effectiveness but also

⁴⁶ Security Council Report (2026). UN Interim Security Force for Abyei: Briefing and Consultations. Available at: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2026/05/un-interim-security-force-for-abyei-briefing-and-consultations-2.php>

⁴⁷ UNISFA assessments.

⁴⁸ United Nations Secretary-General Report (2025). Situation in Abyei. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n25/101/30/pdf/n2510130.pdf>

⁴⁹ United Nations Secretary-General Report (2026). Situation in Abyei. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4114238?v=pdf>

⁵⁰ Dabanga (2026). 167 killed, scores injured in an attack north of Abyei in the disputed area. Available at: <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/167-killed-scores-injured-in-attack-north-of-abyei-in-disputed-area-between-sudan-and-south-sudan>

⁵¹ Interview with a military nurse and sector head.

highlights the limited access to healthcare for communities”, leaving both populations highly vulnerable to climate-driven health risks.⁵²



Image 1.2: UNISFA Area of Operations in Abyei; Source: UNISFA GIS

Conversely, the rainy season limits the movement of some local armed groups but provides opportunities for Nuer armed elements from South Sudan to enter cross country while other Nuer’s are hired by RSF. This has resulted in two new groups emerging Misseriya-RSF locals to the Northern sector and Nuer-RSF, those who are hired but also work on both a seasonal and contracted basis.⁵³ By exploiting the reduced mobility of peacekeepers, these groups cross the border through the Marial Achak and Rumamier areas to conduct cattle raids, attacks on villages and other crimes against civilians,

⁵² Ibid.,

⁵³ See EPON-TfP Report; Tchie, A.E.Y and Osei-Tutu, J, A. (2026) *Forthcoming*. From Primacy of Politics to Primacy of Benchmarks: UNISFA’s approach to POC in Abyei.

taking advantage of slower response times and limited UN presence. Additionally, the challenging environment also constrains the Battalion's ability to respond promptly to these incidents. For instance, on 28 July, GHANBATT troops on foot patrol in Rumamier provided immediate first aid to a local shot by armed elements but needed evacuation to a higher-level medical facility in Abyei due to excessive blood loss.⁵⁴ Similarly, in Marial Achak, "a local hunter was mistaken for a Nuer armed element and shot in the thigh". He was rushed to the Marial Achak CAP, where he was treated and discharged.⁵⁵

When researchers asked the mission how it responded, it was noted that "we implement area domination patrols, aerial reconnaissance, and proactive community engagement initiatives aimed at deterring armed elements and fostering trust with local populations".⁵⁶ When probed further on the use of these measures and whether the mission was able to change it lens to assess the situation in Abyei from a CPS lens in order to understand how climate change is impacting on violence and violent conflict it was noted that the mission "struggles to take adaptive measures which are critical for countering both seasonal and opportunistic threats, ensuring the protection of civilians (POC) and maintaining operational effectiveness in southern Abyei" in part due to the fact that the mission responds to issues in Abyei from a reactive position.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Sudan Tribune (2024). Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/sudantribuneEN/posts/unisfa-condemns-renewed-intercommunal-violence-in-abyeifebruary-1-2023-abyei-the/6146565428698593/>

⁵⁵ Interview with military personnel and internal report.

⁵⁶ Interview with a senior military official.

⁵⁷ Interview with a senior political official and a humanitarian official.

UNISFA response to climate-related security risks locally

Since the start of the civil war in Sudan, about 15,000 Sudanese have settled in Diffra and nearby villages, while around 10,000 are concentrated in the Amiet Market area, many living in informal settlements.⁵⁸ Abyei has received an influx of migrants, returnees, and displaced populations from both Sudan and South Sudan. In some cases, they have become targets of cattle rustling, robbery, and violent attacks. Meanwhile, flooding has displaced over 24,000 people, including 4,000 Nuer cattle herders from Unity State–southeastern Abyei. Migrants have also been affected by waterlogging and mud, which has forced communities to move to higher ground and increasing population density.

Interviews with TCCs in Sector South indicate that battalion recognises the impact of climate and environmental conditions on the POC, particularly during the rainy season which, according to the TCC sector head, has "led to a flexible approach to operations, which provides an adaptability to conduct foot patrols in communities inaccessible to vehicles due to flooding or poor road conditions, ensuring continued presence and protection despite environmental constraints".⁵⁹ Furthermore, the strategic deployment of battalion's COBs in civilian-populated areas within the sector and along the three MSRs linking South Sudan and Abyei enhances domination of the Area of Responsibility (AOR). It also appears that the mission has allowed TCC in Sector South to position themselves at Marial Achak, Rumamier, Agok, Banton, and Athony, placing TCC in key locations to disrupt armed element activities and provide rapid responses to incidents across Sector South. According to senior officials, "the adaptive change in deployment strategy ensures that support and protection are readily available to local populations within the Battalion's AOR [Area of Responsibility]". However, while different components of the mission are adjusting in various ways, these approaches are very rarely done in coordination with one another, often leading to sectors/ areas dominated by the different TCC responding differently. In addition, "spreading yourself thin" does not equate to an active way to deter climate peace and security (CPS) challenges but suggests a level of indication, a show of force, which may repel but certainly may not stop violence occurring.

While the different responses have led to context-specific approaches to tackling CPS, it has also led to a mismatch and missed opportunity for the mission to take a holistic approach to these issues. Given that the dynamics of violence in Abyei have shifted from traditional forms of violence toward emerging

⁵⁸ United Nations Security Council, 'Situation in Abyei. Report of the Secretary-General, May 2025, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n25/101/30/pdf/n2510130.pdf>, accessed 10 October 2025.

⁵⁹ Interview with sector command.

patterns in which criminal acts merge with reprisal attacks, fuelling a political economy of violence where armed groups can be hired and deployed as militias with households, including those at communal marketplaces, acquiring and carrying weapons for self-protection.⁶⁰ The combination of a growing population, the proliferation of armed groups and small arms has increased the risk of violent incidents, but also demonstrates that the current approach of simple spreading forces does not necessarily equate to an adaptive approach to the issues of CPS. For example, in northern Abyei, the presence of Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF), particularly in Misseriya areas, has reportedly strengthened their influence over the community, with carjacking incidents involving UNISFA vehicles also reported.⁶¹

Consequently, the projection of force is mismatched due to the difficult terrain that caused limited patrols, limited situational awareness, and flooding of areas, among others. When one TCC logistics becomes impossible to move due to the terrain, other TCCs are not working; impacted TCCs are part of a whole-of-mission and adaptive context response. When the situation is affected by heavy rains, which has a bearing on the troops and conduct of flight operations, it imposes additional restrictions and constraints on the ability of UNISFA to dominate the area in carrying out its mandate. As a result, during the rainy season, Troop or Police Contributing Countries (T/PCC) campaigns get confined to short distances and limited reach, placing CPS issues at the back of the queue, despite their continuous impact on POC in the area. Consequently, interviews and our field observations indicate that the combined effects of climate change, environmental degradation, and poor road infrastructure constrain operational effectiveness, slow response times to protection incidents, and limits access to vulnerable populations. This continues to restrict the mission's POC efforts, as well as its ability to address and respond to CPS challenges more broadly.

⁶⁰ Interview with Juba appointed authority in Abyei, conducted on 16 September 2025.

⁶¹ United Nations Security Council, 'Situation in Abyei. Report of the Secretary-General, May 2025, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n25/101/30/pdf/n2510130.pdf>, accessed 10 October 2025; and Interviews with UNISFA, conducted on 17 September 2025.

Improving UNISFAs response to deal with underlying challenges

The next section below will explore how can peacekeeping missions better support community-based protection mechanisms in the face of climate-related challenges? And what lessons can we learn from UNISFA's response to climate-related security risks, environmental degradation and impacts of climate change? What can be learned from the adaptive efforts and experience of T/PCC's within UNISFA? How can these adaptations be better supported and fostered?

While it has been noted that TCC continue to prioritise CIMIC as a key strategy to connect with local communities, build trust, and win the hearts and minds of the population through strategic priority, several of these activities were designed to respond to the impacts of climate change and are somewhat linked to trying to mitigate the impact of harsh climate and environmental conditions on civilians. The mission carries out a wide range of activities such as medical outreach programs, provision of veterinary services to support livestock-dependent livelihoods, donation of relief items, and water supply to communities affected by severe drought during the dry season. However, overall, this approach is responding to the aftermath and not proactively placing and positioning the mission at the heart of responding to CPS challenges. As one group of seniors officially noted, "we are reactionary", and this can be seen through our delivery of basic assistance to vulnerable populations and try to "shore up and strengthen our relationships with local leaders and communities and enhance situational awareness".⁶² One important conflict prevention initiative linked to CPS issues is the pre- and post-migration dialogues facilitated by UNISFA's Community Liaison Office. Held before and after the seasonal migration period, these forums bring together representatives of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities from the eastern, northern and central migration corridors. The discussions provide an opportunity for community leaders, youth, women and civil society actors to agree on practical arrangements governing access to shared resources such as water points and grazing areas. Insights from their interactions and agreements have helped to establish local early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms during seasonal livestock movements.⁶³ There have been reports that these dialogues have helped reduce violent incidents between the two communities.⁶⁴ However, risks of such initiatives yielding long term success remain to be seen, due to the fast-changing dynamics in the box and the stark projections of climate impacts which may further limit the availability of shared resources.

⁶² Interview with personnel from the Joint Operations Centre.

⁶³ Interview with CLO's Office, September 2025

⁶⁴ United Nations, Security Council, 'Situation in Abyei', Report of the secretary-general, S/2025/269, 1 May 2025; and Interview with CLO's Office, September 2025

Recommendations

As a result, the analysis in this report and the researchers' overall findings reveal several adjustments to the way UNISFA can respond to CPS underscoring the need to be adaptive. The following section summarises some of the key recommendations which could support UNISFA in the upcoming discussions on its mandate in November 2026 as part of its mandate renewal process.

1. *Acceptance and awareness:* The researchers noted a general challenge within and across the mission regarding the understanding of climate change, but more broadly, the link between CPS in Abyei. From the respondents that the study engaged with, both from within the mission and outside of the mission, there was a lack of comprehension of CPS, its impact, and its potential effects on peace and security matters. While in some quarters there is eagerness to know more (TCCs, the Community Liaison Office, political staff and humanitarians). There is a need to provide staff with access to information and capacity building through training, lessons learned, to allow the mission to integrate CPS issues in analysis, planning and response by all mission staff at both the highest and lowest levels;
2. *Connecting strategies through an integrated approach:* The team observed that there was no strategy for CPS and no broader understanding of how these dynamics impacted the protection of civilians mandate, women, peace and security and more broadly how CPS can be a risk multiplier, especially to protection and POC matters. Overall, we assess that while there are those eager to learn, there is a lack of understanding from within the mission about how CPS should be approached, connect with POC and protection issues and be integrated to support the mission's work and mandate. In addition, there was a lack of connection between the environmental team's work, which is internally focused, and the mission's external-facing work;
3. *Linking early warning and early response:* UNISFAs still lacks a meaningful early warning, early response and pre-emptive strategy. Despite the growing environmental changes, the mission has not been able to connect patrol data, CPS, POC and early warning into a coherent strategy. Consequently, the mission misses critical opportunities to convert CPS data as part of its early warning, early response strategy.⁶⁵ There is a need for UNISFA to adopt and enhance seasonal planning and work hard to connect this with the military's efforts and the role of UNPOL in this area. Therefore, drawing lessons from UNMISS in this regard would help build the capacity of UNISFA staff and institutionalise a mission-wide approach;
4. *The placement of roles with the right resources and support:* The deployment of a CPS advisor with experience in both UN PKO and CPS is a must. This could be funded by Member States,

⁶⁵ During the teams visit in May 2025, it was noted that the mission had updated its early warning strategy which needed to be signed off at the senior leadership level.

such as Norway's Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP) initiative. The strategic placement of a possible CPS advisor should also be considered. The role should sit at the P5 level, which would allow the appointed person to play a strategic role in supporting UNISFAs senior leadership, while also supporting the mission by adapting the CPS approach, strategy, and integrating this into UNISFAs POC strategy, and its approach to WPS. Furthermore, the UN Security Council should continue to ensure that UNISFA is adequately supported by integrating CPS issues as part of its periodic analysis and maintaining operational paragraphs and language in 2026 and for UNISFA to further use SG reports to put more visibility on their efforts and challenges in this area;

5. *Sharing knowledge:* Although we note that UNISFAs personnel had received some initial training and knowledge exchange from the UNMISS CPS advisor(s). A more systematic approach was needed to engage with the mission on a more frequent basis. This could be achieved by loaning personnel from the UNMISS CPS unit to the UNISFAs periodically, approximately three to four times a year, for a duration of about two weeks, which could be a meaningful start and build capacity, transfer lessons, and more broadly provide the mission with an awareness of CPS issues. This can be scaled down once a CPS advisor is appointed for UNISFA;
6. *Sharing resources between missions:* In the current financial context, absorbing an additional staff member, even if they are contributed free to the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), may be a challenge. If so, an alternative could be to send someone from UNMISS or UN Headquarters in New York or elsewhere to provide training and advice on a visit, and to repeat such a visiting arrangement on a regular basis, e.g. twice a year or more regularly if funding allows. It should not just include civilian personnel, but commanders, planners and intelligence officers also need to be trained in integrating CPS into their operations and operational assessments. The purpose of the advice could be to raise awareness, increase knowledge and facilitate sessions for various units or elements of the mission to integrate CPS into their work. The advice should be facilitated by an advisor who is connected to and has actionable knowledge that is relevant to peacekeeping operations;
7. *Wider environment changes:* Actors such as the RSF, SSPDF force, and Nuer militia are rising in area dominance. While UNISFAs role is to ensure a demilitarised zone, the rise of these actors and self-protection forces is alarming. One aspect is the growing embeddedness of these actors in areas where natural resources exist (natural resource economy), the rapid rate at which they are depleting such resources, such as coal, and their dependence on communities for recruitment and taxes. The environmental damage from these actors is not accounted for and should be considered in the UNISFA risk analysis;
8. *Pre-deployment training and expertise:* Our observation is that all TCCs are struggling with the impact of CPS, but more specifically, the impact of climate change on the ground conditions. While 2025 experienced less rain, the possible outcomes are likely to be more clashes, which, according to the UN Secretary General's report, indicates a rise from 2024-25. During the rainy season or flood period, communities are often cut off from the mission, which serves as a vital lifeline. While the mission is working toward restoring its MSR, more needs to be done to increase While Pre-deployment training was updated in 2025 and is being rolled out with the

inclusion of a module on CPS.⁶⁶ Pre-deployment training on CPS, both at home and through regional training centres needs to increase and match other related thematic areas. Additionally, TCCs need to have the right vehicles (i.e. all-terrain vehicles and inflatable boats) and equipment for the terrain in the box along with stepping up engineering capabilities of TCC. Therefore, there is a need for T/PCCs to have enhanced pre-deployment CPS training to prepare their units for operating in extreme weather conditions through a point person who works with the relevant sections in DPO and Department of Operational Support to rethink and change the requirements for military and Force Police Units that deploy in contexts where extreme weather conditions like flooding are likely. One obvious requirement seems to be equipment like inflatable boats, and related equipment like life jackets. This should also include a requirement for TCC to be able to patrol on foot in wet conditions, etc. Further, all TCCs should have a weather monitoring mechanism in their operations rooms for weather forecasts and a weather application to monitor the weather forecast, for at least 24 to 48 Hrs before any operations;

9. *A UN PKO-CPS user manual*: Across both UNMISS and UNISFAs, a significant number of people are seeking clarity on climate change, CPS, and other interrelated terms. Our observation from these missions is that there is a need to develop a CPS manual to guide staff on what CPS is and its impact on peacekeeping. This should be supported with the development of a mission-specific strategic guidance on CPS from United Nation Head Quarters. The mission-specific guidance note can help explain to peacekeeping personnel what CPS is and why it needs to be integrated into their assessments, planning, operations and reporting;
10. *Joint Projects to address CPS*: Finally, donors could support projects in the Abyei box that advance climate change adaptation, resilience building, shared natural resource management and social cohesion. Currently, the United Nations Environment Programme has been implementing an EU-funded project in coordination with the O/SEHA and UNISFA to support locally led efforts to strengthen peaceful cohabitation and shared management of natural resources in a context where environmental degradation and climate-related pressures compound protracted political tensions (from 2025-2026). Similar initiatives can be implemented through joint partnerships to compensate for the limited presence of actors in Abyei.

⁶⁶ United Nations. (2026, July 27). *Peacekeeping trainers from Asia-Pacific strengthen pre-deployment preparation*. <https://www.un.org/en/delegate/peacekeeping-trainers-asia-pacific-strengthen-pre-deployment-preparation>

Conclusion

It is evident that UNISFA provides the UN with an opportunity to demonstrate how PKO can evolve and adapt to contexts where CPS challenges directly affect the implementation of core mandated tasks, similar to the environments in which many African-led peace support operations find themselves in today. The potential for climate-induced contestation over scarce natural resources to further fuel inter-communal tensions and violence in Abyei remains significant, as highlighted in this report. The increased complexity in implementing protection strategies due to unpredictable environmental conditions further complicates peacekeeping efforts. The intersection of climate change and conflict requires a re-evaluation of traditional peacekeeping approaches to a more adaptive, climate-sensitive protection strategy that can anticipate and respond to the dynamic challenges posed by environmental degradation and its cascading effects on human security. The insights above can help to guide how peacekeeping or other models of peace interventions could evolve to respond to CPS matters, especially in contexts where there is weak state authority and cross-border or borderland threats, as this would require moving beyond traditional peacekeeping perspectives.

The analysis in the report and our time in Abyei highlight a need for the mission to readjust, pivot, and reconfigure how it does business. Missions like UNISFA with extreme climate challenges need to consider how a multidimensional mission, which is military-led, can incorporate CPS with support and guidance from UN Headquarters and within the mission, but also externally. However, in an era of budget cuts, it is important for UNISFA to strategically understand that it can do more with less and integrate this into its daily workings.

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