



***United Nations  
Field Staff Union  
Extraordinary  
Council  
Meeting***

Virtual Meeting  
**Wednesday,  
November 1, 2023**



Stronger  
together.

## Minutes of the Introductory and Extraordinary Council Meeting on Emerging Issues

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

### List of Attendees

Mr. Milan Dawoh	UNFSU President
Mr. Paul Smith	UNFSU Vice President
Ms. Jackline Ojwang Omondi	UNFSU Vice President
Ms. Rosa Colucci	UNFSU Executive Admin
Mr. Stephen Towler	UNIFIL, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Phil Scarr	UNIFIL, UNFSU Vice Chair
Mr. Kim Solvsten	UNAMA, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Dejan Stepanovic	Entebbe, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Emmanuel Alfred F. Bernateau	UNDOF, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Jairo Fernandez Duarte	UNVMC, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Jonie Bosco	KJSO, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Samuel Sarrah Conteh	MINURSO, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Benoit Elie Bryche	MINUSMA, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Penda Ly	MONUSCO, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Louis Reynold	MONUSCO, UNFSU Vice Chair
Mr. Nenad Cupic	UNAMI, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. S. Michael Blamo II	UNISFA, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Lino Sciarra	UNMIK, UNFSU Chairperson
Mélanie Gingue	UNMIK, UNFSU Vice Chair
Ms. Safiatu Gant	UNMISS, UNFSU Representative
Ms. Reem Al-Wakil	UNMOGIP, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Curthis Norman	UNSOS/UNSOM, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Vimlesh Mattoo	UNSOS/UNSOM, UNFSU Vice Chair
Mr. El-Houcine Chairi	UNTSO/UNSCO, UNFSU Chairperson
Mr. Hassan Fattin	BINUH, UNFSU Chairperson

Absent

OESG-UNMHA	No Committee
UNOWAS	No Committee
UNFICYP	No Committee
UNGSC	No Committee
UNSMIL	No Committee

The meeting was started at 14:05 (Brindisi Time).

### **Introduction**

The UNFSU President welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude for their attendance given the short notice. Despite being on the ground hardly a week, he felt that it was important to convene the Extraordinary Council Meeting on emerging issues including the conflict in the Middle East. In the same spirit, he requested the FSU Council members to observe a minute of silence to honor the colleagues who lost their lives in service and the death of UN Staff because of the on-going conflict in the Middle East. Prior to proceeding, the UNFSU President highlighted that it was imperative for the new Executive Team to express their gratitude and recognition towards their predecessors, Mr. Mark Polane, Leila, and Liliya, for their collective contributions, efforts, and service as the UNFSU Executive for a duration of four years.

The UNFSU President took the opportunity to introduce his Team Mr. Paul Smith and Ms. Jackline Omondi. Ms. Omondi acknowledged that the team was elected unopposed to serve on the FSU Executive, despite this, they are prepared and willing to collaborate with the council members as they navigate the path. The President and Ms. Omondi will collaborate on policy and strategic matters due to their joint membership in several committees; as a result, they will be providing mutual support.

Mr. Smith will assume case management responsibilities for the staff members individual cases that arise and to assist them in resolving these issues and provide guidance. However, the FSU Executive will encourage staff to engage with their respective FSU

Committees at the individuals' missions' level, as they will often find that their relationships improve and have a positive rapport with their mission management to resolve these cases. The UNFSU Executive will make every effort to collaborate with FSU Council if further escalation is required. Therefore, the Executive places a great deal of trust in the council members.

The UNFSU President provided an explanation for convening the Extraordinary Council Meeting, citing compliance with the organization's Constitution, which mandates the convening of the FSU Annual General Meeting. However, due to the recent assumption of office by the Executive Team, logistical challenges have arisen that render the Executive Team unable to successfully execute the meeting. Moreover, the current FSU leadership lacks access to financial information and has requested the consent of Council members to perhaps schedule the annual UNFSU council meeting for the beginning of the next year. This will provide them the opportunity to allocate sufficient time for strategic planning and the development of a complete agenda, as well as address mission-specific considerations.

**Action Point 1:** The decision to delay the FSU annual council meeting to the beginning of the next year was officially endorsed by the FSU Council.

A Council member provided clarity about the procedural aspects of the voting method since the Extraordinary Council Meeting invitation was sent to all members of the FSU committees. The Constitution provides explicit guidance for a single voting mechanism. The FSU Council is comprised of three executive members; however, each participating Council Member shall have one vote on an issue. Additionally, the FSU Chairpersons shall not vote except in the case of an equality of votes in which case they have the deciding vote. As stipulated in Article 11, item 7 of the constitution "*A member of the Executive and thirty percent (30%) of the Council, or their alternates, shall constitute a quorum in any Extraordinary Council Meeting.*"

The Council members had the opportunity to offer their congratulations to the recently elected UNFSU Executive Team and reaffirmed their shared commitment to extend their

support. They acknowledged the significant tasks that lie ahead for the FSU Executive over the next two or four years.

The UNFSU President sought a comprehensive briefing from the UNIFIL, FSU representative about the ongoing situation in the region. This request stems from the significant degree of concern of the staff unions at the Federation level over the complex dynamics in the Middle East (Gaza and Israel). It is worth mentioning that the Federation (UNISERV) was in the process of formulating a document for submission to the Secretary General, which pertains to the stance of the UN staff members. He emphasized that the FSU Council has UNIFIL, FSU on the ground to provide firsthand information and it would be beneficial for the Council to be aware of the situation as it unfolds.

### **UNIFIL Briefing**

The UNIFIL FSU Chairperson, highlighted that UNIFIL is not physically situated in Gaza. However, they are experiencing the repercussions of the events that transpired in Gaza, which have caused staff members distress in a collective manner. There is a recurring occurrence of staff attrition within the organization, wherein hospitals and schools are subjected to bombing incidents. There is a concerning trend of losing colleagues, which should not be occurring. The southern Lebanese border, where the UNIFIL mission is located, has experienced bombings and incursions into Israel. This has resulted in the destruction of numerous villages in southern Lebanon, particularly in the area where the UN operates, and some national staff have lost their homes. There has been a sustained period of aerial bombardment and rocket attacks in this region, lasting about three weeks. One may experience a sense of disorientation and spatial detachment when they find themselves immersed in the vast expanse of the area. These residences are located around 15 kilometers distant from the central base, for the benefit of those unfamiliar with this geographical detail. On each occasion that a funeral ceremony is held to commemorate a martyr, it signifies the loss of life occurring along the border. There exists an inherent danger. Three weeks ago, there was a mandatory relocation of UNIFIL international personnel to Beirut. The duration of four weeks will conclude on Sunday (November 5), at which point the remuneration is likely to cease. It is anticipated that the affected staff members will be informed of this decision within the next 24 hours.

A scheduled town hall meeting was set to take place on November 2, whereby the Force Commander was to deliver a comprehensive message to the whole staff. The relocation of staff members is already underway, with around 70 staff members awaiting confirmation of their assignment to reside on camp premises. However, it is worth noting that the absence of shelters is an additional concern.

**Action Point 2:** Administrative Guidelines for Lebanon was released by the Chief Executive Board (CEB) and Human Resources Network (HRN) on the 27 October 2023. These Measures are specific to duty station(s) located south of the Litani River in Lebanon explicitly outlined in these guidelines, as per the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) communique dated 13 October. All other provisions would typically apply to Lebanon, contingent upon DSS or other necessary authorization, in accordance with the regulations, rules, and internal policies of each respective organization.

## **UNISFA**

The representative from UNISFA, FSU emphasized the importance of the UNFSU President addressing the concerns of colleagues from the Palestinian territory who are serving in various missions. The issue at hand pertains to the challenges faced by these colleagues in regularly returning home due to the current situation. Additionally, the sociological impact of the crisis should not be underestimated by Council members. While some colleagues have been fortunate enough to relocate their immediate families away from the conflict zone, there are still primary members who are significantly affected. These circumstances hinder their ability to effectively carry out their duties at their respective duty stations, despite the management's expectations for increased performance. The UNISFA FSU urged the UNFSU President to express these concerns at the Federation level to explore potential mechanisms for management engagement and the extent of help the union can provide in guiding colleagues across various missions, given the present circumstances not directly in UNIFIL, but in other missions where their families are caught up in the crisis.

**Action Point 3:** The UNFSU Executive to address these concerns at the Federation level (UNISERV) by examining potential strategies for involving management and assessing the level of support the union can offer in assisting colleagues across different missions.

## **UNTSO**

The representative from the UNTSO FSU provided a briefing to the Council, characterizing the fighting as very unpredictable. There are staff members who have been displaced from their residences, some staff members are now unable to commute from the West Bank to the workplace location. The borders with Lebanon and Syria are now blocked. It is not possible to depart from Tel-Aviv airports via air travel. Their means of passage is via Jordan, a region well acknowledged as a secure refuge for the staff members. The presence of UNIFIL, UNDOF, and MLT, together with several MLT 5 authorized officials, has resulted in a lack of clear direction. Consequently, some staff members have independently decided to repatriate their families without delay. This passivity may be attributed to concerns of the potential consequences of evacuation benefits and related matters. It is evident that staff members are experiencing significant distress and the need for counselling support system. In a broader context, the current situation deviates from the norm, with reports indicating that this may only mark the first stages of escalating conflicts. Notably, recent events include Yemen's launch of missiles in Israel, further contributing to the evolving situation.

## **MINURSO**

The representative from MINURSO, FSU expressed his perspective during the current discourse within the unified axis noting that, as a staff union, the Council primary focus lies in safeguarding the well-being of UN personnel rather than engaging extensively in the political context. This delineation is crucial to maintain the integrity of the staff representation. He proposed that the Council should endeavor to optimize their efforts and direct their attention on the matter of safeguarding UN personnel including evacuation procedures.



## **UNMIK**

The representative from UNMIK expressed complete agreement with the remarks made by MINURSO, FSU drawing upon his previous experience in UNAMA. His advice was to consider the consequences of any decision to not evacuate, as it has resulted in a significant endangerment of staff members lives in the past. It is imperative to refrain from exposing staff members to potential harm just due to the apprehension of the potential repercussions in the political realm.

## **UNDOF**

The UNDOF, FSU representative emphasized that the Middle East issue, as elucidated by other colleagues, has repercussions on UNIFIL and other missions in proximity including UNDOF. The Middle East region is characterized by a highly politicized environment. All missions that have been influenced by external political forces have not been exempt from such influence. The Syrian Arab legalization office, known as SSAD, serves as an intermediary between UNDOF and the Syrian government, facilitating various forms of mediation. This includes assisting with entry visas and obtaining necessary documents from government offices. Recently, the SSAD announced the discontinuation of the National Staff Committee (NSC) and decided that it cease to exist. The NSC were instructed to cease their actions, with the notification that they would no longer be deemed permissible. This statement serves to highlight the significant influence wielded by such office. With that being said, there has been interference in the recruiting process, as well as interference with the mobility of staff. All personnel seeking employment with UNDOF must undergo a thorough vetting process conducted by the SSAD office. This process allows the office to review the provided justifications and subsequently accept or reject the individual's candidacy for employment or deployment to UNDOF. Additionally, it is mandatory for UNDOF staff members to obtain a special entry or exit visa when entering or leaving the country, regardless of possessing a valid visa. One additional challenge they are encountering pertains not alone to the internal pressure they experience, but also to internal issues they confront. Currently, they have been provided with guidance on the supply route in Lebanon. The ongoing instability in Lebanon exacerbates the challenges faced by its population. However, the Lebanese government mandated that UNDOF must provide a notification of their intention to enter

Lebanon at least 21 days in advance for the provision of emergency crossing services to be offered. However, it is important to note that for non-emergency situations, a 21-day notice planning period is required and there is no absolute assurance that they will be able to successfully traverse the given obstacle. In addition, there was a crossing located at 12 kilometers from UNDOF area. This crossing was referred to as the "alpha side" by Israel and the "bravo side" by Syria. The closure of the crossing, which took effect on October 8th, has resulted in the entire disruption of their supply route to Israel. Despite this, the administration has not taken proactive measures to support or address the concerns of the staff members. Consequently, a power struggle has emerged between the CMS and the Force Commander (FC), which is causing significant disruption, by delivering separate messages within a span of two weeks. One week before, a town hall meeting was convened to address the prevailing circumstances inside the nation. During this assembly, the Force Commander reassured the staff members by expressing their intention to thoroughly examine the contingency measures for evacuation and relocation, if deemed necessary. Additionally, he emphasized his commitment to exploring the establishment of a safe haven in Cyprus. After a span of 5 minutes, inside the same room, the CMS asserts this is business as usual, there will be no relocation. It is noteworthy that UNDOF underwent an evacuation process in 2014, only to subsequently return to Syria in 2018 noting that it was a chaotic nature of the evacuation process. As a result, the staff now find themselves in a state of confusion about the appropriate course of action. The Middle East region is characterized by a high degree of complexity. However, it has an impact on all the missions of UNIFIL, UNDOF, and UNTSO.

**Action Point 4:** The decision made by the Council included the establishment of a working group aimed at providing assistance in the formulation of a document that addresses the missions impacted by the Middle East crisis, pertaining to the evacuation of non-essential personnel and their families from the afflicted region (UNIFIL, UNDOF, and UNTSO). It is important to acknowledge that the issuing of administrative guidelines for Lebanon on October 27, 2023, effectively resolving most of the concerns raised, rendered the need for this working group request not critical.

## **Mission Specific Briefings**

### **MONUSCO**

The Vice Chairperson from MONUSCO indicated that they find themselves in a precarious position. The mission will imminently close. It is well acknowledged that the Minister of Foreign Affairs made a public statement, addressing the global community, expressing their intention to discontinue their engagement with MONUSCO. It is evident that the staff members are aware of the impending termination of this operation the South Kivu region would be subject to closure. Given the current circumstances, it is evident that the staff members find themselves in a predicament where they lack the knowledge or ability to address the impending closure of South Kivu, namely Bukavu. This decision is primarily influenced by the fact that MONUSCO is now active in just three provinces. This closure will affect a total of 200 international staff members, as well as local staff and several other components within the region without a Comparative Review Process (CRP). It is the FSU Council moral duty to push for administrative instructions for special measures like the administrative instructions issued for MINUSMA staff.

MONUSCO FSU Committee have requested their management to provide the prerogative for MONUSCO staff to fill the vacant positions following the impending closure. While they do not hold any opposition against MINUSMA staff, perhaps they can collaborate to choose the most effective approach. It would be beneficial to engage in a discussion with the UNFSU Executive further.

**Action Point 5:** The MONUSCO, FSU proposed to engage in a comprehensive discussion with the UNFSU Executive on the administrative procedures and the psychological impact on MONUSCO staff following the impending drawdown.

### **KJSO**

The representative from KJSO highlighted that with the departure of their chairperson, who recently joined the FSU Executive Team, they are currently reduced to two members. In accordance with the FSU Constitution, they lack the necessary quorum to proceed to run the FSU committee. Furthermore, they are unable to obtain the required number of

signatures to endorse the five-member composition. In the meantime, they propose that some of their members become deposit members until they can establish a sufficient quorum for the endorsement process in the next election.

**Action Point 6:** Reference was made to the accommodation in the existing constitution, Article 15, item 4 *"In case of failure to conclude the selection of Polling Officers (POs) in a mission, the Central Polling Officers shall assume the responsibility to conduct Committees election for the said mission"*.

## **MONUSCO**

The representative from MONUSCO FSU conveyed his viewpoint that the constitution, which is created by the Members, is subject to modification at any given moment. He emphasized the factual reality that the Executive Team, elected for a two-year term, lacks sufficient time to effectively fulfill their responsibilities towards the populace. If a consensus is reached among all the Council members, it is possible to modify the Constitution and proceed with a referendum. This ability to modify the Constitution stems from the fact that it is the collective constitution of the people. He proposed that at the next Council Meeting, it be considered for deliberation whether the term should be extended to a duration of four years. If consensus is reached among all parties involved, they proceed accordingly.

**Action Point 7:** A proposition to be deliberated upon during the upcoming Council meeting regarding the potential elongation of the Executive term. The Council members may proceed with a referendum and other formal procedures if consensus is achieved.

Further reference is made to Regulation 8.1 of ST/SGB/2023/1/Rev.1, Article VIII on Staff Relations *"(a) The Secretary-General shall establish and maintain continuous contact and communication with the staff in order to ensure the effective participation of the staff in identifying, examining and resolving issues relating to staff welfare, including conditions of work, general conditions of life and other human resources policies; (b)*

*Staff representative bodies shall be established and shall be entitled to initiate proposals to the Secretary-General for the purpose set forth in paragraph (a) above. They shall be organized in such a way as to afford equitable representation to all staff members, by means of elections that shall take place at least biennially under electoral regulations drawn up by the respective staff representative body and agreed to by the Secretary-General."*

## **MINUSCA**

MINUSCA FSU representative shared with FSU MONUSCO his firsthand experience with downsizing procedures, having served as FSU Chairperson at UNAMID. He highlighted the need for MONUSCO management to provide them with a comprehensive list of vacant positions as a good starting point. Additionally, they should ensure a Comparative Review Process (CRP), as one of the challenges they encountered when they were at UNAMID, and staff reductions began was that section chiefs and managers were selecting personnel they were willing to retain. Therefore, they mandated that the entire staff undergo CRP training, as it is not location specific. It addresses all aspects, thus personnel ought to be capable of completing that procedure.

He highlighted that MINUSCA SRSG, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs provided a briefing to the Security Council and the Minister of Foreign Affairs requested a review of the tasks and mandate of MINUSCA, as it has mostly fulfilled its purpose. These are tendencies that have been seen in previous operations, such as MINUSMA and MONUSCO. One notable observation is the existence of a considerable number of unoccupied positions, around 120 in total. He expressed his concern over the presence of personnel from external sources, including non-UN workers, being recruited for these positions, and recalled that in the past, all staff movement and placement information was made available on "iSeek," platform indicating a high level of transparency. He suggested the necessity to revert to the Department of Management, Strategic Policy, and Compliance (DMSPC-OHR) to facilitate the posting of all placement details. He proposed that the Council members should formally request DMSPC-OHR to get updated reports from different missions about the recruitment of MINUSMA personnel, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current situation.

**Action Point 8:** To acquire a comprehensive comprehension of the current situation of downsized staff, the President of the UNFSU should formally request the DMSPC-OHR to obtain updated reports from various missions regarding the recruitment of MINUSMA staff.

## **UNMIK**

The UNMIK FSU representative emphasized that while UNMIK is considered a relatively stable mission in comparison to others, the prevailing instability is attributable to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The event that occurred on September 24th is now being investigated because to its peculiar nature, which has resemblance to the Ukraine model and has caused significant disturbance. In the context of the emergence of unconventional armed factions, it culminated in the unfortunate demise of a law enforcement officer and the elimination of three individuals affiliated with the insurgent organization. The present circumstances exhibit instability due to their association with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The current conflict in Gaza does not imply that it is not exacerbating the situation. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge the need of preparedness for an extended duration of instability. Another point of discussion, which was brought up at the Council meeting. Many individuals lack comprehension about the Union's defined position within the normative framework, necessitating the need to effectively communicate the existence of established regulations that must be adhered to. Smaller missions have limitations in their capacity to accommodate personnel from MINUSMA, MONUSCO, or other missions in the event of closure. However, the practice of consistently recruiting external candidates while disregarding the negative impact on downsized missions, is seen inappropriate.

**Action Point 9:** There is a pressing need to consistently advocate for the Union's stated stance within the normative framework and to uphold the established policies, rules, regulations, administrative instructions, and processes to ensure accountability from all involved parties.

## **BINUH**

The representative of the BINUH FSU conveyed the sentiments of the Union towards their deceased colleagues situated in various areas, as well as towards their colleagues and families in the Middle East, including within UNFIL, UNDOF, and UNTSO. The BINUH Mission anticipates the eventual deployment of a multinational force, however its realization is still on-going. If this initiative were to operate under the auspices of the United Nations and maybe assist in the reemployment of personnel who have been downsized from other missions. The UN staff is a fundamental support system for the organization. It is imperative for the staff union to adopt a more assertive stance in relation to management, recognizing the indispensable role of staff members in the United Nations' operations. It is essential to consolidate the stance of the union and address it at the most elevated echelons. It may be beneficial to have a comprehensive global database with information on all personnel. The visibility of the offered vacancies is not yet within the union purview. It is suggested that the UN should consider establishing a designated pool of personnel rather than terminating all staff members from downsized missions but allow individuals to be seated in a designated location and thereafter remunerate them with their net wage without the need for termination indemnities, however it is advisable to maintain a pool of staff members in a designated location.

**Action Point 10:** It may be beneficial to have a comprehensive global database with the visibility of the offered vacancies within the staff union purview.

## **UNSOS**

The representative from UNSOS FSU reiterated similar thoughts to those shared by other Council members. He emphasized the difficulties they are encountering in their interactions with the Kenyan Government over the changes in relation to tax imposition contrary to MOFA agreements. International staff members of the United Nations who have resided in the country for a duration over 365 days are unable to get a new duty-free vehicle. For instance, if a staff member had an automobile at that period, it would be seen acceptable. If not, one is required to pay the duty tax charges for any vehicle acquired over a period of 365 days. The UN senior leadership already aware of these

challenges and engaging in discussions with the Kenyan Government. Another issue of concern is the discontinuation of roster as voices by other Council members.

### **Entebbe**

Entebbe FSU representative highlighted that RSCE international staffing strength is 177 who are affiliated with various missions, such as MONUSCO, UNMISS, and UNISFA. In contrast to the multitude of substantial and consequential challenges encountered by other missions, they are not burdened with similarly arduous concerns as their counterparts. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there are some general concerns which may also be relevant for their colleagues. The memorandum from USG DOS on the shortage of printing material for UNLP resulted in a challenge for the UN staff deployed across several UN missions, who are now compelled to use their respective national passports for travel purposes as such, the burden of acquisition of visa processes to travel. Secondly, the implementation of ST/AI/2022/4, Section 2 regarding the currency of payments and disbursements, may adversely affect international staff members who have financial obligations to fulfill both at their present duty stations and in their home countries. It is imperative to emphasize that the downsizing of MINUSMA will result in the loss of 21 posts inside RSCE. Likewise, in the event of MONUSCO's downsizing in the next year, a minimum of 30 positions or more will be lost. It is noteworthy that a significant portion, namely 90%, of RSCE's budget is derived from peacekeeping operations. Another aspect to consider is the need for continuous information update both on the modalities of mobility framework and continuous appointment. It is essential that the management effectively communicates the progress to the staff to ensure a smooth flow of information. There is a significant quantity of generic emails being sent, with a lack of response to staff members on these matters. It is essential to augment the level of information dissemination pertaining to these significant frameworks.

**Action Point 11:** The need for continuous information update both on the modalities of mobility framework and continuous appointment. It is essential that the management effectively communicates the progress to the staff to ensure a smooth flow of information.



Concerning the promulgation of ST/AI/2022/4, Section 2 regarding the currency of payments, the management representative indicated that they would be asking duty stations for suggestions so that the one-off arrangements are better understood. In November, duty stations will be requested to explain any exceptions that must be kept permitting a review of circumstances (host country legislation, tax regimes, etc.); and offered to meet with staff unions and asked them to convey issues being encountered.

### **UNMISS**

UNMISS, FSU representative highlighted that there is limited information to report, as significant challenges have been addressed at the local level within the mission leadership. However, the representative also emphasized the importance of enhancing collaboration among the union members, establishing a strong identity for the FSU, and ensuring the provision of robust services to meet the staff's requirements. This could involve organizing quarterly meetings to discuss updates and generate ideas for necessary actions. As one colleague suggested, it may be beneficial to develop a policy paper and review existing policy documents. Otherwise, UNMISS has implemented a pilot initiative focused on the inclusion and empowerment of women in the field monthly health educational program designed for women. Medical professionals have been extended invitations to provide a concise overview of the essential health education. In November, Cigna has been requested to participate in this initiative due to the significant number of employees seeking clarification on their health insurance.

**Action Point 12:** The importance of enhancing collaboration among the union members, establishing a strong identity for the FSU, and ensuring the provision of robust services to meet the staff's requirements. This could involve organizing quarterly meetings to discuss updates and generate ideas for necessary actions.

### **UNAMA**

UNAMA, FSU representative emphasized the absence of alignment in the rest and recuperation (R&R) framework, as implemented by the United Nations Funds and Programs. This issue has been raised to the notice of their management. However, the root cause of this problem lies in management reluctance to adhere to the norms set by

the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). This can be escalated at the Federation (UNISEV) level. Additionally, he emphasized that as of May 2023, according to Afghan legislation, female employees are prohibited from reporting to the workplace. Secondly, he expressed agreement with all the points made about the SMC XI report of rostering cessation as a global challenge faced by personnel across various missions and the need for FSU Executive to follow through from where the outgoing FSU Executive left. He also highlighted Post Adjustment concerns in Afghanistan noting that no adjustment survey has been conducted in since 2011. Considering the absence of any associated costs or gains, the results indicate a significant decrease of precisely 13.4%.

**Action Point 13:** The need for practice harmonization, including a standardized rest and recuperation (R&R) framework and frequent place-to-place surveys to provide a fair cost of living assessment and salary protection measures.

## **UNAMI**

UNAMI, FSU representative trust that the future collaboration will be as successful as the previous engagement with the former leadership of the staff union. Their mission management has been quite satisfactory. They have made efforts to submit reports to the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to advocate for modifications to their policies and procedures, whether it will last for four weeks or be subject to an extension, has still to be determined, acknowledging that the decision was supported by UNDSS. However, some concerns that they would want to address, one constraint pertains to the proposed discontinuation of roster membership. The situation is characterized by a significant degree of dispute. The proposition being made will impact mobility framework; nevertheless, it is unclear how one might achieve mobility without possessing roster membership. It is advisable that FSU Executive to allocate more attention to the matter. There was also a problem encountered about the cost-of-living survey, which UNAMI had not conducted since 2014. Over the course of the previous nine years, it is evident that no significant action has been taken, resulting in a consistent decline in post adjustment each year. Consequently, they made a request and are anticipating a response. It can be seen at a global scale that the monthly post adjustment is consistently decreasing. Additionally, there is an ongoing continuous appointment exercise, but the local human

resources department is not actively participating in it. The current situation lacks clarity and understanding. He was alerted by their staff members that all data and information in the Inspira system has been inaccessible or missing. Therefore, staff members are unable to ascertain the status of their continuous appointment application.

**Action Point 14:** It is recommended that the FSU Executive devote greater emphasis to the contentious discontinuation of roster membership and its ramifications for the mobility framework. A periodic assessment of the cost-of-living survey, the last UNAMI survey was performed in 2014. Additionally, ongoing progress updates and continuous appointments.

## **MINURSO**

MINURSO, FSU representative highlighted that one notable challenge is the dissemination of information, particularly emanating from their management, with a particular emphasis on the human resource departments and their reluctance to provide information on recruitment factsheet. To facilitate effective communication and foster a culture of engagement inside the organization, it is essential for the mission leader to initiate dialogue and establish a channel of communication with the Human Resources department and other relevant departments. The proposed concept entails the establishment of a comprehensive system capable of documenting and cataloging staff members who have been subjected to termination due to mission closure.

Their senior leadership is addressing the matter of staff residency permits, particularly with regards to the challenges faced by family members in obtaining residency permits. They continue to have difficulties in the situation family members are unable to reside at the designated location and lack multiple entrance visas. Due to the possession of a single-entry visa, staff members are restricted from freely leaving and re-entering as desired. If a staff member chooses to temporarily travel their dependents from their current location, such as for a single day or during a trip, they must undergo a visa application process. This process often requires a waiting period of around 3-4 weeks before the dependents may return to the original location. Therefore, this is a pressing matter that continues to be a subject of ongoing contention and debate. While some staff members

have been granted the privilege of a one-year multiple entry visa, there remains an ongoing struggle for resident family members who rely on their dependence status. This discrepancy prevents family members from freely entering and exiting the country, hindering their ability to establish a sense of permanence. Consequently, it is imperative to address this matter to promote equitable treatment for all.

**Action Point 15:** The proposed concept entails the establishment of a comprehensive system capable of documenting and cataloging staff members who have been subjected to termination due to mission closure.

### **UNISFA**

The UNISFA, FSU emphasized the presence of a significant problem within their mission pertaining to the duration of R&R and post adjustment. In the month of September, the ICSC approved duration of their R&R cycle to four weeks and altering their intended destination from Entebbe to Nairobi, Kenya retroactive from July 1st. The mission leadership complained that the ICSC has not been in direct communication with them and obtained information from informal sources. Furthermore, the mission is located within the geographical boundary of South Sudan and yet they are undergoing a separate review process as an autonomous entity. The communication from their management on the matter at hand seems to be inadequate, and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) also lacks clarity regarding the specific nature of their concerns. If it is not feasible to conduct the review within this month, it should be scheduled for the next month. Considering their involvement and presence in South Sudan, it is important to consider the adjustments bearing these factors in mind.

**Action Point 16:** The duration of R&R cycle/designated location and post adjustment.

### **UNVMC**

The UNVMC, FSU emphasized that most of the issues raised by other Council members are commonly shared. Despite the widespread outcry and extensive coverage, there is still a lack of information available on the downsizing initiative for MINUSMA mission. He has consulted the Human Resources department, and they have already absorbed a

significant of MINUSMA staff in alignment with the downsizing policy. However, they have had some challenges in some positions that need proficiency in the Spanish language. He highlighted that their term in office has expired, and they are having difficulty locating polling officers within the mission. Although they maintain an agreement with their management to the effect that it is acceptable to continue to support staff issues, however, according to the Constitution, they are already ineligible. It has been extremely difficult to resolve this issue of Polling Officers. In conclusion, UNVMC mission P-to-P survey was quite satisfactory. They successfully increased their post-adjustment from 29% to 45.7% by ensuring that staff members reported all the appropriate expenditures to obtain a well-balanced survey.

**Action Point 17:** The UNVMC, FSU representative requests the UNFSU Executive to provide assistance of polling officials in accordance with the provisions outlined in the existing constitution. Article 15, item 4 *"In case of failure to conclude the selection of Polling Officers (POs) in a mission, the Central Polling Officers shall assume the responsibility to conduct Committees election for the said mission"*.

## **UNMIK**

UNMIK FSU representative reiterated that it is essential to adopt a strategic approach to enhance the Council capability as Union representatives, asserting that a handbook was intended to be created outlining the expected conduct and responsibilities of Union representatives and wanted to know if it considered a component of the handover to the new FSU Executive. He suggested that the matter at hand necessitates strategic attention to fortify the union theoretical framework and enhance the Council capabilities. To establish a systematic approach to enhance the efficiency and coordination of the Union mission at a higher level. While acknowledging the existence of several pressing problems, it is important to direct the Union attention towards strategic long-term issues to achieve common objective.

**Action Point 18:** The Council members were advised that UNFSU Handbook for staff representatives is not ready. The outgoing FSU President sent an email to Mr. Simon

Ferrar on the 10/16/2023 to assist with the completion of the Staff Representatives Handbook. The new UNFSU Executive will follow up for an update.

### **UNIFIL, FSU Treasurer**

The FSU Treasurer gave a brief overview of the present cumulative financial status under the jurisdiction of the UNFSU, which have been acquired amounting to \$996,900.72. Additionally, it is worth noting that the opportunities for travel were significantly limited during the initial years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is pertinent to mention that the outgoing Executive embarked on an extensive travel over the past 18 months to fulfill numerous duty travel. These actions align with the predetermined financial allocations outlined in the constitutional regulations. The allocated budget for hosting expenses amounts to \$3000, while an additional \$2000.00 has been set up for ancillary costs that contribute to the overall expenditure. With the endorsement of the Council, the Treasurer proposed, in his capacity that the Council to consider a temporary adjustment for the current fiscal year 25% increment to accommodate financing for ancillary purposes, exclusively for the incoming administration. It should be noted that the expenditure of the allocated funds is contingent upon necessity. Specifically, in the context of the \$3000 designated for hosting purposes, an increase of \$750 would be required. Similarly, for the \$2000 allocated for ancillary items such as cameras, which are essential for capturing photographs and other miscellaneous components without exceeding the designated budget, a 25% increase amounting to \$500 would be necessary. The Treasurer requested that the Council to consider implementing a provision, specifically for this fiscal year, amounting to \$250 if deemed necessary until the conclusion of the current financial year.

**Action Point 19:** The Treasurer requested that the Council members to consider implementing a provisionary increase of 25% or \$250 if deemed necessary until the conclusion of the current financial year based on the justification given. It would also be advisable for the FSU Council to consider approving an official travel for the Treasurer to provide a detailed briefing session to the new UNFSU Executive on the

financial status and AOB, including the official UNFSU website hosting and management.

## **UNSOS**

The representative from UNOS FSU reiterated similar thoughts to those shared by other Council members regarding the roster membership, since it has significant importance. He reminded the Council members on the implementation of roster clean up in Inspira system. For instance, if a staff member holds P4 level and was years back cleared for FS4, there would be no point of maintain FS4 roster membership. Additionally, the age bar is positioned at the rear end, allowing staff to address that aspect as they strive to maintain the current level and above. The Staff Union may push forward the integration of technology and administrative processes, instead of discontinuation of the roster membership. Additionally, he expressed that this meeting yielded significant outcomes and the Council may consider scheduling a quarterly meeting or within a six-month timeframe to establish a sense of connection. This will serve the purpose of documenting and retaining pertinent information. However, he personally perceived the meeting as productive and would like to propose to the President and Vice President that we convene at least once every three months, if not more frequently. Given the dynamic nature of our missions and the potential for increased contributions, a six-month interval seems excessively long and recognized that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled to take place early next year.


**Action Point 20:** It is essential to provide a notification to all staff members of the ongoing Inspira roster clean-up. For more guidance, a video link has been included. Furthermore, it is advised to schedule regular meetings, either on a quarterly basis or within a six-month timeframe, to optimize staff engagement.

<https://input.un.org/EFM/se/3995D1A44330F2F1>

The meeting ended at 15:39 Brindisi local time.

Minutes drafted by: Jackie Omondi, UNFSU Executive, Vice President

Approved by:



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Milan Victor Dawoh  
President-UNFSU

07/12/2023

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Approval Date: