



Addis Ababa November 19/2012 (WIC)- The UN Security Council on Friday extended until 31 May 2013 the mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping force for Abyei, an area contested by South Sudan and Sudan.

In a unanimously adopted resolution, the Council also demanded that the two countries finalize the establishment of an administration for the area, as well as constitute a police service, in line with an agreement signed in June 2011.

The pact, signed in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, provides for temporary administrative arrangements for Abyei and the withdrawal of troops by both sides.

The Council also urged Sudan and South Sudan to make regular use of the Joint Oversight Committee to ensure steady progress on the implementation of the agreement. The Council established the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in June 2011 following an outbreak of violence after Sudanese troops took control of the area, displacing tens of thousands of people in the weeks before South Sudan became an independent State after seceding from Sudan.

The mission's mandate includes overseeing the demilitarization of the area and maintaining security.

According to UN News, the final status of Abyei, which straddles the border between the two countries, has yet to be determined – one of the outstanding issues of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which helped to end the long-running civil war between Sudan and South Sudan.