

operational. According to the 8 March 2013 implementation matrix the GRSS and GoS were to give UNISFA land for these bases by 10 April and the bases were to be established by 8 June.

UNISFA had already established the Kadugli headquarters in 2011 as a base for its peacekeepers in Abyei. This base has been adversely affected by clashes between the SRF and SAF, which have disrupted the delivery of rations and supplies. In 2014 work continued on the Kadugli base so that it can support a company-sized force. As of 1 September 2014 there are 25 UNISFA, 34 SAF, and 30 SPLA JBVMM monitors at the base, in addition to 79 of the 117 force protection troops mandated by Resolution 2104.

The JBVMM base at Gokk Machar, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, is also operational to some extent, although it is still not conducting ground patrols. Land for the base was provided on 26 March 2013 and an advance party of UNISFA monitors arrived on 17 April. On 25–27 June 2014 UNISFA moved 38 troops from Kadugli to Gokk Machar. Work on the base continues, however, and it is unable to house a company-sized force. A call for tenders for construction work announced on 5 August 2014 asks that ‘the contractor shall prepare the site clean [*sic*], cut trees, roots, any hard materials, rocks and level to start the work’, indicating that the base is far from being completed.

Work has not begun on either of the other two JBVMM bases. The GoS only gave UNISFA permission to build a base at Buram, Darfur, on 30 June 2013. As of September 2014, while an area of land for the base—next to an existing UN/African Union Mission in Darfur base—has been selected, work has yet to begin and no monitors or UNISFA troops have deployed to Darfur. In Malakal UNISFA only agreed on a site for the JBVMM base in December 2013. With clashes breaking out in Upper Nile shortly after this, work has not begun on the base. As of September 2014 Malakal is deserted and conflict continues in the state. It thus seems unlikely there will be a JBVMM presence in Upper Nile state in the foreseeable future.

Without bases, UNISFA will be unable to deploy its four companies. Without force protection, there can be no ground patrols and the JBVMM will be reliant on aerial patrols that cannot verify the situation on the ground. Thus, the establishment of an effective JBVMM is contingent on the resolution of the internal security situation in both countries, which would allow bases to be constructed. This is not a likely development in the foreseeable future.

Even if the bases are constructed, however, and the UNISFA force deploys, it is unlikely that the JBVMM will be able to effectively monitor the SDBZ. The Sudan–South Sudan border is 2,010 km long and four companies of 267 soldiers, together with 90 UNISFA military observers, will struggle to patrol regularly enough and cover sufficient territory to ensure that the SDBZ is demilitarized.

But it is highly unlikely that the JBVMM will be able to verify that the SDBZ is demilitarized even with the protection mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 2104. This is not only a question of coverage of a vast border zone. The border zone is often extremely difficult to access, and—given the absence of border checkpoints and uncertain state control over the border zone—is extremely porous.

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As of September 2014 there is little incentive for either country to implement the SDBZ. Most fundamentally, both sides maintain military positions in the SDBZ that are important for internal struggles, i.e. against the SRF in the case of the GoS and in South Sudan's internal conflict. With internal security currently taking precedence over all other concerns, neither side is likely to demilitarize.

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