



# Security Council

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## Situation in Mali

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2480 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2020 and requested me to report every three months on the implementation of the resolution. The present report contains updates on major developments in Mali since my previous report ([S/2020/223](#)), dated 20 March 2020. The report also includes assessments of: (a) progress achieved in the implementation of the priority measures set out in paragraph 4 of resolution [2480 \(2019\)](#); and (b) the implementation of paragraph 13 of Council resolution [2391 \(2017\)](#).

#### II. Major developments

##### A. Legislative elections

2. Building on the momentum generated by the inclusive national dialogue, legislative elections were held on 29 March and 19 April in a peaceful context despite insecurity and fear related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Voter turnout was reported at 36 per cent for the first round and 35 per cent for the second round. Some 5,000 national observers were deployed throughout the country. A number of incidents were recorded, including the kidnapping of candidates, local and traditional leaders and electoral officials, the destruction of electoral materials and interference by armed groups. Opposition leader and President of the Union pour la république et la démocratie party, Soumaïla Cissé, was abducted by alleged violent extremists on 25 March while campaigning in his stronghold of Niafunké, in Timbuktu Region. Efforts to liberate Mr. Cissé, coordinated by the Government, continue.

3. The results of the first and second rounds were proclaimed on 9 and 30 April, respectively. The ruling party, Rassemblement pour le Mali, won 51 seats (out of 147), followed by Alliance pour la démocratie au Mali-Parti africain pour la solidarité et la justice with 24 seats and Union pour la république et la démocratie, led by Mr. Cissé, with 19 seats. Among the newly elected Members of Parliament, 41 are women, compared with 14 in the previous legislature, which represents an increase of 19 percentage points in the proportion of women Members of Parliament. Some



protests followed the confirmation of the final results by the Constitutional Court on 30 April in Bamako, Kati, Sikasso and Sévaré.

## **B. Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali**

4. Notwithstanding progress with the elections, the international mediation team noted continuing disagreements between the signatory parties, which impeded the swift implementation of certain key elements of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, particularly the redeployment of residual elements of the reconstituted army to Kidal.

5. On 5 May, the Agreement Monitoring Committee held its thirty-ninth session at MINUSMA headquarters, with proceedings adjusted in the light of COVID-19 restrictions. Participants decided to include six women in the Committee by its next meeting. The Committee also urged parties to accelerate the “catch-up” phase of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration/integration process of former combatants to reach the target of 3,000 to be redeployed to northern Mali.

6. The Technical Commission on Security held regular and extraordinary sessions to discuss the modalities of the redeployment of reconstituted units of the army.

7. On 13 April, the Independent Observer of the implementation of the Peace Agreement issued its latest report, in which delays in the administrative and territorial restructuring and the challenges facing the redeployment of reconstituted units of the army to the north of the country were identified as the main obstacles to the implementation of the Agreement.

8. MINUSMA continued to support government efforts to fight impunity and extend State authority, including justice and prison services, in the north and centre. A delegation of the Ministry of Justice visited Kidal, with MINUSMA support, to evaluate the status of justice institutions and develop recommendations for their effectiveness. The Mission provided prisons and tribunals with medical and sanitary supplies to help justice institutions to maintain essential services during the pandemic. The President of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, pardoned 1,447 prisoners to protect people in detention facilities against the COVID-19 threat.

9. The Mission, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) provided technical assistance to the Specialized Judicial Unit to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime, prioritizing investigations on situations that risk destabilizing the peace process, including violence along community lines in the centre.

## **C. Stabilization and restoration of State authority in the centre**

10. Government efforts in support of dialogue and reconciliation initiatives continued, but at a slower pace, within the framework of the *Cadre politique de gestion de la crise au centre du Mali*. Owing to its focus on the elections and restrictions in the context of COVID-19, the Government suspended some field activities in late March, including in Bankass and Douentza *cercles* in Mopti Region.

11. Terrorist attacks against the civilian population, the Malian Defence and Security Forces and international forces continued to be a driver of violence in the centre, affecting all communities. National forces, with support from MINUSMA and international forces, reinforced efforts to protect civilians, including through patrols.

Despite those efforts, MINUSMA patrols continued to be obstructed by Dan Nan Ambassagou, a militia affiliated to the Dogon community.

12. Reconciliation committees were established in four communes of the Douentza and Bandiagara *cercles* with MINUSMA support. A series of community dialogue meetings were held in March, with United Nations support. The dialogue resulted in local peace agreements in Toguéré-Koumbé commune, Ténenkou *cercle*, and in the villages of Woko and Néma, in Néma-Badenyakafo commune, Djenné *cercle*. Despite the agreements, violence persisted in these areas. MINUSMA also developed interactive programmes on reconciliation and social cohesion in the Dogon and Fulani languages.

13. The Mission supported its national counterparts in devising effective prevention measures to enable the Government to continue critical activities in spite of COVID-19.

#### **D. Regional developments**

14. Prevailing terrorist threats compounded by the pandemic remained the main concern of countries in the Sahel region, with terrorist groups continuing to capitalize on the lack of State presence in many areas. Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger intensified counter-terrorism operations in the tri-border area, in coordination with French forces. As a result, six hostages held by Islamic State in the Greater Sahara were freed in Gargassa and Fererio, Burkina Faso, and several members of the group were killed.

15. On 16 March, the Ministers of Defence of Burkina Faso and Mali met in Bamako to strengthen military cooperation in the Liptako-Gourma region. On 5 May, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso and Mali discussed by videoconference the status of 6,514 Malian refugees living in the Mentao camp near Djibo in northern Burkina Faso following alleged human rights violations against refugees in the camp.

16. The Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) launched its first regional operation, and its largest operation to date, in the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger in March.

#### **E. Security developments**

17. Terrorist groups affiliated with Al-Qaida and Islamic State continued to attack security forces and civilians in northern and central Mali, while further clashes between those groups were reported. Civilians continued to be the victims of violence committed by terrorist groups and the targets of attacks across community lines in central Mali. During the reporting period, a total of 169 civilians were killed and 79 were injured in 190 incidents, representing a decrease from the previous reporting period. Mopti Region accounted for more than 51 per cent of the incidents.

18. In northern Mali, terrorist groups continued to pose the most significant security threat. Combatants of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara maintained a presence in Gao, Timbuktu and Ménaka Regions. Nine civilians were killed on 29 March when a public transport vehicle hit an explosive device in Niafunké *cercle*, Timbuktu Region.

19. In central Mali, clashes between militias affiliated with the Dogon and Fulani communities continued, as well as attacks by terrorist groups. On 11 April, suspected terrorists attacked the Soufouroulaye camp hosting 292 former combatants

participating in the community violence reduction programme. Five persons were injured.

20. Violence along community lines persisted, while there were also reports of clashes within communities. On 28 April, in Koro *cercle*, 11 members of the Dogon community returning from peace talks were reportedly ambushed by presumed militia affiliated to their community.

21. Deadly clashes were recorded in central Mali between combatants of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, which are competing for control over areas and trafficking routes. In March and April, a series of clashes between the groups were reported in Mopti Region, killing and injuring civilians.

22. MINUSMA and national and international forces continued to be the target of asymmetric attacks during the reporting period. MINUSMA was targeted by 26 attacks in which three peacekeepers and one contractor were killed and 24 were injured. This represents an increase compared to the prior period, in which 22 attacks against MINUSMA were reported, resulting in injuries to 43 peacekeepers. Mopti Region continued to record the highest number of attacks (15), followed by the regions of Kidal (6), Gao (3), Ménaka (1) and Timbuktu (1).

23. The most serious improvised explosive device attack against MINUSMA occurred on 10 May in Aguelhok, Kidal. Three peacekeepers were killed and four were seriously wounded.

24. The national defence and security forces were targeted in 49 attacks, resulting in the deaths of 67 soldiers and injuries to 86, with the deadliest attacks occurring on 19 March in Tarkint and 6 April in Bamba, both in Bourem *cercle*, Gao Region. Thirty soldiers were killed and 20 were injured in Tarkint, while 25 soldiers were killed and 12 were injured in Bamba. The Mission carried out 11 medical evacuations for 37 seriously wounded members of the national armed forces.

25. There was an increase in the number of casualties in explosive incidents involving civilians, with six incidents killing 15 civilians and injuring 14 others throughout Mali, compared to nine incidents killing 10 civilians and injuring eight others in the prior period.

26. After having withdrawn in November 2019, the national army returned to the base at Labézanga in Ansongo *cercle*, Gao Region. Within the framework of Operation Seka, the Mission intensified its patrols throughout Ansongo *cercle* and deployed temporary operating bases along main axes, providing support to the newly reinstalled defence forces and contributing to the protection of civilians, including through the discovery and destruction of several improvised explosive devices.

27. The efforts of the national army to consolidate small bases and concentrate its deployments in central Mali contributed to improving its defence against and response to threats in the area, although security vacuums emerged in many areas. The army conducted operations in Bankass, Djenné, Douentza and Mopti *cercles* to provide protection to civilians and State representatives.

28. As part of Operation Buffalo and in coordination with national defence and security forces, the Mission increased its presence in areas where national forces have a limited presence in the centre, including Bankass, Bandiagara and Koro *cercles* in Mopti Region. The Mission's deployment in those high-risk areas helped to prevent some attacks in them, although a lack of air assets prevented MINUSMA from reaching some hotspots in time.

### III. Assessment of the implementation of the priority measures referenced in paragraph 4 of resolution 2480 (2019)

#### A. Constitutional reform following an inclusive consultation with the full involvement of the Malian parties, the political opposition and civil society

29. Addressing disagreements regarding the constitutional review process was a key objective of the inclusive national dialogue in 2019. A resolution was adopted at the dialogue to prioritize the holding of legislative elections before May 2020, followed by a constitutional referendum. As reported above, two rounds of legislative elections were held on 29 March and 19 April, respectively.

30. Taking into account the concerns raised by the signatory movements, the Government decided to hold legislative by-elections in 11 *cercles* and two regions (Taoudenni and Ménaka) in northern Mali. On 15 April, the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization established a commission tasked with establishing interim authorities and preparing elections in those areas by the end of the year. The main opposition coalition, the Front pour la sauvegarde de la démocratie, denounced the decision to hold by-elections, arguing that other areas in southern and central Mali should also benefit from increased representation in the parliament. My Special Representative will continue to work with all parties to facilitate consensus on the holding of by-elections, which is an important step in the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

31. Despite progress in the inclusive national dialogue, the debate on the timeline for the holding of the constitutional referendum continued. The new National Assembly will play an important role in the shaping and sequencing of the political and institutional reforms in Mali.

32. Advancing the key reforms outlined in the Peace Agreement remains critical and the parties should be urged to:

**Adopt without delay a revised road map with a clear, realistic and binding timeline focused on priority actions under the political and institutional pillar of the Peace Agreement; and take steps towards increasing the representation of northern Mali in the parliament through the holding of planned legislative by-elections, the holding of a constitutional referendum to enact key institutional reforms envisioned in the Agreement and the holding of regional and local elections leading to the operationalization of regional assemblies and local councils to ensure greater involvement of local populations, including in northern Mali, in the administration of their affairs.**

#### B. Transfer of deconcentrated State services to local authorities, and adoption of legislation establishing territorial police

33. The effective decentralization of State services remained vital to empower State officials deployed in the north to more effectively exercise their authority. Draft decrees setting out specific steps for the transfer of competencies in 10 (out of 42) priority domains had yet to be signed. They concern the areas of agriculture, health, education, urbanism, fisheries, livestock, mines and energy, youth affairs and sport, culture, and water and sanitation. MINUSMA continued to use its good offices to encourage Malian officials to take concrete steps towards effective decentralization and facilitated consultative workshops with key stakeholders.

34. Discussions progressed on the establishment of the territorial police force. On 25 March, following consultations with the signatory movements, the Council of Ministers endorsed the draft bill and related decree on the establishment of a territorial police force for submission to the National Assembly. The territorial police units are envisaged to support mayors in enforcing local taxation policies; maintain public order; and provide security for municipal-level technical services and deconcentrated State services. MINUSMA supported the development of a strategy for the deployment of the territorial police units and stands ready to provide technical support for the recruitment and training of the first units.

35. As at 30 April, there was no change in the percentage of State officials present at their duty stations in northern Mali compared to the previous reporting period. At the local level, their presence decreased, with an additional 22 per cent of prefects (5) and sub-prefects (36) having relocated to the main regional towns for security reasons. In the centre, the percentage of civil administrators present at their duty stations in Mopti Region has further decreased to 22 per cent, with only 13 per cent of sub-prefects deployed.

36. While the Government's 2020 budget provides for the transfer of 23.1 per cent of State revenues to subnational authorities, with a view to progressively reaching the envisaged transfer of 30 per cent of State revenues, the absence of banking institutions and financial services in Kidal, Ménaka and Taoudenni continued to impede further progress in this regard.

37. Concrete measures are needed to advance the transfer of deconcentrated State services to local authorities and the establishment of the territorial police. The Government is urged to:

**Complete the full transfer of the 10 competencies listed in paragraph 33 above and the adoption of requisite legislation for the territorial police, as well as the development of a recruitment, training and deployment plan following an inclusive consultation process with the full involvement of the Government, signatory armed groups, the political opposition and civil society. The first units of the territorial police should be deployed with priority for northern and central Mali.**

### **C. Redeployment of reconstituted and reformed Malian Defence and Security Forces to northern Mali**

38. The redeployment of the reconstituted units to Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu and Ménaka represents an essential step towards the restoration of State authority in northern Mali. The good offices of my Special Representative were critical for the parties to resolve differences and reach agreement on the modalities for the redeployment. MINUSMA continued to provide critical political, security and logistical support to the redeployed units in northern Mali.

39. As at 7 May, 1,189 personnel were deployed in the north as part of the reconstituted units of the national armed forces, including 357 in Gao, 400 in Kidal, 104 in Ménaka and 328 in Timbuktu. A total of 397 are from the armed forces, while 792 are former combatants of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, the Platform coalition of armed groups and some non-signatory armed groups. The remaining 538 (out of a total of 1,330) former combatants integrated into the armed forces were redeployed as part of the national guard and the counter-terrorism units, following an agreement between Malian parties in December 2019. They are deployed in Bamako and in southern and central Mali.

40. The deployment of an additional company of the reconstituted army from Gao to Kidal was halted on 6 May following disagreements between the signatory parties. In a letter addressed to the President of the Agreement Monitoring Committee dated 16 May, the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad noted that the number of its combatants within the reconstituted company was not equivalent to a third of the unit, as previously agreed.

41. In Gao and Timbuktu, the reconstituted units have assumed control of and responsibility for securing the Operational Coordination Mechanism camps. In Timbuktu, they began to conduct patrols on the main axes, secure the polls and enforce the curfew measures in response to COVID-19. Their activities were less visible in Ménaka, and all reconstituted units have been training to improve internal cohesion, with the support of the European Union training mission.

42. In Kidal, where the arrival of the reconstituted units in February marked the first formal State security presence since 2012, the units have yet to become operational and strengthen cohesion. MINUSMA continues to provide support, including through security arrangements at the camp.

43. Operationalizing the deployed reconstituted units will require training and other concrete measures to strengthen cohesion, and active steps by signatory armed groups to enable those units to gradually take on key responsibilities. The provision of additional equipment by the Government is also necessary.

44. As part of the comprehensive redeployment plan, the next steps include the completion of the “catch-up” phase to disarm, demobilize and integrate the remaining 510 combatants. Lists from the signatory movements designating individuals to undergo the process were still outstanding when the operation was suspended in late March to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Divisions within the Platform coalition of armed groups over quotas continue to complicate discussions and delay the process in spite of the active engagement of the international mediation team.

45. The “catch-up” phase will be followed by the integration of the remaining 1,160 elements of the former Operational Coordination Mechanism to reach the objective of redeploying 3,000 troops. Once completed, the biometric registration of 74,000 pre-screened former combatants in Gao, Mopti, Timbuktu, Ménaka and Kidal will follow. Upon completion, a total of 10,000 former combatants are envisaged to be integrated into the national defence and security forces and the public administration, while 16,000 combatants would benefit from the socioeconomic reinsertion package of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

46. To achieve further progress, the Malian parties are to be urged to:

**Complete the “catch-up” phase of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration/integration process and the redeployment to northern Mali of all former combatants who underwent the accelerated process, as envisaged in the Peace Agreement; and take concrete measures to ensure that the deployed units gradually assume more responsibilities within their areas of deployment.**

#### **D. Development of the Northern Development Zone**

47. The visit of the Prime Minister of Mali, Boubou Cisse, to the north in March, notably Kidal, Tessalit and Aguelhok, was intended to signal the Government’s commitment to step up efforts in support of sustainable development in northern Mali, following the establishment of the Northern Development Zone in July 2019 and the operationalization of the sustainable development fund. The Prime Minister announced a series of projects to be implemented in the region, including the

construction of a main road from Bourem to Kidal and a vocational training centre for youth, and the renovation of rest areas for camels.

48. The review of the development project was launched on 21 March during a meeting of the Steering Committee of the sustainable development fund chaired by the Prime Minister. At the meeting, the Committee also approved the fund's manual of administrative, financial and accounting procedures.

49. The creation of the interregional advisory council, whose role is to help to coordinate and support the preparation of development projects to be submitted to the fund, remains pending. The council is expected to play a crucial role in assisting regional authorities in the north in effectively preparing, presenting and managing development projects.

50. Ensuring the full operationalization of the Northern Development Zone remains essential to create economic opportunities in the north, where many communities continue to lack access to basic social services. Progress can be achieved if the Government and signatory movements:

**Establish the interregional advisory council, following consultations with all relevant partners, with a view to completing the operationalization of the Northern Development Zone; and take concrete steps to implement pilot projects in northern Mali.**

## **E. Participation of women**

51. Concrete measures were adopted at the high-level workshop held in January, supported by MINUSMA and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to increase women's participation in the peace process and broader political life. They included increasing the number of women in the follow-up mechanisms of the Peace Agreement from 3 to 30 per cent; the creation of an independent women's observatory to monitor the peace process; and the establishment of a monitoring framework to follow up on the adopted measures. The selection process to designate six women to participate in the Agreement Monitoring Committee is ongoing; a donor has provided funding for their participation.

52. Forty-one women were elected in the legislative polls, representing over 27 per cent of the National Assembly, which represents a threefold increase from the 14 women (or 9.52 per cent) in the previous legislature, although it falls short of the 30 per cent representation required by law. Sensitization activities aimed at empowering women leaders and candidates, and the activities of political parties, contributed to increased engagement, improved capacity and wider acceptance of women's participation in public office.

53. More efforts are needed to ensure that this increase translates into actions that benefit women at large. Overall, the representation of women in most public institutions lags behind the required 30 per cent. Women continue to be a minority in other key institutions, including the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, the National Council for Security Sector Reform and the interim administration at the regional and district levels.

54. With the support of its partners, the Government of Mali, the signatory movements, political parties and civil society groups should be urged to:

**Ensure that the recommendations of the high-level workshop are fully implemented, the representation of women in the Agreement Monitoring**



**Committee is increased and the women's observatory on the implementation of the Peace Agreement is operational.**

#### **IV. Assessment of the implementation of paragraph 13 of resolution 2391 (2017)**

55. As requested by the Security Council in paragraph 39 of resolution 2480 (2019), an assessment of the implementation of paragraph 13 of resolution 2391 (2017) was conducted by the Secretariat, MINUSMA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

56. The operational tempo of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel has increased considerably. Following the revision of its strategic concept of operations and the establishment in Niamey of a joint command mechanism for the Joint Force, French forces and other security presences in the Sahel region, the Joint Force launched its first regional operation, Operation Sama, in March. Overall, MINUSMA logistical and operational support was deemed essential and the provision of life support consumables a critical contributing factor to increasing and sustaining the Joint Force's activities.

57. However, multiple challenges have prevented the Joint Force from fully benefiting from the support provided by MINUSMA. In resolution 2480 (2019), it is stipulated that the Joint Force and other partners bear the responsibility of ensuring the delivery of life support consumables to their respective areas of operations when outside Mali. The Joint Force, however, has limited capabilities to collect life support consumables at the designated collection points in Mali and transport them to its other sectors. In several instances, the Joint Force has been unable to collect rations delivered by MINUSMA at designated collection points (Bamako, Gao and Mopti). In keeping with the technical arrangement, MINUSMA and the Joint Force agreed that additional collection points for rations would be located in Ansongo and Douentza, with the caveat that deliveries to those locations would only be provided in limited quantities on the basis of the Mission's convoy schedules and storage capacity. Ménaka was ruled out owing to the absence of sufficient infrastructure to store rations or fuel. French forces were often requested to assist with the transportation of rations using their air assets.

58. Procedures for casualty evacuation on Malian territory are well established and MINUSMA has evacuated Joint Force troops on several occasions. Security forces deployed in Mali have also established effective coordination mechanisms and assist each other in extremis. However, MINUSMA is neither authorized nor in a position to provide casualty evacuation beyond Malian territory. In some instances, international forces provided limited assistance in this regard.

59. In January, the Joint Force requested support from MINUSMA for the provision and assembly of prefabricated modules for its new temporary headquarters in Bamako. MINUSMA responded positively to this request on an exceptional basis. The Joint Force also submitted a request for MINUSMA to support the fortification of its camps in Boulikessi and Tessit, which are strategic locations in Mali.

60. While the establishment of the Joint Force's human rights compliance framework is unprecedented in its scale and scope and the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces is a prerequisite for the provision of support by MINUSMA to the Joint Force, important challenges remain, stemming from the complexity of operations, opaque command and control structures of the Joint Force, including in its cooperation with national military forces, and the lack of United Nations

monitoring and investigation capacity on the ground, particularly outside Mali, to support and monitor the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy. These challenges often hamper effective decision-making, information-sharing (including on civilian casualties) and follow-up actions, particularly with regard to alleged human rights violations and judicial proceedings.

61. Considering the challenges, several options were identified to render international support to the Joint Force more effective, as set out below.

#### **A. Options for enhanced international support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel**

62. Most partners were of the view that the current approach is not sustainable in the long term, especially with a likely increase in operations in the Sahel following the establishment of the Coalition for the Sahel. The current support mechanism depends entirely on the availability of donor funding and does not allow for long-term planning. Its current mandate and the subsequent arrangements and procedures enshrined in the technical arrangement, signed on 23 February 2018 between the European Union, the G5 Sahel and the United Nations, are not commensurate with the needs of a counter-terrorism operation, which requires maximum flexibility.

##### **Option 1: establishment of a dedicated, separate United Nations support office providing full logistical and operational support, including transport, as well as tactical and strategic support to the Joint Force**

63. I have repeatedly advocated for the Security Council to authorize a logistical support package for the Joint Force, similar to the one for the African Union Mission in Somalia, delivered by the United Nations to non-United Nations missions through assessed contributions. I propose this as an interim measure until the G5 Sahel develops and strengthens its own capacity to support its own force.

64. A dedicated United Nations support office for the G5 Sahel could provide such a package in the Joint Force's areas of operations that would include the following: aeromedical evacuation capacity and related medical support; life support services, including rations, fuel and water, adapted to the requirements of the Joint Force; consumables, including field defence stores, first aid kits, tactical tentage, accommodation materiel and medical supplies; technical support to apply and implement the human rights due diligence policy; capacity for managing its environmental footprint; maintenance contracts, geospatial, telecommunications and information technology and infrastructure support; and transport and other types of support provided to the Joint Force and its troops.

65. This option would have several advantages. It would provide for sustainable and predictable funding and allow for more long-term planning. It would also enable the Security Council to have the best oversight of the support provided to the Joint Force and ensure that the support is provided in accordance with appropriate standards and accountability, while promoting the multilateral approach in a fluid regional context. Establishing such a United Nations entity dedicated entirely to supporting the Joint Force and/or the Coalition for the Sahel would allow for a clear distinction between MINUSMA and a logistics operation intended to support regional counter-terrorism operations.

**Option 2: establishment of a dedicated, separate United Nations support office providing support to the Joint Force to be funded by a dedicated trust fund**

66. Alternatively, should the United Nations be authorized to provide support to the Joint Force outside Mali, it could establish a logistical support package for the Joint Force through a dedicated trust fund as an interim measure to provide some of the services described above. The capacity to manage and oversee the delivery of support would also need to be drawn from the voluntary trust fund. The level of support to be provided and its efficacy would depend on the level of sustained funding by donors, which would have an impact on the timeliness of the planning and delivery of supplies and services. Under this option, the Secretariat would seek to leverage its broad expertise in providing support to field entities in finding practical solutions to some of these challenges.

**Option 3**

67. In the absence of a more comprehensive solution, the following alternatives could be pursued to address immediate challenges in the short term. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive and could be considered either alone or in combination.

**(a) Strengthening of the capacity of the Joint Force to procure and provide life support**

68. Strengthening the Joint Force's own capacity to procure and provide life support for its contingents would be the most sustainable alternative. Donors who already extensively support the G5 Sahel could provide stipends to the contingents to procure their own locally sourced life support consumables. This option could be explored in particular with regard to food rations and fuel.

69. A parallel long-term and holistic approach could be pursued to build the capacity of the Joint Force or the executive secretariat of the G5 Sahel to set up its own procurement system. This would require bestowing the Joint Force or the executive secretariat with their own legal capacity to enter into commercial agreements with vendors and receive payments from and issue payments to third parties.

**(b) United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali continues to provide ration packs and fuel but other partners deliver or contract freight forwarding companies directly for delivery**

70. To address the Joint Force's persistent transport and storage capability shortfalls, a donor could contract its own freight forwarding companies for the delivery of life support consumables procured by MINUSMA to the Joint Force's areas of operations. This approach would not require any adjustments to the Mission's mandate.

**(c) United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali is authorized by the Security Council to undertake the delivery of life support supplies beyond its area of operations**

71. Alternatively, the Security Council could extend the mandate of MINUSMA and authorize the Mission to undertake the delivery of life support supplies beyond the current collection points in Mali to areas closer to the Joint Force's areas of operations in Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger, Mauritania and Chad. The success of this support arrangement would depend on the availability of commercial contractors and voluntary contributions by donors. Under no circumstances does the United Nations

deliver life support supplies to combat areas. Water, rations and fuel for its own contingents are delivered to collection points through a turnkey contractor.

72. Outside of Mali, the Joint Force indicated a preference to receive life support supplies in the capitals of the other four member States of the G5 Sahel if delivery to its areas of operations was not feasible. Under this option, the respective countries could decide on the type of food supply, whether ration packs or fresh rations, some of which may be sourced from the local markets and which would be procured and delivered by a contractor engaged by MINUSMA. This approach would require the recruitment of dedicated staff to undertake a procurement process, contract administration and operations, since the resources currently available in MINUSMA to provide such support are not sufficient. The United Nations would also need to establish a legal framework and secure exemption from tax and other duties, as well as privileges and immunities, for its contractors in each member State of the G5 Sahel where support would be delivered.

73. Such a model would require security arrangements and the availability of commercial contractors operating in these areas. MINUSMA does not have the mandate or resources to provide security for third parties beyond Malian territory and authorized drop-off locations. The model would also present a significant challenge with regard to liabilities, given that freight forwarding companies have filed significant claims against MINUSMA for damaged or destroyed equipment in the past as a result of hostile actions. Any such arrangement would require donors to make the necessary financial provision for these potential liabilities.

## **B. Casualty evacuation**

74. Partners were of the view that the only sustainable solution would be to build the Joint Force's capacity to conduct its own casualty evacuation. This solution would require additional financial resources and expertise, as well as air assets. In the interim, the United Nations or other partners should provide support in strengthening the capacity of the Joint Force contingents to provide first aid.

## **C. Engineering support**

75. Provided the availability of funding, MINUSMA, by outsourcing the implementation of the project, would be able to provide horizontal engineering support for the fortification of the Boulikessi and Tessit camps. However, this would require the provision of security escorts and site protection. A plan for vertical construction, to be carried out by other partners in alignment with the completion of horizontal works, will be imperative. Other partners could continue to provide major engineering support for locations within and outside Mali. Given its experience in this domain, the United Nations Office for Project Services could provide engineering support, including vertical engineering, for locations within and outside Mali, but would also rely on a security umbrella to be provided by MINUSMA or another partner.

## **V. Human rights situation**

76. The human rights situation continued to deteriorate, particularly in central Mali. MINUSMA documented 535 violations and abuses, 412 more than the previous reporting period, including 275 abuses by armed groups and 163 by the national forces. Violations and abuses included extrajudicial executions and other killings (203 victims), enforced disappearances (53), abductions (48), torture and other cruel,

inhuman or degrading treatment (11), violations or abuses of the right to physical integrity (97), arbitrary arrest and detention (123) and several instances of the destruction of property and looting, as well as threats and intimidation. Most cases of human rights abuses were reported in Mopti Region (241). Cases were also recorded in Bamako (112) and the regions of Gao (10), Kayes (21), Kidal (44), Ménaka (31), Ségou (25), Sikasso (6) and Timbuktu (45).

77. Community-based armed groups were responsible for the highest number of human rights abuses (143), in the context of continued retaliatory attacks. Armed men from the Fulani community were responsible for at least 23 attacks claiming the lives of 82 civilians, while armed men from the Dogon community were responsible for 7 attacks resulting in the deaths of 26 civilians. The Dan Nan Ambassagou militia continued to forcibly recruit civilians to bolster its ranks. National armed forces were involved in 95 human rights violations leading to at least 34 civilians being summarily executed and 53 others being forcibly disappeared in Mopti and Ségou Regions.

78. On 18 March, MINUSMA released the findings of a human rights fact-finding mission into the 14 February attack on Ogossogou, Mopti Region. It concluded that armed men from the Dogon community had planned, organized and conducted the attack, which had led to the death of at least 35 Fulani (29 men, 1 woman and 5 children), with 3 injured and 19 still missing.

79. On 30 April, MINUSMA issued a quarterly update on human rights violations. From the beginning of 2020 to the end of March, 598 human rights violations and abuses were recorded, marking an increase of 61.21 per cent compared to the three months from October to December 2019. National defence and security forces, including some operating under the G5 Sahel, committed 119 extrajudicial executions, 32 enforced disappearances and 116 arbitrary arrests. Most of the incidents took place in Mopti and Ségou Regions. Other incidents involving the armed forces of the Niger took place in Ménaka Region.

80. In March, the President of Mali signed a declaration to support the prevention of and the response to conflict-related sexual violence in the country.

81. A total of 228 grave violations against 151 children were documented, compared to 174 violations against 103 children in the previous reporting period. While the perpetrators of 88 cases remain unidentified, 52 were attributed to the Platform coalition of armed groups, 29 to extremist groups, 23 to the national armed forces, 14 to *dozo* armed elements, 9 to Fulani armed elements, 1 to the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and 12 to various other parties to the conflict. A total of 29 children were killed and 16 maimed, including 13 girls. In addition, 89 children (all boys) between the ages of 14 and 17 years were verified as recruited: 21 by the national armed forces and 52 by signatory armed groups in Gao region; 14 by Katibat Macina in Ségou and Mopti Regions; and 2 by Dan Nan Ambassagou in Mopti. The children were released and returned to their families as a result of advocacy by the United Nations.

## VI. Humanitarian situation

82. The number of internally displaced persons in Mali increased to 239,484 from 218,000 in March (54 per cent women). Mopti Region hosts the highest number of displaced persons (99,598, or 41 per cent), followed by Gao (58,040), Timbuktu (30,304) and Ségou (24,291) Regions. Mali currently hosts 28,765 refugees from the Niger and Burkina Faso owing to the deterioration of the security environment in those countries.

83. Of the 3.5 million people suffering from food insecurity, 757,000 are severely food insecure. The \$393 million humanitarian response plan is underfunded, with \$68.8 million (17.5 per cent) received as at 12 May. In response to COVID-19, an additional \$73 million is required to address unforeseen humanitarian consequences.

84. The impact of COVID-19 is exacerbating the humanitarian crises and posing new challenges to humanitarian actors. Recent border restrictions and the interruption to international transportation are driving up prices and could affect food security. An increasing number of migrants are also stranded in Mali and remain outside the reach of reception centres. Before the Government closed all schools to prevent the spread of the virus, 1,261 schools were already closed, mainly in Mopti Region. In total, 3.8 million children in Mali are now affected by school closures. The humanitarian situation is expected to worsen in the coming months as the number of persons in need will likely increase and 1.3 million will face crisis levels of food insecurity. The number of vulnerable people traumatized by intercommunal violence, attacks by armed groups and reported human rights violations and who require mental health assistance is increasing.

## **VII. Socioeconomic situation**

85. The anticipated impact of the pandemic on the economy of Mali led the Government to revise its forecast for 2020, from a rate of 5 per cent to 0.9 per cent growth. The crisis is causing decreases in the output of the secondary and tertiary sectors, remittances from workers abroad and tax revenue collection, which risks putting 800,000 people below the poverty line.

86. During the reporting period, 40 quick-impact projects and 6 trust fund projects were approved in support of mandate implementation, totalling \$1.33 million and \$2.3 million, respectively. Projects include those relating to the provision of basic social services, infrastructure, income-generating activities, conflict prevention, support for the national defence forces and support for the Government's response to the pandemic. On 6 April, the Peacebuilding Fund utilized its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative to support new projects targeting women's empowerment, gender equality and inclusion, and participation of youth in the peace process.

## **VIII. Capacities of the Mission**

### **Update on the Mission adaptation plan**

87. MINUSMA and the Secretariat pursued their efforts to implement the Mission adaptation plan, which should enable civilian, military and police components to better deliver the mandate, especially on the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the protection of civilians. Outreach to troop-contributing countries continued to generate the required capabilities. On 19 May, the Secretariat held a virtual force generation conference, resulting in pledges for aerial intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, an armed helicopter unit and a level II hospital.

88. The plan requires the Mission to expand its bases in Gao and Mopti. In Gao, the expansion should be completed by the fourth quarter of 2020. In Mopti, the Government facilitated the Mission adaptation plan by granting additional land on 16 April. Restrictions relating to COVID-19 will delay the timeline for completing camp expansion works.

**Military**

89. As at 15 May, 12,170 military personnel had been deployed, corresponding to 91.6 per cent of the authorized strength of 13,289 personnel. The personnel included 38 military observers, 470 staff officers and 11,662 contingent personnel. Women accounted for 3.85 per cent of military personnel.

**Police**

90. As at 15 May, 1,722 police personnel, or 89.7 per cent of the authorized strength, had been deployed, including 273 individual police officers and 1,449 formed police unit personnel. Women accounted for 13.4 per cent of police personnel.

**Civilian**

91. As at 23 April, 90 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 93 per cent of international staff (25 per cent women), 84 per cent of United Nations Volunteers (32 per cent women) and 89 per cent of national staff (16 per cent women).

**Safety and security of United Nations personnel**

92. In the context of the pandemic, MINUSMA has taken urgent measures to protect its personnel and its capacity to continue critical operations. The Mission has strengthened health and sanitation policies and procedures, upgraded existing medical infrastructure and taken measures to mitigate the spread of the virus and ensure that United Nations personnel are not contagion vectors. MINUSMA also supported the reinforcement of the national COVID-19 response through the provision of relevant equipment, material and infrastructure and the conduct of sensitization campaigns through Radio Mikado.

93. As at 27 May, 73 MINUSMA personnel and 6 staff members of the United Nations country team had tested positive for COVID-19. For MINUSMA, 42 had recovered, leaving 31 active cases.

**Conduct and discipline**

94. No allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded during the reporting period. MINUSMA continued to implement the Secretary-General's strategy to address sexual exploitation and abuse, including through the training of personnel and outreach activities with the local population.

**Environmental issues**

95. MINUSMA continued its efforts towards minimizing its environmental impact by developing guidance for the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in construction projects. The Mission also managed biomedical waste related to COVID-19 in accordance with specialized guidelines to avoid contamination through the environment.

**IX. Observations**

96. The COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer of complexity to the already challenging situation in Mali and the Sahel region. It has slowed economic activity, compounded the dire humanitarian and security situations and affected aspects of political life. I commend the Government for its swift response to the pandemic with United Nations support and measures taken to stem the spread of the virus. Pandemic

restrictions notwithstanding, the Malian parties remained engaged in the implementation of the Peace Agreement with the support of the international mediation team and MINUSMA. This is encouraging. Important progress has been made since the conclusion of the inclusive national dialogue, and it is paramount that the dynamic and refocused attention on the implementation of the Agreement be preserved. I call upon all parties to join efforts and focus together on progressing in the reform processes envisaged in the Agreement. I encourage the signatory parties to strengthen mutual trust and work together to keep up the momentum in the peace process, which remains the only pathway to a politically stable and more secure Mali.

97. In keeping with resolutions of the inclusive national dialogue, the parliamentary elections were held before May 2020 and the newly elected National Assembly is now in place. I encourage Members of Parliament to play a proactive role in shaping the reform agenda and implementing the Peace Agreement. I am particularly encouraged by the 41 women who were elected, almost three times more than the 14 women in the previous legislature. I call upon all Malian stakeholders to take active steps to enable the implementation of the recommendations of the high-level workshop to enhance women's participation, as further efforts are needed to amplify the voices of Malian women in the peace process. I welcome the Government's decision to hold legislative by-elections in Ménaka and Taoudenni Regions by the end of 2020. I call upon all political stakeholders to support this phase, as these elections represent an important step in the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

98. The redeployment of the reconstituted units of the national army to northern Mali is an important achievement which would not have been possible without the support of MINUSMA. It is paramount that all redeployed units become operational and that the conditions for them to gradually assume their mandated security responsibilities be created. Concrete steps are needed, including the provision of additional infrastructure, equipment, training and measures to strengthen cohesion. It will be equally important to increase their numbers, including through the completion of the envisaged "catch-up" phase and the redeployment of additional personnel to northern Mali. I urge the signatory parties, notably the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups, to continue to display the necessary leadership to find pragmatic solutions to outstanding issues within the agreed parameters.

99. The deteriorating security situation in Mali and the Sahel region remains of grave concern, with terrorist groups allied with Al-Qaida and Islamic State competing for control over areas of influence. I condemn attacks on civilians and government officials, including the abduction of the opposition leader, Soumaïla Cissé. I am gravely concerned by the continued attacks on national and international forces, with the national defence and security forces suffering the greatest harm. I am deeply saddened by the loss of life, including the death of three MINUSMA peacekeepers from Chad who lost their lives on 10 May as a result of an improvised explosive device attack against their convoy in Aguelhok. I express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the bereaved and the Government and people of Chad. I reiterate my call for the Malian authorities to spare no effort in identifying the perpetrators of all the attacks against peacekeepers so that they can be brought to justice.

100. In central Mali, terrorist groups continued to exploit violence across community lines that claimed many lives. MINUSMA has further stepped up its efforts to protect civilians in coordination with the authorities, which has yielded initial results. Addressing the security situation in central Mali will require a greater State presence and the dismantlement of ethnically-based self-defence groups, including Dan Nan Ambassagou, which continues to be an obstacle to reconciliation between communities in the region.



101. The Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel needs additional support to fulfil its mandated role in countering violent extremism and terrorism in the Sahel region. As requested by the Security Council, the Secretariat assessed the support provided by MINUSMA to the Joint Force in accordance with the technical arrangement between the United Nations, the Joint Force and the European Union. Although the support provided by MINUSMA has been decisive and essential for the operationalization of the Joint Force, the assessment also highlighted some important challenges. Options to address shortfalls were identified for consideration by the Security Council. Fighting terrorism is a global responsibility, and the Joint Force needs support to become fully operational through the receipt of sustainable and predictable funding and resources. Its operations have to go hand-in-hand with other coordinated efforts alongside a broader strategy encompassing poverty reduction, good governance, development and humanitarian assistance.

102. The human rights and humanitarian situations remain of deep concern. Allegations of human rights violations against defence and security forces from the subregion must be investigated and those responsible brought to justice. In this regard, I welcome the declarations of the Governments of Mali and the Niger to undertake inquiries into those allegations. The number of people in need of assistance is expected to increase to 5 million by the end of 2020. I call for swift and determined action to cover the most urgent humanitarian needs and the destabilizing effects of COVID-19.

103. The pandemic has not changed the foundation of the MINUSMA response in Mali; the full implementation of the Peace Agreement remains the viable path to a more stable and secure country. The presence of the Mission remains crucial and its mandate remains relevant, given the complexity of the challenges and the corresponding need for comprehensive solutions. I therefore recommend that the mandate of MINUSMA be extended for another year, until 30 June 2021, at the current overall strength, with a configuration as proposed in my report dated 30 December 2019 (S/2019/983). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all Member States that pledged specialized capabilities for MINUSMA during the force generation conference of 19 May. The continued support of Member States will be indispensable to secure critical air assets and the resources necessary to implement the Mission's mandate. Malian ownership remains paramount for MINUSMA to succeed in implementing its mandate. In the paragraphs above, I proposed concrete measures with regard to key aspects of the peace process and the participation of women for the Malian parties to achieve in the coming 12 months, while the Council may also wish to consider measures with regard to the restoration of State authority in central Mali and the fight against impunity.

104. I wish to express my deep appreciation to my Special Representative for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his outstanding leadership and dedication. I commend United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their commitment to peace and stability in Mali. I also extend my sincere gratitude to the troop- and police-contributing countries, members of the international mediation team, regional and multilateral organizations, donor countries, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their steadfast support for Mali.

## Annex I

## United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali: military and police strength as at 15 May 2020

Country	Military			Police								
	Experts on Mission, staff officers and units			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Armenia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Austria	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bangladesh	1 288	16	1 304	1	–	1	237	43	280	238	43	281
Belgium	32	6	38	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Benin	241	18	259	16	1	17	133	5	138	149	6	155
Bhutan	5	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Burkina Faso	1 046	35	1 081	19	9	28	130	10	140	149	19	168
Burundi	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cambodia	266	25	291	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cameroon	1	1	2	8	3	11	–	–	–	8	3	11
Canada	4	–	4	6	4	10	–	–	–	6	4	10
Chad	1 417	41	1 458	12	1	13	–	–	–	12	1	13
China	410	16	426	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Côte d'Ivoire	356	8	364	12	14	26	–	–	–	12	14	26
Czechia	4	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Denmark	62	8	70	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Egypt	1 071	2	1 073	–	–	–	150	10	160	150	10	160
El Salvador	190	16	206	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Estonia	4	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ethiopia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Finland	3	–	3	1	1	2	–	–	–	1	1	2
France	23	2	25	7	1	8	–	–	–	7	1	8
Gambia	4	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Germany	341	20	361	4	6	10	–	–	–	4	6	10
Ghana	135	19	154	3	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	3
Guatemala	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Guinea	835	30	865	5	6	11	–	–	–	5	6	11
Indonesia	7	–	7	4	1	5	–	–	–	4	1	5
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ireland	12	–	12	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Italy	1	1	2	2	–	2	–	–	–	2	–	2
Jordan	64	–	64	7	–	7	–	–	–	7	–	7
Kenya	13	–	13	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Latvia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Country	Military			Police								
	Experts on Mission, staff officers and units			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Liberia	102	15	117	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lithuania	35	2	37	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Luxembourg	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	2	–	2	–	–	–	2	–	2
Mauritania	7	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mexico	2	1	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nepal	154	4	158	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	1	1
Netherlands	5	–	5	3	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	3
Niger	860	12	872	24	10	34	–	–	–	24	10	34
Nigeria	74	8	82	1	1	2	101	39	140	102	40	142
Norway	10	4	14	3	2	5	–	–	–	3	2	5
Pakistan	150	–	150	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Portugal	2	–	2	2	1	3	–	–	–	2	1	3
Romania	120	6	126	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Senegal	995	52	1 047	14	5	19	281	30	311	295	35	330
Sierra Leone	19	4	23	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Spain	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sri Lanka	249	–	249	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sweden	74	35	109	–	2	2	–	–	–	–	2	2
Switzerland	7	–	7	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	1	1
Togo	888	49	937	18	3	21	261	19	280	279	22	301
Tunisia	81	7	88	25	1	26	–	–	–	25	1	26
Ukraine	8	1	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	3	1	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United States of America	8	1	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 701</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>12 170</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>1 293</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>1 449</b>	<b>1 492</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>1 722</b>

