



# 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 to the Council every three months on the implementation of the resolution. The present report highlights progress made in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and in the development and implementation of a comprehensive politically led strategy to re-establish a State presence, State authority and basic social services, protect civilians and reduce intercommunal violence in central Mali, as well as in MINUSMA efforts to support these objectives. It also provides an update on coordination among MINUSMA, the Malian Defence and Security Forces, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the French forces and the European Union missions in Mali. It covers major developments in Mali since my previous report ([S/2019/454](#)), dated 31 May 2019.

#### Political developments

2. Preparations for an inclusive national dialogue dominated political developments, following the signing of the agreement of 2 May between the Government and several opposition parties. The scope of the dialogue, initially intended to involve consultations with relevant stakeholders on the revision of the Constitution, was gradually expanded to include major political and institutional reforms outlined in the Agreement. Consultations on the terms of reference of the dialogue, its duration and the participants continued within and among political parties and civil society.

3. On 25 June, the President of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, appointed three facilitators to lead the preparation and holding of the dialogue: Mediator of the Republic, Baba Akhib Haïdara; former Prime Minister, Ousmane Issoufi Maïga; and political activist and former government Minister, Aminata Dramane Traoré. In an effort to ensure the inclusivity of the process, the facilitators consulted a wide range of stakeholders, including former Heads of State, former Prime Ministers, political parties, civil society representatives, cultural associations, women's and young people's associations, labour unions and signatory armed groups, as well as representatives of the private sector and the media.



4. Some opposition parties, including the coalition Front pour la sauvegarde de la démocratie, led by opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé, expressed reservations about the appointment of the facilitators, while others announced that they would not participate in the inclusive national dialogue. On 27 July, a newly created group of civil society and political groupings, Awn Ko Mali, criticized the lack of inclusivity in the dialogue process, with some members calling for the greater involvement of representatives at the local level.

5. The ruling majority coalition, the Ensemble pour le Mali, called for broad support for, and participation in, the dialogue, although during the reporting period, 10 political parties left the coalition owing to disagreements regarding the dialogue. On 6 June, they formed their own alliance, the Action républicaine pour le progrès. The Coalition des candidats 2018 pour le Mali, composed of five former presidential candidates who had supported Mr. Keita in the second round of the 2018 elections, also suspended its participation in the Ensemble pour le Mali, on 19 June, accusing the Ensemble of failing to address pressing issues in Mali. Both political groupings, however, confirmed their willingness to participate in the inclusive national dialogue.

6. My Special Representative continued to work closely with all parties concerned and use his good offices to address differences among political actors and encourage their active participation in the dialogue, while promoting the participation of women's and young people's associations. In a meeting with women leaders on 14 June, the Prime Minister of Mali, Boubou Cisse, reaffirmed that women would play a central role in the dialogue. Mr. Cisse officially launched the inclusive national dialogue in Bamako on 16 September, upon validation of its terms of reference and internal procedures. The dialogue will include discussions on the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, institutional and political reforms, the Loi d'entente nationale, the role of traditional and religious authorities, unions and non-governmental organizations, and governance and development issues, as well as a new electoral calendar.

7. In addition to preparing for the inclusive national dialogue, the Government intensified its efforts to prevent the escalation of intercommunal violence and restore State authority and basic social services in order to address the crisis in central Mali. On 19 June, Mr. Cisse issued a decree establishing the Cadre politique de gestion de la crise au Centre du Mali to ensure the strategic and political coordination of efforts to stabilize the situation. In that connection, on 20 June, Mr. Keita nominated former President of Mali, Dioncounda Traoré, as his High Representative for the Centre.

8. From 3 to 7 July, Mr. Cisse visited Bankass, Bandiagara, Douentza and Koro cercles, Mopti region, where he launched the delivery of emergency food assistance, encouraged and facilitated inclusive intercommunal dialogue and announced the deployment of additional troops and gendarmes to the area, bringing the total number of national defence and security forces deployed to the region to 3,000. From 1 to 5 August, Mr. Cisse returned to central Mali and visited Macina cercle, Ségou region, to chair the signing ceremony of a cessation of hostilities agreement between representatives of *dozos* (traditional hunters) and Fulani self-defence groups.

9. On 27 June, the National Assembly voted to extend the mandate of members of parliament a second time, from 30 June 2019 to 2 May 2020, owing to delays in the constitutional review process and the organization of legislative elections. While the Constitutional Court confirmed the constitutionality of the extension, on 3 July, some members of the political opposition denounced it as unconstitutional.

10. For the first time since the crisis of 2012, parliamentary delegations undertook official visits to central and northern Mali, with MINUSMA support, to assess the level of ownership of the peace process. From 9 to 17 July, delegations comprising members of parliament from both the ruling majority and opposition political parties

visited Gao, Kidal, Mopti, Taoudénitand Timbuktu. They engaged with local authorities, signatory armed groups and civil society.

11. During the visit of the parliamentary delegation to Kidal, on 16 July, the Secretary-General of the Haut conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad, Alghabass Ag Intalla, scheduled a flag-raising ceremony at the Operational Coordination Mechanism camp in Kidal. The initiative was not welcomed by supporters of the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, who continued to voice their differences regarding the status of Kidal. As a result, the ceremony was cancelled, and on 17 July, demonstrators removed references to the Republic of Mali from the Governor's office signage and burned the flag of Mali, accusing the leadership of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad of having decided unilaterally to raise the flag without consulting the population.

12. Also on 17 July, all signatory parties issued communiqués condemning the protesters' actions and reaffirmed their commitment to the peace process. On 18 July, the international mediation team also issued a communiqué condemning the protesters' actions as a serious attack on the unity of Mali and reminded the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad of its obligations related to the return of State symbols in Kidal. The Government warned the perpetrators that they might be subject to sanctions.

13. A leadership crisis within the Plateforme between opposing factions from Gao and Timbuktu continued to escalate. Both factions sought strategic allegiances with other compliant and signatory armed groups, which further increased the polarization. In an effort to de-escalate tensions, my Special Representative and the president of the Agreement Monitoring Committee remained in close contact with both factions and other relevant stakeholders.

14. On 22 June, in his first public appearance since his resignation, on 18 April, former Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga chaired a meeting in Ségou that was attended by an estimated 1,000 supporters of his party, the Alliance pour la solidarité au Mali, and reiterated his support for Mr. Keita. On 1 August, a spokesperson for Mahmoud Dicko, an influential religious leader who had led major protests against the former Prime Minister's Government earlier in 2019, launched the Coordination des mouvements, associations et sympathisants de l'imam Mahmoud Dicko with the stated aim of uniting all Muslim young people's associations around the principles and values of Islam.

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

### **Political and institutional measures**

15. Some progress was achieved concerning the defence and security measures of the Agreement, the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the establishment of the northern economic development zone. Overall, however, the implementation of the Agreement continued to advance at a slow pace. Following the adoption by the National Assembly of two bills on such a zone in Mali, Mr. Keita signed them into law on 24 July. The first law lays out the principles for the creation of development zones in Mali, and the second one establishes the zone, defining the roles and responsibilities of the five northern interim administrations and the oversight mechanisms for expenditures. The Government also established a development fund for the operationalization of the zone.

16. The percentage of civil administrators present at their duty stations in northern and central Mali decreased from 31 to 27 per cent, with 67 per cent of governors,

53 per cent of prefects and 17 per cent of sub-prefects deployed. The decreased State presence is mostly due to insecurity.

17. The transfer of funds to local authorities remains a key challenge owing to the absence of banking facilities and financial services in northern Mali. As at 28 June, 21 per cent of the State budget had been allocated to local authorities, although the Agreement had defined that 30 per cent of State revenues should have been transferred to them by December 2018. The Government made efforts to meet its obligations by allocating \$3.5 million to the 21 district-level interim administrations; however, funds had yet to be disbursed.

#### **Justice and reconciliation measures**

18. On 24 July, Mr. Keita promulgated the Loi d'entente nationale. Based on the outcomes of the Conférence d'entente nationale held in April 2017, the law outlines a number of measures aimed at fostering reconciliation following the crisis of 2012. The measures include the cessation of prosecution, including preliminary investigations against those who may have committed crimes but have expressed repentance, the compensation of victims and the reintegration into society of those who have renounced violence. Its scope excludes war crimes, crimes against humanity, rape and crimes that are not subject to a statute of limitations.

19. Human rights activists and organizations in Mali maintain that the Loi d'entente nationale contains provisions that could lead to impunity for serious human rights violations and international crimes, such as torture, which risk undermining the transitional justice process, and deny victims their rights to truth and reparations.

20. MINUSMA continued to provide logistical and technical support to the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, which, as at 5 September, had received 14,191 testimonies, of which 6,253 were given by women (44 per cent) and 643 by children (less than 1 per cent). The public hearings are expected to commence in December.

21. On 24 July, Mr. Keita promulgated a law extending the jurisdiction of the Specialized Judicial Unit to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime to war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, which will provide the basis for the unit to prosecute perpetrators of large-scale attacks.

22. MINUSMA and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continued to provide support to the Specialized Judicial Unit to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime and its Specialized Investigation Brigade, including mentoring sessions, as well as the provision of investigative equipment to increase the capacity for criminal analysis. As of July, 458 cases were being investigated by the Unit, including 200 on terrorism, 45 on transnational organized crime and 231 on general criminal matters.

23. To reinforce the security of the prisons, the Mission provided support to the Government, including by procuring and installing security and surveillance equipment in prisons in the North and the Centre and in Koulikoro, which hold inmates suspected or convicted of terrorism-related and transnational organized crime.

#### **Support for the Agreement Monitoring Committee**

24. On 17 June, the Agreement Monitoring Committee held its third ministerial-level consultation, during which participants condemned the violence in central Mali and reiterated their support for the Government in addressing the situation. They also urged signatories to work to ensure the return of State symbols and social and administrative services to Kidal region.

25. On 15 July, the Agreement Monitoring Committee held its thirty-sixth ordinary session, during which participants adopted an updated road map for the implementation of the Agreement. The meeting was also marked by continued discord within the Plateforme, whose two opposing factions eventually walked out.

26. On 19 August, the signatory parties met for the thirty-seventh session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee. The Committee took note of the training of 1,006 former combatants of signatory and former splinter groups. It welcomed the adoption and promulgation of the legislation on the northern economic development zone and the Loi d'entente nationale. The Government announced that it would establish a standing secretariat for its tripartite forum with the signatory movements in order to conduct regular intersession meetings.

27. Notwithstanding the adoption of a law in December 2015 requiring a minimum quota of 30 per cent representation by women in public office, the lack of representation of women on the Agreement Monitoring Committee remains a concern. My Special Representative, along with the international mediation team, continues to encourage the signatory parties to nominate women to all Agreement monitoring mechanisms while working closely with the signatory parties on the establishment of an independent women's observatory to monitor the implementation of the Agreement.

28. The listing of an additional five individuals by the Security Council on 10 July pursuant to resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) provoked reactions in the northern regions, whereas the political actors in Bamako remained silent for the most part. On 12 July, the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad publicly contested the listing of one of its members, Ahmed Ag Albachar, and denied the existence of any ties to terrorist groups. The listing of the member of parliament for Bourem district, Mohamed Ould Mataly, sparked protests by young people's organizations in Gao region. The listing of Houka Houka Ag Alhousseini, from Timbuktu region, triggered mixed reactions, with civil society organizations expressing hope that he would be held accountable for his alleged crimes during the occupation of Timbuktu and some interlocutors underscoring his instrumental role in resolving intercommunal conflicts in Timbuktu.

### **Regional developments**

29. During the period under review, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel reportedly carried out sweeping operations along the Mali-Burkina Faso border. Few calls were made to MINUSMA to provide life-support consumables.

30. On 9 July, the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) and the European Union held their fifth meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, during which the European Union pledged an additional €120 million for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and €18 million for its police component. On 17 July, MINUSMA, the G5 Sahel and the European Union held a tripartite meeting to gain greater clarity regarding operations, the disbursement of pledges and logistical issues.

31. On 25 August, at the summit of the Heads of State of the Group of Seven, held in Biarritz, France, the Group adopted the Biarritz declaration for a Group of Seven and Africa partnership and the Sahel partnership action plan, calling, inter alia, for extended military cooperation to fight terrorism in the Sahel and for enhanced efforts to strengthen governance and promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth in the region, with a particular focus on women's entrepreneurship and digital transformation.

32. The political and security situation in the Sahel and Libya continued to negatively affect Mali and neighbouring countries, in particular Burkina Faso and the Niger, and also, increasingly, the West African States of the Gulf of Guinea, with

reports of violent extremist cells and threats or attacks in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.

### III. Stabilization and restoration of State authority in the Centre

33. MINUSMA intensified its engagement with key government stakeholders on the development of an action plan for the Centre based on the *Plan de sécurisation intégrée des régions du Centre* while continuing its efforts to support the re-establishment of State authority and basic social services in the Centre. In support of efforts of the authorities in Mali to reduce violence and intercommunal tensions – a prerequisite for the eventual return of government officials – the Mission also supported reconciliation efforts, including through the provision of technical and capacity-building assistance for the establishment of three district and municipal reconciliation committees in Mopti, Bandiagara and Bankass districts, Mopti region, and reinforced the regional reconciliation committee in Ségou. As part of its communication efforts in its work in the Centre, the Mission launched dedicated radio programmes to raise the awareness of local populations of its work in support of the Government.

34. Operation Oryx I, launched on 30 March by MINUSMA, continued to provide a deterrent presence in the Centre. Medium- and long-range patrols performed jointly by MINUSMA and United Nations police in Bandiagara and Bankass districts, Mopti region, contributed to a decrease in reported security incidents. Operation Oryx II, a three-week surge operation, reinforced the efforts of Operation Oryx I, placing two additional companies in Koro district, Mopti region. National defence and security forces deployed five additional companies to the region, as well as two gendarmerie companies with MINUSMA police support. In late July and August, Operation Oryx patrols were blocked by the local population, which protested against the volatile security situation.

35. A preliminary special human rights investigation by MINUSMA into the Ogossogou attack of 23 March in Bankass *cercle* concluded that the attack was planned, organized and coordinated and could constitute a crime against humanity. The investigation established that at least 145 civilians of the Fulani community had been killed through the use of automatic Kalashnikov-type and hunting rifles and 95 per cent of the houses had been burned down. The Specialized Investigation Brigade concluded its preliminary investigation into the attack on 15 May and opened a judicial investigation. A total of 10 suspects are in pretrial detention. The Mission provided technical and logistical support to the investigation and in situ support following the attack in Sobane Da, Mopti region, of 9 June against Dogon civilians.

36. On 4 September, Malian armed forces allegedly carried out an air strike against a base of the Dan Nan Ambassagou *dozo* militia, in Bandiougou village, Bandiagara *cercle*, Mopti region. No casualties were reported. On 6 September, Dan Nan Ambassagou issued a communiqué condemning the attack and called for the disarmament and cantonment of all armed groups in central Mali.

### IV. Major security developments

37. The security situation remained complex in both northern and central Mali. Attacks by terrorist groups perpetrated predominantly in northern Mali continued to target national defence and security forces, MINUSMA and international forces with improvised explosive devices, rocket and mortar attacks and small arms fire. Confrontations between armed groups and their respective communities led to violent clashes in Gao, Ménaka and Timbuktu regions.

38. Tensions persisted between the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad and members of the Dawsahak community affiliated with the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad in Gao and Ménaka regions, including a violent clash in Agarnadamos, 45 km south of Talataye, Gao region, on 24 June, resulting in casualties on both sides. On 29 June, MINUSMA deployed an integrated investigation team to the site of the incident. On 29 August, the groups reportedly reached an agreement on an immediate cessation of hostilities and established several reconciliation mechanisms.

39. Tensions between the Arab Tormouz and Oulad Ich tribes, affiliated with the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad-Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad-Plateforme, respectively, regarding control of strategic checkpoints escalated in Lerneb, Timbuktu region, and resulted in violent clashes, with multiple casualties. MINUSMA supported reconciliation efforts and the implementation of a road map agreement signed by representatives of the two communities, and mediation efforts by the Government of Mauritania led to the signature of a ceasefire agreement, on 28 July. The Technical Commission on Security agreed, at its thirty-ninth ordinary session, to act as a guarantor for the agreement while the joint observation and verification teams are investigating the clashes.

40. The situation in Ménaka region remained unstable. In Ménaka town, insecurity continued to affect humanitarian actors and civilians. Moreover, tensions among the various armed groups remained palpable, in particular following the expansion of the presence of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, to the detriment of the Plateforme.

41. In central Mali, conflicts across community lines, exacerbated by the presence of extremist groups, continued to claim many civilian lives and the destruction of livelihoods during the reporting period, with Bandiagara, Bankass, Douentza and Koro *cercles*, Mopti region, most affected. The visits of the Prime Minister, combined with a surge in political, security and reconciliation efforts led by the Government, with support from local and international partners, brought a small reduction in violence and appears to have contributed to a decrease in large-scale attacks. However, the massacre in Sobane Da village on 9 June claimed the lives of more than 35 Dogon civilians, mostly children. Smaller-scale attacks, including retaliatory acts, continue to be reported on a near daily basis.

## A. Asymmetric and other attacks

42. Extremists carried out 62 asymmetric attacks, with northern Mali recording the majority thereof (67 per cent, including in Timbuktu (15), Gao (14), Kidal (10) and Ménaka (3) regions), followed by 31 per cent in Mopti (17) and Ségou (2) regions and 1 attack in Kayes region. The number of such attacks is similar to the number recorded in the previous reporting period, in which 59 attacks were perpetrated, mostly in the northern regions (58 per cent). Although Mopti region recorded the greatest number of attacks in the period under review, the overall number of attacks there decreased from that of the previous reporting period. MINUSMA continued to intensify its efforts to mitigate the impact of asymmetric attacks, including within the framework of Operations Flow and Flint (see para. 50 below).

43. MINUSMA, national defence and security forces and international forces continued to be targeted by asymmetric attacks. There were 20 attacks against MINUSMA – in Kidal (6), Timbuktu (5), Gao (4), Mopti (3) and Ménaka (2) regions – resulting in the death of 1 contractor and the injury of 25 peacekeepers, 3 civilians and 4 contractors. In the previous reporting period, there had been 12 attacks against MINUSMA, resulting in the death of 4 peacekeepers and the injury of 12.

44. On 26 July, a MINUSMA armoured personnel carrier escorting a logistic convoy hit an explosive device approximately 78 km south-east of Timbuktu, on the Bambara-Maoudé axis (Timbuktu region), injuring six peacekeepers. On 16 August, a MINUSMA contracted vehicle, part of a logistics convoy, hit an explosive device approximately 35 km east of Indelimane, Ménaka district, on the Ansongo-Ménaka axis. The incident resulted in the death of one civilian contractor and the injury of two others. On 20 August, a MINUSMA mine-protected vehicle hit an explosive device approximately 2 km north-east of MINUSMA camp in Kidal. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims claimed responsibility for the attack, which wounded seven peacekeepers, one seriously.

45. On 22 July, a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated at the entrance to the international forces camp in Gao, injuring 30 people, including 2 MINUSMA contractors. It was the only such attack against international forces during the period under review.

46. During the period under review, there were 32 attacks against the national defence and security forces, resulting in the death of 42 and the injury of 33, compared with 35 attacks, resulting in 67 soldiers killed and 51 injured, in the previous reporting period.

47. Signatory groups were targeted in 10 attacks by extremist elements in Gao (7), Timbuktu (2) and Kidal (1) regions. Five Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and four Plateforme elements were killed, compared with 11 attacks targeting signatory armed groups in the previous reporting period, during which 43 signatory armed group members were killed and 17 injured.

48. Central Mali continued to be the area most affected by incidents involving improvised explosive devices, with 69 per cent of attacks taking place there in the first half of 2019, compared with 51 per cent in the same period in 2018. Civilians continued to be the main victims, with 110 in the first half of 2019, compared with 112 civilian casualties reported during the same half of 2018.

49. From 8 July to 17 August, MINUSMA conducted Operation Flow, an intelligence-gathering operation focused on reducing threats posed by improvised explosive devices east of Douentza, Mopti region. Since 10 May, Operation Flint has included 10 missions east of Douentza and maximized the deployment of the Mission's 10 explosive ordnance disposal teams, optimizing the protection of the main road axes of Mali and convoy security.

## **B. Defence and security measures of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali**

50. Progress was made in the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. As at 9 September, MINUSMA had transported a total of 1,448 former Operational Coordination Mechanism combatants to national army training centres. Following the completion of basic military training, elements will undergo specialized training at the location where their units will ultimately be redeployed. However, this remains contingent upon the finalization of a comprehensive plan for the redeployment of reconstituted national defence and security forces.

51. Since 10 June, MINUSMA has transported former members of the Operational Coordination Mechanism from Gao and Timbuktu to Bamako and supplied rations and fuel for ground transportation. Upon the arrival of the former combatants in Bamako, the Government provided transport to the training centres of the Malian Armed Forces in Ségou and Koulikoro regions, where they received their matriculation and identification numbers, marking their formal integration into the

armed forces and the National Guard and received basic military training, which they completed on 2 September.

52. Notwithstanding initial concerns raised by the signatory groups about moving their combatants from Kidal, the parties reached an agreement facilitated by the good offices of my Special Representative. At the thirty-ninth meeting of the Technical Commission on Security, on 5 August, participants agreed on the transport of the remaining Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and Plateforme elements from Kidal to Gao. On 17 August, MINUSMA began their onward transportation from Gao to the south.

53. In total, 668 former deserters who joined armed groups in 2012 have returned to the national armed forces and were redeployed to their former units with their rank, in conformity with the terms of the Agreement.

54. On 25 June, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the National Council for Security Sector Reform completed the draft decree for incorporating the combatants of the Operational Coordination Mechanism into the national defence and security forces. On 3 September, the National Council for Security Sector Reform adopted an action plan on a strategy for national security sector reform, as well as the draft decree on the modalities of the allocation of ranks and command and the reclassification of former combatants of the signatory movements in the relevant State structures, including the civil service and national defence and security forces.

55. The Technical Commission on Security met four times during the reporting period. Sessions were centred on the transport of Operational Coordination Mechanism combatants, possible amendments to the existing control measures on convoys and heavy weapons and the results of the investigation regarding Talataye, Gao region, by the joint observation and verification teams.

### **C. Support for Malian defence and security institutions**

56. On 29 August, the Mission convened a meeting of the Instance de Coordination au Mali to strengthen operational coordination and enhance ways to exchange information and intelligence among national and international forces in Mali. Participants presented their long-term strategic plans and agreed to expand the meeting to include national and international police and other security forces, going forward.

57. From 24 June to 13 July, the Mission enhanced its efforts to strengthen the intelligence-gathering and analysis capabilities of the authorities in Mali through a first training session for personnel in the Malian Intelligence Analysis and Fusion Centre. The support provided for the establishment of a database will facilitate intelligence sharing, including early warning mechanisms regarding threats against United Nations personnel and Malian security and defence forces, as well as civilians.

58. On 7 September, MINUSMA completed the construction of the national armed forces camp in Anderamboukane, Ménaka region, with security support from Operation Barkhane. The camp will enable the national defence forces to redeploy to this strategic location along the border with the Niger.

59. In keeping with the memorandum of understanding between MINUSMA and the Government, the Mission provided 10 medical and casualty evacuations to members of the national armed forces and 16 such evacuations for civilians.

## **D. Small arms, light weapons and explosive threat mitigation**

60. As part of its efforts to enhance the national capacity to store weapons safely, in particular in the central region, from 17 June to 22 August, the Mine Action Service refurbished a large-capacity armoury for the national gendarmerie in Niono, Ségou region, and provided training sessions on weapons and ammunition management for national security forces in Gao and Bamako.

## **V. Protection of civilians**

61. Civilians continued to be targeted directly, as victims of extremist violence and intercommunal attacks, as well as indirectly, as victims of improvised explosive devices and banditry. During the reporting period, there were 331 incidents, in which 367 civilians were killed, 221 were injured and 63 were abducted. This constitutes a slight increase in the level of violence compared with that of the previous reporting period, during which there were 245 incidents, with 333 civilians killed, 175 injured and 145 abducted. Of these, 37 civilians were killed and 50 were injured in 53 incidents involving improvised explosive devices, marking an increase compared with the previous period, during which 12 civilians were killed and 22 were injured in 44 incidents.

62. On 25 July, the first meeting of the newly established Regional Security Committee was convened by the new Governor of Mopti region. The Committee was created to improve information-sharing and coordination among national defence and security forces, the United Nations police and MINUSMA force and civilian components with the aim of helping to restore security and enhance the overall protective environment for civilians in the central regions.

63. The activities of unidentified armed elements, and their impact on civilians, remained of concern in Gao region. To address the surge in crime in Ansongo district, the Governor of Gao proposed a curfew for motorcycles, as well as the creation of a weapons-free zone in Ansongo town, notwithstanding difficulties of enforcing any such measure. Within the framework of the recently established *Cadre de concertation sur la sécurité d'Ansongo*, local authorities consulted the local population on the measures to ensure their buy-in.

64. The Mission enhanced its presence in Ansongo district through an increase in MINUSMA operations and developed an integrated action plan involving civilian, military and police components to improve its engagement with local authorities and stakeholders, with a particular focus on women.

## **VI. Human rights situation**

65. The human rights situation continued to be of concern. The majority of human rights-related incidents took place in central Mali, where MINUSMA documented 81 cases of serious human rights violations and abuses, which represents an increase of 33 per cent compared with the previous reporting period. At least 66 cases were linked to violence across communal lines. Other cases occurred in the North (7 in Gao, 6 in Timbuktu and 5 in Ménaka regions), as well as 5 in Kayes and 2 in Koulikoro regions and 1 case in Bamako.

66. Violations and abuses involved at least 339 victims (262 men, 32 women, 30 boys and 15 girls). Community self-defence armed groups were responsible for most of the human rights abuses (64), all in Mopti and Ségou regions, followed by violent

extremist groups (21) and signatory armed groups (9). The Mission verified one case of conflict-related sexual violence in Timbuktu region, involving one girl.

67. National defence and security forces were responsible for six cases of human rights violations, including one case of extrajudicial execution of four men in Mondoro commune, as well as one case of torture, which led to the death of the victim, who had been in detention in Gao. State authorities were responsible for three cases of failure to investigate or prosecute.

68. On 9 June, Sobane Da village, Mopti region, was attacked, reportedly by Fulani young people, killing 35 civilians, while on 18 June, armed elements allegedly from the Fulani community attacked Yoro and Gangafani villages, which resulted in 25 and 17 civilians killed, respectively. According to a MINUSMA investigation, at least 35 persons from the Dogon community (7 men, 6 women, 11 boys and 11 girls) were killed, 32 of whom died in buildings that attackers had burned down, and at least 329 persons were displaced. The victims were buried in five mass graves, and witnesses identified some assailants as members of the Fulani community from neighbouring villages. MINUSMA documented instances of hate speech through social and traditional media, calling for violence in the days following the attack. A national investigation into the attack is ongoing, and nine individuals were placed in pretrial detention by the investigating judge of the Specialized Judicial Unit to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime.

69. There was an increase in grave violations against children, from 145 verified cases in the previous reporting period to 284 cases in the current period, with 182 violations occurring in Mopti region alone, affecting 235 children in all of Mali, including 10 attacks on schools.

70. My Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict visited Mali from 9 to 13 July. She called upon all relevant parties to fully implement the protocol on the transfer of children captured in military operations to civilian child protection actors and urged armed group leaders to release all children from their ranks and end all grave violations against children. She also encouraged the Government of Mali to develop a national prevention plan in line with Security Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#). In Mopti, she met with community leaders affected by intercommunal violence.

71. MINUSMA provided 34 awareness-raising sessions on international human rights, humanitarian law and the protection of children in armed conflict to 407 national defence and security forces personnel (including 95 women), 163 civil society actors (including 41 women), 137 members of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (including 26 women), 60 members of the Operational Coordination Mechanism and 57 staff members of the Government of Mali (including 19 women). The Mission also organized five information sessions on the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces for government officials, national defence and security leaders and other relevant partners.

## VII. Humanitarian situation

72. From January to June 2019, 168,515 persons were displaced inside Mali, compared with 75,351 during the same period in 2018, representing an increase of 45 per cent. The greatest number of persons, approximately 80,000, were displaced in central Mali in the first half of 2019.

73. As at 31 August, there were 26,836 refugees and 987 asylum seekers in Mali, including 13,517 women and 13,319 men, mostly from Burkina Faso, Mauritania and

the Niger. Spontaneous and facilitated returns from Mbera camp, in Mauritania, increased during the period under review, while 139,020 Malian refugees remain in neighbouring countries.

74. As a result of insecurity, in addition to the resulting constraints on access to land, livelihoods and markets, 700,000 persons, 60 per cent of whom were located in Central Mali, were in urgent need of food assistance. In July, the World Food Programme and partners scaled up assistance to reach 470,000 persons with rations, but they will require additional funding to maintain such a level of assistance.

75. In total, 1.6 million children were in need of humanitarian assistance. The majority of the displaced population (52 per cent) is under 18 years of age, and many are women and girls with specific humanitarian needs. A total of 627 survivors of gender-based violence received medical and psychosocial support during the reporting period. Among them, 98 per cent were women, 51 per cent were under 18 years of age and 28 per cent were victims of sexual violence. The security situation continued to negatively affect the provision of basic social services. The number of closed schools increased, from 866 in March to 920 in June, including 598 schools closed in Mopti region alone, affecting up to 277,600 children.

76. Improvised explosive devices remained a serious threat to humanitarian actors throughout the North and the Centre. On 6 July, the vehicle of a Malian non-governmental organization hit an explosive device in Goundam district, Timbuktu region, injuring two personnel.

77. In the light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Mali, the humanitarian response plan was revised upwards in July to \$324 million. Some 3.9 million persons are now estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance, compared with 3.2 million in January.

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

### **Military**

78. As at 10 September, 12,647 military personnel had been deployed, 95 per cent of the authorized strength of 13,289 personnel, including 40 military observers, 494 staff officers and 12,153 contingent personnel. Women accounted for 3.29 per cent of military personnel.

79. The Canadian helicopter detachment completed its deployment on 31 August. Until the Romanian helicopter detachment attains initial operating capability, on 15 October, MINUSMA will face a critical shortfall, which will have an impact on its mobility, flexibility and responsiveness. A contracted helicopter with an integrated aeromedical evacuation team has been provided for services from Gao. Such a commercial solution provides a stopgap measure to ensure the continuity of essential MINUSMA evacuation services.

### **Police**

80. As at 10 September, 1,753 police personnel, or 81.92 per cent of the authorized strength, had been deployed, including 328 individual police officers, 21.64 per cent of whom were women, and 1,425 formed police unit personnel, 10.38 per cent of whom were women.

81. Two formed police units continued to lack armoured personnel carriers. To close the gaps and enhance the units' operational mobility, the Secretariat continues to work with the police-contributing countries.

### **Civilian personnel**

82. As at 9 September, 88 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 91 per cent of international staff, 85 per cent of United Nations Volunteers and 86 per cent of national staff. Women held 27 per cent of international posts, 35 per cent of United Nations Volunteer positions and 18 per cent of national staff posts.

### **Implementation of the options for adaptation**

83. In line with the recommendations for a potential significant adaptation of MINUSMA, outlined in my previous report, the Mission began to make changes to its footprint, force and police units, including devising long-term plans for accommodation and deployments to different field locations. The full implementation of the adaptation plan will require the urgent designation of land by the Government of Mali, notably in Mopti and Kidal. The need for a flexible logistics concept that would allow the force and the United Nations police to be responsive and proactive remains essential. Ensuring that resources allocated to the Mission are commensurate with its mandate will be critical.

84. The Mission took further steps to augment its protected mobility, flexibility, agility and proactive posture in the area of deployment, including through the extension of Operation Oryx I and the launch of Operation Oryx II (see para. 35 above). The overarching strategy for the adaptation of MINUSMA is focused on increasing the Mission's mobility to cope with the dynamic operational environment, in central Mali in particular, and reducing reaction time. The realignment would result in a concentrated effort at selected major population centres, the enhancement of capability through the generation of increased mobility and flexible units and the transformation of units, such as infantry battalions and the quick reaction force currently deployed.

85. The handover of the Mission camp in Diabaly to national armed forces is planned to begin in October 2019, following a phased approach to secure the base and the surrounding area during the transfer, including a period during which MINUSMA and national armed forces would be co-located inside the camp before the full withdrawal of the Mission.

86. During the reporting period, MINUSMA continued to enhance its civilian presence in the Centre. Preparations for the redeployment of one formed police unit from Bamako to Mopti region continued, but are contingent upon the availability of additional space in the camp in the Centre. The camp in Mopti is at maximum capacity and is unable to accommodate additional units. The Mission also prepared for the deployment of the 650 personnel from the Côte d'Ivoire infantry battalion to Timbuktu, which will enhance the flexibility and agility of the force.

87. A preliminary agreement was reached on the transfer of training activities from the MINUSMA police to the European Union capacity-building mission in Mali, with an expected handover by July 2020.

### **Efforts to optimize performance**

88. MINUSMA continued its efforts to improve its performance, in line with the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, as well as with the action plan resulting from the report of Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled "Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers: we need to change the way we are doing business". A number of measures were implemented in order to enhance the preparedness of MINUSMA civilian personnel and military and police units,

including through in-mission and predeployment training sessions on explosive ordnance disposal operations and in post-blast investigations.

89. To strengthen the operational capabilities of military and police units, MINUSMA is working with troop and police contributors to address shortfalls and ensure that all contingent-owned deployed equipment corresponds to signed memorandums of understanding and is in line with the Mission's Statement of Unit Requirements. During the period under review, one troop-contributing country transferred 11 armoured personnel carriers to its unit in Timbuktu, which improved its mobility. However, the battalion remains short of 20 armoured personnel carriers.

90. A number of contingents continue to have significant ammunition shortfalls, which affect their capacity to conduct operations and participate in training. The Secretariat is working with the concerned troop contributors to meet the MINUSMA-specific ammunition requirements.

91. As part of the performance evaluation framework, three military units were assessed as part of the Force Commander's evaluations. The evaluations covered mandate comprehension and support, command and control, training and discipline, sustainment and health. They also included an assessment of the willingness and ability of the units to implement assigned tasks related to the protection of civilians. While the evaluations showed the contingents' progress, there remain deficiencies in personal equipment availability and basic soldier skills, such as radio procedures and ammunition storage.

92. MINUSMA completed the evaluation of all of its formed police units. The evaluation revealed that units are performing well and in accordance with Mission's requirements, although gaps were identified in two units, related to self-sustainment, health and training. Performance improvement plans have been put in place for both units to address the issues.

93. In July, the Mission launched a comprehensive performance assessment system with an initial context-mapping exercise, resulting in the preliminary identification of key drivers of change in Mali. Further work will be conducted in September and October to develop the results framework, building on the context mapping.

#### **Safety and security of United Nations personnel**

94. MINUSMA continued its efforts to reinforce the security of its camps, with the installation of electronic surveillance systems at Kidal and Mopti and the expansion of its internal communication systems in Aguelhok, Ber, Douentza, Goundam, Ménaka and Tessalit camps. The effort is being complemented by additional security measures already implemented at the various camps. The project at the camps is at an advanced stage and earmarked to be completed by February 2020.

95. MINUSMA also continued to enhance its capabilities for casualty and medical evacuation, including through the deployment of stand-alone aeromedical evacuation teams.

#### **Conduct and discipline**

96. Two allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded during the period under review and are currently being investigated. The Mission continued to implement its strategy to assist victims and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, including enforcement measures, training and outreach activities to inform the local population and personnel of the zero-tolerance policy of the United Nations.

### **Environmental issues**

97. MINUSMA continued its efforts to minimize its environmental impact, including through the submission of its mission-wide environmental action plan in July, providing environmental performance data and score.

98. In Kidal region, the Mission completed a preliminary environmental assessment for the Kidal runway project, including a risk assessment and environmental management plan, and signed a joint implementation arrangement with international forces regarding the provision of airfield services in northern Mali in July.

## **IX. Observations**

99. The signing of a political agreement between the Government and some political opposition parties earlier in 2019 was an important step towards easing political tensions. The launch of the inclusive national dialogue on 16 September provides all Malian actors with an important opportunity to reach agreement on pressing matters and fosters consensus with regard to the upcoming essential reforms that will lay the groundwork for a more peaceful and stable Mali. The nationwide consultations with various sectors of society and a bottom-up approach is a vital step, and I am encouraged by the assurances from the Government that women will be part of the process. I urge the Government, the political opposition, signatory movements and civil society to sustain the spirit of compromise and collaboration and make rapid progress in concluding the dialogue process with concrete outcomes to avoid further delays in the implementation of the Agreement and plunging the country into another institutional crisis. Priority must be given to accelerating and concluding the constitutional reform process, which is an indispensable step towards allowing other critical reform processes to unfold, in particular the election of a new parliament and the redeployment of reconstituted and reformed units of the national defence and security forces.

100. I welcome the progress made towards the integration of former combatants of signatory armed groups into the armed forces as part of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former Operational Coordination Mechanism personnel. More than 1,000 former combatants have completed training and been integrated into the national armed forces and national guard, in addition to more than 600 deserters. This is an important step. It is now important to maintain the momentum and to make their redeployment a reality, which will be essential to restore State authority in northern Mali and to fight terrorism. I call upon all parties to work together in good faith to devise a comprehensive plan agreed upon by all as part of a broader national vision of security sector reform. It will require strong leadership and political will from all sides to leave the past behind and move towards a better future for all Malians. I regret that several aspects of the implementation of the Agreement, such as decentralization reform, security sector reform, economic development and justice and reconciliation measures, have been slowed by the continuing conflict between and within signatory movements. I reiterate my call upon all parties to honour their commitments under the Agreement and accelerate the implementation in line with the updated road map. I urge them to take concrete action to increase the number of women in the monitoring and implementation mechanisms of the Agreement and to enhance women's participation in political processes.

101. Notwithstanding the deployment of interim administrations to northern Mali, the restoration and extension of effective State authority remains a key challenge, and the people of northern Mali have yet to see the dividends of the peace agreement signed by their leaders in 2015. The low deployment rate of State officials not only adversely affects the delivery of basic social services but also undermines the

confidence of the local populations in the State. I deplore the recent incident in Kidal in which protesters burned the national flag of Mali on the occasion of a visit of parliamentarians. There is an urgent need for those from Kidal who signed the Agreement to take concrete steps to create an environment that will allow for the return of the State presence and services to this part of the country. It will require raising the awareness of the local population of the unity of the Malian State and, ultimately, its acceptance. I am encouraged by the visits of members of parliament to Kidal, which is a symbolic step towards the return of State presence and services. The legislation for the establishment of the northern economic development zone is now in place, and I urge all parties and international partners to take the measures necessary to make the zone a reality that benefits the people who live in northern Mali.

102. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the crises in Mali, in particular in the Centre. They suffer increased incidents of criminality and intercommunity conflict, which are exploited by violent extremist groups to garner support and recruits. I welcome the intensified political, security and reconciliation efforts of the Malian authorities and MINUSMA to stem the deadly violence and protect civilians. I am encouraged by the establishment of the Cadre politique de gestion de la crise au Centre du Mali and the visits of Mr. Cisse to the region, which facilitated a number of local reconciliation agreements. They are important steps, recognizing that long-term solutions to stabilize central Mali are political in nature. In order to be sustainable, they must be accompanied by justice and reconciliation initiatives. I call upon the Malian authorities to urgently finalize and implement the revision of the comprehensive politically led strategy to address the situation in the Centre and allocate the resources necessary to ensure its swift implementation. I reiterate the importance of bringing perpetrators of serious crimes to justice, which will serve as an important deterrent against such violence.

103. I strongly condemn the attacks on MINUSMA and the national and international forces. I am outraged by the incidence of landmines and improvised explosive devices planted by some of the groups on major roads in northern and central Mali, which has cost the lives of far too many civilians and security personnel. I was deeply saddened by the death of 1 MINUSMA contractor and the injury of 25 peacekeepers and 4 contractors since June and remind all that attacks targeting United Nations peacekeepers may constitute war crimes under international law. I commend the Mission's efforts to mitigate the impact of asymmetric attacks and to make Mali safer for its people. The threat remains high, however. The dire security context also further compounds the humanitarian crisis, increasing food insecurity and undermining access to health care and education. I call upon the Government and international partners to redouble their efforts to facilitate humanitarian access and provide assistance, including by mobilizing the funds required for the humanitarian response plan for Mali.

104. Stabilizing Mali requires addressing cross-border challenges. The Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel remains critical in fighting extremist armed groups. It must also play a key role in addressing trafficking in persons, illicit goods, weapons and drugs. The decision of the Security Council to lift geographic restrictions on life-support consumables to the Joint Force enables all contingents to benefit from MINUSMA support. This is important, but not enough. The international community must also support the Joint Force to become fully operational through sustained and predictable funding. I welcome the efforts of the Sahel Alliance and the new Group of Seven and Africa partnership, as well as the Sahel partnership action plan, and I call upon the international community to advance the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and its United Nations support plan. Only a more coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach combining security

measures, humanitarian activities and long-term development efforts can allow for a shift from delivering emergency relief to reducing the needs of populations and achieving lasting peace and sustainable development in the region. Stemming and preventing escalation requires offering people, in particular young people, a hopeful future, a perspective that goes beyond their daily needs.

105. The future depends on effective political and institutional reforms, which require the commitment of the entire political class, in particular the political opposition, and on the political will of the signatory parties to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement. I call upon opposition political parties in particular to seize the opportunity and participate in the political dialogue in good faith and in an effort to advance peace, democracy and the rule of law in Mali.

106. A better future for all Malians also requires the stabilization of the security situation in the Centre and the return of State authority to the North and the Centre. It is imperative that the Mission have the resources required to provide support in these areas. To that end, I call upon the Government to finalize agreements on the designation of land that would allow the Mission to expand its camp in Mopti to increase its civilian and uniformed presence in the Centre, and to build a runway in Kidal to facilitate the implementation of the mandate and the free flow of goods and services to the region. I also urge troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as donors providing bilateral support, within the framework of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, to provide uniformed MINUSMA personnel with the equipment and training required to enhance the protection of civilians while Headquarters continues to work towards providing troops and police with the specialized equipment and expertise needed in Mali.

107. Lastly, I wish to thank my Special Representative, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his outstanding leadership and dedication, and all MINUSMA personnel, the United Nations country team and the troop- and police-contributing countries for their commitment to improving the lives of the Malian people. I also commend the efforts of the regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners and non-governmental organizations for their continued support to Mali.

## Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization  
Mission in Mali: military and police strength as at  
10 September 2019**

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
Austria	2	–	2									
Bangladesh	1 278	17	1 295	1			235	44	279	236	44	280
Belgium	33	5	38									
Benin	242	18	260	15	2	17	135	5	140	150	7	157
Bhutan	5		5									
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	2									
Burkina Faso	1 650	54	1 704	12	9	21	131	9	140	143	18	161
Burundi	1	1	2									
Cambodia	265	27	292									
Cameroon	2	1	3	12	4	16				12	4	16
Canada	12	13	25	8	4	12				8	4	12
Chad	1 397	26	1 423	17	1	18				17	1	18
China	406	15	421									
Côte d'Ivoire	158	3	161	16	13	29				16	5	21
Czechia	4	3	7									
Denmark	2	–	2									
Egypt	1 082	1	1 083	–	–	–	137		137	137		137
El Salvador	194	17	211									
Estonia	3		3									
Ethiopia	1		1									
Finland	4		4	1	1	2				1	1	2
France	25		25	15		15				15		15
Gambia	2	1	3									
Germany	350	20	370	9	2	11				9	2	11
Ghana	136	20	156									
Guatemala	2		2									
Guinea	847	16	863	7	9	16				7	9	16
Indonesia	9		9	4	1	5				4	1	5
Italy	1	1	2	2		2				2		2
Jordan	66		66	11		11				11		11
Kenya	11	1	12									
Latvia	8	1	9									
Liberia	106	10	116									
Lithuania	35	2	37									
Madagascar				2		–				2		2

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
Mauritania	6		6									
Mexico	2	1	3									
Nepal	155	2	157									
Netherlands	11		11	9	1	10				9	1	10
Niger	852	12	864	31	9	40				31	9	40
Nigeria	66	17	83	2	5	7	98	39	137	100	44	144
Norway	76	15	91	2		2				2		2
Pakistan	14		14									
Portugal	2		2	1		1				1		1
Romania	16	2	18									
Senegal	1 245	31	1 276	22	6	28	284	31	315	306	37	343
Sierra Leone	17	4	21									
Spain	1		1	2	–	2				2	–	2
Sri Lanka	203		203									
Sweden	206	34	240	3	2	5				3	2	5
Switzerland	6		6	2		2				2		2
Togo	907	30	937	16	1	17	257	20	277	273	21	294
Tunisia	79	3	82	35	1	36				35	1	36
Turkey				2		2				2		2
Ukraine	6	1	7									
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2		2									
United States of America	7	2	9									
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 219</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>12 647</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>1 277</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>1 425</b>	<b>1 534</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>1 753</b>

# Annex II

## Map

