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Situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2531 \(2020\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2021 and requested me to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of the resolution. The present report covers major developments in Mali since my previous report ([S/2020/952](#)) of 29 September. As requested in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 15 October ([S/PRST/2020/10](#)), it also includes updates on the Mission's support for the political transition in the country.

II. Major developments

2. Efforts towards the establishment of the institutions of the transition, after the ousting of the former President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita on 18 August in a coup d'état, continued to dominate political developments in Mali. Following the appointment in late September of the President of the Transition, Bah N'Daw, the Vice-President, Colonel Assimi Goïta, and the Prime Minister, Moctar Ouane, on 1 October, a transition charter was issued. On 5 October, a transitional government was formed, and, on 3 December, President Bah N'Daw appointed the 121 members of the Conseil national de Transition, the parliament of the Transition.

Political developments

1. Transitional arrangements

3. On 1 October, Malian authorities issued the Transition Charter, adopted in September during consultations with political leaders, civil society representatives and other national stakeholders. The Charter outlines the priorities, institutions and modalities for an 18-month transition period to be concluded with the holding of presidential and legislative elections. It adheres to most recommendations of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), reflects key provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, signed in 2015, and grants amnesty to the leaders of the coup.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 6 January 2021.



4. On 5 October, the President of the Transition, Bah N'Daw, appointed a transitional government of 25 members, in accordance with the recommendations of consultations held in September with key political and civil society actors. The new cabinet includes four women, or 16 per cent of the cabinet, down from 23.6 per cent in the previous cabinet. It also includes high-ranking military officials, and among them three leaders of the coup, as well as members of the Mouvement du 5 juin-Rassemblement des Forces patriotiques (M5-RFP), the coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups which led the protests prior to the ousting of former President Keïta. The cabinet additionally includes representatives of civil society, and for the first time, four representatives of the signatory movements to the Agreement.

5. Reactions to the new Government were mixed. The leaders of M5-RFP protested against the participation in the transitional government of some of the coalition's members and denounced its perceived lack of inclusivity. Women's organizations deplored the decrease in women's participation. On 8 October, a group of women leaders delivered a declaration to the Prime Minister, outlining their concerns over what they perceived as their marginalization in the political transition process and decision-making at large. In a statement issued on 9 October, the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad welcomed the formation of the transitional government and expressed satisfaction with the consultations that preceded the formation of the new cabinet.

6. On 9 November, President Bah N'Daw issued two decrees establishing the National Transition Council. One decree defined the criteria and modalities for appointments in the transition parliament and the other allocated its 121 seats to various groups. The largest number of seats, 22 in total, were allocated to representatives of defence and security forces, 11 seats were allocated to political parties and organizations, 4 to youth groups and 5 to signatory armed movements. Numerous other organizations and groups, including human rights organizations and trade unions, were also represented.

7. The decrees were rejected by leaders of political parties from the previous presidential majority and the opposition, as well as independent labour unions. On 12 November, several political parties and party coalitions issued a joint statement, expressing concerns over the lack of consultations with political parties on the quotas, the lack of transparency regarding the selection criteria and the level of representation granted to the military as compared with the political parties. In an effort to resolve the issues surrounding the establishment of the National Transition Council, leaders of the transition held a series of meetings with political leaders.

8. On 3 December, President N'Daw issued a decree appointing the 121 members of the National Transition Council. On 5 December, at their first session in Bamako, members of the Council elected Malick Diaw, one of the leaders of the coup and the sole candidate for the position, as president of the institution. Mr. Diaw obtained 111 votes out of 118 votes cast. Several stakeholders, including political parties, signatory movements and civil society organizations criticized the process leading to the appointment of Council members, noting that it did not take into account the outcome of prior consultations.

9. My Special Representative for Mali and other representatives of the international community in Mali continued to call for a peaceful and inclusive transition process in order to achieve the institutional and electoral reforms prior to the anticipated elections.

10. In other developments, on 8 October, opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé, French national Sophie Petronin and Italian nationals Nicola Chiacchio and Pier Luigi Maccalli, formerly held hostage by violent extremist groups, were released following negotiations between the Malian authorities and their captors. The hostages were freed in exchange for the release of over 200 suspected members of violent extremist groups detained by

Malian authorities, some of whom were under investigation for their presumed involvement in attacks on civilians and on national and international security forces.

2. International response

11. On 6 October, following the appointment of a civilian President and Prime Minister, and the formation of the transitional government, the Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, the President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, announced the lifting of all sanctions imposed on Mali. Following the coup, ECOWAS had suspended the membership of Mali and imposed sanctions against the country, including the closure of all land and air borders with ECOWAS member States and the suspension of all financial transactions and most trade flows between its member States and Mali. On 7 October, in line with a request from ECOWAS, the Malian authorities released the 11 political and military officials detained since 18 August.

12. On 9 October, following ECOWAS, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union lifted the suspension of Mali from the African Union. On 11 October, President Akufo-Addo, in his capacity as the Chair of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, visited Bamako to evaluate progress in the transition process. On 27 November, the ECOWAS follow-up committee on the transition convened in Bamako, with the participation of international partners, including my Special Representative. Participants at the meeting assessed the political situation and discussed the coordination of support for the transition.

13. On 21 October, the former President of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, returned to Mali from Abu Dhabi, where he had travelled for medical treatment, as previously agreed by the Malian authorities and ECOWAS.

14. From 18 to 20 November, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, visited Mali and met the President of the Transition, the Vice-President, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and other national and international actors, including my Special Representative. Mr. Faki stressed the need for Malian stakeholders to deepen consultations, in a spirit of consensus and national interest, with a view to finalizing the transitional organs and ensuring a smooth political transition.

15. On 30 November, the follow-up and support committee for the transition established by the African Union held its first meeting in Bamako. The Prime Minister presented the programme of action of the transition, with eight priority areas, including reforms, the organization of general elections and the implementation of the Agreement. Representatives of the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as my Special Representative, stressed the international community's commitment towards concerted and robust action to ensure stability in Mali.

3. Preparation towards the holding of elections

16. Malian authorities took initial steps towards the preparations for the holding of presidential and legislative elections at the end of the transition period, in the face of significant challenges. On 27 October, President Bah N'Daw met with the members of the Constitutional Court to discuss the upcoming electoral process.

17. On 29 October, civil society representatives in the *Coalition pour l'Observation citoyenne des Élections au Mali* stated that a series of strikes called for by labour unions representing civil servants had led to the suspension of the revision of voter rolls and would delay the process initially scheduled to take place from 1 October to 31 December 2020. On 9 November, four such labour unions, including from the ministry of territorial administration, tasked with the organization of elections, launched an indefinite strike, following failed negotiations with the transitional government.

18. On 22 November, the Minister for Territorial Administration and Decentralization announced the creation of a support unit for the electoral process to enhance inclusivity and improve transparency with regard to the electoral process. The transitional government is yet to issue an electoral calendar for the holding of legislative and presidential elections.

4. Support for the transition

19. My Special Representative continued to engage with President N'Daw, the Prime Minister and members of the transitional government to explore avenues for cooperation and the provision of support. MINUSMA continued its good offices and advocacy regarding key reforms, whose implementation should precede the upcoming presidential and legislative elections. These include the issuance of an electoral calendar and the holding of a constitutional referendum.

20. In order to strengthen national ownership, the Mission also conducted a series of consultations with civil society organizations, including youth, women's and workers groups, as well as trade unions, religious representatives and traditional leaders. The objective was to foster their participation in the electoral process.

III. Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali

21. The establishment of transitional institutions contributed to further diverting the focus of Malian stakeholders from the implementation of the Agreement. However, the transition also presents new opportunities for meaningful progress towards its full implementation.

22. In October, for the first time, representatives of signatory groups joined the transitional government with the appointment of four ministers, namely, Harouna Toureh and Alhamdou Ag Ilyene for the Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014 coalition of armed groups, and Mossa Ag Attaher and Mohamed Ould Mahmoud for the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad. In addition, for the first time, nine women were included as representatives of the signatory parties on the Agreement Monitoring Committee.

23. After a five-month hiatus, the Agreement Monitoring Committee resumed its meetings, holding its forty-first session on 16 November. The Malian delegation to the meeting, comprising nine ministers, was led by Mr. Ouane. The Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, the Special Envoys for the Sahel of the European Union for the Sahel and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland attended. The Foreign Minister of Algeria participated by videolink. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the transitional authorities' commitment to the implementation of the Agreement. All signatory parties agreed to revitalize the inter-Malian consultation framework. Following a recommendation of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, the signatory parties held a four-day workshop, from 24 to 27 November, aimed at developing a revised road map of priority actions to be implemented during the transition.

Redeployment of the reconstituted, reformed and inclusive Malian Defence and Security Forces

24. During the reporting period, signatory parties reached an agreement to launch the second part of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process by the end of the year. This phase will lead to the integration of 1,687 combatants into the defence and security forces in order to reach the mandated ceiling

of 3,000 combatants. As at 24 November, 1,313 combatants have been integrated, 451 have been registered as part of the “catch-up” phase and are awaiting transportation from the north to the South of Mali to be trained before their integration and redeployment. Discussions are ongoing among signatory parties to solve the issue of quotas for integration, which is delaying the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. The socioeconomic programme for the non-integrated combatants is planned to start during the first trimester of 2021 with support from MINUSMA and the World Bank.

25. My Special Representative continued to use his good offices to facilitate progress on issues related to redeployment of the reconstituted and reformed Malian Defence and Security Forces. From 18 to 19 November, he travelled to Kidal and held a series of meetings in this regard with leaders of the Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad, the Governor of Kidal and civil society representatives.

Constitutional and institutional reforms

26. After months of inaction, the establishment in early December of the National Transition Council, the parliament of the transition, is expected to spur progress in the implementation of constitutional and institutional reforms, as well as in the holding of legislative elections in Ménaka and Taoudenni, in northern Mali.

Northern Development Zone

27. During the reporting period, consultations among the signatory parties resumed on the full operationalization of the Northern Development Zone, with support from the international mediation team. Questions regarding the roles of local, district and regional authorities and the interregional advisory council, on the transparent management of revenue from local taxes, transfers from the State and financial resources from the sustainable development fund and donors were addressed as part of discussions on the establishment of the secretariat of the interregional advisory council and its secretariat. However, internal rivalries among representatives of the five northern regions hampered progress towards the finalization of the process. In addition, the process of selecting projects to be financed by the Sustainable Development Fund continued to undergo delays.

Women’s participation

28. Nine women actively participated in the forty-first session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, up from four at the previous session in June. The government delegation comprised three women, including the Minister for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families. The delegations of the *Plateforme* and the Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad each included three women. Women’s participation now stands at 9 out of 29 national members of the Committee, or 31 per cent.

IV. Stabilization and the restoration of State authority in the centre

29. The situation in central Mali remained of serious concern. A new trend of significant violent incidents was recorded in Ségou region where, since early October, the village of Farabougou and other neighbouring villages in the Dogofri *commune*, Niono *cercle*, have been the target of blockades and attacks by suspected extremist combatants.

30. The siege and blockade of the villages led to the deaths of at least six civilians, dozens of wounded, the abduction of at least 20 civilians, and the displacement of over

2,000 households from villages in the *communes* of Dogofri, Marico, Siribala and Sokolo, and the theft of cattle. It was estimated that nearly 4,000 people are currently stranded in Farabougou village without access to necessities or health care and under the constant threat of violence. Several mediation and humanitarian initiatives were set up around Farabougou with distinct objectives, including humanitarian access, conflict mitigation and de-escalation and reconciliation. The MINUSMA force flew 25 military helicopter sorties in the affected areas to transport 64 soldiers of the Malian Armed Forces and deliver over 30 tons of food and other supplies.

31. In Mopti region, self-defence militias and extremist groups continued to exploit conflicts across community lines, fuelling violence against civilians and causing security incidents, mainly in the *cercles* of Bandiagara, Bankass, Douentza and Koro. New and worrying dynamics and rivalries were recorded within community-affiliated armed groups. Dan Na Ambassagou, an armed group affiliated to the Dogon community, faced growing opposition from dissident Dogon villages.

32. Terrorist groups, specifically Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Musulimin' (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), continued to expand their influence in the centre, attacking and threatening the local population in several villages. Clashes between communities and terrorist groups continued, resulting in blockades of several villages, with dire consequences for many civilians. The most significant blockade was reported in the village of Farabougou, Niono *cercle*, Ségou region.

33. The use of improvised explosive devices by armed groups continued to impede the freedom of movement of civilians and security forces. On 1 and 11 November, in two improvised explosive device attacks against the Malian army in Mopti and Douentza *cercles*, Mopti region, six officers were injured. In one improvised explosive device incident in Bandiagara *cercle*, Mopti region, two MINUSMA peacekeepers were injured.

34. MINUSMA maintained its support to the policy framework for the management of the crisis in central Mali, including its permanent secretariat, which enjoys the support of the transitional government. On 15 October, the broadcasting of local radio programmes on the stabilization strategy for central Mali started throughout the regions of Mopti and Ségou, to increase the awareness, adherence and contributions of populations in both regions, including women, youth and vulnerable populations, with regard to the strategy.

35. MINUSMA continued to support efforts to reduce community violence and strengthen reconciliation and social cohesion in several targeted areas. In Mopti region, progress in intercommunity reconciliation in the *cercles* of Bankass and Koro contributed to a decrease in intercommunity violence, with fewer security incidents during the reporting period.

36. Across Mopti region, in areas affected by the violence, MINUSMA supported the establishment of communal reconciliation committees. On 31 October and 1 November, in Douentza *cercle*, MINUSMA supported a dialogue between the Dogon and Fulani communities of Dallah and Petaka *communes*, which led to the signing of a joint reconciliation road map and to the establishment of a joint follow-up committee. In Ogossagou, where two massacres occurred in March 2019 and February 2020, the Mission conducted a mediation and reconciliation project, introducing joint intercommunity activities which reduced tensions and the risks of renewed conflicts between the Dogon and Fulani communities in the area.

37. In Ségou region, the Mission continued to strengthen local reconciliation committees through a series of training sessions on mediation and reconciliation skills, from 6 to 10 October. In the weeks following the sessions, members of these committees played a key role in initiatives that helped avert a potentially violent crisis in parts of Niono *cercle*. Similarly, MINUSMA supported local authorities as they helped broker local peace agreements between two opposing Bambara and Fulani communities.

38. In support of the authorities' efforts to address land issues, a key driver of local conflict, the Mission worked to improve governance capacity and strengthen local land commissions in Mopti region. From 16 to 23 October, the Mission facilitated six workshops to sensitize 190 participants, including 71 women, on the roles and responsibilities of the land commissions.

39. MINUSMA commenced capacity-building for municipal councils in 18 *communes* in Djenné and Bandiagara *cercles* and embarked on training for four district councils in Mopti region.

40. Lastly, across central Mali, the Mission intensified its military operations to protect civilians in areas affected by repeated outbreaks of violence. MINUSMA continued Operation Buffalo and Operation Mongoose in close cooperation with civilian pillars and launched Operation Cobra, the Mission's first coordinated operation with the Malian Defence and Security Forces.

Progress made in the achievement of priority measures

1. Re-establishment of State presence and State authority

41. As at 30 November, 9 per cent of civil administrators in northern Mali and Mopti region were physically deployed to their duty stations, the lowest figure since September 2015 or earlier. The majority of administrators reside at the nearest *cercles* or the regional capital and travel to their duty stations periodically. In Ménaka and Taoudenni regions, several positions remain vacant.

42. On 25 November, the Government appointed 17 new governors, including 11 army officers, marking a shift in such appointments, usually held by civilians. On 28 November, the main labour unions representing civil servants issued a joint statement describing the appointments as "contemptuous, insulting and provocative" and decided to continue their indefinite strike until their grievances are addressed by the transitional government.

43. As at 2 December, all magistrates deployed to Mopti region were present at their duty stations, despite persisting security threats.

2. Fight against impunity

44. Initial steps were taken to ensure accountability for violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed in 2020. The Specialized Judicial Unit opened an investigation into the attacks committed against Gouari and other villages in Bankass *cercle* on 1 and 2 July 2020, causing the deaths of at least 30 civilians and 7 officers of the Malian Armed Forces. On 30 November, the Mopti Court of Assizes began proceedings in 34 criminal trials, with 97 accused, 7 of which involve incidents along community lines.

45. The launch of an investigation into the killing of 24 civilians in Libé, Mopti region, on 22 October, is still pending. The killing is alleged to have been committed by the Malian Army, which has denied any involvement. Arrest warrants are yet to be executed for military personnel suspected of involvement in serious crimes in central Mali, including the Binédama incident on 5 June, in which at least 37 persons were summarily executed, including 31 men, 3 women and 3 children.

46. It is noteworthy, however, that on 23 and 24 November, the military tribunal in Mopti, with jurisdiction over the northern regions of Mali, held its first-ever hearings. Eight cases concerning minor offences were tried. Six soldiers were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

V. Regional developments

47. International counter-terrorism forces across the Sahel region, including the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, further increased their operational tempo during the reporting period. On 13 November, French authorities announced the killing in Mali of Ba Ag Moussa, a key JNIM military commander.

48. MINUSMA continued to support the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, in line with the provisions of resolution [2531 \(2020\)](#). In November, the Mission provided 10,000 litres of fuel to the Malian armed forces, in addition to three-month food rations and medical support.

VI. Major security developments

49. The security situation continued to deteriorate during the reporting period, in particular in the centre of Mali. Attacks by community-affiliated armed groups against civilians persisted in the region, where the scope of armed violence extended to Ségou region. In the north, violent extremist groups remained active.

50. In central Mali, beyond Mopti region, a series of major incidents were recorded in Ségou region for the first time (see paras. 29 and 30 above). Civilians continue to be the main victims of attacks by community-affiliated armed groups, including Dan Na Ambassagou, and violent extremist groups.

51. In northern Mali, clashes between groups affiliated to JNIM and ISGS continued, including near the tri-border area between Burkina-Faso, Mali and the Niger, with significant clashes occurring in Ansongo *cercle*, Gao region. Violent extremist groups remained active in Timbuktu region. In an attack on 1 October, two Malian police officers were killed and one was injured.

52. The Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad maintained its influence across northern Mali but recorded a rare defection in Ménaka. On 17 October, a faction of the Dawsahak Idoguiratane community announced in a statement its decision to join the Plateforme, a rival coalition. Divisions within the Plateforme persisted as its two factions continue to compete for influence in Kidal region.

A. Asymmetric and other attacks

53. There were 35 asymmetric attacks against the Malian Defence and Security Forces, international forces, MINUSMA and signatory armed groups, 55 per cent of which occurred in northern Mali, including 14 per cent in Kidal region, 33 per cent in Timbuktu and 8 per cent in Gao. For the first time, improvised explosive device attacks were recorded in Koulikoro and Sikasso regions, in southern Mali. The centre saw 45 per cent of the attacks, including 36 per cent in Mopti region and 9 per cent in Ségou region. This marked a decrease in attacks in central Mali from the previous reporting period, in which 30 attacks were recorded against security forces and signatory groups.

54. The Malian Defence and Security Forces were targeted in 17 attacks, in which 30 soldiers were killed and 48 injured. The deadliest attacks occurred on 13 October between Parou and Songobia bridges, approximately 25 km and 30 km south-west of Bandiagara town, Bara Sara *commune*, Bandiagara *cercle*, and on 6 October in Birga Peuhl, 20 km west of Koro town, Mopti region, with three soldiers killed and seven injured between Parou and Songobia bridges and three soldiers killed in Birga Peuhl.

55. There were 13 attacks against MINUSMA, resulting in the death of one peacekeeper and injuries to 10 others. This marked a decrease in the number of attacks and fatalities as compared with the previous period, during which 31 attacks were

reported, in which two peacekeepers were killed and 40 were injured. The largest number of attacks were recorded in Mopti and Kidal regions, each with three incidents. On 15 October, one peacekeeper was killed after the convoy vehicle in which he was travelling hit an improvised explosive device or a mine on its way to Kidal. On 21 October, a MINUSMA Force vehicle hit an improvised explosive device or a mine 3 km east of the MINUSMA Force temporary operating base near Diallo village, 33 km south-west of Bandiagara town, Mopti region. Two peacekeepers were wounded in the incident and the MINUSMA vehicle was extensively damaged.

56. On 30 November, the MINUSMA camps in Kidal, Ménaka and Gao, which are shared with Malian Armed Forces and international forces, came simultaneously under indirect fire attacks by mortar. No casualties or material damage were reported.

57. There was one attack on signatory armed groups during the reporting period, in which one member of a group was kidnapped on 13 October, when unidentified armed men on motorcycles abducted a Ganda Izo combatant.

B. Support for Malian defence and security institutions

58. MINUSMA continued to support the reconstituted units of the Malian Defence and Security Forces in northern Mali, including through the provision of basic training. The Mission also conducted construction work in three camps in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu to improve the living conditions of the redeployed units. More generally, MINUSMA continued to support the Malian Defence and Security Forces on several fronts, including casualty evacuation and logistics assistance.

59. MINUSMA police trained 525 Malian security personnel, including 87 women, on a range of matters, including protection of civilians, community-oriented policing and combating gender-based violence.

C. Small arms, light weapons and explosive threat mitigation

60. Amid the persisting threats posed by the proliferation of small arms, light weapons and improvised explosive devices, MINUSMA continued to implement a series of mitigating measures, including its counter-improvised explosive device plan for its convoys. In November, the Mission introduced a new training course for uniformed personnel on explosive threat mitigation, aimed at increasing their understanding of the explosive threat and providing them with skills required to plan and execute operations.

VII. Protection of civilians

61. The reporting period was marked by a reduction in the number of attacks against civilians, due to decreased mobility during the rainy season, the increase in MINUSMA operational tempo, and a series of local mediation efforts supported by the Mission. However, attacks along community lines persisted in central Mali, and civilians continue to be affected by clashes between terrorist armed groups and the impact of counter-terrorism operations.

62. As at 1 December, a total of 232 incidents had been reported, with 182 civilians killed, 175 injured and 163 abducted, throughout Mali. This constitutes a decrease in the level of violence compared with that of the previous reporting period, during which 343 incidents were reported, resulting in the deaths of 375 civilians, injuries to 450 and the abduction of 93. Civilians in Mopti region continued to be most affected, with 89 incidents, in which 127 civilians were killed, 104 were injured and 46 were abducted (39 per cent of all incidents involving civilians).

63. Civilians continued to be impacted by improvised explosive devices. During the reporting period, 6 civilians were killed and 10 injured in Gao, Kidal and Sikasso regions.

64. In Gao region, MINUSMA recorded only a slight decrease in violence against civilians, despite the efforts of the Malian defence forces to return to their positions in Labézanga, with MINUSMA support. Criminality and incidents of violent intimidation persisted along the Ansongo-Labézanga and the Ansongo-Ménaka routes, highlighting the need for an improved security presence. Abductions of girls and women by presumed radical armed elements were recorded, and violence against civilians continued in the In-Tillit *commune*, in particular against gold miners involved in illegal mining.

65. In Timbuktu region, the continued threats posed to civilians by violent extremist groups remain a serious concern, including as a result of the limited presence of national security forces. In Diré, Goundam and Niafunké *cercles*, Timbuktu region, terrorist and other violent extremist groups disrupted civilians' daily life.

VIII. Human rights situation

66. The human rights situation continued to deteriorate. MINUSMA documented grave violations and abuses in the context of military operations, the activities of armed groups and prisoner exchange arrangements, which undermine efforts to fight against impunity.

67. MINUSMA documented 483 human rights violations (88) and abuses (395), 237 fewer than in the previous period, including extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (29), other killings (96), violations/abuses of the right to physical integrity (123), enforced disappearances (2), abductions (111), torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (15), illegal detentions, including cases of prolonged detention and violations of due process guarantees (107), as well as numerous instances of property destruction and looting, attacks on humanitarian personnel and abuse of the right to freedom of conscience by violent extremist groups.

68. The alleged perpetrators were national forces (29), judicial authorities (50), signatory and compliant armed groups (74), community-based armed groups and militias (157) and violent extremist groups (173). As in previous periods, most violations and abuses were documented in central Mali, with 202 in Mopti region and 71 in Ségou region. Violations and abuses were also documented in the regions of Gao (36), Kayes (6), Kidal (57), Koulikoro (1), Ménaka (26), Sikasso (5), Taoudenni (3) and Timbuktu (26), as well as in Bamako (50).

69. There were reports of the involvement of members of the Malian Armed Forces in grave human rights violations, notably the summary execution of at least 24 members of the Fulani community and injuries to 3 others in Libé, Mopti region, on 22 October. During this incident, the national forces, supported by traditional hunters from the Dogon community (*dozos*), also reportedly burned down dwellings and granaries, looted livestock and destroyed a water tank.

70. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of violent extremist attacks. Most attacks took place in the Centre, but incidents have also been recorded in different parts of the country. On 13 October, 13 civilians were killed by JNIM combatants along the Parou-Songobia axis in Mopti region.

71. In central Mali, the changing dynamics and increasing violence across community lines continued to undermine the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms in the affected areas, as illustrated by the situation in Farabougou, Niono *cercle*, Ségou region.

72. MINUSMA documented 225 grave violations against 155 children, a slight decrease compared with 230 violations against the same number of children during the previous period. While the perpetrators of many violations (99) remained unidentified, 41 were attributed to the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad, 28 to the Plateforme, 19 to the Katiba Macina, 17 to Dan Na Ambassagou, 9 to *dozos*, 6 to Fulani community-based armed groups, 5 to the Malian armed forces, and one to ISGS. A total of 102 children (79 boys and 23 girls) aged between 12 and 17 years were recruited in Ménaka (45), Mopti (31), Kidal (23) and Timbuktu (3) regions, including by the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (41), Plateforme (28), Katiba Macina (18), Dan Na Ambassagou (11), Malian armed forces (2) and *dozos* (2). All the children, except three who remain active with armed groups, have received psychosocial support, and their reintegration is ongoing. Additionally, 47 children (28 boys and 19 girls) were killed (17) and maimed (30), an increase compared with 43 children in the previous period, in the regions of Mopti (31), Gao (10), Timbuktu (3), Kidal and Ségou, as well as Bamako (1 each). Most of the children were killed or maimed by unidentified armed groups (28), Fulani armed groups (6), Dan Na Ambassagou (5), *dozos* (4), the Malian armed forces (3) and ISGS (1). Humanitarian partners recorded a rise in the forced recruitment of children, accounting for 42 per cent of grave violations against children during the reporting period.

73. In a positive development, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence Staff issued orders to military commanders strictly prohibiting the use of children aged under 15. The command orders also instruct Army personnel to take measures to curb the presence of children around military barracks.

74. MINUSMA documented 10 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, an increase of five cases as compared with the previous period, including the rape and gang rape, perpetrated by members of community-based armed groups and unidentified armed individuals against nine women and one girl in Gao, Ménaka and Mopti regions. To address this, MINUSMA and the United Nations country team mobilized system-wide support, including support for a sexual and gender-based violence one-stop centre in Mopti region, where comprehensive care is provided to survivors.

75. MINUSMA continued to provide capacity-building, logistical and technical support to the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, which to date has registered 18,722 depositions, including from 7,482 women and 790 children. The Commission held its second public hearing in Bamako on 5 December.

76. The Human Rights and Protection Division of MINUSMA continues to monitor the human rights situation of the former President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and other members of the government deposed by the military on 18 August, following their release from arbitrary detention.

IX. Rule of law

77. MINUSMA continued its efforts to support the return and effectiveness of State judicial entities in central and northern Mali. In October, MINUSMA supported the organization of public meetings in Ménaka to improve understanding of State justice and traditional justice mechanisms, their roles and areas of complementarity. MINUSMA and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) organized ethics and integrity trainings for 43 members of the judiciary to combat corruption in the justice sector. Other entities, including UNODC, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the International Parliamentary Union assisted Malian authorities in efforts to harmonize their national laws with international legal instruments related to terrorism.

78. MINUSMA and UNODC continued to support the Specialized Judicial Unit to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime and its Special Investigation Brigade. As at 3 December, the 2020 criminal trial session of the Bamako Court of Assizes had tried 45 terrorism-related cases, in which 62 defendants were found guilty, including 49 in absentia, with sentences ranging from 10 years to the death penalty and 20 accused acquitted. The session was significantly affected by the extrajudicial release of detained jihadists on 5 October in exchange for the liberation of the Malian opposition figure, Soumaïla Cissé, and three foreign nationals, as at least 37 (about 45 per cent of the accused) have likely been exchanged. The session brings to 142 the number of terrorism suspects tried since the Specialized Judicial Unit became operational in 2017, leading to 113 convictions and 29 acquittals.

79. The Specialized Judicial Unit brought to trial a series of high-profile cases during the reporting period, including the trial of three suspects in relation to the two terrorist attacks in Bamako in 2015, against a restaurant and a hotel. On 28 October, the suspects were found guilty and sentenced to death. The Unit also brought to trial on terrorism charges 15 suspects, including Souleymane Keita, the suspected leader of a terrorist group, the Khalid ibn al-Walid Brigade, affiliated with Ansar Eddine. On 13 November, the accused were also sentenced to death. MINUSMA supported the live broadcasting of the trial for victims based outside Mali. In another trial, a man was sentenced to life imprisonment for terrorist acts. He had confessed during the investigation to planting mines in northern Mali, of which a MINUSMA contingent member may have been a victim.

X. Humanitarian situation

80. The humanitarian situation remained of serious concern. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the violence along community lines and within communities, and the effects of climate change, further increased humanitarian needs. The number of internally displaced persons increased from 287,496 in July 2020 to 311,193 in October. Some 143,301 Malian refugees remained in neighbouring countries. There was also a significant deterioration in food security during the reporting period, as humanitarian partners mobilized to assist three million people. In October, humanitarian actors assisted 2.35 million, 78 per cent of the total. However, without additional funding, this assistance cannot be maintained.

81. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian partners revised upward the estimated number of children in Mali aged 6–59 months expected to face severe acute malnutrition. The figure now stands at 188,000, from 166,000 earlier in the year.

82. Although most schools reopened across the country at the start of the school year, on 14 September, 1,261 schools remained closed owing to insecurity, mainly in the centre and the north. Humanitarian actors continued to support the Government in establishing COVID-19 protocols in schools and equipping them with prevention and control materials. Humanitarian partners have assisted 274,489 people in this regard.

83. According to government data, seasonal floods have affected 80,760 persons, killed 18 and injured 25, while damaging 6,478 houses, destroying 7,030 tons of food and washing away 274 hectares of crops. Despite the assistance already provided by the Malian authorities and humanitarian partners, serious gaps remain. Contingency stocks initially pre-positioned in the regions for flood response have been used to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing the response capacity.

84. As at 1 December, of the \$474 million requested through the revised Humanitarian Response Plan, \$214.1 million has been funded, a funding rate of 45.1 per cent.

XI. Economic development

85. On 13 October, the International Monetary Fund further revised downward the estimated gross domestic product (GDP) for Mali to -2 per cent for 2020 from 0.9 per cent in May, and 5 per cent earlier in the year. The COVID-19 pandemic and the political instability have affected trade, investment, employment, public revenues, foreign remittances and the secondary and tertiary sectors.

86. MINUSMA approved three new trust fund projects totalling \$543,996, as part of the implementation of the integrated strategic framework to support a return to constitutional order, strengthen resilience and social cohesion and improve peace dialogue in Gao, Mopti, Taoudenni and Timbuktu regions. These projects will also support the strengthening of women's political representation and role in the promotion of peace.

87. During the reporting period, MINUSMA approved a dozen quick-impact projects, totalling approximately \$500,000, to support the provision of basic services to vulnerable populations: support for local radios, COVID-19 prevention measures, school kits, agriculture activities, water and income-generating projects in Gao, Kidal, Tombouctou and Mopti regions. MINUSMA has 70 quick-impact projects under implementation in the north and the centre in support of a wide-range of activities and actors.

88. A Peacebuilding Fund cross-border project between Mali and Mauritania amounting to \$3 million was approved, with the aim of helping address mounting conflicts between pastoral, agropastoral and agricultural populations relating to access to natural resources on both sides of the border.

XII. External communications

89. In an effort to increase awareness of the Mission's mandate and role and clarify the role and responsibilities of the Malian authorities to protect civilians and ensure the implementation of the Agreement, the Mission took measures to increase its outreach activities throughout the country. To this end, MINUSMA conducted hundreds of community-based awareness-raising sessions in local languages and French, in Bamako, in the centre and in the north with traditional chiefs, religious leaders and local populations, in particular women and youth.

90. The Mission continued to strengthen its partnerships with local and community radios and improve the production of communication products in local languages to target wider audiences.

XIII. Capacities of the Mission

Military

91. As at 14 December, 12,877 military personnel had been deployed, corresponding to 96.9 per cent of the authorized strength of 13,289 personnel, including 11 military observers, 463 staff officers, and 12,092 contingent personnel. Women accounted for 3.6 per cent of military personnel.

Police

92. As at 14 December, 1,718 United Nations police personnel have been deployed, corresponding to 89 per cent of the authorized strength of 1,920 personnel, including 272

individual police officers and 1,446 formed police unit personnel. Women accounted for 25.7 per cent of individual officers and 11.1 per cent of formed police unit personnel.

93. Considering the fragility of the current situation in Bamako, as well as risks for United Nations personnel and installations, arrangements are being made to maintain both formed police units in Bamako, at least for the duration of the transitional period.

Civilian personnel

94. As at 14 December 2020, 90 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 92 per cent of international staff, 81 per cent of United Nations Volunteers and 90 per cent of national staff. Women held 26 per cent of international posts, 31 per cent of United Nations Volunteer positions and 16 per cent of national staff posts.

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

95. MINUSMA continued its efforts to reinforce the security of its camps across Mali, including through the acquisition of new equipment and regular training courses for its personnel. The Mission also maintained and improved its measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including the installation of thermal cameras at the main entrances of its premises in Bamako, Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Mopti and Timbuktu.

96. During the reporting period, one MINUSMA peacekeeper died from complications of COVID-19. As at 14 December, 499 MINUSMA personnel and 23 staff members of the United Nations country team have tested positive for COVID-19. For MINUSMA, 436 have recovered, leaving 13 active cases and three fatalities.

97. Since the inception of the Mission in 2013, a total of 135 MINUSMA personnel have died as a result of malicious acts, including one during the reporting period. No individual has been convicted to date for the killings of these MINUSMA peacekeepers. As at 2 December, a total of four individuals were being held in relation to these attacks. It is reported that at least six individuals may have been extrajudicially released on 5 October in exchange for the liberation of Soumaïla Cissé and the three foreign nationals.

Conduct and discipline

98. No allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded during the reporting period. MINUSMA continued to implement its strategy to prevent misconduct, in particular sexual exploitation and abuse, through the delivery of induction and refresher training to all categories of personnel, as well as conducting risk assessments aimed at providing recommendations for mitigating measures. MINUSMA also continued to conduct outreach activities, including awareness-raising for local populations, and continued to provide assistance to victims of SEA.

Environmental issues

99. The Mission completed its environmental action planning and performance submission, with a score of 69 points for the year 2019–2020, from 57 points in 2018–2019.

XIV. Observations

100. I welcome the progress made by the Malian stakeholders, with the support of the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations, in establishing the transitional government and institutions of the transition. On several occasions, the leadership of

the transition has confirmed its adherence to the Agreement and its commitment to advancing its implementation. For the first time since the signing of the Agreement in 2015, the signatory movements are represented in the Government. This presents an opportunity for collaboration and pragmatic solutions to overcome differences and to take bold decisions to advance the peace process in the interests of the country.

101. The implementation of the Agreement requires the undivided attention of and support from the signatory parties and international partners. The transitional period should be capitalized upon to address the outstanding issues regarding the implementation of key provisions of the Agreement. I take note of the transitional government's efforts to implement the recommendation of the forty-first session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee regarding the development of a consensual road map for the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement, with indicative timelines. Further delays and deadlocks will only exacerbate tensions, engendering further instability. I call upon the Government and the signatory armed groups to assume responsibility and ownership of the peace process, show good faith and agree on concrete measures to implement outstanding decisions in the areas of peace and security, national reconciliation and inclusive, sustainable development. The redeployment of the reconstituted units must be accelerated and a breakthrough achieved in the operationalization of the Northern Development Zone.

102. I am encouraged by the greater participation of women in the peace process and call upon Malian stakeholders to create the necessary space for women leaders to participate fully and actively in the Agreement Monitoring Committee and its subcommittees. I also urge the transitional government to take urgent steps to ensure, in accordance with existing laws, greater participation of women in political life and the unfolding transition process.

103. I take note of the establishment of the National Transition Council, which will play a key role in advancing critical institutional, political and electoral reforms. Almost three months into the 18-month transition, there is an urgent need to commence work on institutional, constitutional and electoral reforms. This is the only path for addressing the root causes. I also urge Malian political actors to make use of the recommendations of the inclusive national dialogue, which built a broad consensus around a number of issues of national importance. I encourage the international community, including the group in support of the transition established by the African Union and the follow-up committee established by ECOWAS, to continue to coordinate efforts by international and regional actors in support of the political transition, leveraging dialogue and political pressure as the situation requires to help move the process forward.

104. Developments on the social front are worrying, with strikes or threats of strike by labour unions. I call upon the Government, labour unions and other concerned actors to address tensions and secure consensus. An escalation of social tensions could have serious consequences for the political transition, if not addressed. I urge the transitional authorities to try to reach a social compact with all labour unions under the Transition Charter to foster the necessary stability and alleviate the impasse that is paralysing this transition.

105. I remain concerned about the volatile and deteriorating security situation in central and northern Mali and strongly condemn attacks against United Nations peacekeepers and personnel. I urge militias, violent extremist movements and other armed groups to immediately cease violence and destabilizing activities. I strongly condemn the attack in Kidal against MINUSMA that killed a peacekeeper. I am concerned about the lack of meaningful progress in the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed against United Nations peacekeepers, personnel and installations. Crimes against peacekeepers who contribute to efforts to stabilize the

situation in Mali, in a highly challenging security context, must not be met with impunity.

106. I am appalled by the continuing rise in the heinous violence and human rights violations, notably in central Mali. I strongly condemn human rights violations and abuses and reiterate my call for swift investigations. There is an urgent need to bring to justice the perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses; only justice and reconciliation can help break the vicious cycle of attack and reprisal. I urge national authorities to investigate and prosecute emblematic cases of human rights violations and abuses, including massacres in Ogossagou, Koulogon and Libé. The effective protection of civilians requires concrete steps to put an end to impunity for crimes and on dialogue and reconciliation. Furthermore, I encourage national, regional and international forces engaged in the fight against violent extremism in northern Mali to abide by international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Support to non-United Nations forces will continue to be provided in strict observance of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.

107. I welcome the positive steps taken by the transitional government to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and encourage the transitional government and signatory parties to take additional decisive actions to end grave violations against children. I also call upon the transitional government to continue to make efforts to implement commitments contained in the joint communiqué to end sexual violence in armed conflict.

108. I remain concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Mali, with its multifaceted and complex emergencies. The COVID-19 pandemic has added a layer of complexity to existing crises. I call upon donors and partners to provide the much-needed material and financial support to address the humanitarian needs of the affected populations. Humanitarian assistance to vulnerable civilians can be sustainable only if carried out in conjunction with development efforts, dialogue and reconciliation initiatives. I encourage the transitional government to work closely with all actors concerned to enable the affected populations to resume their livelihoods in a more secure and stable environment.

109. I thank my Special Representative, Mahamat Saleh Annadif for his dedicated leadership and all MINUSMA and United Nations personnel for their tireless efforts in contributing to peace, security, stabilization and development efforts in Mali. I commend the unwavering support of troop- and police-contributing countries, international and regional organizations, as well as donors and partners in the implementation of the mandate of MINUSMA. I am grateful for the engagement of the African Union and ECOWAS in support of the political transition in Mali. I also extend my appreciation to international non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations that play an active role in support of United Nations activities and initiatives in Mali.

Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization
Mission in Mali: military and police strength as at
14 December 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	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Australia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Austria	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bangladesh	1 309	14	1 323	1	–	1	279	1	280	280	1	281
Belgium	48	5	53	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Benin	244	15	259	19	1	20	132	5	137	151	6	157
Bhutan	5	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Burkina Faso	1 053	35	1 088	14	11	25	129	11	140	143	22	165
Burundi	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cambodia	268	25	293	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cameroon	1	–	1	12	1	13	–	–	–	12	1	13
Canada	2	2	4	7	1	8	–	–	–	7	1	8
Chad	1 394	41	1 435	4	2	6	–	–	–	4	6	6
China	406	16	422	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Côte d'Ivoire	806	7	813	3	10	13	–	–	–	3	10	13
Czechia	–	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Denmark	10	–	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Egypt	1 064	–	1 064	2	0	2	146	14	160	148	14	162
El Salvador	187	16	203	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Estonia	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ethiopia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Finland	3	1	4	5	1	6	–	–	–	5	1	6
France	20	2	22	11	3	14	–	–	–	11	3	14
Gambia	3	2	5	4	2	6	–	–	–	4	2	6
Germany	397	20	417	5	3	8	–	–	–	5	3	8
Ghana	134	19	153	3	0	3	–	–	–	3	0	3
Guatemala	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Guinea	830	30	860	7	3	10	–	–	–	7	3	10
Indonesia	8	–	8	4	1	5	–	–	–	4	1	5
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ireland	12	–	12	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Italy	1	1	2	3	0	3	–	–	–	3	0	3
Jordan	76	–	76	12	0	12	–	–	–	12	0	12

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
Kenya	8	2	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Latvia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Liberia	147	16	163	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lithuania	44	2	46	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	1	0	1	–	–	–	1	0	1
Mauritania	7	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mexico	4	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nepal	150	3	153	0	1	1	–	–	–	0	1	1
Netherlands	8	–	8	2	1	3	–	–	–	2	1	3
Niger	858	12	870	24	10	34	–	–	–	24	10	34
Nigeria	69	8	77	3	4	7	101	39	140	104	43	147
Norway	11	2	13	4	1	5	–	–	–	4	1	5
Pakistan	151	–	151	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Portugal	60	5	65	1	0	1	–	–	–	1	0	1
Romania	4	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Senegal	963	40	1 003	11	6	17	281	28	309	292	34	326
Sierra Leone	17	3	20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Spain	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sri Lanka	241	–	241	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sweden	155	35	190	2	1	3	–	–	–	2	1	3
Switzerland	7	–	7	4	3	7	–	–	–	4	3	7
Togo	885	49	934	25	5	30	259	21	280	284	26	310
Tunisia	80	5	85	7	1	8	–	–	–	7	1	8
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ukraine	9	1	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	237	17	254	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United States of America	8	1	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Zambia	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Totals	12 419	458	12 877	200	72	272	1 327	119	1 446	1 527	191	1 718

Annex II

Map

