



## Security Council

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### Letter dated 28 February 2020 from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) on Mali addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Coordinator of the Panel of Experts on Mali, whose mandate was extended pursuant to resolution 2484 (2019), I have the honour to submit for the information of the Security Council, in accordance with paragraph 4 of that resolution, the midterm report of the Panel.

The attached report was presented to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali on 30 January 2020 and was considered by the Committee on 12 February 2020.

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

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pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) on Mali

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\* Reissued for technical reasons on 6 March 2020.



## Summary

During the reporting period, there has been little progress on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, largely because for six months, the Agreement Monitoring Committee (Comité de suivi de l'accord – CSA) held no meetings and a lengthy inclusive national dialogue needed to be concluded. In September 2019, the Government of Mali unilaterally cancelled a Committee meeting planned to be held in Kidal. Following public statements by the Niger to the effect that the region was a sanctuary for terrorists and allusions to a possible revision of the Agreement as part of the national dialogue, the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) walked out but eventually returned to both venues. However, these events damaged trust between the parties, as highlighted at the high-level Committee meeting on 19 January 2019.

The inter-Malian consultation framework, which was launched in September 2018 under the auspices of the Minister for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation, appears to be the most appropriate mechanism to rebuild trust. However, its future is uncertain because the Government has reorganized the lines of supervision, which have been split up between the Minister for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation and the new Minister for Foreign Affairs. In the context of the critical stance taken by the Niger and discontent on the part of Algeria with the cancellation of the Committee meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs has assumed a prominent role by guiding the implementation process. As a result, however, armed movements are confused about who their interlocutor is on behalf of the Government.

Notwithstanding the political turmoil surrounding the implementation of the Agreement, parties continued to coordinate actions to accelerate the disarmament, demobilization and integration of new members into the army within the framework of the Committee's Technical Commission on Security. A total of 1,330 members of armed groups completed the process and in January 2020, the first battalions of the reconstituted Malian army, more than 400 troops strong, started to deploy to Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao. However, the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration has not been without its difficulties, such as neglect by the Government of the newly integrated members of the Malian armed forces, a three-month delay in the issuance of formal decisions to attribute military ranks and appointments, and a lack of adequate equipment.

Countries in the region have been affected by the stalling implementation of the Agreement. The escalation of cross-border violence and the attacks on national security and defence forces in the Niger and Burkina Faso, due to the security vacuum on the Malian side of the border, has tested the patience of neighbouring countries and regional institutions with actors to the limit, as illustrated by statements on the status of Kidal by the President of the Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, and by the Economic Community of West African States in September.

In Mali, the balance of power among signatory and compliant armed groups significantly changed in 2019. As described in detail in the most recent final report of the Panel of Experts ([S/2019/636](#)), one year ago, the leaders of the main armed groups in northern Mali gathered in Bamako at the initiative of General El Hadji Ag Gamou of the Malian armed forces, the *de facto* military commander of the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés, (GATIA) to form a broad alliance to counter terrorism and regain control of the ground lost, first, to Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (listed under QDe.159), and then to "Islamic State's West African Province". CMA disrupted Gamou's initiative and, instead, imposed its own coexistence strategy with terrorist armed groups. CMA argues that the deployment of the reconstituted army, coupled with institutional reforms in line with the Agreement,

is a non-negotiable precondition to combating terrorism and organized crime. The Panel will monitor closely how CMA will adapt its strategy now that the first battalions of the reconstituted army are being deployed.

In addition, CMA, furthered its military expansionist strategy in breach of the ceasefire signed in Ougadougou, which stipulates that armed groups should refrain from engaging in hostile operations and freeze their military positions, by promoting a rift within the Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014 d'Alger, which led to the creation of two distinct organizations using the same name. This diminished the chances that the Committee would effectively resume its work. The split of the Plateforme also engendered a new type of ceasefire violation between, on one hand, the newly formed Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés-Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (GATIA-CMA) of Haballa Ag Hamzatta and sanctioned individual Ahmoudou Ag Asriw (listed under MLi.001), supported by the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad (MAA)-Plateforme based in Gao and led by sanctioned individual Mohamed Ould Mataly (MLi.008) under the leadership of Harouna Toureh and, on the other hand, the original GATIA of General Gamou allied with MAA-Plateforme based Timbuktu and led by Moulaye Ahmed Ould Moulaye, under the overall leadership of Fahad Ag Almahmoud.

Further steps in the proactive strategy of CMA aimed at regaining its centrality as the main political and military actor in northern Mali and, potentially, at gaining more leverage for the final round of negotiations with the Government of Mali are: (a) the first extension of the so-called Acharouchou operations to Timbuktu, planned next for the Gourma area and the Ménaka Region, and (b) the "conventions season", which took place from October 2019 to January 2020, during which the future merger of the three components of CMA into a single organization was announced in front of thousands of participants gathered in Kidal and Ber and several hundred vehicles mounted with machine guns were showcased in military parades.

A rapprochement between CMA, MAA-Plateforme and GATIA-CMA appears to have served to coordinate the movement of narcotics between the Gao and Kidal Regions, as no new violent incidents involving convoys have been reported. In contrast, rivalry over convoys frequently results in violent incidents in Timbuktu Region between what appear to be criminal networks affiliated with CMA and MAA-Plateforme. Recent seizures of cannabis resin (hashish) in Mauritania and Western Sahara – originating from Morocco and on its way to Mali – should, during the remainder of the Panel's mandate, shed more light on the individuals who command trade and the associated convoys.

While investigating additional competing criminal networks, the Panel delved further into the network commanded by sanctioned individual Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri (MLi.007), also known as Rouggy. From previously reported cases involving major seizures in Guinea-Bissau, Morocco and the Niger described in its previous reports, the Panel has made inquiries with Member States and financial institutions and in doing so identified a string of shell companies that have been established in Algeria, Mali, Morocco and the Niger, likely for the purpose of laundering drug money and financing trafficking operations. In view of the asset freeze measure, companies directly managed by Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri should be mentioned under his listing for use in the due diligence efforts of financial institutions.

Asset freezes in respect of five individuals were applied on 19 December 2019. In spite of this recent date, the Panel has not yet obtained evidence of any violations. However, the Panel has documented multiple travel ban violations by three of the eight sanctioned individuals. The Panel urges Member States to effectively implement the sanctions measures and believes that the international mediation partners could consider and, as a consequence, terminate the continued involvement of sanctioned

individuals in the mechanisms for the implementation of the peace agreement, such as the Agreement Monitoring Committee or the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Doing so would enhance the stigmatizing and dissuasive effect of sanctions on individuals identified as obstructing or threatening the implementation of the Agreement. In addition, for consistency, the Committee should also apply the asset freeze to the three individuals listed on 20 December 2018.

# Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on Mali

[Original: English]

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\* Circulated in the languages of submission only and without formal editing.

## I. Background

### Mandate, travel and cooperation

1. In its resolution [2484 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council decided to renew until 31 August 2020 the measures set out in paragraphs 1 to 7 of its resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#). The sanctions regime established by resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) consists of a travel ban and an asset freeze that applies to individuals and/or entities designated by the Committee as being responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in, directly or indirectly, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Mali. In resolution [2484 \(2019\)](#), the Council requested the Secretary-General to re-establish the Panel of Experts and extended its mandate as set out in paragraphs 11 to 15 of resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#), until 30 September 2020.

2. Between November 2019 and January 2020, the Panel undertook two missions in Mali. From 9 to 12 December 2019, the Panel also visited the Niger. The Panel would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Governments of both countries for accommodating its visits. The Panel is also thankful for the support given by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and, more specifically, the Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC), the Panel's focal point within the Mission, and for the security arrangements made by the Department of Safety and Security.

### Methodology

3. The Panel endeavours to ensure compliance with the standards recommended by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions in its report of December 2006 (see [S/2006/997](#), annex). While it intends to be as transparent as possible, in situations where identifying sources would expose them or others to unacceptable safety risks, the Panel withholds identifying information.

4. The Panel is equally committed to the highest degree of fairness and will endeavour to make available to parties, where appropriate and possible, any information in the report for which those parties may be cited, for their review, comment and response within a specified deadline.

5. The Panel safeguards the independence of its work against any effort to undermine its impartiality or create a perception of bias. The Panel approved the text, conclusions and recommendations in the present report based on consensus prior to its transmission to the President of the Security Council.

## II. Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali: violations, obstruction and progress

### A. Technical Commission on Security and ceasefire violations

#### Ongoing work of the Technical Commission on Security

6. The Panel commends MINUSMA for its continuous efforts to strengthen the role of the Technical Commission on Security throughout the past year. As a result, since the cancellation by the Government of Mali of the meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee planned to be held in Kidal in September 2019, the Commission has been the only official forum that has met on a monthly basis to propose, discuss and enact progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which has led to the deployment of the first battalions of

the reconstituted army (see para. 35). The Chair of the Commission has regularly recalled that armed groups should refrain from negotiating security arrangements outside the Commission and inform the Commission secretariat of all security and military operations.

7. In addition, at the initiative of the Chair of the Commission, the framework governing the movement of vehicles and arms by signatory and compliant armed groups has been clarified and simplified, as proposed at the thirty-ninth meeting of the Commission and approved at its fortieth meeting, on 26 August, in the absence of representatives of CMA and the Plateforme, which denounced delays in payment of per diem allowances by the Government of Mali (the Government did not pay per diem allowances to representatives of armed groups at the meetings of the Commission from June to November 2019). MINUSMA also reinforced its capacity to enforce, monitor and record violations of the rules of the Commission through Operation Farrier.<sup>1</sup> However, CMA and the Plateforme did not comply with the 15 November deadline for communicating to the Commission the list of checkpoints, bases and commanders with delegated authority to notify movements of more than five vehicles and of collective weapons.

8. Lastly, MINUSMA maintained its unwavering logistical support for the joint observation and verification teams (*équipes mixtes d'observation et de verification – EMOV*). The activities of those teams were intensified at the end of 2018, following a Panel recommendation in its 2018 final report (S/2018/581). At the end of September, MINUSMA gave the first training on investigative techniques to members of the joint observation and verification teams based on a training programme adopted by the Technical Commission on Security at its thirty-eighth meeting. The Panel reiterates its recommendation that the most serious violations of the Commission's rules recorded by MINUSMA and/or investigated by joint observation and verification teams should be presented and discussed during the meetings of the Committee.

### **Ceasefire violations**

9. Joint observation and verification teams were ordered to conduct two investigations concerning ceasefire violations in, respectively, Timbuktu and Inchinanane during the reporting period. The first report was presented to the Commission on 25 September 2019 and the second on 17 January 2020. A third report, regarding ceasefire violations committed by two Arab tribes in Lerneb, Timbuktu Region, on 26 July, was presented to the Commission on 28 November. The Tormouz militia, backed by MAA-CMA from Raz el Ma, had attacked an MAA-Plateforme checkpoint and main base in Lerneb commanded by Colonel Mahmoud Ould Jeyd (Oulad Ich) over issues regarding the taxation of the local population and businesses. The investigation by the joint observation and verification team on the ground was conducted in the immediate aftermath, on 29 July, and was included in the previous report of the Panel.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Timbuktu riots*

10. The first report concerned the killing of two young boys, aged 12 and 9, by the Malian armed forces in Timbuktu on 19 September during riots targeting the Arab

<sup>1</sup> From 14 October 2019 to 18 January 2020, MINUSMA received 50 notifications from compliant armed groups (Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA), Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad (MAA), Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés (GATIA), Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad of the Chamanamas (MSA-C), and Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad of the Daoussak (MSA-D)).

<sup>2</sup> See S/2019/636, paras. 79 and 80.

community. The sister of the boys sustained bullet wounds in the same incident. Following this serious incident, MAA-CMA forces based in Ber, under the command of Hussein Ould Al Moctar, also known as colonel Goulam, and MAA-Plateforme forces based in Assidi, led by Abdallahi Ould Sidi Mohamed, also known as Colonel Marekchi, in violation of the ceasefire gathered dozens of pickup trucks filled with combatants and threatened to enter Timbuktu to protect their own population.

11. After meeting on 20 September with the investigation team of the joint observation and verification team and the MINUSMA deputy sector commander, the commander committed MINUSMA to protecting Arab populations and both MAA commanders instructed their troops to return to their bases. The provost of the Malian armed forces in Timbuktu, Captain Abdoulaye Coulibaly, stated to the joint observation and verification team that an investigation had been started into the matter. The Panel will follow-up during its next mission to Timbuktu.

*Killing of the military chief of staff of the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad of the Daoussak by Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad in Inchinanane*

12. The second report concerns the killing by CMA elements on 21 December of the chief of the military staff of the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad of the Daoussak (MSA-D), Sahidima Ag Mahgani, in Inchinanane (also known as Inchenanene) in Ménaka Region. Two civilians<sup>3</sup> and four CMA members were also killed during the incident. CMA was further accused of killing livestock, looting a commercial warehouse and destroying civilian property. On 8 January 2020, on a mission to Inchinanane, members of the joint observation and verification teams photographed two graves, dead cattle, burned foodstuffs and a looted warehouse.<sup>4</sup>

13. The mission was labelled by CMA as a peace and reconciliation awareness mission and was officially led by the CMA regional commander, Colonel Mohamed Ag Akly, together with members of the political leadership of the Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA) in Ménaka Region. The mission was to visit Anderamboukane, Inchinanane and Tamalelt from 19 to 22 December.<sup>5</sup> According to Member of the Malian Parliament Bajan Ag Hamatou, who is *amenokal* (traditional chief) of the Oulemiden and traditional leader of the Imouchagh community, the decision to conduct the mission in an area under formal control of the Plateforme,<sup>6</sup> had been decided in Kidal during the HCUA congress held from 26 to 28 October.<sup>7</sup>

14. The peace and reconciliation awareness mission was composed of 76 individuals, armed with 30 assault rifles and 10 collective weapons (eight PKM machine guns, one rocket-propelled grenade and one 12.7mm machine gun). It

<sup>3</sup> Abdoulaye Ag Mohamed and Ibrahim Ag Rhyssa (report of the joint observation and verification teams, 8 January 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Meeting with Bajan Ag Hamatou held in Bamako on 8 January 2020 (report of the joint observation and verification teams of 8 January 2020).

<sup>6</sup> On 20 November, MSA-D officially communicated to the Technical Commission on Security the locations of its military bases and checkpoints in the Ménaka Region, including Anderamboukane, Inchinanane and Tamalelt. In fact, the MSA-D leader, Moussa Ag Acharatoumane, was in Inchinanane on 18 December, as communicated on social media on 20 December (communication with the Panel of 20 December 2019, Twitter post available at <https://twitter.com/i/status/1207961171086716928>, accessed on 17 January 2020).

<sup>7</sup> Meeting with Bajan Ag Hamatou and statement made by Guichma Ag Hakeily to the joint observation and verification teams (report of the joint observation and verification teams of 8 January 2020). However, at a meeting in Bamako on 8 January 2020, a member of the HCUA leadership denied to the Panel that any such statement had been made.



consisted of 22 vehicles, including 4 vehicles of the Malian armed forces,<sup>8</sup> and was in fact led by a colonel of the Malian Gendarmerie, a member of the Imouchagh community named Guichma Ag Hakeily, and sponsored by Bajan Ag Hamatou. On behalf of his community, Bajan joined HCUA during its congress in Kidal<sup>9</sup> to obtain CMA protection against Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad (MSA) and armed terrorist groups<sup>10</sup> in the context of a long-standing conflict between the Daoussak and Imouchagh communities.<sup>11</sup> The Imouchagh are the leading tribe of the Oulemiden; their power and influence over Ménaka Region has been challenged by the Daoussaks since 2012.

15. Colonel Guichma, who is Bajan's son-in-law, leads a group of combatants based in Ménaka that is composed of between 20 to 30 Imouchagh members of the Malian army, National Guard, Gendarmerie, customs and police.<sup>12</sup> A large number among the 76 members of the mission were members of this Imouchagh militia, including one member of the Malian Gendarmerie, Alkadi Ag Tankana, who was killed during the fighting with MSA-D.<sup>13</sup> The remaining part consisted of HCUA fighters commanded by Mohamed Ali Ag Ahmed, also known as Hamad Ali. He is the HCUA commander of the Tinfadimata CMA base, which is staffed mainly by members of the Ichadinharen Tuareg tribe, and was primarily in charge of the escort of HCUA political regional leaders, including Midoua Ag Houda, mayor of Tidermene, and Siguidi Ag Madit, HCUA regional coordinator for Ménaka.<sup>14</sup>

16. The mission of the joint observation and verification teams could not establish the exact circumstances of the killing of Saydima, the MSA-D military chief of staff in Inchinanane on 21 December by CMA. According to Bajan's statement, which he made to the Panel on 8 January 2020 and is consistent with the statement of Colonel Guichma made to the joint observation and verification team on 24 December 2019, Saydima opened fire on the CMA bivouac while those who were there were having tea and was then killed in legitimate defence. According to MSA, Hamad Ali ordered his HCUA combatants to assassinate Saydima while he was approaching to have a discussion with them. A third version of the incident recorded by the Panel, which is based on reports from second-hand witnesses, says that Hamad Ali's escort killed Saydima by accident, after misinterpreting a sign to his own combatants to stay behind while he was approaching the CMA delegation.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> CMA *ordre de mission* No. 041/2019/CDS-BT, issued on 19 December 2019 (annex to the report of the joint observation and verification teams, 8 January 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Meeting with CMA representative, Bamako, 8 January 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Meeting with Bajan Ag Hamatou (annex to the report of the joint observation and verification teams of 8 January 2020).

<sup>11</sup> Meeting with Bajan Ag Hamatou (report of the joint observation and verification teams of 8 January 2020). In addition to the historical antagonism between both tribes, the Imouchagh recently accused the Daoussaks of being responsible of the killing, on 29 October, in the vicinity of the Plateforme checkpoint in Ménaka on the road leading to Ansongo, of Bajan Ag Hamatou's adoptive son alongside two other relatives. Bajan Ag Hamatou subsequently released an audio recording on social media that has been interpreted as a call for the Imouchagh to take revenge against the Daoussaks (audio file archived at the United Nations).

<sup>12</sup> Communication with a confidential source, 30 December 2019. According to a confidential report of 14 December 2019, there is reason to anticipate that the strong representation of Imouchagh affiliated with CMA in the Malian defence and security forces based in Ménaka may become an issue in the near future in the context of the resumption of joint patrols in the town of Ménaka.

<sup>13</sup> Meeting with CMA representative, Bamako, 8 January 2020. Communication with confidential sources, 11 January 2020. Confidential report, 27 December 2019.

<sup>14</sup> See previous Panel reports for background on both individuals and additional context on Ménaka Region.

<sup>15</sup> Meeting with CMA representative (report of the joint observation and verification teams of 8 January 2020).

17. The Panel considers that this incident follows a pattern similar to that of another incident, which the Panel reported to the Committee in a confidential document.<sup>16</sup> In that incident, a CMA patrol led by the HCUA mayor of Talataye, Mohammed Assaleh Ishak, also known as Salah Ag Ahmed, and composed of numerous pickup trucks with armed combatants on board, killed four MSA-D combatants and three civilians in Agardanamos, and attempted to assassinate the regional MSA-D commander, Moussa Ag Alhadi.

18. Such ceasefire violations are clearly a consequence of the territorial expansion strategy of the CMA at the expense of other armed groups and are in breach of article 9 of the ceasefire agreement, which stipulates that all parties should prevent “any attempt to take over new positions in the field”.<sup>17</sup>

19. Moreover, the use of vehicles by the Malian armed forces and by active Malian military and security personnel for operations conducted under the CMA banner raise serious questions and may jeopardize the credibility of the ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. In that context, the Panel will recommend that the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) concerning Mali add to its sanctions list the individuals responsible for such ceasefire violations.

## **B. Cancellation of the meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee planned to be held in Kidal, and regional political context**

20. During the reporting period, regional States were persistent in calling for progress to be made in the implementation of the Agreement. The escalation of violence in Burkina Faso and the Niger has bred impatience vis-à-vis Malian actors.

21. On two occasions, the President of the Niger has publicly declared that the status of Kidal posed a threat to his country and that signatories to the Agreement were colluding with terrorist groups in attacking his country.<sup>18,19</sup> The final communiqué of the extraordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on terrorism, held in Ouagadougou on 14 September, echoed the President’s concern, stating: “the Kidal region is an integral part of Malian territory”.

22. The statement made by the President of the Niger and the extraordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS came right before the thirty-eighth meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee was scheduled to convene in Kidal on 17 September. The Panel has received information that several

<sup>16</sup> Confidential document of the Panel addressed to the Committee established pursuant to resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) concerning Mali, 19 July 2019, pp. 9 and 10.

<sup>17</sup> Preliminary Agreement to the Presidential Election and the Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali, signed in Ouagadougou on 18 June 2013.

<sup>18</sup> See François Soudan, “Mahamadou Issoufou: ‘Ma décision de respecter la Constitution et de ne pas me représenter est irrévocable’”, *Jeune Afrique*, 14 August 2019. The President reiterated his statement about Kidal on 7 September while on an official visit to Mali, at a press conference held at Koulouba, the presidential palace.

<sup>19</sup> Media articles have referred to the involvement of certain HCUA members in certain attacks that the Panel is investigating. See RFI, “Mali: le Niger accuse des membres du HCUA de complicité avec les terroristes”, 19 September 2019. See also L’Indépendant, “La complicité entre la CMA et les groupes terroristes à nouveau mise à nu Deux cadres du HCUA, Ayoub Ag Alhader et Mohamed Ag Balaga, donnés pour morts au combat à Inatès”, 16 December 2019. [Maliweb.net](#), “Communiqué conjoint: rencontre CMA-Plateforme tenue le 17 septembre 2019 à Kidal”, 18 September 2019.

States members of ECOWAS had argued that the meeting in Kidal would have been inappropriate and urged the Government of Mali to cancel it.<sup>20</sup> On 16 September, the Government of Mali did so unilaterally. CMA and the Plateforme protested against the cancellation<sup>21</sup> and called for international mediation to re-establish trust in the process.

23. Statements made in the region about Kidal and the subsequent cancellation of the meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee planned to be held in Kidal created a climate of mistrust between the signatory parties, causing delays and hampering the implementation of the Agreement. Representatives of the Niger argued that they could no longer sit at the same table with actors accused of collusion with terrorist groups.<sup>22</sup> Burkina Faso also became increasingly suspicious of the cross-border movements of Malian nationals (see para. 37).

24. Algeria, in its capacity as the head of the international mediation efforts for the Agreement and Chair of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, was not pleased with the last-minute cancellation of the Kidal meeting<sup>23</sup> and attempted to host a meeting of Malian armed groups in Algiers early in October. However, on 5 October, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali visited Algiers in an effort to improve relations and to express his country's opposition to a meeting of armed groups in Algiers.<sup>24</sup> An attempt to hold a special meeting of the Committee on 11 December was recalled at the request of the foreign minister of Algeria, officially because Algeria was to hold presidential elections on 12 December.<sup>25</sup>

25. The public statements made by the President of the Niger also triggered reactions in Kidal and subsequent initiatives for dialogue by the Niger. On 26 September, a youth association in Kidal held a public rally at which people carried banners with strong language aimed against the President of the Niger.<sup>26</sup> The Government of the Niger sought to re-establish dialogue with actors in Mali through a delegation of non-governmental actors based in the Niger led by former minister Khamed Abdoulaye that included political figures with Tuareg backgrounds. After holding consultations with the President of the Niger, the delegation visited Kidal, Bamako and Timbuktu to meet with local authorities, civil society actors and representatives of armed groups.<sup>27</sup> The delegation also attended the HCUA congress in Kidal from 26 to 29 October and met with its Secretary General, Alghabass Ag Intallah. In Bamako, the delegation met with several key ministers in the Government of Mali, including those responsible for foreign affairs, for territorial administration and decentralization, and for social cohesion, peace and national reconciliation.

26. On 26 November, a CMA delegation from Kidal led by the Secretary General of HCUA met with the President of the Niger in Niamey with the intention to play down earlier statements, referring to the statement by the President of 7 September as a

<sup>20</sup> Meetings with diplomatic sources, Bamako, 11–15 November and 4–10 December 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Declaration of the CMA steering committee, 16 September 2019, available at <http://mnlamov.net/?start=16>.

<sup>22</sup> Confidential diplomatic sources, Bamako, 4–10 December 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Confidential diplomatic source, 4–10 December 2019. Farewell letter of Ambassador Ahmed Boutache to members of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, 16 September 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Meeting with confidential source, 4–10 December 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> ActuNiger, « Mali-Niger: à Kidal, une manifestation contre les propos du président Issoufou », 26 September 2019.

<sup>27</sup> Confidential source, January 2020. The delegation also included Mohamed Akote, Siaka Ag Kato, Mohamed Anako, Mohamed Wanjada, also known as Tombola. The delegation visited Mali from 21 October to 3 November 2019.

“minor incident”.<sup>28</sup> On 27 November, the Prime Minister of the Niger met with a delegation from Mali that included the leader of CMA, Ibrahim Ould Sidatti, the spokesperson for the Plateforme, Harouna Toureh, and the Minister for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation of Mali, Lassine Bouaré.<sup>29</sup> In both meetings, and to the Panel, officials of the Niger expressed their country’s commitment to the Agreement Monitoring Committee and welcomed the planning of another meeting for December.<sup>30</sup>

### C. Inclusive national dialogue, elections and institutional reform

27. At the national segment of the inclusive national dialogue, held in Bamako from 14 to 22 December 2019, significant challenges had to be overcome. On 22 September, the President of Mali stated that certain provisions of the Agreement could be revised at the inclusive national dialogue.<sup>31</sup> Signatory and compliant armed groups rebuked the President for his statement and on 27 September, CMA suspended its participation, even though it allowed its representatives to continue participating in pre-dialogue consultations at the local level.

28. Following deadly attacks against Malian soldiers in Boulikessi and Mondoro on 30 November, the President of Mali called on all Malians to join the inclusive national dialogue. His statement prompted talks between the Government and CMA, following which, on 3 December, CMA announced its return to the inclusive national dialogue on the understanding that the dialogue was not the venue for opening the Agreement for revision. The Panel was informed that a consensus was reached at these talks to prioritize legislative elections, and to address other key institutional reforms afterwards.<sup>32</sup>

29. Four resolutions were adopted at the inclusive national dialogue: one on legislative elections, to be held by May 2020, with a first round to be held on 29 March 2020 and a second round on 19 April 2020.<sup>33</sup> The elections are to be based on current electoral constituencies, which do not include Taoudenni and Menaka.<sup>34</sup> The territorial reorganization will be conducted after elections. In the second resolution, the parties to the dialogue decided that a constitutional referendum was to be held, but without setting its timing. In the third resolution, the parties to the dialogue called for a prompt redeployment of security and defence forces throughout Mali. Finally, in the fourth resolution, they called for a reopening of certain articles of the Agreement, but in accordance with its article 65, which requires that all parties agree on amendments.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Jeune Afrique*, “Niger-Mali: Mahamadou Issoufou a reçu des chefs touaregs de Kidal”, 28 November 2019.

<sup>29</sup> The meetings between officials of the Government of the Niger and Malian actors were held in the wings of the third African continental summit on peace and security, hosted by the Niger from 28 to 30 November 2019. The summit was attended by Governments and by civil society actors from various countries in Africa. See *Le Sahel*, “Troisième sommet continental de l’Afrique pour la paix à Niamey: arrivée, hier, du président comorien et de la fondatrice de la Fédération pour la paix universelle (FPU)”.

<sup>30</sup> Meetings with senior officials of the Government of the Niger, Niamey 17–19 December 2019.

<sup>31</sup> See Maliweb, “Discours à la Nation du président de la République à l’occasion du 59<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l’Indépendance du pays”, 22 September 2019.

<sup>32</sup> Meeting with confidential sources, Bamako, 4–10 December 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Malijet, “Communiqué du Conseil des Ministres du Mercredi, 22 Janvier 2020”, 22 January 2020.

<sup>34</sup> The electoral code is also unlikely to be revised for another reason, namely time constraints.

<sup>35</sup> Among the Government’s concerns is article 6 of the Agreement, which provides for the administrative autonomy of local entities and participative governance.

## **D. Changes in the coordination by the Government of the implementation of the Agreement**

30. The Panel has noted that a shift has occurred in the responsibilities of the Government for the coordination of the implementation of the Agreement, causing concern among armed movements as the change possibly overturns established concertation mechanisms.

31. On 9 October, the Prime Minister signed two decrees regarding the coordination mechanism of the Government. By the first decree, an inter-ministerial commission chaired by the Prime Minister was established. The commission comprises all the ministries, with the Ministry of Social Cohesion, Peace and Reconciliation functioning as the secretariat. This inter-ministerial commission has the mandate to coordinate, evaluate and prepare the actions of the Government relating to implementation, to hold meetings every two months and to provide a report following each meeting.<sup>36</sup>

32. By the second decree, a joint commission of Government and development partners was created, co-presided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and a representative of development partners. It comprises representatives of the central Government and State institutions, local authorities, international partners, civil society organizations, MINUSMA and others. The joint commission has the mandate to share information, conduct planning with local authorities, harmonize various interventions and raise funds.<sup>37</sup>

33. The issuing of these new decrees raises questions about whether the Ministry of Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation will continue to fulfil its role as an interface between the Government, armed groups and other stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the Agreement. Most notably, the Ministry established an intra-Malian consultation framework to enhance Malian ownership of the Agreement, with weekly meetings to address implementation details, settle disputes and give follow-up to decisions or recommendations made by the Agreement Monitoring Committee and its subcommittees. In September 2019, the Independent Observer of the Agreement underlined the strengthening of consensual decision-making as a result of these weekly meetings.<sup>38</sup> It is not clear whether the newly created bimonthly commission meetings are to replace the weekly meetings of Malian parties or, instead, will exist in parallel to them.

34. The Government has divided the supervision of the implementation of the Agreement between the ministries responsible for social cohesion and for foreign affairs. This has prompted armed movements to express confusion about who their Government counterpart was on various questions, in particular following the cancellation of meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee originally planned to be held in Kidal.<sup>39</sup> As meetings of the Committee resumed in January 2020, it will be of importance for the parties to continue to convene in the spirit of the intra-Malian consultation framework.

<sup>36</sup> Decree No.2019-0810 PM-RM of 9 October 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Decree No.2019-0811 PM-RM of 9 October 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Carter Center, "Report of the Independent Observer: Observations on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers Process" (Atlanta, United States of America, 16 September 2019).

<sup>39</sup> See also Baba Ahmed, "Mali: les ex-rebelles de la CMA suspendent leur participation au processus de l'accord de paix", *Jeune Afrique*, 18 September 2019.

## E. Accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

35. The Panel noted progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration: 1,330 members of armed groups completed the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, and the first battalions of more than 400 members of the reconstituted Malian army started deploying to Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu in January 2020. The figure of 1,330 does fall short of the benchmark set in Security Council resolution [2480 \(2019\)](#) to train, integrate and redeploy 3,000 members of armed groups.

36. However, the Panel underlines that the process has been affected by delays and negligence. On 2 September, at the ceremony to mark the completion of the training of 1,006 of the total 1,330 newly integrated members of the army at Bapho military training centre, the Chief of Staff of the Malian army, General Keba Sangaré, announced a 15-days' leave permission given to all 1,006. Representatives of armed groups who attended the ceremony opposed the measure, arguing that it would disperse troops and create other risks.

37. For several months, the 1,006 new members of the Malian army were left to fend for themselves. Many stayed with relatives in Bamako, but others had no other option than to return to their home areas in the north.<sup>40</sup> More than 20 were reportedly abducted on 4 September from a public bus between Douentza and Hombori while on their way to Gao, less than 10 days after completing their training.<sup>40,41</sup> Repeated appeals from armed groups to the general staff of the armed forces went unanswered. To date, the whereabouts of the alleged abductees remain unknown.<sup>40</sup> Four newly integrated members of the army were arrested by the security forces of Burkina Faso when crossing into that country. They are still being detained in Ouagadougou central prison, pending investigation.<sup>40</sup>

38. Procedural issues continued to cause delays as well. It took until 12 December for the administrative decisions regarding ranks and appointments to be signed, more than three months after the training of the 1,006 new members of the army had been completed.<sup>42</sup> The Government has also had difficulty in providing adequate equipment and logistics to the 1,330 newly integrated members of the reconstituted army, who have meanwhile all completed their training. As a last resort, at the suggestion of the secretariat of the subcommittee on defence and security of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, 300 individual weapons (197 assault rifles and 103 rifles) previously collected during the Operational Coordination Mechanism integration, were provided to the first battalion of the reconstituted army to be deployed to Kidal.<sup>43</sup>

39. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is in its pilot phase, with over 80,000 candidates still waiting. Continuing delays risk damaging the trust and discouraging future candidates. The Panel will continue to closely monitor the actions and decisions taken by both the Government and the armed groups that are likely to obstruct, delay or discredit the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process further.

<sup>40</sup> Meetings with diplomatic sources and representatives of signatory armed groups, Bamako, 11–15 November 2019 and 4–10 December 2019.

<sup>41</sup> See also AFP, “22 ex-combattants enlevés lors d’un trajet en autocar au Mali”, VOA Afrique, 6 September 2019.

<sup>42</sup> The Panel received a copy of Presidential Decree No.2019-0961/P-RM of 12 December 2019 allocating senior military rank to over 65 officers. Non-commissioned officers' military ranks are conferred by a ministerial decree and those of other soldiers by a signed decision of the General Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces.

<sup>43</sup> Confidential report, 2 January 2020.

## **F. Northern Development Zone and the sustainable development fund**

40. Information regarding the Northern Development Zone and the sustainable development fund is contained in annex I.

## **III. Sanctions measures**

### **Designations and compliance**

41. Following the listing on 10 July 2019 of five additional individuals subjecting them to the travel ban as set out in paragraphs 1 to 3 of Security Council resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#), on 19 December, the Committee also approved the application of the assets freeze measure as set out in paragraphs 4 to 7 of the same resolution. The Committee is yet to apply the assets freeze measure to the three individuals listed on 20 December 2018, who are subject to the travel ban.

42. In view of the application of the asset freeze, the Panel provides further information about companies managed by one listed individual that is to be included under the subheading “Other information” in the relevant entry on the list of individuals and entities subject to measures pursuant to resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) (“the 2374 Sanctions List”) (see paras. 87–90).

43. Following the 10 July listing, and in anticipation of a future asset freeze, the Panel contacted the Malian authorities in writing on 24 July to inform them of the listing and request that they send information about salary payments to Mahri Sidi Amar Ben Daha (MLi.006), deputy chief of staff of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao, and Mohamed Ould Mataly (MLi.008), member of Parliament. The Panel is yet to receive a response and would like to remind the Government that:

- According to the listing criterion set out in subparagraph 8 (c) of the resolution, acting for or on behalf of or at the direction of or otherwise supporting or financing listed individuals exposes the person or entity responsible to sanctions.
- According to paragraph 6 of the resolution, Member States may permit the addition to the accounts frozen pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 4 of the resolution of interests or other earnings due on those accounts or payments due under contracts, agreements or obligations that arose prior to the date on which those accounts became subject to the provisions of the resolution, provided that any such interest, other earnings and payments continue to be subject to these provisions and are frozen.

44. The Panel is not aware of any transposition of sanctions designations into national legislation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has informed the Panel that it has circulated a letter informing various ministries about the sanctions decision, but did not provide the Panel with a copy of the letter.

45. The Panel notes that Government decree No. 2015-0230/PRM of 2 April 2015 on implementing procedures for freezing the funds and other financial resources of terrorists, those financing terrorism and terrorist organizations, enables, in theory, the transposition to a national asset freeze list of names included in the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da’esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions list maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1267 \(1989\)](#). A similar decree could be envisaged regarding other threats to peace and security, including those covered by the designation criteria in Security Council resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#), in other words, to enable the implementation of the asset

freeze in respect of those subjected to it by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) concerning Mali.

46. The Panel is also yet to receive a response from MINUSMA regarding the payment of per diem allowances to sanctioned individual Mohamed Ousmane Ag Mohamedoune (MLi.003), information about which had been requested after the Panel had witnessed such a payment being made in Bamako on 13 June 2019.<sup>44</sup>

### **Violations of the travel ban**

47. The Panel received information from Member States<sup>45</sup> and additional sources of travel ban violations by the following designated individuals:

- Mohamed Ould Mataly (MLi.008), who travelled by air from Mali (Bamako) to the Niger (Niamey) on 25 September 2019 and back to Mali by road 3 or 4 days later.<sup>46</sup>
- Mahri Sidi Amar Ben Daha (MLi.006), who travelled by air from the Niger (Niamey) to Côte d'Ivoire (Abidjan) on 17 September and back to Niamey from Abidjan on 20 September 2019.
- Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri (MLi.007), who travelled from the United Arab Emirates to Algeria on 5 August and back to the United Arab Emirates on 16 August 2019, from Morocco to Algeria on 20 September and from Algeria to Mali on 23 September 2019.
- Ahmoudou Ag Asriw (MLi.001), who was in Tunisia on 18 October 2019, travelling with a passport under the name of Ibrahim Ben Tidjani.

48. The Panel recalls paragraph 3 of resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#), in which it is emphasized that violations of the travel ban can undermine the peace, stability or security of Mali. As an indicator, Mohamed Ould Mataly attempted during his travel to Niamey to obtain an audience with high-level government officials to plead the release of individuals arrested in connection with trade in narcotics. He was turned down once government interlocutors became aware of his intentions.<sup>47</sup> On 13 November and 3 December 2019, the Panel engaged with Mohamed Ould Mataly to explain the measures taken by the Committee. He said that he would abide by the travel ban in the future.

49. At the same time, the Panel recognizes that the belated inclusion of the 2374 Sanctions List into the special notices of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) – the names did not come online until 4 December 2019 – has not been conducive to the effective implementation by the above-mentioned Member States of the travel ban.

### **Impact of sanctions**

50. The listing, on 10 July, of another five individuals has led to various public reactions, including calls from three of the targeted individuals and their supporters to lift the measure in which they also referred to other designated individuals.

<sup>44</sup> [S/2019/636](#), para. 4.

<sup>45</sup> The Panel has written to nine Member States to inform them about the sanctions designations and request further information. It has received answers from two so far.

<sup>46</sup> Communication from the security service of the Niger, 14 December 2019. Ould Mataly travels between the Niger and Mali in a 2019 grey Lexus GX 470 with what appears to be a Mauritanian licence plate (photo in annex II).

<sup>47</sup> Meeting with confidential source in Niamey; and also hinted at in press article in *L'Enquêteur*, 1 October 2019 (see annex III).



51. On 18 July 2019, Mohamed Ould Mataly tried to organize a march in Gao, which eventually resulted in a sit-in at the independence square at which about 100 people gathered.<sup>48</sup> On 22 July, a second event was held in Bourem and was accompanied by a declaration rebutting sanctions and a letter signed by Bourem local officials and community leaders and addressed to the Chair of the Committee calling for lifting sanctions against Ould Mataly, Ben Dahi and Ben Ahmed Mahri (see annex IV). During an Arab community meeting held in Gao from 31 August to 2 September, the leader of the Tilemsi Arab community, Nema Ould Sidi Mohamed, condemned the injustice of the United Nations sanctions against Ould Mataly.<sup>49</sup> During the forum of Tabankort, held from 27 to 29 December under the stewardship of Ould Mataly and Hanoune Ould Ali, a call was made for the lifting of the sanctions imposed on five of the hitherto eight designated individuals.<sup>50</sup> The final declaration of the Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad (CPA) congress in Soumpti, adopted on 20 January 2020, also requests the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Ould Mataly, Ben Dahi and Ben Ahmed, as well as those on its own president, Mohamed Ousmane Ag Mohamedoune (MLi.003) and on *cadi* Houka Houka Ag Alhousseini (MLi.005).

52. As special adviser to the Governor<sup>51</sup>, Ahmed Ag Albachar (MLi.004) used a meeting with the humanitarian community, held in Kidal at the Governor's office on 20 July 2019, to obtain clarification about the reason for his designation. On 12 July, CMA issued a communique defending Ahmed Ag Albachar and expressing the view that the sanctions are unequal because they do not target the Government of Mali.<sup>52</sup>

53. Houka Houka Ag Alhousseini also challenged his designation in a television reportage aired on 13 August.<sup>53</sup> Immediately after his designation, he had already expressed discontent to MINUSMA, sharing letters of support from various authorities.

54. In addition to public challenges to their designation, two sanctioned individuals have thus far submitted delisting requests to the Focal Point for Delisting established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1730 (2006). The request regarding Mohamed Ousmane Ag Mohamedoune was submitted on 1 July 2019 and rejected by the Committee on 29 November. On 4 December, Ag Mohamedoune addressed a communication to the Focal Point in which he contested the decision. The request concerning Ahmed Ag Albachar was submitted to the focal point on 1 October 2019; the time limit for review by the Committee expired on 31 January 2020.

55. These public challenges and delisting requests demonstrate the stigmatizing effect of sanctions. At the same time, the Panel believes that the stigmatizing effect of sanctions is not being maximized and used as leverage to advance the implementation of the Agreement because international mediation partners do not unambiguously appreciate actual designations – some being more comfortable with the threat of sanctions alone – and are therefore divided over the continued participation of sanctioned individuals in meetings of the Agreement Monitoring

<sup>48</sup> Confidential report, 30 July 2019.

<sup>49</sup> Le Démocrate, "Injuste sanction onusienne: les Arabes réitèrent leur soutien à Ould Mataly", 4 September 2019, available at [niarela.net](http://niarela.net).

<sup>50</sup> Maliweb, "Forum de Tabankort: Pour démontrer leur soif de paix et de cohésion sociale, les leaders de la CMA, de la Plateforme et le gouvernement signent la 'tente de la paix'".

<sup>51</sup> "Special adviser" is not a recognized position, but it is a practice to have special advisers in the northern regions of Mali to accommodate signatory armed movements in State institutions following the 2015 Agreement.

<sup>52</sup> See Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, "Déclaration relative au régime des sanctions prévues par la résolution 2374/2017", available at [mnlamov.net](http://mnlamov.net).

<sup>53</sup> TV5 Monde, "Mali: Houka Houka, le cadi oublié de Tombouctou", 13 August 2019.

Committee and at other venues supported by the international community.<sup>54</sup> International mediation partners should carefully consider whether such ongoing participation in itself – even if no per diem allowances are paid – provides support to designated individuals under paragraph 8 (c) of Security Council resolution 2374 (2017) and should therefore be terminated.

#### IV. Armed groups

56. In its previous reports, the Panel described the CMA strategy intended to expand and maintain the CMA security grip and political strength outside Kidal Region without overstressing excessively its limited military apparatus of around 2,500 men characterized by a loose command and control structure.

57. In Talataye Commune in Gao Region, CMA imposed its presence on the MSA-D after a series of terrorist acts claimed by Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) that forced the Daoussak fractions that supported MSA-D to negotiate and accept the return of pro-CMA Daoussaks and their political leadership.<sup>55</sup>

##### **Coexistence strategy of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad**

58. According to the Panel, ongoing collusion strategies on the part of CMA with JNIM and ISWAP indirectly contributed to the reinforcement of ISWAP in the Timbuktu (Gourma), Gao and Ménaka Regions, where the campaign of assassinations and abductions targeting communities and elders supporting GATIA/MSA have persisted.<sup>56</sup>

59. The Panel observes that the progressive loss of territorial control and influence by GATIA in the Gourma area,<sup>57</sup> as well as by the GATIA/MSA alliance in the Gao and Ménaka Regions, also coincides with increasing pressure on the army and security forces of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger, including those under the command of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, and on international forces. At the time of writing the present report, in the Gourma area, GATIA maintained a military presence only in Doro, 90 km west of Gao, where it was under intense military pressure. In Gao Region, GATIA was under significant military pressure in the Djebok area, located 35 km east of Gao, where conflicts between Tuaregs and Arabs have been frequent.<sup>58</sup> The road connecting Gao, Ansongo and Labézanga, a major trade route connecting Gao to the Niger, traditionally controlled

<sup>54</sup> Meetings with Member States diplomats and representatives of multilateral organizations in Bamako.

<sup>55</sup> See S/2019/636, paras. 90–95.

<sup>56</sup> See also S/2019/636, S/2019/137 and S/2018/581.

<sup>57</sup> In a presumed JNIM-ISWAP combined attack on a GATIA checkpoint on 22 October 2019, five GATIA members and three civilians (internally displaced persons from Intillit) were killed; meeting with GATIA representative, Bamako, 16 November 2019; confidential report, 24 October 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Former member of the Mouvement pour l'unification et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO) Mohamed Ould Alkehal, also known as Alkeyhal or Ould El Kherel, an Ahel Taleb Arab, is believed to be leading the ISWAP *katibat* formerly under the command of Sultan Ould Badi's cousin Boubacar Ould Abidine, also known as Bouba, from the same fraction, who was killed, according to the official version, near Timeiaouine, Algeria, on 18 November 2019, then replaced by Salko Ould Abalawe, Machdouf fraction of Tilemsi Arabs, who was detained in Bamako in 2014 on terrorism charges, killed by French forces on 14–15 December in Inazole, Ménaka Region; confidential reports, November and December 2019, meetings in Bamako, 10 and 16 November 2019, communication with confidential sources, December 2019. Bouba was killed after an alleged meeting between ISWAP and JNIM in the Tinzaouatène area, on 6–8 October 2019; Malian armed forces communication to the Technical Commission on Security, 29 October 2019.

by local militias affiliated with the Coordination des mouvements et fronts patriotiques de résistance (CMFPR), is now reported to be under the control of ISWAP.<sup>59</sup>

60. Also reported in the Panel's most recent final report (S/2019/636), the integration of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) into ISWAP in March 2019 has visibly increased its operational capacities in the tri-border area of operations, i.e., the area where the borders between Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger meet, which has for the past months been one of the main focal points for ISIL global propaganda. The unprecedented spike in the number of attacks on army bases, temporary bases and advanced posts has killed hundreds of soldiers during the reporting period<sup>60</sup> and prompted the Malian armed forces to abandon other bases<sup>61</sup> to prevent further attacks.

61. The fact that the withdrawal of the Malian armed forces coincided with GATIA/MSA setbacks has created a complete security vacuum, within which ISWAP, and to a lesser extent, JNIM can operate freely, including in terms of recruitment, training and tax collection.<sup>62</sup> It can also regroup easily its different *katiba* and *ferka* to attack larger military targets, seizing an increasing amount of vehicles, military equipment, weapons and ammunition, which could, in the near future, lead to attacks on major urban centres, such as Hombori, Gossi, Ansongo or even Ménaka.

62. The existence of a security vacuum has been used as justification for the ongoing expansion of the CMA presence in the Gourma area and the Ménaka Region. At the same time, an increasing number of traditional and military leaders from the Imghad and Daoussak communities have switched their allegiance in 2019 from GATIA and MSA to HCUA. This has sometimes even been publicized by HCUA in official communiqués<sup>63</sup> in which it has openly been stated that joining HCUA would protect their communities from terrorism.

<sup>59</sup> CMFPR1 of Toureh declared to international forces that they were not in a position to oppose ISWAP in their areas of operations between Gao and Labezanga, and had to negotiate a non-aggression agreement in exchange for *zakat* payment; confidential report, 24 October 2019. On the other hand, CMFPR2 suffered serious attacks that killed 11 members in Tassiga, 23 October 2019, and in Fafa, on 2 December 2019; confidential reports, 25 October and 12 December 2019. The presumed leader of ISWAP in this area is a former member of CMFPR2, known as Souley Oumarou, while the right bank of the Niger river is thought to be controlled by a former MNLA military commander known as Boubacar Alamine; confidential reports, November–December 2019; meeting with confidential source, Bamako, 16 November 2019.

<sup>60</sup> Claimed by JNIM: attack on Mondoro and Boulikessi camps of the Malian armed forces, 30 September 2019. Claimed by ISWAP: attack on Koutougou Army Camp, Burkina-Faso, 19 August 2019; attack on Indelimane Camp of the Malian armed forces, 1 November 2019; attack on a convoy of the Malian armed forces near Tabankort village, Ménaka Region, 18 November 2019; attack on Inatès Camp of the armed forces of the Niger, 10 December 2019; attack on Arbinda Gendarmerie Camp and village, Burkina Faso, 24 December 2019; attack on a military escort of the electoral commission in the Niger, 25 December 2019; attack on Chinégodar Camp of the armed forces of the Niger, 9 January 2020. Other smaller-scale attacks on regular armed forces are not included in this list.

<sup>61</sup> On 10 November 2019, the Malian armed forces officially announced the withdrawal of their units from Labezanga to Ansongo, and from Anderamboukane and Indelimane to Ménaka.

<sup>62</sup> While single-sourced reports indicate that ISWAP and JNIM have clashed in very specific incidents in the Mopti and Timbuktu Regions since September 2019, notably over *zakat*, the Panel was nonetheless able to collect and corroborate information that most military commanders from both organizations used to fight on the same side in 2012, and are thought to continue to cooperate in some areas of the Gourma and in the Gao and Ménaka Regions, on a case-by-case basis, notably in attacks on national and international forces and on GATIA and Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad (/MSA).

<sup>63</sup> See for example HCUA communiqué No. 001/HCUA/2020 of 1 January 2020, available at [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=3340420506031053&id=734311883308608](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3340420506031053&id=734311883308608).

63. The Panel will therefore monitor closely how the CMA strategy towards terrorism and trafficking evolves, considering that, at the time of writing, the reconstituted army is being deployed to Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal and Ménaka. The Panel will include its observations on this key aspect of the implementation of the Agreement in its 2020 final report to the Security Council.

#### **Advanced posts and military bases of the Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad**

64. The advanced posts and military bases of CMA in Timbuktu and Ménaka are clear illustrations of the CMA coexistence strategy with terrorist groups and are key vectors of its expansion. Those military positions, in particular the bases of Foïta and Tinfadimata at the borders with, respectively, Mauritania and the Niger, are almost 1,000 km apart and are located in strategic but remote areas.

##### *Base of Foïta*

65. The CMA base in Foïta lies at a very strategic location, at the point where the boundaries of Timbuktu, Ségou and Mopti Regions meet, at 8 km from the border with Mauritania and the town of Fassala on the other side, and at only 150 km from Niono and 420 km from Bamako. The base is also connected to the HCUA stronghold of Koygouma, controlled by Ahmedou Ag Abdallah and his son, Abdallah Ag Ahmedou, known as Amma.<sup>64</sup> The base is thought to be composed of elements affiliated to HCUA, Mouvement national de libération de l’Azawad (MNLA) and MAA-CMA. The base has contributed to the extension of Operation Acharouchou to Timbuktu Region, now rebranded “Alafia”, with six to eight pickup trucks.<sup>65</sup>

66. Since 2015, it has been suspected that the CMA base of Foïta has been instrumental in liaising with and supporting armed terrorist groups based in Ouagadougou forest (north of Ségou Region, bordering Mauritania), the Méma area and the broader central region. This direct assistance in the form of training, recruitment and supplies, is thought to have been fundamental to the strategy of JNIM to open a new military front in central Mali through the direct implication of JNIM elements and support to Hamadoun Kouffa’s *katiba* across Ségou and Mopti Regions. Also, multiple sources have reported to the Panel that, since 2015, the base has served as a rear base for or provided support to raids on the bases of the Malian armed forces in Nampala (at 35 km), Dioura (80 km) and Soumpi (120 km),<sup>66</sup> as well as to other attacks on international and Malian forces.<sup>67</sup>

67. Bah Ag Moussa (QDi.424), listed, on 14 August 2019, by the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities following his participation in the attack on the camp of the Malian armed forces in Dioura, has reportedly been hosted several times in Foïta while liaising with

<sup>64</sup> See [S/2019/636](#).

<sup>65</sup> Confidential report, 9 October 2019. A group of 30 pickup trucks with 210 combatants left Foïta and Raz elMa on 26 November 2019 for the MNLA congress in Kidal; confidential report, 29 November 2019.

<sup>66</sup> Nampala was attacked on 5 January 2015 and 19 July 2016. Soumpi was attacked on 24 October 2017 and 27 January 2018. Dioura was attacked on 17 March 2019.

<sup>67</sup> Meetings and communications with four confidential sources in Bamako and Timbuktu held on 24 and 27 March, 17 April, 12 May, 2 July, 10 July, and 22 September 2019. Confidential reports, 19 August 2015, 23 July 2016, 15 October 2017, 25 May 2019, and 7 November 2019, and Panel’s 2018 final report ([S/2018/581](#)).

Kouffa and JNIM *katibas*, and meeting directly with Kamo Ag Mohamed Ali.<sup>68</sup> Hamza Ag Iyad, the son of listed JNIM leader Iyad Ag Ghali (QDi.316), is also reported to have made frequent visits to the Nampala area.

68. The CMA base of Foïta is commanded by Kamo Ag Mohamed Ali, also known as Kamo Ag Menani or Kamo Ag Mohamed, a senior MNLA military commander and a deserter from the Malian army who used to hold the rank of lieutenant-colonel there.<sup>69</sup> Kamo is also the brother of Hamey Ag Mohamed Ali, JNIM commander of the Méma *katiba* and former member of the Gendarmerie, Ahma Ag Mohamed Ali, CMA coordinator for Timbuktu Region on behalf of the MNLA, and Wali Ag Mohamed Ali, a journalist who covers northern Mali as a stringer.

69. Kamo's large network also includes Mama Ag Mohamed Ali, Operational Coordination Mechanism MNLA commander in Timbuktu, a relative from his Kel Inteberemt fraction of the Sherifen Tuareg tribe.<sup>70</sup> Kamo's deputy and cousin, Kabo Ag Abdoullahi, is the brother of Mohamed Ahmad Ag Abdoullahi, known as Boulkaye,<sup>71</sup> JNIM commander of the *ferka* in Kita (Ténenkou Cercle) of the Méma *katiba*.<sup>72</sup> Alkassoum Ag Abdallah, military chief of staff of CPA and deputy chief of staff of the Coordination des mouvements de l'entente (CME), was based in Foïta before moving to Soumpi and is connected to the same individuals.<sup>73</sup>

*Base of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad in Tinfadimata, and the I Hagana checkpoint*

70. The CMA base in Tinfadimata serves as a military hub for HCUA in Ménaka Region. It is connected primarily to CMA forces in Talataye and Tin Techori and to MSA-C forces in Tin Djeret,<sup>74</sup> from where it can reinforce its various strongholds in Ménaka Region, such as Tidermene and Tin Abao. Tinfadimata has military quarters built by MINUSMA and currently used by CMA as office space.<sup>75</sup>

71. The Panel is currently investigating how the CMA base in Tinfadimata has recently been used as a rear base in attacks on the national security and defence forces of Mali and the Niger, as already reported by the Panel in connection with the attack on the National Guard position in Ménaka on 28 January 2018.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>68</sup> According to a confidential source, Kamo and Bah Ag Moussa met on 26 November 2017, which corroborates previous information about the presence of Ag Moussa in this area as the Panel reported in its 2018 report (S/2018/581, para. 110).

<sup>69</sup> A confidential report dated 8 July 2016 identifies Kamo Ag Menani as a senior commander of Ansar Eddine.

<sup>70</sup> Mama was abducted on 11 September 2019 by JNIM in the Léré area and freed on 22 September following negotiations led by Kamo. Two other Tuaregs, relatives of Boulkaye, have also been abducted according to communications from a confidential source, September 2019, and according to a confidential report, 17 September 2019.

<sup>71</sup> Kel Tinatawat fraction of the Tuareg Sherifen.

<sup>72</sup> Meetings and communications with confidential sources. The Kita base is currently thought to be instrumental in countering the growing influence of ISWAP in the Nampala area. Confidential report, 4 January 2020.

<sup>73</sup> As reported by the Panel, Alkassoum took part in both attacks on the Soumpi camp of the Malian armed forces. See S/2018/581.

<sup>74</sup> Despite being officially member of the CME, the MSA-C, under the command of colonel Assalat Ag Habi, tries to keep a certain degree of neutrality and maintains opportunistic ties with other groups, including armed terrorist groups. It notably sent a strong delegation to the HCUA congress with dozens of armed pickup trucks, and received a strong delegation from Kidal for the inauguration, in Tin Aouker on 25 December, of their new *amenokal*, Abdi Ag Mohamed Ibrahim alias Kiyou, in the presence of the *amenokal* of the Ifoghas, Mohamed Ag Intalla. Alghabass, Ag Cherif and Ag Gamou took the opportunity to discuss the Ménaka situation in a side meeting.

<sup>75</sup> Confidential report, 5 January 2020.

<sup>76</sup> See S/2019/636, paras. 97–99.

72. As mentioned in paragraph 15, Tinfadimata is commanded by Mohamed Ali Ag Ahmed, also known as Hamad Ali. He seconded by Hassan Ag Alamome. Daoud Ag Midoua and “Intakney” are also known to be part of the CMA base<sup>77</sup>. With the exception of Ag Alamome, who is an Igdalane from Tidermene, all others are members of the Ichadinharen Tuareg tribe.

73. On 9 July 2019, at the weekly security meeting held at the Governor’s office in Ménaka, CMA officially announced that it had established a checkpoint on the RN20 road in I Hagana (also known as Inhagana, Ihaganag or Injanggalane), located 30 km east of the Indelimane and the base of the Malian armed forces there.<sup>78</sup> On 5 August, at the thirty-ninth meeting of the Commission, the Malian armed forces expressed their concern regarding the establishment of this checkpoint, which had neither been approved nor discussed by the Commission, and officially demanded that it be dismantled. CMA refused and instead expressed its intention to establish other checkpoints, including in areas controlled by the Plateforme, such as Anderamboukane.

74. The checkpoint is under the command of an individual known as “Elhouijem” or “Alwayjam”, who is a member of an unknown Arab tribe related to the Lemhar in Gao Region, which originates from a hamlet of the same name located 2 km south of the main road. A former member of the Mouvement pour l’unification et le jihad en Afrique de l’Ouest (MUJAO) under the command of sanctioned individual Mahri Sidi Amar Ben Daha (MLi.006), also known as Yoro Ould Daha, Alwayjam has been identified by the Panel as Najim Ould Baba Ahmed.

75. Until his unit was “rebranded” as a CMA unit in July 2019 and started using MAA-CMA and CMA banners,<sup>79</sup> Alwayjam was suspected of commanding a large *ferka* made up of 30 to 40 fighters, mostly Tolobé from the Niger who are thought to have been responsible for several attacks on national and international forces in the Indelimane area in the past years. Alwayjam was part of the CMA delegation in Ménaka during the visit of Bilal Ag Cherif as a member of the local security detail of Achafgui Ag Bouhada, the HCUA military chief of staff.<sup>80</sup>

### Armed group conventions

76. The “convention season” brought together the various components of CMA and its newly affiliated entities from the Plateforme of Harouna Toureh in Kidal, Tabankort and Ber, and show their unity and strength.

77. On 12 January 2020, senior CMA and Plateforme military commanders, Achafgui Ag Bouhada of HCUA and Mahamad Ag Bachar of GATIA, respectively, signed a security agreement in Ménaka. The event marks the formal recognition of the Plateforme, led by Fahad Ag Almahmoud, on the part of CMA and its leader, Bilal Ag Cherif, who headed the CMA delegation present in Ménaka.<sup>81</sup> By signing the

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. Both were involved in the attack on the National Guard.

<sup>78</sup> The intentions of CMA were previously announced to MINUSMA on 24 June 2019 by its regional representative and the village chief of Inhagana; confidential report, 26 June 2019.

<sup>79</sup> A confidential report dated 9 September 2019, based on direct observation, indicates that the checkpoint consists of one observation post with an MAA-CMA flag and a tent, and has one motorbike and one pickup truck bearing the CMA banner.

<sup>80</sup> Report to the Panel by a direct eyewitness, 14 January 2020.

<sup>81</sup> Signed outside the framework of the Technical Commission on Security, this agreement put an end to the long standoff between CMA and Plateforme forces in the town of Ménaka following the killing of the MSA-D military chief of staff on 21 December 2019 (see paras. 12–19). General Gamou also participated in the discussions with CMA, officially in his capacity as leader of the Conseil supérieur des Imghad et Alliés (CSIA).



agreement, CMA also indirectly acknowledged that MSA-D had become a member of the Plateforme, a fact that had been officially announced on 13 July 2019.

78. GATIA and CPA also held their own conventions during the reporting period. More information about this is given in annex V.

## V. Organized crime

### Drug convoys in northern Mali and regional seizures

79. In its previous report (S/2019/636), the Panel described violent skirmishes over and misappropriation of cannabis resin (hashish) moving from Gao to Kidal Region, all involving sanctioned individual Ahmoudou Ag Asriw. Since the last known episode, which occurred at Tabankort on 19 April 2019, the Panel has not received similar information about rivalry along this route. Ag Asriw was appointed chief of staff in the new GATIA branch that sought rapprochement to CMA in September 2019 together with MAA-Plateforme. It seems that, owing to this move, Ag Asriw has been sufficiently involved in trafficking operations that require coordination between MAA-Plateforme and CMA-associated criminal networks in Gao and Kidal, respectively, as drugs move through their respective areas of control.

80. Among those who make up CMA-associated criminal networks involved in drug convoys are Mohamed Ag Akly, MNLA regional commander (see para. 13) and Mahamadou Ag Attayoub of the Ifoghas/Ifergoumissen tribe, who acts on behalf of Khalid Ag Mohamed, the son of Mohamed Ag Intallah.<sup>82</sup>

81. The Panel did receive information that, unlike in Gao and Kidal Regions, in Timbuktu Region narcotics convoys had come under attack and that the attacks had been carried out by Hussein Ould Ghaname, also known as Guigoz, of the Oulad Ghanam fraction. The most recent incident took place in mid-November 2019 at Bou-Djébéha, 150 km north of Timbuktu. The perpetrators have not yet been identified. Previous attacks on Guigoz' convoys, in 2018, have been attributed to men acting on behalf of Settara Ould Ahmed Hairi.<sup>83</sup> Settara, a businessman and member of the Taoudenni interim authority, was assassinated on 8 July 2018 together with the visiting MAA-Plateforme commander of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao, Mohammed Ould Hinnou.<sup>84</sup> Settara maintained business relations with MAA-Plateforme leader Hanoune Ould Ali.<sup>85</sup> Guigoz relies on military backing from MAA-CMA in Ber, notably colonel Goulam.<sup>86</sup>

82. Criminal networks that receive escorts from MAA-Plateforme and CMA for their drug convoys in Timbuktu Region are not dependent on each other as in Gao and Kidal Regions, and rivalry between them has given rise to repeated clashes that are not being mediated.

83. Mauritania has allegedly also intercepted two of Guigoz' drug convoys during the latter half of 2019,<sup>87</sup> and the Panel has requested further information. The Panel has also obtained information about the seizure of 1,625 kg of cannabis resin by the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) in July 2019 along the southern sector of the Morocco Western Sahara

<sup>82</sup> Meetings with armed group representatives, Bamako, 8 and 15 May 2019.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> See S/2018/636, para. 77.

<sup>85</sup> See S/2018/636, footnote 78.

<sup>86</sup> Confidential Member State report, 16 October 2017. See also para. 10.

<sup>87</sup> Communication with confidential source, 19 November 2019.

wall, known as the berm.<sup>88</sup> Four armed men were arrested. They were believed to be on their way from Morocco to Mali.

84. Authorities in Mali and the Niger are aware of a drug convoy that crossed from Ménaka Region in Mali into the Niger on 21 April 2019. It continued to Arlit and from there entered Algeria at Assamakka.<sup>89</sup> Given that this happened two days after the alleged incident in Tabankort, the convoy could have involved drugs misappropriated by Ag Asriw and Mahamadou Ag Attayoub.<sup>90</sup>

85. On 2 September 2019, authorities in Guinea-Bissau made a major cocaine seizure of 1,947 kg, the second that year. Six nationals of Guinea-Bissau, three Colombian nationals and one Malian national were arrested in connection with the seizure. The Panel has not found evidence linking seized shipments to sanctioned individual Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri (MLi.007), also known as Rouggy, who was implicated in transporting the of 789 kg of cocaine seized earlier the same year, on 9 March. The fact that the drug parcels had similar logos on them<sup>91</sup> does indicate that overlapping criminal networks send and/or receive the drugs.

## A. Trafficking in narcotic drugs

### Companies linked to Rouggy's criminal network

86. In view of the asset freeze imposed on Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri, also known as Rouggy, the Panel conducted further investigations into shell companies that he and his business associates potentially use to launder money and finance operations. As indicated in previous reports, Ben Ahmed Mahri is involved drug trafficking operations that have led to three major drug seizures in the region: in the Niger (14 June 2018), Guinea-Bissau (9 March 2019) and in Morocco (21 April 2019).

87. Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri is a director of Tilemsi Distribution in the Niger, as is his associate Ben Kazou Moulati. Ben Kzou Moulati was arrested in Niamey in relation to a 10-ton shipment of cannabis resin, part of which was seized. The manager of the company is Attaye Ben Ahmed Mahri, Mohamed's brother, who is also in charge of the parent company in Gao.<sup>92</sup> Tilemsi Distribution is registered in Algeria under a slightly different name, Tilamsi or Taldis, with both brothers on record as company directors.<sup>93</sup>

88. According to records at the Niger chamber of commerce, Tilemsi Distribution has among its declared activities the prospection and sale of precious metals (see annex VI). However, the company has not obtained any prospecting or trading licences.<sup>94</sup> In addition, no company was located at its registered address in Niamey. During the remainder of its current mandate, the Panel will continue to investigate the possibility of drug-related money being laundered via the mineral trade, possibly gold.

89. Mohamed Lamine Sekouni<sup>95</sup> was arrested in April 2018 along with Ben Kazou Moulati in Niamey. He is the founder of Groupe Sekouni International, an import-

<sup>88</sup> Confidential report, 16 July 2019.

<sup>89</sup> Member State information.

<sup>90</sup> See S/2018/636, para. 116.

<sup>91</sup> Correspondence with an international drug enforcement officer, 21 November 2019. Likewise, the shipment of 798 kg of cocaine hidden in new vehicles transported by ship from Brazil, seized in Senegal on 28 June 2019, contained parcels with a logo that was also seen in the 9 March seizure in Guinea-Bissau.

<sup>92</sup> Also known as Attaye Ould Sidi Mohamed. Member State information, 23 January 2019.

<sup>93</sup> See [www.adresse-algerie.com/annuaire/sarltilamsi-taldis/](http://www.adresse-algerie.com/annuaire/sarltilamsi-taldis/).

<sup>94</sup> Meeting with mining authorities of the Niger, Niamey, 20 November 2019.

<sup>95</sup> Also known as Mohamed Ould Maatala, according to Member State information, 2 August 2019.



export company with a parent company registered in Laayoune, Morocco. The company has been inactive in both countries since its registration in 2017 and 2016, respectively. No company is located at the addresses provided. The copy of the rental contact provided in Morocco at the time of registration was forged.<sup>96</sup>

90. Ben Ahmed Mahri's associate Sidi Ahmed Mohamed,<sup>97</sup> was arrested near the town of Safim, Guinea-Bissau, following the seizure of 9 March. In August 2018, he had founded the import-export company Siyama in Niger. The Panel has obtained banking records<sup>98</sup> showing several sizeable cash deposits of up to 25 million CFA francs (equivalent to \$42,444) and totalling 140 million CFA francs (\$237,697) from 21 August to 30 September 2019.<sup>99</sup> In February 2019, before travelling to Bissau, Sidi Ahmed Mohamed withdrew 40 million CFA francs (\$67,900). That sum is likely to have been used to finance the drug trafficking operation.

91. Regarding the Morocco seizure, the Panel has identified a company based in Bamako. Further details are being withheld for now so not to jeopardize ongoing investigations.

### **C. Trafficking in otherwise licit goods**

93. Information regarding trafficking in otherwise licit goods is provided in annex VIII.

## **VI. Violations of international humanitarian and human rights law**

94. In view of time constraints, the Panel's international humanitarian and human rights law investigations are still ongoing. The Coordinator of the Panel will inform the Committee about these investigations when he briefs the Committee on the Panel's midterm report in February 2020.

<sup>96</sup> Member State information, 4 and 19 November 2019. A dual citizen of Mali and Algeria, Sekouni attempted to obtain a residence permit in Morocco. That was denied because he lacked a permanent residence.

<sup>97</sup> Sidi Ahmed Mohamed's Niger passport gives Tchintabaraden as his birthplace, but he was allegedly born in Tabankort, Gao Region. See also Niger Diaspora, "Arrestation d'un officiel nigérien pour trafic international de cocaïne: des révélations époustouflantes sur Mohamed Sidi Mohamed et le trafic de drogue au Niger", 18 March 2019. In Mali he is known as Hamadana.

<sup>98</sup> Response from the bank to a request for information from the Panel of 12 December 2019.

<sup>99</sup> Instruction No. 010-09-2017 of the Central Bank of the West African States establishes the threshold for reporting cash transactions to the relevant national financial information processing unit at 15 million CFA francs. The Panel is not aware of any reporting by the bank in question.

## Annex I

### The Northern Development Zone and sustainable development fund

1. In its previous final report the Panel demonstrated misrepresentation of funds dedicated to development in the northern regions as part of the overall Government budget for the implementation of the Agreement. Various unrelated operational expenditures<sup>1</sup>, over almost 18 billion francs CFA in 2017 and 2018, had been wrongly presented as falling under the sustainable development fund that was not yet created, while some development projects worth over 13 billion francs CFA, were executed as advances to the fund pending its creation.<sup>2</sup>

2. The fund was created in June 2018<sup>3</sup>, but armed movements were not represented in its steering and management committees. After challenging this in the subcommittee on economic, social and cultural development, the Government in June 2019 accepted to revise the relevant decree describing the administrative and management responsibilities of the Steering Committee and the Management Committee.<sup>4</sup> In return, CMA assured to no longer condition operationalisation of steering committee to such revision, as it had done in March 2019.<sup>5</sup> However, while the management committee had its first meeting in January 2019, the steering committee is still to have its first meeting.

3. The Independent Observer on Mali has noted a real reluctance in some government departments, including the Ministry of Economy and Finance, to allow the movements to participate in the management of the fund. UN resolution 2480 of 28 June 2019, as well as the 12 July 2019 roadmap emphasised its inclusive management.<sup>6</sup>

4. In a future meeting, the management committee is supposed to consider a procedures manual which should first be validated by the three signatory parties. Validation was scheduled for September 2019 but has still not taken place, likely due to the cancellation of the CSA meeting in September.

5. On a positive note, the Northern Development zone was enacted in July 2019, and its Interregional Advisory Board on 30 September 2019. Together with the regional assemblies, the latter is meant to administer the zone where the special strategy for the development of the northern regions<sup>7</sup>, in place since 2017, is to be implemented, *inter alia*, drawing from the fund. Regional elections pending, signatories would need to agree how to appoint interim representatives to this council and clarify its relation to local (interim) authorities.<sup>8</sup>

6. Meanwhile, the fund has in 2018 and 2019 together been endowed with 48,3 billion francs CFA.<sup>9</sup> This amount falls short of the government engagement of 100 billion per year upon its creation in January

<sup>1</sup> Charges related to the various Agreement Monitoring Committees, the office of the President's High Representative for the Implementation of the Agreement and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the National Integration Commission, See S/2019/636, para. 60.

<sup>2</sup> See S/2019/636, para. 58.

<sup>3</sup> See S/2019/636, para. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Décret n°2018-0516/P-RM du 20 juin 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of the meetings of the subcommittee on economic, social and cultural development of 15 February, 15 March and 14 June 2019, archived at the Secretariat.

<sup>6</sup> The Independent Observer has noted a real reluctance in some government departments, including the Ministry of Economy and Finance, to allow the movements to participate in the management of the fund.

<sup>7</sup> The Specific Development Strategy has a total budget of 2,194 billion FCFA, including government and donor contributions.

<sup>8</sup> See S/2019/983, para. 42.

<sup>9</sup> Of which 16 billion from budget transfers and the rest from revenues generated from compulsory levies and taxes on airline tickets, cotton exports and tobacco sales. Communication with international mediation team finance specialist, 10 January 2020; See also <https://www.maliweb.net/nations-unies/lutte-contre-le-terrorisme-reunion-speciale-sur-le-mali-et-le-sahel-a-new-york-2840786.html>

2018, which was already pledged during the Paris donor conference in 2015.<sup>10</sup> It also falls short of the adjusted amount of 40 billion in the national budget in 2018 and 2019.<sup>11</sup>

7. Notwithstanding, endowments for the Northern development zone, it has not been fully operational yet because of above-mentioned outstanding institutional issues. It therefore remains doubtful whether it could swiftly deliver peace dividends, as mentioned among the priority measures in resolution 2480 to be accomplished before the end of MINUSMA's current mandate in June 2020.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See S/2019/636, para. 56. Likewise, according to a 13 July 2017, speech of the Minister of Economy and Finance during a workshop with the Movements, the fund was to be funded annually by the government based on a forecasted budget of 100 billion FCFA. See Independent Observer, "Observations on the Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, Emanating from the Algiers Process", 16 September 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Of the total 48,4 billion 24,3 billion francs CFA was mobilised in 2018 and 24 in 2019. Communication with international mediation team finance specialist, 10 January 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Resolution 2480 (2019) paragraph 4.

## Annex II

Vehicle used by Mohamed Ould Mataly to travel between Niger and Mali medio September 2019, in violations of his travel ban. Screenshot from video taken during Tabankort the forum of Tabankort, held from 27-29 December 2019, obtained by the Panel from a confidential source on 10 January 2020.



## Annex III

Article in L'Enquêteur of 1 October 2019





## Annex IV

Declaration rebutting sanctions and a letter signed by Bourem local officials and community leaders and addressed to the President of the Committee calling for lifting sanctions against Ould Mataly, as well Mahri Sidi amar Ben Daha, document obtained by the Panel from a confidential source, 7 January 2020.

**DECLARATION DES ELUS ; ORGANISATIONS COMMUNAUTAIRES FEMMES  
ET DES JEUNES DES COMMUNAUTES SONGHOI, KEL TAMACHEQS ET  
ARABES DU CERCLE DE BOUREM**

Le soir 10 juillet 2019 nous apprenons par l'AFP (Agence Française de Presse) que 5 cinq de nos compatriotes dont trois originaires de Gao sont ajoutés à la liste proposée pour sanctions au conseil de sécurité parmi lesquels le député élu à Mohamed Ould MATAI pour entrave à l'accord de paix; Yoro Ould DAHA l'un des responsables militaires du MAA Pro Mali pour liens avec le terrorisme; et Mohamed MEHRI PDG de Tilemsi Transport pour vente d'armes aux groupes armés tous issus de la même famille et de la même communauté arabe de Gao. Ces attitudes unilatérales violent toute collaboration établi par les chefs des communautés Songhoi M. Ali Bady MAIGA ; Arabes M. Hanoun Ould ALI et Imghads M. Azaz Ag LOUD DAG DAG.

Trois motifs plaident pour la radiation des noms cités :

**Le premier motif :** la plateforme en alliance avec les acteurs de la société civile de Gao et les représentants de toutes les communautés d'Abakoira à Labbezanga ; du Tilemsi au Gourma (lors de réunion au siège du cadre des notables chez Ali Badi MAIGA) ont demandé au Gouvernement d'accepter leur proposition ou bien ils se verront dans la nécessité de boycotter les dites consultations. L'une des raisons avancées par les communautés est que la proposition du Gouvernement va créer des conflits inter et intracommunautaires (entre les songhois ; entre les arabes et les idnans ; entre les imghads et les songhois etc. Ould Mataly est membre de ses organisations et notabilités mais pas leur souverain ; Yoro est un officier du MAA Plateforme et le troisième opérateur économique arabe de Gao est inconnu du grand public.

**Le deuxième motif :** 12 juillet 2018-12 juillet 2019 deux (2) ans jour pour jour les acteurs de la manifestation viennent de célébrer à Gao l'événement à la place de l'indépendance de Gao. Donc une fois encore les instigateurs de la marche sont non seulement connus mais célébrés à Gao par les jeunes. Ould Mataly a demandé aux jeunes d'accepter les Autorités Intérimaires et ils seront pris en charge dans le DDR et autres dispositions de l'APR en présence de d'autres députés de la région notamment Hon Chatto et Agoussa Toure tous membres de la délégation du PM de l'époque Abdoulaye Idrissa MAIGA.

**Le troisième motif :** un responsable communautaire impliqué dans le processus de paix plaide (selon l'expression du comité des sanctions) pour la libération des jeunes arrêtés par Barkhane (considérés présumés innocents) ne peut pas être considéré comme un acte de terrorisme. Surtout que la tâche consiste au quotidien à trouver des motifs d'adhésion à l'accord pour ces jeunes souvent mineurs sans aucune instruction ce qui n'est pas de leur faute car aucune structure étatique n'existe dans leur localité.

Le député Mohamed Ould Mataly (M. Ali Badi MAIGA Président du cadre des notables et ses membres ; l'imam du Koweit Alpha Oumar Almahadi aux côtés du Président des jeunes de Gao de l'époque et des notabilités arabes et Songhoi ont convaincu leur communauté arabe et Songhoi leur Mouvements le MAA et la CMFPR Plateforme de ne pas tomber dans les pièges insinueux et intelligents des ennemis de la paix connues et compris aujourd'hui par les populations.

La rencontre inter et intracommunautaire de la paix des braves à Almoustarat (Région de Gao) organisée sous l'opération Serval avec l'appui du Centre pour le Dialogue humanitaire avec comme acteur principal le député Ould Mataly. Sur ce chapitre les Organisations qui interviennent à Gao dans le cadre de la cohésion sociale dans la sous-région nous renseignent mieux que ce document de presse.

**DECLARATION DES ELUS ; ORGANISATIONS COMMUNAUTAIRES FEMMES  
ET DES JEUNES DES COMMUNAUTÉS HONGHOI, KEL TAMACHEQS ET  
ARABES DU CERCLE DE BOUREM**

Il faut rappeler que c'est bien sous l'impulsion de l'honorable député avec le soutien des Gouvernements successifs que la présence de l'état et de ses représentants est effective à Almoustarat et l'organisation de l'élection présidentielle. Et tout récemment une mission en Norvège pour relancer la zone de développement du nord telle que prévu par l'accord.

Les affaires politiques et civiles ; la Division DDR de la MINUSMA tant au niveau national que local à Gao peuvent renseigner sur les actions louables des personnes accusées.

Des regroupements des partis politiques ; des leaders communautaires ; des organisations de jeunes de Gao ; des organisations de la société civile malienne ont interpellé à maintes reprises par voie de presse par des déclarations ; lors des conférences ; des manifestations le Gouvernement malien et les acteurs du processus d'Alger ; la communauté internationale ; sur les responsables et auteurs de ces violations qui sont connus de tous puisque agissant par des déclarations ou attitudes publiques leurs manœuvres d'entrave au processus.

En toute sincérité et honnêteté la presse nationale et internationale (de la signature de l'accord à 2019) est friande d'actions qui œuvrent contre la paix et entravent le processus (les symboles de l'Etat et de sa souveraineté sont bafoués ; l'accord est piétiné) ; les responsables sont connus.

Nous demandons purement et simplement la radiation de la liste des sanctions des personnes qui œuvrent avec nous au quotidien à la réussite du processus de paix.

Pour notre part ces accusations qui sont plutôt des erreurs pour les populations de Bourem doivent être évitées à l'avenir et nous donne des raisons de rester mobilisé et déterminé avec l'appui des amis du Mali à sensibiliser nos braves et résilientes communautés à œuvrer à la paix et à la réconciliation entre les fils de notre chère patrie.

La marche.

Bourem le 22 juillet 2019

République du Mali

Un peuple un but une foi

Coordination des élus notabilités ; des leaders communautaires ; leaders religieux et organisations des jeunes et des femmes du Cercle de Bourem.

A Monsieur le Président du Comité des sanctions des Nations Unies,

**Objet :** demande de radiation de Honorable Mohamed Ould Mataly , Mohamed MEHRI dit Rouge et Yoro ould DAHA de la liste des sanctions du Comité des NU (en Pièce Jointe les motifs);

Monsieur le Président,

Nous élus, leaders communautaires et organisations de la société civile de Bourem venons par cette lettre vous appuyer dans votre tâche si difficile et si délicate au service de la paix au Mali.

En effet nous avons tous été surpris de retrouver les noms de nos frères ; leaders cité en objet sur la liste des sanctions car ils nous ont aidé à soutenir l'accord de paix et œuvrer à son application ; éviter un conflit inter communautaire (2012-13) et nous aide au quotidien à baisser les tensions communautaires exacerbées par la crise de 2012.

Par conséquent nous sollicitons auprès de votre haute personnalité la radiation de ses noms de la liste des sanctions et nous restons disponibles et mobilisés pour aider la communauté internationale notamment les Nations Unies à sanctionner les véritables acteurs qui entravent le processus de paix au détriment des communautés.

Veuillez accepter monsieur le Président l'expression de nos sentiments les plus distinguées.

Bourem le 22 juillet 2019



Le Maire-chef de village/Notables

*Amadou Toure*

Le Haut Conseil de Collectivités

*Hassan Hamadou Haiga CN.*

La Représentante des femmes élus du Cercle

*Philya Ibrahima*

Ampliations :

Gouvernement du Mali ;

Comité de Suivi de l'Accord ;



Le Président de l'Autorité Intercommunale

*Yoro Ould DAHA*

Le Pdt Haut conseil Islamique local

*Yoro Ould DAHA*

La Présidente CAFO

*Binlon Sinitage*

Le Président des Jeunes du Cercle

*Yoro Ould DAHA*

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## Annex V

### The compliant armed groups (CAGs) conventions' season

1. The conventions' season was the opportunity for the CMA and its new allies to show off their unity and fire power. Hundreds of pick-up truck vehicles mounted with collective weapons and filled with thousands of combatants, were displayed during military parades in Kidal, Ber (Timbuktu region) and Tabankort (Gao region).<sup>13</sup> Conventions are also the occasion for armed groups to collect financial contributions from communities and diaspora, businessmen and traders, and to form new or consolidate alliances, settle conflicts and agree on new strategies.<sup>14</sup> In addition to armed groups, several communities held gatherings during the same period, notably the Kounta on 15 October 2019 in Anéfis, and the Chamanamas in Tinaouker on 24 December 2019.

2. Several individuals listed by the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2374 (2017) took advantage of having the floor during the conventions' season to request lifting of the sanctions. Such recommendation was more specifically included in the final communiqués of the gathering of the MAA-Plateforme in Tabankort and of the congress of the CPA in Soumpi (Timbuktu region), both groups being led by sanctioned individuals, respectively Mohamed Ould Mataly (MLi.008) and Mohamed Ousmae Ag Mohamedoune (MLi.003).

### Conventions of CMA components and affiliated entities

3. The season opened with the second HCUA regular convention in Kidal, from 26 to 28 October 2019 – the first one having taken place in May 2014. Alghabass Ag Intalla was reappointed as secretary general of the HCUA in front of around 500 participants. The military parade included an approximate number of 90 vehicles and 600 fighters.



*Welcome banner of the HCUA convention*

4. Two significant events took place on the periphery of the HCUA convention. First the arrest by CMA on 30 October of Aboubacrine Ag Mohamed Elmokhtar, known as Bokari Ag Inadakmar, from the

<sup>13</sup> Confidential reports, December 2019 and January 2020; the Panel also collected numerous statements, videos and photographs received directly from confidential sources, and met with armed groups leadership in November 2019 and January 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Meetings with armed group leaders, Bamako, November 2019; meeting with confidential source, Bamako, 17 February 2018.

HCUA in Ber. Bokari is a senior military commander from the Kel Inagozmi tuareg tribe, accused of being involved with his brother Mahmoud in robbery, including the theft on 26 September 2019 of WFP vehicles in Timbuktu, and exactions on civilians in the Timbuktu region.<sup>15</sup> Bokari, who was also noticed in Bamako alongside sanctioned individual Houka Houka Ag Alhousseini (MLi.005) and CPA member Intagharasse Ag Sidi Hama, was nevertheless freed by CMA on 23 November 2019. Second, on the evening of same day of the arrest, four vehicles bearing HCUA flags fired at a MINUSMA convoy from Kidal to Gao, while it had stopped for the night in the vicinity of Anéfis. The HCUA acknowledged the incident claiming that their elements fired by accident at MINUSMA, and then stopped as soon as they identified the convoy as UN.<sup>16</sup>

5. The HCUA congress was then followed by the fourth regular convention of the MNLA, also in Kidal, from 30 November to 3 December 2019. About 600 participants gathered in Kidal for the reconduction of Bilal Ag Chérif, including delegations from Mali and abroad (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Finland, France, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia). A famous Tuareg music band, Tinariwen, performed a public show for the closing ceremony.

6. The military parade of the MNLA included more than 110 pick-up trucks and around 700 fighters, contradicting previous analysis of MNLA's military weakness compared to HCUA. A drone made an aerial footage of the parade and propaganda video clips were largely disseminated.



*About 110 vehicles participated in the military parade of the MNLA*

7. The MAA-CMA held its third regular convention in Ber, from 10 to 12 January 2020, where Ibrahim Ould Sidatti was renewed as its secretary general. The president of the CMA, Bilal Ag Chérif, could not attend the meeting, as he had departed on 5 January to Ménaka with 25 vehicles and 125 combattants to negotiate a security agreement with General Gamou. The MAA congress was attended by sanctioned individual Mohamed Ousmane Ag Mohamedoune (MLi.003). A military parade was also organised.

<sup>15</sup> Bokari was denounced publicly by human rights local organizations of having killed on 12 October 2018 civilians in Léfétane from the Kel Indjaren tribe of the Kel Antessar, alongside his brother Mahmoud and Assaleck Ag Mohamed. Bokari's name was also listed as a criminal, allegedly by AQMI, on a poster displayed on the door of the mosque of Acharane.

<sup>16</sup> Confidential report, 4 October 2019; meeting with MINUSMA Force Commander, 16 November 2019.





*Mohamed Ousmane Ag Mohamedoune (second from left) at the MAA-CMA convention in Ber*

8. In order to enact the division of the Plateforme, a founding congress was organised for the GATIA-CMA in Inamzil, eight kilometres west of Aguelhok, on 2-3 November 2019. In presence of Harouna Toureh, the leadership of the CMA (namely Ould Sidatti and Alghabass Ag Intalla) and MAA-Plateforme from Gao (including sanctioned individual Mohamed Ould Mataly), Haballa Ag Hamzatta was elected secretary-general of GATIA-CMA and sanctioned individual Ahmoudou Ag Asriw (MLi.001) appointed as its military chief of staff. FAMa Brigadier General Takny Ag Intikane and Mohamed Ag Mahmoud were elected honorary presidents of the armed group, and Rhissa Ag Mohamed, member of regional authorities in Kidal and special advisor to the governor of Kidal, regional coordinator of the Plateforme for Kidal.



*Harouna Toureh waving GATIA's flag next to Mohamed Ould Mataly*

9. MAA-Plateforme from Gao organised a large forum in Tabankort, hosted from 27 to 29 December 2019 by sanctioned individual Mohamed Ould Mataly (MLi.008) and Hanoune Ould Ali, gathering also all the CMA, which came with a delegation of 175 members on board of 37 vehicles. The forum was reportedly sponsored by two large companies, Nour and Tilemsi, and their CEOs, respectively Sidi Ahmed Ould Ali, Hanoune's brother, and Attaye Ben Ahmed Mahri, Rougy's brother, present and active in the organisation.<sup>17</sup>



*Mohamed Ould Mataly signing the “peace tent”, next to Harouna Toureh’s signature*

10. Sanctioned individuals Ahmoudou Ag Asriw (MLi.001), Mahri Sidi Amar Ben Daha (MLi.006) and Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri (MLi.007) also attended the MAA meeting,<sup>18</sup> turning the peace forum of Tabankort, paradoxically, into the largest concentration of individuals listed by the Committee as obstructing and/or delaying the implementation of the Peace Agreement, under the banner of the Plateforme of Harouna Toureh.

### Convention of the CSIA and GATIA

11. On the other side of the spectrum, on 29-30 November 2019, the *Conseil Supérieur des Imghads et Alliés* (CSIA) presided by General Gamou organised its congress in Aguelhok, during which the latter was renewed as President. The GATIA held its first regular convention at the same location on 2-3 December 2019 by its secretary general, Fahad Ag Almahmoud, who also presides the Plateforme. The GATIA convention was attended in large numbers by the MSA-D, which came with 30 vehicles and about 200 combattants, and a MAA-Plateforme delegation from Timbuktu led by Moulaye Ahmed Ould Moulaye. A military parade with about 70 vehicles took place.

<sup>17</sup> Accessed at <http://news.abamako.com/h/226993.html> on 26 January 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Communication from a confidential source who also attended the meeting, 11 January 2020.





*Photograph of the venue of the GATIA convention in Aguelhoc (Adjelhoc)*

12. A previous community meeting of the Imghad community in Takellout from 26 to 29 September 2019, presided by the member of Parliament Ahmoudène Ag Inkass, was followed by a press statement on 3 October issued by the GATIA, announcing the dismissal of five of its members, namely (1) Ag Hamzatta, in his capacity as deputy secretary general of the GATIA and member of the CSA, (2) Rhissa Ag Mohamed, (3) Mohamed Ag Itousse, commissioner at the CVJR, (4) Sidilmehdiag Albaka, commissioner at the *Conseil National pour la Réforme du Secteur de Sécurité*, and (5) Haballa Ag Aghaly, special advisor to the Governor of Kidal.<sup>19</sup>

13. While both GATIA could organise their respective conventions in Aguelhoc area, General Gamou instructed since his forces to prevent GATIA-CMA from using GATIA flags and equipment, and to regain control of entities previously under his jurisdiction. In this context, while returning to Gao on 6 December 2019, Gamou's convoy forcibly removed GATIA-CMA newly-established checkpoint in Achou.<sup>20</sup> On 15 December 2019, the vehicle of Ag Aghaly was shot at in Aguelhoc over a conflict for the budget of the local health center (*Centre de santé communautaire* - CSCOM).

### **Convention of the CPA**

14. The CPA of sanctioned individual Mohamed Ousmane Ag Mohamedoune (MLi.003), organised its own congress from 18 to 20 January 2020 in Soumpi, in presence of another sanctioned individual, Houka Houka Ag Alhousseini (MLi.005). A military parade was also organised and included some vehicles from the MSA-Chamanamas from Gao.

<sup>19</sup> The five individuals were replaced respectively by Mohamed Mahmoud Ag Chérif, Ousmane Ag Mohamed, Agli Ag Bidari, Talga Ag Rhissa and Bigga Ag Mitki.

<sup>20</sup> The checkpoint in Achou was previously attacked on 18 October 2019, when six GATIA fighters were killed.



*Military parade of vehicles at the CPA convention*

15. Several close associates of Houka Houka also attended the CPA meeting, such as Intagarasse Ag Sidi Hama, CPA base commander in Zouéra. Intagarasse, a Kel Razzaf from a well located nearby Houka Houka's camp in Louteib, is closely connected to Abdoullaye Ag Mohamed, a former commander of the *Hesbah* established in Timbuktu by Al-Qaeda in 2012 (see paragraphs 58 to of the Panel 2019 interim report). Both Intagarasse and Bokari, the HCUA military commander mentioned above (see paragraph 4 of this annex), travelled to Bamako in September 2019 with Houka Houka to participate into the launch of Mahmoud Dicko's political movement, called the *Coordination des Mouvements, Associations et Sympathisants (CMAS) de l'Imam Mahmoud Dicko*, on 7 September 2019.



*Houka Houka Ag Alhousseini (at the center, holding the microphone)*

**Annex VI**

Extract from Niger commerce registry for Tilemsi Distribution, obtained by the Panel from a confidential source on 18 November 2019.

- RCCM-NI-NIA-2016-B-2269 du 22/08/16 :

Dénomination sociale : Société Tilemsi Distribution –SA « TILDIS- SA »

Capital social: 10.000.000 F.CFA

Forme juridique : SA

Objet : Recherche exploitation et prospection des ressources minières, Comptoir d'achat et de vente des métaux précieux et semi précieux, Traitement de ressources minières sous toutes ses formes, Importation des machines d'exploitation d'équipements miniers, Vente et location d'équipements miniers, Importation exportation, distribution des hydrocarbures et produits dérivés, Gestion et exploitation des points de vente et de stations d'hydrocarbures et produits dérivés, Transports, etc.

Siège social : Niamey, Quartier Banizoumbou, Rue GM19, Porte 226 ;  
Tél+22796962211; BP : 10160 Niamey

Gérant : MAHRI MOHAMED BEN AHMED

Administrateurs :

MAHRI MOHAMED BEN AHMED, PCA ;

MOULATI SIDI AHMED BAN KAZOU.

**Annex VII**

## Update on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants

1. As already remarked in the Panels previous final report, Timbuktu has taken over from Gao as principal trafficking hub for migrants on their way north, mostly to Algeria.<sup>21</sup> Although there is underreporting in Gao because of more hidden practices following temporal arrests of so called *passeurs* see (S/2018/581, para. 139) migrants' accounts confirm Timbuktu route is favorable over Gao, with migrants from Timbuktu passing into Algeria to reach Bordj Badji Mokhtar at In-Afarak<sup>22</sup>, northwest of In-Khalil, rather than Talandak and Tindiska, southeast of In-Khalil.

2. Migrants transport along the Timbuktu In-Afrarak<sup>23</sup> route is largely protected by MAA-CMA and some MNLA<sup>24</sup>. HCUA rather exercises control over the Tindiska and Talhandak, where HCUA member Mohamadou Ag Rhissa (Mli.002) was responsible for abuses of migrants. The Panel is not aware of similar cases of abuse tied to armed group individuals along the Timbuctu-In-Afarak migrants route.

3. The Panel received information on Syrian migrants arriving by air in Bamako to travel to Europe via Mauritania and Algeria.<sup>25</sup> Tightened visa requirements for Mauritania for Syrian Nationals, reported by the Panel in its previous final report<sup>26</sup>, may have led to their shifting migration route via Bamako.

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<sup>21</sup> According to most recent IOM figures for November 2019, there were three times as many migrants leaving Timbuktu (1280) compared to Gao (403)

<sup>22</sup> Accounts from Housseine Ag Issa, "Tombouctou, nouveau parcours du combattant des migrants en partance pour l'Europe", CENECO, 1 December 2019, available at <https://cenozo.org/en/articles/182-tombouctou-nouveau-parcours-du-combattant-des-migrants-en-partance-pour-l-europe>

<sup>23</sup> In 2016, the In-Afarak passage was used for moving cannabis convoys involving sanctioned individual Ahmoudou Ag Asriw, who is associated to GATIA. GATIA lost its position of In-Afarak in July 2017 to CMA.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Member State information

<sup>26</sup> S/2019/636, paragraph 160.



## Annex VIII

### Update on trafficking of otherwise licit goods

#### Cigarettes

1. Trafficking of American Legend cigarettes through Mali from Burkina Faso seems to have dried up. The Panel received a communication from a retailer in Timbuktu Mali requesting American Legend to an intermediary trader in a neighbouring country, who responded negatively.<sup>27</sup> Since March 2018, when Karelia in Greece shipped 10.000 boxes to Burkina Faso, no more cigarettes were exported from Greece to Burkina Faso or any neighbouring country.<sup>28</sup> Some quantities were exported to Mauritania. If there are indications of renewed trafficking of American Legend through Mali the Panel will make further inquiries into the Mauretania.

2. The Panel has started making inquiries into the trafficking of other cigarette brands from Burkina Faso and Niger to Mali, notably ORIS and Yes, but is yet to identify traders and establish linkages to armed groups.

#### Petrol

3. On 17 December 2019, Mali customs agents in Segou seized 78 barrels of fuel arriving from an unknown destination in the north.<sup>29</sup> The Panel is closely following the seizure and leads it may provide concerning petrol trafficking rings operating in northern Mali possibly providing finances to armed groups.

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<sup>27</sup> Confidential Whatsapp communication, 26 November 2019.

<sup>28</sup> As per UN Comtrade database, available at <https://comtrade.un.org/>.

<sup>29</sup> Communication with Malian customs official, 18 December 2019.