



## Security Council

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### **Letter dated 20 May 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Brigadier General Oumarou Namata Gazama, Commander of the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force; and His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, the Niger (on behalf of the three African members of the Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam in connection with the video-teleconference on “Peace and security in Africa” convened on Tuesday, 18 May 2021. A statement was also delivered by His Excellency Mr. Oumar Ibn Daoud, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad of Chad.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 by the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* **Zhang Jun**  
President of the Security Council



**Annex I****Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations,  
Jean-Pierre Lacroix**

[Original: English and French]

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Security Council.

Since the previous Security Council debate on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), held on 16 November 2020 (see S/2020/1126), the fight against terrorist armed groups in the region has intensified and continued to mobilize at regional, continental and international levels, despite the ongoing context of the coronavirus disease pandemic. In a testament to this international commitment, Task Force Takuba is now fully operational and has been supporting Malian armed forces in combat. It takes a variety of actors to confront the daunting challenges in the region, and coordination among security actors on the ground remains paramount.

The Joint Force remains a vital part of security responses to address extremist armed groups in the region, along with other cross-border challenges, including trafficking in persons, illicit goods, weapons and drugs. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force has continued to enhance its operational capabilities. The offensive phase of Operation Sama 2 started in the first week of November and continued into the beginning of January. The Joint Force launched Operation Sama 3 in March, aimed at strengthening and consolidating the outcome of Operations Sama 1 and 2, buoyed by additional capabilities following the deployment of the eighth battalion of the Chadian army at the beginning of March.

In that context, my remarks will consist of taking stock of the support that the international community, and more particularly the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), has provided over the past few months to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force as it continued to scale up its operational tempo in an ever-more challenging security environment.

MINUSMA continued to provide logistical support to the seven battalions operating under the command of the Joint Force, within the framework of its mandate. All requests from the Joint Force related to petrol-oil-lubricants and casualty evacuation have so far been honoured. MINUSMA's responsive operational and logistical support to the Joint Force remained critical to the Force's operations, especially in Centre Sector. The provision of life support consumables by the Mission has proven critical in sustaining the Joint Force, as it continues to face major challenges with regard to its operational and logistical capacities in providing supplies to its troops — a problem worsened by a lack of suitable means of transport.

Going forward, strengthening the Joint Force's police component will be an important step not only towards improving oversight over military operations but also to linking them to State-building, support to the justice sector and prison reform, as well as efforts under the human rights compliance framework. In this context, the operationalization of the police component has registered some progress with regard to the Special Investigation Units. As far as the provost units are concerned, the 13 gendarmes per battalion have been deployed within their respective battalions, in addition to 11 gendarmes in Chad's second battalion, and are operational for the most part.

Moving to the implementation of the human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework of the Joint Force and the human rights due diligence policy, it is important to note that, while some aspects of essential work remain pending, the Joint Force has taken significant steps in the right direction,

notably with regard to mitigation measures being put in place as a result of the ongoing establishment of the compliance framework.

Recently, the Joint Force and the authorities of Chad and the Niger demonstrated their commitment to investigating and prosecuting the serious allegations of sexual violence reportedly committed by members of the eighth Chadian battalion of the Force deployed in the Niger in late March. Their proactive actions are commendable, as they attest to their professionalism and command responsibilities and demonstrate the important progress made by the Joint Force in operationalizing its human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), whose role I would also like to commend.

We should acknowledge, however, that the human rights situation in the Sahel is deteriorating significantly because of escalating conflict and the fact that human rights violations allegedly committed by security forces while combating terrorism persist. Both the compliance framework and the human rights due diligence policy are essential to build the capacity of the forces under the G-5 Sahel command to enhance human rights compliance, but these efforts are a long-term endeavour. I therefore encourage all partners to enhance their assistance to OHCHR in support of the Joint Force. Our strong collective support to human rights and the protection of civilians is a prerequisite to winning the war against terrorism.

It should be acknowledged that the United Nations as a whole played an important role in implementing the human rights due diligence policy, while providing life support consumables support to the Joint Force. With private contractors, however, the United Nations will likely have less visibility and leverage over the support and the policy's implementation.

At the request of the Security Council, the Secretariat carried out an assessment of MINUSMA's support to the Joint Force under resolution 2531 (2020) in early 2021. The assessment highlighted the progress made in this regard, but also challenges in implementing the enhanced support mandate.

First, as much as we commend the European Union for its vital support to the Joint Force, the issue of the predictability of funding remains of concern. The United Nations, alongside the G-5 Sahel and other partners, continues to call for more predictable funding. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force plays a critical role in the regional response to violent extremism. In this regard, it is essential that it receive the assistance it requires to carry out its mandated tasks.

Moreover, while the current model relies on quarterly planning for the provision of life support consumables, the Joint Force has indicated that detailed projections of needs remain a challenge in the context of dynamic operations in a highly volatile environment. Unfortunately, however, the current support model provides little room for flexibility.

In some instances, the Joint Force seems to lack the capacity to collect the delivered life support consumables from the designated collection points in Mali. In other instances, life support consumables were reportedly delivered and collected but did not reach the battalions, suggesting the Joint Force's lack of capacity to travel long distances to deliver supplies.

Since the Pau Summit held in January 2020, the strengthening of national armies, the temporary deployment of 600 additional French soldiers to Operation Barkhane, the improved coordination among national armies, Operation Barkhane, the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel and MINUSMA, while respecting their respective mandates, and the deployment of Task Force Takuba have enabled results to be

achieved in the fight against terrorism in the region. However, in spite of this encouraging progress much remains to be done. We must be aware of the dire consequences of the security situation for the population, as well as the risks for the rest of the West Africa if the situation in the Sahel is not properly addressed.

As calls for additional resources to support the G-5 Sahel's fight against terrorism continue, there are also calls for increased mobilization to address poverty and the unprecedented humanitarian crisis that currently confronts the region. Strengthening the Joint Force is only one of the many ways that the international community can provide support.

In that spirit, I welcome the strengthened coordination mechanisms that the Sahel Coalition proposes to implement, which will allow all international partners to leverage their comparative advantages and work together more effectively in the areas of development, good governance, humanitarian assistance and security.

In the light of the situation in the Sahel, the international community must be motivated by a shared responsibility to act swiftly and work alongside and in solidarity with the people of the region.

## Annex II

### **Briefing by the Commander of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, Oumarou Namata Gazama**

[Original: French]

First of all, I would like to thank the Council for the honour of being invited to brief members on the current status of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel).

The Joint Force was created in February 2017 to help meet the security challenges in the Sahel-Saharan strip.

Over the past four years, the Joint Force has worked first on force generation and deployment and then gradually on operationalizing force capabilities, with international support, to complement the individual and collective efforts of the G-5 Sahel member States. Since year three, it has continued to work to increase its strength and operational experience.

The Joint Force began its fourth mandate in November 2020 and has already made considerable progress, in particular in the areas of operations and partnerships. However, several challenges remain to be met.

To provide more information about the Joint Force, I propose to address the following points: first, the genesis and organization of the Joint Force; secondly, its work and recent progress to date; and thirdly, the road ahead and outstanding challenges.

The Joint Force is one of the Sahelian structures of the common institution known as the G-5 Sahel, whose five members are Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Chad. The mandate of the Joint Force is given by the African Union Peace and Security Council, which is part of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

With an initial authorized strength of 5,000 personnel, the Joint Force has four multinational headquarters; seven battalions, each with a provost unit; and seven specialized investigation units, comprising the police component of the Joint Force. In addition, the eighth battalion of the Joint Force, from Chad, has just been deployed to the Centre Sector in the so-called tri-border area.

Logistical and financial support are provided as follows.

First, the G-5 Sahel countries are responsible for supporting the forces they make available to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, through their national logistics chain.

Secondly, additional logistical support is provided via the technical agreement between the G-5 Sahel, the United Nations and the European Commission.

Thirdly, on rare occasions, such support is also provided by Operation Barkhane, according to the provisions outlined in the reciprocal support protocol between the Joint Force and Operation Barkhane.

As the Council can see, this is a complex support system, to say the least, and its sustainability remains fragile. It is a system in which the force command does not on its own provide support for its troops. It does not have full command over its units, only operational control.

The Council knows, as we do, that eliminating terrorism is a long-term struggle that has put the world's best armies to the test wherever intervention has been necessary. The situation in the Sahel, focused on and around Mali, with the numerous actors and stakeholders we all know, is a perfect illustration of that fact.

From January 2020 to date, the security situation has remained quite worrisome in view of the large number of very often violent incidents. In addition, it has been noted that intercommunal and inter-ethnic conflicts have worsened in some areas as they are often exploited by various armed groups.

Turning to the operations conducted, it must be stated that after establishing the initial guidelines and the broad outlines of my operational agenda when I took office in August 2019, we set about planning and implementing operations in line with our mandate. We set guidelines on the basis of a campaign plan for the period August 2019 to August 2021.

One of the main objectives of the plan is to harmonize the future operations of the Joint Force with the various efforts of the national armies and partner forces — Operation Barkhane and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). That campaign plan was also clearly aimed at changing the posture and format of the Joint Force to make it more pragmatic and effective so as to better address the deleterious security situation, in particular in the centre of the G-5 Sahel area.

With regard to operations, from its inception to date the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel has conducted 25 operations, including 11 major operations conducted from the end of 2019 to date that had very noteworthy results in the decontamination of our common space.

In addition to the hundreds of terrorists who have been neutralized and the disruption of much of their logistical capacity through the seizure or destruction of large quantities of materials, a further example of progress is represented by the 79 people arrested or captured in the period November 2020 to April 2021 and currently being brought to justice. That provides an idea of the considerable progress made in the area of operations. With regard to international partnership support, in addition to the national efforts made by our five member States international partnership support for the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel covers several areas.

In the area of training, the main partners of the Joint Force are the European Union (EU) Training Mission in Mali, the European Union Capacity Building Mission in the Sahel and the Human Rights and Protection Division of MINUSMA.

Support for the implementation of the human rights compliance framework is provided by European Union funds, for which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is responsible through its office at MINUSMA.

Operational logistical support is provided through a mechanism known as “additional support” based on EU funds, for which MINUSMA is responsible. Progress is being made on that front — albeit slowly — and improvement measures have been taken, in particular in line with the new provisions of resolution 2531 (2020). Such support is welcome but remains insufficient in many respects.

Support for equipment, services and infrastructure for the Joint Force is provided in two main ways — bilateral support provided through the national structures of the five G-5 Sahel countries and support provided directly to the Joint Force.

The United States Africa Command also intervenes, very often indirectly, to assist the Joint Force with support for equipment and the provision of services.

Lastly, Operation Barkhane provides purely operational support to the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, such as air support (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance overflights, air support, transport) and the supply of combat rations.

The report of the Secretary-General (2021/442) mentions very little about the progress we have made. First, coordinated and/or joint operations with national and partner forces have been streamlined, which is a key part of our campaign plan. We

have also met with genuine success in the areas of cooperation and coordination, at all levels.

Furthermore, in addition to operational activities, we have been making progress for some time on several key fronts.

The first relates to changes in posture and format, which is also a primary operational objective of our campaign plan. That objective is currently considered to be well under way.

Another key achievement is the effective harmonization of activities and coordination among the various actors, which we have secured by streamlining coordinated and/or joint operations.

Last but not least, there has been progress in the area of respect for human rights and the protection of civilians, first through the practical implementation of the standing operating procedures for internal investigations of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel and secondly through the establishment of the Civilian Casualties Identification, Tracking and Analysis Cell. With regard to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, the Joint Force has advanced past the learning stage and is well established in the ownership stage.

With regard to the major challenges before us, it should be noted that from a functional perspective, we can state categorically that we have reached a satisfactory position. However, with regard to our capabilities, two points deserve special attention and it should also be recalled that the issue of sustainable funding remains a challenge.

First, the Joint Force does not have its own air capability, despite the fact that the current counter-terrorism fight cannot be conducted effectively without that additional capability.

Secondly, the other major shortcoming of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force is its intelligence system.

Given those two capability challenges and until we are more autonomous, current imperative operational needs mean that, in addition to other important national efforts, we must continue working with operational partners present in the area. It must be stated that we remain very dependent on them.

In conclusion, with regard to the issue of overall support for the Joint Force, it is worth recalling that despite the various kinds of international support announced, whose implementation is often slow to materialize, the G-5 Sahel States continue to make considerable domestic sacrifices. It is therefore timely to recall the need to find a way to ensure a sustainable system of funding for the Joint Force. The most sustainable solution would be to establish a United Nations support office to provide logistical, operational, tactical and strategic support to the Joint Force. It would be funded by assessed and voluntary contributions alike.

In short, it is clear that considerable progress has been made. The guidelines introduced have been designed to lead the Joint Force in a more realistic and pragmatic direction.

Efforts by the Joint Force have been quite successful in the area of military operations and relations with partners, so that today it appears to be an increasingly credible and genuine Sahelian force.

However, challenges remain.

As operations in the area of responsibility are constantly evolving, there is a clear need to continue the current dynamic of coordination and capacity-sharing.

This is therefore an opportunity for me, if I may, to remind the Council that we must redouble efforts to mobilize material and financial resources, in accordance with the commitments made by the international community, towards the eventual establishment of the more permanent support we all hope and pray for. The goal is to successfully eliminate the scourges that now afflict our countries — plunging them into mourning and threatening international stability.

## Annex III

### **Briefing by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees**

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the President and the members of the Security Council for the invitation to brief them on the continued engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in the pursuit of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel.

First of all, I would like to extend my condolences to the Government and the people of Chad on the tragic death of President Idriss Deby Itno on 19 April. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of restoring stability and constitutional order in Chad, which is vital for stability in the broader Sahel region.

We are all aware of the complexity of the situation in the Sahel, which has never been more dire. However, more remains to be done to address the root causes of conflict in the region through a long-term, comprehensive and integrated approach to sustaining peace and development.

Consistent with its long-standing engagement in support of the Sahel region, the PBC met on 28 April to discuss peace and development trends since its last related engagement in October last year. The Commission recognized the budgetary burden caused by increased security expenditures and reduced revenue collection in several countries in the Sahel, at a time when the coronavirus disease pandemic is also constraining resources. The Commission called for greater coordination among the security, development and humanitarian actors in the region in order to ensure that effective efforts are made to meet programming and resource mobilization needs, including through the development and use of a shared information management system.

The Commission also recognized that the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) remains a useful framework for ensuring proactive and effective United Nations activities in the Sahel to help tackle the root causes and drivers of instability and violence in the region. It welcomed the continuing support from the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund for cross-border investments and empowering women and youth. The Commission has repeatedly encouraged the coordination of efforts for the effective implementation of UNISS through the United Nations country teams in the region and welcomed the recent appointment of Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye as Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel.

Over the past few years, the Commission has supported peacebuilding efforts in Burkina Faso, at the request of and under the leadership of the Government. The Commission has promoted coherent United Nations action and coordinated international support, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, mobilizing more than \$400 million from PBC members in support of the country's peacebuilding priorities in 2020. This was followed by Burkina Faso being the first country to benefit from the World Bank's Prevention and Resilience Allocation, under its Fragility, Conflict and Violence Envelope. On behalf of the Commission, I would like to encourage the United Nations and the World Bank to build that approach with other States of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), with a focus on joint analysis of conflict and response.

The Commission welcomes the role of the Coalition for the Sahel in promoting a combined and coordinated approach aimed at combating terrorism, strengthening the Sahelian States' military capabilities, supporting the restoration of State authority throughout the territory and bolstering development assistance. The Commission supports the call made on 16 February, during the N'Djamena Summit

of the G-5 Sahel, for a civilian surge that will be complementary to military efforts and designed to increase coherent development, humanitarian and good governance initiatives, thereby enhancing the economic autonomy of the population. During the PBC meeting, Mr. Dieye underlined the relevance of such an approach, including through strengthening investments in periphery regions.

To help enhance national and regional peacebuilding efforts in the Sahel, the Commission encourages more robust and coherent action, as well as stronger partnerships, in line with national and regional peacebuilding priorities. In that regard, the G-5 Sahel States appealed for international support for their Priority Investment Programme.

The Commission has also called for additional measures to empower women and young people to undertake leadership roles in peacebuilding initiatives and to strengthen their role in governance structures. In that regard, during that PBC meeting Ms. Fatchima Nayaya of the non-governmental organization WARAKA, based in the Niger, presented examples of positive change in the Niger that had been brought about by empowering women and young people, including through initiatives that aim to build economic, social and psychosocial resilience, as well as cohesion and trust, by providing community training, promoting peaceful coexistence and tolerance and enhancing sustainable livelihoods.

The Commission has welcomed contributions to the Liptako-Gourma mechanism, as well as the World Bank's Green Wall initiative and the African Development Bank's Desert-to-Power initiative, and calls for more structural investments in the Sahel, including in response to challenges related to environmental degradation and climate change.

The Commission has acknowledged the invaluable contribution of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to building peace in Mali and the region, including through support provided to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. We welcome the leadership taken by regional actors and organizations in confronting and countering terrorist groups and other organized criminal groups.

After two generations of international engagement in the region, we owe it to the Sahelian population to ensure that real dividends and impact are achieved. In that respect, the Commission has an important role to play in complementing the focus of the Security Council on peace and security by strengthening engagement with the Economic and Social Council and the development system and supporting strengthened United Nations partnerships with international financial institutions. The Commission will therefore continue to encourage greater system-wide coherence to tackle the root causes of violence and rebuild much-needed peace and stability in the region.

**Annex IV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

[Original: Chinese]

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Commander Namata of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and Ambassador Edrees, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings. We welcome Mr. Oumar Ibn Daoud, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad of Chad, to today's meeting.

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to Minister of State Oumar Ibn Daoud and through him to the Government and the people of Chad following the tragic death of the former President of Chad, Idriss Deby Itno.

In response to the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/442) and the briefings we have heard today, as well as the important opinions expressed by the Niger and other African members of the Security Council, I would like to make the following points.

First, it is important to strengthen coordination and cooperation to form a joint force against terrorism. For some time, the security situation in the Sahel has continued to deteriorate. Terrorist activities have caused heavy casualties, left large numbers of people displaced and caused a spillover effect. China is deeply concerned about the situation and sincerely thanks the countries of the region and the Joint Force for actively carrying out counter-terrorism operations and achieving a number of goals.

Chad has added 1,200 military personnel to the Joint Force, thereby fully demonstrating Chad's important role in regional counter-terrorism. The African Union announced that it will send 3,000 standby troops to the Sahel, which is conducive to strengthening the regional counter-terrorism force. China takes note of the relevant operations carried out by European countries in the Sahel and hopes that such operations will strengthen coordination and cooperation with the Joint Force so as to achieve better results. The spillover effect of the conflict in Libya is an important factor in the deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel. The withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya must be conducted in an expedited yet organized and orderly manner so as to avoid further negative impacts on regional security.

Secondly, international support must be increased to resolve the concerns of the Joint Force. The lack of funding is a major constraint to the Joint Force playing a greater role. China supports sustainable and predictable financial support for the Joint Force. We have provided 300 million yuan through bilateral channels to assist the Joint Force, with its disbursement under the way. The Joint Force is a regional counter-terrorism operation authorized by the African Union. The European Union has provided considerable financial support. We look forward to the continued strong support of the European Union, in particular of relevant member States.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has provided logistical support to the Joint Force. It is hoped that as it fulfils its core mandate, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali will work in close coordination with the Joint Force, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, to further optimize the logistical support programme. China supports all parties in strengthening communication and finding a solution that responds to the current regional context, meets the needs of the Joint

Force and takes into account the political and legal concerns of all parties. Such a solution must also be accepted by all parties.

Thirdly, comprehensive measures must be taken to eliminate the root causes of conflicts. The security challenges facing the Sahel cannot be completely resolved by military means alone. We must delve into the root causes of conflicts; address the multiple challenges faced by the region, such as economic development issues, food insecurity, environmental degradation and ethnic conflicts; and implement comprehensive policies in order to prescribe the right medicine.

China supports the efforts of international partners and the Peacebuilding Commission. The United Nations should take into account the situation in the Sahel, formulate and promote a comprehensive development strategy, increase investment from relevant international institutions in the region and make joint efforts at the international, regional and relevant national levels to achieve lasting peace and development in the region. We must continue to make efforts in that regard. On China's initiative, the Security Council will hold a high-level meeting tomorrow on promoting post-pandemic reconstruction in Africa and eliminating the root causes of conflict. We believe that will encourage the international community to pay more attention to the challenges faced by Africa in the context of the pandemic, help Africa speed up post-pandemic reconstruction and resolve the root causes of conflicts.

China is willing to work with the international community to continue making efforts to ensure the long-term stability, prosperity and development of the Sahel.

**Annex V****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Gert Auväärt**

I thank the briefers for their insights on the latest developments in the Sahel region and the operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel).

It is extremely concerning that the security situation in the Sahel region continues to deteriorate despite the ongoing efforts of regional and international security forces. The reported increase in the attacks against civilians makes the call for the civilian surge ever more relevant, as expressed during the N'Djamena Summit held in February. The civilian population can be effectively protected only when credible State presence is restored across the territories of the region's countries. In that connection, it is essential to continue the efforts to re-establish not only security presence but also police and judicial institutions.

We commend the role of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in coordinating and mobilizing both operational and strategic support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. Regional and national ownership of counter-terrorism efforts is crucial to their success.

Combating terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel is clearly a joint effort by national, regional and international security forces. In order to ensure its effectiveness, we need to keep our attention on coordination. Sharing relevant information is of key importance, as is ensuring clear command lines.

Estonia remains committed to playing its part in achieving security and stability in the Sahel region. We contribute with personnel to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the French-led Operation Barkhane and the European Union Training Mission in Mali, and we also contribute financially to the European Union Trust Fund for Africa. Estonia is also part of Task Force Takuba, which has recently achieved full operational capacity.

We are encouraged by the further strengthening of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. As a member of the European Union (EU), we are glad that financial support from EU has allowed MINUSMA to offer logistical support to the Joint Force. We also acknowledge the calls from the region's States to ensure more predictable and sustainable funding to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. From the Estonian side, we are open to discussions on more comprehensive solutions to that issue.

Estonia shares the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his most recent report (S/2021/442) about the continued human rights violations that have allegedly been committed by security forces during counter-terrorist activities. We welcome the prompt announcements by the Joint Force and the region's States to conduct investigations and underscore that all investigations must be conducted thoroughly and fully. Strengthening trust between the State and the population is of key importance. In that connection, it is essential that all human rights violations and abuses be investigated and perpetrators held fully accountable.

Lasting peace in the Sahel region can be achieved only when, together with military efforts, the root causes of conflict are actively addressed. Certain issues exacerbate existing grievances, such as the negative effects of climate change and the economic impact of the coronavirus disease, and need to be addressed. It is of the utmost importance to empower women by ensuring their full, effective and meaningful participation in all aspects of the society. Children and young people need to have safe access to education, which will provide an alternative to a life of poverty and violence.

**Annex VI****Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: French]

I thank the briefers for their briefings. In particular, I welcome the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad of Chad, Mr. Oumar Ibn Daoud, and Brigadier General Namata, Commander of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), to today's meeting.

The situation in the Sahel remains of great concern. Terrorist groups, although hard hit, continue to commit acts of violence and seek to extend their reach. The threat now extends to southern Mali, as well as Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin. The effects of poverty and climate change have exacerbated those tensions. Despite our efforts, the humanitarian crisis is worsening. A total of 29 million people are in need of emergency assistance — 5 million more than last year and 10,000 more people every day since January. The number of internally displaced persons and refugees has increased and food insecurity has increased as well. Nearly 5,000 schools are closed or not operational.

That situation calls for simultaneous action to address all facets of the issue — combating terrorism, strengthening defence and security forces, employing Government services and maintaining humanitarian and development efforts.

First of all, the fight against terrorism remains crucial. The Barkhane force has continued its operations over the past six months in close coordination with its partners, thereby making it possible to maintain pressure on terrorist groups and reduce their capabilities. The Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel continues to plan and conduct its operations, including Operation Sama 3, which is under way in the tri-border area.

The deployment of the eighth Chadian battalion was a decisive step forward. I would like to congratulate the Chadian authorities for honouring that commitment. We have also seen an increasingly robust response to human rights violations through the implementation of the compliance framework, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Task Force Takuba is now operational and its initial results are very encouraging. We welcome the contributions made by Estonia, the Czech Republic and Sweden, which will soon be joined by other European partners.

It is essential more than ever before for the United Nations to assist in those regional efforts and strengthen its support for the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel. The members of the G-5 Sahel made ambitious commitments at the N'Djamena Summit on 15 and 16 February. The Joint Force has made headway in terms of organizational efforts and operational results. However, it is not yet logistically autonomous. We believe it is essential to provide it with increased and sustained support. That would take the form of a support office funded by assessed contributions. The Secretary-General has repeatedly voiced his support for such a solution, which is also endorsed by the African Union and the European Union. The creation of the mechanism would enable the Council to better supervise the operations of the G-5 Sahel. We could also provide the office with a human rights division, which would strengthen the Joint Force's consideration of those issues.

Meanwhile, the tripartite United Nations-European Union-G-5 Sahel mechanism must be maintained and fully implemented. We call on the European Union and the United Nations to finalize their discussions on the use of contractors.

Military actions must be supported by increased governance, development and humanitarian assistance efforts. I call on the United Nations to mobilize agencies, funds and programmes to join the civilian surge objective agreed upon at the Ndjamena Summit. France welcomes the willingness of the Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, and the Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, Mr. Mar Dieye, to revitalize the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. France will continue to be fully involved in those efforts. The French Development Agency supported the G-5 Sahel countries with €480 million in 2020.

## Annex VII

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, T.S. Tirumurthi**

At the outset, let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Lacroix of the Department of Peace Operations for his briefing on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and related developments. I also thank Ambassador Fathi Ahmed Edrees, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and Brigadier General Oumarou Namata, Force Commander of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, for their briefings. I also welcome His Excellency Mr. Oumar Ibn Daoud, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Chad, to the meeting.

At the outset, I would like to offer my tribute to the former President of Chad, Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, who sacrificed his life in the fight against the rebel groups. President Idriss Deby's contribution to regional stability and combating terrorism was significant and will be remembered forever. We also recognize the important contribution of Chad to the G-5 Sahel initiative.

It is a matter of concern that the security situation in the G-5 Sahel countries is deteriorating rapidly, which is evident from the recent attacks by terrorists and armed groups. The reporting period has witnessed several serious incidents, including in the Tahoua region of the Niger on 21 March, which resulted in the killing of 137 civilians. The national and regional forces, including the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, have increasingly come under attack. The Liptako-Gourma tri-border area has remained a hotspot. Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, affiliated to Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, has expanded its activities. It is a matter of great concern that those groups use improvised explosive devices, which resulted in the killing of several peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and of civilians. The threat of the spread of those groups to the Southern and Western African coasts remains high. It is also worrisome that the reporting period has seen attacks spreading to the borders of neighbouring countries.

Al-Qaida and groups linked to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and Boko Haram have also continued to expand around the eastern and northern shores of Lake Chad. More than 2 million people are internally displaced and the situation has forced 900,000 people to take refuge in neighbouring countries. The Libyan crisis that caused instability in Mali and the larger Sahel a decade ago continues to adversely impact the region. The presence of foreign fighters in Libya is also negatively affecting the region. The incidents in Chad provide clear evidence of that aspect of the problem. The overall security situation is therefore tenuous and extremely worrisome.

Clearly, the situation in the Sahel is complex and must be addressed with a comprehensive response. Achieving political stability and socioeconomic development and establishing governance structures should become the top priorities for the Sahel region. In that regard, I would like to submit the following for Council's consideration.

First, on the security front we appreciate and support the efforts of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, the national forces of the G-5 Sahel countries, the French Operation Barkhane and Task Force Takuba. Those efforts, along with the peacekeeping efforts of MINUSMA, have contributed to combating terrorism in the Sahel. We take note specifically of the progress made by the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel in stabilizing the Centre Sector between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, thereby creating conditions for the return of the national armed forces and local authorities.

Secondly, the Joint Force continues to be plagued by multiple challenges, such as the lack of training and equipment, transport and logistics and sustainable and predictable financing—all of which have hampered its full operationalization. We appreciate the capacity-building and logistics assistance being provided to the Joint Force by various countries, as well as by MINUSMA.

Thirdly, the current model of support for the Joint Force is inadequate and unsustainable, a reality that has been highlighted by the Secretary-General in his recent reports (S/2020/1074 and S/2021/442). Assistance to the Joint Force through MINUSMA under the existing mechanism also has its own limitations. Overstretching MINUSMA's responsibilities can adversely affect its core mandate of securing peace in Mali. At a time when the terrorist threat is rapidly growing in Mali and spreading towards the southern part of the country, it is all the more crucial for the Mission to focus on containing the threat in Mali. The impediments that the Mission faces in providing logistical support to the Joint Force beyond Mali need to be addressed.

Fourthly, we believe that it is high time that regional security initiatives, such as the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, be provided with adequate and sustainable resources, training and logistics support. A resource-constrained counter-terrorism strategy can be a recipe for failure. Therefore, the proposal for establishing a United Nations support office dedicated to providing logistics assistance to the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel has our support and requires the Council's immediate collective attention. Moreover, since those initiatives involve multiple nationalities and backgrounds, for them to be effective, mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure effective internal coordination, cohesion and training and unified command-and-control structures. We need to strongly support African counter-terrorism operations through sustainable financing, including assessed contributions.

Fifthly, it is important that when it comes to terrorism, we first clearly acknowledge the nature of the problem before we can start addressing it. Otherwise, we will address it in fits and starts—a recipe for failure. That is all the more important at a time when terrorist forces are only getting stronger and spreading to more parts of Africa, as has been repeatedly acknowledged in the Council's reports and discussions. The terrorist groups in the Sahel have strong links with international terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaida, ISIS and others with similar radical ideologies. Just as there cannot be any justification for terrorism, we cannot be half-hearted when it comes to resolute action by the Council in addressing counter-terrorism issues. The Council needs to take effective measures, including by supporting regional and subregional organizations in their security initiatives. We appreciate the decision of the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States and the G-5 Sahel countries for the deployment of 3,000 AU troops to reinforce the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel.

Finally, security measures need to be complemented by addressing issues associated with instability in the Sahel with regard to the lack of development, poverty, poor governance and loss of livelihoods. We are happy to note that those issues are being addressed through initiatives such as the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and the Sahel Alliance's G-5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme. The recent appointment of the Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel to oversee the implementation of UNISS is a positive development.

In conclusion, let me reiterate India's support for the G-5 Sahel initiative and its related regional security initiatives. India has always been willing to extend and expand its capacity-building assistance to the armed forces of the affected countries to support them in their fight against terrorism. India's recent initiatives in that regard have been to include Chad in our Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation

training programme, including 10 military training slots last year, and to provide a specialized in situ training programme in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism for nearly 200 Nigerian army personnel this year. We believe that it is important that the Council continue to extend all possible assistance and support to the Joint Force for the G-5 Sahel in the overarching interest of peace, security and stability in the region.

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**Annex VIII****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason**

[Original: English and French]

I, too, would like to thank all of the briefers for their very enlightening contributions today.

The challenges facing the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) are numerous and interconnected. The negative effects of climate change are fused with poverty and economic underdevelopment, leading to intercommunal conflict and displacement. Humanitarian needs in the region continue to increase. The rise in the number of attacks on civilians is very disturbing. I extend my deepest condolences to the relatives of all those, including the members of security forces and civilians, who lost their lives recently.

Instability in the Sahel is a concern not only for the countries of the region but for us all. We therefore welcome the regional efforts led by the G-5 Sahel countries to address threats and maintain peace and security.

The operational and logistical support provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel remains indispensable, but the temporary nature of that support underscores the need for predictable and sustainable funding. We must therefore work constructively together to make progress, while paying close attention to the views of the countries of the region.

Ireland welcomes the increased operationalization of the Joint Force. However, the continued deterioration of the security situation, particularly in the Liptako-Gourma region, underlines the need for strengthened efforts.

The work of the G-5 Sahel executive secretariat and the establishment of national coordination committees increase the coherence of the Joint Force's efforts. However, as we have heard today, challenges remain, including the issue of dual command. To address that, progress on the deconfliction mechanism is needed.

The protection of civilians, including predeployment training, must be at the heart of mission planning. That is a critical step on the path to sustainable peace. Achieving that will require respect for the rule of law, human rights and international humanitarian law. We welcome progress in the implementation of the human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework and encourage further measures to that end. An effective police component, including operational special investigation units, also has an important role to play.

Reports of serious human rights violations, particularly instances of sexual and gender-based violence, are deeply concerning. We call on the Joint Force to increase information-sharing on the impact of operations on civilians and follow-up to human rights violations committed by elements of the Joint Force. Countering impunity is essential to preventing future violations. It is critical that survivors receive justice and that perpetrators be held to account.

Ireland welcomes the efforts of the executive secretariat, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to mainstream gender in the security sector. I also want to add my voice to the calls we have heard today for the increased nomination of women to senior military and police ranks. We firmly believe that such positive and practical quantitative changes are essential for increasing women's

participation and increasing the overall effectiveness of the Joint Force. We ask the Joint Force to meet its commitment to ensuring that gender analysis and women's participation are integrated into assessments, planning and operations and we seek enhanced reporting in that regard.

We believe that compound challenges require integrated and holistic responses that can address the root causes of instability — responses that go beyond military intervention. The Peacebuilding Commission has a critical and important role to play in that regard. I want to welcome in particular the presence of Ambassador Edrees, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and thank him for his remarks.

In the Sahel, the effects of climate change are not theoretical. They are real and exacerbate tensions and increase the risk of violent conflict. Together with the Niger, Ireland convened a meeting of the Informal Expert Group of Members of the Security Council on Climate and Security, focused on the Sahel. Quite simply, the impact of climate change on peace and security in the Sahel is obvious and cannot be ignored.

In conclusion, Ireland actively contributes to stabilization efforts in the region through the deployment of troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, through the European Union and through bilateral and multilateral development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The people of the Sahel have the right to a peaceful society. I assure the Council of the deep support of my country, Ireland, to that end.

**Annex IX****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Alicia Buenrostro Massieu**

[Original: Spanish]

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Brigadier General Namata and Ambassador Edrees for their briefings. We also welcome the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad of Chad, Mr. Oumar Ibn Daoud, to today's meeting.

Mexico would like to begin by extending condolences to Chad on the death of President Idriss Deby.

We, too, recognize the important role played by the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) in addressing the diverse and complex security challenges in that region. We are particularly concerned about the effects that insecurity in the Sahel may have on the rest of the African continent and beyond.

We therefore welcome the progress made in the operationalization of the Joint Force in recent months, despite the prevailing logistical, mobility and supply challenges. We also note the positive outcome of Operation Sama 2 and the good cooperation with other forces in the area.

We believe that the security strategy in the Sahel must focus on the protection of civilians, who remain the primary victims of violence in the region. We are therefore concerned about the reports of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law attributed to soldiers of the Multinational Joint Task Force. We deplore, in particular, the cases of sexual violence mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/442) and the detention of minors. We call on the members of the G-5 Sahel to redouble their efforts to prevent such incidents in the future, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We hope that the Civilian Casualty and Incident Tracking and Analysis Cell, launched at the beginning of the year, will help resolve the issue.

Mexico believes that all discussions on additional Security Council support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force will need to take into account its performance in fulfilling its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We stand ready to participate constructively in discussions on the issue.

While the scope of the security challenges in the Sahel is indisputable, we emphasize that, in order to achieve lasting peace, the structural causes underlying radicalization and intercommunal clashes must be addressed. Accordingly, we welcome the increase in the civilian component agreed at the seventh Summit of Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel, held in February.

We hope that the approach reflected in the Coalition for the Sahel road map will quickly lead to effectively financing and setting up State institutions responsible for providing basic services to the population, in particular health-care services, which will be crucial to responding to the coronavirus disease pandemic. Providing essential services will improve the alarming humanitarian situation in the region, where almost 7 million people are food insecure.

Mexico believes that the Peacebuilding Commission shoulders a major responsibility in developing a comprehensive response to the persistent development issues in the countries of the Sahel. To that end, it is imperative to work towards achieving improved cooperation among the various actors on the ground, including regional and subregional organizations, and ensure that women and young people play a role in decision-making.

**Annex X****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

[Original: French]

On behalf of Kenya, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia (A3+1), I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Brigadier General Oumarou Namata Gazama, Commander of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Joint Force; and Mr. Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their excellent presentations and their continued commitment to stabilizing the situation in the Sahel.

We also welcome the presence among us today of His Excellency Mr. Oumar Ibn Daoud, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad of Chad, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the G-5 Sahel.

On behalf of the A3+1, I would like to pay tribute to the late President of Chad, Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, whose role and that of his country have been invaluable in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel.

I will focus my remarks on two aspects, namely, the findings — based on major factual observations — and the recommendations of the A3+1.

First, with regard to our findings, the link between development and security is apparent in the Sahel, where the two interact with one another indissolubly. In terms of security, the assessment provided by the report of the Secretary General (S/2021/442) and Brigadier General Namata Gazama's briefing reflect the appreciable progress made in the operationalization of the Joint Force. Its military activities have resulted in the neutralization and capture of terrorists and other criminals in its areas of operation. Significant progress has been made in the area of respect for human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The deployment of the 1,200-strong eighth Chadian battalion, which brings the total strength of the Joint Force to 5,534 men, has already begun to demonstrate its effectiveness in the tri-border area. In addition, there is positive coordination among the allied forces on the ground, namely, the Joint Force, the national armed forces and Operation Barkhane. That has made it possible to disrupt the logistical chains of armed terrorist groups and reduce their ranks, thereby contributing to the stabilization of the region, which is of paramount importance.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the African Union, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), France, the European Union, the United States, China, Russia, Turkey, Senegal, Rwanda and all other partners that have supported the operationalization of the Joint Force in myriad ways.

The liaison officers from the United States Africa Command and France's Operation Barkhane working within the Joint Force provide its Commander with daily support.

Moreover, since the reorganization of the G-5 Sahel Executive Secretariat, it has significantly stepped up its support for the Joint Force. It has shown that it is

able to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the framework of cooperation among the G-5 Sahel member States. It has also demonstrated its autonomy in managing its own procurement system.

Those achievements, however, are being made against the backdrop of an increased lack of equipment and weak logistical capacity, primarily owing to insufficient funding and a delay in the disbursement of pledged funds. The assessment of the MINUSMA support mechanism for the Joint Force has indicated that effectively combating terrorism will depend on predictable and adequate resources.

Consequently, despite the progress I just mentioned, 2020 was the deadliest year for civilians in the tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, where more than 2,440 civilians and defence and security forces lost their lives. In that regard, we underscore the need for collective efforts and an integrated approach to combat such cross-border terrorism, the ramifications of which in Africa remain of great concern.

The number of internally displaced persons has risen twentyfold in the Liptako-Gourma region since 2018. Moreover, intercommunal conflicts are adding to the complexity of the security situation, including the fight against terrorism. In addition, the adverse effects of climate change are also continuing to negatively affect the humanitarian situation in the region.

We must therefore continue to take into account the complex relationship between climate change and conflict in order to prevent and address the challenges arising from poverty, food insecurity and intercommunal violence caused by climate change, with a view to creating the necessary conditions for achieving peace and reducing the risk of violence.

In addition, as part of improving MINUSMA's support for the Joint Force, a number of mechanisms have been put in place, including the use of private companies to deliver life support consumables to contingents operating outside Mali.

We are concerned about the 11-month delay in carrying out contracts following the adoption of resolution 2531 (2020), and especially about the fact that the arrangement, should it be implemented, would lead to additional costs for the Joint Force if the delivery fails to reach the battalions.

In terms of development, the world rankings of the Human Development Index indicate that the countries of the Sahel, with an average 1.2 per cent annual growth rate over the past 20 years, have surpassed the world average of 0.7 per cent for the same period. Unfortunately, the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, coupled with the heavy financial cost of defending their territories, has undermined their ability to invest in the development sector and basic social services. Therefore, support for the implementation of the priority investment programme emanating from the European Union Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel is more needed than ever.

In that regard, the A3+1 welcomes the recent appointment of Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye as United Nations Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel and encourage him to strengthen support for the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, in close partnership with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the Sahel countries and regional organizations, including the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, ECOWAS and the G-5 Sahel.

In the light of the findings I just mentioned, I would like to make the following recommendations on behalf of the A3+1.

We must marry the imperative of renewing development with that of political and civil revitalization, which was advocated at the at the seventh Summit of Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel, held in N'Djamena on 15 and 16 February. In that regard, as peace is a global public good, the Security Council and the international community shoulder the moral responsibility to prevent the Sahel from foundering.

If that is our goal, we must take into account the continued recommendations of the Secretary-General, which are based on the recommendation of MINUSMA's support mechanism for the Joint Force to establish a United Nations support office to provide logistical and operational support. That is the only option that would prevent the region from foundering — given that, in addition to the growing insecurity faced by the G-5 Sahel member States, two of them are confronting internal crises as a result of the situation in Libya.

If that is our goal, we must heed the Secretary-General's recommendations based on the assessments of MINUSMA support mechanism for the Joint Force by establishing an office to provide logistics, tactical and operational support next month.

With respect to the current efforts to ramp up support for the Joint Force through the use of private companies, the 11-month delay in implementing the new arrangement in and of itself is indicative of the shortcomings that it will inevitably entail. Moreover, that added support accounts for only a portion of everything that the Joint Force will probably need.

The funds budgeted for private companies to deliver supplies would have been put to better use in equipping the Joint Force at the logistics level so that it could carry out its own delivery of provisions.

Those facts also argue strongly for the establishment of a United Nations support office.

With regard to the recurrence of intercommunal conflicts, the establishment of a joint G-5 Sahel-United Nations programme would contribute significantly to addressing their root causes and preventing their recurrence.

In addition, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration will undoubtedly strengthen collective regional security efforts, including measures to make the G-5 Sahel Joint Force self-reliant.

Concerning the Peacebuilding Commission, its support for Burkina Faso's peacebuilding priorities in 2020 is commendable. We encourage following the same model in the rest of the G-5 Sahel countries, in full coordination with the countries concerned.

In addition, the Commission should work together with the Joint Force in the area of civilian and military cooperation through quick-impact projects to build relationships and trust with the local populations.

The Commission could also support the Integrated Territorial Development Project for Burkina Faso municipalities in the Sahel, Timbuktu in Mali and Tillabéri in the Niger — home to 5.5 million people — planned for a period of one year and financed in the amount of 1 billion CFA francs by the WAEMU.

In conclusion, it is time to take stock in order to evaluate and adapt our intervention strategies. The ball is in the court of the Security Council, which must seize this opportunity to continue supporting the Sahel throughout this critical phase in the fight against terrorism.

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**Annex XI****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, Mona Juul**

I thank the briefers for their insights from various perspectives.

Norway remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel and the loss of humanitarian space. Those crises must be addressed and prevented from spreading to neighbouring countries.

The death of late President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad has also highlighted the many cross-border linkages in the region, as did the recent loss of the Niger's soldiers near the border with Mali. We pay our respects to them and convey our condolences to Chad, the Niger and those most affected.

We are encouraged by the progress made by the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) in fighting terrorism. As a regional response to regional challenges, the Joint Force merits our attention and support. We understand the need for increased predictability, sustainability and flexibility. Norway is ready to discuss how that can be done, including through the United Nations and the actions of the Security Council. However, some questions remain, including what options are there to overcome the operational and logistical challenges we see today and what support mechanisms are best suited to preventing and addressing violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Norway is troubled by reported attacks against civilians committed by members of the Joint Force, including allegations of sexual violence against women and girls. At the same time, we commend the recent examples where perpetrators have been removed from their posts or prosecuted. We also commend the Joint Force's implementation of the compliance framework to prevent civilian harm. We hope that we have seen only the beginning of such efforts. Let me be clear: any international support effort that involves the United Nations would hinge especially on conduct that is fully in line with the its Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

We recognize that the Joint Force is operating in a challenging context. However, professionalism and the protection of civilians must be expected in strict accordance with human rights law and international humanitarian law. Particular attention should be given to children in armed conflict. To that end, Norway will continue to support the compliance framework, expertly implemented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In addition, an increase in police presence would help. The Force must also be expected to deliver on the women and peace and security agenda. The positive attention of the G-5 Sahel Executive Secretariat to the role of women in leadership positions should continue.

Military solutions alone can never transform conflicts into peace. Security measures must be complemented by understanding and addressing root causes — whether owing to the lack of development, inequality of opportunity or vulnerability to climate change. We should continue to enhance the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission in that regard. The fight is not only against violent extremism, but also about gaining the trust of the civilian population through inclusive governance. This was also a main message in a recent report from the People's Coalition for the Sahel. They call it the four "people's pillars", which are to, first, prioritize the protection of civilians; secondly, create a political strategy to address the root causes of the crisis; thirdly, respond to humanitarian emergencies; and, fourthly, combat impunity.

Lastly, I am glad to note that those signals are increasingly being recognized — the G-5 Sahel Summit in N'Djamena focused on a civilian and political surge. The road map of the Coalition for the Sahel also includes pillars involving development and the return of the State and basic services, such as schools and health clinics. In the end, that is what matters to people in their daily lives.

**Annex XII****Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva**

[Original: Russian]

At the outset, I would like to say that we regret the format of this meeting. Given the positive direction that the epidemic has taken in New York, it is high time that the Security Council return to in-person meetings, while respecting social distancing and other health-related requirements. Moreover, the Security Council Chamber is equipped to meet all such requirements.

We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for briefing us on the developments in the region. We also thank Brigadier General Oumarou Namata Gazama, Commander of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Joint Force; and Mr. Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, for the information they presented. We welcome the participation at this meeting of Chad's Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad.

Russia shares the assessments that were made today that, during the reporting period, the situation in the Sahel not only failed to improve but, to a large extent, deteriorated. Terrorist activity has exploded with renewed force, while inter-ethnic and intercommunal conflicts have widened. All of that has had an extremely negative impact on the security situation. Dozens of military servicemen and hundreds of civilians have been killed by terrorists. The statistics are truly heartbreaking.

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons has increased. Challenges to food security are at their highest-ever level. All this demands that the States of the region take urgently needed measures to resolve the acute socioeconomic problems, strengthen State institutions and safeguard human rights. Otherwise it will create conditions more apt to lead to the radicalization of the population, including young people.

We support the efforts of the G-5 Sahel to deploy its Joint Force to counter terrorism and organized crime; it has become an important element of regional security. We commend the success of several counter-terrorist operations carried out by the Joint Force within the reporting period. There is a need to further coordinate action, both within the Sahel Force and with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and other military presences in the region.

It is obvious that the full operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force depends upon two key factors — ensuring stable and predictable financing and providing the necessary transportation and logistical support. In that regard, we support the assistance that MINUSMA provides the Joint Force in accordance with its mandate pursuant to resolution 2531 (2020). The resolution envisages flexible mechanisms to improve the Mission, which we hope will soon be put into practice.

We view the regional initiatives to advance interaction between the Joint Force and the United Nations in a positive light. We are ready to look into the relevant proposals, including those relating to the establishment of a special division like the United Nations Support Office in Somalia. We believe that the constructive expertise seen in the provision of technical and logistical support to the African Union Mission in Somalia can be adapted and applied to the Sahelo-Saharan region.

In general, we are convinced that further coordinated steps aimed at countering terrorism in the Sahelo-Saharan region are highly important, and they

need to be made by both the Africans and the international community. Hopefully, the concept of deploying African standby forces in the Sahel, which the African Union is developing together with the regional organizations, will soon bear fruit.

Russia is closely following the developments in the region. We provide military and technical assistance to a number of States and train military and police personnel. We intend to carry on with that work.

## Annex XIII

### **Statement by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations**

I also thank all the briefers here today. Their insights help give us a fuller picture of the challenges facing the Sahel region.

In the past six months, we have witnessed a growing number of attacks in the Niger, creeping insecurity into southern Mali and renewed attacks against villages in Burkina Faso. Civilians are being killed and displaced, losing access to education as schools close and facing the increasing threat of famine.

We recognize the efforts of the States members of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5) to address the challenges facing the region, and we welcome in particular their commitment through the Coalition for the Sahel road map to refocus attention on governance, development and the provision of basic services. There can be no purely military solution to instability in the Sahel.

This is clear in Chad, where the death of President Idriss Deby Itno has resulted in the establishment of a Transitional Military Council. We urge the Transitional Council to deliver a peaceful, timely transition to civilian and constitutional rule, including free and fair elections within an 18-month time frame.

We welcome the steps taken by the Joint Force to improve coordination with other forces on the ground and build trust with local communities. Our troop deployment to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is seeing first-hand the impact of effective civilian and military coordination, including dialogue with communities about their protection needs and security concerns.

However, we remain concerned about continued allegations of human rights violations. The swift action taken by the Joint Force and by the Chadian and Nigerien authorities immediately following recent allegations in the Niger has sent a clear message, but there is more to do. We urge the Joint Force and relevant national authorities to follow through on their commitments to ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are held accountable.

The G-5 Sahel Joint Force is a key part of the solution to peace and stability in the region. However, it is only one part of the solution. As the Sahel Coalition road map illustrates, security interventions need to be part of a concerted political effort to address the root causes of conflict. G-5 Governments, with support from the international community, need to address governance and sustainable development needs, if military actions are to have a lasting effect.

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**Annex XIV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield**

Let me start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Brigadier General Namata Gazama, Ambassador Edrees and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Daoud for their briefings today.

At the outset, like other members of the Security Council, we are alarmed by the increasing violent extremism, terrorist attacks and intercommunal violence across the Sahel. In addition, with climate change and food insecurity on the rise, civilians are increasingly vulnerable. As members of the Security Council heard, already in 2021, at least 300 civilians have been killed in attacks, and nearly 2.2 million people were internally displaced in the Sahel. We mourn the deaths of those innocent people.

Those upsetting trends are why we must continue our serious, sustainable approach to the region. The Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) — both the civilian component and the Joint Force — is a crucial part of that solution. Continued coordination among Governments in the region is also critical. We welcome the creation of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, which complements the ongoing efforts of the G-5 Sahel, the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and other African institutions.

For its part, the United States is a dedicated partner in the region. To the G-5 Sahel alone, we provide equipment, training and advisory support to fill critical capability gaps on a bilateral basis. Since 2017, the United States has committed more than \$588 million in security assistance and other counter-violent extremism support to the G-5 Sahel countries.

Given all the mechanisms in play, the existing G-5 Sahel Trust Fund and bilateral support to the Joint Force are the right approach to addressing the Sahel's security concerns. But, in order to make that work, all partners must honour their pledges to the Joint Force and support the individual G-5 Sahel militaries that supply troops to the Joint Force. We believe that United Nations-assessed peacekeeping funds are not a viable source of financing for the Joint Force. Chapter VII authorization for the Joint Force is neither appropriate nor ideal to help it accomplish its mission.

Beyond the security response, we also need to address governance in the region. As Secretary of State Blinken said in his remarks to the G-5 Sahel Summit in February, tactical counter-terrorism work is essential, but alone it is insufficient. Instability and violence are also symptoms of a crisis of State legitimacy. Stability comes from providing economic opportunity, protecting the rule of law and engaging communities in decisions that affect them. In order to help with those concerns, the United States Government has provided more than \$2 billion in health and development, security and humanitarian assistance to support the Sahel.

But stability requires more than that. It requires justice and accountability, especially for human rights violations and abuses committed by security and defence forces. It also requires addressing the needs of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force has an obligation to fully implement its own human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework. It must visibly demonstrate its commitment to the protection of civilians in the region. To that end, we welcome the Government of Mauritania's recent step to complete two trials of alleged cases of abuse. We look forward to the timely and credible investigation and resolution of all outstanding cases.

In Chad, we strongly support the efforts of the African Union to engage with the transitional authorities towards a peaceful, timely and civilian-led transition to a democratically elected Government.

In Mali, we welcome the transitional Government's plan to hold presidential and legislative elections in February of 2022. We urge the Malian transitional Government to ensure inclusive and transparent processes in preparing for and holding free and fair elections, including with regard to the full, effective and meaningful participation of women and young people.

In the Niger, we applaud the Government's recent transition and congratulate the President on his inauguration.

For Chad, Mali and the rest of the region, representative elected Governments are the best path forward. Democracy leads to good governance; good governance leads to stability; and stability will lead to peace and prosperity for all.

**Annex XV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

We would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his comprehensive briefing, as well as Brigadier General Oumarou Namata, Commander of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), and Ambassador Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their contributions. We also welcome His Excellency Mr. Oumar Ibn Daoud, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad of the Republic of Chad, to this meeting.

On the political and security situation, despite some encouraging progress in the political sphere, we are concerned about the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel region, especially along the borders between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, as well as the recent attacks against peacekeepers and defence and security forces.

At least 300 people, including peacekeepers, were killed in three major terrorist attacks thus far in 2021. We join other Member States in condemning those barbaric acts of violence, including that which led to the passing away of the late President of Chad and the failed plot to murder the President of the Niger. We would like to convey our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the recent attacks in Chad, the Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. The perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Against that backdrop, we reiterate the importance of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force in maintaining peace, security and stability in the Sahel region. It is urgent that the countries of the Sahel, the United Nations and regional and international organizations redouble their efforts to fight terrorism and violent extremism and prevent intercommunal conflicts. We believe that the Joint Force can address the tremendous challenges ahead only if they receive adequate resources and assistance. We therefore support the initiatives of the three African members of the Security Council and France on the establishment of a United Nations support office for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force in order to combat terrorism.

Furthermore, we stress the urgency of providing better protection for, and ensuring the safety of, peacekeepers, as well as calling for an immediate stop to the use of improvised explosive devices against civilians, peacekeepers and defence and security forces.

On the humanitarian front, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, proliferating terrorist attacks, escalating conflicts and the exploitation of natural resources, inter alia, are exacerbating the dire humanitarian conditions in the region. In 2021, it is estimated that 29 million Sahelians are in need of assistance and protection. Approximately 6.8 million people are facing threats of food insecurity and famine, while 2.3 million people have been forced to leave their homes and nearly 900,000 people have become refugees. In that context, we call for more vital aid for the countries of the Sahel to deal with those humanitarian crises, especially the COVID-19 pandemic. It is projected that countries in the region will need \$3.7 billion for their 2021 response plan.

As for parties to conflicts, they must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, including for the protection of civilians, especially women and children, and ensure the legitimate rights and the interests of people in the Sahel region. It is imperative to provide safe and smooth passage for humanitarian aid along the border of the countries of the Sahel and ensure basic services for those in need.

We are of the view that it is crucial for the Sahel region to take a coherent and integrated approach to security and humanitarian issues, as well as to promote peace, stability and social and development challenges in the Sahel. We reiterate our call for greater focus on social services and sustainable economic development and the inclusion of women and young people in that regard.

Last but not least, we welcome the efforts and contributions of the United Nations Office for West Africa, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the European Union and Member States in collaborating with the Joint Force to address the challenges I mentioned and promote peace, security and stability in the region.

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**Annex XVI****Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad of Chad, Oumar Ibn Daoud**

[Original: French]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the People's Republic of China on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May and to thank it for holding this meeting on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel).

I also wish to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Brigadier General Oumarou Namata, Commander of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force; and Ambassador Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their excellent briefings on the situation concerning the Joint Force and the G-5 Sahel in general.

As mentioned by previous speakers, the Joint Force, which was created in 2017 by the G-5 Sahel Heads of State, has achieved some considerable and commendable successes, despite the multiple challenges it continues to face. For example, since 2020, several operations have been carried out in the central time zone — the epicentre of terrorist attacks — in conjunction with Operation Barkhane partners, achieving satisfactory results.

However, the security situation remains highly concerning. Terrorist attacks continue to plunge the national armed forces and civilian populations into mourning. Attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger have resulted in the deaths of more than 400 people since March. Moreover, the subregional security dynamic is undergoing developments that further exacerbate the already serious and complex security context in the G-5 Sahel region.

I would like to touch on the departure of mercenaries and foreign fighters from Libya. Those mercenaries and fighters of all kinds have been ordered by the international community, in particular the Security Council, to leave Libya without adequate disarmament and support measures. That has exposed the neighbouring countries to the danger of coming into contact with those mercenaries and the tons of heavy armaments, as well as sophisticated military equipment, in their possession.

That which has already occurred in Chad due to the incursion of mercenaries from Libya, resulting in the late Marshal Idriss Deby Itno being killed in action on 20 April, is a perfect illustration of what could happen anywhere in the Sahel if adequate accompanying measures are not urgently taken by the international community, in particular by the Security Council. It also shows how fragile the situation in the Sahel remains.

The departure of mercenaries from Libya poses a risk of further deterioration for our countries, which could wipe out the gains made and thrust the subregion back into violence that is difficult to control. More conflict in the subregion will be detrimental to Africa as a whole.

In order to prevent the African continent becoming a battlefield and a rear base for the international terrorist movement, it is essential to take control of the situation and defeat the terrorists in the Sahel. That is possible, and one of the tools at our disposal in that fight is the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel. By ramping up its capabilities, we can eradicate the terrorist threat in the Sahel and create the conditions for stability and harmonious and sustainable development in the region for the benefit of the whole of Africa.

However, despite the progress made, the Joint Force is still facing challenges related to sustainable and predictable funding that hinder its full operationalization, thereby affecting the morale of the troops, as the Secretary-General eloquently noted in his report (S/2021/442). It is true that the Joint Force has benefited from the support of its partners within the framework of multilateral support to the Force and the national armies of the G-5 Sahel States. Unfortunately, it is also true that such support, although essential, remains uncertain. The voluntary contributions pledged by our partners are slow to materialize, meaning that the Force's needs are far from being met in a timely manner.

As for the logistical support provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to the Joint Force within the framework of the technical arrangement, while it is a great contribution to the Force, its full implementation continues to suffer due to major difficulties, including the cost of transporting consumable items to battalions on the ground, as the Joint Force does not have its own logistical means to do so. Furthermore, due to its limited nature, MINUSMA support does not cover all of the essential needs of the battalions in the different time zones. Certain battalions in the eastern zone, for example, rarely have their requests fulfilled due to the various constraints linked to the nature of such support.

Given the major limitations of the existing mechanisms for supporting the Joint Force, the most appropriate and effective option remains the creation of a logistical and operational support office, financed by compulsory contributions from Member States. The support office would enable the Joint Force to definitively resolve the issue of sustainable, predictable funding so that it could focus its full attention on the fight against terrorism in order to restore security, stability and peace and create the conditions for much-needed sustainable socioeconomic development in the region.

Of course, the Joint Force will continue to pursue full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, in accordance with the compliance framework and the due diligence policy. As noted in the Secretary-General's report, significant progress has been made in terms of implementation in that regard. The States members of the G-5 Sahel remain committed to the full implementation of the compliance framework and will spare no effort in further strengthening respect for human rights, the protection of civilians and the integration of gender issues in the actions of the Joint Force in particular and the G-5 Sahel in general.

We are at a pivotal juncture. The questions, hesitations and prevarications of our partners will unfortunately serve only to give the terrorists respite and strengthen them, as they are observing and noting the lack of action. That will encourage the terrorists to believe that the efforts of States and the international community are failing to eradicate the scourge. The terrorists will exploit any loopholes in the ranks of the international community and build strength with all manner of new recruits, including from criminal organizations and terrorists fleeing from elsewhere.

Moreover, the persistence of terrorist attacks demonstrates the resilience of terrorists and their ability to take the initiative in the face of the slightest weakness, absence or inaction on the part of States and their partners. In that struggle, lasting security requires the military defeat of the terrorist core group in order to restore security. Without the defeat of the terrorists, any other non-military action will not have the desired effect.

The Joint Force is ready to achieve that objective, which is expected of it by its populations, the States of the region and the international community. It simply needs substantial support. The only option to provide the support it requires is through the establishment of a support office, financed by compulsory contributions from Member States.

Of course, there is no purely military solution to the Sahel crisis. There is also the development component, which constitutes the other pillar of the G-5 Sahel, and its implementation must be accelerated. Since its creation, the G-5 Sahel has had in place a strategy for development and security based on four strategic axes: defence and security, governance, infrastructure and resilience and human development. Those axes are broken down into a priority investment programme.

In order to accelerate the implementation of the development and security strategy, the G-5 Sahel has also adopted an integrated priority action framework, the objective of which is to enable the identification of rapid, realistic, measurable and flexible actions to be carried out on the security and development fronts in priority fragile areas and then extended to the humanitarian, governance and reconciliation spheres.

That means that the G-5 Sahel has a comprehensive range of short-, medium- and long-term projects, programmes and actions, identified by our States and based on our realities on the ground, aimed at lifting the Sahel out of the current crisis situation and effectively addressing the root causes that contribute to it. All that the G-5 Sahel lacks are the means to carry out its security and development activities, namely, thorough and sustained international support to achieve its objectives, for the good of Africa and humankind.

Finally, I would like to express my warm congratulations and thanks to the President of the Security Council for holding this meeting. We will undoubtedly have to continue these exchanges in order to assess the progress made in the implementation of our respective commitments.

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