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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2164 (2014), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). My previous report ([S/2014/692](#)) focused on the implementation of the Ouagadougou preliminary agreement and the expansion of the MINUSMA force's presence in northern Mali. The present report covers the implementation of all aspects of the Mission's mandate, as well as provides updates on the implementation of the measures welcomed by the Council during its informal interactive dialogue on 10 November. While the reporting period is from 16 September to 16 December, I have included information dating back to 27 May on those aspects of the mandate that were not covered in my previous report.

II. National political dialogue and reconciliation

2. Three additional rounds of the inter-Malian dialogue launched in Algiers in July were held during the reporting period, supported by the mediation team led by Algeria and comprising the United Nations/MINUSMA, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and the Niger. Following the first round in July, the mediation had produced a document for negotiations containing elements for a peace agreement proposed by the parties and the civil society representatives that they had selected. In the subsequent rounds, the parties negotiated on the basis of that document. At the end of the fourth round of negotiations in late November, the parties' positions on key issues remained unchanged.

3. A second round of negotiations facilitated by the mediation team was concluded in Algiers on 23 September. The mediation team undertook bilateral discussions with the Government and the Coordination, composed of the Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), the Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA) and the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad (MAA), joined by individuals from the Coordination des mouvements et fronts patriotiques de résistance II (CMFPR-II) and a faction of the Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad (CPA) on one side, and with the Government and the Platform armed groups composed of CMFPR-I, CPA and the other faction of MAA, as well as individuals



from the Groupe d'autodéfense touareg Imghad et alliés (GATIA) invited by the Platform, on the other. While the parties agreed on the principles of territorial integrity, the secular and unitary nature of the State, the transfer of broad authority to regional entities, and the recognition and facilitation of cultural diversity, significant differences remained regarding the institutional framework. The Government and the Platform called for enhanced regionalization, while the Coordination continued to advocate the establishment of a federal system in Mali. The parties agreed on the need for an interim period to enable the transition to any new governing arrangements and for significant international community engagement to provide guarantees and oversight of an eventual peace agreement.

4. The parties returned to Algiers in mid-October to prepare for a third round of negotiations. On the eve of the resumption of the talks, on 17 October, the Security Council issued a press release in which it called upon all parties to fully comply with the commitments that they had made in the road map of 24 July and to engage in peace talks in good faith and in a spirit of compromise. On 18 October, the mediation members held a ministerial-level meeting to review and validate a document entitled "Elements for a peace and reconciliation agreement in Mali", developed from the discussions in the second round, before sharing it with the parties.

5. On 20 October, Algeria, on behalf of the mediation team, presented the draft document to the parties, and from 21 to 23 October the parties held separate consultations with the mediation team on the draft document. In an attempt to bridge the gap between the Coordination's call for federalism and the Government's proposal for enhanced decentralization, the document proposed a package deal offering: (a) stronger regionalization and the strengthening of the capacity of regional assemblies and local governments to determine local and regional priorities; and (b) a significant economic development package for the north, largely financed by the international community. It also proposed the creation of a local police force; the addition of a second national legislative chamber, a Senate, whose members would be representatives from communities and traditional and customary leaders; and the establishment of a quota of seats in the National Assembly and the Government for northern constituencies. The proposal was also aimed at strengthening interim security arrangements in the north, including through strengthened ceasefire management arrangements supervised by MINUSMA. It outlined the principles governing the proposed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes; called for a strengthened truth, justice and reconciliation commission respecting international norms regarding independent representation; requested an international commission of inquiry; and invited the parties to respect international norms governing humanitarian action. Finally, the document outlined a set of interim measures to govern a transition period and to establish a robust follow-up committee to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement.

6. The Government welcomed the revised "Elements for a peace and reconciliation agreement in Mali", stating that the document provided the basis for an agreement. The Government also requested changes to the document, including with regard to the proposed reserved quotas for the citizens in the north in State institutions, the designation of a single economic development zone in the north, the creation of a Senate and the interregional arrangements. The Coordination expressed concerns over the document's focus on economic development rather than their

demand for political and institutional arrangements granting autonomy to the north. The Platform broadly approved of the document.

7. On 24 October, the parties left Algiers to consult their constituencies on the proposed elements of the peace agreement. MINUSMA facilitated training and provided logistical support to all parties during their awareness-raising campaigns. The parties briefed their respective constituencies, including Malian refugees residing in Mauritania and the Niger, on the content of the document. The Government carried out the campaigns countrywide, with the exception of Kidal, while the armed groups focused on the northern regions.

8. On 20 November, a fourth round of talks resumed in Algiers on the basis of the revised document, which incorporated a number of comments that the parties had submitted to Algeria and included additional annexes detailing the implementation arrangements. From 22 to 24 November, the mediation team organized interactive dialogues between the Government and the Platform on the one hand and between the Government and the Coordination on the other. On 26 November, the mediation team presented the parties with a slightly revised text that included three annexes and was renamed the “Draft peace and reconciliation agreement in Mali”. On 27 November, the parties returned to Mali for consultation with their respective constituencies with the understanding that their senior leaders would reconvene in Algiers in January 2015. On the same day, the mediation team issued a communiqué for the first time since the launch of the inter-Malian dialogue, encouraging the parties to remain committed to the peace process and the ceasefire agreement and calling upon the international community to continue its support.

9. During the reporting period, the Government came under increasing criticism and public pressure, including over its handling of the peace process, allegations of corruption by some senior officials and labour unrest. On 19 October, tense negotiations between the Government and trade unions resulted in the former agreeing to lower taxes and raise the minimum wage. With regard to the inter-Malian dialogue, the media and political parties in the south criticized the Government for engaging in discussions on potential decentralization in the north, which they perceived as a factor potentially leading to the partition of Mali. On 19 November, an opposition leader criticized the lack of Government effort to inform the population on the negotiation process, as well as on the content of the negotiations in Algiers, in particular the proposed security and political institutional arrangements between the Government and the northern regions. On the same day, in Bamako, more than 40 civil society groups jointly protested against the content of the draft agreement.

10. Opposition parties also expressed concerns about the allegations of corruption in the disbursement of State funds. The allegations prompted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to visit Mali from 11 to 25 September to review the Government’s economic programme supported under the IMF Extended Credit Facility. On 25 September, the Government agreed with IMF to publish independent audit reports, including on the extrabudgetary spending on a presidential aircraft and a military contract, following an IMF audit on the national budget system and investigations into discrepancies in fiscal management. On 1 December, following corrective action by the Government, the IMF Executive Board decided to resume aid to Mali.

11. On 12 December, the Minister of Justice confirmed the release on 9 December of four prisoners held on charges ranging from terrorism to kidnapping in exchange for a French national who had been held hostage by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) since 2011. Civil society groups and opposition parties demanded an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the prisoners' liberation, while Mali corrections personnel threatened to go on strike on the grounds that one of the released prisoners had killed a prison guard during an escape attempt.

12. On 1 October, the Government launched an operation to update civil registries through the Steering Committee of the recensement administratif à vocation d'état civil, an administrative census aimed at modernizing the civil registry system to produce a biometric electoral voters' list. The United Nations Integrated Electoral Team provided technical and logistical support to the operation. The biometric list will be used in the communal and regional elections scheduled for the first quarter of 2015.

III. Security, stabilization and protection of civilians

13. The security situation remained volatile throughout the reporting period. The parties repositioned their forces and, in repeated instances, clashed as negotiations in Algiers proceeded. To support the implementation of increasingly fragile ceasefire arrangements, MINUSMA sought to operationalize and expand the extended Mixed Technical Commission on Security and the joint observation and verification teams. Extremist groups maintained a high level of activity and continued to target MINUSMA. Clashes between the parties and the prevalence of improvised explosive devices had a negative impact on the protection of civilians.

14. On 16 September, in the margins of the inter-Malian dialogue, the parties and members of the mediation team signed a declaration of the Commission, endorsing the inclusion of all six armed groups, as well as Algeria, Chad, Mauritania and the Niger, in the Commission, chaired by MINUSMA. The Ouagadougou preliminary agreement of 18 June 2013, signed by the Government of Mali, HCUA and MNLA, had established the Commission to develop implementation modalities and monitor the ceasefire, as well as investigate possible violations through joint observation and verification teams to be established in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. In the declaration of 16 September, the parties condemned attacks against international forces and committed to collaborating fully with MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane to prevent them. During the reporting period, the composition of the joint observation and verification team in Gao was adjusted to include all armed group members of the Coordination and the Platform, as well as representatives from Algeria, Chad, Mauritania and the Niger. From 19 to 22 November, the Gao team conducted a fact-finding mission in Didi, on both sides of the Niger River. Meanwhile, MINUSMA started preparations for the establishment of the joint observation and verification team in Timbuktu. On 16 December, the Commission met in Gao, where discussions focused on the modus operandi of the enlarged Commission, the work of the joint observation and verification teams and the identification and reconnaissance of cantonment sites.

15. On 16 October, N'tillit (Gao region) passed from MNLA to pro-government GATIA control without violence, but this resulted in the displacement of 500 civilians. MINUSMA conducted patrols in the area to diffuse potential tensions

and reassure the population before facilitating the return of those displaced. On 19 October, MNLA and GATIA fought over neighbouring Tessit, which GATIA succeeded in taking over from MNLA. The subsequent deployment of Malian defence and security forces troops to N'tillit and Tessit fuelled allegations of collusion between the forces and GATIA. The Secretaries-General of MNLA and HCUA did not join the Coordination delegation in the fourth round of the inter-Malian dialogue in November, arguing that developments on the ground required them to stay in Mali. The Coordination representatives in Algiers accused the Government of violating the ceasefire and instigating intercommunal violence.

16. On 6 November, the Malian defence and security forces took control of the southern bank of the Niger River in Didi, east of Timbuktu, while MAA (Coordination) and MNLA remained in control of the northern bank. In mid-November, the Coordination took control of Zarho (100 km east of Didi), and on 1 December the Platform seized Bamba (30 km east of Zarho). There was no significant violence recorded during those movements.

17. Extremist groups were suspected of killing 16 peacekeepers and injuring 14 others during the reporting period. Improvised explosive devices and anti-vehicle mines placed along routes used by MINUSMA severely hindered its operations. On 16 September, a mortar round detonated near MINUSMA installations in Aguelhok (Kidal region). On 18 September, five peacekeepers died and five were injured when a patrol vehicle struck a mine south of Tessalit (Kidal region). One of the wounded peacekeepers later succumbed to his injuries. On 3 October, a MINUSMA logistics convoy was ambushed near Indelimane (Gao region), and nine peacekeepers were killed. The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) claimed responsibility for that attack, as well as for a subsequent attack in the Niger that killed one and injured two members of the Nigerien Defence Forces on 19 November. On 7 October, seven mortar rounds hit the MINUSMA camp in Kidal, killing one peacekeeper and injuring two. On 25 October, a MINUSMA force water supply truck hit a mine 12 km south-west of Kidal town, injuring three peacekeepers. On 2 December, three peacekeepers were wounded when their vehicle struck a mine in Aguelhok (Kidal region). On 9 December, a military vehicle hit an explosive device 70 km east of Ansongo (Gao region), and one peacekeeper sustained slight injuries.

18. From 3 to 5 November, the Niger hosted a ministerial meeting of African troop contributors to MINUSMA to discuss the deteriorating security situation. Participants pledged to support the signature of a peace agreement, called for the reinforcement of MINUSMA capacities and committed to enhancing regional security cooperation to combat terrorism. The importance of regional security mechanisms for stability in Mali, including the Nouakchott Process, led by the African Union, was echoed by the Security Council during its informal interactive dialogue of 10 November.

19. Extremist groups also targeted civilian contractors operating for MINUSMA. On 12 October, armed elements stopped a contracted truck and destroyed the clearly marked cargo, leaving the driver unharmed. On 6 November, a civilian contractor's truck struck an explosive device 40 km south of Almoustarat (Gao region), wounding three. On 8 November, two civilian trucks contracted by MINUSMA were stopped by armed elements, who robbed the drivers and threatened to burn their trucks should they continue working for MINUSMA.

20. From 27 May to 16 December, the explosion of improvised explosive devices placed along major routes resulted in 19 civilian casualties, with 3 dead and 16 injured. Explosive remnants of war remained a serious concern for civilians, with six incidents recorded since 15 September in Ber, N'tillit, Kidal and Tabankort, resulting in the death of 2 children and the maiming of 10. A total of 140 Malian civilians were killed or injured by explosive remnants of war between 1 March 2012 and 16 December 2014. As at 10 November, the United Nations Mine Action Service had surveyed 1,167 villages and safely destroyed 1,371 items of unexploded ordnance. From 1 July to 31 October, the Mine Action Service and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) partners conducted awareness-raising sessions on the risks of explosive hazards, reaching a total of 33,122 men and women.

IV. Re-establishment of State authority

21. The absence of a political agreement, coupled with persistent insecurity and the control of large parts of northern Mali by armed groups, continued to impede the redeployment of national administrators and service providers. In the Gao region, prefects and subprefects have redeployed to three of the region's four *cercles*, namely Bourem, Gao and Ansongo. In Gao, 75 per cent and 80 per cent of prefects and subprefects, respectively, have resumed their functions. In Mopti, all eight prefects are in place, as are all of the 50-some subprefects. In Timbuktu, all five prefects are deployed, as are 13 of 27 subprefects. In total, in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions, 95 per cent of prefects perform their functions, as do roughly 80 per cent of subprefects. In the Kidal region, there has been no presence of State administrators since May 2014.

22. A number of public buildings that had been destroyed and looted have been rehabilitated in Timbuktu town, as well as in 36 towns of the region, through a programme implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in support of the restoration of State authority. UNDP also worked with MINUSMA, within the Global Focal Point for the Police, Justice and Corrections framework, to complete the rehabilitation of the Gao and Timbuktu prisons. The gendarmerie brigades in Goundam, Niafunké and Timbuktu were rehabilitated through MINUSMA quick-impact projects. In addition, UNICEF supported the rehabilitation and equipment of 113 birth registration offices in Gao and Timbuktu, 47 civil registry offices and the Gao regional protectorate for the protection of the family, women and children.

23. The redeployment of justice and corrections personnel has not proceeded apace with the refurbishment of infrastructure owing to persisting concerns over their security in areas of northern Mali under the control of armed groups, as well as missing equipment. A total of 122 justice and corrections personnel work in the northern regions, an increase of 4 personnel since September. This represents 51 per cent of the current authorized personnel of 237. In northern Mali, 7 of 12 tribunals and related prosecutors' offices and 7 of 12 prisons are operational. MINUSMA continued to extend technical assistance and logistical support to the Ministry of Justice in the field of judicial inspections, including an inspection of prison facilities in the Timbuktu region between 8 and 19 November. On 8 December, UNDP and MINUSMA submitted to the Minister of Justice a draft strategic plan for justice reform in Mali. The proposed reform is aimed at guaranteeing the independence of the justice system and facilitating access to and delivery of justice.

24. On 21 October, a magistrate was appointed by presidential decree to coordinate a national programme to fight drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. The effectiveness of Malian transnational organized crime units remains significantly hampered by resource constraints despite the co-location of a United Nations Police Transnational Organized Crime Cell with Malian counterparts. Through co-location, practical training and tactical support, the United Nations Police continued to assist the narcotic drugs brigade, which achieved significant successes in the seizure of large quantities of illegal substances and in the prosecution of 13 individuals.

25. On 14 August, the Government established a National Council for Security Sector Reform, chaired by the President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, which will define the strategic orientation of future security sector reform with the participation of all relevant ministries, including the Ministries of Justice, Defence, Interior and Security, Finance, Women, Children and Family, and Environment. To enhance coordination among international actors, MINUSMA established a high-level strategic committee on security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and a working-level technical working group. MINUSMA also initiated capacity-building work for the National Assembly on the issue of democratic oversight of security institutions.

V. Human rights

26. During the reporting period, MINUSMA documented a number of exactions committed by MDSF, including excessive use of force that resulted in extrajudicial killings. On 3 October, in Gao town, prison guards shot an unarmed detainee who was surrendering after a failed prison escape attempt. On 16 November, also in Gao town, a soldier of the Malian armed forces opened fire indiscriminately in a public place, which resulted in the death of one man and injury to five others. The Malian authorities have opened investigations into those two incidents.

27. On 2 November, 16 of 20 persons arrested during an MDSF operation in Boulkessi (Mopti region), an area controlled by HCUA, reported to MINUSMA severe beatings during interrogation. They said that MDSF was trying to force them to confess that they belonged to armed groups. After being detained for one month, the 20 were released without charges. MINUSMA considers that the treatment received by the detainees during arrest and interrogation may amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

28. In the areas of Anéfis and Tabankort, MAA (Coordination) and MAA (Platform) continue to detain fighters, as well as civilians, perceived to support the opposing party. Both groups refuse to disclose the exact number of detainees held and the locations of detention. The practice may be considered tantamount to enforced disappearance, in breach of the armed groups' obligations under customary international humanitarian law.

29. MINUSMA also documented reprisals against persons cooperating with the United Nations or the international community at large. In Lerneb (Timbuktu region), in September, MAA (Platform) warned in various public meetings that it would punish members of the local population who provided information to MINUSMA and the French forces. On 23 September, the body of a beheaded man was found in the area of Zouera, 80 km north of Timbuktu. He was one of five men

abducted on 16 September by AQIM, and accused by that organization of collaboration with international forces, who have since disappeared.

30. The prosecution of human rights violations committed during the conflict did not progress during the reporting period. The trial against General Sanogo remains in the pretrial phase; the killing of 16 preachers in a Malian armed forces camp in Diabaly in September 2012 remains under investigation; the summary execution of three Tuaregs in Djébock (Gao region) in February 2014 is under investigation, with four Malian armed forces soldiers still in detention. No investigation has been initiated in the killing on 12 April 2014 of a Dogon man by police officers in Mopti. While 174 reported members of armed groups remain in detention on conflict-related charges, no criminal trials have begun to date.

31. In October and December, MINUSMA provided training to 425 members of MDSF on the limits of the use of force in military and police operations, protection of civilians, handling of detainees and guarantees in conflict-related criminal trials. On 14 November, the Mission provided similar capacity-building training to 11 representatives of HCUA, MAA (Coordination) and MNLA. MINUSMA continues to bring individual cases or patterns of concern to the attention of the parties and to recommend remedial actions.

Violations of women's rights

32. Malian courts have yet to prosecute cases of conflict-related sexual violence, but on 12 November six local human rights non-governmental organizations filed criminal complaints on behalf of 80 women and girls (ages 9-55) for sexual violence committed by members of armed groups in 2012. MINUSMA also identified 32 survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in the region of Timbuktu and referred them to non-governmental organizations ready to assist them in filing their cases with the justice system. MINUSMA closely monitors progress on cases of sexual violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, in the penal system. In Gao, Malian military authorities impeded a criminal investigation into two rape cases allegedly committed by Malian armed forces soldiers in May, pressuring the father of a 14-year-old victim to withdraw one case and failing to comply with the judicial police's request for access to the suspected perpetrator of the rape of an 11-year-old child in another.

Violations of children's rights

33. On 16 September, MINUSMA and UNICEF screened armed elements of MAA (Coordination) and MNLA stationed in Ber (Timbuktu region) and identified five children aged 15 to 17 years and two young adults who were probably recruited while they were still minors. The two armed groups had signed orders on 18 September prohibiting their forces from committing grave violations against children. On 15 October, MINUSMA and UNICEF conducted a child protection mission to Tabankort (Gao region), in which MAA (Platform) and GATIA pledged to respect international child protection standards, especially the prohibition of the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. They also committed to verifying that all recruits were over 18 years of age. UNICEF reunited 36 boys formerly associated with armed groups with their families in Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu in 2014, including 1 during the reporting period. One boy formerly associated with armed groups remains in the UNICEF-supported centre pending reunification with his family.

34. In spite of persistent United Nations advocacy, nine children are still detained in Bamako detention centres for alleged association with armed groups, in violation of the protocol on the release, reunification and reintegration of children associated with armed forces or groups in Mali signed on 1 July 2013 by the Government.

VI. Humanitarian assistance

35. The security situation continues to hamper humanitarian access in northern Mali. For the first time since the beginning of the crisis in 2012, two humanitarian workers were killed on 29 May in the Timbuktu region when their car hit a remote-controlled improvised explosive device. Two international non-governmental organizations' vehicles were carjacked on 8 and 9 November near Ménaka (Gao region). The MINUSMA force assisted with the recovery of the passengers on 9 November. On 15 November, a third vehicle belonging to an international non-governmental organization was carjacked in the same area. On 25 November, a humanitarian convoy was attacked by two armed men 20 km west of Timbuktu. They stole one vehicle but left the passengers unharmed.

36. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) again registered a decrease in the number of internally displaced persons in Mali (86,026 persons as at 17 November, down from 99,816 in late September). The number of Malian refugees registered in neighbouring countries by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) remained relatively stable, at 143,530 persons as at 15 November 2014. IOM, UNDP and UNHCR have developed a comprehensive durable solutions strategy for internally displaced persons and returnees encompassing reconciliation and social cohesion, food security, livelihoods, property, assets and documentation aspects. A large number of internally displaced persons and Malian refugees are expected to return should an agreement be reached in Algiers.

37. The food security situation in Mali has improved. From a high of 812,236 persons in need of emergency food assistance in December 2013, the number of food-insecure people in Mali has fallen to 263,039. In August and September, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) distributed fertilizer, rice seed, peanut seed, millet seed and sorghum to 215,000 members of vulnerable households in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions. Preliminary results of the 2014/15 agriculture surveys are broadly satisfactory. Some areas in Gao, Timbuktu and Mopti, however, have experienced rain deficit, which will have an impact on both agricultural and pastoral activities.

Ebola

38. To date, eight Ebola virus disease cases have been identified in Mali; six of the patients died and two recovered. On 23 October, a first case of Ebola was reported in the Kayes region: a two-year-old girl returning from Guinea died of the disease but without transmitting the virus to any of the people with whom she had been in contact. On 11 November, an outbreak was reported in Bamako when a symptomatic person travelling from Guinea infected several health-care workers at Clinique Pasteur, the United Nations referral medical facility. The Government of Mali immediately placed the clinic under quarantine, and MINUSMA formed police units assisted the Malian authorities in providing security around the clinic. The

Government subsequently initiated a comprehensive tracing and tracking exercise, which completed follow-up, with more than 400 contacts to date. The last individuals who had been in contact with an infected person finished the mandatory 21-day quarantine on 15 December. Should no further cases be recorded, Mali could be declared free of the virus in January.

39. The United Nations launched an emergency response in support of the Government's efforts. On 12 November, the World Health Organization (WHO) deployed 63 experts specializing in epidemiology, contact tracing, infection prevention and control and case management. While WHO and MINUSMA supported the Government's tracking exercise, IOM deployed personnel to border entry points to strengthen the monitoring and tracing of travellers between Guinea and Mali, as well as to raise the local population's awareness of the disease. Further to a request from President Keita, on 22 November I established a United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response support office in Mali, which operates in coordination with and is supported by MINUSMA. UNICEF, in coordination with WHO, has scaled up its response to support the Ministry of Health on water, sanitation and hygiene programmes. UNICEF also supported hygiene promotion and prevention at the community level and in schools, as well as psychosocial and social mobilization activities. In addition, a United Nations disaster assessment and coordination team deployed early in December for a three-week period to support the Government in establishing an Ebola operations centre and to establish mechanisms to facilitate coordination between the Government and partners. MINUSMA subsequently deployed staff to the national coordination structure and provided logistical and material support.

VII. Early recovery and development

40. On 30 September, a follow-up meeting to the international donors' conference held in Brussels in 2013, which had pledged \$4 billion, was held in Paris. The rate of commitment remains the same as in May — 73 per cent — while 51 per cent has been disbursed. While the United Nations had pledged only \$232 million of the \$4 billion, in 2013 alone the Organization disbursed \$346 million, and its projected expenditure for 2014 amounts to \$529 million.

41. UNICEF assisted the Ministry of Education in launching the 2014/15 school year, which began in October. While 25 per cent of the schools in the three northern regions remain closed, the school enrolment rate is back to 94 per cent of the 2011 level. The Timbuktu region has made the most progress, with 86 per cent of its schools now functioning. There are currently 13 schools open in the Kidal region, compared with 7 before the unrest in May.

42. In partnership with national and international organizations, MINUSMA has completed 10 quick-impact projects since June, including the rehabilitation and equipment of police and gendarmerie stations in the Gao and Timbuktu regions and support to women's associations. On 13 October, MINUSMA and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched a quick-impact project to rehabilitate four private libraries in Timbuktu, which carry ancient manuscripts. In Gao on 3 July, UNESCO, with logistical support from MINUSMA, undertook the replastering of the Tomb of Askia, a World Heritage site.

VIII. Expansion and operationalization of the Mission

43. As at 1 December, MINUSMA had reached 74 per cent of its authorized personnel. A total of 69 per cent of the authorized civilian posts were filled (76 per cent of international posts and 56 per cent of national positions, of which 30 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, were filled by women). A total of 72 per cent of the planned police personnel had deployed (5 per cent of whom are women).

44. As at 15 December, 76 per cent of the authorized military personnel had deployed (12 per cent of whom are women). The military component continues to serve in extremely challenging conditions in the north. The operational capability of almost all former units of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) continues to be limited by the lack of self-sustainment capacity and contingent-owned equipment that meet United Nations standards. Of the seven infantry battalions and force reserve units on the ground, only two fully comply with the United Nations statement of unit requirements. The shortfalls of the other five range from 50 per cent to 80 per cent in the self-sustainment contingent-owned equipment category.

45. The Mission deployed significant efforts to enhance the general living conditions of troops and police during the reporting period. It is providing 200 new tents and installed prefabricated accommodation modules, dug 23 boreholes operational in nine locations, provided communications equipment, including satellite telephones, to the troop-contributing countries and delivered water, fuel and rations by air to Aguelhok and Tessalit (Kidal region) for two months while the force's road clearance team verified the Gao-Anéfis-Kidal-Aguelhok-Tessalit supply route. The first logistical convoy to follow the road clearance exercise reached Kidal on 13 December and Tessalit on 17 December.

46. The Mission continued to move forward in the implementation of its ambitious construction plan. In the light of increased insecurity in the north of Mali, measures were put in place to enhance the physical security of all MINUSMA installations, including perimeter security around all camps and the Kidal airstrip. The Mission expects to complete the construction and rehabilitation of the main camps in Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal early in 2015, thus enabling the relocation of formed police units and military contingents and the deployment of additional police, military and civilian personnel to those camps; the Gao and Timbuktu camps already accommodate military contingents. The Mission is also constructing a new headquarters site near the Bamako international airport on land provided by the Government of Mali, with a view to vacating its current headquarters in Hôtel l'Amitié. The upgrade of nine minor camps, most of which already accommodate military infantry units, should be completed by July 2015. The Mission plans to use contractors to build the five additional minor camps envisaged in the Mission's laydown plan in 2015 and 2016. Commercial contractors are upgrading the runways in the Gao, Kidal, Tessalit and Timbuktu airports. This will allow the Mission to load aircraft to full capacity and increase the delivery of goods and services to those areas.

Actions under way to improve the Mission's capabilities

47. MINUSMA has progressed in implementing measures to fully operationalize and enhance MINUSMA capabilities in the face of increased asymmetric attacks

against the Mission. The Security Council expressed support for those measures during its informal interactive dialogue on 10 November.

Strategic planning/command and control

48. A coordinated review of the MINUSMA force's rules of engagement was undertaken by the Secretariat, which concluded that the current rules of engagement were sufficiently robust to allow MINUSMA to fully implement its current mandate. The rules of engagement authorize MINUSMA military contingents to use force, up to and including deadly force, in the exercise of the inherent right of self-defence, in protecting civilians under imminent threat of physical violence and in implementing stabilization tasks. Guidance was provided to MINUSMA on the application of the rules of engagement, while the Mission organized training for all MINUSMA military personnel on the rules of engagement and on the scope of the Force Commander's authority to deploy troops according to operational needs. From 10 to 14 November, a team from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations assisted the MINUSMA force in reorganizing its military sectors and in planning for the introduction of operational mentoring and liaison teams to support infantry battalions with no prior exposure to asymmetric warfare. On 3 December, the Mission created a third military sector for Kidal — Sector North — in order to better synchronize the operations of the different components of MINUSMA in the region and to reinforce command and control, as well as capabilities, in the area. A civilian Head of Office and civilian components are present in Kidal. MINUSMA will launch a revision of its Mission concept early in 2015, which will guide the review of the complementary military, police and support components' concepts that detail and support the implementation of the Mission concept. This work will be finalized with the incoming senior Mission leadership.

Assistance to contingents and counter-improvised explosive devices programme

49. Accelerated implementation of the MINUSMA counter-improvised explosive devices programme continued during the reporting period. The Mission procured specialized equipment (armoured ambulances, mine-protected vehicles and medical kits), trained 3,063 troops on prevention and mitigation with regard to improvised explosive devices and 1,481 troops on first aid, introduced mentoring activities for the Mission's two explosive ordnance disposal companies with limited prior exposure to asymmetric environments and built its exploitation capability (three weapons identification teams are now operational). Much of the intensified effort to enable MINUSMA contingents to capably address the threat of mines and improvised explosive devices was funded through the AFISMA Trust Fund. Remaining funds will be used to support additional mitigation measures, including predeployment training and the establishment of surveillance and alert systems, including canine teams, in MINUSMA camps.

Intelligence assets and management

50. During the reporting period, MINUSMA aviation assets were temporarily deployed in Kidal to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations on armed groups' movements, notably in the Tilemsi valley (Gao region). The collected data were subsequently fused and analysed by the All Sources Information Fusion Unit. The Unit also started training infantry units on information awareness and sharing procedures to enhance the information flow within the MINUSMA force.

MINUSMA established an Information Sharing Board that includes the military component, the All Sources Information Fusion Unit, the Joint Operations Centre, the Joint Mission Analysis Centre, the United Nations Police and the Security and Safety Section. The Board aims to integrate and optimize the flow of information within the Mission. In November, the All Sources Information Fusion Unit started construction work to establish a unit within the new Timbuktu camp.

Cooperation with Malian forces and Operation Barkhane

51. MINUSMA continued to cooperate closely with Operation Barkhane, including through intelligence sharing and the conduct of coordinated operations, in respect of their respective mandated tasks. Four French personnel from liaison and operational support detachments continued to provide support to MINUSMA, mainly to de-conflict operations with Operation Barkhane. During the reporting period, Operation Barkhane supported two medical evacuations of MINUSMA personnel.

52. On 7 July 2014, the Mission signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of the Interior and Security setting out concrete mechanisms for the provision by the United Nations Police of technical assistance, mentoring and other capacity-building support. Joint strategic and action plans with each of the four security institutions, namely the national police, the national gendarmerie, the national guard and civil protection, were subsequently validated. Since 15 September, the United Nations Police has conducted some 1,679 patrol hours, including long-range joint patrols, in all northern regions except Kidal.

Implementation of ceasefire arrangements

53. As part of its efforts to alleviate tensions on the ground, MINUSMA convened the first meeting of the expanded Mixed Technical Commission on Security on 16 December. The parties agreed that subsequent meetings would be held on a monthly basis, that the operationalization of the Timbuktu joint observation and verification team was imminent and that the Kidal team would be launched by 16 January 2015. The parties also agreed on the identification and reconnaissance of cantonment sites, that troop rotation and the provision of supplies could be undertaken as long as it was verified by the Commission and that troop and weapon levels remained unchanged. Finally, the parties agreed that joint observation and verification teams should be dispatched to confirm the presence of troops at localities mentioned during the meeting of the Commission in July, as well as at six currently contested localities.

Improvement of operational capacity and focus

54. After examining all possible alternatives, the Secretariat concluded that proceeding with the deployment of those troop contributions already identified remained the fastest option for full deployment of the mandated 11,200 military personnel. At the same time, the Secretariat continues to explore all options to reinforce and bolster the Mission's current operational capacities in the challenging environment of northern Mali. MINUSMA has initiated the redeployment of one infantry battalion from Diabaly to Gao (two infantry companies are already in Gao, and the last units will arrive in January 2015), reinforcing the Mission's military presence in Sector East and enabling subsequent redeployment to the newly created

Sector North. The Mission is currently deploying an airfield service unit in Kidal and Tessalit and has finalized its plan to deploy, by April 2015, a medium utility helicopter unit in Kidal, an infantry battalion in the Timbuktu area and a reserve battalion and two infantry companies in the Kidal region. The deployment of attack and utility helicopters in Timbuktu for Sector West and two smaller force protection units in Kidal and Timbuktu is scheduled for the second quarter of 2015. MINUSMA introduced rotation among the four current troop contributors in the Kidal region to relieve pressure off the unit deployed in Aguelhok. The Mission has also begun to identify military units and contingents deployed in high-risk areas in northern Mali that may be eligible for the risk premium. Two formed police units remain outstanding.

Mission support

55. To improve its logistical support to contingents and police deployed in the most difficult environments in Mali, the Mission has assigned civilian support personnel to facilitate the logistics planning and reporting of some military units deployed in Kidal and Tessalit. The civilian logistics officers provide advice, training and mentoring to units that operate in the most remote locations and adverse conditions. The Mission is enhancing its medical capability in the same area by redeploying a level II hospital from Sévaré to Kidal.

Impact of the Ebola outbreak on United Nations personnel

56. Clinique Pasteur, the United Nations referral medical facility in Bamako, was placed under quarantine on 11 November following the death of a nurse who had contracted Ebola. A total of 23 peacekeepers were hospitalized in the clinic at the time for serious injuries sustained while serving in northern Mali. They were certified Ebola-free and transferred to appropriate medical facilities upon completion of the quarantine period on 6 December.

57. In response to the Ebola virus disease outbreak, MINUSMA initiated temperature screening of all personnel and visitors entering MINUSMA facilities in Bamako on 19 November. The Mission also constructed an Ebola treatment centre in Bamako and provided adequate training for its personnel. Preparations are under way to build similar facilities in Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu.

58. In the absence of a referral medical facility in Bamako, MINUSMA took immediate action to ensure that appropriate medical bridging capabilities were available to United Nations staff while establishing a United Nations level II clinic to replace the services previously provided by Clinique Pasteur. This has involved efforts to enhance the capacity of the MINUSMA level I clinic, including through the provision of surge medical staff and bilaterally donated medical equipment, identify and evaluate the capacities of alternative clinics in Bamako to meet United Nations standards for treatment of its personnel, and secure the agreement of the European Union Training Mission in Mali to treat emergency cases on a cost-reimbursable basis. Work to establish a United Nations level II medical facility adjacent to the Bamako airport began on 8 December. In parallel, a procurement process to source any equipment and/or staffing commercially began.

IX. Benchmarks

59. The benchmarks jointly identified by the Malian authorities, MINUSMA and the United Nations country team focus on three priority tasks identified in Security Council resolution 2164 (2014), namely security, stabilization and protection of civilians; support to the national political dialogue and national reconciliation; and support to the restoration of State authority throughout the country, the reconstruction of the Malian security sector, the promotion and protection of human rights and humanitarian aid. The benchmarking exercise has advanced in coordination and complementarity with other planning processes, including the United Nations five-year Development Assistance Framework and the Mission's results-based budgeting for the biennium 2015-2016. Following consultations within the Government, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, agreed benchmarks to measure progress towards peace consolidation in Mali were formalized in a letter signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and MINUSMA on 28 November. Benchmarks and indicators will be annexed to my next report.

X. Observations

60. The negotiations in Algiers are proceeding, and I welcome the commitment of the Malian parties to engaging in dialogue four times in almost as many months. The conflict has lasted more than half a century and cannot be addressed overnight. While mindful of the necessity to reach an agreement within a reasonable time frame, I consider it equally important for the parties to be allowed sufficient time to collectively address and resolve contentious issues to ensure a truly inclusive, viable and implementable agreement. I commend the Government of Algeria for its leadership of the inter-Malian dialogue and for its efforts to advance progress in the negotiations, including through the introduction of substantive ideas and proposals and ongoing bilateral discussions with the parties. I welcome the participation of the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and the Niger in the mediation effort. Through the engagement of my Special Representative, the United Nations remains committed to supporting the dialogue process in a spirit of collegiality and to promoting inclusive consultations among Malian constituencies in support of viable and implementable peace proposals.

61. Looking ahead, I call upon the parties to the peace process — the Government of Mali and represented armed groups — to use this pause in negotiations to demonstrate political leadership and develop the compromises necessary to reach an agreement in Algiers. This process offers a historic opportunity to achieve a durable peace in Mali. While the international community, through mediation efforts, can foster dialogue and propose creative solutions to outstanding disagreements, the responsibility for seizing this opportunity remains with the parties themselves. The active political will of the parties is essential if a consensual peace agreement is to be realized. It is equally essential to build inclusive support for peace across the Malian society, as the parties and their mediation partners have committed to doing under the terms of the Algiers process road map.

62. It is clear that, even if agreement on the broad framework of a future peace is achieved in the coming months, significant work will be required to clarify its scope, application and time frame. The experience of past peace processes in Mali

and elsewhere demonstrates that ambiguity or lack of sufficient detail in the content of implementation arrangements and the responsibilities of the parties, as well as of international guarantors, can fatally undermine confidence in a nascent process. This will require commitment not only by the parties but also by the country's regional and international partners to providing political support, technical expertise and resources to the detailing of practical arrangements and coordination modalities for implementation. The United Nations, as a key partner in the implementation of any peace agreement in Mali, is committed to coordinating with multilateral, regional and international partners in pursuit of this essential task.

63. I remain concerned about the clashes in some localities in the northern regions between the armed movements and continued violations of the ceasefire agreements by all sides to the conflict. I call upon all parties to show their goodwill and to refrain from actions that could have a negative impact on the negotiations in Algiers. I urge the parties to actively support the activities of the ceasefire management bodies, particularly the joint observation and verification teams and the Mixed Technical Commission on Security, as well as confidence-building measures. Clear and detailed security arrangements that are accepted by all the parties will be a critical element to help advance and shore up any peace agreement.

64. The continued asymmetric attacks on United Nations peacekeepers, as well as targeted assassinations and kidnappings of civilians, are worrisome developments. I am profoundly saddened by the death of 16 peacekeepers and the injuries inflicted to 14 others in the course of the past three months. I take this opportunity to express once again my condolences to the families and to the Governments of the deceased peacekeepers and wish a full and speedy recovery to those injured. Acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, and the international community is committed to assisting the Government of Mali in its war against the enemies of peace. I call upon all parties to strongly condemn, reject and actively combat acts of terrorism, which are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivation and wherever, whenever and by whomever they are committed.

65. The attacks on MINUSMA over the past months have highlighted the urgency of strengthening the Mission through enhanced measures to prevent attacks with improvised explosive devices and other indirect weapons. I encourage all countries contributing troops to MINUSMA to continue their efforts to upgrade the equipment of their contingents deployed in Mali. In the spirit of shared responsibility, I also call upon bilateral donors to step up their efforts to support troop and police contributors in these efforts. The United Nations remains equally committed to supporting these efforts through the use of Trust Fund resources and is grateful to all contributors to the Trust Fund for their generous contributions to date. As highlighted by the Security Council in its informal interactive dialogue of 10 November, and to recall one of the recommendations of the Niamey meeting of 5 November, continued regional action to contain the freedom of movement of terrorists remains central to the creation of a regional security environment that is conducive to a successful peace process in Mali.

66. MINUSMA continues to coordinate activities with Operation Barkhane and MDSF, within the parameters of the distinct and fundamentally different mandates of each entity. I am grateful for the continued support provided by Operation Barkhane to MINUSMA as provided under Security Council resolution 2164 (2014), particularly for medical evacuations of United Nations personnel.

67. I remain concerned about the continuing restricted access to basic services, including health care and schools, faced by ordinary citizens across northern Mali. I am encouraged to note that government service providers are increasingly present in various areas in the north of Mali and urge national authorities to step up their efforts to re-establish the delivery of critical services in those areas where the national administration operates.

68. I salute the efforts of the Malian authorities to contain and manage the cases of Ebola that have emerged in Mali over the past months. Their success in containing the spread of Ebola in Mali shows that the disease can be controlled through sound public health policy, strong national leadership and the mobilization of partners. Yet the risks remain significant, and now is not the time to let our guard down. I call upon all international and national stakeholders to remain mobilized to prevent and contain any new cases that could appear in the country.

69. Despite recent positive trends, I remain preoccupied with the scale of continued humanitarian needs in Mali and persisting difficulties in gaining access to populations in need. The security of humanitarian workers is of particular concern, and I urge all parties to take the steps necessary to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel in areas under their control.

70. The past three months have seen progress in the deployment of Mission staff and the expansion of its presence in the north of Mali. This process, which takes place in one of the most challenging logistical and climatic environments in the world and in a context where local capacity to implement infrastructure projects is limited, will continue to take place over the next 12 to 18 months and is likely to require considerable amounts of additional resources. It is important that all international stakeholders seize the full measure of the financial and operational implications of operating safely in Mali. I look forward to maintaining dialogue with Member States on these issues in the coming months.

71. Lastly, I wish to express my appreciation to my former Special Representative for Mali, Albert Koenders, for his dedication and service from the start of MINUSMA until October 2014. I am deeply grateful to my acting Special Representative, David Gressly, and to my Deputy Special Representative, Arnauld Akodjénou, as well as to all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel in Mali, for their continued hard work in very difficult conditions to restore lasting peace and stability in the country. I would also like to thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union, bilateral partners, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their important contributions to peace, security and development in Mali.

Annex

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali: military and police strength as at 1 December 2014

Country	Military component (staff officers and units)			Police component								
	Male	Female	Total	Police officers			Formed police units			Total		
				Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Bangladesh	1 470	4	1 474	–	–	–	139	–	139	139	–	139
Benin	255	–	255	20	1	21	–	–	–	20	1	21
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Burkina Faso	844	10	854	19	2	21	–	–	–	19	2	21
Burundi	–	–	–	10	–	10	–	–	–	10	–	10
Cambodia	302	4	306	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cameroon	3	–	3	13	–	13	–	–	–	13	–	13
Chad	1 076	13	1 089	5	–	5	–	–	–	5	–	5
China	386	13	399	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Côte d'Ivoire	120	–	120	15	1	16	–	–	–	15	1	16
Democratic Republic of the Congo	–	–	–	5	1	6	–	–	–	5	1	6
Denmark	9	1	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Djibouti	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	1
Dominican Republic	–	–	–	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Egypt	60	–	60	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	2
El Salvador	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Estonia	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Finland	5	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
France	18	–	18	3	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	3
Germany	2	3	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	–	7
Ghana	215	–	215	7	–	7	–	–	–	1	–	1
Greece	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Guinea	164	–	164	4	1	5	–	–	–	4	1	5
Guinea-Bissau	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Italy	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Jordan	1	–	1	3	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	3
Kenya	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Liberia	45	4	49	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	2	–	2	–	–	–	2	–	2
Mauritania	6	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nepal	139	4	143	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Country	Military component (staff officers and units)			Police component								
				Police officers			Formed police units			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Netherlands	643	20	663	14	1	15	-	-	-	14	1	15
Niger	846	4	850	10	1	11	-	-	-	10	1	11
Nigeria	169	14	183	2	-	2	120	20	140	122	20	142
Norway	19	2	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	48	-	48	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Romania	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	2
Rwanda	6	-	6	1	1	2	123	17	140	124	18	142
Senegal	471	2	473	9	2	11	278	2	280	287	4	291
Sierra Leone	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	148	8	156	2	1	3	-	-	-	2	1	3
Switzerland	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
Togo	917	18	935	4	-	4	140	-	140	144	-	144
Tunisia	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
Turkey	-	-	-	5	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
United States of America	9	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yemen	5	-	5	7	-	7	-	-	-	7	-	7
Total	8 418	125	8 543	167	13	180	800	39	839	967	52	1 019

