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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 2227 (2015), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2016 and requested me to report every three months on the situation in Mali, focusing on progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the efforts of MINUSMA to support it. The present report covers the period from 23 September to 16 December 2015.

II. Major political developments

2. The reporting period was characterized by a new momentum in the peace process, with positive steps in the implementation of the peace agreement, including an improved relationship between the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) and the Platform coalition of armed groups following their bilateral talks in Anéfis (Kidal region). Those positive developments also included a series of intercommunal and intracommunal reconciliation dialogues and the nomination of the members of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. Meanwhile, all signatory parties participated constructively in the Comité de suivi de l'accord and contributed to sustaining a positive momentum for the implementation of the peace agreement, in spite of outstanding challenges related to the inclusivity and transparency of the process.

3. On 23 September, my Special Representative convened a meeting between the military leadership of CMA and the Platform in Bamako. Under his auspices, the parties resolved to immediately cease hostilities, end all incursions into the areas under the other party's control, ensure the free circulation of civilians and goods and resume the participation of CMA in the Comité de suivi de l'accord and its subsidiary organs. The parties also agreed to initiate dialogue in Anéfis, with a view to solving the long-standing intercommunal and intracommunal tensions at the root of the conflict between them. On 27 and 28 September, a CMA delegation held meetings with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and the leaders of the Platform in Bamako. Following the meetings, CMA announced that it would order its combatants to refrain from using force against the troops of the Government forces and of the Platform.



4. On 24 September, President Keïta announced a cabinet reshuffle that increased the number of ministers from 29 to 31, of which five are women and two, namely, the Minister in charge of Decentralization and State Reform and the Minister of Territorial Development and Population, are from the north. The opposition parties complained forcefully that the Government reshuffle was a missed opportunity to include politicians from outside the presidential majority.

5. Between 27 September and 14 October, CMA and the Platform engaged in direct talks in Anéfis. At the end of the talks, the parties endorsed a road map comprising a series of measures, including the cessation of hostilities, joint initiatives for intercommunal and intracommunal reconciliation, the exchange of prisoners, the establishment of interim local administrations and the free movement of people and goods. During and following the Anéfis talks, CMA and the Platform brokered a series of intercommunal and intracommunal reconciliation agreements in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions, including between the Ifoghas and Imghad Tuareg communities affiliated with CMA and the Platform, respectively. During the reporting period, a number of intercommunal and intracommunal dialogues were held in Bamako, as well as in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions, involving all Arab and Tuareg communities and the Peulh community. The Ministry of National Reconciliation organized two intercommunal dialogues in Ansongo and Gao in Gao region on 10 and 11 November with the support of MINUSMA. On 2 December, as part of the Government's reconciliation efforts, the Council of Ministers adopted draft legislation on compensation for victims of the 2012 military coup.

6. Sensitization efforts on the peace agreement continued during the reporting period. On 20 October, the Government launched the second phase of the "Caravan for peace and reconciliation" and held conferences and cultural events nationwide. For its part, MINUSMA continued to intensify and diversify outreach to the public at large in order to enhance understanding of the peace agreement. On 29 October and 3 November, MINUSMA held information sessions with local politicians in Gao, Koulikoro, Mopti and Timbuktu to explain the various provisions of the agreement. On 5 December, the Mouvement des cadres et responsables chrétiens du Mali organized the first of six awareness-raising workshops on the peace agreement in collaboration with the Ministry of National Reconciliation and MINUSMA in Bamako; it is to be followed by additional workshops in Kayes, Mopti, San, Ségou and Sikasso.

Implementation of the peace agreement: political and institutional measures

7. During the reporting period, three meetings of the Comité de suivi de l'accord were organized and attended by all signatory parties to the peace agreement. At the meeting held on 30 September and 1 October, the parties endorsed the workplan and road map for the political and institutional subcommittee. At the same meeting, the Comité decided to establish a working group chaired by the African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel to address the participation in its meetings of armed groups outside CMA and Platform coalitions, namely, the Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad (CPA-Ousmane), the Coordination des mouvements et fronts patriotiques de résistance II (CMFPR-II), the Front populaire de l'Azawad (FPA) and the Mouvement populaire pour le salut de l'Azawad (MPSA), which had been participating in Comité meetings as invitees, pending resolution of the issue of membership of the Comité. On 2 November, CMFPR-II and FPA announced their merger with CMA. On 7 November, the Alliance populaire pour la paix et l'unité

nationale joined the Platform. The working group is expected to continue its deliberations on the status of CPA-Ousmane and MPSA.

8. At the meeting of the Comité de suivi de l'accord, held on 28 and 29 October, it welcomed the outcome of the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali and stressed the need for the rapid disbursement of pledged funds to start implementing critical programmes, including those generating peace dividends. Further to the request of CMA and the Platform, the Comité called on the Government to finalize the national development strategy for the north by the end of 2015, including the national emergency response plan, in consultation with CMA and the Platform. Participants also stressed the need to accelerate the implementation of all four chapters of the peace agreement.

9. The meeting of the Comité de suivi de l'accord, held on 19 and 20 November, adjourned owing to the terrorist attack on the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako on 20 November, was marked by frustration on the part of CMA and the Platform over the slow progress in the implementation of the peace agreement by the Government. CMA and the Platform issued a joint statement deploring the Government's lack of inclusivity and inaction, in particular concerning the delayed establishment of interim administrations for the northern regions, the integration of northern citizens in State and public institutions, the provision of humanitarian assistance to the northern regions and the release of conflict-related detainees. This is further to their joint letter of 13 October addressed to Algeria as president of the Comité, in which they had voiced their concern over the lack of consultations by the Government on several institutional reforms, including the terms of reference and composition of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and the designation of its members. To address those concerns, the Government agreed to provide monthly updates on the implementation of the peace agreement and to include CMA and the Platform in the national committee of coordination for the implementation of the peace agreement. Meanwhile, the subcommittee on political and institutional issues failed to reach consensus on the law governing the designation of interim administrations in the northern regions and recommended that the matter be referred to the national committee.

10. On 21 September, the Council of Ministers decided to postpone the regional, communal and district elections scheduled for 25 October, owing to a number of factors, including the need to implement the revision of the electoral and decentralization laws envisaged by the peace agreement and to the prevailing insecurity and absence of local authorities in some parts of the northern regions. Political parties, civil society organizations, CMA and the Platform had also requested that the polls be delayed until the return of refugees and internally displaced persons so as to guarantee an inclusive electoral process. On 13 November, the National Assembly adopted a bill extending the mandate of local authorities, pending local elections. MINUSMA continued to support the Malian electoral management bodies in preparing for local elections by providing logistical support for the annual revision of the electoral list. The Mission and the United Nations Development Programme also conducted several workshops to address the needs of women candidates, observers and voters.

11. On 5 October, the President of the National Assembly reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to the peace agreement, stating that bills related to its implementation would be given priority. In early November, the Government began drafting a bill to

establish a national office of public service for the territorial collectivities. On 30 November, the High Council of Territorial Collectivities, which is the national institution representing local authorities, endorsed the draft national policy for decentralization for the period 2015-2024 and the draft agricultural policy of Mali, which were submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister in advance of their presentation to the Council of Ministers for endorsement.

12. On 14 October, following the appointment of the chair of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission on 3 August, the Council of Ministers approved the nomination of 14 commissioners, including 4 women, 2 CMA affiliates, 2 representatives of the Platform and 7 representatives of civil society, including 1 member of the Haut conseil islamique. Although the Ministry of National Reconciliation had requested that the signatory armed groups, religious representatives and civil society organizations propose candidates for the posts of commissioners, CMA did not submit names by the deadline. Several human rights organizations regretted the absence of victims' representatives among the commissioners. MINUSMA has enhanced its technical support to the Commission, including the organization, from 26 to 28 October, with international non-governmental organizations, of a training session for the commissioners on the implementation of the Commission's mandate and how to foster effective communication with other judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.

13. Since my last report ([S/2015/732](#)), owing to persistent security concerns, there has been limited improvement in the number of State representatives who are reported as present and operating at their duty stations in northern Mali. While 7 out of 8 prefects are present at their duty station in the Mopti region, the number of sub-prefects present in the region has decreased from 43 to 38, owing mainly to increased security threats. However, the sub-prefects who have relocated to Mopti continue to conduct regular missions to their duty stations throughout the region. The presence of justice and prison personnel has remained fairly constant, with 7 out of 12 courts and 7 out of 12 prisons operating in the three northern regions. In Mopti region, justice personnel for Ténenkou and Youwarou have relocated to the town of Mopti/Sévaré. In Timbuktu region, State representation increased during the month of November, with the redeployment of the sub-prefect for Tonka in Goundam Cercle. However, the establishment of the interim administration arrangements in the northern regions, as envisaged by article 6 and annex I of the peace agreement, did not take place during the reporting period.

14. In October, the Ministry of the Promotion of Women, Children and Family sought international political and financial support to promote the effective participation of women in the implementation of the peace agreement and the national action plan based on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Out of the 66 representatives of the Government and the signatory parties in the Comité de suivi de l'accord, there is only 1 woman representative from the Government in one of the subcommittees. On 12 November, in another development aimed at enhancing women's political participation, Parliament passed a bill providing for a 30 per cent quota for the appointment of women to national institutions and legislative organs. The Council of Ministers is yet to issue a decree defining its application modalities.

Regional cooperation on the Sahel

15. There was significant progress on regional initiatives to comprehensively address challenges affecting the Sahel, including terrorism, organized crime and human and drug trafficking. In Bamako, on 4 and 5 November, the Government of Mali hosted the fourth Ministerial Coordination Platform of Sahel Strategies. The participants agreed to strengthen the coordination and harmonization of the Ministerial Coordination Platform, the African Union-led Nouakchott Process on the enhancement of security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region, the Group of Five for the Sahel and other regional mechanisms. On 4 November, in Ouagadougou, the chiefs of staff of the armed forces of the Group of Five for the Sahel countries, namely, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, signed a military partnership agreement defining the modalities of cooperation of their armed forces to combat terrorism and cross-border criminality.

16. On 20 November, the Group of Five for the Sahel Summit was held in N'Djamena. The Presidents of the Group of Five for the Sahel countries highlighted the challenges that continue to affect the region, notably, illicit drug and human trafficking, youth unemployment, radicalization, violent extremism, the lack of socioeconomic development, increased migration flows and the forced displacement of people. They also welcomed the adoption of a road map in June defining the framework for cooperation between the Group of Five for the Sahel and the United Nations, to be coordinated under the leadership of the office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel.

III. Major security developments

17. While positive steps were taken towards the implementation of the peace agreement by the signatory parties, there was an increase in the number and geographical spread of activities by extremist and terrorist groups and organized crime networks, notably in Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu regions, as well as in Bamako. The prevalence of improvised explosive devices in northern Mali continued to put the Malian defence and security forces, French forces and United Nations personnel at risk and to seriously constrain the operations of MINUSMA. The Mission therefore continued to require convoy escorts and force protection, despite the absence of fighting between CMA and the Platform following the Anéfis talks and the ongoing efforts by the Government and the signatory armed groups to organize the cantonment process and to put mixed patrols into operation.

Asymmetric and extremist attacks

18. On 16 October, an Ansar Dine leader, Iyad Ag Ghaly, denounced the peace process and threatened to intensify attacks against French forces and their allies in Mali, making specific references to extremist cells in Kidal, Mopti, Sikasso and Timbuktu regions. On 25 November, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb interrupted an intracommunal meeting of Arab tribes in Boujbeha, approximately 200 km north of Timbuktu, warning participants not to collaborate with the “enemies of Islam” and expressing its opposition to the peace agreement and the mixed patrols. On 6 December, MINUSMA received unconfirmed reports indicating a possible attack on Diabaly (Ségou region) by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb based in Lerneb

(Timbuktu region). On the same day, the group claimed responsibility for the killing of two individuals, including a local CMA leader accused of aiding French forces in Ber (Timbuktu region), on 9 October and in Algeria on 19 November.

19. The activities of extremist and terrorist groups also continued unabated in northern Mali, with a total of 28 attacks, compared with 20 attacks during the previous reporting period, targeting MINUSMA using improvised explosive devices or mines. During the reporting period, hostile acts against MINUSMA resulted in the deaths of a total of 2 peacekeepers, 1 civilian staff and 1 civilian contractor, while 18 peacekeepers and 2 civilian contractors were injured. On 24 November, a MINUSMA armoured vehicle in a logistics convoy hit by an improvised explosive device 25 km west of Timbuktu resulted in the first death of a MINUSMA civilian staff by the use of such a device. On 28 November, six rockets hit the MINUSMA camp in Kidal, killing 2 peacekeepers and 1 civilian contractor and wounding 18 peacekeepers and 2 civilian contractors. Media reports cited a senior Ansar Dine figure claiming responsibility.

20. MINUSMA convoys remained the primary target of extremist and terrorist groups and transnational drug traffickers on the main supply routes between Gao and Tessalit and between Gao and Ménaka (Gao region). On average, two out of three MINUSMA convoys between Anéfis and Gao and four out of five between Gao and Ménaka were hit by improvised explosive devices during the reporting period, damaging or destroying four MINUSMA military vehicles and three civilian-contracted trucks. Measures to counter the use of improvised explosive devices adopted by MINUSMA, including in-depth training of troops and a revision of the casualty evacuation procedures, prevented all but one civilian casualty. However, force protection measures, including convoy escort and camp protection, consume approximately two thirds of the Mission's infantry capacity, seriously hampering the implementation of mandated tasks in spite of elaborate planning and the constant reprioritization of tasks, as well as the investment of significant financial and other resources.

21. The increase in activities by extremist and terrorist groups was particularly acute in Mopti region, where a weak administrative structure and limited deployment of the Malian defence and security forces were exploited. The deteriorating security situation, coupled with the general sense of abandonment by the State and of the peace process among the population, as well as the lack of economic opportunities, created a precarious environment in which marginalized youth were targeted by extremist and terrorist groups, including the Front de libération du Macina, which has links with Ansar Dine. In both Mopti and Ségou regions, MINUSMA received reports of at least three incidents ranging from death threats to the summary execution of local authorities. In response, the Malian defence and security forces launched counter-terrorist operations in Mopti and Ségou regions on 24 October, resulting in the arrest of a number of suspected terrorists. For its part, MINUSMA deployed two platoons of an infantry unit to Mopti immediately after the 7 August attack in Sévaré (Mopti region) in order to enhance the protection of United Nations personnel and secure the airfield. On 15 September, the Mission deployed two additional infantry platoons and a company-level command and control team.

22. On 20 November in Bamako, armed assailants gained access to the Radisson Blu Hotel and indiscriminately fired shots, killing 19 civilians and 1 Malian soldier,

while injuring many others, including 3 people who were seriously injured. At the request of the Government, MINUSMA supported the rescue operations led by the Malian defence and security forces, deploying medical, investigation and forensics experts and transferring the injured to a local clinic. The forces killed three assailants during the operations. The attack was reportedly claimed by Al Mourabitoun and the Front de libération du Macina. On the same day, the Government declared a 10-day state of emergency. At the request of the Government, from 20 November to 3 December, MINUSMA participated in daily joint night patrols with the Malian police and gendarmerie in Bamako.

23. It is reported that extremist and terrorist groups have increasingly sought to secure new sources of funding to operate in northern Mali, including from the trafficking in ivory. Following the alarming increase in the poaching of elephants in the first half of 2015 (57 killed out of an estimated population of 350), local authorities, MINUSMA and other partners undertook an assessment mission in Douentza Cercle (Mopti region) from 3 to 5 October. Following the killing of an additional 11 elephants in October and November, MINUSMA police conducted patrols in Douentza Cercle in support of local authorities who had deployed 50 additional park rangers to Mopti region.

Ceasefire monitoring

24. The Mission did not document any ceasefire violations during the period under review, compared with a number of ceasefire violations in and around Ménaka and in different parts of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions during the previous reporting period. Furthermore, as a result of the rapprochement between CMA and the Platform, MINUSMA lifted the 20 km security zone around Kidal, but decided to maintain its presence in Anéfis and the 20 km security zone around Ménaka to ensure the protection of civilians.

25. MINUSMA has also enhanced its system to monitor the ceasefire. The Mission has mapped the positions of the signatory parties, as outlined in the ceasefire agreement of 23 May 2014, and has updated it monthly. Depending on the nature, seriousness and location of reported incidents, MINUSMA sends either the joint observation and verification team or military observers to investigate. As at 16 December, 11 military observers had been deployed in each of the three military sectors of MINUSMA in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions, as well as 2 in Bamako. Since 10 November, military observers in all three sectors have conducted a total of 30 patrols to observe and assess the movement of the signatory parties.

26. In contrast with the compliance of signatory armed groups with the provisions of the peace and ceasefire agreements, the Mission observed that self-defence militias such as Ganda Izo and Ganda Koy, which are not party to the peace agreement, enhanced their activities and established checkpoints in central and northern Mali in late September. On 20 October, Ganda Izo-Seydou Cissé called on the Government to organize consultations between the Bella, Peulh and Songhai communities, similar to those held in Anéfis, and addressed an open letter to the Platform stating that it would take up arms against anyone preventing it from taking part in the peace process. On 4 November, representatives of Ganda Izo, Ganda Koy, Ganda Lassal Lizaye and the Front de libération du nord informed MINUSMA that they would submit some 3,000 names for cantonment and that excluding Mopti

region from the peace process ran counter to the prospects for long-term peace and the stabilization of Mali.

Implementation of the peace agreement: defence and security measures

27. Further to the political measures mentioned in section II above, the Malian parties also made some progress in the defence and security provisions of the peace agreement. The meeting of the Comité de suivi de l'accord on 30 September and 1 October endorsed the conclusions of the meetings of the Commission technique de sécurité, held on 1, 2 and 17 September, including those agreements related to the modalities for the reconnaissance of cantonment sites, the terms of reference of the Mécanisme opérationnel de coordination and the operating procedures for the mixed patrols.

28. As at 19 November, CMA and the Platform had each proposed 12 cantonment sites. Subsequently, the mixed teams comprising the United Nations, the Malian armed forces, CMA and the Platform assessed three CMA sites and seven Platform sites against a series of technical criteria, such as the support required and the environmental impact. On 19 November and 12 December, the Commission technique de sécurité approved five CMA sites and six Platform sites and agreed to begin construction of the first three sites proposed by the Platform, namely, Fafa and Inaggar (Gao region) and Likrakar (Timbuktu region). CMA and the Platform agreed to share one or two sites pending the construction of other sites, but they have yet to submit lists of combatants. MINUSMA and the United Nations Office for Project Services intended to begin construction in the second half of December. Consistent with the decision taken by the Mécanisme opérationnel de coordination on 29 October, the first mixed patrol took place on 14 November when CMA joined a Malian armed forces-Platform convoy from Aguelhok to 20 km north of Anéfis (Kidal region), returning from the Algerian border with nine vehicles donated by Algeria to the Mécanisme.

29. During a meeting held from 16 and 19 November, the subcommittee on defence and security matters of the Comité de suivi de l'accord reviewed the draft decrees related to the national commissions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and on integration, as well as the National Council for Security Sector Reform. MINUSMA, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), is developing a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategy for children, which will complement the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration policy. Efforts to strengthen democratic oversight of the security sector and ensure gender mainstreaming are also being incorporated into all stages of the security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

30. On 14 October, the Council of Ministers approved the establishment of a specialized judicial unit on terrorism and transnational organized crime. MINUSMA supported the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights in operationalizing the unit, which brings together a range of personnel with specialized capacities, such as prosecutors, investigating judges and judicial clerks. Between 23 September and 16 December, MINUSMA trained 76 Malian defence and security force personnel on issues related to transnational organized crime and counter-terrorism, including intelligence gathering and forensic investigation skills. MINUSMA also supported the development of holistic national policies on defence, counter-terrorism and border security. Furthermore, at the request of the Ministry of Defence and Former

Combatants, the United Nations Mine Action Service destroyed a total of 256 tons of obsolete and expired ammunition in Ségou region.

Protection of civilians

31. Armed banditry constitutes the most significant threat to civilians, with more than 75 per cent of incidents occurring in Gao and Timbuktu regions. Most of the crimes appeared to be theft, motivated by economic need. The vastness of the regions and the sparse deployment of the Malian defence and security forces remained challenges to reducing the high levels of criminality and arresting and identifying the assailants in these regions. In response, MINUSMA adopted a robust and visible posture by increasing the frequency of long-range patrols in all northern regions, as well as the use of its aviation assets and unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor remote areas and deter violence. MINUSMA police focused on urban centres, conducting more than 1,600 patrols jointly with the Malian police, an increase of 29 per cent since the previous reporting period. In Timbuktu region, MINUSMA conducted an average of four reconnaissance flights per week over Ber, Goundam and Gourma-Rharous to monitor the movements of armed groups and reassure the population. On 2 December, MINUSMA co-located police in the gendarmerie headquarters in Gao as part of its efforts to support local capacity-building.

32. Intercommunal conflict persisted, in particular in Gao region. At least six violent clashes took place between members of two Tuareg communities, the Daoussak (largely pro-CMA) and the Imghad (predominantly pro-Platform), as well as between the Daoussak and Peulh communities in the area between Ansongo and Ménaka in Gao region. On 30 October, as part of the reconciliation initiative pursuant to the Anéfis talks, CMA and the Platform organized an intracommunal dialogue between two communities in Inouellene, Gao region. Approximately 300 people reportedly attended the event, including prominent figures from both communities and local officials. Following the spate of violent clashes in Gao region on 21, 23 and 30 October and 11 and 14 November between the Daoussak and Peulh communities, which left four killed, one injured and four others abducted, my Special Representative convened a meeting in Bamako on 23 November between leaders from the two communities. At that meeting, the participants signed an agreement to cease hostilities and agreed to discuss the root causes of the tensions between the two communities. Humanitarian actors assessed that fighting between the Daoussak and Peulh communities had forced approximately 4,500 civilians to be displaced in Ménaka commune.

33. On 28 and 29 October, MINUSMA supported the governorate of Mopti in organizing a regional conference among farmers, herders and fishermen aimed at preventing conflicts stemming from seasonal cattle migration. The participants proposed 19 recommendations on conflict prevention measures and the management of wetlands in Mopti and Ségou regions. A MINUSMA quick-impact project demarcated roads for cattle migration in 15 communes of Mopti region to prevent conflicts between farmers and herders.

IV. Human rights

34. MINUSMA continued to document violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Malian defence and security forces, CMA, the Platform and other armed groups. A total of 25 cases of human rights violations and abuses involving at least 157 victims were reported during the reporting period, compared with 29 cases and 70 victims in my last report. The cases involved 3 instances of summary execution and enforced disappearance, 96 instances of arbitrary detention, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees and 6 incidents of sexual violence involving 10 victims.

35. As at 16 December, MINUSMA had identified 289 conflict-related detainees, all male, including six boys, held in State-run detention facilities throughout the country. Of these, 157 have been detained illegally. The number of people detained by CMA and the Platform decreased from 67 in June to 43 in December as a result of the release of detainees by all signatory parties as part of confidence-building measures. On 1 October in Gao, the Government freed 21 detainees affiliated with CMA, including 2 minors, and 9 others affiliated with CMA. CMA released 16 Malian armed forces soldiers and 2 children associated with the Platform. CMA continued to detain 3 children. Discussions continued between the parties for the release of an additional 111 individuals, of which 49 are detained by Malian authorities.

36. MINUSMA continued to monitor detention conditions and the legal status of detainees charged with terrorism. As at 16 December, 50 individuals had been charged with terrorism and detained in State-run detention facilities in Gao, Koulikoro, Mopti and Timbuktu regions and in Bamako. In the context of the counter-terrorist operations, mentioned in paragraph 21, which began on 24 October in Mopti and Ségou regions, at least 29 men were arrested on suspicion of being associated with terrorist groups. Among them, eight were reportedly subjected to ill treatment by the Malian armed forces upon their arrest. On 26 September, Ahmad Al Mahdi Al Faqi, a member of Ansar al-Dine, became the first Malian citizen to be surrendered, by the authorities of Niger, to the International Criminal Court.

37. During the reporting period, 10 women reported to MINUSMA that they had been victims of sexual violence at the hands of Platform combatants and the Ganda Izo local defence group. The incidents included three consecutive acts of rape, reportedly committed against one woman, and the attempted rape of three women and one girl near Anéfis by members of the Groupe d'autodéfense touareg Imghad et alliés during its occupation by the Platform. On 29 September, in Timbuktu region, one girl and one woman were allegedly raped by CPA-Ousmane combatants, and, on 28 October, one woman was allegedly raped by Ganda Izo combatants. As at 16 December, the testimony of 12 women on those incidents had been heard by a magistrate in Bamako. Measures to ensure the security of the survivors of conflict-related sexual violence were put in place through the MINUSMA trust fund for the protection of victims, witnesses and their rights.

38. MINUSMA noted the continuing recruitment of children and the military use of schools. On 2 October, MINUSMA documented one case and identified two alleged cases of child recruitment involving six boys by signatory armed groups in Timbuktu region. As at 16 December, a total of seven schools remained under military use by signatory armed groups in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions.

V. Humanitarian situation

39. Insecurity continued to constrain humanitarian access and activities, hampering the return of internally displaced persons and refugees and causing new displacement in northern Mali. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs registered 15 incidents that resulted in delays or the temporary suspension of humanitarian activities in Gao and Mopti regions. About 80 per cent of the incidents, especially carjacking, occurred in the Gao region, in particular in Ménaka Cercle. The Office continued to sensitize CMA and Platform leaders on the humanitarian principles of safe access. The Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission continuously provided flights so that humanitarian actors could reach vulnerable populations in the north. Meanwhile, MINUSMA conducted a comprehensive clearance of mines and improvised explosive devices at the secondary airfield in Kidal, which is essential for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, while also securing the airfield owing to a high risk of remining.

40. Security concerns prevented the reopening of 288 schools in 59 localities in Gao and Kidal regions, western Timbuktu region, four districts in Mopti region and one district in Ségou region. The delay in the implementation of the exceptional administrative measures provided for by the peace agreement hampered the resumption of basic services, including education, in Kidal region. In Kidal region, only 15 out of 62 primary and junior high schools reopened on 19 October, for the first time in three years, following efforts by the Government and CMA, with the support of UNICEF. Demonstrations against the visit of a senior government official in Kidal led to the cancellation of the participation of the Minister of Education in the school's reopening ceremony. As at 16 December, 52 volunteer teachers and 5 paid teachers were educating more than 3,300 children in the 15 open schools in Kidal region. In Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions, the World Food Programme provided school meals to 142,800 children in 782 primary schools and take-home food rations to 64,198 girls to encourage their attendance at school.

41. In October and early November, an estimated 4,000 Malian refugees arrived in Niger owing to insecurity in north-eastern Mali. As of mid-December, there were approximately 62,000 internally displaced persons in Mali and approximately 137,000 Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger.

VI. Economic development, cultural preservation and the environment

42. Six months after the signing of the peace agreement and following the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali in October, expectations for the delivery of peace dividends were high among the Malian population. In order to promote ownership of and support for the peace process, MINUSMA and the United Nations country team continued to strive to deliver tangible peace dividends to the population through flexible and responsive mechanisms, including quick-impact projects, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Trust Fund in Support of Peace and Security in Mali.

43. Since June, MINUSMA has scaled up its support for communities in the north by approximately 30 per cent, supporting 36 new quick-impact projects, at a cost

amounting to approximately \$1.3 million. New projects included the provision of potable water in Kidal region, access to schools in Mopti, equipment for health centres in Kidal and Mopti, the refurbishment of social care centres in Gao and social reintegration projects for vulnerable communities, women, youth and internally displaced persons in Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu regions, as well as the rehabilitation of some Government law enforcement facilities in Bamako and in Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions.

44. From 6 to 8 October, in preparation for the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali, the United Nations facilitated consultations by the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank to assess the socioeconomic and development needs in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions, as part of their joint evaluation mission to the north, in accordance with article 36 of the peace agreement. The population and regional authorities of Mopti expressed concern over the exclusion of the region from the development strategies for the northern regions, despite the fact that Mopti had been significantly affected by the conflict, with an estimated population of 2.2 million, three times larger than that of the three northern regions combined. On 25 November, CMA and the Platform met with the three development banks and recommended that additional consultations be held to ensure that the specific needs of the most vulnerable people would be reflected in the proposed national development strategies for the northern regions.

45. The international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali hosted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris on 22 October 2015, generated pledges of approximately 3.2 billion euros for the period 2015-2017, of which 700 million euros have been earmarked for the northern regions. At the conference, the Government of Mali presented a draft development strategy for the north, in accordance with article 34 of the peace agreement, together with the national emergency response plan for the northern regions referred to in paragraph 8 above, consisting of short-term activities aimed at delivering swift peace dividends to the population through the restoration of State authority, economic revitalization, the strengthening of social cohesion and the delivery of basic social services. The Government also announced the creation of a sustainable development fund to which it would contribute 450 million euros over the period from 2016 to 2018. CMA and the Platform spoke with a unified voice in support of the implementation of the peace agreement at the conference. In addition to the signatory parties, representatives of 64 countries, as well as of regional organizations, international partners, Malian civil society and the private sector, attended the conference. Malian organizations underlined the importance of swiftly translating the pledges into tangible benefits for the population and ensuring transparency in the management of the funds.

46. The Mission undertook several initiatives to address the issue of youth unemployment, which stands at approximately 60 per cent for persons under the age of 35. With the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations country team implemented projects to support income-generation activities for youth and displaced populations in Gao and Timbuktu regions. The Fund also supported the design of tools and materials to teach the importance of peace in schools in Timbuktu.

47. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework Plus 2015-2019, which sets out a strategic framework for a collective United Nations response to the poverty reduction strategy of the Government of Mali, and which replaces the United Nations Integrated Strategic Framework in the country, was signed on 17 September by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, my Special Representative and the heads of the United Nations country team.

48. MINUSMA continued to consider environmental impacts while operating in the vicinity of cultural and historical sites. From 23 September to 7 December, the Mission trained 756 personnel on environmental and cultural management, in accordance with the provisions of the environmental policy of the Departments of Field Support and Peacekeeping Operations for the United Nations field missions.

VII. Deployment and capacities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Military

49. As at 16 December, the strength of the military component of MINUSMA stood at 10,638 out of an authorized strength of 11,240, representing 93 per cent of authorized military personnel. Women represented 2 per cent of the force. Key outstanding capacities include a combat convoy battalion, a medium military utility helicopter unit, an attack helicopter unit, a military transport aircraft, additional military staff officers for sector headquarters and a force protection company. MINUSMA has also requested troop-contributing countries to urgently deploy 92 armoured personnel carriers and mine-protected vehicles to reach the originally planned levels in order to enhance the Mission's ability to protect convoys. Concerns over the operational capability of some infantry units remain owing to the lack of sufficient items of contingent-owned equipment, both in major equipment (four contingents are below 70 per cent of requirements) and in self-sustainment capabilities (four contingents are below 60 per cent of requirements) that meet United Nations standards. The areas of bilateral support needed for the MINUSMA troop-contributing countries include the maintenance of armoured personnel carriers, capacity-building in minor engineering works and logistics support and training to improve the asymmetric warfare capabilities of the contingents.

Police

50. As at 16 December, the strength of the police component of MINUSMA stood at 1,055 personnel, representing 71 per cent of its authorized strength of 1,440, with 58 per cent of individual police officers (7 per cent of them women) and 82 per cent of the formed police unit personnel (5 per cent of them women) deployed. MINUSMA continues to require the deployment of specialized police personnel, including a police riverine capacity composed of formed police units and individual police officers, to support the Malian defence and security forces in its activities to counter transnational organized crime and terrorism. Meanwhile, in the light of the increased attacks by extremist and terrorist groups, Malian authorities have requested that MINUSMA support the establishment of special weapons and tactics team capacities within Malian law enforcement agencies. The Mission will provide such support through a specialized team, including provisions for capacity-building, within the authorized ceiling.

Civilian personnel

51. With respect to civilian staff, 84 per cent was deployed, comprising 83 per cent of international posts, 70 per cent of United Nations volunteer positions and 88 per cent of national posts. Women hold 28 per cent of all civilian positions. Civilian staff are currently deployed in Bamako (824), Gao (164), Kidal (80), Mopti (87), Tessalit (16) and Timbuktu (121).

Construction of camps

52. Persistent security constraints limited the number of logistics convoys in northern Mali, hampering both the delivery of supplies and materials and construction efforts. Despite these difficulties, camps in Gao and Timbuktu cities were fully operational by the end of November, enabling MINUSMA to start redeploying approximately 6,000 troops to those facilities. Other camps have yet to be completed, in one instance because MINUSMA awaits a response from the Government to allocate land for the construction of a camp in Mopti. In Bamako, preparations continued for the relocation of the Mission's headquarters from the Hotel l'Amitié to another area in the capital by March 2016.

VIII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

53. United Nations personnel continued to operate in extremely volatile security conditions in Mali. In response to the persistent attacks on MINUSMA and the spread of the activities of extremist and terrorist groups, the Mission enhanced its security measures in the northern regions and in Bamako, as well as Mopti, as outlined in paragraph 21, above. In Kidal, the aerostat balloon and surveillance equipment to improve force protection and security is expected to be installed in Kidal by January 2016. A similar capacity is planned to support the camp in Gao. The ground alert system, which broke down in July, was repaired and became operational again on 10 December.

54. The United Nations Mine Action Service continued to support the safety and security of MINUSMA personnel by providing technical assistance to MINUSMA explosive ordnance disposal teams and specialized infantry platoons. It also conducted predeployment training of trainers on how to respond to the use of

improvised explosive device for 355 personnel of MINUSMA contingents that provide escorts for convoys. In Bamako, MINUSMA, in addition to conducting joint night patrols with Malian police, as mentioned in paragraph 22 above, enhanced security measures around United Nations premises in the wake of the attack on the Radisson Blu Hotel.

IX. Conduct and discipline

55. During the reporting period, one allegation of sexual abuse, involving a minor, was reported. Pursuant to my 2003 bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, the Mission took additional precautionary measures to prevent such acts from taking place in Mali. The Mission sensitized the local population in Bamako, Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu to strengthen existing mechanisms for reporting misconduct implicating United Nations personnel. MINUSMA also raised awareness of prohibited conduct, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, through 12 outreach activities, reaching approximately 600 persons. Steps are also being taken to implement strengthened measures detailed in my last report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (see [A/69/779](#)).

X. Observations

56. A new momentum in the Malian peace process emerged during the reporting period. I welcome the rapprochement between CMA and the Platform as a result of their bilateral talks held between 27 September and 14 October in Anéfis, at which the parties agreed to cooperate on the cessation of hostilities, intercommunity and intracommunity reconciliation, the exchange of detainees, the return of interim local administration and the free movement of people and goods. The new momentum was accompanied by a high level of engagement by the international community in support of peace in Mali, as expressed at the 1 October ministerial consultative meeting in New York. I was encouraged to see the commitment demonstrated by the Government of Mali at the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali, held in Paris on 22 October, and the unified voice expressed by CMA and the Platform in support of the implementation of the peace agreement. The improved relationship between the signatory armed groups, which translated into their constructive participation in the Comité de suivi de l'accord and its mechanisms, as well as the absence of any ceasefire violations, were welcome developments.

57. The signatory parties must now redouble their efforts to implement the peace agreement, in particular those institutional reforms that underpin the execution of all other provisions of the agreement, while ensuring an inclusive, transparent and sustained process. Ultimately, the responsibility for the success of the peace agreement rests with the signatories. Without the determined will of the Malian parties and their constituencies to move forward with the implementation of all provisions of the peace agreement in a parallel and synchronized manner, the impact of the support of the international community will remain limited. The parties must ensure broad and inclusive consultations with all stakeholders, including the signatories, civil society, women and youth, to consolidate the Malian people's ownership of their future. While doing so, the local priorities and development needs, not only of the three northern regions but also of all Malians, should be taken

into account. I am encouraged in that context by the recent adoption by Parliament of legislation introducing a 30 per cent quota for women's appointment to national institutions and legislative organs.

58. The political progress made in the peace process must urgently translate into a tangible improvement of the security conditions for the people of Mali. I encourage all parties to advance on the defence and security measures envisaged by the peace agreement and to accelerate the efforts of the Commission technique de sécurité and the Mécanisme opérationnel de coordination on the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, including the sustainable operationalization of the mixed patrols. Security sector reform is another priority process to be implemented, as there cannot be successful cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes in the absence of a comprehensive strategy for security sector reform. I call upon the Government of Mali to establish, at the earliest possible time, national commissions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and on integration, while ensuring inclusiveness of the process through the revision of the National Council for Security Sector Reform. While the gradual redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces requires further coordination among the parties, the initiative by the Government to address terrorism-related security threats in Mopti and Ségou regions was a welcome development.

59. The security situation in Mali continued to deteriorate during the reporting period, and civilians, the Malian armed forces, French forces and MINUSMA remained the target of asymmetric and sophisticated attacks. I strongly condemn these barbaric acts and express my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of those crimes, as well as to the Government of Mali and the Governments of the countries of origin of the United Nations peacekeepers who have lost their lives. I reiterate my appeal for these crimes to be investigated and punished in earnest. Attacks targeting United Nations peacekeepers may constitute war crimes under international law.

60. Since northern Mali remains an extremely difficult environment in which to operate, MINUSMA is likely to continue to face significant security challenges posed by actors outside the peace process, namely, extremist and terrorist groups and transnational drug traffickers. I am particularly concerned about the spread of insecurity into central and southern Mali, and the unacceptable attacks and intimidation by extremist and terrorist groups.

61. Under such circumstances, the countries contributing troops and police to MINUSMA will continue to require support in terms of capabilities. I encourage all troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries and bilateral donors to continue their efforts to ensure that all contingents have the necessary equipment and training to operate in this challenging environment. I look forward to the rapid deployment of a combat convoy battalion and urge the rapid deployment of the priority military and police capabilities outlined in paragraphs 49 and 50, above. I remain committed to implementing innovative measures to ensure the implementation of the mandate of MINUSMA, while enhancing the protection of its personnel.

62. The appointment of the 14 members of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission during the reporting period was a welcome development, although I regret the absence of victims' representatives among its members. Sustainable reconciliation can only result from a comprehensive and transparent truth-seeking, justice and reparation process with a Commission supported by the whole

population. I congratulate the Government of Mali, CMA and the Platform for organizing a series of intercommunal and intracommunal dialogues to promote reconciliation among different communities of the north. Inclusivity in such dialogues is critical to finding long-term solutions. I encourage all parties to ensure that traditional and local leaders, women and youth play a role in the national and local reconciliation efforts.

63. I welcome the important pledges made by the partners of Mali during the Paris international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali, which highlighted the international community's unanimous support for the peace process in Mali. The parties must sustain the momentum by translating the pledges made in Paris into concrete peace dividends that improve the lives of the Malian population. I call upon the Government of Mali to capitalize on this momentum and accelerate the return of basic services in the northern regions. MINUSMA and the United Nations country team will continue to support the Malian parties in the consolidation of the gains made in the peace process, including through quick-impact projects.

64. I welcome the establishment by the Malian authorities of a specialized judicial unit on terrorism and transnational organized crime. The United Nations stands ready to provide support to enhance the capacity of the Malian authorities to face these security challenges. While the full implementation of the peace agreement is the priority to ensure long-term stability in Mali, the transborder nature of the threats calls for enhanced regional security cooperation. In this regard, I encourage Member States in the subregion to enhance the effectiveness of initiatives to address security threats, including measures to prevent and counter violent extremism. I reiterate that effective counter-terrorism measures and respect for international human rights and humanitarian law are complementary and mutually reinforcing and essential to combat terrorism. The United Nations remains committed to coordinating with regional mechanisms, including the Nouakchott Process on the enhancement of security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region and the Group of Five for the Sahel. I also urge the Government of Mali and the international community to allocate adequate resources to address the illicit trafficking in ivory and other poaching activities, which are increasingly being used as a source of revenue to finance extremist and terrorist groups.

65. Lastly, I wish to express my appreciation to Mongi Hamdi for his service as my Special Representative for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, his tireless efforts in supporting the Malian peace process and his personal initiatives to defuse intercommunal tensions. I commend the members of the international mediation for their sustained support for the Malian parties. I also wish to pay special tribute to the men and women of MINUSMA, troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners, many of whom have been serving under difficult conditions and facing grave threats in a hostile environment, for their important contributions in support of peace and stability in Mali and for their dedication and contribution to the Mission.

Annex

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization
Mission in Mali: military and police strength as at
15 December 2015**

Country	Military component (staff officers and units)			Police component								
				Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Armenia	1		1									
Austria												
Bangladesh	1 585		1 585				140		140	140		140
Belgium												
Benin	260		260	29	1	30	140		140	169	1	170
Bhutan	3		3									
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2		2									
Burkina Faso	1 699	20	1 719	21	2	23				21	2	23
Burundi				13		13				13		13
Cambodia	290	13	303									
Cameroon				17	1	18				17	1	18
Chad	1 134	13	1 147	4		4				4		4
China	386	14	400									
Côte d'Ivoire	5		5	7	1	8				7	1	8
Democratic Republic of the Congo				5	1	6				5	1	6
Denmark	18	3	21									
Djibouti				1		1				1		1
Egypt	72		72									
El Salvador	88	4	92									
Estonia	9	1	10									
Finland	5		5									
France	29		29	5		5				5		5
Gambia	4		4									
Germany	9		9	13		13				13		13
Ghana	214		214	1		1				1		1
Guinea	85	1	86	4		4				4		4
Guinea-Bissau	1		1									
Indonesia	143	2	145									
Italy	3		3									
Jordan	1		1	2		2				2		2
Kenya	4	3	7									
Liberia	47	2	49									

Country	Military component (staff officers and units)			Police component								
				Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Madagascar				2		2				2		2
Nepal	145	4	149									
Netherlands	589	34	623	19	5	24				19	5	24
Niger	858	5	863	8		8				8		8
Nigeria	155	26	181	2		2	109	31	140	111	31	142
Norway	18	3	21									
Portugal	2		2									
Romania	1		1	2		2				2		2
Senegal	674	2	676	16	2	18	276	4	280	292	6	298
Sierra Leone	7		7									
Sweden	197	15	212	1	2	3				1	2	3
Switzerland	4		4									
Togo	917	18	935	1		1	134	6	140	135	6	141
Tunisia				25		25				25		25
Turkey				1		1				1		1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1	1	2									
United States of America	10		10									
Yemen	7		7	9		9				9		9
Totals	10 454	184	10 638	201	14	215	799	41	840	1 000	55	1 055

