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Situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution [2531 \(2020\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2021 and requested me to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of the resolution. The present report covers major developments in Mali since my previous report ([S/2020/476](#)), dated 2 June 2020.

II. Major developments

2. The situation in Mali deteriorated significantly amid widespread protests following the legislative elections of 29 March and 19 April 2020 and culminated in a coup d'état on 18 August and the detention of the former President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, the former Prime Minister, Boubou Cisse, and other civilian and military officials. The President subsequently resigned and announced the dissolution of the government and the National Assembly.

Political developments

1. Post-electoral protests and mediation efforts

3. Post-election protests intensified in June in Bamako and several other cities. The protests were triggered by the decision of the Constitutional Court, on 30 April, to overturn the preliminary results of the legislative elections held in March and April for 31 of the 147 seats, mostly in favour of candidates of the ruling coalition.

4. The protests culminated in a mass rally in Bamako, on 5 June, called by the Coordination des mouvements, associations et sympathisants de l'imam Mahmoud Dicko. Civil society representatives, including Imam Dicko, and political leaders from the opposition subsequently launched the Mouvement du 5 juin-Rassemblement des forces patriotiques (M5-RFP). In addition to disputing the elections, M5-RFP accused the Government of failing to provide security and to implement long overdue institutional reforms and demanded the immediate resignation of the President and his Government. Other mass protests followed on 19 June and 10 July.



5. In response to these developments, my Special Representative, in collaboration with the representatives of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Mali, held several meetings with national stakeholders, advocating a negotiated solution to the crisis, while encouraging Malian leaders to be flexible regarding the protesters' demands. On 18 June, ECOWAS dispatched a mediation team to Bamako. On 14 June and 8 July, the President addressed the nation to calm the situation. In his second address, he announced the dissolution of the Constitutional Court. In response, M5-RFP continued to demand the resignation of the President and called upon its supporters to take to the streets and engage in civil disobedience. From 10 to 13 July, as a result of clashes between protesters and security forces in Bamako, 14 civilians were killed, over 100 were injured and several protesters and M5-RFP leaders were arrested.

6. From 16 to 19 July, ECOWAS dispatched a delegation to Bamako for talks, led by the former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Following that initial engagement, a delegation, comprising five Heads of State from the region, arrived in Bamako on 23 July to finalize an agreement to resolve the crisis. The ECOWAS proposals were ultimately rejected by M5-RFP.

7. On 27 July, ECOWAS convened an extraordinary summit at the level of Heads of State and recommended a range of measures to be implemented by 31 July. These included the resignation of the Members of Parliament whose election was contested, the swift recomposition of the Constitutional Court and the formation of a government of national unity. Leaders of M5-RFP rejected these recommendations, arguing that they violated the Constitution of Mali and failed to satisfy the expectations and aspirations of the Malian people, and reiterated their demand for the President "and his regime" to resign.

8. On 11 and 12 August, M5-RFP mobilized protesters and announced that more rallies would be held on 21 August. On 12 August, the ECOWAS mediator met the M5-RFP leaders to persuade them to hold direct talks with the President. On 13 August, M5-RFP issued a communiqué rejecting the proposal, reiterating its demand for the resignation of the President, and calling upon the population to remain mobilized ahead of the protests scheduled on 21 August.

2. Removal of the President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita

9. On the morning of 18 August, a group of soldiers and army officers led a mutiny in the garrison town of Kati, north-west of Bamako. They quickly moved to the capital, where they took control of strategic installations, without facing resistance. Hours later, they detained the President and the Prime Minister. Government ministers, senior officials, high-ranking military officers and Members of Parliament, including the Speaker of the National Assembly, were also arrested. All were taken to the military camp in Kati. Around midnight, in a broadcast on national television, the President announced his resignation and the dissolution of the Government and the National Assembly.

10. Early on 19 August, in a broadcast on national television, a group of military officers announced that they had designated themselves the Comité national pour le salut du peuple (CNSP) and had taken power in Mali. The group clarified that its actions were motivated by the need to fight corruption and bad governance, and to end instability in central and northern Mali. Colonel Assimi Goïta, the commander of a battalion of special forces based in central Mali, was presented as the President of CNSP. He announced that CNSP would hold consultations with political actors and civil society to establish a civilian transition and to organize general elections within a "reasonable time frame". He also stated that CNSP would ensure the continuity of the Malian State and honour all international commitments, including the

implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and with regard to the presence of international forces in Mali, including MINUSMA.

11. Political parties of the ruling majority – Alliance pour la démocratie au Mali-Parti africain pour la solidarité et la justice, Convergence des forces républicaines and Rassemblement pour le Mali – condemned what they described as the unconstitutional removal of the President from power. The main opposition party, Union pour la République et la démocratie, expressed its readiness to work with the military towards a political transition. Another opposition party, Yelema, condemned the mutiny but viewed the resignation of the President as an opportunity to solve the institutional crisis. M5-RFP welcomed the ousting of the President and indicated its readiness to discuss with CNSP modalities for the establishment of a political transition.

12. On 21 August, at the initiative of M5-RFP, over 15,000 people gathered at Independence Square to celebrate the “people’s victory”. Imam Dicko, the CNSP Vice-President, Colonel Malick Diaw, and CNSP Spokesperson, Colonel Ismaël Wagué, attended the rally.

3. International response and diplomatic efforts

13. Regional and subregional organizations swiftly condemned the mutiny and the arrest of the President. The United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie demanded the immediate release of the President and other senior government officials and the immediate restoration of constitutional order. The African Union, ECOWAS and the International Organization of la Francophonie suspended the membership of Mali. On 20 August, an extraordinary summit of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government condemned the overthrow of the democratically elected President, which was in violation of ECOWAS treaties and protocols, and called for his immediate reinstatement as Head of State. ECOWAS also imposed a sanctions regime, closing all land and air borders. Under the sanctions, ECOWAS also halted all financial transactions and trade flows between its member States and Mali, except for basic consumer goods, medicine, electricity and fuel.

14. From 22 to 24 August, an ECOWAS delegation, led by the former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, visited Bamako, where it engaged with leaders of CNSP and also met with my Special Representative and other members of the international community.

4. Transitional arrangements

15. Following the consultations between ECOWAS and CNSP, Mr. Keita was released from detention on 27 August. The MINUSMA Human Rights Division had visited Mr. Keita during his detention to assess his condition, and my Special Representative met with him immediately upon his release. On 2 September, Mr. Keita was hospitalized in Bamako and, on 5 September, he travelled to Abu Dhabi for medical attention.

16. The ECOWAS delegation and the leaders of CNSP continued to engage on the modalities for a political transition.

17. As events continued to unfold, the secretariats of the Government ministries remained in place and the Mission continued to engage with relevant ministry counterparts in an effort to maintain continuity in mandated activities.

18. On 24 August, CNSP published a provisional constitutional document (*Acte fondamentale*), which is aimed at providing a legal basis for upcoming decisions and contains a number of provisions, including on human rights, matters of the State and sovereignty and treaties and international agreements. On 27 August, CNSP made a

series of appointments to key positions within CNSP and the Malian Defence and Security Forces.

19. CNSP convened a series of consultations with key political and civil society actors on 10 and 12 September. Participants adopted a “Charter for the transition”, providing a framework for the holding of elections over a period of 18 months. The Charter also provided for a President of the Transition, a Vice-President, responsible for matters of defence and the restoration of State authority, and a Prime Minister, who would lead a government of no more than 25 ministers. The President and Vice-President could be either a civilian or a member of the armed forces. Furthermore, the Charter included a call for the creation of a national council of 121 members to act as a legislative body, comprising all national stakeholders, including the signatory armed groups.

20. On 7 September, at its fifty-seventh ordinary summit, in Niamey, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government took note of the ongoing consultations and issued a communiqué, rejecting the above-mentioned Charter, while consenting, in principle, to a transition period of 18 months. The Authority also conditioned the easing of sanctions on the designation of a civilian President and Prime Minister to lead the transition. The President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, in his capacity as the new Chair of the Authority, invited CNSP to attend consultations in Ghana on 15 September, in an effort to broker a deal.

21. On 21 September, CNSP announced the official designation by an electoral college of the former Minister of Defence and retired Colonel-Major, Bah N’Daou, as President of the 18-month transitional government and CNSP leader, Colonel Assimi Goïta, as Vice-President. Some members of M5-RFP rejected the designations, alleging that the process had not been inclusive, whereas the Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad, in a separate statement, called for a greater emphasis on the peace process during the transition period.

22. On 23 September, the ECOWAS Special Envoy, Goodluck Jonathan, returned to Bamako for consultations with all relevant stakeholders.

III. Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali: progress made in the achievement of the priority measures

23. The political crisis led to a near standstill in the implementation of the Agreement. The Agreement Monitoring Committee held its fortieth session prior to the events of 18 August, on 11 June. The Malian parties reviewed progress made in the implementation of the Agreement and agreed to include women in the Monitoring Committee.

24. Key actors, including the leaders of CNSP and the signatory movements, continued to reaffirm their commitment to the Agreement. The signatories, the Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups, met with CNSP and stressed the need for any transitional arrangements to uphold the Agreement.

25. To ensure the compliance of the United Nations system in Mali with the sanctions list established pursuant to resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#), MINUSMA continued to raise awareness about the sanctions obligations, including introducing the screening of potential passengers to avoid any listed individuals boarding MINUSMA flights. The Mission also alerted other stakeholders, including those overseeing the

implementation of the Agreement, on the requirement to prevent listed individuals from benefiting from financial, operational or logistical support.

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

26. In June, some progress was recorded in the completion of the “catch-up” phase to disarm, demobilize and integrate the remaining caseload of 510 ex-combatants, from an initial total of 1,840 ex-combatants, into the Malian Defence and Security Forces. By 12 July, a total of 400 ex-combatants (including 10 women) had been registered in Timbuktu (215), Gao (139) and Kidal (46). The Mission and the United Nations country team provided support for the registration process. The former combatants will be trained, integrated and deployed once a new Government signs off on the process. The remaining 110 former combatants will complete this phase during the next occurrence of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and integration process.

27. Challenges persisted in the deployment to Kidal of the remaining company of a reconstituted battalion currently housed in Gao owing to disagreements between the parties on the modalities.

28. In Gao and Timbuktu, following the Mission’s handover of the Operational Coordination Mechanism sites during the previous reporting period, concerns emerged regarding leadership, lack of adequate support from Malian armed forces’ command, poor living conditions and perceived unfair payments for the reconstituted battalion in Timbuktu. There were similar issues with payments in Kidal. Adequate support, training, command and control structures and equipment remain important to ensure the full operationalization of the reconstituted units.

29. The next step of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and integration process is the training and integration, and the subsequent redeployment, of the 400 former combatants who have already been registered. This will be followed by the resumption of the second batch of the accelerated process targeting 1,160 ex-combatants, as well as the implementation of the socioeconomic reinsertion programme.

B. Constitutional and institutional reforms

30. In the absence of a functioning parliament, progress towards the implementation of constitutional and institutional reforms was further delayed. Preparations for legislative by-elections in Ménaka and Taoudenni regions were also put on hold.

C. Northern Development Zone

31. The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization continued work on the Northern Development Zone, but progress was halted on its implementation following the political crisis, as the Government ceased to function effectively.

D. Participation of women

32. At the fortieth session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, the Government delegation included a woman Deputy Minister and the Platform coalition of armed groups delegation included three women (see para. 23 above). Participants endorsed the proposal to increase the participation of women from two to three

representatives for each party, and the signatory parties committed to each include the three women in their delegations at the next session. Participants also vowed to explore options to ensure the participation of women in the four thematic subcommittees of the Agreement Monitoring Committee.

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

33. The situation in central Mali remained of serious concern. Self-defence militias and extremist groups continued to exploit conflicts across community lines, which resulted in continued violence against civilians and security incidents, mostly affecting the *cercles* of Bankass, Bandiagara, Douentza and Koro. It is reported that the Dogon self-defence militia, Dan Nan Ambassagou, forcibly recruited Dogon villagers into its ranks and violently retaliated against those who refused. Extremists also continued attacks on the Malian defence and security forces, while consolidating their presence in Ségou region. Clashes between communities and terrorist groups also resulted in blockades of several villages, making living conditions increasingly dire.

34. Terrorist groups continued to expand their influence in the centre, attacking and threatening the local population in several villages. Abductions reportedly carried out by these groups increased in Douentza *cercle*, as did attacks using improvised explosive devices on major transportation axes, impeding the movements of civilians and security forces. National defence and security forces were the target of multiple attacks, mainly in the eastern and northern parts of the central region.

35. The Mission continued to support the Permanent Secretariat of the Cadre politique de gestion de la crise au centre du Mali. On 29 June, the Regional Committee of the Cadre politique for Ségou region was launched in Ségou town, completing the establishment of key structures at the regional level.

36. MINUSMA continued to support reconciliation and social cohesion efforts. Intercommunal dialogue was initiated in Ogossogou, and local peace agreements were signed in Koro and Djenné *cercles*, allowing for the return of 500 internally displaced persons to Djenné.

37. The Mission supported training on conflict prevention and mediation for local authorities and traditional mediators throughout Mopti, as well as a government initiative bringing together local authorities and civil society leaders to discuss challenges regarding the return of State authority to the region. The Mission also supported the Government's communication campaign for the centre with local language broadcasts on peaceful coexistence in Bandiagara, Bankass, Douentza and Koro.

38. The Mission and the United Nations country team also worked on easing access to remote villages, including through repair work on several bridges along the Niger River. The political crisis in Bamako, however, halted most of the Government's efforts in the centre, although the Mission continued its protection of civilian work.

39. MINUSMA continued Operation Buffalo and initiated Operation Mongoose, both with the aim of enhancing the protection of civilians in areas repeatedly targeted by violence. The Mission also created a new geospatial data-driven tool to evaluate the impact of its protection of civilian efforts, enabling it to adapt its efforts quickly and further improve the effectiveness of operations.

Progress made in the achievement of the priority measures

1. Re-establishment of State presence and State authority

40. As at 31 August, 17 per cent of civil administrators in northern Mali and Mopti region were physically deployed at their duty station, including 29 per cent of prefects and 14 per cent of sub-prefects, marking a 5.5 per cent decrease from the previous reporting period, caused by persistent insecurity and growing political instability. The majority of administrators travel between their duty stations and the nearest *cercle* or regional capital. In Ménaka and Taoudenni regions, several positions remain vacant.

41. Following the abduction on 17 June of the sub-prefect of Diré *cercle*, Timbuktu region, the two main civil administrator unions issued a joint communiqué on 22 June, calling upon their members who feel unsafe in their duty stations to retreat to the nearest secure location. This prompted several civilian administrators to leave their duty stations, including the prefect and all remaining sub-prefects of Diré. Several abducted civil administrators remained in captivity.

2. Fight against impunity

42. The Government's response to serious crimes under international human rights and humanitarian law committed in the centre remained largely insufficient. Little progress was seen in the judicial response to high-profile cases such as the attacks on Ogossogou in March 2019, Sobane Da in June 2019 and Malémana in December 2019, which claimed the lives of at least 206 civilians in total. However, a criminal investigation was launched into the attack in Ogossogou in February 2020. In an encouraging move, in July, prosecution orders were signed for military personnel suspected of involvement in serious crimes in central Mali, including the Binedama incident on 5 June, in which at least 37 persons were summarily executed (31 men, 3 women and 3 children) during a national forces military operation. Arrest warrants for the suspects remain to be issued.

43. Challenges persist with regard to carrying out investigations and executing arrest warrants owing to increasing insecurity, restrictions on movement related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the absence of Malian defence and security forces and the influence of extremists and militias.

V. Regional developments

44. International counter-terrorism operations continued with some success, notably the killing of the leader of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Abdelmalek Droukdel, and several members of his group near Tessalit, Kidal region, in early June. At the summit of Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel, held on 30 June in Nouakchott, the Heads of State of the five countries, along with the President of France, vowed to intensify counter-terrorism operations along the tri-State border areas of the Liptako-Gourma region, while reiterating their commitment to investigating allegations of human rights violations by security and defence forces, and to ensure that they adhere to the human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework.

45. MINUSMA continued to provide logistic support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. From 3 June to 24 July, the Mission provided 240,600 litres of fuel, 640 litres of oil and 12,600 ration packs to the Joint Force. MINUSMA, in close consultation with the Joint Force, also made arrangements to begin implementing its enhanced support mandate to the Joint Force, in accordance with resolution [2531 \(2020\)](#).

VI. Major security developments

46. The security situation remained of grave concern, as attacks by extremist groups on civilians and national and international security forces in northern and central Mali continued unabated.

47. Clashes between groups affiliated to Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara continued, mainly in Gao region as a result of the continued expansion of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara from central Mali towards the north and the tri-State border area. On 31 July and 4 August, customs personnel and a gendarmerie post in Sikasso and Kayes cities, respectively, came under attack by unidentified assailants, believed to be affiliated with terrorist groups.

48. In Gao city, tensions between the Arab and Songhai communities erupted on 20 August. On 26 August, following an inter-community meeting, a memorandum of understanding to foster a secure environment in Gao region was signed by notables from the Songhai, Arab, Tuareg and Fulani communities.

49. The Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad continued to expand its influence in Kidal and Timbuktu regions and remains the primary security provider in Kidal region.

50. In July, clashes reignited between different Arab communities affiliated with the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad-Plateforme (Ould Ich) and the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad-Coordination (Tourmouz) in Lerneb, Goundam district, Timbuktu region. Despite an agreement brokered by Mauritanian authorities in the border area, clashes on 2 August resulted in the deaths of 15 people. In August, MINUSMA provided support for the mediation process initiated by the Governor of Timbuktu and for a fact-finding mission by the joint observation and verification team, which concluded that the incident constituted a ceasefire violation to be addressed at the next meeting of the Technical Security Committee.

A. Asymmetric and other attacks

51. There were 84 asymmetric attacks against national and international forces, MINUSMA and signatory armed groups, 49 per cent of which were in northern Mali, including 11 in Gao, 9 in Kidal, 7 in Ménaka and 14 in Timbuktu regions. The centre saw 48.8 per cent of the attacks, including 33 in Mopti and 8 in Ségou regions. This marked an increase in attacks in central Mali from the previous reporting period, in which 30 attacks were recorded against security forces and signatory groups.

52. The Malian defence and security forces were targeted in 47 attacks, in which 108 soldiers were killed and 201 were injured. The deadliest attacks occurred on 14 June in Bouka, Niono *cercle*, Ségou region, in which 27 soldiers were killed and 5 went missing, and on 2 July in Gouari, Bankass *cercle*, Mopti region, in which 9 soldiers were killed and 6 were injured.

53. There were 29 attacks against MINUSMA, resulting in the death of two peacekeepers and the injury of 40. This marked an increase in the number of attacks and fatalities compared with the previous period, during which 26 attacks against MINUSMA were reported, in which 24 peacekeepers were injured and none were killed. The highest number of attacks continued to be recorded in Mopti region (14), followed by Kidal (8), Ménaka (3), Gao (2) and Timbuktu (2) regions. On 13 June, two peacekeepers were killed when assailants attacked a MINUSMA logistics convoy, 93 km north-east of Gao town. On 7 July, assailants launched an indirect fire attack at the MINUSMA camp in Tessalit, Kidal region. No casualties or damages were reported.

54. In the first half of 2020, the number of improvised explosive device attacks against MINUSMA increased to 41, up from 25 in the same period in 2019. While the number of peacekeepers injured increased from 22 to 58, the number of fatalities increased only slightly, from 3 to 4, owing, in part, to the Mission's increased counter-improvised explosive device training and enhanced equipment.

55. There were seven attacks on signatory armed groups during the reporting period, resulting in the death of seven elements and the abduction of six. On 9 July, the commander of the Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad base in Amrouch, Gargando commune, Gounadam *cercle*, Timbuktu region, was kidnapped by unidentified armed men.

B. Support for Malian defence and security institutions

56. On 27 July, the Instance de coordination au Mali met to enhance coordination between national and international defence and security forces. Participants discussed support requirements for the Ménaka Without Weapons Initiative, as well as efforts to establish a legal framework for cooperation and consultation among security forces in Mali.

57. MINUSMA conducted 35 casualty evacuations for Malian defence and security forces members. After the events of 18 August, the Mission continued to conduct evacuations, including for 18 members of the Malian defence and security forces who were injured on 27 August when a Malian army convoy was attacked in Mopti region and for 18 Malian soldiers whose convoy was attacked in Koulikoro region on 4 September.

58. MINUSMA police trained 129 Malian security personnel (including 21 women) on community policing.

C. Small arms, light weapons and explosive threat mitigation

59. Extremist groups increased the number of improvised explosive device attacks against international security forces, requiring MINUSMA and others to adapt mitigation efforts. To that end, in addition to the use of air cover to counter threats, the Mission continued Operation Seka, which is aimed at safeguarding the primary transportation axes in Gao and Ménaka regions.

60. The Mission also launched Operation Toolbox on 3 July, mapping and analysing previous attacks to inform the planning of convoy routes and enhance the capabilities in each sector to protect routes for convoys, civilians and humanitarian actors. The Operation has resulted in important changes, including the creation of counter-improvised explosive device plans for each convoy based on the specific threats, enhanced reconnaissance and patrolling as part of missions supporting the Operation, and a database of reconnaissance information and operational recommendations for various routes.

61. The Mine Action Service completed work for two armouries in Gao region and launched construction and refurbishment works for 10 armouries and one ammunition depot in Gao and Ménaka regions for the Malian authorities. The additional safe storage capacity will reduce the risks of accidental explosions and contribute to reducing the illicit trafficking of small arms.

VII. Protection of civilians

62. Despite the best efforts of national forces, with MINUSMA support, to enhance protective measures, targeted attacks on civilians across community lines continued to occur, particularly in central Mali. As at 31 August, 343 incidents had been reported, in which 375 civilians had been killed, 450 had been injured and 93 had been abducted throughout Mali. This constitutes an increase in the level of violence compared with that of the previous reporting period, during which 293 incidents were reported, resulting in the death of 266 civilians, the injury of 189 and the abduction of 44. Civilians in Mopti region were the most affected, with 165 incidents, in which 248 civilians were killed, 100 were injured and 49 were abducted (48 per cent of all incidents involving civilians).

63. While the overall number of improvised explosive device incidents has remained constant, an increase in victim-operated improvised explosive devices in the centre has resulted in higher civilian casualties: 153 in the first half of 2020 (35 killed and 118 injured), compared with 108 in the same period in 2019.

64. In Gao region, MINUSMA recorded an uptick in violence against civilians, despite the recent return of the Malian defence forces, with MINUSMA support, to the border town of Labbezanga. Civilians along the Gao-Labbezanga axis and in the neighbouring Liptako-Gourma area continued to experience violence and intimidation, leading to displacement. MINUSMA is in the process of increasing its presence in the area.

65. On 15 June, MINUSMA adopted its new standard operating procedures for early warning and rapid response. Newly introduced online tools, such as the early warning tracking form, tested in Mopti region in August and rolled out to the other regions in September, allowed MINUSMA to conduct regular, comprehensive after-action reviews to guide the ongoing improvement of rapid response. The Mission further refined its pilot data-driven tool to measure the impact of its protection of civilian efforts and extended its use to force operations in regions other than Mopti. Arrangements are under way to roll out the toll-free hotlines allowing civilians to inform MINUSMA of imminent threats throughout the Mission area. The availability of sufficient air assets, however, will remain critical in ensuring the Mission's capacity to rapidly deploy to protect civilians.

VIII. Human rights situation

66. The human rights situation deteriorated, with violations and abuses linked to the spread of violent extremism, counter-terrorism operations and community-based violence, as well as acts of violence during anti-government demonstrations in Bamako.

67. MINUSMA documented 720 human rights violations (377) and abuses (343), 185 more than in the previous period, including extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (96 victims), other killings (252), violations or abuses of the right to physical integrity (158), enforced disappearances (5), abductions (58), torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (9), illegal or arbitrary arrest and detention (142), as well as numerous instances of death threats and intimidation, forced civilian conscription and displacement, destruction of public and private properties and looting.

68. As in the past, most violations and abuses were documented in Mopti region (359), with others in Bamako (202), Ségou (44), Timbuktu (32), Ménaka (28), Gao (22), Koulikoro (17) and Kidal (16) regions. The perpetrators were national forces

(187), judicial authorities (114), signatory and compliant armed groups (35), community-based armed groups and militias (260) and extremist groups (122).

69. Following allegations of serious human rights violations perpetrated by national forces during demonstrations in Bamako between 10 and 13 July, MINUSMA conducted a fact-finding mission, documenting excessive use of force by the Special Counter-terrorism Force and other parts of the Malian defence and security forces, resulting in the death of 14 persons (11 men and 3 boys) and the injury of 109 persons. The investigation established responsibility for acts of violence by some individuals.

70. National forces perpetrated human rights violations in the context of counter-terrorism operations, including the summary execution of at least 37 persons (31 men, 3 women and 3 children) and burned down dwellings during a military operation in Binedama, Mopti region, on 5 June. Dogon traditional hunters (*dozos*) from the surrounding villages collaborated with national forces during the operation.

71. On 6 August, MINUSMA released its quarterly note on trends in violations and abuses of human rights in Mali, for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2020, with 632 violations and abuses documented, a 5.7 per cent increase compared with the previous quarter. In its findings, MINUSMA highlighted an increase in violations committed by the Malian defence and security forces and international forces in the context of military and security operations, including allegations of 50 arbitrary executions between 26 and 28 May 2020, in particular in the village of Boulekessi and the surrounding villages.

72. Violence across communal lines continued unabated in Mopti region: Dogon armed groups and militias were responsible for 6 attacks, in which 9 persons were killed, and armed groups from the Fulani community were involved in 61 attacks, resulting in 180 killings. On 1 July, armed men from the Fulani community attacked Djimindo, Fangadougou, and Gouari villages, killing at least 33 persons, injuring many others, destroying property and looting livestock. Dan Nan Ambassagou also continued forcibly conscripting civilians to bolster its ranks.

73. Fewer grave violations against children were recorded than during the previous reporting period: 230 violations against 159 children, compared with 322 violations against 219 children. While the perpetrators of most of the cases remain unidentified, 27 were attributed to the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, 19 to the Platform coalition of armed groups, 14 to Dan Nan Ambassagou, 3 to extremist groups, 2 to *dozos* and one to the Malian armed forces. A total of 46 children were killed and 24 were maimed. Sixty-nine children between the ages of 11 and 17 years were recruited by Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (36), Platform coalition of armed groups (19), Dan Nan Ambassagou (7) and unidentified armed groups (7). MINUSMA also documented 16 attacks and threats against schools and hospitals.

74. MINUSMA reported five cases of conflict-related sexual violence against three women and two girls, including gang rape and sexual slavery, perpetrated by extremist groups. MINUSMA trained 54 police officers on handling cases of conflict-related sexual violence.

75. MINUSMA continued to support the work of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, which began preparations for the drafting of its final report in June.

IX. Rule of law

76. The number of judicial and prison officials deployed in the north and centre remained low, which had a negative impact on the functioning of the courts. Insecurity continued to cause absenteeism and the relocation of eight magistrates in these regions. MINUSMA continued efforts to support the return of State judicial entities to these regions, advocating the assignment of a sufficient number of magistrates and the holding of mobile hearings and regular in situ missions.

77. MINUSMA supported the Government through awareness-raising and the provision of protective equipment to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in prisons in the north and centre.

78. MINUSMA and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continued to provide technical assistance to the Specialized Judicial Unit against Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime through remote mentoring for magistrates and investigators and virtual training for first responders and clerks.

79. On 24 August, the 2020 criminal trial session of the Court of Assizes of Bamako started, with 29 trials scheduled for terrorism-related crimes as at 11 September.

80. To this date, no death of a peacekeeper has been tried by the Malian authorities.

X. Humanitarian situation

81. The humanitarian situation remained of serious concern, with COVID-19 compounding an already fragile situation. Insecurity continued to limit humanitarian access, but humanitarian actors continued trust-building efforts to improve their access to communities.

82. Food insecurity increased at an alarming rate. During the lean season, the number of people needing emergency food assistance increased by more than 70 per cent, reaching 1.3 million. At the same time, funding constraints forced humanitarian actors to reduce the ration to 60 per cent of the basic food basket.

83. Since the previous reporting period, the number of internally displaced persons has increased from 250,998 to 266,831. Some 139,631 Malian refugees remained in neighbouring countries.

84. All schools have been closed since 19 March, affecting 3.8 million children. The international community provided support to the Government to implement home-based learning activities and prepare for school reopening while adhering to strict COVID-19 prevention measures. The mobilization of the entire health sector in response to the pandemic also had negative consequences for essential programmes, including vaccinations.

85. As part of an integrated effort, MINUSMA, with technical guidance from the World Health Organization, provided support to the Government in the fight against COVID-19 through the provision of protective materials, with 21 tons of material already dispatched to the north and another 32 tons of material ready for handover in Bamako.

86. The humanitarian plan for 2020 was revised in July 2020, targeting 5.5 million people of a total of 6.8 million in need. Implementation of the plan requires \$474.3 million. As at 31 August, \$166.2 million had been received (35 per cent).

XI. Economic development

87. In June, the United Nations country team and MINUSMA undertook a socioeconomic impact assessment and finalized a costed United Nations integrated response plan to COVID-19 to coordinate its support to the Government. The assessment suggested that the Government's ability to mobilize resources had diminished owing to the global economic recession as a result of the pandemic and an expected reduction in the estimated national growth in gross domestic product (GDP) for 2020, from 5 per cent to 0.9 per cent.

88. For the first time in six years, demographic growth will significantly exceed GDP growth. In 2019, the poverty rate was 42.3 per cent, but the current crisis is likely to push a further 800,000 Malians below the poverty line, while others will be poorer than before. Inequalities in income and access to employment are expected to increase, resulting in a potential escalation of socioeconomic and political tensions. The ECOWAS sanctions could also have negative repercussions on the short- and medium-term prospects.

89. During the reporting period, 11 new trust fund projects, totalling almost \$3.6 million, were approved, in alignment with the priorities identified in the integrated strategic framework, including the return of State authority, social cohesion, resilience, infrastructure, rule of law, mediation and the empowerment of women to participate in the implementation of the Agreement.

90. Thirty-one quick-impact projects, totalling \$1.02 million, were also approved for the provision of basic services, infrastructure-building, income-generating activities, conflict prevention, support for youth, women and children, support for the Malian defence and security forces and support for the Government's response to COVID-19.

91. A new Peacebuilding Fund project, totalling approximately \$1.3 million, was approved to support the coordination of the Fund's projects in Mali.

XII. External communication

92. MINUSMA took steps to enhance external communication to increase awareness and understanding of its mandate and to emphasize the primary role and responsibility of the Malian authorities in implementing the Agreement and protecting civilians. The steps included targeted thematic press briefings on priority issues such as the Agreement and the Mission's role in central Mali; interviews with Government and senior MINUSMA officials broadcast on radio and other media channels; interactive radio programmes; the building of a solid network for information-sharing and training for local media and radio stations in the centre; and increased cooperation with local media and Malian journalists and civil society associations to promote peace and dialogue among different ethnic groups.

93. In implementing its crisis communication strategy, MINUSMA has continued to communicate regular prevention messages to reduce the risks of the spread of COVID-19.

XIII. Capacities of the Mission

A. Military

94. As at 14 September, 12,438 military personnel had been deployed, corresponding to 93.6 per cent of the authorized strength of 13,289 personnel, including 33 military observers, 445 staff officers and 11,960 contingent personnel. Women accounted for 3.6 per cent of military personnel.

B. Police

95. As at 14 September, 1,712 United Nations police personnel had been deployed, corresponding to 89.1 per cent of the authorized strength of 1,920 personnel, including 266 individual police officers and 1,446 formed police unit personnel. Women accounted for 11.9 per cent of police personnel.

C. Civilian personnel

96. As at 14 September, 90 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 94 per cent of international staff (26 per cent women), 81 per cent of United Nations Volunteers (30 per cent women) and 89 per cent of national staff (16 per cent women).

D. Implementation of the adaptation plan

97. The COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the current political crisis, slowed the implementation of the adaptation plan, including delaying infrastructure projects for camp extension. The Mission worked to mitigate these challenges and continue to implement its adaptation plan.

98. MINUSMA began the movement and consolidation of different contingents to set the conditions for the transformation of units and inflow of new capabilities. In July, the majority of a mechanized infantry company and base defence unit relocated from Timbuktu to Mopti, inter alia, to ensure the protection of construction works for the extension of Mission premises. Attack helicopter units were consolidated in Timbuktu and will be transformed to one unit before the end of the year. Due to COVID-19-related restrictions in the force generation and deployment process, MINUSMA is exploring ways to redeploy available capabilities to achieve maximum operational impact.

99. As part of the adaptation concept, Operation Mongoose was developed to deploy a mobile unit to provide protection in areas of Mali that are out of reach of the Mission's current operational deployments. During the first phase, from 2 to 5 June, special forces deployed from Timbuktu to Mopti and conducted two missions, resulting in enhanced real-time coordination between Mission headquarters, the Mopti regional office and force elements in the field, and improved synchronization of Mission air assets, explosive ordnance disposal teams, other ground troops and a quick-reaction platoon.

100. MINUSMA police continued to prepare for the deployment of the remaining 120 members of the Egyptian formed police unit to Mopti, which was delayed by COVID-19 restrictions.

101. The requirements for the successful and timely implementation of the adaptation plan include the absorption capacity of MINUSMA camps and the Mission's land acquisition processes. After the initial approval of land provision in Mopti, significant changes to the layout were requested, which will require the Mission to find an alternative solution for the planned expansion. In Kidal, the Government is reviewing the Mission's request for more land to accommodate additional aviation units that will deploy as part of the adaptation plan.

E. Efforts to optimize performance

102. The Mission continued to roll out the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System, which was updated to reflect the changes in the Mission's mandate introduced by Security Council resolution [2531 \(2020\)](#).

103. Physical distancing, the disruption of troop rotations and border closures constrained the Mission's ability to operate and forced it to adopt flexible responses and to shift some of its efforts to supporting the Government in its COVID-19 response.

104. The Malian authorities and the United Nations have been working together closely to address the crisis. The authorities have provided testing and medical care to United Nations staff with COVID-19, while the United Nations has transported COVID-19 materials for the Government, donated COVID-19 prevention kits to vulnerable communities and organized awareness-raising sessions.

105. COVID-19-related travel restrictions led the Mission to postpone the evaluations of 10 units. The force resumed evaluations in September after introducing a system to conduct them remotely. The police component, which relies on personnel in the regions to conduct performance assessments, evaluated nine formed police units. While they received satisfactory ratings, it was acknowledged that the reduction of patrols and interaction with communities as a result of COVID-19 prevention measures negatively affected information collection and performance. Unserviceable armoured personnel carriers were identified in four units, and three units received specific recommendations on how to enhance camp defence.

F. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

106. Following the events on 18 August, MINUSMA promptly activated its crisis response mechanism, reviewed and updated its contingency and security plans and conducted drills.

107. Enhancements to perimeter surveillance systems continued in Kidal and Mopti, after work had been completed in Gao and Timbuktu. Public address systems were installed in Goundam, and the Mission began the planning phase of installing new access control systems in all premises.

108. The Mission's COVID-19 response included the introduction of stricter medical checks for gaining access to premises, the installation of thermal-detection cameras in Bamako and the systematic decontamination of United Nations camps. In support of the Malian authorities' containment efforts, the Mission also participated in the decontamination of main markets, medical centres and the Bamako airport.

109. Rotations of MINUSMA uniformed personnel were partially resumed on 1 July. Troop- and police-contributors are required to comply with stringent conditions, including pre-deployment training on COVID-19 and a 14-day quarantine in the home country, adherence to the Mission's quarantine regulations upon deployment, physical

distancing and the use of personal protective equipment to mitigate the spread of the virus.

110. As at 24 September, 354 MINUSMA personnel and 11 staff members of the United Nations country team had tested positive for COVID-19. For MINUSMA, 351 had recovered, leaving one active case and two fatalities.

G. Conduct and discipline

111. One allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse was recorded during the reporting period. MINUSMA continued to implement its strategy to prevent misconduct, particularly sexual exploitation and abuse, by training 808 uniformed and civilian personnel and managing risks through mitigating measures. Training and outreach activities were conducted in strict adherence to COVID-19 containment measures using alternative technological resources.

H. Environmental issues

112. Preparations continued for the implementation of a pilot project for the storage of solar energy in liquid form aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

XIV. Observations

113. I am deeply concerned about the consequences of the 18 August coup in Mali that led to the resignation of the President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and the dissolution of the parliament. I strongly condemn the military interference in politics. I reiterate my call for a swift return to constitutional order in Mali. I note that these events were largely non-violent and were an expression of grievances with corruption, worsening insecurity, lack of political participation and unfulfilled promises for social and economic improvement in the daily lives of ordinary Malian people.

114. The political vacuum is of great concern, as it may further delay the implementation of the Agreement and the reform agenda, which had already slowed significantly in previous months.

115. I therefore urge all Malian stakeholders to work together, in the spirit of compromise, to create the conditions necessary for a consensual and inclusive transition. A pragmatic road map will be needed to ensure the continuity of the State and to create the basic conditions for the establishment of stronger democratic institutions, a level playing field for the national elections and the full restoration of constitutional order. This will require an inclusive process, involving political leaders, the military, organized labour, civil society and women's and youth organizations. The United Nations stands ready to accompany Malians in this challenging endeavour.

116. As the transition evolves, Malian stakeholders must urgently identify solutions to overcome the recurring breakdowns in dialogue and trust in order to lay a solid foundation for democratic practices and eventual peace dividends for the people of Mali. I call upon regional and international actors to continue their engagement in support of Mali, as it navigates this sensitive transition. I am grateful for the active engagement of ECOWAS, the African Union and other partners in ensuring that Malian stakeholders build the foundations for a more stable and peaceful country.

117. The Agreement remains the relevant framework for the urgently needed institutional reforms, and its implementation must remain a priority. There is no viable

alternative. I call upon the transitional authorities to take ownership of the Agreement, while the signatory movements are urged to renew their commitments to take concrete steps to ensure measurable progress in its implementation. Greater efforts are needed to enable the redeployed, reconstituted units to play their role and more effectively contribute to security arrangements in northern Mali, particularly in Kidal, and facilitate the return of the State. Any further delays risk reversing hard-won gains.

118. Time is of the essence as the security, humanitarian and human rights situation continues to deteriorate as a result of intensified activities by terrorist groups in central and northern Mali. I strongly condemn attacks by extremist groups against civilians, humanitarian workers, Malian defence and security forces and MINUSMA. I call upon the national authorities to take swift action to investigate such incidents and bring the perpetrators to justice.

119. Countering terrorism, violent extremism and asymmetric attacks must remain a priority. I count on the continued support of international forces and development and humanitarian partners, working closely with the national authorities, to ensure that ground is not lost to extremist elements. It is essential that the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel continue to receive the assistance needed to carry out its tasks. The Mission will continue to implement its comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians in the centre, including providing support to the Malian defence and security forces in full compliance with the human rights due diligence policy. To that end, I call upon Member States to accelerate support to the protection and adaptation efforts of MINUSMA.

120. I am deeply concerned about the increasing cases of human rights violations, including against children and women, which I have repeatedly condemned. I call upon the Malian authorities to promptly investigate and prosecute human rights violations in the north and centre, as well as those committed in the context of the post-electoral crisis. Impunity fuels the cycle of violence and undermines trust in the social contract between the Government and the population. It has to end. I urge all Malian stakeholders to accord the fight against impunity the utmost attention in the road map of the transition and in the Government's post-transition priorities.

121. I am equally worried about the humanitarian situation, which is a product of the multifaceted and multidimensional crises facing Mali, now compounded by the coronavirus pandemic. I commend bilateral and multilateral partners for stepping up efforts to address the humanitarian needs. Given the ongoing pandemic, deteriorating security situation and tense political context, assistance to vulnerable populations, in particular, women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, must remain unhindered and commensurate with their needs.

122. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my Special Representative, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his leadership and to all the United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their tireless and sustained efforts in a particularly challenging political, security and humanitarian context. I am also most appreciative of the continued support provided to Mali by troop- and police-contributing countries, bilateral, regional and multilateral partners and non-governmental organizations.

Annex I

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission
in Mali: military and police strength as at 14 September 2020**

Country	Military			Police								
	Experts on Mission, staff officers and units			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Armenia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Australia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Austria	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bangladesh	1 313	15	1 328	1	–	1	237	43	280	238	43	281
Belgium	33	5	38	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Benin	240	17	257	12	1	13	133	5	138	145	6	151
Bhutan	5	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Burkina Faso	1054	35	1089	22	13	35	130	10	140	152	23	175
Burundi	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cambodia	310	25	335	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cameroon	1	1	2	10	3	13	–	–	–	10	3	13
Canada	2	2	4	3	4	7	–	–	–	3	4	7
Chad	1 415	41	1 456	9	1	10	–	–	–	9	1	10
China	410	16	426	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Côte d'Ivoire	556	8	564	6	10	16	–	–	–	6	10	16
Czechia	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Denmark	9	–	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Egypt	1 062	2	1 064	–	–	–	148	10	158	148	10	158
El Salvador	189	16	205	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Estonia	3	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ethiopia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Finland	3	1	4	1	1	2	–	–	–	1	1	2
France	22	2	24	8	1	9	–	–	–	8	1	9
Gambia	3	2	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Germany	342	20	362	3	5	8	–	–	–	3	5	8
Ghana	133	19	152	3	0	3	–	–	–	3	0	3
Guatemala	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Guinea	833	30	863	5	3	8	–	–	–	5	3	8
Indonesia	5	–	5	4	1	5	–	–	–	4	1	5
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ireland	11	–	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Italy	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Jordan	80	–	80	7	0	7	–	–	–	7	0	7
Kenya	11	–	11	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Country	Military			Police								
	Experts on Mission, staff officers and units			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Latvia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Liberia	102	15	117	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lithuania	33	2	35	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Luxembourg	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	2	0	2	–	–	–	2	0	2
Mauritania	7	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mexico	1	1	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nepal	150	3	153	0	1	1	–	–	–	0	1	1
Netherlands	5	–	5	2	1	3	–	–	–	2	1	3
Niger	857	12	869	22	11	33	–	–	–	22	11	33
Nigeria	74	8	82	0	1	1	101	39	140	102	40	142
Norway	10	2	12	2	2	4	–	–	–	2	2	4
Pakistan	140	–	140	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Portugal	56	5	61	2	1	3	–	–	–	2	1	3
Romania	117	6	123	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Senegal	959	40	999	12	6	18	284	29	313	296	35	331
Sierra Leone	21	4	25	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Spain	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sri Lanka	249	–	249	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sweden	153	35	188	1	1	2	–	–	–	1	1	2
Switzerland	4	–	4	3	2	5	–	–	–	3	2	5
Togo	887	49	936	26	5	31	258	19	277	284	24	308
Tunisia	80	5	85	25	1	26	–	–	–	25	1	26
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ukraine	11	2	13	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2	1	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United States of America	8	1	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	11 987	451	12 438	191	75	266	1291	155	1 446	1 482	230	1 712

Annex II

Map

