



Security Council

Distr.: General
19 August 2022
English
Original: French

Letter dated 15 August 2022 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my authorities, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the letter dated 15 August 2022 addressed to you by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali concerning violations of the airspace of Mali by the French Barkhane force (see annex I).

Please also find attached two communiqués from the Government of Mali denouncing those attacks on territorial sovereignty (see annex II), as well as a table of air incidents reported since the announcement of the withdrawal of the Barkhane force (see enclosure).

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

(Signed) Kanisson **Coulibaly**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex I to the letter dated 15 August 2022 from the
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the
United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

Koulouba, 15 August 2022

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mali, I would like to draw your attention to serious acts that are likely to undermine international peace and security.

Indeed, for the past several months we have observed repeated and frequent violations of Malian airspace by air vehicles such as drones, military helicopters and fighter planes flown by French forces without authorization from the Malian authorities.

Since the beginning of 2022, the Malian Armed Forces, equipped with new capacities, have recorded more than 50 cases of deliberate violation of Malian airspace in various ways by foreign aircraft, in particular those operated by French forces. In addition to undisciplined behaviour such as a refusal to obey the instructions of air traffic control services, there have also been cases of transponders being turned off in order to evade control. There have also been cases of falsification of flight documents and of helicopters landing in non-airfield locations without prior authorization. There are reports of numerous high-altitude flights of intelligence aircraft and drones engaged in activities perceived as espionage, intimidation or even subversion. A table listing the air incidents that have taken place since the announcement of the withdrawal of the Barkhane force is enclosed.

One of the most recent cases was the illegal presence of a French forces drone on 20 April 2022 above the Gossi base, control of which had been transferred to the Malian Armed Forces on 19 April 2022. The aforementioned drone was present from 1145, moving at medium altitude and spying on our valiant Malian Armed Forces. In addition to espionage, French forces have also been guilty of subversion, as they published images collected by their drone that showed civilians who had been killed. A judicial investigation conducted by the competent Malian services established that the bodies had been placed there well before the arrival of Malian forces in Gossi. That unfortunate communication was designed to blame and tarnish the image of the Malian Armed Forces that are working to liberate their territory and to protect and safeguard the inhabitants, who have lived through a prolonged crisis.

On 21 April 2022, a Mirage 2000 patrol flew, without prior coordination, over a Malian Armed Forces convoy that was on its way to bring reinforcements to the base in Gossi. That action was part of a strategy of intimidating our forces.

On 15 June 2022, a Malian air force Casa 295 tactical transport aircraft was harassed by a combat aircraft of the Barkhane force while the Malian aircraft was carrying out rotation flights between airfields located in Malian territory. The unknown French aircraft, which did not announce itself on the radio at any time, made dangerous manoeuvres around the Malian aircraft that were perceived as attempts at intimidation.

In addition, on 6 August 2022, the Barkhane force confirmed in an official communiqué that it had conducted air operations against suspected terrorists in the Talataye area. However, those unilateral operations were not coordinated with the Malian Armed Forces.

In addition, in the Lerneb sector, on the night of 6 to 7 August 2022, at approximately 0330, a helicopter landed in the vicinity of the Ougrich forest to the south of Lerneb and Aratène, Goundam cercle, Timbuktu region. The helicopter took two members of the team of Ibrahim Ag Baba, lieutenant of Abu Talha, leader of the Timbuktu Emirate, to an unknown destination.

On 8 August 2022, at 37 kilometres from Tessit, Malian Armed Forces reinforcements from Gao moving toward Tessit were flown over by a Chinook helicopter flying in the opposite direction. The Chinook, caught unawares, suddenly gained altitude. Cross-referencing with partners by the Joint Theatre Command Post East failed to confirm the aircraft's origin.

On 8 August 2022 at 1255, a Malian Armed Forces patrol left Labézanga to search, without success, for a package dropped by Barkhane 3 kilometres east of the post.

Throughout the process of the transfer of the Gao airfield and the northern airspace to the Malian authorities, since the announcement of the withdrawal of Barkhane, Malian military aircraft have been obstructed on a regular basis by delaying tactics designed to reduce their effectiveness and increase their response times.

In the light of the increase in those acts of aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State Member of the United Nations, the Government of Mali issued communiqués Nos. 009 and 028 of 12 January and 26 April 2022, respectively, the text of which is included in an annex (see annex II), in order to inform the nation and the international community. The Security Council has also been informed.

The Government of Mali has several pieces of evidence indicating that France has made use of those flagrant violations of Malian airspace to collect intelligence for the benefit of terrorist groups operating in the Sahel and to drop arms and ammunition to them.

Moreover, it should be noted that the Government of Mali, because of its suspicions regarding the destabilizing tactics of France, has firmly opposed the request for French air support for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), so that France does not use the United Nations mission as a pretext for conducting subversive operations aimed at further weakening Mali and the Sahel region.

In terms of international law, the Government of Mali believes that those actions by France constitute aggression, which is defined, according to General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974, as “the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations ...”.

Accordingly, the Government of Mali invites the United Nations Security Council, as the guarantor of international peace and security, to take action to ensure that the French Republic immediately ceases its acts of aggression against Mali. Furthermore, France, as a permanent member of the Security Council, should comply with international law and respect the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Should France persist in its behaviour, which undermines the stability and security of our country, the Government of Mali reserves the right to resort to self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

I would be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council, with a view to holding an emergency meeting on these matters, and issue it as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdoulaye **Diop**
Officer of the National Order

**Annex II to the letter dated 15 August 2022 from the
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the
United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

Communiqué No. 009 of the transitional Government

The Government of the Republic of Mali informs the nation and the international community that a French army A400 aircraft, registered as FRBAN, made a flight on the route Abidjan–Gao–Abidjan during the day on Tuesday, 11 January 2022.

The aforementioned aircraft, which was in clear view of Malian airspace, had both turned off its transponder so as not to be identified and cut off communication with Malian air traffic control agencies.

Despite that fraudulent tactic, the recently acquired national defence capabilities were able to identify the plane and plot its trajectory.

Accordingly, the Government complained of that violation of Malian airspace to the French authorities which, incidentally, have decided to support ECOWAS sanctions that include the closure of the land and air borders of ECOWAS member countries with Mali.

You may recall that the Government of Mali, in accordance with the principle of reciprocity and following the sanctions imposed by ECOWAS, has also closed its borders with ECOWAS member countries, except Guinea.

Moreover, the Government informs the nation and the international community that it declines all responsibility for the risks taken by the perpetrators of such practices if there any further violations of our airspace.

Finally, the Government of Mali invites the public to be vigilant and to remain on guard.

God bless Mali!

Bamako, 12 January 2022

(Signed) Colonel Abdoulaye **Maiga**
Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
Presidential Spokesperson

Communiqué No. 028 of the transitional Government

The growing strength of the Malian Armed Forces is a source of pride for the Malian people and is reflected in the striking victories they have scored against our enemies, as well as their increasingly effective control of the national territory and airspace.

Accordingly, since the beginning of the Keletigui operation, a temporary no-fly zone has been established over part of the national territory in order to secure the airspace, protect the corridors for authorized aircraft and guarantee freedom of action for the Malian Armed Forces in their operations. Any overflight of Malian airspace requires an express authorization issued by the Malian air force.

Since the beginning of 2022, the Government of the Republic of Mali has reported more than 50 deliberate cases of violation of Malian airspace in various forms by foreign aircraft, particularly those operated by French forces, including:

- Refusals to comply with instructions from air traffic control services
- Falsification of flight documents
- Helicopter landings in non-airfield locations without prior authorization
- Numerous high-altitude flights of intelligence aircraft and drones engaged in activities perceived as espionage, intimidation or even subversion.

One of the most recent cases was the illegal presence of a French forces drone on 20 April 2022 above the Gossi base, control of which had been transferred to the Malian Armed Forces on 19 April 2022. The aforementioned drone was present from 1145, moving at medium altitude and spying on our valiant Malian Armed Forces.

In addition to espionage, the French forces have been guilty of subversion by publishing fake images that were fabricated in order to accuse the Malian Armed Forces of being the perpetrators of civilian killings, with the aim of tarnishing the image of the Malian Armed Forces that are working to liberate their territory and to protect and safeguard the inhabitants, who have lived through a prolonged crisis.

On 21 April 2022, a Mirage 2000 patrol flew, without prior coordination, over a Malian Armed Forces convoy that was on its way to bring reinforcements to the base in Gossi. That action was part of a strategy of intimidating our forces.

In response to that additional provocation by the French forces, which were ordered to leave Malian territory without delay on 18 February 2022, the Government of the Republic of Mali informs the nation and the international community that it firmly condemns that attitude of the French authorities and invites them once again to respect the sovereignty of Mali.

The Government of the Republic of Mali reaffirms its willingness to promote and maintain cooperation with all the States of the world, in mutual respect and on the basis of the cardinal principle of non-interference, in accordance with the aspirations of the Malian people.

God bless Mali!

Bamako, 26 April 2022

(Signed) Colonel Abdoulaye **Maiga**
Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
Presidential Spokesperson
Knight of the National Order

Enclosure

Table of air incidents since the announcement of the withdrawal of the Barkhane force

No.	Date	Incidents
1	11 January 2022	A French A400M aircraft, registered as FRBAN, call sign CTM2010, on the route Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)–Gao (Mali) attempted to enter the airspace of Mali without authorization. The controller notified the pilot that the pilot was not in compliance and was therefore prohibited from entering Malian airspace. Despite the controller's objections, the French pilot did not obey, continued his flight and announced to the controller that he was switching to an operational flight and then there was complete radio silence (to escape the control of the civil authorities). The pilot continued his flight and landed at Gao.
2	12 January 2022	A surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, a CESSNA 208B registered as N943AC***, call sign UNO058P, conducted a vertical surveillance and reconnaissance flight over Malian Armed Forces positions in the Timbuktu, Niafunké and Goundam areas.
3	18 January 2022, between 1100 and 1400	A French A332 aircraft, registered as FUJCG, call sign CTM1056, flying from Istre (France) to Niamey (Niger) attempted to enter the airspace of Mali with a false authorization number, namely No. 0107/ANAC/DG. The Air Operations Coordination Centre, alerted by the air traffic control services of Mali while the aircraft was in Mauritanian territory, 30 minutes from the airspace of Mali, proceeded to authenticate that number. It appeared from that verification that the aforementioned number had been officially issued the day before to another French aircraft of the Barkhane operation to serve as an overflight authorization. After receiving that information from the Air Operations Coordination Centre, the controller notified the pilot that he was not in compliance and therefore he was prohibited from flying over Malian territory. The pilot of the aforementioned aircraft then announced to the controller that he was in possession of another permanent authorization number, namely No. 221225, which was shown by cross-referencing to have been delivered by neither the Air Operations Coordination Centre, nor the National Civil Aviation Agency. Upon careful review of the overflight authorization application form, the Air Operations Coordination Centre soon discovered that it was counterfeit, as it included an additional item (item 11) whereas the authentic form has only 10 items. Despite the controller's objections, the French pilot did not obey, but continued his flight and announced to the controller that he was switching to an operational flight and then there was complete radio silence (to escape the control of the civil authorities). The aircraft changed its course and headed for Gao instead of Niamey. It flew over the city of Gao before heading back on course to Niger.
4	18 January 2022 between 1300 and 1400	Another military aircraft (probably on behalf of Operation Barkhane), namely an IL 76 registered as 4QAZ100, made an unauthorized flight on the route Germany–Gao with the authorization number 21/007198/1/ANAC/DG/DTA/STA/BCI communicated to the controller by the pilot. That flight was reported to the Malian controller via the Niamey control service in charge of Gao and the surrounding area. Despite being instructed not to land without authorization, the pilot continued his flight and landed at Gao.
5	18 January 2022	An aircraft, type A330-MR, registered as FUJCG and operated by Barkhane, was seen on the radar screen with call sign CTM 1056, heading for the Upper Transit Area of Bamako via Mopti, without any coordination with the control tower. The air traffic control services in Bamako called Niamey to find out more about the aircraft. They were informed that the aircraft had cut off all contact after take-off. It passed Mopti at 1816 with the transponder code 7222 and made contact with Bamako at 1822. When the control services asked about the overflight authorization, No. 107ANAC/DG 221225

No.	Date	Incidents
		was provided for that purpose, but it did not appear in the national registers. The aircraft was ordered to leave the national airspace. The aircraft then cut off all contact with the control services until it left the airspace of Bamako at 1901. Later, the control services in Niamey called Bamako to notify them that the same aircraft had changed its callsign to HALIDAY-63.
6	20 January 2022	A C130J aircraft, registered as B538, call sign DAF 2284, coming from Niamey and bound for Gao, flew over the national airspace without authorization. After being informed that the aircraft did not have authorization to fly over Malian airspace, all contact with the control services was broken off and the aircraft continued its flight.
7	20 January 2022	Two Mirage aircraft, call sign COMET 15, flying from Niamey and bound for Gao, flew over the airspace of Mali in operational flight without authorization. After being informed that the aircraft did not have authorization to fly over Malian airspace, all contact with the control services was broken off and the aircraft continued its flight.
8	20 January 2022	An A400 aircraft, registered as FRBAC, call sign ADES64, on a military operational flight flying from Niamey and bound for Gao flew over the national airspace without authorization.
9	20 January 2022	An A400 aircraft, registered as FRBAJ, call sign AERMES63, flying from Niamey and bound for Gao flew over the national airspace without authorization.
10	From February to June 2022	Several cases of aircraft of an unknown type were reported by advanced tactical air control officers near the Guiré, Nara, Mondoro, Gossi, and Boulikessi Malian Armed Forces bases without it being possible to establish radio contact with the aircraft.
11	15 June 2022	The Casa 295 tactical transport aircraft of the Malian air force was harassed by a Barkhane combat aircraft while the Malian aircraft was carrying out rotation flights between airfields located on Malian territory. The unknown French aircraft, which did not announce itself on the radio at any time, made dangerous manoeuvres around the Malian aircraft that were perceived as attempts at intimidation.
12	6 August 2022	Barkhane confirmed in an official communiqué that it had conducted air operations against suspected terrorists in the Talataye area. Those unilateral operations were not coordinated with the Malian Armed Forces.
13	Night of 6 to 7 August 2022 at approx. 0330	In addition, in the Lerneb sector, a helicopter landed in the vicinity of the Ougrich forest to the south of Lerneb and Aratène, Goundam cercle, Timbuktu region. The helicopter took two members of the team of Ibrahim Ag Baba, lieutenant of Abu Talha, leader of the Timbuktu Emirate, to an unknown destination. The helicopter appears to have left from Nema in Mauritania and then returned there.
14	8 August 2022 to 1230 Zulu time	At 37 km from Tessit, Malian Armed Forces reinforcements from Gao moving toward Tessit were flown over by a Chinook helicopter flying in the opposite direction. The Chinook, caught unawares, suddenly gained altitude. Cross-referencing with partners by the Joint Theatre Command Post East failed to confirm the aircraft's origin.
15	8 August 2022 at 1255 Zulu time	A Malian Armed Forces patrol left Labézanga to search, without success, for a package dropped by Barkhane 3 kilometres east of the post.
16	January–August 2022	Throughout the process of the transfer of the Gao airfield and the northern airspace to the Malian authorities, since the announcement of the withdrawal of Barkhane, Malian military aircraft have been obstructed on a regular basis by delaying and often dangerous tactics that are designed to reduce their effectiveness and increase their response times.