



Security Council

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Letter dated 8 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre, Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar, Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; and Brigadier General Maureen O'Brien, Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, South Africa (on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on United Nations peacekeeping operations convened on Thursday, 4 June 2020.

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

(Signed) **Nicolas de Rivière**
President of the Security Council



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

[Original: English and French]

I am pleased to open this Security Council meeting on peacekeeping, with the participation of some Heads of military components of peacekeeping operations. I will be brief, as the purpose of this meeting is primarily to enable the Security Council to benefit from the experience and analysis of the Heads of military components regarding their efforts to implement the mandates entrusted to them. This briefing has become a yearly occasion, held in June, and even though the challenges related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic have led us to postpone the traditional Heads of Military Components Conference, we welcome this continued opportunity for some of our Force Commanders to share their insights with the Security Council.

As the world faces the challenges of COVID-19, so does peacekeeping. A few days ago, we marked the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers and paid tribute to the women and men who serve in peace operations across the globe. Over the past few months, these peacekeepers — civilian, police and military — have all shown their dedication and commitment as they continue to carry out their mandates in the best way possible given the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also honoured the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving under the Blue Flag. On that day, we were saddened by the passing, for the first time, of two of our colleagues from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) due to COVID-19. Now more than ever, we pay tribute to, and express our gratitude for, their sacrifice in the service of peace.

Over the past few months, peacekeeping operations have shown their capacity to adapt to the new context imposed by this pandemic. Our response has been guided by four main objectives: first, protecting our personnel and their capacity to continue critical operations; secondly, containing and mitigating the spread of COVID-19; thirdly, supporting national authorities in their response; and, fourthly, protecting vulnerable communities, while delivering on mandate implementation.

Council members will shortly hear about these different dimensions from the Force Commander of MINUSMA, Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre; the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar; and the Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, Brigadier General Maureen O'Brien.

Each of these military components have taken appropriate measures and have adapted in their own way, taking into account the contexts in which they operate and the needs and priorities on the ground. However, they all have done that with the same commitment to preventing the spread of COVID-19 and to continuing to carry out their vital peace and security work, from supporting a political process to observing a ceasefire and from protecting civilians to supporting capacity-building and national authorities.

In that spirit, the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative continues to guide us as the organizing framework for strengthening United Nations peacekeeping. In the light of the pandemic, we have reprioritized activities to ensure a focus on specific objectives on which we can, and should, deliver within the next few months. We are also pursuing the implementation of the force adaptation plans

within MINUSMA and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as they are indispensable to our operational effectiveness and an integral part of A4P.

I would like to thank the three Force Commanders attending this meeting for their service under the Blue Flag and, through them, all their colleagues, as well as the women and men who serve in our military components.

Annex II**Statement by the Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre**

[Original: English and French]

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the Security Council for allowing me to address it and to share my views on the situation in Mali and within the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). I have been Force Commander of MINUSMA for almost two years, and I am proud of what the Mission has accomplished during my time there.

The Secretary-General's report on the situation in Mali (S/2020/476) for the period up to 2 June has just been issued. It should be clear that many challenges prevail. However, there are also several positive achievements in the area of security.

The deployment of the reconstituted army, with soldiers integrated from the compliant armed groups into the Malian Defence and Security Forces, represents a vital step towards State representation in northern Mali and the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The first echelon, comprising a core of three battalions and one company, has been deployed. In Gao and Timbuktu, MINUSMA handed over the so-called Operational Coordination Mechanism sites to the Malian armed forces, and the reconstituted units are engaged in patrolling and basic security operations. However, the symbolically important deployment of the last element to Kidal was halted earlier due to disagreements. With the ongoing negotiations led by MINUSMA in the Technical Commission on Security, we are ready to escort this unit to Kidal, although no decision has yet been taken.

The continued disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is scheduled to restart on 5 June following an agreement at a meeting of the Technical Commission last week. This agreement now allows for postings of compliant armed groups, including both factions of the Platform coalition, and for the implementation of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic measures at the Operational Coordination Mechanism sites.

On 17 May a company-sized unit of the Malian armed forces redeployed to Labezanga. This was a major milestone in providing security to the local population and re-establishing State authority in the tri-border area. The redeployment has significant symbolic value, as that was one of the three camps from which the Malian armed forces withdrew late last year. Since then, MINUSMA has been providing security in the area.

Within a Mission-wide effort, our main effort is devoted to the protection of civilians. The force has responded to several of the attacks, as well as to threat warnings, by sending ground quick-reaction forces and armed and reconnaissance helicopters and, while not preventing all casualties, it has likely prevented further carnage. Extensive analysis shows a clear pattern — violence is reduced in areas where we conduct at least bimonthly patrols. However, due to the distances, difficult terrain and the number of attacks, it is evident that the current posture and configuration are not fit for purpose.

Concerning the COVID-19 situation, MINUSMA has been in close coordination with the Government of Mali to provide support and ensure conformity with its regulations. We realize the importance of maintaining health and security during this pandemic, not only for the benefit of the Mission's peacekeepers but

also for MINUSMA's reputation as an entity that assists, and in no way harms, the population.

MINUSMA's leadership is dedicated to adopting the appropriate countermeasures during this time, and both the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and I have personally issued guidance to unit commanders to increase their efforts to counter the effects and spread of COVID-19. The sectors are diligently working to implement these measures throughout their units. The force has put in place a variety of preventive measures to stop the spread of the virus, such as enforcing a strict quarantine policy, strict prioritizations of air operations and specific instructions for patrols to limit interactions with the population.

Notwithstanding these measures, I have made it clear that this is not the time for the force to take a step back. While acting prudently and mitigating risks, we will continue to strive to fulfil our mandate. The force will continue its operations, albeit on a more limited scale. We will continue to focus on the core priorities of the mandate and, at the same time, set conditions for adaptation.

The adaptation is crucial, and it has already started. It is a whole-of-mission undertaking, involving all pillars, which is essential for the Mission to adapt not only to its current mandate and the evolving situation in Mali, but also to our efforts to enhance performance. To that end, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General describes the force adaptation as the locomotive for change.

In order to adapt, the focus is on finding a proper balance among ends, ways and means. The ends, or objectives, are the mandate provided by the Security Council, including its two strategic priorities.

For its ways, or how we operate, the force continues to adapt to a proactive posture, characterized by mobility, flexibility and agility. Infantry units are continuously deployed and present at key areas by employing temporary operating bases. Units typically conduct operations for a month before returning to their camp. Also, we conduct temporary reinforcements through its force projection operations by utilizing helicopters to quickly and decisively transport specialized manoeuvre forces to remote locations where the Malian armed forces and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel are camped, thereby reassuring them and providing protection to the local populace. We are building on these operations and are currently conducting Operation Mongoose, where the force employs utility helicopters to insert a special forces unit in the centre to build confidence and enhance security.

These operations must have the means, or capabilities, for their proper execution, such as aircraft and specialized units. The recent force generation conference was a milestone, and I wish to express my gratitude to the troop-contributing countries for the pledges. However, to fully realize the adaptation concept, MINUSMA still requires additional utility and armed helicopter units. A successful adaptation requires the commitment of all stakeholders to maintaining the scope and pace of the implementation. To that end, it is essential that the Mission receive the resources required to allow infrastructural changes and additional air operations. In line with A4P, procedures for casualty evacuation (CASEVAC), intelligence-sharing and boards of inquiry have been streamlined and authorities delegated.

The mindset of our peacekeepers must also continue to adapt. We must be self-confident and proactive and respond immediately and robustly, anywhere. The force is not, and will never be, a counter-terrorism unit. However, we will be able to protect civilians immediately and decisively, regardless of who the perpetrator is.

The adaptation provides a two-tier approach that can both continue the day-to-day activities and the more traditional peacekeeping, while also being able to

rapidly deploy to protect the population and repel any violence in a resolute manner by employing a mobile task force. The mobile task force will comprise intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance air assets, long-range patrol units, special forces, rotary-wing capabilities, air-mobile infantry units and quick-reaction force units, distributed across all four sectors, with the ability to quickly assemble these capabilities to form an ad hoc task group.

An important part of being a Force Commander is the responsibility for the safety of my peacekeepers. We are continuously being targeted and attacked, primarily by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and indirect fire. It is evident that we must make every effort to limit both the number of attacks against peacekeepers and their effects. We are the most vulnerable in and around camps and during logistical convoys. The common denominator is predictability. The aggressor can benefit from the element of surprise, as the time and location of the attacks can be prepared in detail.

Even though we marked the end of this past month with the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, we sadly lost six of our fellow peacekeepers last month. Most recently, two of our peacekeepers succumbed to the effects of COVID-19. Earlier in May, a scorpion stung a peacekeeper, causing his death. In addition, a MINUSMA patrol was attacked by IEDs, resulting in three peacekeepers killed in action and four wounded in action.

Despite the recent attacks that MINUSMA has regrettably experienced, the Mission has made a great deal of improvement in the area of providing its peacekeepers with safety and security. More proactive patrolling, including night patrols and air operations around the camps, as well as support operations to combat convoy missions, have been implemented. To further address our weaknesses, we have improved camp infrastructure and maintenance of equipment — armoured personnel carriers and mine-protected vehicles — and enhanced the integration of force multipliers, such as explosive ordnance disposal, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and counter-rocket, artillery and mortar systems. So far this year, there have been far fewer peacekeeper fatalities as a result of hostile attacks than last year. Currently, we are focusing on improving our counter-IED (CIED) capability. Later this month, we are introducing a new concept called the convoy CIED toolbox, comprised of methods of improved decision cycles, methods, equipment and training. In addition, sufficient CASEVAC coverage remains a key factor for operations. In just the past two months, MINUSMA has executed 12 CASEVAC missions, using air assets, of which half were in support of the Malian armed forces.

Despite the casualties, I have great confidence in the steps we are taking and the goals we seek to achieve, and I am also grateful for the Security Council's continuous support in this endeavour. Let me also reassure the Council of our determination to continue our efforts. When I speak to commanders and colleagues of fallen peacekeepers, they unequivocally show determination to carry on and fulfil the mission.

In the dire situation in which we find ourselves, I have recently issued my guidance and priorities for the coming months. On account of the security situation and the mission with which we have been entrusted, we must relentlessly strive for the achievement of our mandate. We continue operations, while adhering to the Mission's COVID-19 preventive measures. Our main efforts are to implement the peace agreement, protect civilians in endangered areas and population centres, enabling partners to improve the security situation, and augment our posture so as to meet the longer-term objectives, but, at the same time, retain flexibility to respond to contingencies in the near term.

Annex III

Statement by the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) operates under resolution 2514 (2020), which authorizes the use of all necessary means to protect civilians, create the conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, support the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the peace process, and monitor and investigate human rights. It maintains the overall UNMISS force ceiling of 17,000 personnel. The Force comprises 14,554 personnel: 13,932 troops and 622 individual uniformed personnel.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) presented the challenge of maintaining an “infection-free” profile while continuing with mandate implementation. Personal hygiene and distancing norms required modifications to administrative and operational procedures. The need was to inform, adapt and follow a “new discipline” without causing undue alarm or caution. The following measures were adopted.

Working groups at force and sector headquarters coordinate efforts and formulate directives and standard operating procedures for uninterrupted operations in the COVID-19 environment. Instructions are repeated through regular broadcasts.

We have ensured handwashing facilities are available at multiple locations and the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) to contingents and military personnel. Contingents have fabricated masks, and deficiencies have been addressed with Mission support. A few contingents are planning to ship in PPE and medicines/medical equipment to support troops.

A separate treatment and isolation facility was created with each contingent (Level 1). Entry into military camps has been restricted, and regular disinfection of accommodations and vehicles is carried out.

Protocols for isolation and quarantining have been promulgated and the necessary facilities created. Level 2 hospitals have been prepared to receive and treat COVID-19 patients.

Daily health checks and monitoring/isolation of suspected cases is being ensured.

Troops returning from operations with contact with population are placed under medical observation for up to 14 days.

To keep troops prepared and ready to react to contingences, training on operational drills and conduct of field exercises are being carried out.

Stress management and welfare are being addressed through physical exercises; good communication and information sharing; a buddy system among all uniformed personnel; prayers and religious congregation with distancing; and support and guidance by commanders at all levels in person or via video-conference (VTC).

Regarding operations in the COVID-19 environment, most operations can be conducted, minimizing risks from COVID-19 by adopting prevention measures. The following mitigation measures have been adopted.

Patrolling and presence in populated areas have been reduced. Where presence is mandatory — for example, in protection of civilian camps — procedures have been modified to include mobile patrolling and measures to maintain safe distance from internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Physical interaction is being limited with locals and within the force, adhering to social distancing, flexible attendance at the workplace, the use of VTCs, and controlled visits outside of the base. The number of personnel in vehicles and helicopters is being restricted. Hand sanitization is being carried out while on patrol, with washing with chlorine water upon return to base. Vehicles are disinfected upon entry. All personnel undergo medical checks upon return to base.

Regarding the protection of civilians, the force is operationally committed to protecting civilians in dedicated camps, totalling 190,376 among Juba, Bentiu, Malakal, Bor and Wau, as well as in other areas/regions across the Mission. Troops on static protection duties at protection of civilian camps have been reduced by up to 60 per cent to generate troops to respond to protection threats in other areas as required.

The Mission has continued to pursue its protection mandate following the processes of leadership engagement, threat assessment, early warning, and physical deployments of integrated teams in temporary operating bases and long-duration patrols through the following planning and execution processes.

In terms of planning, hotspots are identified through systematic collection and analysis of information obtained from multiple sources — Government and community leaders, non-governmental organizations, human rights-violation reports, assessments by Civil and Political Affairs Divisions and International Organization for Migration data on the return of IDPs. An early-warning outlook is generated on a weekly basis to guide future mission operations.

In terms of integrated operations, maintaining a sustained presence outside established bases, in areas of conflict and violence, is the key to resolving disputes, saving lives, building peace and encouraging the return of IDPs.

The following methodology is being used to address the inter-communal violence currently being witnessed in many parts of the country. Integrated teams, comprising military, civil affairs and human rights divisions, at Mission and field offices, share information and proactively engage with community leaders and administrative, security and political authorities to defuse situations with potential for violence.

Troops are deployed in the field in the conflict zone with civil affairs and human rights personnel to form a temporary base called a “hub” for up to three months. Patrols are executed to outlying areas, “spokes”, affected by conflict to build confidence, deter violence and encourage the return of displaced persons. Day and night patrols offer protection and respond to threats to the population.

We assist in and guide the forging of a negotiated settlement by bringing communities and their leaders together, and then enable the implementation of the agreement reached. We assist in recording human rights violations, along with efforts to build peace. We support humanitarian pillars in assessment of response and provide security required for distribution of assistance. We inform and educate the population on COVID-19-prevention measures and interact with women and girls to draw their perspective in finding durable solutions. We propose development projects for execution through the trust fund as a long-term solution to alleviate the population’s hardships.

Let me turn to impediments to executing our protection mandate. Undeniably, loss of life and population displacement continue despite our efforts. However, it must be noted that those figures are a small proportion of the lives that are saved. In the prevailing political environment, the principal impediments are as follows.

First is the inability to know the time and place of the next incident of violence. Regarding the May 2020 clash between Murles and Nuers in Jonglei, while it was known that the Murles were likely to attack the Nuers and troop deployment was effected, the precise location and time remained unknown. It occurred earlier than expected, on 16 May, at multiple locations, in a coordinated manner and at considerable distance from the deployment of troops.

The second principal impediment consists in limitations on movement and the inability to reach the desired location with the necessary force in the required time.

Third is the need to balance the safety and security of troops with the probability of success of the mission. Troops deployed at locations for the protection of civilians need to be suitably armed and equipped to intervene, face and overcome resistance in protecting civilians.

Fourth is the complex nature of conflicts with a historical context, around land, grazing rights, food insecurity, militarization of the population, tribal loyalties, and weak law and order and enforcement systems existing in a governance vacuum.

Let me turn now to the performance of military contingents. Every military contingent is faring well considering the challenges of a very demanding operational environment. Troops have operated from temporary bases for more than three months, with minimal support, interacting with communities, generating confidence and building peace.

Land operations are restricted from May to November due to monsoons, and weather restricts helicopter operations considerably. There is a need to review the equipment and self-sustaining capacity of contingents, for which a study is due.

Specific improvements have been achieved in the security of bases, the accommodation of troops and the creation of isolation and quarantining facilities in good time within the Mission. Contingents are well-equipped with PPE, sanitization and washing facilities and are operating exceedingly well in the COVID-19 environment. Requirements are being met by the Mission, and national authorities are also contributing to the effort.

Annex IV**Statement by the Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, Brigadier General Maureen O'Brien**

I will address the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the Force: adapting to the challenges of COVID-19 and working to continue to implement the mandate.

Since early March 2020, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has been implementing a detailed COVID-19 action plan designed to maintain operational capability and limit the potential for the spread of the virus within the mission. This plan includes screening on entry to all 14 positions and restrictions on movement between positions, with most national and international staff working from home.

The UNDOF COVID-19 Crisis Management Team, comprising the mission leadership and special staff officers, meets weekly and as required to discuss new control measures as well as updated United Nations and World Health Organization advice. As the restrictions are being lifted in Syria and Israel, risk analysis is being conducted on projects that require national civilians to enter camps, and mitigating protective measures are being put in place. A very collaborative approach has been taken during these meetings, which has ensured the buy-in of everyone involved.

Dedicated quarantine and isolation facilities have been identified in both Camp Faouar and Camp Ziouani, and specialized medical equipment has been sourced.

I am confident that the UNDOF Level 1+ hospital has the capacity to deal with mild cases of COVID-19. However, more serious cases will require medical evacuation to a home country or designated United Nations COVID-19 treatment facility.

To date, UNDOF has had NO COVID-19-positive cases. This is entirely due to the precautionary measures taken by each of the 1,016 military and 52 civilian members of the UNDOF team.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant challenge to UNDOF, it has had little impact on UNDOF's ability to fulfil its mandate. In Syria, curfew and inter-governorate travel restrictions have now been lifted, which has allowed us to resume night patrols. There are also some positive indications that inspections of Syrian military positions in the area of limitation on the Bravo side, which had been stopped for security reasons, may resume on a phased basis.

In the Israeli-occupied Golan, or Alpha side, most COVID-19 restrictions have also been lifted. It is anticipated that Alpha-side inspections will recommence soon.

While many of the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted on both sides of the ceasefire line, the Quneitra crossing remains closed. It should be said, however, that both parties have been very supportive to the mission by allowing specialized personnel and medical equipment to cross. UNDOF observes the 14-day quarantine requirement of both parties when personnel cross.

It is hoped that, when both Israel and the Syria open their borders, transit through the Quneitra crossing will resume at the level it was prior to 2014. This will ensure that UNDOF has freedom of movement as provided for in the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974.

Although the Lebanese-Syrian border is closed, it is open to commercial vehicles and, therefore, there has been no impact on our fuel, water and food supplies. Stock levels held by the mission have been increased as a contingency.

In line with the Secretary-General's direction, all rotations of contingents and individual personnel have been postponed with effect from 4 April to 30 June. All leave was cancelled with effect from 4 March. Planning is ongoing to resume rotations in line with the United Nations transitional measures for the partial resumption of uniformed rotations in a COVID-19 environment.

Liaison between UNDOF and both parties is ongoing despite the COVID-19 restrictions. UNDOF Liaison Officers have been able to communicate with representatives of both parties. Meetings with the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate have continued as usual, and a meeting was facilitated by Israeli Chief of the International Cooperation Unit at the A gate of the Quneitra crossing.

Over the last two weeks, UNDOF mission leadership has conducted video-conference meetings with troop-contributing country embassies and others in order to update them on ongoing issues and challenges, including implications of COVID-19.

I shall now provide update on our return to the Bravo side. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, UNDOF continues to progress plans towards full mandate implementation on the Bravo side following the partial withdrawal of the Force in 2014 due to security concerns arising from the internal conflict in Syria.

Phases 1 and 2 of the plan were completed with the return of the Force headquarters and the Force Commander's reserve to Camp Faouar in 2017 and the re-establishment of a credible presence in the area of separation with the resumption of patrols and the reconstruction of a number of United Nations positions.

Phase 3, the consolidation phase, commenced in October 2019, with a view to ensuring a strong and resilient Force deployment. This phase commenced with the Uruguayan contingent reaching full operational capability in the south of the area of separation and the implementation of a new Force structure, enhancing command and control and reporting.

Planning is almost complete on the fourth and final phase. Phase 4 will see the enhancement of the operational capability of UNDOF through the addition of two mechanized platoons, which will staff two new posts — one in the centre and another in the south of the area of separation. These new positions are located in strategically significant locations that will significantly enhance UNDOF's situational awareness and operational capability.

UNDOF has worked hard to increase its operational footprint. This has been primarily achieved through patrolling. UNDOF now has access to over 95 per cent of the area of separation for patrolling purposes. In May 2019, UNDOF conducted 325 patrols. In May of this year, UNDOF conducted 999 patrols. This additional patrolling has significantly increased the situational awareness of mission and its ability to report more effectively.

Let me now address the challenges of operating in a sensitive environment. UNDOF operates in a complex and sensitive environment. There have been ongoing violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974. UNDOF has reported violations wherein Israeli forces attacked targets within Syria and, most significantly, on 30 April, the Israel Defense Forces conducted a number of attacks on positions within UNDOF's area of separation and area of limitation. Other military violations include the presence of unauthorized military equipment in the area of limitation and an increased number of aircraft and drones flying over the area of separation.

On the Bravo side, there is an ongoing presence of Syrian armed forces within the area of separation and many instances of civilians crossing the ceasefire line on a daily basis.

The deteriorating security situation in the Dara'a governorate is cause for concern to UNDOF. First, there has been a notable shift in security-related incidents moving closer to the UNDOF area of operations, with some cases occurring in the immediate vicinity of UNDOF patrol routes. There is no indication, however, that UNDOF is being targeted.

Secondly, the attacks have grown in frequency, scale and severity, with assassinations occurring almost every day and a number of reports of significant exchange of gunfire taking place between competing groups.

Thirdly, a new trend has emerged whereby the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham is claiming responsibility for attacks in the Dara'a governorate, some of which occurred within the UNDOF area of operations.

In conclusion, UNDOF continues to use its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire between Israeli and Syrian forces and to see that it is scrupulously observed. Despite the challenging environment in which we are now operating, UNDOF will continue to implement its mandate with impartiality. I thank Council members most sincerely for their ongoing support to UNDOF.

Annex V**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve**

We would like to thank Jean-Pierre Lacroix as well as the three Force Commanders for their insights into the additional challenges that peacekeeping is facing during these unusual times. I would like to begin by honouring the peacekeepers on the ground for their courage and resilience as they face this pandemic. Today our sincere thoughts are with the victims in the missions, including the victims of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Belgium contributes troops to three missions. Together with the other States members of the European Union, we committed at the beginning of the crisis to continuing to support peacekeeping by not withdrawing our troops because of COVID-19.

I would like to ask the Force Commanders several questions.

First, with respect to the impact of the pandemic on the operations that they command, engagement with local communities is critical to the protection of civilians and the prevention of attacks. The events of last week in the centre of Mali are worrisome, and so are the number of COVID-19 cases in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). What is the impact of social distancing on that engagement? How is it impacting their situational awareness, and how do they adapt their working methods to this new reality?

Both Lieutenant General Tinaikar and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer have promoted the “hub and spoke” model to project the capacity to protect civilians also outside protection-of-civilians sites and near established bases. Given the COVID-19-related restrictions on mobility, what are the consequences for the “hub and spoke” approach, and therefore on the protection of civilians in more remote areas?

Let me turn to other peacekeeping-related challenges. Unfortunately, those are not going away at this time of COVID-19, and we recognize the efforts of all, both at Headquarters and in the missions, to ensure business continuity.

Performance is at the heart of their action, and we know how critical the integration of the various components is to the success of a mission. Could Lieutenant General Tinaikar, of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), update us on the implementation of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS) within UNMISS? What are, in his opinion, the biggest benefits of that tool? Does CPAS serve as a catalyst to improve integrated planning among the military, police and civilian components of the Mission?

Going back to MINUSMA, we support the force adaptation plan on the basis of the general principles that have been shared with Member States. Access to a higher level of detail, including on troop availability, could be useful for planning purposes. We hear that some critical assets, including air assets and intelligence capacity, remain unavailable as of yet. These assets are key to the success of the adaptation plan. How do they see the impact on the implementation of the plan?

I would like to finish with a more open, maybe even philosophical question to our three guests from the field.

What is, from their perspective, the main challenge that peacekeeping will have to face in the next few years? How can the Security Council better help them to be fit for purpose for that challenge?

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our support to the peace missions in those difficult circumstances.

Annex VI

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

I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting, and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his introductory remarks. I also wish to thank the Force Commanders of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for their briefings.

We marked the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers just last week. Today, through the Commanders, I wish to once again pay tribute to all military personnel deployed in the 13 United Nations peacekeeping missions for their efforts, sacrifice and contribution. United Nations peacekeeping is an important instrument for maintaining international peace and security. It plays an irreplaceable role in helping to stabilize the situation in host countries and create the conditions for a political settlement. Therefore, peacekeeping operations overall have been given positive recognition and been supported by Member States.

Meanwhile, we must acknowledge the challenges they face. At present, being deployed in conflict areas, peacekeepers bear the brunt of wars and conflicts. They have a stronger yearning for peace, higher hopes for the United Nations and greater expectations for peacekeeping operations. At the same time, peacekeeping operations are faced with threats such as the escalation of violence, terrorism and disease. Since peacekeepers carry out their missions, implement their mandates and face dangers on behalf of the United Nations, the Security Council should do its utmost to help resolve the problems they face. The safety and security of peacekeepers should be addressed with greater urgency.

Under the special circumstances surrounding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, United Nations peacekeepers are fighting shoulder to shoulder with local peoples against the pandemic. It is a difficult time for United Nations peacekeepers. Indeed, peacekeepers in countries such as Mali and South Sudan have been infected. China stands with the United Nations and its Member States to jointly tackle the impact of COVID-19 on peacekeeping operations and advance the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

I wish to make the following points.

First, we should keep peacekeeping operations moving in the right direction. We should adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles for peacekeeping operations, as well as respect the ownership of host countries. That is key to the success of peacekeeping operations. The Charter of the United Nations explicitly calls for the political settlement of disputes, which is the ultimate goal of United Nations peacekeeping. The primacy of a political settlement should be reflected in every aspect of such operations. They should ensure smooth communication with host countries at all stages of deployment. The relevant issues must be addressed through timely consultations, and the sovereignty of host countries must be respected. This is conducive to the implementation of mandates and the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Secondly, the impact of COVID-19 on peacekeeping operations should be properly addressed. The pandemic is a major test for peacekeeping operations. The Secretariat and peacekeeping missions should take the measures necessary to formulate epidemic-response policies, regulate the activities of peacekeepers and increase medical-support facilities, adjust the rotation policy in the light of the development of the pandemic and enhance the anti-epidemic capability of the

missions. We commend the measures proposed by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix in this regard and believe that, through our joint efforts, we can fundamentally reduce the risk of transmission in peacekeeping missions.

Thirdly, the utmost efforts should be made to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. Peacekeeping operations are now faced with even more complex and dangerous environments and challenges. It is our shared responsibility to improve their safety and security. The Security Council should continue to attach great importance to this issue, formulate mandates based on the situation on the ground and ensure resources for peacekeeping missions that are adequate to their mandates.

Member States and the Secretariat should fully implement resolution 2518 (2020); help troop-contributing countries and peacekeeping missions enhance their early-warning capability, health support and critical medical capacities; and improve the relevant training. We should improve the system of medical support and casualty evacuation for injured peacekeepers and ensure that adequate medical facilities and qualified personnel are deployed in the field, in full accordance with resolution 2518 (2020).

China is the second-largest financial contributor and a major troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations; indeed, 2,500 peacekeepers from China are currently serving in nine mission areas. Peacekeeping carries forward the mission of peace. China will continue to take concrete action to honour its commitment to multilateralism and world peace and to contribute even further to United Nations peacekeeping.

Annex VII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

We want to thank the briefers for the information provided today.

Peacekeeping operations are a vital and indispensable tool in the maintenance of peace and security. We attach high importance to the work carried out by peacekeepers.

There is an undeniable link between capacity-building, security and the protection of peacekeepers, taking into account the fact that they are deployed in deteriorating and complex political and security environments, while facing asymmetrical threats. We believe that resolution 2518 (2020) has set an important precedent in enhancing their safety and security.

We take this opportunity to extend our deepest condolences to the families and colleagues of the two peacekeepers in Mali who recently lost their lives due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This sad news highlights the importance of closely monitoring and assessing the impact of the pandemic on peacekeeping operations, particularly on the protection of civilians, which requires prioritizing, readapting and, likely, expanding resources, while emphasizing that the response to the pandemic should not be solely their responsibility but that they should instead support and collaborate with national authorities in this regard.

As humankind faces one of its greatest threats, common sense would indicate the need to heed the call by the Secretary-General for a ceasefire in all conflicts so as to allow and facilitate the provision of immediate assistance to those in need and mitigate the impact of the pandemic. However, in the case of Mali, despite progress on some fronts, the number of attacks against security forces and peacekeepers as well as intercommunal violence continue to be alarming.

In that respect, we would like to pose a question to General Gyllensporre. Some reports point to an increase in the number of sexual violence cases amid the pandemic and the measures imposed to contain it. Could he please share with us the actions being taken to address this issue?

We are also concerned about the expanding threat posed by COVID-19 to the population of South Sudan. We welcome the measures put in place by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to limit its spread, deal with existing vulnerabilities and find creative ways to implement its protective mandate in the field. We commend the decision by UNMISS to coordinate with local authorities and to support nationally led efforts to create a mobile awareness campaign, in partnership with the World Health Organization, throughout densely populated areas, dispelling rumours and ensuring that citizens are accurately informed.

In that regard, we would like to ask General Tinaikar two questions. How successful does he think this campaign has been, and what else can be done to make it more efficient? How can we as a Council support UNMISS in the continuation of its proactive response to COVID-19 while protecting its own personnel and safeguarding the communities it serves at this critical juncture?

With regard to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), we commend the mission's efforts to implement an awareness plan designed to maintain operational capability and limit the potential spread of COVID-19 in the mission. The Dominican Republic highlights the importance of UNDOF being able to carry out its operations without facing any administrative obstacles. All parties involved must continue to facilitate the enforcement of the mission's plans for an

incremental return to its primary operations and positions in the area of separation to fully ensure that the mission can implement its mandate effectively.

It is important that the design, planning, implementation and review of peacekeeping operations be gender-responsive and that missions implement resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) within their respective mandates. The deployment of gender, women protection and child protection advisers is paramount, and these must be fully funded and given the appropriate seniority.

In that regard, we would like to ask the Force Commanders how the mandates of peacekeeping operations could be reinforced to implement resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), including to ensure closer collaboration with local communities, especially with youth and women.

To conclude, the Dominican Republic remains committed to the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and reiterates the critical role that peacekeeping missions play. Only through joint willingness and efforts will we one day successfully achieve a lasting and sustainable peace in conflict-affected countries.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations

Estonia recognizes the importance of United Nations peacekeeping operations and the crucial role that peacekeeping plays in achieving conditions for stability and lasting peace.

I join others in expressing our gratitude to United Nations peacekeepers and honour the service of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

In the middle of the ongoing pandemic, the responsibilities of United Nations peacekeeping missions have multiplied, as have the risks they are facing. Estonia, together with other European Union countries, has pledged its continued commitment to United Nations peacekeeping during the pandemic. Peacekeeping missions must be willing and able to continue to operate and deliver on their mandate, promote conflict resolutions, support host States and protect civilian populations.

Estonia also continues to support the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and places high importance on its goals of strengthening protection of civilians, alongside advancing political solutions, promoting the women and peace and security agenda and improving effective the performance and accountability of peacekeeping.

I have three questions.

First, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) are mandated to monitor and document violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law. Information-gathering, analysis and early warning are crucial to the protection of civilians and peacekeepers alike. Could the briefers update us on recent developments in the implementation and strengthening of their mission-wide early warning strategies, including the establishment of the Information Acquisition Plan in UNMISS?

Secondly, the MINUSMA and UNMISS mandates also include a sexual and gender-based violence dimension. How do the missions incorporate gender considerations into their operations? Perhaps the briefers could share good examples of how the force has responded to conflict-related sexual violence?

I address my third question to all three missions. Host States must fulfil their obligations and facilitate access and freedom of movement for United Nations peacekeepers and their equipment, consistent with the mandate, including for medical evacuation, especially in the time of a health crisis. Violations of status-of-forces agreements are a serious problem that can disrupt mandate delivery and also threaten the safety and security of peacekeepers. The Security Council highlighted that issue recently in resolution 2518 (2020). How has COVID-19 impacted peacekeepers' freedom of movement and access, and the movement of the goods and equipment necessary for the fulfilment of their mandates?

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations**

[Original: English and French]

I would like to pay tribute, through Generals Gyllensporre, Tinaikar and O'Brien, to all military component Commanders, who are carrying out their missions in particularly demanding and often degraded conditions.

Despite the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic, some actors are continuing their destabilizing actions. I commend the responsiveness of the Secretariat and of each peacekeeping operation for having been able to adapt so quickly and effectively to this situation and to pursue the implementation of their mandates to the maximum extent possible. The role of peacekeeping operations remains essential in such a context.

We see this in the protection of civilians; indeed, both the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) play a key role in this regard. Both have maintained their activities, despite numerous cases of COVID-19 within the Mission for the former and significant restrictions of movement for the latter. France also condemns the violations of the status-of-forces agreement and welcomes the fact that things are now improving.

I would ask General Gyllensporre, following the force generation conference, what new capabilities among those announced does he believe will make a difference on the ground? What does he still need?

I would also ask General Tinaikar how the force is adapting to the upsurge in intercommunal violence. UNMISS also plays a key role in the fight against sexual violence, which can serve as an example for other peacekeeping operations. What lessons and good practices has he learned from the work of UNMISS on this issue?

The importance of peacekeeping operations is also reflected in their political mandate. In Mali, the force is playing a leading role in supporting the redeployment of the reconstituted Malian army. That process would not be taking place without MINUSMA. How does the General foresee the continuation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the redeployment of the reconstituted Malian army?

The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, for its part, plays an essential role in liaising between the parties on both sides of the ceasefire line. Despite the constraints imposed by COVID-19, it is important that it be able to resume and intensify its inspection activities on the Bravo side and that the various restrictions placed on it be lifted.

In conclusion, I wish to praise the courage of the peacekeepers, who have managed to continue their missions, often working, within these three operations, in a very tense environment.

Annex X**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Juergen Schulz**

I wish to thank the three Force Commanders for their presentations. We very much appreciate the regular direct interaction with the Force Commanders; it is extremely helpful. We would like to thank them for their service and their leadership. We would also like to pay tribute to all troops under their command for their service exercising and to express our deepest condolences to the families of all those who have lost their lives while performing peacekeeping duties.

It is always good to have a direct exchange with the Force Commanders, especially this year, as we are discussing the implications of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It is very important for us to learn and better understand how the pandemic and its implications affect the implementation of the peacekeeping missions' mandates. It was very good to hear from the three Force Commanders how that has been done, and it was very interesting to hear from them how they integrate an efficient pandemic response into their daily work on the ground and what can be done further to improve their pandemic readiness.

Before I turn to the three missions, let me make three brief general points.

First of all, we express our strong support for the Secretariat's efforts to increase the number of women in peacekeeping, especially in senior leadership positions. It is promising that this year we see more diversity, including in our conversations, and welcome Brigadier General O'Brien as Acting Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).

Secondly, we also had a very productive exchange last year when we focused on cooperation with host States. In the light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, cooperation with host nations is more important than ever. Without their consent, no life-saving goods and equipment will reach the missions, and peacekeepers cannot receive the medical treatment they need. Host nations, of course, bear the primary responsibility for the safety and security of peacekeepers and for full compliance with the respective status of forces agreement.

Thirdly, safeguarding viable medical evacuation destinations is a challenge at the moment. Germany stands ready to help and to contribute as a medical evacuation destination, but with some limitations, since we still have a high number of domestic cases and we have to take precautionary measures for a possible second wave.

I would like now to say a few words about the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). In particular, I would like to focus on the force adaptation plan and to thank the Force Commander for leading it. The force adaptation plan is indispensable for further improving operational efficiency. And it is, as was said, the driver for change to the Mission. The force adaptation plan is therefore critical. The recent Force Generation Conference demonstrated that there is strong support for the plan and that we need more pledges for certain critical capabilities, in particular helicopters.

Turning to my country, Germany, I would like to stress that, since the start of MINUSMA, in 2013, Germany has been a strong supporter of the Mission and has contributed both troops and police to it. We will maintain our commitment. In that vein, we announced an additional contribution in support of MINUSMA's force adaptation plan, thereby further expanding the range of our unmanned aircraft system Heron 1 in Gao.

As we are going to discuss MINUSMA and the mandate in more detail soon, all I want to say at this point is that there is obviously a limit to what we can do with

the capabilities we have at hand. Further and broader Mission tests will backfire if we do not collectively ensure that it has the right personnel and adequate resources. Efficiency gains go hand in hand with a mandate with a realistic scope. I would also like to recall that the Mission is multidimensional, as the name suggests — consisting of civilians, military and police. The force adaptation plan must be geared towards making the military component stronger and enabling the work of the other parts of the Mission. For that to occur, the civilian, police and military components must be better integrated.

Turning to UNDOF, I think it is fair to say that, in these times, strong mission leadership is more important than ever. We once again thank Brigadier General O'Brien for her dedicated service. UNDOF continues to play a vital role in preserving the ceasefire between Israel and Syria.

We remain concerned about the continued and increasing number of violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement, as reported by the Secretary-General in his most recent report (S/2020/219). We welcome and encouraged by the return of UNDOF to the Bravo side. Once the situation on the ground allows, operational activities such as night patrols and inspections, as agreed by Syria, should resume.

However, we remain concerned that, due to host nation restrictions — particularly because of COVID-19 — essential personal protective equipment cannot always reach peacekeepers. We therefore call on both parties to ensure the safety and security of military and civilian personnel in UNDOF and the Observer Group Golan, and to extend their cooperation to UNDOF with a view to helping in fulfil its mandated tasks. We also call on the parties to allow UNDOF to operate safely, securely and freely in accordance with the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. It is important for UNDOF to be able to carry out its operations without any administrative obstacles.

Finally, turning to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the precautionary and preventive measures taken by the Mission — some owing to unduly imposed Government restrictions — have resulted in a reduction of operational activities. All such status-of-forces-agreement violations must stop. Overall, we witnessed a detrimental impact on the security situation, probably due to the Mission's drastic reductions as a result of the outbreak of the pandemic. At the same time, it is clear that, given the medical and logistical conditions in South Sudan, UNMISS must take a cautious approach.

We encourage the Mission to operate as effectively much as possible under the current circumstances, especially with regard to the violence in Jonglei state. We must also remind the Government that combating the pandemic must not divert attention from the implementation of the peace agreement, which is so critical. We ask the Government of South Sudan to fully and comprehensively implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. I would echo the Force Commander's sentiment that the protection of civilians remains the core pillar of the Mission's mandate. That remains key, and the COVID-19 pandemic poses a particular challenge to the protection-of-civilian sites and camps. Those sites are densely populated and social distancing and hygienic measures are difficult to implement.

My last point on UNMISS is that safeguarding viable medical evacuation destinations for UNMISS personnel is also a challenge at the moment. We would like to ask the Secretariat to keep troop-contributing countries informed about the state of play and underline that a robust solution must be found as soon as possible. We also call on South Sudan and neighbouring States to fully cooperate with the United Nations.

Annex XI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

I would like to thank you, Madam, for convening this important meeting, which is very dear and close to our heart. Peacekeeping is the most visible action of the United Nations on the ground. It is what shows that the United Nations has done its job.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for the introduction, as well as Lieutenant General Gyllensporre, Lieutenant General Tinaikar and Brigadier General O'Brien for their briefings.

As we just recently celebrated the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers with a focus on women in peacekeeping, I am proud that Indonesia has women peacekeepers in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

I would also like to once again pay tribute to the many fallen Blue Helmets who served with honour and made the ultimate sacrifice for global peace and security. As we commemorate the International Day of Peacekeepers on 29 May, we vow to never forget their service.

I would also like to pay tribute to all Force Commanders for their exemplary leadership.

Allow me now to make some general observations on the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on peacekeeping missions, and then ask some questions to the briefers.

First, I would like to turn to the safety, health and security of peacekeepers. We are deeply concerned about the increasing number of COVID-19 cases and the loss of lives among peacekeepers.

As we have just heard from Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, we recently lost two peacekeepers to COVID-19. Let me take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to the families of the two fallen peacekeepers in MINUSMA. I ask the Force Commander to convey that message to their family.

The magnitude of the pandemic must not be underestimated. We therefore urge the Secretariat to further strengthen the medical support capacity of missions. For Indonesia, the safety, health and security of peacekeepers is a top priority.

Secondly, I would like to touch upon the implementation of mandates during the pandemic. We commend the continued efforts by the missions, including MINUSMA, UNMISS and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), to carry out their mandates despite some restrictions related to COVID-19. Indeed, missions need to prioritize their activities and resources, focusing on the most important aspects of their mandates. Missions should also do more to support the local Government and population's efforts to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.

Thirdly, I turn to training and capacity-building for peacekeepers. One of the lessons that we should learn from the current pandemic is the importance of training and capacity-building for peacekeepers, including with regard to basic medical care and community health. That training will equip all peacekeepers with the necessary skills, not only to take care of themselves but also to more effectively help the community during the pandemic.

We in Indonesia have always advocated the importance of community engagement and winning the hearts and minds of the community, as has always been the credo of our armed forces and police and as is evident in the training of our peacekeepers. In that regard, the Secretariat needs to incorporate those skill sets into the curriculum and materials, both for predeployment and in-mission training. As a strong supporter of training and capacity-building, Indonesia remains committed to working with the Secretariat and member countries to further improve that important endeavour.

Allow me to ask some questions to the Force Commanders.

The first question is to all three Force Commanders. What is their assessment on the Council's mandate vis-à-vis its implementation on the ground? Is it clear enough and are they able to translate the mandate into clear practical actions on the ground? That will also help us in the Council in the future when we come up with a resolution and seek to ensure that it is line with the needs of the Force Commanders and the troops on the ground. Their honest assessments will certainly help us in our decision-making processes.

My next question is to Lieutenant General Gyllensporre. But let me first express our condolences to the families of the six peacekeepers who lost their lives last month. It is a pity that, as we marked the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, we lost another six brave Blue Helmets. We extend our condolences to the troops on the ground, on behalf of Indonesia and the Council.

My question is, to what extent does the increase in COVID-19 cases affect MINUSMA's ability to deliver on its mandate? With the mandate renewal scheduled for later this month, what areas can be improved to ensure that the Mission can continue to support the implementation of the peace agreement, stabilization efforts and the protection of civilians? I also concur with General Gyllensporre's sentiments about the need to change mindsets, particularly in this time of new challenge.

On UNMISS, I would like to ask Lieutenant General Tinaikar about the rising intercommunal violence, especially the recent clash in Jonglei. Have there been any specific measures taken by UNMISS to respond to that violence, and what needs to be done to prevent such violence in future?

My last question is to Brigadier General O'Brien. As we just heard from her, there have been ongoing violations of the 1974 Agreement as Israel Defense Forces and other parties attacked targets within Syria and at positions within UNDOF's area of separation and area of limitation. What more should the Council do to assist UNDOF in implementing its mandate? Are there any actions that Brigadier General O'Brien can suggest, especially given its occurrence within UNDOF's area of operations and its adverse effect on its peacekeepers?

In conclusion, rest assured that Indonesia, now the largest troop- and police-contributing country in the Security Council, will continue to support all these missions. We have sent our peacekeepers — including women personnel in MINUSMA, UNMISS, UNDOF and other missions — to make the world a safer place. Please also keep them safe from harm's way. Godspeed, Force Commanders.

Annex XII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

We would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Lieutenant General Gyllensporre and Lieutenant General Tinaikar, the Force Commanders of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as Brigadier General O'Brien, Acting Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), for their briefings and the information they provided on the current situation in the respective peacekeeping missions under their command. It is always useful to learn first-hand how the mandates authorized by the Security Council are implemented on the ground and what specific challenges arise in that regard. We join our colleagues in expressing our condolences with regard to the recent death of two peacekeepers in the line of duty.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are usually deployed in complex and dangerous environments, complicated by difficult humanitarian and socioeconomic situations and sometimes by asymmetrical threats. Needless to say, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak became an additional factor, adversely affecting the performance of peacekeeping operations and the ability of the Blue Helmets to effectively fulfil their tasks.

Under such unprecedented circumstances, it is of the utmost importance to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers and to take appropriate measures to continue the effective implementation of the mandates, while reducing the risk of virus outbreaks within missions and through contact with civilian population. We appreciate the efforts of the Secretariat in that connection and wish to emphasize the importance of close collaboration with troop- and police-contributing countries on any steps in that regard, particularly on the issue of temporary restrictions for the rotation of contingents.

Peacekeeping operations, as we all know, are not meant to be a substitute for the authority of the host State, but rather a supplement to help them enhance their own national capacities. The vital precondition for the success of any peacekeeping operation is constructive and effective cooperation with the host State. The necessity for confidence-building measures and information exchange is especially important nowadays, when measures implemented by national authorities to combat the spread of the pandemic could lead to limitations on the movement of United Nations personnel. Such situations must be solved through dialogue. Supporting host countries in their response to COVID-19 can be provided, where possible, within the respective mandates and upon the request of national Governments.

The primacy of diplomacy and dialogue stands at the core of peacekeeping mandates and remains an imperative in the resolution of any crisis where peacekeeping missions are deployed. It is therefore vital not to lose the gains made in the implementation of peace agreements and to continue to encourage parties to reach political solutions and move forward towards national reconciliation despite temporary pandemic difficulties. The call by the Secretary-General for a ceasefire provides a very good basis for such efforts.

In that regard, we note the signs of normalization of the situation in South Sudan, primarily owing to the accords reached by the parties on the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement of 2018. The formation of transitional Government bodies, including the Government of National Unity, has begun. Significant decreases in the level of violence and cases of human rights violations in the country are already being reported. Increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced

persons returning to their places of permanent residence are also being reported. However, the security situation is still fragile. The efforts by UNMISS peacekeepers are therefore indispensable.

We would like to highlight the role MINUSMA has played in addressing the security situation and facilitating the progress in the political settlement in Mali. We are convinced that the Mission needs comprehensive support, as outlined in the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/476) and in his letter on MINUSMA's performance (S/2020/481). Certain steps carried out in accordance with the Mission's mandate are already bringing about some positive results in the most affected areas, such as the country's central regions.

In the light of the interactive format of our meeting today, I would like to ask Force Commanders of MINUSMA and UNMISS a specific question: are there any signs of attempts to use COVID-19 as a pretext to hinder positive developments on the ground, or even political processes?

We also wish to stress the stabilizing role of UNDOF in the Syrian Golan in reducing tensions and in preventing incidents and escalations between the parties to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974. We will continue to assist in ensuring the conditions necessary for the full return of UNDOF to the Bravo side.

In conclusion, let me once again express our appreciation to the Force Commanders for their leadership, which is in special demand in this time of pandemic, and for their continued efforts aimed at delivering on the tasks before them with dedication. I also wish to commend the thousands of Blue Helmets of the United Nations peacekeeping missions and pay tribute to the peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the re-establishment of international peace and security.

Annex XIII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

I would like to thank the President for convening today's important and timely meeting on peacekeeping operations. While the world is dealing with the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, peacekeeping operations must cope with the challenge of implementing their mandates in the prevailing global health crisis.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African States members of the Security Council, namely, the Niger, Tunisia and South Africa, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

We would like to thank Brigadier-General Maureen O'Brien, the Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), Lieutenant-General Shailesh Tinaikar, Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and Lieutenant-General Dennis Gyllensporre, Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for their briefings.

The Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterate their support for United Nations peacekeeping as one of the mechanisms at the disposal of the Organization to strengthen international peace and security and to promote the protection of civilians in particular. We further echo the view that supports pursuing peacekeeping operations that are relevant, effective, efficient and fit for purpose. We are pleased that the Action for Peacekeeping initiative has helped to delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of the United Nations, troop- and police-contributing countries, host countries and regional organizations.

However, we note with concern the changing nature of threats to international peace and security and the complex, volatile and dangerous environments in which peacekeeping missions operate, including their increasing exposure to asymmetrical threats, in particular MINUSMA, the African Union Mission in Somalia and to a certain extent the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). MONUSCO remains the United Nations peacekeeping mission with the highest number of casualties. Our peacekeepers are increasingly becoming vulnerable and frequently subjected to targeted attacks.

It is against this backdrop that the Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines maintain the view that emphasis should be placed on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers by adopting modern technology for use in peacekeeping operations, among other measures. The United Nations should adopt the use of smart technology and enhance key capabilities that enable peacekeepers to counter any attack by armed groups and other forms of asymmetrical threats, which are increasingly prevalent in peacekeeping.

The Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recognize that the prevailing global health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the challenges in relation to the safety and security of peacekeepers. It is essential for the United Nations to mitigate the impact of this pandemic on peacekeepers and improve their safety and security.

At the same time, we encourage Force Commanders to ensure that all the necessary measures are implemented within their missions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 from peacekeepers to civilian populations, as this may significantly tarnish the reputation of the United Nations mission and aggravate

anti-international sentiments that exist in some theatres of operation. The 2010 cholera outbreak in Haiti is a pertinent example. There, the unmanaged spread of a disease among peacekeepers created significant challenges for the host country and led to permanent reputational damage for the United Nations. The Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also encourage those missions that have had varying degrees of success in implementing their mandates during the pandemic to share their experiences and lessons learned with host-State authorities in order to strengthen capacities and build resilience.

We note the close link between Security Council mandates given to peacekeeping missions and their performance. The performance of peace operations depends on the nature of the mandate, capabilities, available resources and appropriate force multipliers and enablers commensurate with the needs of the peacekeepers in their various theatres of operation. The Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines attach great importance to issues of effectiveness of peace operations, but the performance of peacekeeping missions must be assessed in a fair and evidence-based manner.

As a beacon of hope for many civilians, it is incumbent on United Nations uniformed and civilian personnel to uphold the values of the United Nations and conduct themselves in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Organization. Misconduct by United Nations peacekeeping personnel must not be tolerated. In this regard, we are committed to eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse committed by our forces. We have taken corrective measures to address this problem. In addition, greater emphasis should be put on cultural awareness of peacekeepers in host countries in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and to harness the support of local communities.

On 29 May, we celebrated the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The theme for this year was “Women in Peacekeeping: A Key to Peace”. As we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we must acknowledge that some of the objectives of the resolution have not been achieved, including aspects pertaining to peacekeeping operations, where women remain underrepresented.

We therefore reiterate our position that transformative strategies must be adopted to fully implement the commitments made with respect to advancing the women and peace and security agenda. These strategies should, inter alia, implement the aspirations set forth in resolution 2242 (2015) and the United Nations uniformed gender parity strategy for the period 2018-2028 to increase the deployment of uniformed women in military and police roles, including in leadership positions. All means must therefore be pursued to ensure the realization of these goals, including targeted recruitment, adequate and appropriate facilities conducive for women peacekeepers, and women mentorship and training programmes to ensure higher levels of participation for women in peacekeeping operations.

Finally, we encourage the United Nations to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations in the field of peacekeeping. We welcome the mutually enriching continued support and collaboration we are seeing, particularly in these difficult times, in efforts to alleviate the impact of COVID-19. We take this opportunity to commend the continued commitment of troop- and police-contributing countries and the sacrifices that uniformed and civilian personnel have made in implementing United Nations peacekeeping mandates in challenging environments and in adapting to the current difficulties posed by COVID-19.

Annex XIV**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

First of all, let me thank the Force Commanders for addressing us today and, through them, I would like to thank their troops for the work they are doing to help protect civilians and support stability in some of the toughest environments in the world. I wish to join my colleagues in paying tribute to the 25 peacekeepers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the field this year, including those in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) who recently lost their lives as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

COVID-19, of course, has posed a range of additional challenges in every mission setting. I very much welcomed the comments in the briefings on how the missions are rising to meet these new challenges and how we as individual Member States, the Security Council and the Secretariat can best support the missions. The crucial challenge is how to continue supporting the safety and security of our peacekeepers while ensuring that they can complete their important work in fulfilling their mandates, both to protect civilians and provide stability in conflict-torn environments. We cannot afford to let up on either imperative.

While we address these pressing challenges, we must not lose sight of the longer-term commitments we have all made as part of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which seeks to reform peacekeeping to make it fit for the twenty-first century. The initiative can continue to provide a solid basis for ensuring our United Nations peacekeeping missions can and do fulfil all that we ask them to, even now, in these challenging circumstances.

First, a central priority when it comes to reform must be enhancing planning and improving the collection and use of data across the board, in order to support evidence-based decision-making, both at Headquarters and in all mission settings. This will help improve the analysis and recommendations provided to the Member States.

Connected with that is the issue of performance and the provision of better data on both outstanding performance and underperformance. We look forward to the promised roll-out of the new United Nations integrated performance policy framework later this year to address the performance of uniformed and civilian peacekeepers and overall mission performance, as well as to enhance transparency and accountability. In addition, we note, particularly in this twentieth anniversary year of resolution 1325 (2000), that we should also continue pursuing measures to increase the numbers of uniformed women peacekeepers deployed and ensure their full effective, meaningful participation at every level.

As the Council heard recently in our annual debate on the protection of civilians (see S/2020/465), civilians continue to bear the brunt of conflict worldwide. We must therefore keep strengthening our delivery on protection-of-civilians mandates, which should include full implementation of the peacekeeping-intelligence policy and the revised Department of Peace Operations protection-of-civilians policy. We should also continue to implement the latest iteration of the action plan on the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Finally, we should keep working to smoothen the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in such settings as the Sudan, increase our support for the Peacebuilding Fund and ensure a joined-up approach across the United Nations system, donors and other stakeholders.

Like others, I have a few questions. The first, which I think is relevant to all missions, but I address it now to the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), is the following. We naturally want to ensure that everything possible is done to guarantee the safety and security of all peacekeepers in the field, particularly with respect to illness and injury, but we are concerned about the impact COVID-19 is having on medical evacuation pathways. Does the Force Commander have confidence that the clinical pathways in place provide an adequate level of assurance? And if not, what can any of us do to help unblock issues and provide support?

Secondly, we have noted the impact of COVID-19 on rotations with potential consequences on mission effectiveness and welfare. Bearing in mind that, in several mission environments, the virus may reach a peak in the coming months, what are the Force Commanders' expectations for the period following the 30 June, when the freeze on rotations is due to be lifted? What are the implications for mandate delivery in the second half of the year?

Thirdly, this is another question for the UNMISS Force Commander, but it is also relevant for all. We have continuing concerns about sexual and gender-based violence in several missions' areas of operations, including, for instance, the recent violence reported in South Sudan. I know my Indonesian colleague asked about this, but I was wondering if the Force Commander could comment on how situational awareness and intelligence can be used in the field, both to prevent and deter sexual and gender-based violence and to respond to emergencies.

Finally, I have yet another question for the UNMISS Force Commander. I would just like to hear his assessment of the impact the COVID-19 is likely to have on rates of voluntary departures of civilians from protection-of-civilians sites and whether he expects COVID-19 to have a significant impact on how the force divides its resources between static and mobile protection tasks.

Let me just say that the United Kingdom is very much looking forward to the deployment of our 250-strong long-range reconnaissance forces, with a view to working under MINUSMA command late this year.

Annex XV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank the Force Commanders for their briefings and their service.

I would like to offer my condolences to the families of the two peacekeepers from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) who died of the corona virus last week. The United States greatly appreciates the sacrifice of all United Nations peacekeeping personnel continuing to maintain peace and security amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and we commend all the Force Commanders for their leadership during this crisis.

The pandemic has challenged United Nations peacekeeping missions in new and unforeseen ways, including through suspended troop rotations, restrictions on the movement of personnel and equipment, the need for quarantine and isolation facilities and access issues in countries such as South Sudan. Force Commanders have re-prioritized mandate implementation while dealing with movement restrictions on troops. But even in the face of these challenges, we fully expect accountability for the performance of both uniformed and civilian personnel.

We continue to champion resolution 2436 (2018), which calls for clear, objective performance standards for all United Nations peacekeeping personnel, measures to address underperformance and incentives and recognition for outstanding performance. We look forward to its full implementation and are eager to learn more about the ways Force Commanders hold their troops accountable for performance. An accountability mechanism applicable to uniformed and civilian personnel, and in line with an integrated performance policy framework, will be crucial.

As General dos Santos Cruz noted in his report, accountability contributes to the safety and security of peacekeepers. We support resolution 2518 (2020) and underline the importance of the safety and security of peacekeepers. The resolution highlights the strong correlation between the safety and security of peacekeepers and a culture of performance and accountability.

With regard to MINUSMA, we appreciate the tireless efforts we have seen to prioritize troop performance and hold poor performers accountable. We also commend the Force Commander's drive to maximize his troop-contributing countries' (TCCs) capabilities through the development of the MINUSMA force adaptation plan.

The success of this plan is dependent on getting the right TCCs for the job, and the recent force generation conference is a positive step in this direction. We continue to encourage Member States to pledge more highly specialized units, as well as the necessary enablers, such as helicopters, medical capabilities, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets.

We believe it is important that troop-contributing countries clearly convey any caveats prior to deployment and to commit to full operational transparency. In the wake of attacks on peacekeepers, what actions is the MINUSMA Force Commander taking to ensure the safety and security of the peacekeepers?

Turning to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), we welcome the Force Commander's work to increase the UNMISS force presence through the hub and spoke strategy, which has increased field-level engagement and presence in identified hotspots. We welcome UNMISS engagement in facilitating freedom of movement for civilians in areas of conflict, but we remain concerned about the impact of reduced patrolling. How has the confirmation of COVID-19

cases at some of the protection-of-civilian sites affected his operations, and how is he communicating the dangers of COVID-19 to internally displaced persons?

Finally, with respect to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), we appreciate the continued work of Deputy Force Commander Brigadier General Maureen O'Brien during this pandemic. We also express our full support for the Secretary-General's appointment of Major General Ishwar Hamal as Head of Mission and Force Commander, and we look forward to his arrival at the mission. The Council has voiced its unanimous support for the full return of operations on the Bravo side, as well as the need for the resumption of inspections in the Bravo area of limitation. What is UNDOF's plan for the resumption of inspections in the Bravo area of limitation?

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

I join colleagues in extending our congratulations to Estonia for its excellent work in the presidency of the Security Council during the month of May and assure the current President of our full support for this month of June.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and the Force Commanders of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force — Lieutenant-General Gyllensporre, Lieutenant-General Tinaikar and Brigadier-General O'Brien, respectively — for their insightful briefings and service.

We highly commend all peacekeepers under their command for the great efforts they have made on the ground during this challenging period. We are saddened by the recent demise of two peacekeepers from MINUSMA due to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and would like to send our deepest condolences to their families. We also wish a speedy recovery to the more than 150 women and men in various peacekeeping missions who are infected with coronavirus.

United Nations peacekeeping missions are currently facing unprecedented difficulties owing to the new and complex conditions caused by the spread of COVID-19. In that regard, we welcome the implementation of mitigation measures and salute the efforts of all United Nations peacekeeping missions to help protect peacekeepers and local communities, while supporting Government-led efforts against the pandemic and maintaining the continuity of their critical operations.

Against that backdrop, it is necessary for us to reiterate the following points.

We must ensure that the missions have adequate medical tools, personal protective equipment, handwashing supplies and ventilators. All the protocols put in place to contain the spread of the virus in a mission must be strictly implemented and regularly revised in order to adjust to developments in the situation.

We must also ensure regular information-sharing, awareness-raising and smooth communication between a peacekeeping mission and the relevant United Nations country team and the local authorities and communities. We believe that this is an important and practical measure peacekeeping missions can take in assisting host countries during this extraordinary time.

Finally, in recognition of the critical role of women in peacekeeping activities, a gender dimension should be included in all response plans. We call for more attention to be paid to the need to adopt supportive and priority policies for women peacekeepers, including with regard to safety, security, necessary facilities and the creation of an enabling working environment.

I would like to this opportunity to ask the following questions.

First, it has now been more than two months since the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire. Have the Force Commanders seen the appeal materialize in the country where their missions are deployed? Has humanitarian assistance been allowed to reach unimpeded the populations most vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19?

Secondly, MINUSMA has the highest number of infections among United Nations peacekeeping missions. How has the pandemic impacted the delivery of the

Mission's mandates? What activities could not be implemented and remain pending owing to this situation?

Thirdly, the protection of civilians in armed conflicts has been a main task for peacekeeping missions. In terms of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the total number of civilians seeking safety in six protection-of-civilians sites on Mission bases is more than 190,000. What has been done to prevent the outbreak of COVID-19 at those sites?

Fourthly, could Under-Secretary-General Lacroix please share the rotation plan of United Nations peacekeeping missions for the second half of this year?
