



## Security Council

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### Statement by the President of the Security Council

On 3 February 2021, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa", in accordance with the procedure agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and set out in [S/2020/372](#), the President of the Security Council issued the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the briefing held on 11 January 2021 by the Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

"The Security Council recalls its resolutions [2531 \(2020\)](#), [2512 \(2020\)](#), [2480 \(2019\)](#), [2423 \(2018\)](#), [2391 \(2017\)](#), [2359 \(2017\)](#), [2349 \(2017\)](#) and [2320 \(2016\)](#), as well as its previous presidential statements on this agenda item.

"The Security Council expresses full support to the Special Representative, in carrying out his mandate, and ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS.

"The Security Council calls for continued national, regional and international engagement in cooperation with the countries of the region in an effort to prevent and address the peace and security challenges they face, while reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of all countries in West Africa and the Sahel. It recognizes that responsible and credible mediation by UNOWAS requires, inter alia, national ownership, the consent of the parties to a particular dispute or conflict, and respect for national sovereignty, as set out in [A/RES/70/304](#).

"The Security Council condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks in the villages of Tchoma Bangou and Zaroumadareye in Niger on 2 January 2021 and expresses deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the people and the Government of Niger. The Security Council also condemns the 28 November attacks against civilians in Borno State in Nigeria, as well as the abduction of over 300 children in Katsina State in Nigeria on 11 December. The Security Council also notes the efforts of the Nigerian authorities that led to the release of the children on 17 December.

"The Security Council emphasises the important role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding as well as in post conflict situations, and stresses the importance of their full, equal, and meaningful participation and involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, as recognised in Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and its subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.



“The Security Council, while recalling its Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2021/1), underscores the importance of addressing the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism and the need for a holistic approach to address the root causes of intercommunal violence, as well as prevent further tensions and violence, maintain security efforts, effectively hold accountable and bring to justice individuals responsible for human rights violations and abuses, tackle exclusion and poverty, promote sustainable development, ensure access to education, strengthen resilience of institutions and communities, promote good governance and build peaceful, just and inclusive societies. The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to explore the feasibility of a civilian Joint Project between UNOWAS and relevant regional organisations, such as the G5 Sahel, ECOWAS and the AU, with the aim of stemming the increasingly destabilizing phenomenon of intercommunal violence and preventing its recurrence in the region, as well as encourages support to such a project from bilateral and development partners, such as the World Bank or other International Financial Institutions, and requests the Secretary-General to include in his next report on UNOWAS recommendations with viable options for establishing such a project, as well as for the SRSG to provide an update on these recommendations in his next briefing to the Security Council.

“The Security Council expresses concern at the deterioration in the overall humanitarian situation in the region, exacerbated by COVID-19 and notably characterised by the impact of forced displacement, extreme poverty, food insecurity, social inequalities and violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and calls for safe, sustained and unhindered access for the delivery of humanitarian and medical aid to persons in need, including access to comprehensive healthcare and services for survivors of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations without any discrimination, and further calls for significant humanitarian and development action as well as the disbursement of previously pledged funds. The Security Council condemns all forms of violence and intimidation against those participating in humanitarian operations and encourages efforts by States in the region to ensure that perpetrators of such acts are brought to justice, as provided for by national laws and their obligations under international law.

“The Security Council, while recalling resolution 2532, and acknowledging the effort of West African countries in effectively responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, notes that the pandemic and even more so its second wave, has further exacerbated existing conflict drivers and caused severe socioeconomic, political and security repercussions, worsened the humanitarian situation in the region and disproportionately impacted on women and girls, children, refugees, internally displaced persons, older persons and persons with disabilities. The Security Council underlines the importance of international cooperation and solidarity, welcomes the efforts and contributions of UNOWAS, the African Union, ECOWAS and other member states, and calls for continued support and enhanced cooperation to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including equal and affordable access to a vaccine as well as essential health services, and for actions to prevent the harmful effects of the pandemic on the right of every child to education and to support education that is inclusive, equitable and of quality, using accessible and inclusive distance-learning solutions to close the digital gap.

“The Security Council welcomes the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel as well as by the African Union and ECOWAS in spearheading initiatives to address security challenges exacerbated by terrorism

and transnational organized crime in the region, including through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S), which continued to demonstrate increased tangible operational results, particularly in central Sahel and in this regard, stresses the importance of continued bilateral and international support for it to achieve full and lasting operationalization and autonomy. The Security Council welcomes the 2020 initiative to deploy an African Union-led force in the Sahel, which it looks forward to, and it further recalls the creation of a Coalition for the Sahel. The Security Council reaffirms that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes a threat to international peace and security and further reaffirms the need for all States to prevent and combat it by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in compliance with other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. The Security Council expresses concern at the threat that piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea pose to international navigation, security and development in the region and welcomes the work of UNOWAS on regional cooperation in response. The Security Council underlines the need for security efforts to be aligned with political objectives, to promote the restoration of civilian security, the establishment of effective governance to deliver essential services, the administration of justice and accountability, and humanitarian assistance, and the revival of local economies to provide livelihood opportunities for surging youth populations and promote their constructive political engagement, positively contributing to peacebuilding efforts in accordance with resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) and its subsequent resolutions on Youth, Peace and Security.

“The Security Council reiterates that stabilisation of the situation and protection of civilians in this region requires a fully integrated response, led by the governments of those countries, with the support of UNOWAS, regional organisations and the international community, and encompassing simultaneous pursuit of progress on security, governance, humanitarian assistance, development, reconciliation, and human rights.

“The Security Council reaffirms the need to ensure access to education and its contribution to the achievement of peace and security in the region and recalling Presidential Statement ([S/PRST/2020/8](#)), reiterates its strong condemnation of attacks as well as threats of attacks in contravention of applicable international humanitarian law against schools, children, and educational personnel, and reiterates its deep concern at the closure of schools in situations of armed conflict as a result of attacks and threats of attacks and urges all parties to armed conflict to immediately cease such attacks and threats, to refrain from actions that impede children’s access to education, and to take all feasible measures to protect schools and children.

“The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, including through drought, desertification, and land degradation, as well as their impacts on food security, among other factors, on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region and continues to stress the need for long-term strategies, based on comprehensive risk assessments, by governments and the United Nations, to, support stabilisation and build resilience and encourages UNOWAS to continue to integrate this information in its activities.

“The Security Council welcomes the holding of presidential and legislative elections in 2020 in some countries of West Africa and the Sahel, which has strengthened the roots of democracy in these countries. It notes that most of these elections were peaceful, however it condemns incidents of

election related violence that occurred in some instances and in this context, calls on all political stakeholders to further advance national political dialogue and to take concrete steps to allow sustainable reconciliation. It encourages national stakeholders of countries in the region with upcoming elections to work together to facilitate the preparation for, and holding of, genuinely free and fair, credible, timely, inclusive and peaceful elections, and to take all appropriate steps to prevent any forms of violence, and further encourages them to ensure a level playing field for all candidates and to work towards full, equal, and meaningful participation of women. The Security Council welcomes the leadership of ECOWAS in mediation and promoting democratic electoral processes in the region.

“The Security Council welcomes the assumption by UNOWAS of the good offices functions of United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, following the conclusion of its mandate on 31 December 2020, and requests specific reporting on this good offices function, including progress made by national stakeholders to implement the reform agenda, outlined in the ECOWAS Roadmap and Conakry Agreement of 2016, necessary for ensuring political stabilization, as well as on progress made with regards to the UN transition, in the next report of the Secretary-General.

“The Security Council commends the efforts of the countries of the region to advance the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in political processes including with a view to increasing the number of women appointed to senior government positions, in accordance with their respective constitutions and national, regional and global commitments and welcomes in that regard the active participation and leadership of women in recent electoral processes in Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Niger as well as the appointment of a new female Prime Minister in Togo and proportion of women in the new cabinet of Liberia.

“The Security Council encourages cross-pillar efforts to foster greater coherence and coordination within the UN System as well as with partners in the region to implement the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (UNSPS), and help to enhance the regional implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the African Union Agenda 2063. In this connection, the Security Council, calls on UNOWAS, to work with all elements of the UN system in headquarters including continued engagement with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and in West Africa and the Sahel, in particular the Regional Collaborative Platform, to strengthen integrated responses to the challenges facing the region in order to ensure better coordination and efficiency of the international response to the needs of the people and communities of the Sahel region. The Security Council welcomes the appointment of Abdoulaye Mar Dieye as the UN Special Coordinator for development in the Sahel as an opportunity to boost the implementation of the UNISS and the UNSPS and calls for more detailed and concrete reporting on this implementation through the Secretary-General’s regular reporting on UNOWAS.

“The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide information on UN efforts with respect to aspects highlighted in this statement, the UNOWAS mandate and the situation in West Africa and the Sahel and reiterates its call for an assessment of the implementation of its resolution [2349](#) to be integrated into regular reporting by UNOWAS.”