United Nations S/PV.7275

# Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

*Provisional*

**7275**th meeting
Thursday, 9 October 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President*: | Mrs. Perceval | (Argentina) |
| *Members*: | Australia | Mr. Quinlan |
| | Chad | Mr. Mangaral |
| | Chile | Mr. Barros Melet |
| | China | Mr. Liu Jieyi |
| | France | Mr. Delattre |
| | Jordan | Mrs. Kawar |
| | Lithuania | Ms. Murmokaitė |
| | Luxembourg | Mr. Maes |
| | Nigeria | Mr. Bosah |
| | Republic of Korea | Mr. Oh Joon |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Iliichev |
| | Rwanda | Mr. Gasana |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Sir Mark Lyall Grant |
| | United States of America | Ms. Power |

## Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506. Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

14-56250 (E)

Accessible document

Please recycle

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**United Nations peacekeeping operations**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed, Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations; Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, Force Commander of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Major General Jean Bosco Kazura, Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; and Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha, Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Lieutenant General Ahmed.

**Lieutenant General Ahmed**: It is always a great honour and pleasure to interact with the Security Council. Today I am here to introduce the panel of Force Commanders who will deliver statements to the Council. I would like to begin, however, by saying that, for the first time in the history of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, the very first female Force Commander, Major General Kristin Lund, Force Commander of United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), has been appointed.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Ladsous, was very keen to personally introduce the panel, but, as the Council is aware, he is currently on his way from Mali to New York.

Madam President, I am very thankful to you for the invitation to this dialogue about our peacekeeping missions on various peacekeeping topics. The meeting of Force Commanders with the Council has become a tradition and is one of the highlights, if not the highlight, of the conference. It underlines the Council's much-appreciated commitment and interest in gaining first-hand information. The Force Commanders are very honoured and very eager to share their experiences with the Council in order to contribute to well-informed decision-making.

Currently they are commanding more than 90,000 soldiers out of 105,000 uniformed personnel, and this number is likely to grow in the coming period. They operate in an environment that is often very difficult. Mali is a case in point, where we have suffered maximum casualties this year. The Central African Republic, the Sudans, the Golan and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) are some of the other challenging missions. The Force Commanders are operating in failing or failed States where there is, frankly, hardly any peace to keep.

Ebola is yet another dimension of this complexity. The Force Commander of the African Union Mission in Somalia is our usual conference guest and is sitting behind me. Lieutenant Silas Ntigurirwa commands more than 20,000 soldiers in a very difficult environment in Somalia. This year's conference theme is "mandate accomplishment and capabilities in the field, expectations and future initiatives". Within that framework, we have selected key topics for presentation today. The protection of civilians will be presented by the Force Commander of MONUSCO, Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz; expectations from the military contingents under a changed security environment by the Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Major General Kazura; and the accomplishment of traditional mandates under changed political and military environment by the Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, Lieutenant General Singha.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Lieutenant General Ahmed for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz.

**Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz**: It is an honour to have the opportunity to address the Council today.

It was in late 1999 that the protection of civilians from direct threats was specifically mentioned in the mandate for Sierra Leone. Peacekeeping missions' mandated tasks, based on Chapters VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations, have been pragmatically reflected in Security Council resolutions. But even with the incorporation of details and specific tasks, there is room for interpretation. Furthermore, executing a protection-of-civilians mandate in a demanding and

rapidly changing complex environment requires some necessary changes in structure, mindset and operational behaviour on the ground.

The protection of civilians is the most important task of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is far more than a task in a mandate: it is a moral obligation.

The importance of protecting civilians is not in question. The question is, how to protect them in a more effective way. I am absolutely convinced that the best way to protect civilians is by being proactive rather than reactive. As an example, identifying and taking action against the threats represented by armed groups and militias, which are the main perpetrators of direct acts of violence such as pillage, rape, killings and other crimes, would be more effective than waiting for events to unfold.

The protection of civilians is the effect required on the ground. The United Nations should not wait for armed groups to come and terrorize communities; it should not give them freedom of movement; there should not be hundreds or thousands of panic-stricken civilians coming to crowd around or inside a United Nations base for safety.

Conceptually, troops remain mindful of the United Nations principles of peacekeeping, namely, the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. Those principles may not always apply against armed criminal groups in contemporary missions. Their application could be reviewed and adjusted to contemporary threats and to the context of violence that innocent civilians and peacekeeping personnel face in conflict areas.

Deterrence by presence is not always effective. Only an active force with a proactive, robust posture can neutralize and defeat threats to the civilian population. On the other hand, the simple presence of peacekeepers for prolonged periods without action while violence is being committed leads to a weakening of the reputation of the United Nations, the troop-contributing countries and the international community. In order to implement the mandate, troops on the ground must have the mindset, the will, the leadership and the initiative required to protect civilians in a robust and effective manner.

As a contribution to the transformation required to better protect civilians, I would bring up the following points for the Council's consideration.

These include the requirement to have a mandate with the same obligations for all of the components on the ground; the use of a practical approach on how to protect civilians; and the need to consider that risk is inevitable in the armed services and can be effectively managed and mitigated by well- and appropriately trained, motivated and equipped soldiers. A robust posture is indeed safer for all. A mission should be proactive and responsive. Taking action to protect civilians does not undermine peacekeeping principles and is perfectly compatible with international law.

The assumption that military action may create collateral damage should not prevent us from taking the necessary action. On the contrary, there are many examples that prove that action against armed groups brings huge benefits to the population.

The military components need to be coordinated with realistic, clear and effective political management. Hopes and expectations rise when a population sees a United Nations peacekeeping mission deploying on the ground, together with the presence of United Nations agencies, numerous non-governmental organizations and the international community. What they expect is action to stop the violence and the delivery of significant support.

There are examples of failure to protect civilians due to low-intensity action or poor or inexistent initiative, but there are very few cases of problems due to effective action. To protect civilians, a military force should be robust and dynamic, supported by an operational administration and complemented by civilian components, with work that is visible to the population.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Kazura.

**Major General Kazura**: It is indeed an honour and a privilege to address the Council.

The changed security environment I am going to talk about in the next 10 minutes or so is one that is threatened by armed conflicts and religious fundamentalism, in addition to economic, political, social and environmental crises. This security

environment is fuelled and sustained by such existing complex and unresolved security challenges as corruption, internal tensions, violent extremism and radicalization, illicit trafficking and terrorism. That is the kind of security environment under which Mali has been living for quite some time.

In fact, the security environment in Mali was threatened for a long time by a series of coups d'état, which created a political and constitutional crisis, on top of which was an already extremely vulnerable situation characterized by a volatile mix of problems such as drought, food shortages, migration, armed insurrections and heavy weapons proliferation.

In addition to that, the recent increase in criminal activity perpetrated by a variety of armed movements and terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar Eddine and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, has recently proceeded to violently change the same security environment and to sow further chaos, especially in the northern part of the country.

The successful Operation Serval and the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, and especially the Chadian operations conducted last year, broke those groups' backbone and managed to stop their criminal activities, which they had sought to extend throughout the entire country. The relative stability following the operation allowed MINUSMA to carry out its mandate successfully. As a result, peaceful elections were held, State authority was gradually brought back to the north and people were expecting the signing of the final peace accord according to Ouagadougou agreement.

The failure to implement some provisions of the accords, as well as the occurrence of the sad events of 17 and 21 May in Kidal, have completely changed the security environment in northern Mali. The whole area was and is still occupied by the armed movements and the terrorists. Since May, the terrorist groups have managed to reorganize themselves and have increased their deadly operations against international troops, especially MINUSMA, which has a greater presence in that area and is paying a heavy and deadly price.

Today more than ever, MINUSMA has serious concerns related to re-emerging terrorist threats in that area. The northern ungoverned area is becoming a sanctuary for terrorist activities that are coordinated and facilitated by organized networks with financial, military and human resources, which, in time, will be able to conduct even more lethal operations with horrendous security consequences for the whole region and beyond.

The reality on the ground today is that MINUSMA, which is supposed to be a peacekeeping mission, is facing a terrorist network that is combining patience, intelligence, coercion and brutality to design and direct its attacks when and where it wants. MINUSMA is in a terrorist-fighting situation without an anti-terrorist mandate or adequate training, equipment, logistics or intelligence to deal with such a situation.

The questions we are likely to ask ourselves here today include: What is MINUSMA there for if it cannot deal with the situation? What should we do to stop the killings if MINUSMA should stay there, and who should do it? How long will it take us to answer those questions satisfactorily?

Many questions can be raised and many answers can be found, but today is not a good time for questions; it is time for action, and the decision to act has to be taken now, because, as we gather here today, we may very well receive bad news again — God forbid!

The new security environment MINUSMA is trying to handle is a security situation for which it was not ready. If it has to change its role from peacekeeping to antiterrorism fighting, that should be urgently planned for and done properly. It is against that backdrop that I wish to express the following expectations from MINUSMA military contingents, which could be expected from any contingent under such a security environment.

With regard to immediate action, I wish here to salute the successful Serval/Barkhane Operations, which led to the stability that Mali has enjoyed for months, and to state that today more than ever before operations against terrorists in northern Mali are absolutely crucial, with a view to regaining initiative and allowing MINUSMA forces to be reinforced in terms of necessary equipment, training, intelligence collection and logistics to be able to fulfil its mandate.

In addition, the laudable efforts of United Nations leadership to give force command authority and flexibility to deploy troops where and when it is deemed necessary with required means to do so should be continued. Furthermore, armed movements should be made to understand that they should be held accountable for what is happening in the areas under their control.

The second phase will see the pace of the Mali Defence and Security Force reorganization stepped up, with a view to taking over and fulfilling its mandate of defending the nation.

In the long term, there will be a need for the international community to continue to support Mali in its efforts to rebuild the country through a variety of processes, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and security sector reform processes, justice and national reconciliation and socioeconomic development.

I have used the case of Mali as a clear example of showing that the specific challenges military contingents are facing today under new security environments require new organization, planning and guidance. As for MINUSMA, it needs to adapt itself to new challenges and stay the course. Its contribution to transforming northern Mali into a stable area is more necessary now than ever before. Otherwise, that part of the world would increasingly become a dangerous place to live, and the threats to troops, allies and the population would be even more severe, with negative effects for the entire region.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank General Kazura for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha.

**Lieutenant General Singha**: I am Lieutenant General I.S. Singha, Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). It is a great privilege to address this gathering today on the accomplishment of traditional mandates under changed politico-military environments.

As the Council is aware, UNDOF is a traditional mission under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations and has operated effectively as per its mandate for the last 40 years. The essence of UNDOF's mandate is to keep the military forces of Israel and Syria apart, by establishing and manning a buffer zone, or an area of separation, 75 kilometres in length and 235 square kilometres in area. We are required to observe, monitor and report any violations in the area of separation. In addition, with the help of observers from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), we are also required to inspect periodically the levels of manning of troops in the area of limitation extending up to 25 km on both sides. However, since March 2012 we have experienced fighting between opposition groups and the Syrian Army in the area of separation, which is a clear violation of the mandate. In that internal strife, apart from dealing with the two parties that are signatories to the Agreement on Disengagement, we have had to face a third and complex party: opposition groups of different shades that are not signatories to the Agreement. That has made the task of peacekeepers very challenging, demanding and dangerous.

Exchanges of fire of artillery, tank, mortar, automatic weapons, anti-aircraft and small arms, as well as clashes between the two sides, take place on a regular basis. Over the past three years, peacekeepers have been affected by a large number of incidents, including abductions, car-jackings, weapons snatchings, restrictions of movement, peacekeepers coming under crossfire, vandalism of United Nations property and direct threats to peacekeepers by the radical elements.

The landscape changed drastically this year, with the radical groups arriving in large numbers and controlling the moderate elements. The opposition groups have systematically launched a southern offensive from the Jordanian border, captured the area of separation up to main route 7 and pushed the Syrian Arab Armed Forces further to the east in the area of limitation. We witnessed an upward spiralling of violence to higher levels, amid which peacekeepers were directly targeted by the extremists.

During the crisis in which 45 Fijian peacekeepers were detained by armed members of the opposition, an ordeal that lasted for 15 days, the radicals made their intent clear and surrounded another 72 peacekeepers from the Philippines. The Filipino and Fijian peacekeepers bravely faced that situation and exhibited raw courage, resilience and patience. However, during the release of the peacekeepers, the radical group reiterated that if presented with another opportunity, they would detain additional peacekeepers, seize United Nations vehicles and weapons and ransack United Nations property. They have also clearly spelled out that the United Nations was not required in the area. In spite of all such challenges, it is to the credit of the senior management and peacekeepers from all troop-contributing countries that in all major incidents involving detentions since last year, all peacekeepers have been released safely without any harm.

It was not an easy task to operate in that environment, but we have evolved as a mission and adjusted our operations to meet the challenges

presented by the environment of internal conflict and clashes that have recently increased in their intensity and severity. The weapons employed by both sides, the size of the area and the number of fighters have increased exponentially, engaging the entire area of separation and up to 10 to 15 kilometres of the area of limitation on the Bravo side.

Within the existing mandate, we have enhanced and honed our capabilities. The elasticity of the traditional mandate was stretched just short of the breaking point, preventing it from snapping. When the threat was unacceptable and direct, we decided to temporarily relocate most of our assets on the Alpha side, leaving six positions and observation posts still held in the area of separation and five observation posts, or big positions, on the Alpha side, thereby ensuring that we now focus more on the ceasefire line, or the Alpha line.

The process of adapting and carrying out the mandate differently during these trying times was not done in a graduated manner, but all concerns were addressed simultaneously to achieve significant cohesion in moving ahead and continuing to retain our relevance. We had to reconfigure our operational capabilities and the methodology of the execution of operations on the ground, tweak mission support by tailoring and remodelling logistical and supply chains, and concurrently ensure the safety and security of the peacekeepers to fulfil our mandate. We adjusted to the situation very quickly and we continue to evolve in the face of dynamically changing threats. In the beginning of 2013, we improved our vehicle movement code and stopped the movement of single vehicles, acquired armoured cars for all movements and monitored and controlled every movement carefully. With various prophylactic measures in place, we were able to reduce incidents to a trickle, until the radicals took control and the moderates, although opposed to targeting the United Nations directly, had very little leverage.

Last year, we saw four troop-contributing countries pull out of the mission, leaving it seriously stretched. Only the Philippines and India stayed the course, their soldiers taking on significant extra responsibilities during this period. With the help of the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries present today in the mission, we were able to transform and empower the mission with an additional 200 soldiers, a mechanized company and the capability to counter improvised explosive devices, and to induct some heavier weapons.

UNDOF has doubled its liaison capabilities, and we were given information analysis capabilities and a special adviser. Mission support was able to realign itself with the renewed operational ethos and was able to harden the existing positions and observation posts. Drills were refined, and we were able to ensure the safety of the peacekeepers. We were proactive and on occasion fired back in self-defence, when fired upon, basically restoring the situation and disengaging from the area.

We did reduce our footprint, but continued to monitor the situation with constant information collection by different means, including the induction of long-range day and night surveillance equipment and thermal imaging devices. The troop-contributing countries of UNTSO also stepped up and started to deploy more experienced observers who could cope with the rapidly deteriorating situation. At my behest, they changed from day-time observation to around-the-clock observation at the observation posts. Certain threatened observation posts manned by unarmed observers from UNTSO were provided with protection by line troops from UNDOF, from time to time, and we still continue to provide protection to two observation posts on the Alpha side.

With mitigations measures in place and the participation of new troop-contributing countries with greater risk-taking abilities, UNDOF still skilfully implements its mandate in a modified manner and has ensured that two traditional adversaries are kept away from a conventional war. I must say that, in spite of the changing contours and complexity of the environment, both the parties, Israel and Syria, were steadfast and committed to our resolve to continue with our mandate and tasks.

When the situation started to deteriorate further, after 27 August, and the radical elements started to directly target us, we laid out a decision-support matrix, which guided us through the relocation process. It was due to the brave actions of the Fijian, Irish and Indian contingents that the softer elements were sent out earlier, and the troops of those three contingents moved in the end from Camp Faouar in proper tactical formations without any untoward incident. Those brave peacekeepers and selected members of international staff exhibited great courage and fortitude. In the entire temporary relocation process, both Israel and Syria gave wholehearted support to ensuring that all 800 peacekeepers crossed over safely to the Alpha side.

Notwithstanding the enhanced threat, UNDOF still maintains 11 positions and observation posts in the area of responsibility. The gallant Gurkhas from Nepal continue to hold the strategic Hermon Heights and are fully mentally and physically prepared to face the harsh winters. The command elements have been divided into two: a smaller element is located in Damascus and the main one is in Camp Ziouani.

Efforts are under way to locate one battalion headquarters on the Bravo side. The opposition groups have now understood the essence of our presence in the area of separation, as the engagement levels have gone up, with Syrian defence forces targeting them with air power. Until the time of relocation, the Syrian Air Force had shown considerable restraint in targeting the opposition groups in the area of separation.

The parties to the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces fully appreciate the relevance of UNDOF during the Syrian crises, and my interlocutors on both sides have applauded our flexibility, transparency and, above all, impartiality throughout the ongoing internal strife in Syria over the past three years. That transformation would not have been possible without the strong support UNDOF has received from the Security Council, the Secretariat, United Nations Headquarters and Member States. I would be remiss if I did not mention the assistance that has been provided by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, among others, with rotation and logistics movements, which are carried out through Beirut due to the prevailing security situation. The cooperation between UNDOF and UNTSO, whose observers support the mission through Observer Group Golan, continues to be constructive.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to address the Security Council. I would like to conclude by reaffirming my personal commitment and that of my senior leadership team and all UNDOF peacekeepers, military and civilian, to continuing to do everything possible to ensure the implementation of the mandate that the Security Council has entrusted to UNDOF.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank General Singha for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

**Mr. Gasana** (Rwanda): I would like to thank the Force Commanders for their briefings — General Bosco Kazura of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and General Iqbal Singha of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. I would also like to thank General Maqsood Ahmed, Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, for his remarks.

For the past five years, the Security Council has organized this annual meeting with Force Commanders, which we find very useful, given the challenging peacekeeping environment that a number of our missions are currently operating in. The meetings provide an opportunity for us to gain a better understanding of the perspective from the field, particularly on operational issues. As the Council, we have a huge responsibility to ensure that the mandates we authorize set clear tasks for the missions and their leadership, including where timing and design are concerned. As His Excellency President Paul Kagame of Rwanda said two weeks ago at the high-level summit convened by the United States on United Nations peacekeeping. Rwanda believes that "nothing matters more than saving innocent lives when they are at stake". It is first and foremost a host country's responsibility to protect its own civilians, but, unfortunately, that does not always happen. And that is where United Nations peacekeeping missions have to intervene, when required, in order to make a difference on the ground. That is also part of our responsibility to protect.

As new threats emerge and peacekeeping tasks are transformed, peacekeepers should be trained, prepared and equipped to use force to protect their own lives and those of innocent civilians. Contingents that do not fulfil those requirements should not be deployed to peacekeeping missions, as they may put civilian lives, and their own, at risk. At the very least, we must conduct proactive long-range patrols, and missions must be equipped to carry them out from the first moment their boots are on the ground. When civilians are brutally attacked just a few kilometres or miles from a United Nations camp, United Nations peacekeeping operations rightly lose credibility on the ground, thereby undermining our work around the world.

That applies to what General Bosco Kazura said in his briefing about expectations from our military contingents in challenging security environments. In Mali, our peacekeepers are dealing with asymmetric threats that completely transcend traditional tasks and

requirements. An increasing number of peacekeepers have been in killed in that country in recent weeks, among them a Chadian contingent that paid the greatest price. On Tuesday, in fact, a Senegalese peacekeeper was killed, following the deaths of nine troops from the Niger killed on Friday in an ambush in Gao, in one of the deadliest attacks on peacekeepers in Mali to date. I would like to once again offer our condolences to the peacekeepers' families and Governments. Those brave souls made a noble sacrifice, and it is a reminder that we are not adequately equipped or prepared to confront the challenges of transnational terrorism and the presence of jihadist groups in Mali. I have a few questions about this for General Ahmed and General Kazura.

Peacekeeping involves taking risks and losing human lives, but not to the extent we have seen in Mali. We also know and acknowledge that there were failures during the establishment and rehatting of the Mission, but again, that cannot continue to be an excuse nearly 16 months later. What, in concrete terms, can be done to address this alarming situation? Related to that, we all know that MINUSMA is a peacekeeping mission. It is not mandated to carry out offensive operations, although, to be very clear, that should not prevent the Mission from protecting itself and defending its mandate. Last year, the Council mandated that the French forces of Operation Serval, now replaced by Operation Barkhane, should support peacekeepers whenever operations were beyond their mandate and capability, particularly in relation to counter-terrorism activities. In that regard, I should mention what our colleague from Mali said yesterday at an informal dinner, which is that unfortunately, as of now, armed groups are continuing to gain and occupy new territorial positions and are setting up parallel administrations, going against both the letter and the spirit of resolutions 2100 (2013) and 2164 (2014) and of the relevant political and ceasefire agreements in Mali.

The Council's reaction to those blatant violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the secular Republic of Mali seems weak and ineffective. While the world's eyes and efforts are turned towards the essential fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, we should not lose sight of the growing threat of terrorism on the African continent and of the serious risk of radical and terrorist groups within Mali linking up with similar organizations such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, and thus paralysing the entire region. I would like to ask General Maqsood if the situation I have just described in Mali is going beyond Operation Serval's control, considering the mandate given by the Security Council. I would also like to know what, in General Kazura's view, should be corrected or improved before the situation gets out of hand. In that context, there are additional assets, such as all sources information fusion units and drones, which have been deployed to help with intelligence gathering. We would like to hear from the MINUSMA Force Commander to what extent those assets are being utilized, and if they are useful.

As Rwanda has said before, while the political dimension of that conflict should not be underplayed, a more robust mandate for a reconfigured mission is essential to the safety and security of our peacekeepers and for operational efficacy. The Council needs to have a serious discussion on what that reconfiguraton would entail and what it would look like. We need to change how we do business because we are no longer doing business in the same markets. We cannot avoid that debate. We believe that no national interest of any Council member should be pursued at the expense of the security and safety of the affected populations.

Before I conclude, I wonder if General Dos Santos Cruz could say something about the recent reports that more than 100 demobilized fighters and their families, including women and children, have died from starvation and disease in a military camp in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Does he think that that could affect the planned disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation operations? How can we prevent such inhumane treatment of those who surrender?

**Mr. Barros Melet** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the presidency for having convened this briefing. We also thank Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed, Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, and the Force Commanders of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for their briefings. This annual practice should continue.

At the beginning of my statement, I would like to reiterate my country's commitment to peacekeeping operations, which are a key tool of the United Nations under its peace and security pillar. Since 1948, Chile has supported those efforts. Today, as my country's

Minister for Foreign Affairs said at the summit held at Headquarters in September, we have offered new materiel and training resources, in addition to the existing ones, to be deployed in such cases in Africa.

The new situations and challenges facing the forces on the ground have led us to acknowledge the need to analyse and discuss peacekeeping operations, from their inception to their implementation and conclusion. The membership in general, in particular troop- and police-contributing countries, should participate in that process. In that regard, we underscore the role of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly as the intergovernmental body to address such matters. We welcome the announcement by the Secretary-General to appoint a high-level panel to review and to report on such issues.

My delegation supports a multidimensional approach to conflict resolution that includes the protection of civilians, the restoration of the rule of law, accountability, reconciliation and social inclusion. We also underscore the importance of strengthening the gender perspective and the full integration of women, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) and other existing resolutions. In the current dynamic of conflict, we see the use of new technologies and inter-mission cooperation as useful and necessary mechanisms, which, in all cases, must have the consent of the parties and comply with international law.

We underscore the commitment undertaken by some missions to protect civilians. In the particular case of MONUSCO, we value the optimal use, in cooperation with the Congolese authorities, of early-warning mechanisms at all levels, prevention initiatives on the basis of community-based protection committees and support for the drawing up such plans based on interim and ongoing operations. We believe that community-based early-warning networks could be used in other peacekeeping operations. We also highlight MONUSCO's contribution in terms of training the Congolese police, which has included the management of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as the establishment of islands of stability in priority areas to protect the civilian population.

In the case of Mali, the increasingly frequent attacks against MINUSMA and its troops, as affirmed today by Major General Bosco Kasura, point to a change in the security conditions, in particular in the north of the country. That makes it necessary to consider a reconfiguration of the mandate. We believe that it is appropriate for the Council to discuss the possible options.

As for UNDOF, we emphasize that, for four decades, it has been an effective liaison and communication tool to prevent escalations of violence between Israel and Syria. However, the outbreak of the conflict in Syria and the emergence of non-State actors have changed the reality on the ground and compromised the security of the troops, even forcing the Blue Helmets to temporarily withdrawal to the Alpha side. To deal with that new situation, we believe that UNDOF should maintain its close contact with the authorities of both countries. We should support the strengthening of their defensive capability, while making use of new technologies. We should include more troops who speak Arabic so as to strengthen ties with the local communities in the area of separation and on the Bravo side.

My delegation views peacekeeping operations as a broad concept, where peacekeeping and peacebuilding tasks converge, recognizing the link between security and development. It is therefore important that the mandates, as well as being clear and having the necessary resources and conditions for their implementation, be the outcome of a proper debate in the Security Council, in which the Peacebuilding Commission, the relevant regional organizations and troop- and police-contributing countries are duly heard.

**Mr. Oh Joon** (Republic of Korea): As I am speaking for the first time this month at an open meeting of the Council, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your presidency and to assure you of our full cooperation. I would like to thank Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed, Major General Kazura and Lieutenant General Singha for their briefings. We also welcome all the Force Commanderes who are here with us today. I take this opportunity to acknowledge their dedicated work and to pay special tribute to all the Blue Helmets in the world operating under their command.

Today, peacekeepers face various and increasing threats in carrying out their mandates. Many cases of deliberate attacks against peacekeepers and of their detention have been reported. Safety on the basis of impartiality is no longer taken for granted. One explanation for that changing environment may be found in the recent surge of intractable non-State actors. As they become radicalized, while often enjoying impunity, their belligerence tends to become more indiscriminate.

Such challenges should be met by the strengthening of peacekeeping capabilities. Robust mandates and the safety of the troops should always be ensured.

Implementing mandates in hostile environments exposes peacekeepers to risks. What we must do in the face of those challenges is to provide appropriate training and the necessary equipment. Advanced technologies would also help to reduce potential risks for both peacekeepers and civilians. Priority should be given to maximizing operational preparedness, in accordance with the mandates. Peacekeeping contingents with robust mandates need a sufficient level of regional support in addition to the full cooperation of the host country. Having said that, I would like to make a few observations on today's briefings on peacekeeping operations in the field.

First, the case of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) illustrates how peacekeepers can actively protect civilians and mitigate the risk to civilians. In addition to the Intervention Brigade, which has already proven its value on the ground, MONUSCO's recent steps, such as active patrolling, paying particular attention to refugee camps and swift action, offer good examples of a more mobile and versatile approach to the protection of civilians.

Secondly, with the withdrawal of the Malian forces from most of northern Mali and the drawdown of the French operation, the safety of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), now virtually the only forces on the ground, is increasingly threatened by terrorist attacks. I take this opportunity to reiterate our strong condemnation of the recent targeted attacks against a MINUSMA convoy and camp. In the midst of that heightened security risk, MINUSMA is required to expand its outreach in the northern area, beyond the main population centres, in accordance with resolution 2164 (2014). Far short of its ceiling of approved personnel and without sufficient military enablers, MINUSMA runs the risk of getting stretched too thin. We would like to hear from General Kazura what kind of support MINUSMA needs most to fulfil its mandate.

Thirdly, over the past few months the volatile situation on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights has significantly restricted the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)'s operation in the Bravo zone. Insofar as that abnormality stems from the crisis in Syria, it will take time before stability can return. The Security Council is awaiting the Secretariat's recommendations to allow UNDOF to continue carrying out its mandate under the changed politico-military circumstances of the Golan Heights. In that regard, we would like to hear from General Singha about how he thinks UNDOF should be strengthened to cope with increased threats, and what approach he is taking in dealing with the armed opposition groups to prevent a recurrence of serious obstructions to UNDOF's tasks.

Lastly, we would like to stress that the role of a peacekeeping mission is to assist the Government and people in taking the lead for the future of their own country. Peacekeepers can do their work more efficiently and more swiftly when national stakeholders make progress in the political process. Therefore, we believe that the Security Council and Member States together should encourage national stakeholders to expedite their political transition in an inclusive way. Such efforts will undoubtedly help Force Commanders and peacekeepers to do their job.

**Sir Mark Lyall Grant** (United Kingdom): We welcome this opportunity for a productive and frank exchange with Force Commanders, and we thank you, Madam President, for your initiative in holding this meeting. I also want to thank the three Generals for their clear and informative briefings this morning. This dialogue is important because it helps our understanding of the constraints that Force Commanders face, and therefore informs our decision-making on the mandates for each mission. It should not be a one-off event, and I am pleased that increasingly the Security Council has the opportunity to hear from individual Force Commanders when individual missions are discussed by the Council.

Protecting civilians is now at the heart of many United Nations peacekeeping missions. But sadly, as the recent report of Office of Internal Oversight Services states, there has been "a persistent pattern of peacekeeping operations not intervening with force when civilians are under attack."(*A/68/787, Summary*) That is unacceptable because, as General Dos Santos Cruz spelled out there, is no risk-free option. And civilians are best protected through prevention, mobility and active intervention, rather than simple presence.

If missions do not fulfil their protection-of-civilian responsibilities, it undermines other tasks the mission may have been mandated to do, to say nothing of the loss of life and suffering that ensues. If this is a question

of tools or authority, then the Council needs to ensure that peacekeepers have the ability to fully deliver against the mandate set. But if, as seems sometimes to be the case, it is a question of interpretation of the mandate, then that needs to be urgently resolved among the Secretariat, the Force Commander and the national contingent commanders.

What is the dialogue with United Nations Headquarters, including senior Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) leadership and military advisers on protection of civilian implementation? How often do they discuss the protection-of-civilian strategy and requirements? As my Rwandan colleague pointed out, many peacekeeping operations are now taking place in a very different, more hostile environment. Grom my Government's perspective — I am thinking about preventable atrocities such as the massacre in South Kivu in June — now is the right time to push for an agreed standard and formal DPKO guidance on the remit of protection of civilians. General Dos Santos Cruz made some important recommendations, which the Council should consider carefully. I wonder if he could say a bit more about how he as Force Commander ensured that everyone in the United Nations Organizations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) force understood the protection of civilians and their expected role in it.

The seizure of 45 peacekepiers of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in August, reflecting the changing nature of the security situation in UNDOF's area of operation, as General Singha described, was deeply disturbing. Their subsequent release was a happy ending to the incident, but it brings into sharp relief the risks that all peacekeepers now face. More tragic still, in Mali we have seen 31 peacekeepers killed in a variety of terrorist and other attacks in recent months. Those incidents highlight the fact that United Nations peacekeeping missions are increasingly coming into contact with non-State actors, some using terrorist methods of operation. General Kazura made some important points about the mismatch between the tasks of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and its ability to perform them. Following yesterday's discussion (see S/PV.7274), the Security Council is well seized of that gap and needs to take some tough decisions about the future direction of MINUSMA.

More generally, support from United Nations Headquarters for missions to adapt to changing environments is clearly essential. If missions are unable to protect themselves, they will be unable to protect others. We have heard that in order to fulfil their mandates to protect civilians missions need more protected mobility, better intelligence and an increase in medical evacuation capability. I would be interested to hear the Force Commanders' views on that. Is it primarily an issue of better training and needing better technology, information-gathering techniques and analysis, or is there a more fundamental shift required in how such missions are conceived? I would also be interested to hear from the Force Commanders how the military components understand their role in relations to operating with non-State actors. Do they have guidance they need from New York to engage with non-State actors they encounter on the ground, particular in areas where State control no longer exists.

In conclusion, we recognize the noble and critical role that peacekeepers play, and the risks to which they are exposed. We recognize the need to supply missions with reasonable and appropriate mandates and all the necessary tools and authority that they need to fulfil the obligations. If we do that, then we can legitimately expect that peacekeepers will do their utmost to fulfil those mandates.

**Ms. Power** (United States of America): I wish to thank the Force Commanders for briefing the Security Council today and for their service in three of the world's most demanding United Nations peacekeeping missions. We would also like to recognize the efforts of the Force Commanders who are not speaking today, many of whom are in the Chamber, and the 130,000 troops, police and civilian staff under their collective command. The Force Commanders and those individuals are putting their lives on the line to protect people from countries that are not their own and to ensure our collective security in an increasingly interconnected world. They do not get parades when they return home to their home countries. They are not celebrated in the way they might be if they were acting in their own national defence, but I want them to know that certainly on behalf of the United States, and I assume everyone in the Chamber, they have our great gratitude for their service.

The Council values their unique perspectives on the missions that they command, and we have sought to ensure not only this right of passage where we hear

from them but also their inclusion in regular Council consultations. Vice-President Biden joined President Kagame, Prime Minister Abe, Prime Minister Sharif, Prime Minister Hasina and the Secretary-General to co-host on 26 September an unprecedented summit on peacekeeping, for the simple reason of trying to secure commitments from Member States so that Force Commanders can have better trained, better equipped and more capable forces under their command. That will take time, but we need to strengthen the pool from which the Commanders draw and on which they rely.

Today's meeting is well-timed. As others have noted, on Tuesday a Senegalese peacekeeper was killed by a rocket attack on a joint French-United Nations military base in Kidal, Mali. In the past week, nine Nigerian peacekeepers were killed in a brutal ambush on their convoy in the Gao region of Mali. Our hearts go out to the victims' families and to the loved ones of all the people who have been killed serving in peacekeeping missions. We condemn those ruthless acts in the strongest terms. It is essential that, however long it takes, we bring the perpetrators of those kinds of attacks to justice. Right now, in many missions, a sense of impunity reigns. As those attacks in Mali attest, peacekeepers in twenty-first century missions face unprecedented risks. That is because we are asking them and the Force Commanders to take on more responsibilities in more places and in more complex conflicts than at any time in history.

In those circumstances we have seen great professionalism and effectiveness, and we see systemic failures to fulfil core responsibilities. Today's meeting aims to draw upon the knowledge and experience of the Force Commanders in the Chamber today to identify and learn both from best practices and from common problems. We have heard in their presentations about some of those shared challenges.

Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz's commitment to protecting civilians is a model for twenty-first century peacekeeping missions. He has led his troops by example, personally participating in patrols and operations and even travelling to the headquarters of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) armed group to pressure its leaders to lay down their arms. He is the embodiment of the kind of leadership that Special Representative Kobler described in the Council in August (see S/PV.7237) when he called for a shift in mindset, from of protection by presence to one of protection by action. That is something that my Rwandan colleague has also spoken to in the Council today. We wholeheartedly support his assertion that peacekeeping missions must be more responsive, not only when attacks to happen but also more proactive in efforts to protect civilians even before those attacks take place.

That is why incidents like the one in Haut Uele in the Democratic Republic of the Congo earlier this year, during which civilians were attacked just a few kilometres down the road from peacekeepers, cannot be repeated. That is also why the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must proactively pursue action against the FDLR and other armed groups that continue to wreak havoc on civilians, without waiting for those groups to strike first.

There remain large gaps between principle and practice, between mandates and implementation. The protection of civilians is, as the Force Commanders have stated, at the heart of a number of United Nations peacekeeping mandates. Yet, as the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) report (A/68/787) in March 2014 found, missions routinely fail to use force to protect civilians under attack. We are deeply concerned by that finding and believe that when civilians are facing imminent risk, peacekeepers have a responsibility to intervene. Civilians are counting on peacekeepers.

The OIOS report highlights that troop contingents sometimes refuse to follow orders from their commanders, and the report recommends that those incidents of indiscipline be reported to Department of Peacekeeping Operations. But there is a structural issue that we should acknowledge in the Council today. Every military person knows that command and control is essential for the performance of one's mission effectively. Yet often in peacekeeping missions there are two chains of command, one back to the capital and one within the mission to the Force Commanders. That creates tensions that often go unacknowledged, and certainly under-addressed. It is something that we need to think about as we consider peacekeeping reform, because unity of command is so essential.

Major General Kazura's Mission — the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali — shows, as much as any mission, the complex and multifaceted risks that peacekeepers in the field face today. With his troops being attacked, using improvised explosive devices, rockets, mines, ambushes and suicide bombers, 31 peacekeepers have

been killed and at least 91 injured since the Mission deployed on 1 July 2013. The Major General is, I believe it is official, leading the most dangerous mission in the world for United Nations peacekeepers. He therefore has a unique challenge, on the one hand, in maintaining the morale of his troops as they come under growing attack and, at the same time, trying to perform his mission, supporting the political process and trying to help the Malians reclaim control and to consolidate control of their territory. As the Major General said — he put it very eloquently — he is in a terrorist-fighting situation without an anti-terror mandate. He also noted the lack of equipment and training needed for the environment in which they are now operating. He has often in the past expressed, including when the Council visited Mali and we had the chance to engage with him, a desire to do more and to be more aggressive in dealing and more proactive, more along the lines of what we have heard from Lieutenant General dos Santos Cruz. But he has waited more than a year to even get the troops promised to him, again without the equipment and trained troops tailored for the environment he now finds himself in.

Lieutenant General Singha, for nearly four decades, in what was a relatively quiet observer mission in the Golan Heights, monitoring a disengagement of forces between two countries, suddenly found himself caught in the middle of a brutal civil war, and his peacekeepers have come under direct attack by non-State armed groups. We were, like others, deeply relieved that the 45 abducted Fijian peacekeepers were released and that the surrounded Filipino peacekeepers were able to reach safety unharmed. But we know that the situation remains extremely volatile, and the threat to United Nations Disengagement Observer Force peacekeepers remains high. The abrupt change in the Chapter VI mission has required flexibility on the part of Lieutenant General Singha and the observers on the ground, as well as extensive work on behalf of the whole international community with troop contributors or observer contributors to maintain contributions and to make sure that the mission remains whole. That has been extremely challenging.

For Generals Dos Santos Cruz, Kazura and Singha and all the Force Commanders in the Council today, the United States is fully committed to their missions' success, to the protection of civilians that they serve and to the capacity and safety of the troops that they command. In conclusion, would like to ask three questions.

First, the circumstances they find themselves in are circumstances that even the most advanced, well-resourced militaries would find challenging. Yet they are pooling troops, observers and police from different countries with different military cultures, with different training, with equipment of different quality and different ways of approaching their mandates. That presents enormous challeges. Again, over time, we need close the gaps in those differences in interpretation and capabilities.

My first question is, what can be done by the Security Council, by troop-contributing countries or by the Secretariat and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to increase cohesion towards the one mission-one mandate concept, as well as towards greater shared capabilities and more even capabilities and will across missions?

With regard to my second question, in the Golan and in Mali the ground has shifted under commanders' feet — I think my Rwandan colleague put it well. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, after many years of a similar approach being taken, over the past couple of years we have seen the Council and troop-contributing countries adapt to circumstances where the Mission was not performing its mandate adequately, to try to make the Mission more effective in the light of the success that armed groups had had in terrorizing civilians. We need to look at missions afresh. Sometimes we get on auto-pilot here as the Security Council and as the international community. But the Force Commanders have presented to us, and we ourselves are witness to, the fact that some of the fundamental assumptions at the heart of their missions need to be revisited, challenged and refreshed. Terrorist groups have gained strength and have made targets of the men and women serving under the Force Commanders — and, in a way, under us. We therefore need to look anew at the fundamentals. Of course, commanders should bear in mind that their missions are more, not less, important in the light of the changed circumstances. We therefore do not have the option as the international community of walking away from these vital missions they are dealing with, in which there are critical threats to international peace and security. But we have to make sure that our means are tailored to the circumstances at hand. I would be grateful if the briefers could speak to what they think these new circumstances demand, not simply in terms of anti-improvised explosive device support of the kind we have a responsibility to provide commanders, but the fundamentals.

Thirdly and finally, I have spoken about the importance of protecting civilians. I cannot put it any better than General Dos Santos Cruz or Rwandan Ambassador Gasana have. Before concluding, however, I would like to go back to where I started, and where my British colleague ended as well, which is with regard to the lives and the safety of peacekeepers themselves. Not only are civilians often targeted, with United Nations peacekeepers nearby, but peacekeepers themselves are increasingly targeted for attack. Yet, whether in Darfur, South Sudan or Mali, the perpetrators are rarely, if ever, held accountable. What more should the Security Council or the Department of Peacekeeping Operations or the broader international community do to secure accountability? That is of course particularly challenging with regard to non-State actors and terrorist groups. Often, though, even Government forces involved in attacks against peacekeepers get away with their crimes. That is something that the Council and the entire international community have an interest in stopping.

I thank briefers for their candid presentations thus far and for their responses to the questions raised. I think this dialogue is essential to improving peacekeeping and enhancing the protection of the people who rely on all of us for capabilities that sometimes their Governments are not able to provide.

**Ms. Murmokaitė** (Lithuania): Lithuania welcomes this annual opportunity to hear direactly from United Nations Force Commanders about the most pressing challenges in today's peacekeeping. I thank the Force Commanders for their briefings. Let me also express our appreciation for their service, under increasingly demanding and challenging circumstances. On their sound judgement hinges the successful implementation of mandates, as well as the lives of peacekeepers and those they are tasked to protect. Let me touch upon the three topics selected for today's discussion.

Fifteen years after the Security Council pledged to systematically address the protection of civilians in armed conflict, civilians continue to account for the majority of casualties in armed conflicts. A gap persists between ambitious normative frameworks and tragic realities on the ground. The most vulnerable groups are often those least protected. In that context, we recognize and support all initiatives aimed at enhancing the protection of civilians by United Nations peacekeepers.

The increased presence of troops from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in the eastern part of that country has had a deterrent effect on armed groups that target civilians. Yet presence alone may be insufficient. Peacekeepers must be ready to demonstrate their willingness to act robustly, quickly and effectively to protect civilian lives. In that regard, we welcome the emphasis by Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz on a robust proactive approach.

MONUSCO's efforts to improve its early-warning and response mechanisms should be noted. The establishment of hotlines to alert about impending danger, as well as the Mission's support for the implementation of local protection plans through community protection committees, all contribute to reducing threats and insecurity for the civilian population and should be considered in other peacekeeping operations. Last but not least, we strongly support one mandate-one mission-one force approach, as saving human lives is the primary task of all units of a mission.

Turning to expectations from the military components, it is important to recognize that the current peacekeeping environment — and many have spoken about it — is marked by constantly changing circumstances and challenges. Peacekeepers face indirect fire, improvised explosive devices, ambushes, abductions and even direct attacks, including by radical extremists, as they carry out their missions in hostile environments. They also find themselves in situations where there is no peace to keep, while peace enforcement may not be in their mandate. In spite of the mantra-like repetition by the Council of its resolve to give operations clear, credible and achievable mandates, matched by appropriate resources, situations continue to occur where the ambition of the mandate and the capacity to carry out it are at odds with each other.

A lack of adequate training, proper equipment or enablers, as well as insufficient backing by air assets and modern technologies to counter both conventional and asymmetric threats, are recurrent problems. Such mismatches end up being a lose-lose situation for all. The United Nations loses its credibility, civilian populations suffer casualties and conflict gets more entrenched, and far too many peacekeepers lose their lives in the line of duty.

For example, delays in the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and a continued lack of air mobility, as well as the changing nature of the threats, have limited the Mission's ability to effectively implement the mandate. On the other hand, the current steady increase in the Mission's military and police capacities, as well as the enhancement of its situational awareness through the establishment of the All Sources Information Fusion Unit, are significant steps forward that have a noticeable positive impact on the protection of civilians.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that MINUSMA no longer operates in the peacekeeping context and that some troop-contributing countries bear a disproportionate share of the impact, as we were once again tragically reminded by the recent loss of peacekeepers' lives. A serious discussion about the mandate is in order, and the international community should continue contributing to the development of national capacities. In that context, I would like to note the work of the European Union Training Mission, whose personnel, including four Lithuanian trainers, are engaged in rebuilding the Malian armed forces. The civilian capacity-building mission complements those efforts by supporting internal security forces through training and strategic advice.

Finally, on the accomplishment of traditional mandates under the changing political-military setting, it is crucial to note that the safety and security of peacekeepers must be among the Council's top priorities when designing or adjusting peacekeeping mandates. It should engage in constant dialogue with the Secretariat and troop contributors to make sure that peacekeepers are not left to fend for themselves in a dramatically changed environment.

During the recent months in the Golan, troops of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), mandated to observe the 1974 Disengagement Agreement between Israel and Syrian forces, were besieged, attacked, forced out of their positions and detained by the designated terrorist groups and armed non-State actors. There can be no justification for such actions, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. A temporary adjustment in UNDOF's posture and operations, as well as its immediate relocation, was fully warranted. We commend the mission for continuously reviewing and updating its contingency plans. We also look forward to an update from the Secretary-General on the steps needed to maintain UNDOF's ability to implement its mandate.

Before concluding, let me put forward a few questions to the participating Force Commanders.

First, to what extent is proactive reconnaissance and intelligence helping to create better awareness, and thus pre-empting and preventing threats? Could they refer to good practices in current peacekeeping operations in that respect? What more needs to be done?

Secondly, how do robust mandates translate into operational plans? Would commanders prefer the mandates' tasks to be detailed and precise, or should they leave room for their decisions to act for the achievement of end-states?

Thirdly, what is the impact of modern technologies, such as unmanned aerial systems, in today's peacekeeping operations, in particular on intelligence-gathering? Would the commanders suggest deploying those systems to other missions, such as UNDOF, for example?

**Mr. Iliichev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed and the commanders of the military components of the United Nations missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and the Golan for their substantive briefings, which reflect some of today's most pressing themes, not only for the missions that they represent but also in the broader context of United Nations peacekeeping.

Recently, United Nations peacekeeping operations have increasing been deployed in complex conditions of internal political crisis compounded by armed confrontation, difficult socioeconomic contexts and cross-border threats. That creates additional non-traditional security risks for peacekeepers. The mandates of the operations themselves are increasingly providing for the use of force and being endowed with multiple components. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is a salient example of that, on the basis of which we still have to substantively analyse the experience of the use of the Intervention Brigade and the practice of using unmanned aerial vehicles.

Protecting civilians is one of the central, although far from sole, tasks of today's peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we have serious concerns over the recently observed desire to loosely interpret the standards of

international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict. It is unacceptable that there should be any action taken under the slogan of protecting civilians that in practice pursues selfish geopolitical aims, including the removal of legitimate authorities in sovereign States.

Actions to protect civilians should not go beyond the framework of Security Council mandates, which, in turn, must be clear, preclude dual interpretations and be fully complied with by those who are entrusted with implementing the relevant tasks. Another priority is to work out constructive daily interaction between peacekeepers and local authorities, who by definition bear the direct responsibilities for protecting their populations.

There is considerable concern over the increase in terrorist activity in the areas of deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations. A disturbing sign in that regard is evidenced by the spate of violent and openly terrorist acts aimed against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeepers in that country. The latest tragic incidents involving the death of peacekeepers from Chad, the Niger and Senegal clearly demonstrate the great perils involved in serving in northern Mali. In that regard, it is critical to try to qualitatively enhance the effectiveness of interaction between the Mission and the French forces in the country. We also anticipate that the Mission contingent, which has brought capacities under the existing mandate, enabling it to provide effective support to Bamako in addressing the most pressing problems, above all in the area of security, will promptly be brought to the mandated strength and receive the logistical support commensurate with the tensions of the situation.

A careful assessment of emerging threats to United Nations personnel is a requisite component when planning operations. In that regard, we believe that the stated plan to move the core United Nations force to the troubled northern part of the country cannot be carried out without unwarranted risks to the United Nations Blue Helmets.

The Middle East continues to be another, but unfortunately not the last, region of the world where peacekeepers are exposed to serious risks. Attacks on personnel of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, which is an important stabilizing factor in the Golan, again highlight the priority need to ensure their security. The requirement of preventing aggressive actions against peacekeepers must be addressed not so much to the authorities of Israel and Syria but, given today's realities, above all to the armed fighters whose actions exacerbate the situation in the disengagement area. Those who have leverage over them need to actively make use of their influence to prevent the situation from spinning out of control, provoking a complete drawdown of that critically important peacekeeping mission.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed, and the Force Commanders of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for their briefings. I would like to make two points today.

First, our regular exchanges on peacekeeping are important because peacekeeping, which is at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations, now represents a substantial and symbolic part of the work of the United Nations. Peacekeeping touches upon questions of war and peace and life and death, and therefore triggers our moral and political responsibility.

The number of Blue Helmets and the budgets for peacekeeping operations have been multiplied by 10 in 10 years. The budget today amounts to $8 billion, nearly four times the general budget. It is important to keep those facts in mind.

Many only know the United Nations through the Blue Helmets, who have become symbols of the Organization. France pays tribute to their courage and dedication that sometimes comes at the price of blood, as unfortunately recently occurred in Mali, where soldiers from Chad, the Niger and Senegal were killed.

Starting as an ad hoc concept to serve the purposes of the Charter, peacekeeping operations have gradually emerged as an invaluable tool, and our expectations of them have not stopped growing. They have a vital function, focused or refocused, as in South Sudan recently, on protecting civilians. Their mandates are more comprehensive and complex, extending support to political transitions and stabilization, as in Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. In parallel, deployment occurs in intra-State conflicts or non-stabilized environments

where political processes are disturbed by non-State actors, which increases the difficulty of their work, as the briefers have explained.

Therefore — this is my second point — we have a duty to ensure that peacekeeping operations have the resources they need to achieve success and that they use them with the utmost professionalism with a view to efficiency. That implies several requirements. First, we must meet the needs in terms of troops and equipment, especially through the multiplier effect. I am thinking in particular of air assets, but also medical support and engineering units, which are often lacking.

We need contingents that are immediately available, responsive, well equipped, well trained and capable of taking initiative. We encourage Member States that have such capabilities to close those gaps, as Mexico is preparing to do following its recent decision to re-engage in the uniformed components of peacekeeping operations, or Angola, which just made offers to serve to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

A second requirement is to strengthen the logistical and operational support in missions that need it. French forces are working in that direction in Mali and the Central African Republic. The European Union plays its role in Mali and in the Central African Republic, and by providing decisive financial support to the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia. But the functioning of those Missions emphasizes the progress still needed, including in terms of mission support. No doubt the Force Commanders will be able to give us additional, particularly valuable comments on that point.

The third requirement is to adapt the peacekeeping operations procedures to their mandates, so that they can better do what we ask them. That is even more crucial in the least stabilized contexts, where the interests of efficiency must be combined with those of force protection. The balance between the protection of Blue Helmets and their efficiency is also particularly important in the context of the protection of civilians, as General Dos Santos Cruz clearly explained.

We are convinced that inaction is not an option, as it does not respond to any concerns because it leaves complete freedom of action to those who want to derail the peace process and who attack civilians and peacekeeping soldiers. A dynamic attitude and proactive is the best way to meet the dual objective of protecting civilians and protecting military personnel. The Force Commanders of MONUSCO and MINUSMA will be able to give us some useful examples in that connection.

In addition to this change in attitude and methods of operation, and this is our fourth requirement, we need to allow peacekeeping operations to incorporate modern technology. This is a very promising track. By increasing the capacity for observation, information-processing and the protection of peacekeepers, technology makes it easier to understand the environment, to anticipate and act ahead of spikes of violence and thus protect itself and populations. Here I would give the example of the observation drones used by MONUSCO. I would be very grateful to the Commander of MONUSCO if he would share with us his experience in this area; possibly the other Force Commanders could share with us their views on the technological contributions from which their forces could benefit.

The fifth requirement is to foster inter-mission cooperation and thereby increase synergies. This is another promising area of action; a good example is the cooperation between the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Liberia in West Africa. This cooperation should not be limited to equipment issues, but should also include exchange of information, planning and the sharing of best practices. I would be grateful if the briefers could comment on this.

Lastly, the human aspect must never be neglected. Missions must be adapted to the local context and be capable of building close ties with the people they are meant to protect. The use of French should be fully taken into account, and I wish to recall that we need to have more French speakers in peacekeeping operations deployed in French-speaking areas at all levels, from rank-and-file soldiers to Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as in New York. This is a powerful factor in operational efficiency.

I should like to commend the unwavering commitment of Mr. Hervé Ladsous, at the head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and of his team in meeting all these challenges. With their impetus, peacekeeping has become even more professional and modernized, through, inter alia, the adoption of operational standards, the creation of the post of director of partnerships in charge of the mission of inspection of peacekeeping operations, and the provision of modern technology.

The peacekeeping review that the Secretary-General has decided to launch will be decisive in defining the profile of a peacekeeping mission that is more reactive and more dynamic in order to meet new challenges. France will contribute to this actively and will remain mobilized on this issue, in keeping with the 2009 New Horizon report, which made it possible to continue the process of reflection on policy and doctrine in this area. The report was a joint effort on the part of France and the United Kingdom.

I would like to once again reiterate the strong commitment of France to peacekeeping, to which my country contributes fully in the form of the Blue Helmets, who are serving, for instance, in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, in their national capacity or under the European flag in support of peacekeeping operations such as those in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and the Central African Republic. Today 7,800 French soldiers are involved in peacekeeping operations, including nearly 1,000 who are serving directly in the United Nations and 6,000 under a United Nations mandate. Since January 2013, 13 of our countrymen have paid the ultimate price, and I would like to pay tribute to their memory and to that of all their Blue Helmet comrades who have fallen on the field of glory in the name of the ideals of the United Nations.

**Mr. Liu Jieyi** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): May I begin by congratulating Argentina on having assumed the presidency of the Council for this month. I believe that under your leadership, Madam President, the Council will achieve positive results in its work.

I should also like to thank the United States for the work done in its presidency of the Security Council last month. Let me also thank Lieutenant General Maqsood of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the three Force Commanders of peacekeeping operations for their briefings, which have enabled the Council to have a more comprehensive and direct understanding of peacekeeping operations on the ground as well as of the efforts made by the peacekeepers in fulfilling their mandate.

China would like to pay tribute to all the commanders present as well as all of the United Nations peacekeepers who are implementing their mandates for the dedication and courage displayed in the context of difficult and complex environments.

In recent years, regional conflicts have become increasingly complex, and United Nations peacekeeping operations are facing major changes in their situations and mandates; they should therefore adapt and continue to innovate and improve. China supports the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for a comprehensive review and assessment of peacekeeping operations, and we expect positive progress in the work in this area on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations next year. With regard to the issue of how to promote the development of peacekeeping operations so as to ensure improved efficiency, an optimized mandate and the best results, I would like to make the following four observations.

First, we should focus on increasing the relevance and visibility of United Nations peacekeeping operations in its deployment of such operations. The Council should ensure that peacekeeping mandates are realistic and feasible and should also clearly define the priority tasks and focus, and avoid seeking full coverage of every minor detail and area at the cost of effective execution.

The results of mandate implementation should be assessed in a timely manner and in the light of the requirements as well as changes on the ground, and the relevant adjustments should be made to the mandates, the force level and the scale.

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur has carried out useful experiments in adjusting mandates and functions that may serve as a reference to draw upon in our future exploration of mandate improvements for other peacekeeping operations.

Secondly, peacekeeping operations should be carried out in strict observance of Security Council resolutions, with respect for the sovereignty of the countries in question and with attention paid to increasing communication with those countries.

The deployment of peacekeeping operations itself is not the goal. Only through political dialogue, comprehensive consultation so as to settle differences and the attainment of national reconciliation can we effectively curb violent conflicts, stabilize the situation and restore security. This is also an important foundation for and a guarantee of the effective implementation of the civilian protection mandate by peacekeeping operations. The work of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has shown that the support and cooperation of the country in question is

vital for the robust enforcement of the protection-of-civilians mandate in peacekeeping.

Thirdly, peacekeeping operations should improve their efficiency. The rapid projection and deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations has a bearing on whether the missions are able to play their role at the crucial moment. The Security Council, the Secretariat, the countries in question and the troop-contributing countries, inter alia, should improve their communication and coordination. The procedures for the configuration and deployment of missions should be improved, and logistical backstopping mechanisms should be optimized. There should be better scientific planning and management of the peacekeeping operations, and an effective and efficient use of resources so as to avoid any unnecessary overlap or waste. Through inter-mission cooperation and other means, existing resources can be better transferred and used.

Fourthly, peacekeeping operations should enhance their capacity-building. The parties concerned should work on such areas as technical equipment and personnel training and in closer cooperation with regional organizations. Consideration may be given to formulating standards for the organization, training and supervision of personnel, and, in the light of changes in the security environment in mandate areas, increased safety and security measures for peacekeepers. The operations should focus on the adoption of new technology and equipment while also studying in depth the legal issues involved and continuing to draw lessons from their experiences, both positive and negative, with their gradual dissemination and application carried out on the basis of observance of the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the sovereignty and will of the countries in question.

The United Nations should increase its support for regional organizations such as the African Union in terms of peacekeeping and help Africa with its capacity-building in that area, giving full play to the role of regional organizations in peacekeeping.

China is firmly supportive of and actively engaged in United Nations peacekeeping operations. To date, China has contributed more than 25,000 peacekeepers to various missions. At present, we have approximately 2,200 peacekeepers who are working to implement the mandates of nine United Nations missions, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Mali.

China has for the first time sent a security detail to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and will send an additional 700-person strong peacekeeping infantry battalion to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. That will be the first time that China sends an infantry battalion to a United Nations peacekeeping mission. China is also actively considering despatching helicopters to United Nations peacekeeping operations and stands ready to contribute further peacekeeping police and police experts to join the ranks of Blue Helmets.

We will continue to support, to the extent of our abilities, the peacekeeping capacity-building of African countries, including the establishment of an African Union rapid reaction force. China is ready to work with the international community in a concerted effort by actively contributing to the promotion of the development of United Nations peacekeeping operations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

**Mr. Mangaral** (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate the Mission of Argentina upon its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, as well as to thank it for having organized this public meeting on peacekeeping operations. I should also like to congratulate the Ambassador of the United States and her entire team for their outstanding presidency during the month of September.

I thank Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed, Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, and the Force Commanders of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for their briefings, and welcome them among us today.

Peacekeeping operations are of great importance owing to their contribution to safeguarding international peace and security. They have undergone an evolution from traditional missions, centred on ceasefire monitoring, to multidimensional operations, with ever-more complex tasks.

Over the past several years, intra-State armed conflicts have added such threats as terrorism and transnational organized crime, resulting in several significant shifts in the context of peacekeeping.

I shall make some remarks on the protection of civilians and the peacekeeping security environment today.

I pay tribute to the peacekeepers, who spare no effort to protect civilians despite scarce resources. There is a crucial need for peacekeeping operations to focus on rebuilding peace and security, so as to enable other actors, including humanitarian aid workers, to provide the aid needed and basic services.

We recently witnessed the protection offered by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to thousands of South Sudanese civilians through its mere presence on the ground. However, to better protect civilians it is necessary to go beyond simply being present and to make greater investments in prevention, mobility and active interventions. I take this opportunity to commend the effectiveness of MONUSCO's early-warning and rapid response mechanisms.

Moreover, in order to better tackle sexual violence and abuses committed against women and children, the number of female staff in peacekeeping operations, including at the management level, must be increased.

Peacekeeping operations should prioritize the disarmament of armed groups that continue to fight and to attack and harass civilians, as in the regrettable situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The security environment in which peacekeeping troops now operate has fundamentally changed, being characterized today by confrontations with multiple extremist and terrorist armed groups. In Mali, for example, the difficulty of distinguishing between those groups further complicates peacekeepers' mission and raises legitimate questions about the right way forward.

Faced with such a challenging environment and such asymmetric threats, MINUSMA must be equipped with all means needed to protect the peacekeepers. It is unacceptable that peacekeepers, and those of MINUSMA in particular, are becoming the prime targets of improvised explosive devices, mines, rocket-fire, mortars and car bombs. We condemn all such attacks against peacekeepers and MINUSMA, which have claimed 31 lives and injured 90. We urge the Security Council to go beyond issuing press statements and letters of condolences, and to do everything possible to promote the conduct of an investigation to identify the perpetrators of those attacks and bring them to justice.

We reiterate our support for the Algiers talks and express our hope that they will enable progress on the path towards peace and reconciliation in Mali.

With regard to UNDOF, notwithstanding the grave violations of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, we denounce the forcible eviction of United Nations staff members and their detention by armed groups. UNDOF's ability to uphold its mandate is being severely tested, and that is unacceptable. The safety and security of UNDOF staff and of the Military Observer Group must be guaranteed.

I would like to conclude by asking two questions. First, in the view of General Kazura, what would be the most appropriate strategy to prevent any further attacks against MINUSMA? Is he of the view that such a early warning system as that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo could be effective in the very different setting of Mali?

Secondly, I would turn to General Singha. UNDOF is one of the longest-standing United Nations field missions, and its effectiveness is being severely tested in today's ever-more complex environment. I wonder what the General expects from the United Nations in terms of adapting the mission to this new footing.

**Mr Quinlan** (Australia): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting. I also thank General Ahmed and the Force Commanders for their briefings. Like all other members of the Council, I express our extremely sincere appreciation to them and the men and women with whom they serve. Our role in this Chamber in New York is meaningless without what they do, and we need them to know that — especially as they do their job in increasingly dangerous and unpredictable situations. The 10 deaths in Mali in the past week show once again how dangerous their work is.

We have heard a mix of presentations today from the Force Commanders of one of newest such United Nations peacekeeping operations — the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), one of the oldest — the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), and the largest — the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Those missions are different in size, scope and history, but clearly they are all grappling with institutional and environmental challenges that reflect similar changes in the nature of peacekeeping,

from generating forces and building infrastructure in vast, remote and hostile environments — not just hostile on account of armed groups but, if we look at northern Mali, we see how incredibly physically hostile that environment is, in particular during the summer months — to implementing a robust security posture to protect peacekeepers and civilians, and confronting non-State actors employing deadly and more violent unconventional tactics.

We need to draw out lessons from each mission and apply them with good effect to improve the responsiveness and discipline of United Nations peacekeeping as a whole. The Secretary-General's forthcoming strategic review of peace operations will be important, as it will provide a structured way to do that. It is a necessary and critical initiative. It should be a fundamental review. As Ambassador Gasana said at the beginning, we need to change our way of doing business, since we are not working in the same market any more. The Force Commanders know this much better than we do.

We all know that the protection of civilians is a defining task for United Nations peacekeeping, and indeed is the measure by which the international community — our own stakeholders — measure those of us in the Council and the mission staff in the field. It is now written into the majority of the Council's mandates. It needs to be written into most of them, if not all. The deployment of the Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo represented a necessary seismic shift, embracing the need for clear, offensive action to defeat armed rebel groups that threaten civilians. As General Dos Santos Cruz said, missions must be proactive, not reactive. Under his leadership and that of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Martin Kobler, the results in the Democratic Republic of the Congo speak for themselves, but collectively we can improve — again, to quote General Dos Santos Cruz — across the system, both in mindset and operational practice.

One of the key lessons to emerge from the Democratic Republic of the Congo experience is the importance of new technologies, such as satellite imagery and unmanned aerial systems (UAVs), and improved training in order for our troops to know when and how to protect vulnerable populations. Any enabler that allows those in the field to achieve their mandates in a safer, more effective and efficient manner must be embraced and incorporated more broadly.

We all know that peacekeeping is under unprecedented pressure, with a more simultaneous number of conflicts with a bigger impact over a larger number of people that at any time since the Second World War. Member States must get more serious about doing much more to sustain peacekeeping. The United States and Rwandan initiative during the General Assembly general debate to catalyse more contributions was very much needed, and we hope that initiative will be maintained and increase pressure on all Member States. We need to respond to it. China's indication just a moment ago of an increase in contributions is extremely welcome.

On the very specific point of enablers, I would welcome any further views that General Dos Santos Cruz might have on how UAVs are assisting his Mission's strategy to shape, clear, hold and build and what other technologies and capabilities would be welcome in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also welcome his advice on how the framework brigades could be made more mobile and better integrated into the planning and support of the Intervention Brigade's offensive operations.

General Kazura has described the difficulties that missions face when operating in an evolving asymmetric threat environment and, indeed, where a peacekeeping mission is increasingly operating in an environment in which not only is there no peace to keep, as General Maqsood Ahmed reminded us at the beginning, but the mission has become a primary target of terrorist and extremist elements. That situation is one that requires a serious response from the Council.

I will be chairing a meeting of the Council's Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee this afternoon. At that meeting, we will review the most recent report from the Committee's Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team on the current threat. The threat is increasing far beyond just the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Terrorists are much younger, much more violent and far less inhibited. They do not listen to traditional communal and religious leaders anymore and are seizing territory and cleverly exploiting local conflicts, making those conflicts themselves worse while increasing their own presence, influence and success. This is the new reality, and it will be here for a long time. It has clear implications for peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General's review will need to look at this, but we cannot wait. As Force Commanders

know, operational and defensive adjustments need to be made now. The Council needs to ensure that we are providing them with whatever assistance we can to allow for that. The Council is very conscious of that, and its role in countering terrorism will continue to be a key feature of our discussions into the future. My own country will try to make this a key feature of our own presidency next month, building on the two resolutions we have just adopted, one in August and one in September (resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014)).

On a very specific comment, intelligence and the capacity to analyse and assess new and emerging threats should be an essential element of all peacekeeping, particularly when it can underpin the safety of peacekeepers and civilians. In Mali, the deployment of the All Sources Information Fusion Unit is breaking new ground in peacekeeping. I would welcome any comment from General Kazura about the value of the Unit.

Referring also to the scourge of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the threat of that is reaching new heights, with very tragic results. Ten peacekeepers were killed by IEDs in Mali in September, including those from Chad, who were killed earlier in the month of September. We need to do more to counter that threat. We know that, but is there any further comment from Force Commanders on how we might be able to utilize the expertise that has been developed in a number of countries, including my own, how to handle that with our national forces, and what more can we do to ensure that that experience is being transferred to United Nations peacekeeping?

General Singha has illustrated the challenge faced by peacekeepers in adapting to a rapidly shifting operational environment. We thank him for the explanation this morning of the circumstances he faced. The changed security circumstances in and around the area of separation in recent weeks have been dramatic, culminating in the redeployment, as he explained, of mission personnel to the Alpha side. However, as he also said, the monitoring and liaison functions remain vital — indispensable, in fact — to ensuring that respect for the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces is maintained. That mission is needed. We would welcome any further insights he might have about how the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force mandate can be fulfilled in the changed circumstances, given the current disposition of forces, and what he sees as the future needs.

To conclude, we welcome the opportunity this morning to engage directly with our commanders — and indeed they are our commanders. We need to remind ourselves of the importance of that relationship as a result of that simple and ineluctable fact. They have the day-to-day practical task of translating what we try to do in this Chamber in formulating good mandates into results. We need more interaction in order for them to keep us honest and for us to understand the challenges they face every day and what they anticipate the future needs will be so we can properly calibrate those mandates to the challenges on the ground, but also, above all, ensure that they have the adequate tools and resources. It is our responsibility to help to deliver those. All Member States and the Council, which needs to take an increasingly leadership role, given the threat to the sustainability of peacekeeping throughout the world, must ensure that that is done.

Australia looks forward to replicating this format during our own presidency next month, when we intend to hold the first-ever Council briefing with heads of police components, as they are part of our peacekeeping missions overseas as well.

**Mr. Bosah** (Nigeria): I also thank the Generals for their informative briefings. Peacekeeping is a matter of great interest in Nigeria. Our contingents have served in various peacekeeping missions around the globe since our attainment of independent status, and will continue to do so. We therefore welcome the exchange of ideas on this very important subject.

The changing nature of conflict has required that peacekeeping operations evolve to meet the complex demands they face. Those complexities are often linked to factors such as the need to deploy adequate resources to protect civilians in harsh conditions. Peacekeeping missions are operating with partners that may lack the capacity or will to do their part. There are often high expectations for the protection of civilians at all times, and missions operate in dynamic environments where security situations can change very quickly.

Since the adoption of resolution 1265 (1999), the protection of civilians has remained a top priority in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations. However, experience has shown that mandates for protecting civilians must be strategically, realistically and holistically approached by peacekeeping

stakeholders, ensuring that they are clearly defined from the beginning. Indeed, background knowledge of the root causes of the conflict and the parties to it is essential to a clear understanding of its nature, and will help determine the appropriate strategy for intervention. Proper coordination among the relevant peacekeeping stakeholders is also fundamental to facilitating the protection of civilians. The challenges involved in protecting civilians are more daunting in situations where large numbers have been displaced by fighting among armed groups. Recently we have seen civilians taking refuge in mission bases that were not designed for accommodating large numbers of refugees. We have also seen such bases coming under attack from armed groups, a new dimension that calls for careful assessment of the options available to peacekeeping missions.

Concerning expectations from military contingents on such altered security environments, we note that with the changing nature of conflicts in recent years, the traditional role of United Nations peacekeeping, which used to focus strictly on monitoring ceasefires, has given way to much more complex operations with multiple tasks. Today peacekeeping has become multidimensional, requiring a proportionate level of response in order to maximize its effectiveness. It is pertinent here to emphasize that peacekeeping contingents should respond to the prevailing security situation depending on an assessment of the seriousness of the threats they face; they should be expected to assume a robust posture in situations where the threat level is high and maintain a standard operating mode when they are not threatened.

In order to achieve speedy transitions for military operations, military contingents should adapt rapidly to their changing security challenges. The Council must be prepared to review mandates from time to time to help them to do so. The use of enablers is also crucial in helping to keep the peace, help missions meet the security challenges in their environment and improve situational awareness and intelligence gathering. They are also essential to enabling peacekeeping missions to stay one step ahead of spoilers and other elements whose activities pose serious threats to peace and security.

In terms of fulfilling traditional mandates in a changed political and military environment, we note that this is another of the current challenges that peacekeeping missions face. Traditional mandates have emphasized ceasefire observations and neutrality. In some situations, however, circumstances change rapidly, so that peacekeepers who are merely observing a ceasefire may find themselves in the line of fire. That can have an impact on a peacekeeping mission's effective discharge of its duties, and can also compel a mission to change its posture. Drastic changes in political and military environments therefore affect peacekeeping missions' ability to fulfil traditional mandates. The recent experience of the United Nations Interim Disengagement Force underscores that point.

Before concluding, I would like to pose some questions. The need for new planning and guidance for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali in the face of the changing nature of the threats in Mali was highlighted in Major General Kazura's briefing. We would like to hear his views on what kind of planning and guidance is required. Would that necessitate using enablers or equipment such as unmanned aerial vehicles? We note and commend the exercise of flexibility to enable Force Commanders to deploy troops as necessary in conflict environments, but what more can be done to enhance their capabilities for protecting civilians in those areas?

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the Force Commanders in the various United Nations missions and their dedicated staff, who carry out crucial work with commitment, often in challenging circumstances, in pursuit of the Council's mandates.

**Mrs. Kawar** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would first like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting. We also thank General Maqsood Ahmed, General Kazura, General Singha and General Dos Santos Cruz for their thorough briefings, as well as Mr. Hervé Ladsous for all his efforts in working to maintain peace.

Jordan is proud of its essential contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations, which show our clear commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Organization's noble goals. Based on our experience in the various peacekeeping operations we have taken part in, we reaffirm the importance, for our Force Commanders in peacekeeping operations, of transparency, integrity and neutrality in our peacekeeping forces as they carry out their work. It is important that all peacekeeping operations whose mandate includes the protection of civilians develop comprehensive protection strategies, which must be included in each mission's

implementation and emergency plans. They should be regularly and efficiently evaluated; it is important that clear and adequate assessments be done of missions' resources and human and logistical capacities and that they take into account the requirements for mandates to protect civilians and missions' capacities to fully implement their mandates.

The United Nations has established rapid-reaction structures to help missions achieve more with limited forces, but the dangers facing peacekeepers have increased, as have the Organization's costs, particularly in view of the fact that many missions are conducting extremely complex operations, particularly in fragile States and those involved in serious conflicts. Regarding the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is dealing with a number of obstacles to its fulfilment of its mandate, particularly its limited resources. Despite MONUSCO's progress in halting serious violations of human rights and consolidating State authority in the eastern part of the country, we are concerned about the continuing crimes being perpetrated on civilians there and about the continuing attacks on Mission personnel. We call on the Congolese Government and MONUSCO itself to improve cooperation in implementing their mechanisms for justice and accountability in order to achieve concrete results. We urge the Mission to continue its efforts to make more progress with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of every faction, particularly the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, and especially since the ongoing armed activities of the armed groups affects the Congolese Government's implementation of its disarmament plans, which has now gone on for six months.

Regarding the recent events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in June and August, and MONUSCO's investigation and its support for the deployment of the investigative team, made up of officials from the Democratic Republic of the Congo's legal and military sectors, such attacks affect the Mission's capacity to ensure the necessary protection of civilians and reveal the weak points in the implementation of its mandate. In that regard, we would like to ask the Force Commander the following questions. Does the Force Commander believe that such events show that the rules of engagement should be clarified in order to ensure the implementation of the Force's broad mandate, including underscoring the protection of civilians and strengthening the Mission's legitimacy in the eyes of the local civilian population.

Peacekeeping operations face challenges not only in terms of the lack of resources to meet the needs on the ground. The United Nations capacity to address challenges that jeopardize the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel must also be strengthened. That must be an absolute priority. The ongoing clashes, the tragic consequences and the current security situation as a result of the presence of armed groups in northern Mali all demonstate the need to undertake greater efforts to achieve lasting stability.

We would like to ask a question with regard to the most recent developments in Mali. What can we do to help the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to impose the rule of law in the northern part of the country, in particular given the delicate security situation and the ongoing attacks against Mission personnel? The credibility of peacekeeping operations depends upon the effective implementation of the mandate. The Security Council must continue to ensure that the mandates of peacekeeping operations are clear, credible, realistic and subject to review.

We reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's recommendation to reconfigure the Mission's political role so that it can undertake a good offices role. We call on the international community to increase its support to the Mission so that it can execute its mandates and strengthen its capacity to restore stability.

Finally, we would like to share our concerns about the deteriorating situation in the Golan, the area of operations of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, and its inability to implement its mandate, since the presence of United Nations troops is limited to certain bases. That reflects the deteriorating situation and growing instability. We underscore the need for the Mission to ensure the security of the UNDOF staff and to faciliate their return to their original positions in the Golan.

**Mr. Maes** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for having organized this briefing. It gives us an opportunity to interact with Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed, Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, and the Force Commanders of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Multidimensional

Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). I thank Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz, Major General Kazura and Lieutenant General Singha for their briefings. They have vividly described the challenges facing United Nations missions in contexts where the threat is constantly evolving and peacekeepers are required to be able to adapt a great deal.

The protection of civilians, a topic raised by General Dos Santos Cruz, is at the heart of the mandate of many United Nations operations. The implementation of such mandates requires the commitment of all components of the mission. On the one hand, missions must have civilian capacities specifically devoted to the protection of civilians, in particular women and children. However, on the other hand, it is equally critical that Force Commanders have professional and well-trained staff, with the necessary awareness, capacities and resources to effectively protect civilians.

Before and during their deployment, peacekeepers should have specific training that enables them to deal with complex situations and to take decisions on the ground. In that context, allow me to recall resolution 2143 (2014), on children and armed conflict, in which the Security Council recommends that the United Nations and troop- and police-contributing countries undertake "targeted and operational trainings for the preparation of United Nations mission personnel ... on their contribution in preventing violations against children" (resolution 2143 (2014), para. 20).

In terms of capacity, MONUSCO, with its Force Intervention Brigade and unmanned aerial systems, or monitoring drones, is a mission that is well equipped to protect civilians. Its decisive action against the Mouvement du 23 mars showed that. The proactive implementation of the Mission's mandate, which General Dos Santos Cruz mentioned, strengthened the protection of civilians in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In that specific case, it also helped to address the gaps in the use of force that were identified in the report issued last March by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/68/787).

In that context, aware that there is no universally applicable model for all crises, I would ask General Dos Santos Cruz and his colleagues who are present to what extent MONUSCO's experience in terms of a robust mandate and its available protection of civilian capacities could be useful for other United Nations missions. I ask that question also conscious of the fact that yesterday the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali proposed to the Security Council that the United Nations mission deployed in that country, MINUSMA, be strengthened with the addition of a rapid-reaction force (see S/PV.7274). It would also be interesting to hear General Kazura's view on that issue regarding MINUSMA.

The events of recent months in Mali and in the Golan have shown that the environment in which a peacekeeping operation is deployed can deteriorate very quickly. In Mali, increasingly violent and sophisticated attacks target MINUSMA and cause major losses. Those asymmetric attacks have killed 20 Blue Helmets since early September. As has already been said, 31 peacekeepers have been killed since the Mission's deployment on 1 July 2013. For its part, Luxembourg is ready to support the measures being explored by the Secretariat, together with MINUSMA, to enhance the safety of troops deployed in northern Mali in particular.

In the Golan, the repeated abductions of UNDOF members and the increased activities of the Syrian army and several armed groups, including the Nusra Front, jeopardize the implementation of the Force's mandate and expose the peacekeeping troops to considerable danger. The United Nations must continue consultations with troop-contributing countries and the two signatories to the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces of 1974 so as to establish a better framework for the UNDOF arrangement. The risks to United Nations staff must be minimized while allowing them to carry out their important work and maintain their rapid-response capability. In that context, I would like to underscore that it is critical that the Syrian authorities allow UNDOF to have all the necessary equipment to combat improvised explosive devices as soon as possible.

The timely definition of specific military strategies and concepts, the use of force, leadership, effective command and control, force generation, the necessary resources, the training of peacekeepers, mission support and the proactive approach highlighted by General Dos Santos Cruz are, in our view, the most important parameters to ensure the effective execution of missions in the changing environment.

In conclusion, I would like to express Luxembourg's deep appreciation to all the heads of the military components of United Nations missions for the outstanding work that they carry out with their

contingents in increasingly demanding conditions in order to implement the mandates entrusted to them by the Council in the interest of protecting civilians.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Argentina.

At the outset, I thank and welcome the Force Commanders. I would like to thank them for both their briefings and for the dedication with which they carry out their tasks in the various missions in always difficult environments. We strongly support the holding of these meetings with the Force Commanders because they allow us, along with the rest of the membership, to have first-hand and quality information on the activities and the challenges of the missions on the ground. We hope that this practice, which has been ongoing for five consecutive years, should be continued in the future. We also support the initiative of the Secretary-General, mentioned by other colleagues, to review and evaluate peacekeeping missions as a necessity — a strategic, political and ethical imperative for the Organization.

Allow me to say that Argentina is delighted and welcomes the presence in the Chamber of Major General Kristin Lund, the first woman Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. We welcome her presence because in such a serious activity as peacekeeping it would be selfish for us women if we left peace solely in the hands of men. I therefore welcome her presence here. We are pleased with the responsibility she has been given.

Argentina, like other members of the Security Council, understands that maintaining international peace and security is the ultimate goal of the Council. The responsibilities assigned to missions clearly entail various dimensions: the protection of human rights, assistance in rebuilding institutions and consolidating democracy and the rule of law. Those are tasks are undertaking in every United Nations missions, which are increasingly multidimensional and complex. They also increasingly require more coordination and coherence.

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) are among those that are currently essential to guarantee the protection of civilians. With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we would like to once again emphasize the merit and effort of MONUSCO in fulfilling its mandate, which has made it possible to overcome the threat posed by the Mouvement du 23 mars and to contribute to improving the security situation in the east of the country.

The establishment of an Intervention Brigade was a risky bet and, for the time being, we believe it remains a challenging one. It was a risky bet in order to impose peace. Its establishment was justified since it was created at the specific request of the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and because of the specific situation in the country, which has experienced several decades of unresolved conflicts, with a significant portion of its territory in the hands of armed groups. Moreover,the conflict has the dubious honour of costing the most lives since the end of the Second World War.

The mandate of the Brigade is as unique as it is specific. It should not be expanded or confused with the rest of the Mission, which consists first and foremost in protecting civilians, even when such a protection — how could it be otherwise — implies a proactive attitude of preventive patrolling in order to avoid having to react immediately after civilians become victims of an attack. However, the active protection of civilians should not be confused with the neutralization of the armed groups through aggressive activities. That is the understanding of my country. Such offensive actions should and could be carried out solely by the Intervention Brigade.

With regard to UNDOF, the continuation and the uninterrupted militarization of the Syrian conflict have meant that the crisis has progressively spilled over into the area of operation of the Force, with an impact on the capacity of the mission to fulfil its mandate and putting at risk both its staff and the maintenance of the ceasefire between Israel and Syria. The events that took place a few weeks ago reflect the fact that the mission staff is the target of direct and deliberate attacks by terrorist groups that are opposed to any international presence. In fact, they benefit from greater instability and they seek to exacerbate tensions in the region.

Under those circumstances the Force has reduced its presence and control over a significant portion of its area of operations. While there is no doubt that both the mission and its mandate continue to be extremely relevant and necessary, recent events clearly require us to think about the most effective and secure way for the Force to fulfil its mandate in an operational

environment that is completely different from the one for which it was designed, and it will remain so for the foreseeable future. In that regard, while we are awaiting information to be presented by the Secretariat on the necessary measures to maintain the capacity of UNDOF to fulfil its mandate, we would like to emphasize the rapid implementation of risk-mitigation measures by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in order to allow the mission to fulfil its mandate in a secure way.

At the same time, in such a volatile context, it is essential for the parties to exercise maximum restraint in their activities, to fully use the communication channels that UNDOF has made available and avoid succumbing to provocations. We acknowledge the intense work and the critical role that the Force Commander has been playing throughout this period in order to ease tensions each time that serious incidents have taken place that had the potential to worsen the situation.

On that point I would like to put a question to General Singha. How does he evaluate the consultation process and the interaction between the Force, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Security Council throughout this period when the circumstances in which the Force operates have been changing drastically? What would General Singha change? What would he improve?

Turning to Mali, Argentina condemns in the strongest terms the repeated attacks targeted against MINUSMA, and we would like to express our solidarity with the family members of the Blue Helmets who fell in the line of duty: from the Niger, Senegal, Chad, France and other countries. That is why we in particular value the work of the personnel of this Mission, who put their lives at risk on a daily basis defending peace in the face of the constant threat from fundamentalist groups.

We understand that MINUSMA should not replace the national armed forces of Mali, or become the main element in the fight against extremist groups. Such tasks would basically contravene the role of a peacekeeping operation. For that reason, if the current trend of increasing attacks against the United Nations continues, it will be necessary to undertake an in-depth analysis with regard to the presence of MINUSMA in Mali.

Finally, I cannot conclude without referring to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the only United Nations peacekeeping operation in my own region, Latin America and the Caribbean. Bearing in mind that in the next few days the Council will need to renew its mandate, I would like to make two brief comments. First, we are worried about the rapid onset of the deadline to decide on the future of the Mission. We understand that the political and security situation in Haiti has not improved so significantly as to justify an accelerated and sudden reduction in the troop level, as is proposed in the report of the Secretary General (S/2014/617).

We are also concerned about the change in the Mission's mandate and concept. We believe that it is important to proceed with caution and that decisions should be taken based on conditions on the ground, so as to ensure the successful conclusion of the only peacekeeping operation deployed in the North American hemisphere. We agree that MINUSTAH should remain in Haiti no longer than necessary, but as long as it is requested by the democratic Government of Haiti. At the same time, we believe that it is important to learn from the lessons of the past and to bear in mind the experiences of hasty withdrawals that have forced us to return.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed to respond to the comments and questions raised.

**Lieutenant General Ahmed**: I wish to thank the Security Council and all its members for their statements and very pertinent questions. I will tackle some of the broader questions that have been raised concerning the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the missions in general, and leave some of the areas to be answered by the respective Force Commanders on subjects that they are tackling in their particular missions.

Let me begin by saying that this should, in my understanding, be a great day for the Force Commanders present in the Chamber. Most of them are new. That is why we are holding this meeting this month — it is usually held in June or July. Today's discussion will give them enormous confidence because of the Security Council's understanding of the complexity of the challenges with which they are confronted and the Council's commitment to supporting the missions on the ground. I think that the Force Commanders will leave the Council reassured, and that they will be prepared to complete their task with more zeal and commitment, as

expected by the Security Council. It is a great day for me and for my Force Commanders.

Let me touch broadly on two of the broader issues under discussion. The two issues deal, from a military perspective, with the fundamental tasks of the peacekeepers in the various missions. In my understanding that there are two tasks at hand when we talk about military peacekeepers. One involves the physical protection of the peacekeepers themselves and of United Nations personnel and assets. The second task, which is mandated by the Council, is the protection of civilians. That also falls into the domain of physical protection, because protection has a broader connotation.

The problems relating to those two fundamental tasks are linked to the understanding of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs). I want to re-emphasize that point, because my interactions over the past year with a number of military commanders and the leadership of the various TCCs, police-contributing countries and troop/police-contributing countries has revealed a real gap in understanding. Some TCCs and their capitals, including political decision-makers, think that peacekeeping involves the same, decades-old conventional missions, where peacekeepers are respected by all actors on the ground and no harm is done to them. They are there just to absorb the tension and to report to the Security Council in order for diplomatic pressure to be applied.

What has been said today has shown that we understand that such an environment no longer exists, even in traditional peacekeeping missions. But that understanding has not been communicated to the home capitals. If I may say, and most military commanders in the respective capitals share this view with me, the fact is that we find it very difficult to convince our Cabinets and our political leadership that peacekeepers are being deployed under very challenging environments. Peacekeepers find it very hard to obtain the kind of support from the political leadership that we all seek. There is therefore one gap.

The second gap is between expectations and responsibilities. When peacekeepers are deployed, the host nation, the public and the population have very high expectations. We can cite a number of missions as cases in point. There are also the responsibilities that lie mainly with the Security Council, the Secretariat, the Force Commanders and the TCCs. The Council and the Secretariat, and to some extent the Force Commanders, understand the responsibilities, but they have to get the job done by the TCCs. Therein lies the problem, the source of the pressure coming from the capitals pulling on the peacekeepers.

I will cite another example. Take any country contingent. In its own country environment, the same contingent will perform in one way. If that same contingent is put in a regional environment, it will perform differently. When the same contingent is re-hatted into Blue Helmets, it will perform differently again. That means that there is a gap in understanding. We need to bridge that gap. I am grateful to the United States and the Secretary-General that a great initiative has been taken to move in that direction. The high-level peacekeeping summit held recently on 26 September (see S/PV.7272) was a first step in that direction, where the critical leadership has started to develop an understanding as to the kind of environment facing peacekeepers. That will greatly help us to bring that mindset back to its original position.

The second issue will probably be taken up when we have regional conferences and have more time to focus on that. As the Secretary-General has highlighted, the final segment will probably be about interaction with the chiefs of the defence forces staffs, where we go into the essentials of the details and the capability gaps. That concern will probably be cemented at that time.

If that gap in the understanding is bridged, most of the job will be done, because the peacekeepers receive instructions from their capitals as to how to behave, what to do and as to whether they should be more robust or not. If we get their support, then the critical leadership will line up enough resources to train them and enough material to motivate them and establish the direction of how they should perform on the ground. I think that we need to focus more on that.

Let me move on to the next issue, which is training. That is an absolute must. With the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and with its Office of Military Affairs in the lead, we are working on 11 manuals that lay down United Nations standards. I am certain that, by the end of this year or early next year, we will have completed all 11 manuals. They will be available to the TCCs to prepare their contingents in accordance with the expectations set out in United Nations standards. I want to thank all TCCs for their support in the preparation of the manuals, both their financial and their physical contributions. They have done a wonderful job. We are now at the final stage of finalizing the manuals.

The third area that I want to touch upon is the capability gap. As most of our missions are in African countries, with some African country contingents also there, the Council is aware that we also have major contributions from various Asian countries as well as from African countries. Some of those TCCs lack capabilities. They can have battalions on the ground, but the contingents are not equal in their equipment and the armoured personnel carriers needed to enable what we want on the ground. There we have been requesting, and I will again request, that where other countries have not been contributing actively, they should help the TCCs to build those capability gaps. With regard to Mali, the representative of Rwanda asked a similar question: Why we are not able to deploy peacekeepers on the ground and why are they not up to the required mark? There is that same capability gap. The troops are there on the ground, but they do not have the necessary equipment, and we are looking for that equipment to be provided as soon as possible. Hopefully, by the end of this year, we will have that capability gap bridged to a great extent. That effort will continue.

I would also like to talk about technology. That is a very vital initiative, not only in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo but also in other contingents. That is helping us considerably. It helps in two ways. I always say that technology gives us lead time, whether it provides a kind of surveillance capability, signal intelligence, or whatever. It gives us lead time to pre-empt or stop some atrocities from happening, or if we are unable to do that, to react quickly, compared with the old means whereby the information used to travel from one end to the other end, taking days. Now we are receiving real-time intelligence. That is helping a lot and should be repeated. That is my recommendation — also in the other missions, because it is a great enabler under the environment and we should benefit from it.

Having said that, the All Sources Information Fusion Unit and the other technologies we are putting in place are still not being utilized at full capacity, let me admit that. Introducing a technology is one thing, but absorbing it within the system is another. We have to train our Headquarters and staff officers to make full use of the technologies and derive greater benefit from them. That is where NATO and the European countries are helping in a big way. I want to take this opportunity to thank them. They are helping us to build that capacity. I am very sure that within a very short period we will be utilizing those capacities to their full potential. There are also some other challenges, but I will leave it to the Force Commanders to respond.

Let me touch upon my final point. The point was raised about the principles of peacekeeping. I think that, yes, we can look at those. But, to my understanding, the principles of peacekeeping hold good even in a challenging environment.

We talk about the use of force and about the robustness of peacekeeping operations. The use of force, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, is authorized by the Security Council under only two conditions. The first is the protection of United Nations assets and self-protection, and the second is the protection of civilians. That is where the use of force is appropriate. When we say "protection of the mandate", the protection of civilians falls under the mandate: we are thereby protecting the mandate. For self-protection and the protection of the mandate, the use of force is allowed. That principle was valid a decade ago; it is still valid now. We can still look at that if it needs reviewing.

Finally, I think the strategic review initiative of the Secretary-General provides a great opportunity to look into systems and procedures in the United Nations. The systems relate to rapid deployment and quick response, flexibility in operations, and the rules of engagement. All of those issues will enter the discussion, and hopefully we will find some answers.

With your permission, Madam President, the Force Commanders will answer the respective questions.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Lieutenant General Ahmed for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz to respond to comments and questions raised.

**Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz**: It is very difficult to offer suggestions to the highest level of decision-makers in the world. But even I have the opportunity to disagree or to freely provide some opinions on peacekeeping operations.

I think that the mandates, the rules of engagement and international legislation have never forbidden the use of force for self-defence or the defence of a third party. It is a universal law.

We need to refine certain mandates. But in my opinion, more than that is necessary. We need, in parallel, one interpretation from a practical point of

view. Normally the mandates and principles have different interpretations — one is more classical, one is more academic and one is more philosophical. Maybe it is time for a more practical interpretation, when guidance does not provide freedom to the troops executing, in a practical way, the mandate to protect civilians, and when there is such a broad interpretation of the principle on the ground. On the ground we deal in real life, and we need to be focused on that.

With regard to guidance, we need to state very clearly what effect we want on the ground. I think that according to the environment in which we live right now, guidance must be very clear. What attitude, what mindset, does the Council expect on the ground? That is very important.

We need more technology and more means. However, those means must be supported by the will and the commitment to take action, to report what we did yesterday, and not only what happened yesterday, because if technology is not used and the will is lacking, we will report what happened yesterday.

With regard to troops, obviously a strong posture demands more risk for them. But the risks are not difficult to manage. There are combat procedures. The military combat procedures need improvement. We need to use more of the tactics we have for night combat and counter-ambush techniques and tactics. We have means to compensate for risks that may be assumed on the ground.

It is unfortunate that we live in an environment where, for hundreds of years, neither French nor English was understood, but only force. We must therefore be strong. We need a strong image on the ground. It is safer for us.

On the Intervention Brigade, I think it is a useful experience, exactly because of the behaviour based on the assumption that if one is stronger, one is better. It is very difficult and very sad, but that is the reality in which we live.

I think that all troops should have the same obligations. From a practical perspective, it is not possible to say that "I am doing something to neutralize, or to protect civilians, or sometimes to protect myself". We need all troops to have the same conduct. In one intervention brigade of 20,000 troops, perhaps 17,000 will follow one interpretation while 3,000 follow another. If 20,000 take one step forward, it is a major event; it is not only 3,000 acting. I think all troops should have the same commitment and same obligations. Obviously, that is a much more political posture. Why, then, is it not possible? Obviously, it is political; we will build one rapid-reaction force or a type of intervention force. That is my opinion.

Then there is the mandate, which is not an obstacle to the actions we need to take. We have the means. Sometimes there may be improvements, but we have the means. Then, really, things depend on our attitudes on the ground.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to Major General Kazura to respond to comments and questions raised.

**Major General Kazura**: I thank the members of the Security Council very much for their comments, and Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed and Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz for theirs. With respect to the various questions asked, I will try to base my answers on the comments of Lieutenant General Ahmed.

In fact, the strategy needs to respond to many questions on that point. Again, I am going to go back to the subject of where we are today in Mali and talk more about the problems we have there, so that we can see what can be done about them.

I was very happy to understand that we all speak the same language in terms of the situation on the ground. We are no longer involved in peacekeeping. We now have another programme: responding to terrorism. Now that we know that we have a different situation compared to what we had yesterday, I think that we need to adapt and find new solutions to the problems before us. I am saying that because, as has already been said, we already have 30 troops dead on the ground and many more wounded.

As I was saying, I do not want to believe that such assaults are going to happen again, but it can happen even as we speak. Once again, I think it is time to look at what exactly we can do now and what we can do tomorrow and what we can do in the future. It is good to prepare for what we will do in the future, but we need to understand that we need to something right away to prepare for the action that we may encounter tomorrow.

That is why I am grateful for the cooperation between the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and Operation

Barkhane and others, which have enabled us to be where we are, even if we still have a problem. I think we need to intensify operations now, because we need to pin down the terrorists today so that we can have time to organize our own troops for subsequent action. If we do not do something today, we will be in trouble.

As the Council members know — I think they know it better than I do — we have such problems not only in Mali but also in many other countries in the neighbourhood. We may think — and this is on the political side, which the Council is more conversant with than I am — that the talks in Algiers need to come up with something that is concrete, so that there can be some stability on the ground. Various movements and actors on the ground have involved themselves with the problem, saying that, if the talks in Algiers do not produce a good solution, then we need to prepare ourselves for tomorrow. By "preparing" themselves they are actually creating more clashes. That kind of ungoverned situation gives the terrorists the leeway to continue to organize and kill our people.

As I said before, I think we need to continue to push the movements to be accountable in the areas they control. They claim that they cannot understand how our troops are being killed. Indeed, the movements say that they control an area, but when our people are killed they say that they do not know what happened. I do not think that is acceptable.

I have been asked by many Council members about the intervention brigade. I believe that the Brigade is being thought about in the context of a strategic review. As General Dos Santos Cruz said, if we are strong on the ground, we send a good message about ourselves and about the United Nations in general. If something happens today and we do not react, then we are in fact encouraging them to do something similar or even more lethal tomorrow. That is something that people should think about with reference to our case in Mali. I was trying to answer that question, even as the leadership of the United Nations is trying to think about it.

General Ahmed talked about training. Obviously, we need to continue to think about that. The troops we have on the ground were sent to deal with peacekeeping missions. It is consistent with what General Dos Santos Cruz was talking about — attitude and mindset. Having the attitude and mindset of a peacekeeping operation and then turning it into anti-terrorist activities is something that we should be thinking seriously about. The only way to go about that and to find a solution is to try to train our people to know exactly where they are, and, of course, after training to supply them with the equipment that is suitable for responding to the problems we have today.

Those were the various questions that I was asked to respond to. Once again, I would insist on the fact that in the environment that we have in Mali today, the people we have who have been wounded and killed were in fact killed because they were the ones who were on the ground and they are the ones who are moving. They were not killed while they were at home sleeping; they were killed while they were out trying to do their jobs. I would also insist on the fact that we need to see how we can protect them and how we can train them to be able to deal with the real situation on the ground.

In that regard, I salute what Operation Barkhane has done in Aguelhok today, because they have sent a liaison detachment that is now trying to cooperate with the Chadians and help train them. If that can be done in other camps by other countries, that would also help. I am trying to emphasize the fact that we need to train our people to be able to do their jobs while we wait for various other measures to be taken. At the same time, we are trying to get the proper equipment into their hands. As General Ahmed said, we are happy to be getting more equipment to deal with the situation. I just want to remind the Council that delays in getting us that equipment are not going to help, because the terrorists are not going to wait until we get equipment before they act. We need to be able to react now, even though we are waiting for equipment.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Major General Kazura for the additional information he has provided.

I now give the floor to Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz.

**Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz**: I apologize for failing to have touched upon the points raised by the representative of Rwanda. I have profound personal and professional respect and consideration for him, and am sorry I overlooked his question.

With regard to the question of Kota Koli, there are three camps for ex-combatants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one of which is Kota Koli. Human Rights Watch released a report on the camp, because more than 100 people died there during the time it was operating. The camp is not a military camp under the control of the United Nations Organization

Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Rather, it is administered by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as part of its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The report was very sad, because it may lead to a decrease in the number of surrenders of ex-combatants, which we want, on the contrary, to encourage.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General visited MONUSCO before the problem arose. Now MONUSCO is there with a task force to support and help the Government, because, although the camp is not being administered by MONUSCO, we are committed to giving the maximum support in order not to have this kind of problem in future, because it is a problem that could endanger the entire process when we prompt the ex-combatants to surrender. That is the point we are at.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General is personally committed, along with the United Nations country team and the Mission, to supporting the Congolese Government.

**The President**: I thank Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz for his clarifications.

I now give the floor to Lieutenant Singha to address the comments made and questions raised.

**Lieutenant General Singha**: I wish to express my gratitude to you, Madam President, and to the members of the Security Council for having confidence in peacekeeping in general and in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in particular. A lot of issues were raised; we will take the advice given and work on it so as to ensure the safety and security of the peacekeepers.

I will start with the question posed by the representative of Argentina regarding the cooperation between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, or the Secretariat, and the mission. It has been exemplary. It has been real-time; we have been speaking to each other when the actions have been taking place on the ground, so one could not ask for more. As far as the approach is concerned, it needs to be multipronged so as to see the way ahead. I would like to tell the Council right now that one high-level team from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has already visited the mission and will be presenting other options, most likely on 20 October.

In general, we need to continuously analyse the situation on the ground, stay on top of the situation and keep evolving along with the dynamically changing environment. A lot of cross-cutting issues have come up, and I will divide them basically into the achievement of the mandate, in a modified manner; the security of the peacekeepers; and capacity-building by harnessing technology.

The question was asked, what can the Security Council do? The Security Council has done a lot, and we are grateful. We would request the Security Council and the Member States that are supporting either side in the Syrian strife to use their leverage to tell the parties not to target the United Nations, and to reduce the levels of violence in the area of separation, in fact, make the area of separation free from any presence of armed personnel.

For the achievement of the mandate, as I mentioned, we continue to achieve it in a very modified manner. Our main thrust is now on the ceasefire line, the Alpha line. We would like to make new positions along the Alpha line, so that our density along the Alpha line from the A side is much greater than what we had earlier. So as long as the ceasefire line is sealed, everything is sealed, all violations from either side are observed and reported, I think that we are achieving our mandate in a modified manner.

The use of technology and new tools will also enhance the fulfilment of the mandate. The rightsizing of the force is under way and will be presented to the Council by the team that had come to us. We are studying all possible options, and they will be shared with the Council.

Conerning the synergy between the inter-mission cooperation, I think that we have excellent synergy between UNDOF, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. As far as interaction with non-State actors, our force encounters them while doing our tasks, and our main aim is to just tell them about our mandate and also stress our impartiality and our transparency concerning the entire internal strife in Syria.

Capacity-building will be enhanced. Among other things, we will now have more stress on liaison, for which the capacity, as I had mentioned, has already doubled, and we will be interacting with the parties, as suggested by some members, more proactively. We

will continue to enhance our information-collection capability, also using technology.

As far as the security of peacekeepers is concerned, transferring our major effort onto the Alpha side gives inherent security to the peacekeepers. But we will continue to upgrade our mitigation measures in the weeks to come and also have a smaller footprint, but as much as operationally required in the area of separation. We need to continue to move in the armoured vehicles at least up to 2 to 3 kilometres from the Alpha line, even if we are operating on the Alpha side. The use of enablers and technology we have already discussed.

We will continue to build rapid-reaction capabilities as we go on. In terms of capacity-building, while harnessing technology, we are looking at battlefield surveillance radars and thermal imaging equipment; ground sensors; unarmed aerial vehicles, if the parties allow us to employ them; satellite imagery; and the introduction of technology, keeping in mind the sensitivities of both the parties, as I mentioned, and any other technology that is already being used in peacekeeping.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Lieutenant General Singha for his clarifications.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*