



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8492nd meeting

Wednesday, 27 March 2019, 9.30 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Delattre (France)

Members:

Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Trullols Yabra
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Duclos
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
South Africa	Ms. Sabelo
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to the Sahel (21 to 25 March 2019)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to the Sahel (21 to 25 March 2019)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by the representatives of the three co-leads of the Security Council mission to the Sahel from 21 to 25 March, that is, Côte d'Ivoire, France and Germany.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

The Security Council undertook a mission to Mali and Burkina Faso from 21 to 25 March. It was co-led by the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, France and Germany. The trip focused on support for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, standing up the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Joint Force and following up on the situation in Burkina Faso. The terrible massacre at Ogossagou, which took place during our trip, deeply affected us all. Along with all of our interlocutors, we condemned that unspeakable attack in the strongest possible terms and expressed our full solidarity with all the people of Mali in connection with that very painful event.

We were accompanied by the Chair of the European Union Political and Security Committee, who had been invited to observe the visit as part of the cooperation between the Security Council and the relevant regional organizations involved in supporting the countries of the Sahel. The Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, who had been similarly invited was unfortunately unable to participate because of conflicting commitments. In line with the arrangements on the ground, I shall focus in particular on the visit to Mali before giving the floor to my colleagues from Germany and Côte d'Ivoire, who will address, respectively, the Burkina Faso and G-5 Sahel segments.

The goal of our visit to Mali was to take stock of the state of the implementation of the priority measures

identified in the most recent mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) against the backdrop of the Security Council's ministerial-level meeting to be held on 29 March, which will be an opportunity to take important decisions on future international support for the peace process in Mali as well as the future of MINUSMA itself.

The Council met with President Keita, the Prime Minister and other Government officials, representatives of the opposition and members of civil society, notably women's groups. We also took part in a meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, which brought together the Malian parties and members of the international mediation effort. A meeting was also held with the various security presences in Mali and the Sahel referred to in resolution 2423 (2018). Lastly, a ceremony in tribute to the almost 200 MINUSMA peacekeepers who died carrying out their duty was held at the MINUSMA memorial in Bamako.

In the course of those meetings we took note of the significant progress made since the latest MINUSMA mandate renewal last June, namely, the holding of the presidential elections with the support of groups in the north of the country, the continuation of the decentralization process, the launching of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the issuance of the decree on integration criteria with regard to the future reconstituted army. We noted that that initial progress was the outcome of the renewed commitment on the part of the Malian parties following the signing of the Pact for Peace, the daily efforts made by the Prime Minister and Minister Bouaré, among others, and the establishment of a robust international framework for supporting the peace process centred around such tools as the benchmarks set out in 2423 (2018), as well as an independent observer and the sanctions regime. All interlocutors stressed the central role played by MINUSMA in their support for these efforts.

We also emphasized our own firm expectations in recalling, for example, that the Security Council sees the continuation of the international community's exceptional commitment to Mali only within the framework of a true implementation of the peace agreement. We therefore regretted that several priority measures set out in resolution 2423 (2018) were not implemented by the March deadline, in particular with respect to the effective integration of 1,000 combatants

into the Malian armed forces, the operationalization of interim authorities and building a special development area in the north.

We insisted on the need to accelerate and prioritize the implementation of the agreement. We stressed the priority goals of the constitutional review process, defining a comprehensive plan and a clear timeline for the redeployment of the Malian armed forces to the north of the country, and creating a special development area for the North End. In that spirit, we encouraged the Malian actors to present as soon as possible a new road map that is realistic, binding and focused on a limited number of priorities.

Of course, the situation in the centre of the country following the attacks in the Bankass district was also at the heart of our discussions with all actors we met, including civil society representatives. We all agreed that there was an absolute need to do everything possible to break the terrible cycle of violence that has prevailed in the centre for several months, with tragic consequences for the local populations. We encouraged MINUSMA to maintain its protection-of-civilians mission there and its support for Government efforts, which should probably be strengthened. We also urged that everything possible be done to ensure that the perpetrators of those heinous crimes do not go unpunished.

Lastly, before yielding the floor I should like to say a word about the G-5 Sahel. I simply wish to say that the goal of our mission in that regard was to take stock of the operationalization of the Joint Force and discuss ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the tools the Council has put together to support it. The G-5 Sahel leaders with whom we met underscored in particular the idea of adapting the modalities of the technical agreement without calling into question the heart of its functions, in order to harmonize it with the needs of the Joint Force. Tomorrow's ministerial-level meeting on the Joint Force that is to be led by our Minister for Foreign Affairs will be an opportunity to pursue our thinking on this, in the prevailing cooperative spirit, in the run-up to the preparations for the next report of the Secretary-General and the upcoming Security Council deadlines on this issue.

I should like, on behalf of us all, to offer our heartfelt thanks to all the members of the Secretariat who worked, in New York and on the ground, to organize and carry out the mission. I refer in particular to the members of

the Security Council Affairs Division, the interpreters, the security officers, the teams from the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, MINUSMA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the country team in Burkina Faso and all the teams that did such excellent work. Their work and commitment were exemplary and played a fundamental role in ensuring the mission's success. I thank them from the bottom of my heart on behalf of us all.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to Ambassador Heusgen.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, I should like to echo what you said towards the end of your briefing in thanking the entire team, and especially the members of the Security Council Affairs Division, who did outstanding work. With your permission, I also wish in particular to thank the interpreters. What they did was incredible. Two people were on their feet for three days, from morning till night, trying to interpret. I must admit that my own French is not always perfect, so their performance was especially remarkable. I also thank the members of the security team.

I also thank France and Côte d'Ivoire. This was a very enjoyable experience for me. It was also a first to have three countries co-lead such a mission. The cooperation among members who undertook the trip was most gratifying. At some moments it brought back memories of journeys I took with my friends in high school. On the other hands, it was also very tiring. There were two colleagues, whom I shall not name, who remained behind in Paris for a few days before returning to New York.

As to Burkina Faso, I believe that our visit there was most timely. The country has gone through a very difficult time. The members of the Security Council conveyed a message of support, friendship and solidarity, which I believe was understood by all of our interlocutors. We were very well received in all of our exchanges. The programme extended a full day, from our arrival in the morning until our departure in the evening. We had a very busy agenda — almost crazy — but a very interesting one. We met with the entire United Nations team there, as well as with representatives of civil society, including mayors. I must say that, like in Mali, we were all very impressed

by the competence, energy and commitment of civil society representatives. We held a lengthy meeting with key Cabinet ministers and representatives of the Group of Five for the Sahel, on which our colleague from Côte d'Ivoire will elaborate later. We were received by President Kaboré, who held a long and very collegial meeting with us.

I wish to make three important points.

First, while Burkina Faso has no equivalent to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, there is a strong United Nations team. Mr. Chambas, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, is very involved in developing a strengthened United Nations strategy on the ground. We met with Resident Coordinator Metsi Makhetkha, who made a very favourable impression on us. She is deeply committed. We also felt that she has brought the entire United Nations team together to work as one, which is critically important. Prior to that, the members of the Security Council held a meeting with the Peacebuilding Commission. We saw on the ground the important role being played by the Peacebuilding Fund, as noted by our interlocutors. In other words, there is a good United Nations team on the ground.

Secondly, we must address the challenges. As I said at the outset, the country has gone through a very difficult time. The security situation is fragile, not only along the borders with Mali and the Niger, but in other regions as well, which is truly worrying. There is intercommunal tension, like in Mali. The socioeconomic situation is also very fragile. In Burkina Faso, too, schools and health centres are closed. There are 140,000 displaced persons. Many have also mentioned climate change, which has tragic consequences on the security situation on the ground.

Thirdly, with regard to the domestic situation, we encouraged the Government to pursue the path of democratic reforms within the country. Those reforms began three years ago, and we have encouraged the Government to continue reforming the Constitution, organize elections and reform the education system. We have also urged them to implement laws that have been adopted on combatting corruption, stressing the necessity of zero tolerance for corruption. We also stressed the importance of reopening schools and health centres, as well as of building new housing, given the demographics of the country. Finally, we emphasized

the need to work to ease the tensions among the various ethnic communities.

With regard to human rights, we mentioned several times that there have been damning reports of summary executions of civilians by security forces. We have called for impartial judicial investigations to bring those responsible to justice. The message we conveyed is that the fight against terrorism must be carried out in respect for human rights.

The last important message relates to women and children, who have suffered most in the crisis. We must protect them and strengthen the participation of women in Parliament and in administration. In the light of the demographics, their support is also needed for family planning.

Finally, after long discussions with the Government, we got the impression that the Government is truly committed to doing what must be done. We must recognize the difficult budgetary and security situation, but the Government is willing to take action on human rights. Even before we raised the point of ensuring a strong justice system, they mentioned the importance of respecting human rights.

As I said before, this was a good visit. I will conclude by saying that we need to continue to improve the situation and to see it through the lens of conflict prevention. I think the visit was key, but we must continue to engage with the country and the region.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to convey Ambassador Adom's apologies to you, Sir, and the other members of the Council that he could not participate in this important meeting on the return of the Council mission to the Sahel.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to present, on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Léon Adom, a summary of the discussions on the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) during the Security Council's visit to the Sahel from 22 to 24 March.

The Security Council delegation held a working breakfast on 23 March, from 8 a.m. to 9.30 a.m., with the security forces mentioned in resolution 2423 (2018), namely, the Malian armed forces, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Operation Barkhane, the European Union Training Mission

in Mali and the European Union capacity-building mission in the Sahel. These discussions focused on cooperation among those different forces, including efforts to coordinate the fight against armed terrorist groups in the Sahel. They highlighted the importance of coordination and information exchange among those forces, as well as their complementarity, despite the fact that they operate under different mandates and with persistent challenges.

The Security Council delegation also held a working session with representatives of the Joint Force on the security aspects of the activities of the G-5 Sahel, in which Brigadier General Hanena Ould Sidi, Force Commander of the Joint Force; Mr. Maman Sidikou, the Permanent Secretary of the G-5 Sahel; as well as the Foreign Ministers of Burkina Faso and Mali took part. They informed the members of the Council of the efforts made to operationalize the Joint Force and ensure compliance with the human rights compliance framework. Brigadier General Hanena Ould Sidi pointed out that the Joint Force had been able to conduct three operations since the beginning of 2019, despite delays due to the terrorist attack on G-5 Sahel headquarters in Sévaré in June 2018.

While the exchanges highlighted the progress made over the past six months in the operationalization of the Joint Force, they also underlined the difficulties associated with the provisions of the technical agreement. These include, for example, the territorial constraints on the support that MINUSMA can provide to the Joint Force, pursuant to resolution 2391 (2017). As a result, only two of the seven battalions of the Joint Force operating on Malian territory can benefit from that support. The difficulties encountered therefore require a revision of the technical agreement in order to better adapt it to the realities on the ground and enhance the effectiveness of the Joint Force.

Responding to the concerns expressed by several members of the Council, the Commander of the Joint Force reassured them of the efforts made to implement the human rights compliance framework in the conduct of operations, with the assistance of international partners. He acknowledged that respect for the framework and the conduct of civil-military activities were essential to winning hearts and gaining the cooperation of the people in the affected areas.

The various audiences given to the Council members by Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Malian Head

of State, Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga and, subsequently, by civil society and members of the political opposition allowed the Council members to understand the problems facing the people of Mali in terms of their political, social and security expectations.

During the Ouagadougou stage, the Council held a working session with members of the Government of Burkina Faso, who outlined Burkina Faso's priorities as part of the activities intended to promote economic and social development in the geographical area of the G-5 Sahel. Mr. Maman Sidikou, Brigadier General Hanena Ould Sidi, the Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the European Union representative and the United Nations Development Programme Resident Coordinator in Burkina Faso also took part in this meeting.

Pointing out that Burkina Faso spends 22 per cent of its budget on national defence and security, Government members shared their plans for the economic and social development of the country's vulnerable areas and highlighted actions to reopen schools. They also expressed their readiness to ensure respect for human rights and conduct investigations into alleged human rights violations committed by the defence and security forces. The members of the Government of Burkina Faso informed the members of the Council of their strengthened cooperation with countries on the coast of West Africa — Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin — on security issues, given the risk of an increase in the number of terrorist attacks throughout the subregion.

With regard to Burkina Faso's priorities, Council members noted ongoing efforts to operationalize the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, including its police component, the implementation of the Priority Investment Programme, capacity-building of the permanent secretariat of the G-5 Sahel and the empowerment of women. The Council delegation was also informed of the limitations to the optimal performance of the Joint Force, owing in particular to inadequate support arrangements, equipment shortages, limited basic infrastructure and insufficient training.

At the end of their stay, the members of the Security Council delegation were received by the President, His Excellency Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, who reiterated his country's priorities at the helm of the G-5 Sahel by endorsing all of the information previously conveyed by the members of his Government. President Kaboré committed to stepping up efforts in support

of economic and social development, in particular in affected areas. He also stressed the need to review the technical agreement so as to ensure adequate MINUSMA support to the G-5 Sahel with a view to improving efficiency. That is my summary of Security Council meetings that were held on G-5 Sahel issues.

In conclusion, on behalf of Ambassador Adom, I too would like to thank the Secretariat team for its valuable assistance, which contributed to the success of the Security Council mission.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Ipo for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Council who wish to make a statement.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in French*): I would just like to say a few words,

speaking in French so as not to disrupt the francophone atmosphere of this meeting. On behalf of us all, I would like to pay tribute to our French friends for their excellent logistical support and assistance throughout the mission. The United Nations experts, including the members of the Security Council Affairs Division and the interpreters, also did excellent work.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Council, I would like to thank all of the members of the Security Council for their commitment and collective efforts, all of the members of the Secretariat who made the preparations for the mission, and everyone for the exemplary manner in which they assumed their responsibilities.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.