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Addis Insight

The joint mission to Mali is an opportunity to deepen cooperation with the EU

The first joint mission by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the European Union Political and Security Committee (EU-PSC) to Mali in February was an opportunity to discuss Mali's peace and security challenges with role players on the ground. Such joint missions could be important instruments to harmonise policy between the PSC and other actors in future.

On 1 March 2015, the Malian government and northern rebels signed a peace deal that is destined to bring an end to the crisis in northern Mali. The main coalition of Touareg rebel groups has, however, requested more time for consultations. The peace deal comes soon after the conclusion of the joint field mission of the PSC and the EU-PSC.

Building on their years of collaboration, the PSC and the EU-PSC undertook their first joint field visit on 11–13 February 2015. The decision to undertake this joint field mission was made at the 7th annual consultative meeting between the two bodies in May 2014 at the EU Commission headquarters in Brussels.

The Malian government and northern rebels signed a peace deal that is destined to bring an end to the crisis in the north of the country

The mission was jointly led by ambassador Anne Namakau Mutelo of Namibia (for the PSC) and Ambassador Walter Stevens (permanent chair of the EU-PSC). On 11 February, the delegation held a series of consultations with government officials, political parties and civil society organisations in Bamako. Among others, the delegation met President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and Prime Minister Modibo Keita. The delegation was also briefed by Mali's minister of defence. The exchanges covered the ongoing efforts towards national reconciliation, security sector reform, other security challenges and the peace talks. Civil society organisations in their interaction with the delegation emphasised the need to fight impunity as part of the effort to build peace in the country.

On 12 February, the delegation travelled to the northern city of Gao. As Gao has witnessed renewed violence targeting Malian forces, peacekeepers and civilians, the delegation could not leave the airport. The delegation nevertheless heard the views of local administration and community representatives. Confirming reports of rising violence, the governor of Gao said that 'security has worsened since [the] Algiers talks began'. The delegation also held meetings with representatives of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the French Operation Barkhane. It also exchanged views with the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHÉL), the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) and the EU Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) Civilian Mission to Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali).

Current PSC Chair

**H.E Ambassador
Anne Namakau Mutelo**

Ambassador to Ethiopia and Sudan.
Permanent Representative of Namibia
to the AU and UNECA.

Current members of the PSC

Algeria, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia,
Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia,
Guinea, Libya, Mozambique,
Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa,
Tanzania, Uganda

The joint field mission was an opportunity for the PSC and the EU-PSC to learn from each other's institutional approaches; achieve a shared understanding of the challenges facing Mali; and find ways of aligning their engagement in helping Mali overcome these challenges. The mission said it supported the negotiations currently being held in Algiers to find a permanent, peaceful solution to the security situation in the north of the country. 'The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission expressed its deep concern about the persisting violence in northern Mali. It is a threat to the security, stability, territorial integrity and development of the country and the wider Sahel region, and continues to cause massive human suffering,' the mission said in a statement.

Both African and international actors have critical roles to play, and they have to coordinate and harmonise their actions

Joint action needed in solving crises

It has become clear that no one actor can take on the peace and security challenges in the region. There is now increasing recognition that both African and international actors have critical roles to play, and that they have to coordinate and harmonise their actions to find a successful resolution to the conflict. The joint mission is evidence of this recognition and underscored the need for coordination.

This has also been one of the recurring themes in the statement of the joint mission. It was noted that the joint field mission was a good opportunity to take stock of the progress and synergies achieved by MINUSMA, MISAHEL and the EU CSDP missions (EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali). With respect to the Sahel strategies of various organisations, 'the AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission emphasised the need for enhanced coordination among regional and international actors in the implementation of their respective strategies for the Sahel'. Indicating the importance of the continuing engagement of the AU and regional actors after the transition of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) to MINUSMA, the joint mission expressed 'full support to MINUSMA in the implementation of its mandate and its efforts to protect civilians and welcomed 'the readiness expressed by African troop-contributing countries to contribute to efforts aiming at enhancing the capacity of MINUSMA to execute its mandate'.

Lessons learnt from the first joint mission

Originally scheduled for 17 February, the mission's outcomes were considered on 19 February. Ambassador Mutelo gave a briefing to the PSC on the conduct and outcome of the

joint mission. The PSC also discussed the follow-up to the consultations and exchanges held with the various national and local actors. In the communiqué it issued after the meeting, the PSC stressed that 'dialogue and reconciliation is the way forward for all Malian stakeholders to address and overcome the challenges facing their country. In this context, [the] Council urges all the stakeholders to support the Algiers Peace Talks'. While emphasising 'the urgent need to contribute to efforts [aimed] at enhancing the mandate and capacity of MINUSMA to enable it more effectively to execute its mandate', the PSC underscored 'the need for closer collaboration between the UN and the AU in addressing the acute situation in Mali'.

The PSC tasked the chairperson of the AU Commission to urgently dispatch a technical mission in order to assess how best the AU can further assist with socio-economic development. No timeline has, however, been specified on the dispatch of the mission and its reporting back to the PSC.

The PSC communiqué also underscored the importance of the joint field mission. The Council called for 'further strengthening of this collaboration, including through continuation of AUPSC/EUPSC joint field missions to conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa'.

The PSC underscored the need for closer collaboration between the UN and the AU in addressing the acute situation in Mali

This mission has set a good precedent on which the PSC can build when planning similar joint missions, not only with the EU-PSC but also with the UN Security Council. The lessons from this joint mission will help in properly planning and preparing for similar visits in future. Internal consultations on the proceedings of the mission were in fact only finalised on 10 February, after the arrival of the PSC members in Bamako. As the first such joint mission, the way in which it has shaped the views of PSC member states will determine the institutionalisation of joint field missions as a useful instrument both for engaging with countries in crisis and for harmonising policy action with partner organisations.



On the Agenda

The PSC approves final plans for the regional fight against Boko Haram

The draft concept of operations (CONOPS) for the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) set up to fight Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria and its border regions was reviewed by the PSC on 3 March. Countries in the region are in fact already mobilising forces to fight the terrorist group, which has increased its attacks in neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The force's funding, however, remains a major outstanding issue and the African Union (AU) is planning to discuss it with the United Nations (UN) in mid-March.

As a follow-up to its decision of 29 January 2015, the PSC held a session on the steps being taken for the operationalisation of the MNJTF against Boko Haram of the Lake Chad Basin Countries (LCBC) and Benin. It should be recalled that at its 29 January summit-level meeting, which was held on the eve of the 24th AU Assembly Summit in Addis Ababa, the PSC authorised the MNJTF's deployment. In that decision, the PSC also expressed its expectation that the AU would finalise the drawing up of the CONOPS for the MNJTF.

Nigeria is the largest contributor with 3 250 personnel, followed by Chad with 3 000

Countries increase force strength to 8 700

At a meeting held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 5–7 February experts from the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the AU, with the participation of experts from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union and the UN, finalised the draft operational plans. Apart from defining the MNJTF's mandate and deciding upon its headquarters, the plans outline the mission's area of operation and end state. They also elaborate upon the strategic coordination, rules of engagement, and requirements for supporting and sustaining the mission.

The draft concept also outlines the establishment of a central military command and joint coordination mechanism that will have control over troops contributed by LCBC members and Benin. Unlike the AU's experience with the Regional Task Force for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (which partly inspired the MNJTF framework), which has a single controlling authority, the AU and LCBC will jointly hold strategic-level control of the MNJTF. Operational command and control of the force will be held by a force commander rotating among LCBC members and Benin.

Although the PSC summit decision of 29 January set the MNJTF's force size at 7 500, during the Yaoundé meeting representatives of Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria announced that they wished to increase the size by 1 200 personnel. Nigeria is the largest contributor with 3 250 personnel, followed by Chad with 3 000.

8 700

THE STRENGTH OF THE MNJTF
AGAINST BOKO HARAM

At a meeting of member states of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission to Central African Republic and the Region, General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, stated that Boko Haram attacks had killed tens of thousands of civilians, displaced hundreds of thousands and carried out numerous atrocities.

Region already mobilising against Boko Haram

While planning for the MNJTF is being finalised, the military campaign against Boko Haram is gathering momentum. While Nigeria postponed the general elections scheduled for 14 February by six weeks until 28 March in order to launch an offensive against Boko Haram, Chadian troops have continued their fight against the terrorist group in north-eastern Nigeria. On 17 February Chadian troops made significant progress by retaking the town of Dikwa, which had been under Boko Haram control for months. The Nigerian army was also reported to have recaptured Baga, the previous headquarters of the MNJTF, from which its soldiers fled after a Boko Haram attack in January 2015, and the garrison town of Monguno.

Despite the gains being registered, Boko Haram's attacks have continued unabated. Recent attacks affected Gombe and Biu. On Saturday, 14 February hundreds of Boko Haram fighters attacked Gombe, using heavy gunfire and distributing leaflets calling on residents to boycott the Nigerian general elections. On 17 February a suicide bomber killed at least 36 people in the Borno town of Biu. On 19 February Boko Haram attacked localities near Chibok, killing 21 people. Over 200 schoolgirls were abducted from Chibok in April last year.

Despite the gains being registered, Boko Haram's attacks have continued

The group has also expanded its attacks on neighbouring states. On 19 February reports indicated that Boko Haram attacked Tourba Guida village in south-eastern Niger, killing three people. In the previous week, thousands of residents fled the border town of Diffa following a series of raids and suicide bombings. Earlier, on 12 February, Boko Haram carried out its first attack against a village in Chad. The Cameroonian army also reported that it lost five soldiers in a clash with Boko Haram on 16 February in the Waza region in the far north of the country, near the border with Nigeria.

AU seeks funding from the UN and others

In terms of its operationalisation, one of the major issues facing the MNJTF is that of funding. During the 29 January PSC summit Nigeria pledged to contribute resources to support the

force. Despite the fact that the institutional and legal frameworks for the MNJTF's operationalisation are still being worked out, some countries have already deployed their troops and started their offensive against Boko Haram. Notable in this regard is the deployment of Chadian troops in Cameroon and Nigeria. These troops engaged in the fight against Boko Haram are said to receive funding and other support from Nigeria.

Unless Nigeria is at the front and centre of MNJTF operations, it is unlikely that the force will make any progress against Boko Haram

During the summit-level meeting of ECCAS, member states decided to establish an emergency fund of 50 billion CFA (about US\$110 million) for the fight against Boko Haram.

At the AU level the 29 January PSC summit decision also envisaged two related plans for mobilising funding for the MNJTF. The first was a UN Security Council (UNSC) authorisation of the establishment by the Secretary-General of a trust fund to pay for MNJTF operations. The second was the PSC's request for the AU Commission to organise – by mid-March 2015 and with UN support – a donors' conference to facilitate the mobilisation of the required resources. While its convergence with the rising global concern over terrorism is likely to play a role, the success of this conference in mobilising the required funds will depend on the degree of global confidence in the workability of the MNJTF as an effective framework to defeat Boko Haram.

Following its consideration and adoption by the PSC, the CONOPS will serve as the basis for the UNSC to both consider and endorse the PSC's decision authorising the deployment of the MNJTF and formulate the mechanisms for UN, bilateral and other multilateral support for the force.

As the AU and LCBC move to the next stage of the actual operationalisation of the MNJTF, attention should be drawn to the factors that will impact on its effectiveness. Nigeria's role and leadership is key in this regard. Unless Nigeria is at the front and centre of MNJTF operations, it is unlikely that the force will make any progress against Boko Haram. As the recent aerial bombing of local communities in Niger illustrates, coordination and the unfettered sharing of information/intelligence are also key.

Another factor is the technical, logistical, and financial support that the MNJTF will receive on a multilateral and bilateral basis. In this regard the deployment by France and the United States of some of their special forces to Ndjamena – the headquarters

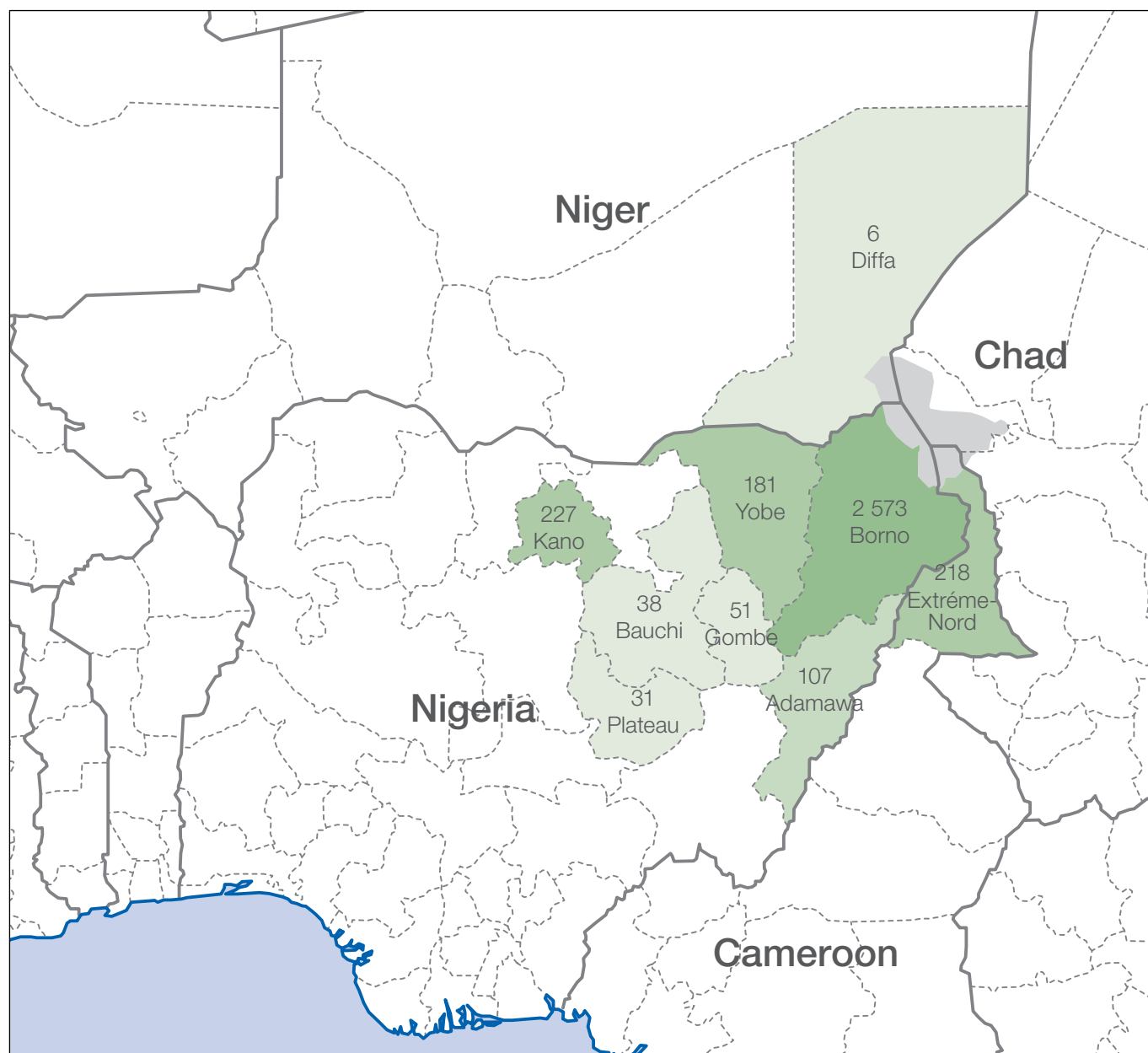


Figure 1 Reported fatalities attributed to Boko Haram in northern Nigeria and border regions, 1 September 2014 – 21 February 2015

Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)

of the MNJTF – to assist the force with aerial and other intelligence about Boko Haram’s movements is a welcome development.

Experience from similar situations such as those in Somalia or Mali suggests that the MNJTF’s military-heavy approach will not conclusively resolve the Boko Haram threat unless it is anchored on and/or accompanied by a comprehensive political strategy. It is also important that, together with MNJTF operations against Boko Haram, the LCBC member states and the AU should take steps to cut off both the terrorist group’s sources of funding and its support base. Similarly, the support of local communities in the MNJTF’s areas of operation will be critical.

Finally, the various MNJTF operational phases and timelines envisaged in the CONOPS should be seen as indicative and their implementation should be adjusted in light of developments on the ground.

Situation Analysis

The Kinshasa government attacks FDLR rebels without the UN



Government forces in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) carried out their first attack against rebels of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) on 24 February 2015, almost a month after this operation was first announced. The attack against the FDLR comes in the wake of a serious disagreement between the DRC government and the United Nations (UN) over the forced disarmament of the FDLR.

Military action against the FDLR has been on the cards since the expiry of the 2 January 2015 deadline set by the Intergovernmental Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for the FDLR to voluntarily disarm. The disarmament of all rebel forces in the eastern DRC forms part of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region (Framework Agreement) signed in February 2013.

The attack against the FDLR comes in the wake of a serious disagreement between the DRC government and the United Nations

Meanwhile, the PSC has been concerned about the continued instability in the eastern DRC for some time and has followed closely the implementation of the Framework Agreement. The progress made in this regard was discussed by the PSC on 23 February 2015.

In its decisions, the African Union (AU) Assembly, meeting in January 2015 for its 24th summit, also expressed support for the implementation of the Framework Agreement and emphasised the importance of the neutralisation of all armed forces in the eastern DRC.

Disagreement with UN over allegations of war crimes

Initially, the offensive against the FDLR was set to be a joint effort by the *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) and the UN. The UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), consisting mainly of South African and Tanzanian troops and with a Chapter VII mandate, was expected to be mobilised in this offensive. The FIB successfully defeated the M23 rebel group in mid-2013.

However, on Sunday 15 February President Joseph Kabila told ambassadors in Kinshasa, including Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the DRC, that the Congolese government would forego any help from the UN in this operation. 'The head of state officially announced to its partners that the DRC renounces any cooperation with MONUSCO [the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC] in the operation of disarmament against the FDLR,' government spokesperson

24 February
2015

THE FIRST ATTACK AGAINST
THE FDLR

Lambert Mende said after the meeting. According to Mende, Kabila also told the DRC's partners and ambassadors to refrain from making statements that do not 'respect the state'. 'We want to say to the various actors, the DRC is not under guardianship of the UN or anyone else.'

Abuses by the FARDC in the eastern part of the country have been well documented by Human Rights Watch and others

The conflict between the DRC and the UN started with the UN's request that the Congolese government replace two generals appointed to head the military operation against the FDLR. This was due to allegations of human rights abuses against generals Bruno Mandevu and Fall Sikabwe, who have been on the UN's red list for years. In terms of its mandate, the UN could not be seen to go ahead with a joint operation led by these officers. Abuses by the FARDC in the eastern part of the country have been well documented by Human Rights Watch and others.

Impact on future DRC–UN relations

The disagreement over the FDLR operation raises several questions about the future of relations between the DRC and the UN. The UN's withdrawal from the operation against the FDLR also provides a useful argument to those critics of the UN and of Kabila's government, notably neighbouring Rwanda, that maintain that the actors involved did not want to attack the FDLR in the first place.

Following Kabila's rejection of MONUSCO's help, the DRC government tempered its stance by stating that nothing was stopping MONUSCO from 'carrying out its own operations against the FDLR'. Mende told Radio Okapi that the tension in the relationship 'doesn't concern other missions that MONUSCO has been charged with'. He said a UN Security Council resolution 'gives a mandate to the mission to find and disarm the armed groups with or without the FARDC'. MONUSCO has 22 000 troops stationed in the country.

In the short term, the DRC will have to do without the food, fuel and logistical support the UN provided to FARDC operations in the past.

This is, however, not the first strong statement by the Congolese head of state against the UN presence in the DRC. In fact, the name change of the mission from MONUC (UN Organisation Mission in the DRC) to MONUSCO (UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC) in 2010 came after just such a spat, when Kabila said a peacekeeping mission was no longer needed in his country.

Concerns over civilian casualties

South Africa and Tanzania are both said to have expressed reservations about the possible collateral damage, especially to civilians, during an operation against the FDLR. The FDLR has been in the region for close to 20 years and is largely embedded in communities in the eastern DRC.

The issue of civilian casualties was widely discussed in the corridors of the 24th AU summit, since the deadline for the FDLR to disarm had expired on 2 January and a joint MONUSCO–FARDC operation was expected. In the run-up to the Assembly meeting on 30 and 31 January, South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Nkoana-Mashabane told journalists in Addis Ababa that an attack could happen 'as we are sitting here'. She told the media that South Africa trusted the military hierarchy to make sure there were no civilian casualties.

Asked at the summit about the possible withdrawal of UN troops from the FDLR operation due to fears of civilian casualties, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete answered that the FIB was part of the UN and that it was up to the latter to decide.

Meanwhile, neighbouring Rwanda, which maintains that the FDLR is a serious security threat, accused both the DRC government and MONUSCO of finding excuses not to attack the FDLR. Rwandan media slammed the UN for its reticence to participate in the joint operation against the FDLR, which is largely made up of Hutus who fled after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Commentators on social media also accused the DRC government of not really wanting to carry out its threats of forcibly disarming the FDLR.

Rwandan media slammed the UN for its reticence to participate in the joint operation against the FDLR

It has become clear that, apart from the disagreement with the DRC government, the FIB's operation against the FDLR is also seriously hampered by the absence of the firm regional consensus that had been behind the military campaign against the M23. Tanzania and South Africa, two of the three troop contributors to the FIB, have not shown as much enthusiasm to go after the FDLR as against the M23.

FDLR a threat to peace

Experts agree it would be a blow to peace in the DRC if the FDLR were not eventually disarmed. Rwanda has for the past 20 years used the FDLR's presence in the eastern DRC to justify its intervening in the country.

In addition, the DRC has a legal obligation in terms of the Framework Agreement, which commits all the parties to end their support for rebels in the eastern DRC. The AU, SADC and the ICGLR are all guarantors of this agreement.

Other anti-rebel operations to continue

Despite the UN's withdrawal from the FDLR operation, indications are that the FIB will remain mobilised in the eastern DRC. The Ugandan rebel group Allied Democratic Forces–National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF–NALU) has been particularly active over the last several months, gaining terrain and attacking civilians. There is also a plethora of smaller armed militia groups in the eastern DRC that have yet to be neutralised by the UN and the FARDC.

Despite the UN's withdrawal from the FDLR operation, indications are that the Force Intervention Brigade will remain mobilised in the eastern DRC

Major issues for the PSC

For the PSC, the disagreement over the military operation against the FDLR and the continuing violence and threat of violence by armed groups against civilians in the eastern DRC are major concerns.

Another area of concern for the PSC is the challenges that the lack of firm regional consensus and the disagreement between MONUSCO and the DRC government present for the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

Options for the PSC

The PSC could initiate the convening at the AU of a joint meeting of the ICGLR and SADC to deliberate on and address the various issues inhibiting the implementation of the ICGLR–SADC decision on the FDLR and of the Framework Agreement.

The PSC could request the AU Commission to work with the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region to initiate a broader regional dialogue. This could be part of the PSC Framework for addressing the regional root causes of the conflict, including the issues of refugees and the disarmament of all armed groups.

The PSC could also request the AU Commission chairperson to engage the DRC government with a view to resolve the on-going lack of cooperation between the DRC government and MONUSCO.

Important documentation

AU documents

- Signing of Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region, 24 February 2013, <http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/peace-security-and-cooperation-framework-for-drc-and-the-region-signed-in-addis-ababa>

REC documents

- Joint meeting of SADC and troop-contributing countries on the DRC, 30 January 2015, <http://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/summit-double-troika-plus-troop-contributing-countries-democ/>

Other

- *ISS Today*, 18 February 2015, <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/un-staying-in-eastern-drc-for-now>
- *ISS Today*, 12 January 2015, <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/extending-the-fdlr-disarmament-deadline-will-only-prolong-the-agony>



Situation Analysis

A long road ahead to achieve Somalia's Vision 2016

Somalia continues to suffer political instability and insecurity, despite important territorial gains made against the terror group al-Shabaab. On 20 February 2015, the day the PSC met in Addis Ababa to discuss Somalia, Somali members of Parliament and the deputy mayor of Mogadishu were killed in a suicide attack in the capital. Still, the historic meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on 10 January in Mogadishu was a positive sign of progress towards stability. A new cabinet was also finally appointed on 27 January.

Somalia has been on the agenda of the PSC since its establishment just over 10 years ago. The country hosts the largest peace support operation that the AU runs on the continent, and progress in its political and security spheres, including the federalisation process, remains of great interest to the PSC. In addition, Somalia is nearing the deadline for a constitutional referendum and general national elections as part of its Vision 2016.

On 20 February the PSC held its scheduled briefing session on Somalia. Ambassador Maman Sidikou, Special Representative for Somalia of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and head of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), gave an update on the situation in the country and on AMISOM's work. The PSC expressed its support for the political process underway in Somalia in a communiqué released after the briefing.

Somalia is nearing the deadline for a constitutional referendum and general national elections as part of its Vision 2016

Al-Shabaab continues to perpetrate attacks

Also on 20 February, in the biggest attack since the beginning of the year, a suicide bomb exploded in Mogadishu's Central Hotel near the presidential palace and killed 11 people, including the city's deputy mayor and several members of Parliament. Scores of people were injured, including the deputy prime minister. Through its radio station Andulus, al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack. This latest incident is just part of a series of killings and suicide and grenade attacks in the capital targeting officials and civil servants.

On 9 February, in the sixth attack of its kind since the start of 2015, gunmen killed a Somali lawmaker in Mogadishu. Five other members of Parliament were also killed by al-Shabaab in 2014. Following the 9 February attack, the radical group warned that it would continue to kill lawmakers 'one by one'. A week afterwards, al-Shabaab killed four airport workers in a drive-by shooting in the centre of Mogadishu. The recent attacks have demonstrated that despite the joint military

\$1.3 billion

MONEY SENT BACK HOME ANNUALLY
BY THE SOMALI DIASPORA

campaign and the resultant loss of administered areas and decline in resources, al-Shabaab remains the single biggest security threat in Somalia. The group, which in recent years changed its tactics to hit-and-run bomb and gun attacks, continues to cause damage, create insecurity and fear, and disrupt political processes in Mogadishu and various other towns around the country.

The recent attacks have demonstrated that al-Shabaab remains the single biggest security threat in Somalia

Loss of remittances a big blow to Somali families

Somalia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Millions of Somalis live in Europe, the United States (US), Canada and Australia and their families depend on the remittances they send back home. However, there are fears that recent measures by Western governments and financial institutions to curb this flow of money could create a socio-economic and security crisis in Somalia, as a money shortage could lure the youth to al-Shabaab. Recently the US-based Merchants Bank closed all accounts with Somali money transfer operators, who were responsible for transferring an estimated 60–80% of remittances from the US, blaming transfers to radical militant groups. According to figures from charity organisations, Somalis abroad annually send more than US\$1.3 billion in remittances, accounting for 25–45% of the gross domestic product of the war-torn country. Similar moves in Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) are expected to worsen the situation. Last year Barclays Bank in the UK closed the accounts of Somali money transfer operators, while in Australia, Westpac Bank has announced it will close Somali remittance accounts soon. According to Oxfam, over 40% of people living in Somalia rely on remittances to meet their basic daily needs. There are thus concerns that such moves could result in further radicalisation and instability.

Charity organisations and members of civil society are calling on the new Somali government to act speedily to prevent this valuable financial lifeline from being cut off.

In addition, a recent United Nations (UN) report claims that more than 38 000 Somali children are at risk of starvation. The report adds that more than 731 000 people, including 203 000 children, are severely malnourished and face a critical food insecurity. Divisions within the government, the continued threat of al-Shabaab and the possibility of an economic and humanitarian crisis could derail the implementation of the Vision 2016 agenda.

The arduous road towards 2016

2015 is a critical year for Somalia. The way in which the federal government deals with the long list of outstanding political reforms will determine the success of the federalism and stabilisation projects that are part of Vision 2016. Continued disagreement between the major centres of power (that of the prime minister and the president) has caused an unstable political situation. Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, who was endorsed by Parliament as Somalia's new prime minister on 24 December, is Somalia's third prime minister in just over a year. Following the appointment of Sharmarke after the fallout between the president and the previous prime minister, the political instability that undermined the role of government continued. The government has also disagreed with Parliament over the appointment of the new cabinet. Finally, on 27 January the government, under pressure from regional and international partners, appointed a 20-person cabinet. Parliament approved the new cabinet only after a third round of voting.

Political infighting, which has been one of the biggest challenges faced by the Somali state, remains a serious threat to the realisation of a national vision. The government continues to suffer from inter-clan differences, regional competition and divisions between politicians and technocrats.

The new government, which has little time left to deliver on the priorities set out in Vision 2016, is tasked with a number of difficult missions in the next year. Building the capacity of local administrations, consolidating stability in the newly liberated areas, and overseeing the establishment and operationalisation of the National Independent Electoral Commission and the constitutional referendum are some of the main challenges. The government also has to complete a new draft constitution, to be submitted to a referendum in March 2016. In mid-2016 Somalia goes to the polls and those elections also need to be prepared.

Continued disagreement between the major centres of power has caused an unstable political situation

Pressure to ensure transparency and accountability

Sharmarke's government needs to hold a series of power- and resource-sharing consultative meetings with the various regions. He also faces constant pressure from the country's partners to ensure the transparency and accountability of the civil service and security institutions. Addressing local inter-clan tensions is another huge challenge for the new government.

Observers predict that tensions between the regions and the federal government, as well as divisions within the new cabinet, could rise as the election approaches and the government starts making solid moves towards federalisation. The federalism project requires a lot of work to increase the legitimacy of local administrations and to ensure the provision of basic services, including security, justice and health at the regional level. The increased presence of the federal government in the regions and greater presence and participation of the local administrations in Mogadishu are required.

Addressing local inter-clan tensions is another huge challenge for the new government

The success of Vision 2016 relies heavily on there being peace and security, as well as on the creation of a strong security apparatus that can deliver it. Reforming and building the capacity of security institutions is a major task. Building the capacity of the existing army and police forces and successfully integrating local and regional militias into the army are sensitive and controversial processes that need professionalism, impartiality and accountability. This is one area where progress has been slow. Despite the capacity-building efforts that have been ongoing for years, a lot remains to be done in terms of building effective, coherent and disciplined national security institutions.

Al-Shabaab, although on the run and losing territory and momentum, has not been defeated. Attacks and bomb explosions are almost daily occurrences, including in parts of the country that should be secure. The latest series of attacks at the heart of the capital targeting members of Parliament and other government officials reaffirmed that the campaign against al-Shabaab needs to be recalibrated. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has been offering amnesty 'to all those within al-Shabaab who are willing to renounce violence and join the peace process' at different occasions as a strategy to weaken the group. AMISOM and the Somali forces' military gains should be supported by strong intelligence work and increased security and surveillance in the liberated areas. Importantly, attention should be paid to stabilisation efforts in the newly liberated areas, including through deploying formed police units and refurbishing local administration structures, most notably justice and police administration.

First IGAD Council of Ministers meeting in Mogadishu in 29 years

In January 2015 IGAD held its historic 53rd Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers in Mogadishu, the first to be held in

Somalia since 1985. The meeting, which was concluded without any security problems, was considered a demonstration of the growing commitment to and confidence in the improving situation in Somalia. In his closing remarks, Sharmarke noted that he remains committed to the federalisation process and Vision 2016. The 23-point communiqué that followed the session praised the military gains by allied forces and the formation of federal states in southern Somalia. In a subsequent press conference, Mohamud said that IGAD heads of state would meet for the first time in Mogadishu in 2015.

Regional engagement is also deepening. On 18 February 2015 Mohamud met Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in Addis Ababa. The two leaders discussed the security situation in Somalia and Ethiopia's increasing role in the AU peacekeeping mission. Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Gelle also undertook a two-day official visit to Somalia on 21–22 February 2015.

'Unique' relations between the AU and the UN

Following the approval of the new government by Parliament, the UN urged the new cabinet to move quickly to deliver on the Vision 2016 agenda. It also hailed the enhanced participation of women in the new government. In a statement released together with a range of other development partners, the UN noted that 2015 is a critical year for Somalia to ensure sustained security and stability and improve the lives of ordinary Somalis. The UN emphasised both the need for the leadership to pass legislation to establish the National Independent Electoral Commission and the progress in building the capacity of the regional administrations. Consolidating the security of areas recovered from al-Shabaab, and resuming the implementation and review of the provisional constitution were also highlighted as requiring the urgent attention of the new government.

The UN urged the new cabinet to move quickly to deliver on the Vision 2016 agenda

In his 4 February 2015 briefing to the UN Security Council, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia Nicholas Kay said this year would be decisive in determining whether and how Somalia could become a unified, peaceful and federal state. Kay hailed relations between the AU and the UN in Somalia, calling it 'unique, strong and essential for success'.

US drone attacks

Drone attacks on al-Shabaab locations and targets have become a regular tactic of the US. This followed the successful drone strike in September 2014 in which al-Shabaab's main

leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, was killed. Another successful strike in late December killed intelligence chief Tahlil Abdishakur. In early February US drone aircraft launched a strike in southern Somalia against senior al-Shabaab figure Yusuf Dheeq, the group's external operations chief. The success of the targeted killings of al-Shabaab leaders –beyond a temporary boost to morale and for propaganda purposes – is yet to be tested, as the same strategy proved ineffective in Afghanistan.

There are also concerns on the part of the troop-contributing countries about the payment of AMISOM troops, following reports of reluctance from some members of the European Union (EU), the mission's biggest supporter.

Major issues for the PSC

One major issue for the PSC concerns the consolidation of the gains that have been made through joint Somalia National Army and AMISOM operations in liberating territories that were under al-Shabaab control.

The success of the targeted killings of al-Shabaab leaders is yet to be tested

The mobilisation of continuing support for AMISOM is another area of concern for the PSC and this also is crucial key to sustaining the momentum against al-Shabaab and consolidate the security gains made.

Another area of interest for the PSC is supporting the Somali government to maintain internal stability by avoiding infighting between the various centres of power. This will help with the implementation of the various priority areas, including building functioning security institutions.

Options

One option for the PSC is to undertake a field visit to Somalia, both to see AMISOM's work first hand and to express solidarity with and support to the people of Somalia as they progress towards peace and stability.

Another option is for the PSC to request the AU Commission to convene a high-level meeting on Somalia to assess the progress made towards Vision 2016; identify areas that require further international support; and reaffirm the commitment and support of various international partners. These include the UN and the EU as well as individual powers such as the US, China and the UK, both for the implementation of the priority areas of Vision 2016 and for AMISOM.

The PSC could also express its appreciation for the role played by AMISOM and troop-contributing countries, IGAD, the EU

and the UN as well as individual countries in supporting the peace effort in Somalia.

Documentation

AU documents

- PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXXXVII) Communiqué–487th Peace and Security Council of the African Union meeting on the situation in Somalia <http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-487th-peace-and-security-council-of-the-african-union-meeting-on-the-situation-in-somalia#sthash.AHE61WGX.dpuf>

REC documents

- Communiqué of the 53rd Extraordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers, http://igad.int/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1031:communique-of-the-53rd-extra-ordinary-session-of-the-igad-council-of-ministers&catid=47:communique&Itemid=149

Other

- Interview with Maman Sidikou, special representative of the AU Commission Chairperson for Somalia, <http://www.issafrica.org/pscreport/addis-insights/psc-interview-the-high-cost-of-defeating-al-shabaab>



PSC Interview

Buyoya: Algiers agreement a positive step forward for Mali

Burundi's former president Pierre Buyoya, currently the High Representative of the African Union (AU) for Mali and the Sahel, speaks to the PSC Report about the latest developments in Mali. He shares his views about the recent peace talks in Algiers and about the role of the international community as guarantors of the Algiers agreement. He also speaks about the AU's contribution to peace efforts in Mali and its cooperation with other actors such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN).

The recent agreement between Mali and certain rebel groups in the north, signed in Algiers on 1 March, has been described as an 'excellent development'. However, the main rebel groups have not yet signed the agreement. As the representative of the AU for Mali and the Sahel, what is your opinion about the agreement?

I would like to add a nuance. The agreement was initialled in Algiers and not signed, even if this act signifies one's readiness to sign the agreement and it normally means a commitment not to seek any changes before signature. My understanding is that the final or actual signature will take place in Mali itself.

It is understandable that parties will be unhappy with one aspect or another of the agreement

Coming now to your question, I would like to say that this agreement is a good compromise. It does not satisfy entirely any single party. It is therefore understandable that parties will be unhappy with one aspect or another of the agreement. But we believe that, taken in its entirety, it provides a good attempt to deal with political concerns, including a model for the sharing of responsibilities between the central government and regional authorities, as well as local communities. It also addresses security, development, justice and humanitarian concerns. In that regard, it is a positive step forward in the resolution of the recurrent crises in the north of Mali.

Are you optimistic that the other rebel groups will sign the agreement in due course?

That is our hope and we are doing everything possible to ensure that they do so in due course. I should add that we, the representatives of the international community, support this agreement and we hope that the armed movements would not want to be on the wrong side of that consensus.

Do you believe that implementing the Algiers agreement could lead to lasting peace in northern Mali?

Of course, the quality and ultimate result of any agreement is in its implementation. As you know, this is not the first agreement signed between the Malian state and

armed movements in the north of the country. I think this is the fifth one since the Tamanrasset Agreement of January 1991, the National Pact of April 1992, the Algiers Accords of July 2006 and the Ouagadougou Agreement of June 2013, even though the present one is the completion of the Ouagadougou Agreement, which was just a preliminary one for specific issues. I mention all this because almost all subsequent waves of rebellion since 1992 are blamed on what armed groups consider the failure to implement previous agreements.

All subsequent waves of rebellion since 1992 are blamed on what armed groups consider the failure to implement previous agreements

Let me add one important difference between this agreement and the previous ones. This difference lies in the strong involvement of the international community in the negotiation and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the present agreement, unlike the previous ones. I therefore hope that all the parties concerned will honour their responsibilities in ensuring the effective and faithful implementation of this agreement. And if this is the case and there are no other factors behind the recurrence of rebellions, then one would assume that the implementation of the agreement would lead to lasting peace in northern Mali.

How can the AU assist Mali to overcome its challenges: notably in national reconciliation, demobilising armed groups in the north and reintegrating them into the army?

We have already started doing that through our effective contribution to the negotiation process that led to this agreement. With regard to the specific issue of national reconciliation, we have been working very closely with the Malians to offer our support and modest contribution. We started doing this as soon as the former Commission on Dialogue and Reconciliation was formed in March 2013, and particularly since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement. We started initially through the African-Led International Support Mission for Mali (AFISMA) that I headed until its transformation into a UN mission in July 2013 and, since then, the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHÉL) that I also head. For example, we have organised a number of events to promote the spirit of national reconciliation in the country.

Since last year, in cooperation with other partners, we have launched a radio programme called *Anka Ben* in Bambara, meaning 'Let's make peace', which airs every Saturday for an hour on a local radio station called Radio Kledu. We also organised, in November last year, in partnership with the Francophonie, a high-level three-day workshop for Malian journalists to encourage them to be peacemakers in their reporting and writing. We have specific projects to support the new Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, as well as the ministry in charge of this sensitive issue. We have other programmes targeting religious and traditional leaders, aimed at encouraging them to play an active role in the promotion of peace, dialogue and national cohesion in the country.

We have similar projects for the DDR [disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration] process. Firstly, in close coordination with the competent Malian authorities and our partners, particularly the UN, we contribute to the analytical work aimed at thinking through the appropriate modalities for the DDR and SSR [security sector reform]

processes in the country. Secondly, we try to mobilise resources to put at the disposal of the Malian Defence and Security Forces (FDSM) in view of ameliorating their working conditions. It is in this regard that, last year, we provided some 20 vehicles of various categories worth US\$1 million to the FDSM through the Ministry of the Interior.

Thirdly, our work in the Nouakchott Process, which aims at promoting regional cooperation in the Sahel in the field of security, will surely make a contribution to Mali, even if it is a regional project. This is why the first meeting of the chiefs of defence staff and of ministers of defence of the 11 participating countries in the process is scheduled to take place in Mali. We hope that other programmes that we have in the development field under the AU strategy for the Sahel region will contribute to the 'reintegration' aspect of the DDR process in Mali, particularly development projects targeting the youth.

We try to mobilise resources to put at the disposal of the Malian Defence and Security Forces in view of ameliorating their working conditions

The AU Peace and Security Council recently conducted a joint visit to Mali with the EU Political and Security Committee. What has been the outcome of this visit?

As you may know, the AU and the EU have a strategic partnership, based on which the two institutions work very closely on several issues. One of these issues is the question of peace and security. The visit you mention falls under this partnership, particularly its peace and security aspect. It was the first such joint mission of the PSC and its European colleagues.

The visit allowed members of the two institutions to familiarise themselves very closely with the realities on the ground in Mali, as they interacted with various stakeholders in the country, including the head of state, the prime minister, several cabinet members, political parties and civil society organisations, as well as international and regional organisations present in Mali. They also travelled to the north of the country.

The visit sent a strong message to all those they interacted with that our two organisations work closely together and share more or less the same reading of events in the country. It sent the message that they will act jointly, if necessary, but in coordination to advance issues of peace and security in the country, as well as sanction those that may hinder this.

The visit allowed members of the two institutions to familiarise themselves very closely with the realities on the ground in Mali

What are the areas of cooperation between the AU and the EU when it comes to solving the security challenges in Mali?

As I said, there is a strategic partnership between the AU and the EU. On Mali, you may know that we were both members of the mediation team led by Algeria in the negotiation of the agreement referred to previously. We shall continue working together to enjoin the parties to implement the agreement in good faith. There are

also many opportunities for MISAHEL and the EU delegation in Mali to work together to support Malian stakeholders in their efforts to solve the security challenges facing their country. The aforementioned joint mission of our peace and security organs illustrates this partnership and collaboration.

There are many opportunities for MISAHEL and the EU delegation in Mali to work together to support Malian stakeholders

In your address to the UNSC in December last year, you said that cooperation between the UN and the AU is crucial for peace and security in Africa. Concerning Mali and the Sahel, what are the areas of possible greater cooperation?

I have mentioned that before the UN deployed a peacekeeping operation in Mali, known as MINUSMA, it was AFISMA – deployed by the AU and ECOWAS [the Economic Community of West African States] – that played this role in the country. And because the Malian crisis is not only a security one, but a political and socio-economic one as well, we collaborate with the UN in these areas that MISAHEL is mandated to work on. In the security realm, we are both members of the technical security committee that was established by the Ouagadougou Agreement to ensure respect of the ceasefire agreements. We shall continue to work together for the effective implementation of the just-concluded agreement of the Algiers process and the various monitoring committees for its implementation. It is very crucial that we maintain this partnership, based on the principle of complementarity informed by our comparative advantages.

We shall continue to work together for the effective implementation of the just-concluded agreement of the Algiers process

We also work with the UN and other partners in the coordination of the implementation of our respective Sahel strategies. You may know that in November 2013, a ministerial platform of coordination for the Sahel strategies was established during a meeting in Bamako, and Mali was designated to chair this platform for the first two years. A technical secretariat was also created to support this platform. The AU (through MISAHEL, based in Bamako) and the UN (through the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel [OSES], based in Dakar) co-chair this secretariat. There is therefore close cooperation between our two organisations in Mali and the Sahel as a whole.

You also said funding is one of the crucial elements where the UN can assist the AU. Do you believe the UN is doing enough in this regard, specifically in the Sahel?

I think the UN has deployed important efforts in the Sahel to promote peace and security in the region. Deploying a force like MINUSMA requires hundreds of millions of dollars per year, not to mention other missions, such as the UN Office for West Africa and the one for the Sahel [OSES], both based in Dakar, in addition to the various UN agencies working in the region. Of course the discussion about UN

financial support to AU peacekeeping operations is one that is likely to continue. One opportunity for such cooperation will be in the logistical and financial support that the UN may lend to the Multinational Joint Task Force that countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin have decided to deploy against Boko Haram. I'm encouraged by the reported willingness of the UN to provide such support.

I must note, however, that there is a growing realisation of the need for and readiness by African countries to increase African contributions to these operations, for, after all, the victims are Africans and Africa is not the only region affected by conflicts and thus needing UN attention. It is a shared responsibility. It is in this regard that the outcome of the Obasanjo report on alternative sources of funding will be key in increasing African contributions in peacekeeping operations on the continent.

The discussion about United Nations financial support to African Union peacekeeping operations is likely to continue

The possible deployment of a robust intervention force, modelled on the Force Intervention Brigade in the eastern DRC was evoked at the January AU summit. Do you think such a brigade could be the solution to drive the last remaining armed groups out of Mali?

We make a distinction between armed groups in Mali. There are those that are part of a peace process, who accept non-negotiable principles of respecting Mali's territorial integrity, national unity and the republican and secular nature of the Malian state. We negotiate with those, as we just did through the Algiers process. There are, on the other hand, those (such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa and Ansar Dine) that refuse one or several of these principles and show no sign of readiness to change course; those are legitimate targets for the use of force.

Everyone agrees that there is a need to strengthen MINUSMA's capabilities. We believe that an intervention brigade is one way of doing so, particularly seeing that MINUSMA's classical peacekeeping mandate does not seem to allow it to engage in offensive anti-terrorist operations, as was the case for MONUSCO in the DRC prior to the deployment of the Intervention Brigade. We therefore believe that such a brigade in northern Mali, alongside MINUSMA and working closely with the French Operation Barkhane, could achieve what the Intervention Brigade did and is doing in the eastern DRC alongside MONUSCO [the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC].

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The Institute for Security Studies is an African organisation that aims to enhance human security on the continent. It does independent and authoritative research, provides expert policy analysis and advice, and delivers practical training and technical assistance.

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