



To: The DSG

Please find attached for your approval the draft SG report on Mali, submitted pursuant to resolution 2227 (2015) and covering the period 12 June to 16 September. The report is due to the SC on 29 December.

In his remarks, the SG noted that the Malian peace process reached a new momentum during the reporting period, as exemplified by the rapprochement between the Coordination and the Platform, as well as a high level of engagement by the international community. He welcomes the constructive engagement by the signatory parties in the Comité de suivi de l'Accord (CSA) and its mechanisms, as well as the absence of any ceasefire violations. He encourages redoubled efforts to implement the peace agreement, in particular institutional reforms, and translating the financial pledges made at the development conference in Paris into concrete peace dividends, which would improve the lives of the Malian population.

The SG also deplores the continued deterioration of the security situation, characterized by the spread of insecurity into central and southern Mali, and asymmetric attacks and intimidation by extremist and terrorist groups.

Received in ODSG

AK
Political Unit

24 December 2015

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Note to the Deputy Secretary-General

MINUSMA: Report of the Secretary-General on Mali

1. Please find attached the draft report of the Secretary-General on Mali further to resolution 2227 (2015), which requested that the Secretary-General report to the Security Council every three months on the situation in Mali, and to focus on the progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation and on the efforts of MINUSMA to support it. The draft report, which was prepared in consultation with MINUSMA and all United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes in the Integrated Task Force for Mali, covers the period from 23 September to 16 December 2015. The draft report is due to the Security Council on 29 December 2015. Consultations are tentatively scheduled for 12 January 2016.
2. The draft report emphasizes the noticeable progress made in the implementation of the peace agreement during the reporting period, notably due to the rapprochement between the signatory armed groups, namely the *Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad* (Coordination) and the Platform. The Coordination and the Platform held historical bilateral talks in Bamako, facilitated by SRSB Hamdi, and later in Anéfis (Kidal region), during which they signed an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, the release of detainees, and the launch of joint initiatives to promote reconciliation in the north. The draft report notes in that context that all Malian parties constructively participated in the implementation framework foreseen by the peace agreement, namely the *Comité de suivi de l'accord* (CSA) and its technical bodies, during the period under review.
3. The draft report assesses that the political gains made in the peace process have yet to translate into an improvement of the security situation in northern Mali, despite the absence of fighting between the Coordination and the Platform. The security trends continued to be characterized by an increase in the number and geographical spread of violent attacks against civilians, MINUSMA, the Malian Armed Forces and the French Force Barkhane, perpetrated by extremist groups and other armed groups that are not compliant with the peace agreement. The number of peacekeepers killed decreased in comparison with the previous reporting period from six to two military personnel, although attacks against peacekeepers persist. The draft report also describes MINUSMA and its convoys remaining primary targets of attacks by extremist groups in northern Mali.
4. The draft report notes that the technical committee on security in the framework of the CSA made some progress on the defense and security provisions of the peace agreement with the support of MINUSMA, including identifying some cantonment sites for combatants from the Coordination and the Platform, and launching the first mixed patrols in Kidal region on 14 November. The Malian authorities continued efforts to reform the security sector and prepare the establishment of key organs, such as the national commission for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and the national commission on integration.

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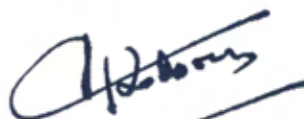
5. With respect to human rights, the draft report indicates that MINUSMA continued to document human rights violations by the Government, signatory armed groups, and other armed groups. Humanitarian assistance to the northern regions continued to be hampered by the lack of security, although the number of internally-displaced persons decreased since the last report, from 78,183 to approximately 62,000.

6. The draft report describes the efforts by the international community and the Malian parties for the development of Mali, including the historical pledges made at the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali held in Paris in October, as well as the continued efforts of the United Nations to deliver tangible peace dividends to the people in the northern regions.

7. The draft report notes that the deployment of the military component of MINUSMA was maintained at 93 per cent of authorized military personnel. Efforts to achieve full operating capability continued, including focusing on generating critically needed enablers such as the combat convoy battalion and helicopter units. The Mission's military capacity continued to be constrained by the significant need to focus on protecting convoys. The persistent attacks against convoys also continued to hamper the construction efforts of MINUSMA in the north.

8. The draft observations stress the need for the Malian parties to sustain the positive momentum for peace and implement all provisions of the peace agreement, while ensuring inclusivity and transparency of the process. It also notes that the political progress has strengthened the resolve of extremist groups and transnational drug traffickers to disrupt the peace process. In this regard, it calls on all parties to prioritize political and institutional reforms, including security sector reform and decentralization that underpin the execution of other key provisions. It also encourages the international community, in particular countries of the region, to cooperate closely to address the security threat at a subregional level. Finally, the draft observations encourage the Malian parties to seize the opportunity presented by the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali and deliver peace dividends to the people in the north.

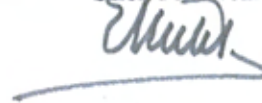
9. We would be grateful if you could obtain the Secretary-General's clearance of the report at his earliest convenience.



Herve Ladsous

DEC 17 2015

cc: Mr. Feltman
Mr. Khare



Draft Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2227 (2015), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2016 and requested me to report every three months on the situation in Mali, focusing on progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and MINUSMA's efforts to support it. The present report covers the period from 23 September to 16 December 2015.

II. Major political developments

2. The reporting period was characterized by a new momentum in the peace process with positive steps in the implementation of the peace agreement, including an improved relationship between the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad (Coordination) and the Platform following their bilateral talks in Anéfis, Kidal region. These positive developments also included a series of inter- and intra-communal reconciliation dialogues and the nomination of the members of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. Meanwhile, all signatory parties constructively participated in the Comité de suivi de l'Accord (CSA) and contributed to sustaining a positive momentum for the implementation of the peace agreement, in spite of outstanding challenges related to the inclusivity and transparency of the process.

3. On 23 September, my Special Representative convened a meeting between the military leadership of the Coordination and the Platform in Bamako. Under his auspices, the parties resolved to immediately cease hostilities, end all incursions into the areas under the other party's control, ensure free circulation of civilians and goods, and resume the Coordination's participation in the CSA and its subsidiary organs. The parties also agreed to initiate dialogue in Anéfis with a view to solving the long-standing inter- and intra-communal tensions at the root of

the conflict between them. On 27 and 28 September in Bamako, a Coordination delegation held meetings with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and the leaders of the Platform. Following the meetings, the Coordination announced that it would order its combatants to refrain from using force against Government forces and the Platform.

4. On 24 September, President Keïta announced a cabinet reshuffle that increased the total number of ministers from 29 to 31, of which five are women and two are from the north, namely the Minister in charge of Decentralization and State Reform and the Minister of Territorial Development and Population. The opposition parties deplored that this Government reshuffle was a missed opportunity to include politicians from outside of the presidential majority.

5. Between 27 September and 14 October, the Coordination and the Platform engaged in direct talks in Anéfis. At the end of the talks, the parties endorsed a roadmap that contained a series of measures, including the cessation of hostilities; joint initiatives for inter- and intra-communal reconciliation; the exchange of prisoners; the establishment of interim local administrations; and, the free movement of people and goods. Subsequently, the Coordination and the Platform brokered a series of inter- and intra-communal reconciliation agreements during and following the Anéfis talks in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions, including between the Ifoghas and Imghad Tuareg communities affiliated with the Coordination and the Platform, respectively. Separately, a number of inter- and intra-communal dialogues were held in Bamako as well as Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions throughout the reporting period, involving all Arab and Tuareg communities and the Peulh community. The Ministry of National Reconciliation organized two inter-communal dialogues in Ansongo and Gao in Gao region on 10 and 11 November with the support of MINUSMA. On 2 December, as part of Government's reconciliation efforts, the Council of Ministers adopted draft legislation on compensation for victims of the 2012 military coup.

6. Sensitization efforts on the peace agreement continued during the reporting period. On 20 October, the Government launched the second phase of the "Caravan for peace and

reconciliation” and held conferences and cultural events nationwide. For its part, MINUSMA continued to intensify and diversify outreach with the public at large to enhance the Malian people’s understanding of the peace agreement. On 29 October and 3 November, MINUSMA held information sessions with local politicians in Gao, Koulikoro, Mopti and Timbuktu to explain the various provisions of the agreement. On 5 December in Bamako, the Mouvement des Cadres et Responsables Chrétiens du Mali organized the first of six awareness raising workshops on the peace agreement in collaboration with the Ministry of National Reconciliation and MINUSMA, to be followed by additional workshops in Kayes, Mopti, San, Ségou and Sikasso.

Implementation of the peace agreement: political and institutional measures

7. During the reporting period, three meetings of the CSA were organized and attended by all signatory parties to the peace agreement. At the meeting held on 30 September and 1 October, the parties endorsed the work plan and roadmap for the political and institutional sub-committee. At the same meeting, the CSA decided to establish a working group chaired by the African Union Special Representative to address the participation in its meetings of armed groups outside of the Coordination and Platform coalitions, namely the Coalition du peuple de l’Azawad (CPA-Ousmane), the Coordination des mouvements et fronts patriotiques de résistance II (CMFPR-II), the Front populaire de l’Azawad (FPA) and the Mouvement populaire pour le salut de l’Azawad (MPSA), which had been participating in CSA meetings as invitees pending resolution of the issue of CSA membership. On 2 November, the CMFPR-II and the FPA announced their merger with the Coordination. On 7 November, the Alliance populaire pour la paix et l’unité nationale (ALPPUNA) joined the Platform. The working group is expected to continue deliberations on the status of the CPA-Ousmane and the MPSA.

8. The meeting of the CSA, held on 28 and 29 October, welcomed the outcome of the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali and underscored the need for the quick disbursement of pledged funds to start implementing critical programmes, including generating peace dividends. The CSA called on the Government to finalize the national development strategy for the north, including the national emergency response plan, in

consultation with the Coordination and the Platform by the end of 2015, further to the request of the Coordination and the Platform to the Government. Participants also stressed the need to accelerate the implementation of all four chapters of the peace agreement.

9. The meeting of the CSA held on 19 and 20 November was adjourned further to the terrorist attack against the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako on 20 November. However, it was marked by frustration on the part of the Coordination and the Platform over the slow progress in the implementation of the peace agreement by the Government. The Coordination and the Platform issued a joint statement deploring the Government's lack of inclusivity and inaction, in particular concerning the delayed establishment of interim administrations for the northern regions, the integration of northern citizens in State and public institutions, the provision of humanitarian assistance to the northern regions, and the release of conflict-related detainees. This is further to their joint letter of 13 October addressed to Algeria as president of the CSA in which they had voiced their concern over the lack of consultations by the Government on several institutional reforms, including the terms of reference and composition of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and the designation of the members of the Commission. To address these concerns, the Government agreed to provide monthly updates on the implementation of the peace agreement and to include the Coordination and the Platform in the National Committee of Coordination for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement. The sub-committee on political and institutional issues meanwhile failed to reach consensus on the law governing the designation of interim administrations in the northern regions and recommended that the matter be referred to the National Committee.

10. On 21 September, the Council of Ministers decided to postpone the regional, communal and district elections scheduled for 25 October, owing, inter alia, to the need to implement the revision of the electoral and decentralization laws envisaged by the peace agreement as well as due to the prevailing insecurity and absence of local authorities in some parts of the northern regions. Political parties, civil society organizations, the Coordination and the Platform had also requested that the polls be delayed until the return of refugees and internally displaced persons so as to guarantee an inclusive electoral process. On 13 November, the National Assembly adopted

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a bill extending the mandate of local authorities pending local elections. MINUSMA continued to support the Malian electoral management bodies in preparing for local elections by providing logistical support for the annual revision of the electoral list. The Mission and the United Nations Development Programme also conducted several workshops to address the needs of women candidates, observers and voters.

11. On 5 October, the President of the National Assembly reaffirmed the Parliament's commitment to the peace agreement stating that bills related to its implementation would be given priority. In early November, the Government started preparing a bill establishing the National Office of public service for the territorial collectivities. On 30 November, the High Council of the Territorial Collectivities, the national institution representing local authorities, endorsed the draft 2015 - 2024 national policy for decentralization and the draft agricultural policy of Mali, which have been submitted to the office of the Prime Minister in advance of being presented to the Council of Ministers for endorsement.

12. Following the appointment of the chair of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission on 3 August, the Council of Ministers on 14 October approved the nomination of 14 commissioners, including four women, two Coordination affiliates, two representatives of the Platform, and seven representatives of civil society, including one member of the Haut conseil islamique. Although the Ministry of National Reconciliation had requested the signatory armed groups, religious representatives and civil society organizations to propose candidates for the posts of commissioners, the Coordination did not submit names by the deadline. Several human rights organizations regretted the absence of victims' representatives among the commissioners. MINUSMA has enhanced its technical support to the Commission, and organized, from 26 to 28 October, together with international non-governmental organizations, training for the commissioners on the implementation of the Commission's mandate and how to foster effective communication with other judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.

13. Due to persistent security concerns, the number of State representatives operating in their duty stations in northern Mali saw limited improvement since my last report. While seven out of eight prefects are present at their duty station in the Mopti region, the number of sub-prefects present in the region has decreased from 43 to 38, mainly due to increased security threats. However, those sub-prefects who have relocated to Mopti continue to conduct regular missions to their duty stations throughout the region. The presence of justice and prison personnel has remained fairly constant with seven out of 12 courts and seven out of 12 prisons, respectively, operating in the three northern regions. In Mopti region, justice personnel for Ténenkou and Youwarou have relocated to the town of Mopti/Sévaré. In Timbuktu region, State representation increased during the month of November with the re-deployment of the sub-prefect for Tonka in Goundam cercle. The establishment of the interim administration arrangements in the northern regions, as envisaged by article 6 and Annex I of the peace agreement, however, did not occur during the reporting period as previously mentioned.

14. In October, the Ministry of the Promotion of Women, Children and Family sought international political and financial support to promote the effective participation of women in the implementation of the peace agreement and the resolution 1325 (2000) national action plan. Out of the 66 representatives from the Government and the signatory parties in the CSA, there is only one woman representative from the Government in one of the sub-committees. In another development aimed at enhancing women's political participation, the Parliament passed on 12 November a bill providing for a 30 per cent quota for the appointment of women to national institutions and legislative organs. The Council of Ministers is yet to issue a decree defining its application modalities.

Regional cooperation on the Sahel

15. There was significant progress on regional initiatives to comprehensively address challenges affecting the Sahel, including terrorism, organized crime, and human and drug trafficking. On 4 and 5 November in Bamako, the Government of Mali hosted the fourth Ministerial Coordination Platform of Sahel Strategies. The participants agreed to strengthen coordination and harmonization of the Ministerial Coordination Platform, the Nouakchott

process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region, the G5 Sahel and other regional mechanisms. On 4 November in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the chiefs of staff of the armed forces of the G5 Sahel countries, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, signed a military partnership agreement defining the modalities of cooperation of their armed forces to combat terrorism and cross-border criminality.

16. On 20 November, the G5 Sahel Summit was held in N'djamena, Chad. The Presidents of the G5 Sahel countries highlighted the challenges that continue to affect the region, notably, illicit drug and human trafficking, youth unemployment, radicalization, violent extremism, lack of socio-economic development, increased migration flows and forced displacement of people. They also welcomed the adoption of a roadmap in June defining the framework for cooperation between the G5 Sahel and the United Nations, to be coordinated under the leadership of the United Nations Office of Special Envoy for the Sahel.

III. Major security developments

17. While positive steps were taken toward the implementation of the peace agreement by the signatory parties, there was an increase in the number and geographical spread of activities by extremist and terrorist groups, and organized crime networks, notably in Mopti, Ségou, Timbuktu regions, as well as Bamako. The prevalence of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in northern Mali continued to put the Malian defense and security forces (MDSF), French forces and United Nations personnel at risk and to seriously constrain MINUSMA's operations. The Mission therefore continued to require convoy escorts and force protection, despite the absence of fighting between the Coordination and the Platform following the Anéfis talks and the ongoing efforts by the Government and the signatory armed groups to operationalize cantonment and mixed patrols.

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Asymmetric and extremist attacks

18. On 16 October, an Ansar Dine leader, Iyad Ag Ghaly, denounced the peace process and threatened to intensify attacks against the French forces and its allies in Mali, making specific references to extremist cells in Kidal, Mopti, Sikasso and Timbuktu regions. On 25 November, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) interrupted an intra-communal meeting of Arab tribes in Boujbeha (approximately 200 km north of Timbuktu), warning participants not to collaborate with the “enemies of Islam”. AQIM also expressed opposition to the peace agreement and the mixed patrols. On 6 December, the Mission received unconfirmed reports indicating a possible attack on Diabaly, Ségou region, by AQIM based in Lerneb, Timbuktu region. On the same day, AQIM claimed responsibility for the killing of two individuals, including a local Coordination leader, accused of aiding French forces in Ber, Timbuktu region, on 9 October and in Algeria on 19 November.

19. The activities of ~~extremist and terrorist~~ groups also continued unabated in northern Mali with a total of 28 attacks, compared to 20 attacks in the previous reporting period, targeting MINUSMA using IEDs or mines. During the reporting period, hostile acts against MINUSMA resulted in a total of two peacekeepers, one civilian staff and one civilian contractor killed, while 18 peacekeepers and two civilian contractors were injured. On 24 November, a MINUSMA armored vehicle in a logistic convoy hit by an IED 25 km west of Timbuktu in Timbuktu region, resulting in the first death of a MINUSMA civilian staff from an IED. On 28 November, six rockets hit the MINUSMA camp in Kidal, killing two peacekeepers and a civilian contractor while wounding 18 peacekeepers and two civilian contractors. Media reports cited a senior Ansar Dine figure claiming responsibility.

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20. MINUSMA convoys remained the primary target of extremist ~~and terrorist~~ groups and transnational drug traffickers on the main supply routes between Gao and Tessalit and between Gao and Ménaka (Gao region). On average, IEDs hit two out of three MINUSMA convoys between Anéfis and Gao and four out of five between Gao and Ménaka over the reporting period, damaging or destroying four MINUSMA military vehicles and three civilian contracted trucks. Counter-IED measures adopted by MINUSMA, in-depth training of troops and a revision of the

casualty evacuation procedures prevented all but one civilian casualty. Force protection measures, including convoy escort and camp protection, however, consume approximately two-thirds of MINUSMA's infantry troops, seriously hampering the implementation of mandated tasks in spite of elaborate planning and constant reprioritization of tasks, as well as significant financial and other resources.

21. The increase of activities by extremist and terrorist groups was particularly acute in Mopti region where a weak administrative structure and limited deployment of the MDSF were exploited. The deteriorating security situation coupled with the general sense of abandonment by the State and the peace process among the population, as well as the lack of economic opportunities, created a precarious environment in which marginalized youth were targeted by extremist and terrorist groups, such as the Front de liberation du Macina (FLM), which has links with Ansar Dine. In both Mopti and Ségou regions, MINUSMA received reports of at least three incidents ranging from death threats to summary execution of local authorities. In response, the MDSF launched counter-terrorist operations in Mopti and Ségou regions on 24 October, resulting in the arrest of a number of suspected terrorists. For its part, MINUSMA deployed two platoons of an infantry unit to Mopti immediately after the 7 August attack in Sévaré (Mopti region) to enhance the protection of United Nations personnel and secure the airfield, followed by the deployment of two additional infantry platoons and a company-level command and control team on 15 September.

22. On 20 November in Bamako, armed assailants gained access to the Radisson Blu Hotel and indiscriminately fired shots, killing 19 civilians and one Malian soldier, while injuring many others, including three seriously. At the request of the Government, MINUSMA supported the rescue operations led by the MDSF, deploying medical, investigation and forensics experts, and transferring the injured to a local clinic. The MDSF killed three assailants during the operations. The attack was reportedly claimed by Al Mourabitoun and the FLM. On the same day, the Government declared a ten-day state of emergency. At the request of the Government,

MINUSMA participated in daily joint night patrols with the Malian police and gendarmerie in Bamako from 20 November to 3 December.

23. The extremist and terrorist groups reportedly increasingly sought to secure new sources of funding to operate in northern Mali, including from the traffic of ivory. Following the alarming increase in the poaching of elephants in the first half of 2015 (57 killed out of an estimated population of 350), local authorities, MINUSMA and other partners undertook an assessment mission in the Douenza cercle (Mopti region) from 3 to 5 October. Following the killing of additional 11 elephants in October and November, MINUSMA police conducted patrols in the Douenza cercle in support of local authorities who deployed 50 additional park rangers to Mopti region.

Ceasefire monitoring

24. The Mission did not document any ceasefire violations during the period under review, in comparison to a number of ceasefire violations in and around Ménaka and in different parts of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions in the prior reporting period. Furthermore, as a result of the rapprochement between the CMA and the Platform, MINUSMA lifted the 20 km security zone around Kidal but decided to maintain its presence in Anéfis as well as the 20 km security zone around Ménaka to ensure the protection of civilians.

25. MINUSMA has also enhanced its system to monitor the ceasefire. The Mission has mapped the positions of the signatory parties as outlined in the ceasefire agreement of 23 May 2014 and updated it on a monthly basis. Depending on the nature, seriousness and location of reported incidents, MINUSMA sends either an *équipe mixte d'observation et de vérification* (EMOV) or military observers to investigate. As of 16 December, 11 military observers were deployed in each of MINUSMA's three military sectors in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions, as well as two in Bamako. Since 10 November, military observers in all three sectors conducted a total of 30 patrols to observe and assess the movement of the signatory parties.

26. In contrast with the compliance of signatory armed groups with the provisions of the peace and ceasefire agreements, the Mission observed that self-defense militias such as Ganda Izo and Ganda Koy, which are not party to the peace agreement, enhanced their activities and established checkpoints in central and northern Mali in late September. On 20 October, Ganda Izo-Seydou Cissé called on the Government to organize consultations between the Bella, Peulh and Songhai communities, similar to those held in Anéfis, and addressed an open letter to the Platform stating that they would take up arms against anyone preventing them from taking part in the peace process. On 4 November, representatives of Ganda Izo, Ganda Koy, Ganda Lassal Lizaye and Front de libération du nord informed MINUSMA that they would submit some 3,000 names for cantonment and that excluding Mopti region from the peace process went counter to the prospects for long-term peace and stabilization of Mali.

Implementation of the peace agreement: defense and security measures

27. Further to political measures mentioned in section II of this report, the Malian parties also made some progress in the defense and security provisions of the peace agreement. The CSA meeting on 30 September and 1 October endorsed the conclusions of the meetings of the Commission technique de sécurité (CTS) held on 1, 2 and 17 September, including those agreements related to the modalities for the reconnaissance of cantonment sites, the terms of reference of the Mécanisme opérationnel de coordination (MOC) and the operating procedures for the mixed patrols.

28. As of 19 November, the Coordination and the Platform had each proposed 12 cantonment sites, respectively. Subsequently, the mixed teams comprised of the United Nations, FAMa, Coordination and Platform assessed three Coordination sites and seven Platform sites against a series of technical criteria, such as the support required and the environmental impact. On 19 November and 12 December, the CTS approved five Coordination sites and six Platform sites and agreed to begin construction of the first three sites proposed by the Platform, namely Fafa, Inaggar (Gao region) and Likrakar (Timbuktu region). The Coordination and the Platform agreed to share one or two sites pending the construction of other sites, but they are yet to submit lists of

combatants. MINUSMA and the United Nations Office for Project Services intend to begin construction in the second half of December. Consistent with the decision taken by the MOC on 29 October, the first mixed patrol took place on 14 November when the Coordination joined a FAMA-Platform convoy from Aguelhok to 20 km north of Anéfis (Kidal region) returning from the Algerian border with nine vehicles donated by Algeria to the MOC.

29. During a meeting from 16 and 19 November, the CSA sub-committee on defense and security matters reviewed the draft decrees related to the National Commissions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and on integration, as well as the National Council on Security Sector Reform. MINUSMA, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), is developing a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategy for children, which will complement the national DDR policy. Efforts to strengthen democratic oversight of the security sector and ensure gender mainstreaming are also being incorporated into all stages of the security sector reform and DDR processes.

30. Meanwhile, on 14 October, the Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the Specialized Judicial Unit on Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime. MINUSMA supported the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights in operationalizing the unit that brings together a range of specialized capacities, such as prosecutors, investigating judges, and judicial clerks. Between 23 September and 16 December, MINUSMA trained 76 MDSF personnel on the issues related to transnational organized crime and counter-terrorism, including intelligence gathering and forensic investigation skills. MINUSMA also supported the development of holistic national policies on defense, counter-terrorism and border security. Furthermore, at the request of the Ministry of Defense and Former Combatants, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) destroyed a total of 256 tons of obsolete and expired ammunition in Ségou region.

Protection of civilians

31. Armed banditry constitutes the largest threat to civilians with over 75 per cent of incidents occurring in Gao and Timbuktu regions. Most crimes appeared to be theft motivated by

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economic incentives. The vastness of the regions and the sparse deployment of the MDSF remained challenges in reducing the high criminality levels and arresting and identifying the assailants in these regions. In response, MINUSMA Force adopted a robust and visible posture increasing the frequency of long range patrols in all northern regions as well as the use of its aviation assets and unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor remote areas and deter violence. MINUSMA police focused on urban centers and conducted over 1,600 patrols jointly with the Malian police, an increase of 29 per cent since the previous reporting period. In Timbuktu region, MINUSMA conducted an average of four reconnaissance flights per week over Ber, Goundam and Gourma-Rharous to monitor the movements of armed groups and reassure the population. On 2 December, MINUSMA co-located police in the local gendarmerie headquarters in Gao as part of its efforts to support their capacity-building.

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32. Inter-communal conflict persisted, particularly in Gao region. At least six violent clashes took place between members of two Tuareg communities, the Daoussak (largely pro-Coordination) and the Imghad (predominantly pro-Platform), as well as between the Daoussak and Peulh communities, in the area between Ansongo and Ménaka in Gao region. On 30 October, as part of the reconciliation initiative pursuant to the Anéfis talks, the Coordination and the Platform organized an intra-communal dialogue between two communities in Inouellene, Gao region. Approximately 300 people reportedly attended the event, including prominent figures from both communities and local officials. Following the spate of violent clashes on 21 – 23, 30 October, 11 and 14 November between the Daoussak and Peulh communities also in Gao region, which left four killed, one injured and four others abducted, my Special Representative convened a meeting on 23 November in Bamako between leaders from the two communities. At this meeting, the participants signed an agreement to cease hostilities and agreed to discuss the root causes of the tensions between the two communities. Humanitarian actors assessed that fighting between the Daoussak and Peulh communities forced approximately 4,500 civilians to be displaced in Ménaka commune.

33. On 28 and 29 October, MINUSMA supported the Governorate of Mopti in organizing a regional conference among farmers, herders and fishermen, aimed at preventing conflicts stemming from seasonal cattle migration. The participants proposed 19 recommendations on conflict prevention measures and management of wetlands in Mopti and Ségou regions. MINUSMA's quick impact project demarcated roads for cattle migration in 15 communes of Mopti region to prevent conflicts between farmers and herders.

IV. Human Rights

34. MINUSMA continued to document violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the MDSF, the Coordination, the Platform and other armed groups. A total of 25 cases of human rights violations and abuses involving at least 157 victims were reported during the reporting period, in comparison to 29 cases and 70 victims in my last report. The cases involved three summary executions and enforced disappearance, 96 arbitrary detentions, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees, and six cases of sexual violence involving ten victims.

35. As of 16 December, MINUSMA identified 289 conflict-related detainees, all male, including six boys, held in state-run detention facilities throughout the country. Of these, 157 have been detained illegally. The number of people detained by the Coordination and the Platform decreased from 67 in June to 43 in December as a result of the release of detainees by all signatory parties as part of confidence-building measures. On 1 October in Gao, the Government freed 21 detainees affiliated with the Platform, including two minors, and nine others affiliated with the Coordination. The Coordination released 16 FAMA soldiers and two children associated with the Platform. The Coordination continued to detain three children. Discussions continued between the parties for the release of an additional 111 individuals, of which 49 are detained by Malian authorities.

36. MINUSMA continued to monitor detention conditions and the legal status of detainees charged with terrorism. As of 16 December, 50 individuals were charged with terrorism and detained in state-run detention facilities in Gao, Koulikoro, Mopti and Timbuktu regions and Bamako. In the context of counter-terrorist operations mentioned in paragraph 21, which started on 24 October in Mopti and Ségou regions, at least 29 men were arrested on suspicion of being associated with terrorist groups. Among them, eight were reportedly subjected to ill-treatment by the FAMA upon their arrest. On 26 September, Ahmad Al Mahdi Al Faqi, an Ansar al-Dine member, became the first Malian citizen to be surrendered to the International Criminal Court by the authorities of Niger.

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37. During the reporting period, ten women reported to MINUSMA of having been victims of sexual violence by the Platform combatants and the Ganda Izo local defense group. This included three consecutive acts of rape reportedly committed against one woman and the attempted rape of three women and one girl near Anéfis by members of the Groupe d'autodéfense touareg Imghad et alliés (GATIA) during its occupation by the Platform. On 29 September, in Timbuktu region, one girl and one woman were allegedly raped by CPA-Ousmane combatants and on 28 October, one woman by Ganda Izo combatants. As of 16 December, 12 women had been heard by a magistrate in Bamako on these incidents. Measures to ensure the security of the survivors were put in place through the MINUSMA Protection Trust Fund for conflict-related sexual violence.

38. MINUSMA noted the continuing recruitment of children as well as the military use of schools. On 2 October, MINUSMA documented one case and identified two alleged cases of child recruitment involving six boys by signatory armed groups in Timbuktu region. As of 16 December, a total of seven schools remained under military use by signatory armed groups in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions.

V. Humanitarian situation

39. Insecurity continued to constrain humanitarian access and activities, hampering the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, and causing new displacement in northern Mali.

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The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) registered 15 incidents that resulted in delays or the temporary suspension of humanitarian activities in Gao and Mopti regions. About 80 per cent of the incidents, especially carjacking, occurred in the Gao region, particularly in Ménaka cercle. OCHA continued to sensitize Coordination and Platform leaders on humanitarian principles for safe access. The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) continuously provided flights for humanitarian actors to reach vulnerable populations in the north. Meanwhile, MINUSMA conducted a comprehensive mine and IED clearance of the secondary airfield in Kidal, which is essential for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, while also securing the airfield as there was a high risk of re-mining.

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40. Security concerns prevented 288 schools in 59 localities from re-opening in Gao and Kidal regions, western Timbuktu region, four districts in Mopti region and one district in Ségou region. The delay in the implementation of the exceptional administrative measures provided for by the peace agreement hampered the resumption of basic services, including education, in Kidal region. Specifically in Kidal region, only 15 out of a total of 62 primary and junior high schools re-opened on 19 October for the first time in three years following the efforts by the Government and the Coordination with the support of UNICEF. Demonstrations in Kidal against the visit of a senior government official led to the cancellation of the Minister of Education's participation in the school re-opening ceremony. As of 16 December, 52 volunteer teachers and five paid teachers were educating over 3,300 children in the 15 schools in Kidal region. In Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions, the World Food Programme provided school meals to 142,800 children in 782 primary schools, and take home food rations to 64,198 girls to encourage their attendance at school.

41. In October and early November, an estimated 4,000 Malian refugees arrived in Niger due to insecurity in north-eastern Mali. As of mid-December, there were approximately 62,000

internally displaced persons in Mali and approximately 137,000 Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger.

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VI. Economic development, cultural preservation and environment

42. Six months after the signing of the peace agreement and following the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali in October, expectations for the delivery of peace dividends were high amongst the Malian population. In order to promote ownership and support to the peace process, MINUSMA and the United Nations country team continued to strive to deliver tangible peace dividends to the population through flexible and responsive mechanisms, including quick impact projects, the Peacebuilding Fund, and the MINUSMA Trust Fund in Support of Peace and Security.

43. Since June, MINUSMA scaled up its support to communities in the north by approximately 30 per cent, supporting 36 new quick impact projects amounting to approximately US \$1.3 million. New projects included the provision of potable water in Kidal region, access to schools in Mopti, equipment for health centers in Kidal and Mopti, the refurbishment of social care centers in Gao, social reintegration projects for vulnerable communities, women, youth and internally displaced persons in Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu regions, as well as the rehabilitation of some government law enforcement facilities in Bamako as well as Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions.

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44. From 6 to 8 October, in preparation for the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali, the United Nations facilitated consultations by the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank to assess the socio-economic and development needs in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions, as part of their joint evaluation mission to the north in accordance with article 36 of the peace agreement. The population and regional authorities of Mopti expressed concern over the exclusion of the region from the development strategies for the northern regions, despite being significantly affected by

the conflict and having an estimated population of 2.2 million, three times larger than that of the three northern regions combined. On 25 November, the Coordination and the Platform met with the three banks and recommended to conduct additional consultations to ensure that the specific needs of the most vulnerable people were reflected in the national development strategy for the north to be developed by the Government.

45. The international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali hosted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris on 22 October generated pledges of approximately €3.2 billion for the period of 2015 - 2017, of which €700 million have been earmarked for the northern regions. At this conference, the Government presented a draft development strategy for the north, as per article 34 of the peace agreement, together with the national emergency response plan for the northern regions referred to in paragraph eight above, consisting of short-term activities aimed at delivering quick peace dividends to the population through the restoration of State authority, economic revitalization, strengthening of social cohesion and delivery of basic social services. The Government also announced the creation of a sustainable development fund to which it would contribute €450 million over the period of 2016 - 2018. The Coordination and the Platform spoke with a unified voice in support of the implementation of the peace agreement at the conference. In addition to the signatory parties, 64 countries, regional organizations, international partners, Malian civil society and private sector attended the conference. Malian organizations underlined the importance of swiftly translating the pledges into tangible benefits for the population and ensuring transparency in the management of the funds.

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46. The Mission undertook several initiatives to address the issue of youth unemployment, with stands at approximately 60 per cent for persons under 35 years old. With the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations country team implemented projects to support income generation activities for youth and displaced populations in Gao and Timbuktu regions. The fund also supported the design of tools and materials to teach the importance of peace in schools in Timbuktu.

47. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Plus for 2015 - 2019, which sets out a strategic framework for a collective United Nations response to the Government's poverty reduction strategy, was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, my Special Representative, and heads of the United Nations country team on 17 September. The UNDAF Plus also replaced the United Nations Integrated Strategic Framework in Mali.

48. MINUSMA continued to consider environmental impacts while operating in the vicinity of cultural and historical sites. From 23 September to 7 December, the Mission trained 756 personnel on environmental and cultural management as per the provisions of the environmental policy of the Departments of Field Support and Peacekeeping Operations for the United Nations field missions.

VII. Deployment and capacities of MINUSMA

Military

49. As of 16 December, the strength of MINUSMA's military component stood at 10,638 out of an authorized strength of 11,240, representing 93 per cent of authorized military personnel. Women represented two per cent of the Force. Key outstanding capacities include a combat convoy battalion, a medium military utility helicopter unit, an attack helicopter unit, a military transport aircraft, additional military staff officers for sector headquarters, and a Force protection company. MINUSMA has also requested troop-contributing countries to urgently deploy 92 armored personnel carriers and mine protected vehicles to reach the originally planned levels in order to enhance the Mission's ability to protect convoys. Concerns over the operational capability of some infantry units remain due to the lack of sufficient contingent-owned equipment, both in major equipment (four contingents are below 70 per cent of requirements) as well as self-sustainment capabilities (four contingents are below 60 per cent of requirements), which meet United Nations standards. The areas of bilateral support needed for the MINUSMA troop-contributing countries include maintenance of armored personnel carriers, capacity-

building in minor engineering works and logistic support, and training to improve the asymmetric warfare capabilities of the contingents.

Police

50. As of 16 December, the strength of MINUSMA's police component stood at 1,055 personnel, representing 71 per cent of its authorized strength of 1,440, with 58 per cent of individual police officers (seven per cent of them women) and 82 per cent of the formed police unit personnel (five per cent of them women) deployed. MINUSMA continues to require the deployment of specialized police personnel, including a police riverine capacity composed of formed police units and individual police officers, to support the MDSF in transnational organized crime and counter-terrorism matters. Meanwhile, in light of the increased attacks by extremist and terrorist groups, the Malian authorities have requested MINUSMA to support the establishment of special weapons and tactics (SWAT) capacities within Malian law enforcement agencies, which the Mission will support through a team specialized in such capacity-building within the authorized ceiling.

Civilian personnel

51. With respect to civilian staff, 84 per cent was deployed, comprising 83 per cent of international posts, 70 per cent of United Nations volunteer positions, and 88 per cent of national posts. Women hold 28 per cent of all civilian positions. Civilian staff are currently deployed in Bamako (824), Gao (164), Kidal (80), Mopti (87), Tessalit (16) and Timbuktu (121).

Construction of camps

52. Persisting security constraints limited the number of logistics convoys in northern Mali, negatively affecting the delivery of supplies and materials and constraining construction efforts. Despite these difficulties, camps in Gao and Timbuktu cities were fully operational at the end of November, enabling MINUSMA to start redeploying approximately 6,000 troops to these facilities, while other camps have yet to be completed or MINUSMA awaits a response from the Government to allocate land for the construction of a camp in Mopti. In Bamako, preparations

continued to move the Mission's headquarters from the Hotel l'Amitié in order to relocate MINUSMA personnel by March 2016.

VIII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

United Nations personnel continued to operate in extremely volatile security conditions in Mali. In response to the persistent attacks on MINUSMA and the spread of the activities of extremist and terrorist groups, the Mission enhanced security measures in the northern regions and Bamako, as well as Mopti as outlined in paragraph 21. In Kidal, the aerostat balloon and surveillance equipment to improve force protection and security is expected to be installed in Kidal by January 2016. A similar capacity is planned to support the camp in Gao. The ground alert system, which broke down in July, was repaired and became operational again on 10 December.

53. UNMAS also continued to support the safety and security of MINUSMA personnel by providing technical assistance to MINUSMA explosive ordnance disposal teams and specialized infantry platoons. It also conducted pre-deployment training of trainers on IED response for 355 personnel of MINUSMA contingents, which provide escorts for convoys. In Bamako, in addition to conducting the joint night patrols with the Malian police as mentioned in paragraph 22, MINUSMA enhanced security measures around United Nations premises in the wake of the attack on the Radisson Hotel.

IX. Conduct and discipline

54. During the reporting period, one allegation of sexual abuse, involving a minor, was reported. Pursuant to my 2003 bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, the Mission took additional precaution measures to prevent such acts from taking place in Mali. The Mission sensitized the local population in Bamako, Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu to strengthen the existing mechanisms for reporting misconduct implicating

the United Nations personnel. MINUSMA also raised awareness on prohibited conduct such as sexual exploitation and abuse through 12 outreach activities, reaching approximately 600 persons. Steps are also being taken to implement strengthened measures detailed in my last report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/69/779).

X. Observations

55. A new momentum in the Malian peace process has emerged during the reporting period. I welcome the rapprochement between the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad (Coordination) and the Platform as a result of their bilateral talks held between 27 September and 14 October in Anéfis during which the parties agreed to cooperate on, inter alia, the cessation of hostilities; inter- and intra-community reconciliation; exchange of detainees; the return of interim local administration; and, the free movement of people and goods. The new momentum was accompanied by a high level of engagement by the international community in support of peace in Mali, as expressed at the 1 October Ministerial consultative meeting in New York. I was encouraged to see the commitment demonstrated by the Government of Mali at the international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali held in Paris on 22 October and the unified voice expressed by the Coordination and the Platform in support of the implementation of the peace agreement. The improved relationship between the signatory armed groups translated into their constructive participation in the Comité de suivi de l'Accord (CSA) and its mechanisms, as well as the absence of any ceasefire violations, were welcome developments.

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56. The signatory parties must now redouble efforts to implement the peace agreement, in particular those institutional reforms that underpin the execution of all other provisions of the agreement, while ensuring an inclusive, transparent and sustained process. Ultimately, the responsibility for the success of the peace agreement rests with the signatories. Without the determined will of the Malian parties and their constituencies to move forward with the implementation of all provisions of the peace agreement in a parallel and synchronized manner,

the impact of the support of the international community will remain limited. The parties must ensure broad and inclusive consultations with all stakeholders, including the signatories, civil society, women and youth, to consolidate the Malian people's ownership of their future. While doing so, local priorities and development needs of not only the three northern regions but all Malians should be taken into account. I am encouraged in that context by the recent adoption by the Parliament of Legislation introducing a 30 per cent quota for women's appointment in national institutions and legislative organs.

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57. The political progress made in the peace process must urgently translate into tangible improvement of the security conditions for the people of Mali. I encourage all parties to advance on the defense and security measures envisaged by the peace agreement and accelerate the efforts of the Commission technique de sécurité and the Mécanisme opérationnel de coordination on the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes, including the sustainable operationalization of the mixed patrols. Security sector reform is another priority process to be implemented, as there cannot be successful cantonment and DDR processes in the absence of a comprehensive strategy for security sector reform. I call on the Government of Mali to establish, at the earliest, the National Commissions on DDR and on integration, while ensuring inclusiveness of the process through, inter alia, the revision of the National Council on Security Sector Reform. While the gradual re-deployment of the Malian defense and security forces requires further coordination among the parties, the initiative by the Government of Mali to address terrorism-related security threats in Mopti and Ségou regions was a welcome development.

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58. The security situation in Mali has continued to deteriorate during the reporting period, and civilians, the Malian armed forces, French forces and MINUSMA remained the target of asymmetric and sophisticated attacks. I strongly condemn these barbaric acts and express my deepest condolences to the families of victims of these crimes as well as to the Government of Mali and the Governments of the countries of origin of the United Nations peacekeepers who have lost their lives. I reiterate my appeal for these crimes to be investigated and punished in

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earnest. Attacks targeting United Nations peacekeepers may constitute war crimes under international law.

59. As northern Mali remains an extremely difficult environment in which to operate, MINUSMA is likely to continue to face significant security challenges posed by actors outside of the peace process, namely extremist and terrorist groups, and transnational drug traffickers. I am particularly concerned about the spread of insecurity into central and southern Mali, and the unacceptable attacks and intimidation by extremist and terrorist groups.

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60. Under such circumstances, MINUSMA's troop- and police-contributing countries will continue to require support in terms of capabilities. I encourage all troop- and police-contributing countries and bilateral donors to continue their efforts to ensure that all contingents have the necessary equipment and training to operate in this challenging environment. I look forward to the rapid deployment of a combat convoy battalion, and urge the rapid deployment of the priority military and police capabilities outlined in paragraphs 49 and 50. I remain committed to implementing innovative measures to ensure the implementation of MINUSMA's mandate while enhancing protection of its personnel.

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61. The appointment of the 14 members of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission was a welcome development. However, I regret the absence of victims' representatives among its members. Sustainable reconciliation can only result from a comprehensive and transparent truth-seeking, justice and reparation process with a Commission supported by the whole population. I congratulate the Government of Mali, the Coordination and the Platform for organizing a series of inter- and intra-communal dialogues to promote reconciliation among different communities of the north. Inclusivity in such dialogues is critical to finding long-term solutions. I encourage all parties to ensure that traditional and local leaders, women and youth play a role in the national and local reconciliation efforts.

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62. I welcome the important pledges made by Mali's partners during the Paris international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali, which highlighted the

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international community's unanimous support to the peace process in Mali. The parties must sustain the momentum by translating the pledges made in Paris into concrete peace dividends, which would improve the lives of the Malian population. I call on the Government of Mali to capitalize on this momentum and accelerate the return of basic services in the northern regions. MINUSMA and the United Nations country team will continue to support the Malian parties in the consolidation of the gains made in the peace process, including through quick impact projects.

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63. I welcome the establishment by the Malian authorities of the Specialized Judicial Unit on Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime. The United Nations stands ready to provide support to enhance the Malian authorities' capacity to face these security challenges. While the full implementation of the peace agreement is the priority to ensure long-term stability in Mali, the trans-border nature of the threats calls for enhanced regional security cooperation. In this regard, I encourage Member States in the sub-region to enhance the effectiveness of initiatives to address security threats, including measures to prevent and counter violent extremism. I reiterate that effective counter-terrorism measures and respect for international human rights and humanitarian law are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and essential to combat terrorism. The United Nations remains committed to coordinating with regional mechanisms, including the African Union-led Nouakchott process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region and the G5 Sahel. I also urge the Government of Mali and the international community to allocate adequate resources to address the illicit trafficking of ivory, and other poaching activities, that are increasingly used as a source of revenue to finance extremist and terrorist groups.

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64. Lastly, I wish to express my appreciation to Mongi Hamdi, for his service as my Special Representative for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, and for his tireless efforts in supporting the Malian peace process and his personal initiatives to diffuse inter-communal tensions. I commend the members of the international Mediation for its sustained support to the Malian parties. I also wish to pay special tribute to the men and women of MINUSMA, troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union, and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-

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governmental organizations and all other partners, many of whom have been serving under difficult conditions and facing grave threats in a hostile environment, for their important contributions in support of peace and stability in Mali and for their dedication and contribution to the Mission.