## 11. The situation in Mali

During the period under review, the Security Council held seven meetings and adopted two resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter in relation to the situation in Mali. Five meetings took the form of briefings and two meetings were convened for the adoption of a resolution. More information on the meetings, including on participants and outcomes, is provided in the table below. The Council also held one private meeting with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001). Besides meetings, Council members held informal consultations of the whole in connection with this item.

In 2022, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA briefed the Council four times further to the periodic reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. <sup>438</sup> The Council also heard briefings by three civil society representatives <sup>439</sup> and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali. <sup>440</sup> Mali was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in two out of the four briefings held under this item. <sup>441</sup>

In 2022, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General updated Council members on the talks between the transitional Government of Mali and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to define a new transition timetable for the holding of elections and a return to civilian government, progress in the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, as well as the security and humanitarian situation in the country amid an increase in violence perpetrated by extremist groups. In his first briefing of the year on 11 January 2022, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted that, at its extraordinary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>435</sup> For more information on the format of meetings, see part II.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>436</sup> See <u>A/77/2</u>, part II, chap. 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>437</sup> The private meeting was held on 7 June 2022 under the item entitled "Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <u>1353 (2001)</u>, annex II, sections A and B". See S/PV.9057.

<sup>438</sup> See <u>S/PV.8945</u>, <u>S/PV.9012</u>, <u>S/PV.9061</u> and <u>S/PV.9154</u>. See also <u>S/2021/1117</u>, <u>S/2022/278</u>, <u>S/2022/446</u> and <u>S/2022/731</u>.

<sup>439</sup> See S/PV.8945, S/PV.9012 and S/PV.9061.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>440</sup> See S/PV.9200.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>441</sup> See S/PV.9061 and S/PV.9154.

Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government held on 9 January 2022, ECOWAS rejected the new timeline proposed by the transitional Government of Mali to extend the political transition and hold elections by the end of 2025 and urged it to focus on a speedy return to constitutional order. ECOWAS also decided to uphold the individual sanctions imposed on 12 December 2021 and added new measures including the closure of land and air borders between member States and Mali. The Special Representative noted that, against this political backdrop, the international mediation for the implementation of the Peace Agreement, led by Algeria and including MINUSMA and other international stakeholders, called for the early convening of a high-level decision-making meeting between the signatories to allow for overdue progress, most notably on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. MINUSMA also continued providing structured support for the Malian authorities on the drafting of a comprehensive politically-led strategy for central Mali, as requested by the Council.

The Special Representative observed that 2021 saw more extremist attacks than ever and that MINUSMA suffered the highest number of casualties since 2013, which underlined the dangerous environment in which it was operating. He stated that the conflict had a devastating impact on civilians and that the number of displaced persons increased from 216,000 in 2020 to more than 400,000 in 2021, and that more than 1.8 million people were expected to need food assistance in 2022 compared to 1.3 million in 2021. The Special Representative further reported on the work of MINUSMA to physically verify the status of schools, protect civilians and ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers.

During the meeting held on 7 April 2022, the Special Representative noted several deadly attacks perpetrated by the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara in the Ménaka region and south of Gao and MINUSMA's deployment of its mobile task force units in response to the incidents. He observed that the attacks occurred in the context of the withdrawal of Operation Barkhane and Takuba Taskforce from Mali and stressed the importance of maintaining the Mission's capabilities and troops and finding adequate response for its capability shortfalls. While noting that the Malian Defence and Security Forces had stepped up their counter-terrorism efforts in central Mali, the Special Representative emphasized that such operations had to be conducted in

<sup>442</sup> See S/PV.8945.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>443</sup> See S/PV.9012.

ways that minimized civilian harm and upheld human rights and international humanitarian principles and had to be complemented by practical and sustained steps to address the root causes of the conflict and violence including the finalization and implementation of the Government's politically-led strategy. With respect to the political transition, he noted that the ECOWAS extraordinary Summit of 25 March 2022 endorsed the proposal of its Mediator, former President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, to extend the transition period for 12 to 16 months as a basis of negotiation on the gradual lifting of sanctions against Mali.

On 13 June 2022, the Special Representative stated that the prolonged uncertainty surrounding the duration of the political transition made it more difficult to make progress in other areas, leaving little political space for a sustained commitment to the implementation of the Peace Agreement. 444 He noted that MINUSMA and Algeria continued to engage with the Government and other signatory parties particularly on the organization of the high-level decision-making meeting and finalizing the details of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process based on the Government's offer to integrate 26,000 combatants into State structures and a common understanding of the broad outlines of necessary institutional reforms. The Special Representative expressed concern regarding the deteriorating security situation in the tri-border area of Liptako-Gourma due to attacks by the Islamic State, with consequent effects on Ménaka and Gao. He noted that MINUSMA was enhancing its presence in Ménaka, prioritizing long-range patrols and establishing temporary operating bases in Gao and Mopti. With regard to the centre of Mali, he informed Council members that the Malian Defence and Security Forces campaign had undeniably led to the improvement of the situation in some areas and a weakening of the extremist groups. However, he expressed concern that some of the operations were marred by allegations of human rights violations.

In his statement on 18 October 2022, the Special Representative reported that significant progress was made in the preparation for elections in Mali following the agreement between Mali and ECOWAS in July 2022 on a new transition timetable which extended the transition until the end of March 2024. Specifically with regard to the transition, the Special Representative noted that a draft constitution was presented to the transitional President of Mali,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>444</sup> See S/PV.9061.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>445</sup> See S/PV.9154.

Colonel Assimi Goïta, on 11 October 2022 and was expected to be put to a referendum in March 2023. According to the Special Representative, the draft was based on the recommendations of the national dialogue on the reform process, provided for the establishment of a bicameral parliament and included provisions that would greatly facilitate the implementation of the Peace Agreement. He further noted progress in the establishment of the Independent Authority for Election Management and the operationalization of the mechanism for monitoring the transition timetable which involved the Malian parties, ECOWAS, the African Union and MINUSMA. Furthermore, in his view, the success of the electoral process depended on the availability of financial and logistical resources, the evolution of the security situation and its overall inclusiveness.

The Special Representative also noted some encouraging developments in the implementation of the Peace Agreement and welcomed the Government's adoption of its comprehensive strategy for the stabilization of central Mali on 24 August 2022 which was based on the four axes of peace, security and social cohesion; governance and justice; economic and humanitarian recovery; and communication and cooperation.

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Notwithstanding these positive developments, the Special Representative noted a sharp increase in the activities of extremist elements affiliated with the Islamic State and Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin in the Ménaka and Gao regions since March 2022. Regarding humanitarian developments, he informed Council members that the number of internally displaced persons had risen to over 422,000, while over 175,000 people were refugees in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, more than 1.8 million people faced severe food insecurity, 1.2 million children under the age of five were affected by malnutrition, and more than 600,000 children were affected by school closures due to insecurity. The Special Representative concluded his remarks by echoing the call of the Secretary-General for the urgent provision of missing capabilities for MINUSMA and stressed that its effectiveness depended on the

cooperation of the Malian authorities, including with regard to freedom of movement in conformity with the status of forces agreement.

In their briefings in 2022, the three civil society representatives offered their views on the connection between social inequality and the conflict in Mali, challenges to the participation of women in security sector reform and the impact of the political and security situation on the civilian population. At the meeting held on 11 January 2022, the Executive Director of the Youth Association for Active Citizenship and Democracy, a Mali-wide organization promoting social justice and democratic values, said that after ten years of failed stabilization strategies, and with the Sahelian crisis at its worst, it was time for a paradigm change. 446 She noted that social, economic, political and environmental inequalities were dangerously fuelling crises and instability and that the military response to the security situation was inadequate to overcome and contain threats. She called on the Council to put its trust in the Malian people and their civil society in order to improve governance, noting that MINUSMA had an important role to play in that regard. In her statement on 7 April 2022, the President of Women in Law and Development in Africa in Mali, a pan-African network for the promotion and protection of women's rights, expressed the view that the security context in Mali had compounded inequalities and widened the gap that had to be overcome for women and young people to gain access to resources and governance. 447 In the face of those challenges, she noted that civil society was planning to coordinate the efforts made by the Council and the Government and promote a legal framework and resources conducive to building a more inclusive, effective, transparent, sustainable and responsible security sector that would serve the people of Mali. In this regard, she outlined several recommendations on how to overcome the barriers to women's participation in the security sector and its reform and to strengthen the mandate of MINUSMA. She also called on the Council to add a reference to climate change to the Mission's mandate, as a key element that effected the security of the population, specifically women and children. On 13 June 2022, the Director of Mali Musso and writer, discussed the consequences of the political stalemate and deteriorating security situation in Mali, including grave violations and abuses against civilians,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>446</sup> See S/PV.8945.

<sup>447</sup> See S/PV.9012.

conflict-related and gender-based violence, the closure of schools and youth unemployment. 448 She underlined that the Council should ensure that its decisions were leading to action on the ground and reiterated the recommendation to bolster the mandate of MINUSMA under Chapter VII of the Charter to fight terrorism alongside the Malian armed forces.

By resolution 2640 (2022) of 29 June 2022, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council extended the mandate of MINUSMA for a period of one year, until 30 June 2023. 449 While maintaining the overall strategic priorities of MINUSMA to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the political transition, and to facilitate the implementation by Malian actors of a strategy which addressed the root causes and drivers of conflict in central Mali, the Council also introduced some modifications including, among others, for the Mission to ensure that its support to the Malian Defence and Security Forces was provided in compliance with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. 450 The Council further expressed its support for the proposal of the Secretary-General to conduct an internal review of MINUSMA and requested the review to be conveyed no later than 13 January 2023. 451 In addition to addressing the mandate of MINUSMA, the Council urged the Malian parties to work towards resuming the meetings of all implementing bodies of the Peace Agreement and called on the Government to make tangible progress to achieve the political transition, the swift return to constitutional order and the handover of power to democratically elected civilian authorities. 452 Further, the Council urged the Malian authorities to prevent, minimize and address civilian harm that might result from operations undertaken by the Malian Defence and Security Forces and called for a cessation of all restrictions on MINUSMA's freedom of movement by ground and air, disinformation campaigns and other destabilizing activities and a constructive dialogue between the authorities and the Mission. 453

Resolution <u>2640 (2022)</u> was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions cast by China and the Russian Federation. <sup>454</sup> In their statements after the vote, the representatives of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>448</sup> See S/PV.9061.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>449</sup> Resolution <u>2640 (2022)</u>, para. 15. For further information on the mandate of MINUSMA, see part X, sect. I.

<sup>450</sup> Resolution  $\frac{2640 (2022)}{2640 (2022)}$ , paras. 18 and 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>451</sup> Ibid., para. 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>452</sup> Ibid., paras. 1 and 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>453</sup> Ibid., paras. 2 and 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>454</sup> See S/PV.9082.

France, the United Kingdom and the United States expressed regret that the resolution did not receive unanimous support and highlighted the importance of the new provisions related to the Government's responsibility to ensure the Mission's freedom of movement, to protect civilians and conduct human rights monitoring and ensuring that the support given to the Malian Defence and Security Forces complied with the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. 455

The representatives of China, Gabon, Ghana and the Russian Federation disagreed with the addition of new language on human rights. 456 Specifically, the representative of the Russian Federation described the language as "intrusive" and expressed the view that it would not advance the Malian people's exercise of their sovereign right to protect their citizens and investigate incidents. The representative of China stated that the resolution lent too much prominence to human rights issues and stressed that, in fulfilling its human rights mandate, MINUSMA should communicate and cooperate closely with the Government and listen to its views carefully. The representative of Gabon opined that the resolution focused only on human rights, did not support Mali in restoring peace and stability, violated the country's sovereignty and failed to take into account the efforts made by its security forces to defend its territory. The representative of India criticized the ambiguous nature of terms such as "robust posture", emphasizing that MINUSMA was not mandated to conduct counter-terrorism operations. Furthermore, together with Brazil, the representative of India objected to the added language of climate change and the establishment of a link between climate change and security. In contrast to this view, the representatives of Gabon, Ghana and Kenya expressed regret that the resolution did not contain stronger language regarding the impact of climate change on the situation in Mali, in addition to strengthening the Mission's protection of civilians mandate.

On 23 November 2022, the Council heard a briefing by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali who reported on the work of the Committee during 2022. 457 In this regard, he highlighted the Committee's engagement with the representatives of Mali and regional States to discuss the challenges in the implementation of the sanctions measures authorized by the Council and its consideration of the final report of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>455</sup> Ibid., France, United States and United Kingdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>456</sup> Ibid., Russian Federation, China, Gabon and Ghana.

 $<sup>^{457}</sup>$  See <u>S/PV.9200</u>. For more information on the mandate of the Committee established pursuant to resolution <u>2374</u> (2017), see part IX, sect I.B.1.

Panel of Experts of 3 August 2022 and its recommendations. <sup>458</sup> By resolution 2649 (2022) of 30 August 2022, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council unanimously renewed the travel ban and asset freeze on Mali as set out in resolution 2374 (2017) until 31 August 2023 and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 30 September 2023. <sup>459</sup> The Council further expressed its intention to review the mandate of the Panel and take appropriate action regarding its further extension no later than 31 August 2023. <sup>460</sup>

In their discussions during the periodic briefings in 2022, Council members expressed concern with the political, security and humanitarian situation in Mali. Regarding the political transition, they called for strengthened engagement between the Government of Mali and ECOWAS, welcomed the agreement on the new transition timetable and called for its full implementation for a swift restoration of constitutional order. Many Council members further expressed concern with the negative impact of the 2020 and 2021 coups d'état on the implementation of the Peace Agreement, but nonetheless welcomed the holding of the high-level decision-making meeting in August and the resumption of meetings of the Monitoring Committee in October 2022. While noting this progress, a number of speakers stressed the need for an inclusive approach to the transition and the peace process, with the full and equal participation of women. 461

All Council members raised concern with the increase in terrorist attacks in Mali in 2022 and the impact on the civilian population. Several delegations noted their support for the strengthened counter-terrorism efforts of the Malian Defence and Security Forces since December 2021. 462 Multiple delegations, however, expressed concern with the reports of human rights violations committed during these operations and pointed to the responsibility of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>458</sup> Ibid. See S/2022/595.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>459</sup> Resolution <u>2649 (2022)</u>, paras. 1 and 4. For more information on the sanctions measures relation to the situation in Mali, see part VII, sect. III.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>460</sup> Resolution <u>2649 (2022)</u>, para. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>461</sup> See <u>S/PV.8945</u>, United Kingdom, Mexico, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya), United States, Albania, Brazil, Ireland and United Arab Emirates; <u>S/PV.9012</u>, India, United Arab Emirates, United States, Albania and United Kingdom; <u>S/PV.9061</u>, Brazil, United States, United Arab Emirates, Ireland, United Kingdom and Mali; and <u>S/PV.9154</u>, Norway, Ireland, United States, United Arab Emirates, Ghana (on behalf of Gabon and Kenya) Albania, United Kingdom and Mali.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>462</sup>See <u>S/PV.8945</u>, Russian Federation and China; <u>S/PV.9012</u>, Mexico , China, Russian Federation; <u>S/PV.9061</u>, China, Brazil, Mexico and Russian Federation; and <u>S/PV.9154</u>, China, Brazil and Russian Federation.

Government to protect civilians and ensure accountability for such acts. 463 Several Council members drew attention to the activities and human rights abuses by foreign mercenaries such as the Wagner group, including the attacks against civilians in Moura in March 2022 during joint operations with the Malian forces. 464 Given these reports, some speakers called on the Government to allow MINUSMA to fully implement its mandate to investigate and report on human rights violations and abuses. 465 More generally on the deteriorating regional security situation in the Sahel, Council members expressed disappointment with Mali's decision in May 2022 to withdraw from the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and stressed the importance of regional cooperation and coordination to address the terrorist threat. 466 Beyond military operations, speakers recognized the need of a holistic approach that addressed the root causes of the conflict and, in that regard, highlighted the importance of the Government's comprehensive politically-led strategy for the stabilization of the centre of the country. 467 In their statements, the representatives of China and the Russian Federation underscored the sovereign right of Mali to establish its own international security cooperation, with the Russian Federation pointing to a significant security vacuum following the withdrawal of Operation Barkhane and the Takuba Taskforce. 468

Council members also exchanged views on the challenges MINUSMA faced in the implementation of its mandate, particularly noting an increase in attacks against its personnel and the Government's restrictions on air and ground movement, with many of them also calling on it to abide by its obligations under the status of forces agreement. Many speakers stressed the need for MINUSMA to be adequately resourced and equipped to implement its tasks and ensure the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>463</sup> See <u>S/PV.8945</u>, United Kingdom, United States, Albania and Ireland; <u>S/PV.9012</u>, France, Mexico, United States, Albania, Ireland and Brazil; <u>S/PV.9061</u>, Brazil, United States, Mexico, Ireland, Norway and United Kingdom; and <u>S/PV.9154</u>, France, Norway, Ireland, United States, Brazil, Albania and United Kingdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>464</sup>See <u>S/PV.9012</u>, France, Mexico, United States, Albania, Norway, Ireland, Brazil and United Kingdom; <u>S/PV.9061</u>, United States, Mexico, Norway, United Kingdom and Albania; and <u>S/PV.9154</u>, France, Norway, Ireland, United States, Albania and United Kingdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>465</sup> See <u>S/PV.9012</u>, France, United States, Albania, Norway, Ireland and United Kingdom; <u>S/PV.9061</u>, France, United States, Mexico, Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom and Albania; and <u>S/PV.9154</u>, United States, Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Kenya) and United Kingdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>466</sup> See S/PV.9061, Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Kenya), Mexico, Ireland and India.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>467</sup> See <u>S/PV.8945</u>, France, Russian Federation, United States, Albania, Brazil and China; <u>S/PV.9012</u>, France, Albania, United Arab Emirates, Albania, China and Brazil; <u>S/PV.9061</u>, United Arab Emirates and Norway; <u>S/PV.9154</u>, China, United States, United Arab Emirates and Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Kenya). <sup>468</sup> See <u>S/PV.9061</u> and <u>S/PV.9154</u>.

safety and security of its personnel. Furthermore, looking ahead, several delegations called on the Secretariat to ensure that the internal review of the Mission, which was requested by the Council in resolution 2640 (2022), 469 took into account the significant changes to the Mission's operational environment. 470 In their remarks to the Council, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and representative of Mali provided an overview of the Government's engagement with ECOWAS on the new timetable for the political transition, progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, enhancing the capacity of the security forces and counter-terrorism operations, and the restoration of State authority. 471 The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali stated that MINUSMA needed to refocus its work on the foundation of its presence in Mali which was to support the restoration of State authority and improve its coordination with the Malian authorities. 472 He further listed the key principles which guided Mali's cooperation with the Council and other international partners, namely, respect for Mali's sovereignty; respect for its strategic choices and selection of partners; and the need to take the vital interests of the Malian people into account in all decisions. 473

Meetings: The situation in Mali

Meeting record and date	Sub-item	Other documents	Rule 37 invitations	Rule 39 and other invitations	Speakers	Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)
S/PV.8945 11 January 2022	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2021/1117)  Letter dated 4 January 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/8)		Mali	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Social activist and Executive Director of the Youth Association for Active Citizenship and Democracy	13 Council members <sup>a</sup> , all invitees <sup>b</sup>	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>469</sup> Resolution <u>2640 (2022)</u>, para. 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>470</sup> See <u>S/PV.9154</u>, Norway, Ireland, United States, Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Kenya), Russian Federation, Mexico and Albania.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>471</sup> See S/PV.8945; S/PV.9012; S/PV.9061; and S/PV9154.

<sup>472</sup> See S/PV.9154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>473</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> The representative of Gabon also spoke on behalf of Ghana and Kenya.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>b</sup> The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Social activist and Executive Director of the Youth Association for Active Citizenship and Democracy participated in the meeting via videoconference.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>c</sup> The representative of Ghana also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Kenya.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>d</sup> The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the President of Women in Law and Development in Africa in Mali participated in the meeting via videoconference.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>e</sup> The representative of Ghana also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Kenya.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>f</sup>The Director of Mali Musso participated in the meeting via videoconference. Mali was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

g Albania, Brazil, China, France, Gabon, Ghana, India, Kenya, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>h</sup> In favour: Albania, Brazil, France, Gabon, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States; *Against*: None; *Abstaining*: China and Russian Federation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>i</sup>The representative of Ghana also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Kenya.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>j</sup>Mali was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>k</sup> The representative of Mexico spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution <u>2374 (2017)</u> concerning Mali.