



## Security Council

Distr.: General  
19 November 2020

Original: English

---

### **Letter dated 18 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa, European External Action Service; and His Excellency Mr. Robert Keith Rae, Permanent Representative of Canada, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, the Niger (on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam (on behalf of Indonesia and Viet Nam), in connection with the video-teleconference on “Peace and security in Africa” convened on Monday, 16 November 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Mali.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Inga Rhonda **King**  
President of the Security Council



**Annex I****Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations,  
Jean-Pierre Lacroix**

[Original: English and French]

I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Security Council.

My remarks will consist of taking stock of the support that the international community and, more particularly, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) have provided to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) over the past few months as it has continued to increase its operational tempo.

Since the last Security Council debate on the Sahel on 5 June (see S/2020/515), the fight against terrorism in the Sahel region has continued to mobilize at the regional, continental and international levels despite the ongoing context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It takes a variety of actors to confront the daunting challenges in the region, and in that regard we welcome the increased coordination of security players on the ground. Such coordination of efforts allowed for a more visible presence of defence and security forces in the region, as well as stepped-up pressure on terrorist groups.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, it is worth noting that counter-terrorism efforts in the Sahel have actually intensified. Against that backdrop, the Joint Force remains a vital part of security responses addressing extremist armed groups in the region, along with other cross-border challenges, including trafficking in persons, illicit goods, weapons and drugs. Since the last report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/476), the G-5 Sahel Joint Force has continued to rise in its operational strengths. Joint Force units have increasingly acquired practical experience and efficiency in their operations. Operation Sama 1 ended on 31 July and was positively assessed, having resulted in significant losses registered on the part of terrorist armed groups. Operation Sama 2, launched on 1 August, is expected to last until the end of January 2021, with equally high hopes for a positive impact.

Going forward, strengthening the Joint Force's police component would be an important step not only in improving the oversight of military operations, but also in linking them to State-building and support to the justice sector and prison reform, as well as efforts under the human rights compliance framework. Admittedly, many areas still require urgent attention in order to implement the police component of the Joint Force. It remains key for partners to streamline support to the police component.

Moving to the implementation of the human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework of the Joint Force and the human rights due diligence policy, we can say that while essential work still remains pending, the Joint Force has taken significant steps in the right direction, notably mitigation measures put in place as a result of the ongoing establishment of the compliance framework.

The responsive operational and logistic support of MINUSMA to the Joint Force remained critical to the Force's operations, especially in Centre Sector. The provision of life-support consumables by the Mission has proved essential to sustaining the Joint Force, notably during the rainy season.

Further to the Security Council's authorization of MINUSMA to engage commercial contractors to deliver life-support consumables to Joint Force contingents operating outside Malian territory, the Mission began to make appropriate arrangements to implement such support. Based on the requirements identified and agreed by the G-5 Sahel, MINUSMA can now advance the procurement process.

Nevertheless, as outlined in successive reports of the Secretary-General, the limitations of the current support model present significant obstacles.

First, the issue of predictability of funding remains of concern. The United Nations, alongside the G-5 Sahel and other partners, continues to call for more predictable funding. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force plays a critical role in the regional response to violent extremism. In that regard, it is essential that it receive the assistance that it requires to carry out its mandated tasks.

Moreover, while the current model relies on quarterly planning for the provision of life-support consumables, the Joint Force has indicated that detailed projections of needs are a challenge in the context of dynamic operations in a frequently changing environment, and the current support model unfortunately provides limited room for flexibility.

At the request of the Council, the Secretariat will carry out an assessment of MINUSMA's support to the Joint Force under resolution 2531 (2020) in early 2021. The assessment will highlight not only the progress made in that regard, but also challenges in implementing the enhanced support mandate. The conclusions and recommendations of this assessment will be taken into account in the 2021 second quarterly report of the Secretary-General on MINUSMA.

Despite encouraging progress in the operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, much more remains to be done. We should be mindful of the disastrous implications for the security situation of the rest of the West African region if the situation in the Sahel is not adequately addressed.

As calls for the mobilization of additional resources to support the G-5 Sahel's fight against terrorism continue, so do calls for increased mobilization to tackle poverty and the unprecedented humanitarian crisis that the region currently faces. Strengthening the Joint Force is indeed only one aspect of the international community's support.

In that spirit, I welcome the strengthened coordination mechanisms that the Coalition for the Sahel proposes putting in place, which will enable all international partners to build on their comparative advantages and work together more effectively in the development, humanitarian and security fields.

In view of the situation in the Sahel, the international community must be driven by a shared responsibility to act swiftly in complementarity and in a spirit of solidarity with the populations of the region.

## Annex II

### **Statement by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smaïl Chergui**

I am delighted by the opportunity given to me to address the Security Council on peace and security in Africa, with a specific focus on the Sahel region. As Council members are aware, this region continues to face multifaceted challenges, including terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organized crime, intercommunal violence, which is closely linked to climate change, humanitarian crises, conflict-disrupted livelihoods and drug and human trafficking, as well as forced migration.

At the African Union (AU), we pay particular attention to the interconnectedness of the developments in Mali and the Sahel. We also note that these developments continue to impact negatively on the individual Member States and the broader region. As the Security Council may recall, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union has, in this regard, expressed its grave concern over the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situations in the region, particularly the continued terrorist attacks and activities of armed and criminal groups, as well as the socioeconomic challenges that continue to erode development activities. These activities have had a negative impact on civilians and security institutions of the countries of the region. The August 2020 developments in Mali that resulted in an unconstitutional change of Government prompted our Council to take immediate action. Given the encouraging development that subsequently ensued, the Peace and Security Council reviewed the situation and lifted the suspension.

Over the recent months, the terrorist threat has dramatically spread to various parts of Mali, particularly the Ségou region, where the village of Farabougou has been besieged for more than a month since 6 October. We also note with concern that the region of Sikasso, located between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, is experiencing terrorist attacks targeting the symbols of the State and the civilian populations. Not only does the insecurity undermine efforts to achieve decent living conditions, but it also erodes hope for a better future among the people, particularly the youth, in the region.

The security situation remains worrying in Burkina Faso, which is experiencing repeated terrorist attacks in the north and the centre. Just yesterday, on 15 November, there were terrorist attacks that led to several deaths. In addition to this insecurity, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated, as illustrated by FAO-WFP Early Warning Analysis of Acute Food Insecurity Hotspots October 2020, the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme published on 6 November. These organizations have warned of the escalation of terrorist activities and reduction in humanitarian access. This could lead to a risk of famine, especially in Burkina Faso, and specifically in the regions of Soum and Oudalan.

I must state here that we are encouraged by the continued determination of and efforts deployed by the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and its member States in degrading the fighting capacity of the terrorist, armed and criminal groups operating in the Sahel amid the prevailing challenges, including the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on the continent.

In the Lake Chad basin, the terrorist group Boko Haram, despite its degradation and fragmentation, has continued with its attacks, targeting not only civilians, but also military bases in Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon to acquire weapons and spread its propaganda. I commend the Multinational Joint Task Force for the good results obtained in combating Boko Haram and severely degrading it.

While the situation remains deeply worrying in the countries of the subregion, we are also watching closely developments as they relate to Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, where post-electoral violence with ethnic overtones continues to claim lives. We are concerned that such developments could exacerbate the already fragile security situation in the region and could also be exploited by terrorists and armed groups. We believe that concerted efforts should be exerted to re-energize the traditional authorities in playing their role at the national and the community level through mediation. Such undertakings will require the full support of the international community, especially our two organizations.

Additionally, the AU is grateful to the efforts of the international community in supporting the efforts of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. Our Council renewed the mandate of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force for 12 months starting on 13 July 2020.

In the same vein, we welcome the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which continues to provide logistical support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. Our Council is of the strong view that given the positive impact that MINUSMA continues to have on the situation in Mali and the Sahel, it is of utmost importance for the United Nations to consider taking the necessary steps that will guarantee sustainable and predictable funding for the G-5 Sahel Force from the United Nations assessed contribution. Doing so will undoubtedly enhance the capabilities of the regional force, which, alongside MINUSMA, is endeavouring to secure the region and rid it of terrorist groups and transnational organized groups.

As the Council may be aware, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government decided at its summit in February 2020 that the AU should deploy 3,000 troops to strengthen ongoing efforts to address the security situation in the Sahel. In this regard, efforts are under way to ensure the deployment of these troops in the Sahel. Soon the working documents for the deployment, especially the mission's concept of operation, will be adopted.

In the meantime, the AU Commission has just adopted its Sahel Strategy, inspired by its Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas in the Lake Chad Basin Region. This draft strategy is focused on three main pillars: governance, security and integrated development. The main objective of this exercise is to address the root causes of the challenges facing the Sahel region, as outlined in the three thematic areas.

I want to use this opportunity to pay tribute to the leadership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), who unwaveringly supported the Malian stakeholders as they made efforts to restore constitutional order in that country. In this regard, we continue to urge all stakeholders to prioritize using dialogue and to refrain from actions likely to exacerbate tensions. The Security Council should also continue to encourage the Malian stakeholders to uphold their national interests and exert their efforts to achieve the successful implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process, signed in 2015, and the Transition Charter, including the organization of credible, transparent democratic elections within the stipulated time frame.

We continue to be worried that the plethora of military initiatives on the ground has not yet produced tangible results. More specifically relating to Mali, one of the challenges relates to the fight against terrorism, as well as ensuring that there is an avenue that allows for intercommunal dialogue to defuse tensions.

In conclusion, the multipronged challenges faced by the countries of the Sahel region require collective and coordinated efforts. Terrorism transcends borders, and the threat of a spillover into other countries and regions of the continent is

ever present. It is therefore imperative that we leverage comparative advantages and complementarities by activating and fully utilizing the regional cooperation architectures for fighting terrorism and transborder crime to regain the territorial integrity of the region. For its part, the African Union Commission, working closely with ECOWAS, will fine-tune the mechanisms to enable the speedy deployment of the 3,000 troops, as decided by the AU Heads of State and Government in February 2020.

Tackling the root causes of the conflict is also a priority and will go a long way to addressing the socioeconomic situations of the countries of the Sahel. We continue to encourage coordinated efforts to ensure timely and relevant assistance and sustainable recovery for vulnerable communities and institutions. Indeed, it is incumbent on our two organs to accompany the people of Mali and the Sahel region in their pursuit of peace, security and stability.

I cannot conclude without indicating that the AU Heads of State and Government have agreed to hold an extraordinary summit this year with a view to accelerating efforts within the continent to address the root causes of conflicts and to silence the guns. The AU Commission is grateful for the support of the United Nations family, in particular the Security Council, in this important process.

## Annex III

### **Statement on behalf of the Managing Director for Africa at the European External Action Service, Koen Vervaeke**

[Original: French]

I thank you, Madam President, for putting the Sahel on the agenda of the Security Council, and I welcome the recent report of the Secretary-General on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) (S/2020/1074). I thank the Council for giving me the opportunity to speak on this subject. It is of paramount importance for the European Union, which is particularly involved in this region and a major partner of the G-5 Sahel countries.

Despite the massive support of the international community, despite the significant investment of the European Union and its member States, the situation in the Sahel remains worrisome. It is further exacerbated by the health crisis and the political crisis in Mali.

In this context, the European Union continues to mobilize while adapting its approach. At the sixth ministerial meeting between the European Union and the G-5 Sahel on 9 November, it took stock of the progress made since the high-level meeting of 28 April, which brought together the leaders of the European Union and the Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel to discuss specific commitments. This meeting also allowed an initial exchange on the ongoing review of the European Union's Sahel strategy: our future approach is more ambitious and, therefore, more demanding in terms of concrete results.

Support for truly inclusive (especially for women and youth), legitimate and effective governance in terms of services to the population throughout the territory will be at the heart of our new approach. This will require that the States of the G-5 Sahel assume considerable responsibility.

Security challenges at the regional level must also be addressed. In that regard, we welcome the extension of the training mandate of the European Union Training Mission in Mali to other countries in the region.

Allow me to emphasize that the exemplary nature of the G-5 Joint Force and the national security and defence forces with regard to respect for the rule of law is a sine qua non for effectiveness in the fight against terrorism. The aim is to regain territories, but above all to regain people's trust.

In that regard, we welcome the investigations announced by the Commander of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force in his letter of 2 July to United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), as recalled in the report of the Secretary-General. We hope that progress will be made quickly in those investigations.

The report of the Secretary-General also addresses the European Union's support for MINUSMA in support of the G-5 Joint Force. I would like to confirm that on our side everything is being done to ensure the sustainability of the support that the Joint Force needs. The European Union and the United Nations are in close contact on this matter. More specifically, we note that the report indicates that the Joint Force faced challenges in providing supplies to its troops, a problem worsened by a "lack of suitable means of transport". We remind the Council that the European Union's support of more than €254.4 million to date for the G-5 Joint Force has already resulted in the delivery of 46 armoured personnel carriers equipped with radios.

The civil political transition that has been under way in Mali since 15 September represents an opportunity to reform modes of governance. But the situation remains fragile. A return to constitutional order in under 16 months is now the top priority. Urgent reforms must be undertaken, particularly the fight against impunity and corruption, as well as security sector reform and the restoration of State authority throughout the country. The implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali will be more important than ever.

In this connection, the European Union is pleased that the Secretary-General has facilitated the establishment of the independent International Commission of Inquiry for Mali provided for in the peace agreement, which was financed by the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. We believe that the recent Sundh report will be a useful instrument in the fight against impunity — and therefore instability — in the Sahel.

## Annex IV

### **Statement by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Robert Keith Rae**

I would like to start by thanking the President and all members of the Security Council for the invitation to provide a briefing on the continued engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region, and would like to take this opportunity to extend condolences to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the people of Mali on the recent passing of former President Amadou Toumani Touré.

The PBC has been a steadfast partner of the countries of the Sahel region in support of their nationally led peacebuilding efforts, which include efforts to tackle humanitarian and security challenges while at the same time promoting longer-term development, with due recognition for the increasingly important role played by women and youth.

While some progress has been made in recent years in the Sahel region, including in the fight against terrorism, serious challenges remain, including deteriorating security and humanitarian situations in some parts of the region, rising levels of displacement, social and economic inequalities, environmental degradation and cross-border risks, including illegal armed and terrorist groups, trafficking in small arms and light weapons and drugs, rising tensions between pastoralists and farmers related to transhumance, high levels of youth unemployment, adverse effects of climate change, low levels of gender equality and recently reported unprecedented peaks of food insecurity. Many of these challenges have been exacerbated by the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Much remains to be done to stabilize the situation and enhance development prospects. The PBC recognizes that for peacebuilding activities to be truly sustainable, all human rights violations and abuses must be fully investigated, and those responsible held accountable.

In addition, despite their key role as economic actors, women in the Sahel continue to face discrimination and encounter severe constraints in accessing the resources they need to be key agents of change, such as land, information, finance, infrastructure technology and markets. They also suffer from sexual and gender-based violence, which is widespread in the region.

The PBC has listened carefully to the needs and recommendations of women peacebuilders and business leaders from the region. Ms. Aïchatou Cissé, the Regional Coordinator of the Group of Five for the Sahel Women's Platform, called for stronger support to people in vulnerable situations in regions most affected by conflict who are also experiencing food insecurity owing to the secondary impact of COVID-19. Ms. Jamila Ben Baba Ferdjani of Laham Industries in Mali called for better access to credit by women entrepreneurs, a necessary condition for sustainable development in the region.

These are complex challenges that require a comprehensive approach to address root causes of conflict in the Sahel, prevent further escalation of conflict, build and sustain peace, and promote sustainable development. Regional approaches need to be strengthened, with a particular focus on cross-border challenges and the need to strengthen engagement with regional partners.

In recognition of the magnitude and complexity of the challenges facing the Sahel region, the PBC has welcomed the recalibrated United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and its United Nations support plan. Through its convening role, the PBC has helped to mobilize support for the implementation of

UNISS, in collaboration with Sahelian countries, the G-5 Sahel, the African Union, the European Union and other regional and international organizations.

The PBC has also welcomed and encouraged continuous contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund in support of the implementation of UNISS. The Fund has so far approved investments of \$137 million in 10 countries engaged in UNISS — Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and the Gambia — representing 25 per cent of the Fund's resources between 2017 and 2019.

Financing for the COVID-19 socioeconomic recovery in the G-5 Sahel countries gives us an opportunity to ensure coordinated humanitarian, development and peace efforts. As discussed in recent PBC meetings, the role of the stabilization facility in the Lake Chad basin is a good example of the transition from the provision of humanitarian assistance to development and resilience-building, with a focus on improving basic services and empowering local actors and communities.

The PBC has also discussed at length the growing humanitarian needs and the impact of COVID-19 containment measures in Burkina Faso, while also recognizing the tireless efforts of the Government to address them with support from international partners, including through the Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment. The Commission remains committed to supporting Burkina Faso in consolidating peacebuilding gains and addressing the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic in the long term.

Through their engagement with the PBC, the countries of the region have consistently called for more help from international partners to address the challenges they face, including the need for sustained funding for actions that directly benefit the concerned populations and better coordination of international efforts, particularly in the light of the devastating impact of COVID-19.

Given that no single entity has the authority and capacity to coordinate the implementation of UNISS through United Nations country teams and regional offices throughout the region, the PBC has welcomed the recent request by the Council, expressed in its presidential statement S/PRST/2020/2, to encourage joint reporting to the PBC by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the Regional Sustainable Development Group on the implementation of UNISS and its support plan. We have taken this role seriously and will continue to support efforts to strengthen UNISS implementation through better coordination among the range of local, national, regional and international actors.

Partnerships with international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank are crucial for the subregion, particularly in the context of recovery from the pandemic. I would like to highlight the growing collaboration between the World Bank and the United Nations on data, risk analysis and joint assessments, supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as new financing instruments aimed at addressing root causes of conflicts. The PBC remains committed to supporting investments that are needed to address the highly complex and interlinked challenges in the Sahel, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Annex V****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Karen Van Vlierberge**

[Original: French]

I would like to thank the various briefers for their statements and their insights.

Belgium remains a committed partner of the Sahel countries, the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and its Joint Force. We share their determination to fight insecurity and promote development in the region.

Belgium's action is both bilateral and part of the efforts of the European Union on behalf of the region. The shared objective is to contribute to the security, stabilization and resilience of populations in a context of growing insecurity. That is why Belgium favours a comprehensive approach that seeks to ensure the coherence of actions carried out with a view to contributing to ending the crisis and establishing lasting peace. This approach and action are reflected in actions at the political and diplomatic, security, including internal security, humanitarian and development cooperation levels.

It is in this capacity that we participated in the ministerial round table organized on 20 October on the crisis in the central Sahel. That meeting aimed to identify priority needs such as humanitarian assistance. Our Minister of Development Cooperation announced an additional contribution of €8 million, thereby demonstrating the importance of the region to our country.

As has been mentioned, the security and humanitarian situation in the region is of great concern and is well known. I would like to dwell on one particular aspect, which is that half of the population of the Sahel is under the age of 15. As a result of ongoing conflicts and more recently the pandemic, tens of millions of children no longer have access to school or education. This lack of education and teaching deprives them of prospects and contributes to their search for alternatives, such as those provided by armed groups. They are therefore more exposed to the risks of recruitment by armed groups, sexual violence and exploitation through labour and other forms of exploitation. Governments in the region have committed to ensuring the continuity of education, which Belgium welcomes. There is no doubt, however, that the challenges in this regard remain immense and must be addressed.

With regard to the Joint Force, Belgium welcomes the various advances made in its operationalization, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/1074), and encourages their continuation. With regard to operational and logistical support to the Joint Force by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, we continue to advocate the implementation of the aspects defined in resolution 2531 (2020) relating to the provision of consumables.

For Belgium, military operations and development projects alone will not be enough to defeat terrorism in the Sahel. Terrorist action is fuelled by the political and governance crisis that several States of the Sahel are going through. A new political commitment and ownership at the highest level are therefore also needed to entrench the Sahel's democratic institutions, and new political solutions to counter the deadly discourse of terrorists must be sought. In particular, we believe that institutions must fight any form of stigmatization of ethnic groups or communities and work actively to provide a governance framework to ease tensions among communities. The provision of basic services, including security, helps to strengthen the bonds and trust of the population. Combating impunity and ensuring transitional justice are also crucial in that regard.

In this connection, Belgium continues to monitor allegations of extrajudicial executions by G-5 security forces. Belgium understands the enormous challenges and fragilities faced by the security forces of our G-5 partners. But in our view, respect for the rule of law and fundamental human rights is an indispensable condition for defeating terrorism and avoiding feeding the breeding ground in which it thrives. Progress on security and development is of course crucial, but if human rights and the rule of law are not respected, this progress will unfortunately remain temporary and terrorism and insecurity will continue to grow.

In conclusion, Belgium encourages the five G-5 countries and the Joint Force to strengthen the implementation of the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Compliance Framework, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as it is one of the main tools that can help prevent possible violations in the future. We recognize the progress made in this area, which reflects the commitment of these countries.

## Annex VI

### Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Dai Bing

[Original: Chinese]

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, Ambassador Konfourou of Mali, Mr. Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa at the European External Action Service, and Ambassador Rae, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings.

The current situation in the Sahel region is generally stable, and countries in the region have had good results in maintaining political stability and combating terrorism. At the same time, the intertwined problems of terrorism, separatism, transnational organized crime, food security and climate change pose serious challenges to those countries. Given the context described in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/1074) and the briefers' remarks, I would like to make the following points.

First, we must work together to promote political solutions to hotspot issues. There was a coup d'état in Mali in August. Thanks to the efforts of the international community, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Malian parties, the crisis was resolved peacefully and the transition process is steadily advancing. Given the crucial importance of Mali's security and stability to regional security, the parties concerned must act in the fundamental interests of their country and its people and overcome their differences peacefully through dialogue to restore stability without delay. Several countries in the region will be holding general elections in the near future. The international community should create an enabling environment for them to take place. The priority now is to seize the window of opportunity for resolving the Libyan issue in order to enable Libya to emerge from its crisis, which casts a long shadow over the Sahel situation as a whole. China backs efforts to seek African solutions to African problems and supports a greater role for ECOWAS and the African Union in regional affairs.

Secondly, regional security must be addressed through effective efforts on the ground. Recently, the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Joint Force has made progress in its counter-terrorism operations. At the same time, the region is still home to a large number of terrorist extremists who collude with each other and frequently launch attacks that result in civilian casualties. We simply cannot let down our guard in counter-terrorism efforts. China is actively implementing initiatives amounting to ¥300 million in assistance to the G-5 Joint Force for security and counter-terrorism operations. We encourage international partners to continue to leverage their respective strengths and strengthen their coordination in support of the counter-terrorism operations and capacity-building of the countries in the region. The presidential statement on counter-terrorism in Africa (S/PRST/2020/5) adopted by the Security Council in March must be effectively implemented. We hope that the Security Council will give priority to the needs of the G-5 Sahel and give more sustainable and predictable financial support to the Joint Force.

Thirdly, the humanitarian crisis must be high on the international agenda. The humanitarian situation in the Sahel region is deeply troubling, with 31.4 million people in need of humanitarian aid and 5 million unable to return to their homes. The international community should provide tailored assistance to regional countries to address food security and other issues and ensure that the basic needs of the people are met.

The coronavirus disease pandemic in the Sahel has eased somewhat, thanks to the strict prevention and control measures adopted by countries in the region. However, the risk of a resurgence of the epidemic still exists. China has sent multiple shipments of supplies to counter the epidemic to countries in the region and is taking the initiative to share its experience in that regard. We will continue to help the countries in the region combat the disease, including by facilitating early access to vaccines for African countries. We will continue to support local socioeconomic development and the improvement of people's livelihoods and strive to maintain our results-based cooperation in spite of the pandemic.

Peace, stability and development in the Sahel region are crucial to the long-term stability of the African continent. Despite the many difficulties and challenges, we are convinced that opportunities always outnumber challenges and solutions always outnumber difficulties. China is ready to continue working with the international community towards the long-term peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Sahel region.

## Annex VII

### **Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his insights.

Let me begin by expressing our deepest condolences to the families and colleagues of the two peacekeepers in Mali, one from Cambodia and the other from El Salvador, who recently died victims of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The world is facing a great threat, which is affecting us deeply and testing our resilience at all levels. For this reason, it is now more important than ever that we secure the gains accomplished so far to bring about peace and security to the Sahel.

We understood and supported, as a matter of principle and common sense, the plea for a ceasefire in all conflicts during the pandemic, in the hope that this threat would somehow raise the awareness of certain groups and result in a halt to their operations. However, the sad reality is that the Sahel region continues to be destabilized by terrorist groups and intercommunal violence.

We are deeply disturbed by the dramatic deterioration of security in the Sahel region in countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, resulting from terrorist attacks on civilians and security forces as well as the surge in intercommunal violence exacerbated by these groups, which claimed the lives of more than 4,000 people in 2019 in those three countries alone and has created a dire humanitarian situation, with 14.7 million people in need of assistance and more than 1.4 million internally displaced across the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) countries.

Another matter of concern is the increased coordination and cooperation between terrorist groups in the Sahel, which are currently taking advantage of both the COVID-19 pandemic to increase their attacks and usurp State authority and their connections to transnational organized crime syndicates to finance their operations, demonstrating that our efforts to achieve peace and security in the Sahel region must continue and be strengthened.

It is encouraging to hear about the recent progress made in the operationalization of the Joint Force, which has enabled it to carry out a number of operations, as well as in the implementation of several needed regional and international security initiatives launched to support the Force and counter-terrorism efforts in the region, such as Task Force Takuba, under Operation Barkhane, which is supported by a number of countries, including Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, the Niger and the United Kingdom; the Coalition for the Sahel; and efforts by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the G-5 Sahel to increase the numbers of troops.

However, challenges remain and should be promptly addressed to pave the way for the full operationalization of the Joint Force, which demands greater coordination at the tripartite level between the European Union, the Joint Force and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to tackle shortcomings in MINUSMA's support model.

As we all know, the security situation in the Sahel region is a complex one, demanding a comprehensive approach. We therefore commend the initiative by the Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel region, through the Coalition of the Sahel, to focus on four pillars: efforts to combat terrorism; capacity-building for defence

and security forces; support for the re-establishment of State presences; and development assistance.

We encourage the leadership of the Sahel to ensure the proactive and broad participation of women and youth across these pillars and other efforts to consolidate peace and security in the region.

Finally, we highlight the importance of accountability and adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law, especially within the framework of counter-terrorism strategies, so as to strengthen the credibility and acceptance of all efforts.

## Annex VIII

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I would like to thank the briefers for their valuable contributions to today's discussion.

Estonia remains extremely concerned about the continued terrorist attacks on the national, regional and international security forces in the Sahel region. It is of utmost importance to concentrate all efforts on creating favourable conditions for the return of the State and security presence there, including the police and the judiciary. We commend the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel for their efforts and encourage them to continue taking ownership of making peace a reality in the Sahel. Besides that, the role of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in coordinating and mobilizing the joint counter-terrorist operations is crucial.

I would like to stress the importance of coordination among the various actors operating in the region. We welcome the steps taken in this direction through the organization of joint meetings. From the Estonian side, we remain committed to the efforts and contributions that can help bring about security and stability in the Sahel region. We contribute personnel to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the French-led Operation Barkhane operation and the European Union Training Mission in Mali, and financially to the European Union Trust Fund for Africa. Estonia is also part of the recently launched Task Force Takuba, operating in the Liptako-Gourma area.

We take positive note of the assurances that the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the region's States have given when it comes to adhering to human rights principles and the international humanitarian law framework in conducting counter-terrorism operations. We welcome the steps that the Joint Force has taken so far and encourage further, concrete steps to be taken on the ground should violations occur. All human rights violations and abuses must be investigated and the perpetrators held fully accountable.

No true peace will be achieved unless the root causes of instability are being addressed actively and in earnest. While the international support and efforts in alleviating the humanitarian situation and civilian suffering should continue, it is clear that the political will and ownership of the region's Governments is key in this regard. Concrete action on reducing poverty and marginalization of certain groups as well as empowering women and youth will help to achieve sustainable peace in the region.

**Annex IX****Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank the various speakers for their briefings. The situation in the Sahel remains difficult, but we know which areas should be prioritized and which tools should be used.

At the request of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), France, together with the European Union, supported the launch this year of the Coalition for the Sahel. It is based on four pillars: the fight against terrorism, capability-building of the defence and security forces, deployment of State services and development.

The fight against terrorism is the area where we have made the most progress. Over the past few weeks, operations conducted by the Operation Barkhane force, in close cooperation with the armed forces of Mali and the Niger, have made it possible to neutralize several dozen terrorists. The support of the United States, for which France is grateful, was decisive in achieving these results. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force has successfully conducted several operations, particularly Sama 1 and Sama 2. Task Force Takuba, which brings together several European special forces, has also begun its mission.

These security efforts must be accompanied by a strong political commitment from the countries of the region to strengthening their institutions and deploying public services in remote areas. The Partnership for Stability and Security in the Sahel, which we launched with Germany in 2019, and whose secretariat is now operational in Brussels, will help to speed up its deployment. The organization of several administrative convoys, which began in June as part of military operations, will help to deploy public services in areas where populations are deprived of them. This is a promising initiative that we hope to extend in agreement with the G-5 Sahel Governments.

The credibility of the State also depends on respect for the rule of law. It is essential that the countries of the region investigate violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in order to put an end to impunity. The compliance framework for human rights and international humanitarian law provides welcome support and must be fully implemented. The mechanisms created by the Joint Force to look into incidents involving civilians are indispensable.

Beyond these actions in terms of security and governance, stabilization of the region requires a significant effort in terms of humanitarian aid and development. This is especially necessary in order to respond to the worsening humanitarian crisis as well as to the challenges of climate change, youth emancipation and women's empowerment. The donor mobilization has been exemplary. On 9 November, the European Union announced nearly €23 million in additional aid. But we are facing several problems. On the one hand, the effectiveness of aid must be improved so that it reaches populations more quickly. This is the philosophy behind the Sahel Alliance, which is continuing its efforts to coordinate technical and financial partners. On the other hand, attacks on humanitarian workers and health personnel are increasing and obstacles to humanitarian access are multiplying. I would like to point out that international humanitarian law is non-negotiable and binding on all.

In conclusion, I would like to reflect on the international support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. When renewing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional

Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), we improved the tripartite United Nations-European Union-G-5 Sahel mechanism. MINUSMA is now able to enter into supply and logistics contracts with private companies to support the Joint Force, including outside Mali's borders. We expect this mechanism to be implemented urgently. We will then be able to take stock of it, based on the assessment that will be presented by the Secretary-General in April. Our objective is for the Joint Force to become fully autonomous. But to achieve this, it still needs the most ambitious support possible, to which the Security Council must contribute.

**Annex X****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany, Günter Sautter**

Germany remains concerned about the complex and volatile security situation in the Sahel. Terrorist groups continue to be well organized and are further expanding their operational territory all over the region. We must reverse this trend.

We welcome the progress made by the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and its partners on the build-up of capacities and the successful conduct of recent counter-terrorism operations. We encourage continued ownership and efforts by the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, especially with a view to the development of its logistical capacities and increased efficiency. We particularly welcome the ongoing and future support from bilateral partners and the African Union. Germany is ready to consider ways to increase support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force by the United Nations.

In this context, we express our full appreciation for the work of MINUSMA and the Mission's efforts to support the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. We encourage the Mission to make full use of available funds (such as European Union funding) in its support for the Joint Force, and to further operationalize its support.

It is important, though, to ensure that the Joint Force's counter-terrorism activities are in compliance with human rights standards and international humanitarian law. It therefore remains key to further and fully operationalize the human rights compliance framework by implementing due diligence regarding human rights as well as by conducting comprehensive investigations of potential human rights violations by the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

Regrettably, the humanitarian situation, which is closely linked to the volatile security environment, continues to deteriorate. More than 13 million people across the region are in need of humanitarian assistance. The Secretary-General is right when he says that the Sahel region is at a breaking point. One positive element is the encouraging fact that the international community gathered at the recent humanitarian Central Sahel conference, hosted by Denmark, the European Union, the United Nations and Germany, which raised \$1.7 billion.

This will not be sufficient in the long term. That is why we reiterate the need for a truly integrated approach, which must simultaneously address development, security challenges, the fight against terrorist groups and the underlying causes of conflict. And the integrated approach must strengthen governance and the rule of law. We would like to emphasize the importance of trust in State institutions. For instance, there is an undeniable need to help build civilian police capacities in order to achieve a trustworthy State presence. Germany is therefore supporting stabilization measures to strengthen domestic security via police cooperation and training as well as decentralization, local governance and basic services. The integrated approach does not stop there. It also means that we need to help manage and mitigate the effects of climate change, since the region is already hit disproportionately hard in this regard.

We welcome today's briefing by the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Commission's continued engagement on the Sahel. It is extremely helpful to have the Peacebuilding Commission apply its cross-pillar viewpoint when engaging with the countries of the region.

We see a great amount of international support for the Sahel. But let us be clear. The international community must do better in coordinating and integrating this support. The German-French Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel

and the Sahel Alliance initiatives are of paramount importance. The Sahel Alliance has already united the biggest development donors in the Sahel and become an important platform for donor coordination and exchange on development challenges with the G-5 Sahel.

The Coalition for the Sahel, and more specifically the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel, in close partnership with the G-5 Sahel, provide the platform for such coordination. Within the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel, Germany will provide the impetus to go beyond coordination to closer cooperation. We are developing multilateral instruments to support stabilization efforts in both Mali and the Sahel. These include stabilization facilities for the Lake Chad and Liptako-Gourma regions, the PATRIP Foundation and a trust fund in support of security forces. We invite international partners to join.

In conclusion, we will need a smart combination of security measures, immediate stabilization efforts and long-term development programmes in order to bring stability to the region and help create resilient societies.

**Annex XI****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

[Original: English and French]

On behalf of the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Tunisia (the A3+1), I would like to express our sincere thanks to Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for his excellent briefing and his sustained commitment to the stabilization of the Sahel.

We also thank the Permanent Representative of Mali, Mr. Issa Konfourou, for his participation in today's briefing on behalf of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), Ambassador Robert Keith Rae, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa at the European External Action Service.

Before getting to the heart of the matter, I would like to welcome the fact that this time around, the report under consideration (S/2020/1074) has taken into account the perspectives emanating from the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, which is the report's main subject. This has undoubtedly been made possible through increased collaboration and information-sharing with countries and relevant actors on the ground.

The Sahel region is facing multiple and multifaceted challenges with devastating consequences for States and their populations. The nexus between development and security is clearly established in this region, where these phenomena interact with each other in a feedback-loop effect. In this context, we stress the need for a holistic approach involving political, security and socioeconomic development actions that can lead to lasting peace and stability in the region. Furthermore, we believe that this cannot be achieved without addressing the root causes of terrorism in the Sahel.

In this regard, the A3+1 welcome the foresight of the G-5 Sahel authorities, which led to the adoption in 2016 of a security and development strategy whose implementation is based on a priority investment programme and focuses on governance, resilience, security and infrastructure. It consists of a portfolio of 40 structuring projects with a total value of nearly €2 billion, 13 per cent financed by member States. Its first phase began in 2019 and will be completed in 2021.

It remains clear that in the Sahel the priority investment programme remains important and is the relevant framework for urgently needed action. Its implementation must therefore continue to be a priority, just as it must remain the channel through which international support must be provided, giving priority to local skills and enterprises.

In order to do this, two priorities seem fundamental to us: financing quick-impact projects based on private-sector involvement, in a spirit of collaboration with the decentralized authorities, and targeting border regions so that the job opportunities created provide a credible alternative to the recruitment of young people by armed groups. This is why the A3+1 insisted on taking into account local content through resolution 2531 (2020). We therefore welcome all efforts to establish a facility to coordinate financing to Sahelian entities, which remains a guarantee of success for all our actions on the ground.

With regard to the implementation of the priority investment programme, by way of illustration we can cite a pilot cross-border cooperation initiative, the Integrated Territorial Development Project, between the municipalities of the Sahel (Burkina Faso), Timbuktu (Mali) and Tillabéri (Niger) regions, which are home to

5.5 million inhabitants. The initiative is planned for a period of one year and financed to the tune of 1 billion CFA francs (\$1.8 million) by the West African Economic and Monetary Union.

The Secretary-General's report also highlights the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, which aggravates the fragility of the G-5 Sahel States and the living conditions of the populations affected. Indeed, in 2020, some 31.4 million Sahelians are unfortunately in need of assistance and protection, while the effects of the coronavirus disease, food insecurity, climate change and floods have complicated the situation. In this context, we welcome the ministerial round table on the Central Sahel — Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger — held in Copenhagen on 20 October and co-organized by the United Nations, Denmark, the European Union and Germany, on the humanitarian crisis in this region.

The A3+1 also welcomes in this regard the funding pledges made for humanitarian interventions, amounting to \$996.8 million for 2020 and \$725.4 million for 2021, and encourages international partners to give priority to the States concerned and their specialized agencies in the implementation of the programmes identified.

With regard to the security situation, we welcome the improvement of the situation in the Liptako-Gourma region as a result of the ongoing operations by the G-5 Sahel Joint Force aimed at cutting off the various supply channels for armed terrorists and organized-crime groups. However, security threats remain a great concern, and we condemn the increase in terrorist attacks against the defence and security forces and the growing intercommunal violence provoked by local armed groups as well as terrorist groups.

The A3+1 welcomes the increase in the operational capacity and the pace of operations of the Joint Force, whose successes are increasingly regular, as well as the operationalization of its police component. Operation Sama 1 is an encouraging example in that regard. Moreover, the announcement made on 5 October in Nouakchott, during the eighth ordinary session of the G-5 Sahel Council of Ministers, of the forthcoming deployment of a Chadian battalion to participate in Operation Sama 2, further strengthens us in the fight against terrorism, particularly in the Centre Sector. We welcome the continued efforts of the African Union Peace and Security Council to work toward the upcoming deployment of 3,000 members of the African Union Standby Force, which will further bolster the fight against terrorism in the region.

In terms of the Joint Force's performance, the operations carried out in the past 10 months in all three areas of operation have made it possible to neutralize and/or arrest 123 terrorists; arrest 104 traffickers; seize, recover or destroy 214 motorcycles and 17 vehicles; destroy several logistics depots or sites for manufacturing improvised explosive devices; and recover nearly 200 weapons and thousands of munitions of all calibres. At the same time, the restructuring of the Executive Secretariat of the G-5 Sahel has made it more operational, enabling it to provide more effective support to the Joint Force.

The A3+1 welcomes the decisive support provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to the Joint Force, including in Mali in the context of the stabilization and gradual restoration of State authority in the centre and north of the country. The same applies to the measures taken in recent months by the Mission in the context of the implementation of resolution 2531 (2020) and the completion of the construction and handover of the temporary headquarters of the Joint Force, which has considerably improved the Force's ability to operate more effectively.

However, recent events in Mali have served as a wake-up call for us to redouble our efforts to help the country ensure the integrity of its territory and the security of its population. It is clear that the return of the defence and security forces throughout the country is a prerequisite for the restoration of regional administrations, which is why it is essential that the Malian authorities consolidate their hold on the regions concerned.

The A3+1 welcomes the significant progress made by the Joint Force in developing and implementing the human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework, including the establishment of a mechanism for identifying, monitoring and analysing harm to civilians. That illustrates the strong commitment of the G-5 countries in the Sahel to respecting human rights and international humanitarian law.

While we duly appreciate the progress made in the collaboration and support provided by MINUSMA to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, it is clear that this mode of support is neither adequate nor sufficient in the context of the fight against terrorism. Secretary-General António Guterres has reiterated this view in numerous reports, including in his latest assessment of this support.

If the Joint Force is eventually to become self-sustaining, we would ultimately have to implement the recommendations of the assessments relating to support for the Joint Force. That would require the establishment of a United Nations support office dedicated to the Joint Force and funded by assessed contributions from Member States. In doing so, consideration should be given to the provisions of resolution 2391 (2017), which clearly stipulate that support to the Joint Force should not affect the performance of MINUSMA. In addition, the current sociopolitical and security situation in Mali requires that MINUSMA redouble its efforts and focus on the core tasks of its mandate in order to achieve its strategic priorities.

At a time when several countries in the region are engaged in electoral processes that reveal or accentuate certain weaknesses, I am pleased to commend the positive role played by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and call on all partners to further coordinate their initiatives and other support to the Sahel region.

In conclusion, and as stated by the Secretary-General in his report,

“The international community has a moral obligation and shared responsibility to support the member States of the G-5 Sahel in their commendable efforts to bring peace and sustainable development to the region” (*S/2020/1074, para. 56*).

Council members are also encouraged to be more pragmatic on this issue, which goes beyond the Sahel and calls for a comprehensive response. In sum, the primary mission of the Joint Force is to rid the Sahel of these forces of evil, which could otherwise extend their reach to other regions.

---

**Annex XII****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva**

[Original: Russian]

We thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and the other briefers for the information they have provided.

We agree with the alarming assessments of the situation in the Sahel that we heard today. The level of the security threat in that part of Africa remains high. The terrorist activity in the region has not died down, inter-ethnic and intercommunal conflicts are spreading, and drug trafficking and organized crime are flourishing. Sadly, during the reporting period we frequently received numerous tragic reports of the deaths of military servicemen and civilians at the hands of militants.

The humanitarian situation is deteriorating, and the challenges to food security are growing at a worrying pace. Against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, serious problems have arisen in the areas of access to education and medical services. Such situations create fertile soil for radicalizing populations. In that regard, the States of the region should work to effectively counter the spread of extremist ideology, tackle serious socioeconomic problems, strengthen State institutions and foster a culture of respect for human rights.

We support the efforts of the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to deploy a Joint Force to combat terrorism and organized crime that has already become an important part of the regional security architecture. We welcome the information about the Joint Force's successful conduct of several counter-terrorism operations during the reporting period. The planning and coordination of action between units has improved and the scope and duration of the operations have expanded. We welcome the establishment in Niamey of a joint coordination mechanism between the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and other military presences in the region.

We are convinced of the need for further coordinated measures on the part of both Africans and the international community aimed at combating terrorism in the Sahel-Saharan region. We hope that the blueprint for the deployment by joint African Union and regional organizations of African Standby Forces in the region will soon bear fruit.

Obviously, the full-fledged functioning of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force depends on two important factors: ensuring stable and predictable funding and providing appropriate transport and logistical support. In that context, we support the assistance provided to the Joint Force by MINUSMA in line with its mandate under resolution 2531 (2020). We hope that the flexible mechanisms provided for in the resolution for the Mission's improvement will be implemented swiftly.

Russia is keeping close track of the developing situation in the region. We are already providing relevant military and technical assistance to a number of countries and training military and police personnel. In general, we agree that the G-5 Sahel Joint Force has become an effective tool for restoring and supporting peace in West Africa and deserves the comprehensive support of the international community.

**Annex XIII****Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe**

I wish at the outset to thank you, Madam President, and I would like to join others in thanking all our briefers for their contributions today.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), the United Nations peacekeepers serving in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the international troops deployed in Operation Barkhane and all those working to bring peace and security to the people of the Sahel. The United Kingdom's own deployment to MINUSMA has begun, and we look forward to contributing to the protection of civilians and progress towards long-term and sustainable peace.

Sadly, since we last met, the security situation in the Sahel has continued to deteriorate. The region has suffered from a number of deadly attacks on civilians and military personnel, including attacks on MINUSMA. People across the Sahel continue to suffer from violence, illicit trafficking and food insecurity, which drive displacement and increase humanitarian need.

Against that challenging backdrop, we commend the G-5 Sahel member States for increasing their operational capability and effectiveness against the forces that seek to destabilize the region. We would welcome more detail on the Force's measures of success beyond operational reporting. This includes an update on how the G-5 Sahel Force is working with the United Nations country team to create an enabling environment for development and for monitoring the return of national armed forces and local authorities. We believe that governance, sustainable development and peacebuilding are the building blocks for stability in the Sahel.

Regional efforts to address the problems of the Sahel are also a cause for optimism. We note the pledge made by the Economic Community of West African States of \$1 billion to fight terrorism and the African Union's forthcoming deployment of 3,000 troops to complement the efforts of the Joint Force. We continue to encourage all partners that have committed to supporting the Joint Force to fulfil those commitments.

As others have said today, there can be no sustainable peace and security in the Sahel without the protection and promotion of human rights and compliance with international humanitarian law. As we have said before, all G-5 Governments must ensure that any allegations of violations committed by their security forces are thoroughly and transparently investigated and that all perpetrators are brought to justice. That is essential not only to prevent human suffering but also to prevent impunity, strengthen the social contract between citizens and the State, and avoid creating grievances that fuel further violence.

MINUSMA's support for the Joint Force hinges on full compliance with the United Nations human rights due-diligence policy. We strongly encourage the Force to implement all risk-mitigating measures without delay, and we also urge it to maintain momentum on fully operationalizing its own human rights compliance framework.

In conclusion, we know that security challenges in the Sahel remain deeply complex and that the G-5 Sahel Joint Force is a key actor in securing a sustainable, long-term solution. It is important that the Force and all other elements of the United Nations and the international response in the region remain coordinated and

coherent to maximize their impact. The United Kingdom will continue to play its part, working with the United Nations, the G-5 Sahel States and all our partners across the region in pursuit of peace, stability, sustainable development and justice for the people of the Sahel.

**Annex XIV****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Richard Mills**

Let me join others in thanking our briefers for their informative briefings this morning. Just as it is for many of my counterparts in the Council, the security situation in the Sahel is a security concern for the United States.

I was also struck by the theme that ran through the briefers' comments about the increasing efforts of the Sahelian Governments to coordinate their actions to improve security, democratic governance and development in the region. The United States certainly agrees that such coordination is crucial to improving the stability and the prosperity of the region, and we were pleased to hear that that is happening.

The United States agrees that the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5) and its civilian component are key to addressing some of the root causes of the conflict. The United States, like others, as we have heard, remains committed to bilaterally supporting the Joint Force with equipment, training, supplies and advisers. Of course, we encourage other partners to both honour their pledges to the Joint Force and to consider additional bilateral support to individual G-5 countries. Since it was mentioned in the remarks made by other speakers, let me reiterate that it remains the position of the United States that United Nations assessed contributions are not a viable source of funding.

In September, the United States announced \$152 million in humanitarian assistance to respond to the needs of the people in the G-5 Sahel countries. This is in addition to our existing regional social services, law enforcement and security assistance programmes, and, as well, in addition to our \$111 million direct contribution to the Joint Force.

In the near term, we expect to see the Joint Force fully leverage the support mechanism of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), enhanced last June to better support the G-5 Joint Force. We believe that there is no time to lose. MINUSMA is only part of the solution, and in our view it is unlikely to continue indefinitely at its current level.

As we heard, the G-5 Joint Force has had some successes recently, with Operations Sama 1 and 2, and the Force taking over a MINUSMA temporary command post. However, I think that we all know that progress can unravel quickly when State defence and security forces commit their own acts of violence against the very people they are supposed to protect. As we all know, such violations reinforce narratives by terrorists and drive recruitment, as others have said. We therefore expect a full investigation into the five alleged cases of serious human rights violations by the G-5 battalion operating in northern Burkina Faso, after MINUSMA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights shared a list of those possible violations with the Joint Force in June. We agree with others that accountability is essential. In addition, at the national level, we are calling on the transitional Government of Mali and the Governments of the Niger and Burkina Faso to conduct thorough and transparent investigations, and to hold accountable anyone responsible for alleged crimes, including the reported 50 arbitrary executions that Burkina Faso forces allegedly carried out in May. As the region seeks to improve governance, which is so crucial to restoring stability, we also call on the Governments of Burkina Faso, the Niger and Chad to promote free and fair electoral processes in their upcoming elections.

Let me end by saying that we all know that Mali is critical to fighting violent extremism in the region, which is why we are pleased to hear from its Permanent

Representative. But we are alarmed by the October release of approximately 200 prisoners in Mali, most of whom, I believe, were held on terrorism charges. We are therefore urging Mali's transitional Government and other actors to swiftly implement the principles of the Algiers Agreement. This Agreement remains relevant, and its provisions will have a stabilizing effect in northern Mali and the entire Sahel. We also call on the transitional Government in Mali to hold free and fair elections within 18 months and to uphold its commitments on everything from fighting corruption to enacting electoral and governance reforms. The Malian people deserve that and nothing less.

**Annex XV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Indonesia and Viet Nam, the two States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the Security Council.

We would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for his comprehensive briefing, and Mr. Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative of Mali and representative of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Robert Keith Rae, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and Mr. Koen Vervaeke, Managing Director for Africa at the European External Action Service, for their contributions.

The G-5 Sahel Joint Force has played an important role in maintaining peace, security and stability in the Sahel region and we would like to reaffirm our support for it as an important security response to the fight against terrorism in the region. We commend the significant support that has been given to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which enables the Joint Force to implement its tasks more effectively.

We welcome the recent progress, including in operations undertaken so far, that has helped to restore the return of State authorities, operationalization of the police component and implementation of the human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework. We also welcome the planned deployment of 3,000 African Standby Force troops to the Sahel to complement the Joint Force in countering terrorism.

People in the Sahel are coping with immediate threats from terrorism, intercommunal conflicts and organized crime, together with the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Millions are suffering from food insecurity, displacement and the adverse impacts of climate change in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. More than 3,500 schools have been closed, and at least 150 health centres are currently not fully functional. Nearly 12 million girls in the Sahel are out of school due to the pandemic, which puts them at greater risk of sexual assault, child marriage and early pregnancy. Moreover, there has been an increase in the number of terrorist attacks on civilians, peacekeepers and security forces in the region. These threats are hindering the provision of basic-need services for the people in this region.

In the light of the foregoing, we would like to highlight the following points. First, we urge countries in the Sahel region, the United Nations and international partners to spare no effort to combat terrorism and extremism and prevent intercommunal conflicts in the region. We stress the importance of international support for the Joint Force. It is essential that the Joint Force continues to receive sustainable support so that it can provide better protection for its soldiers, security forces and civilians, as well as fulfil its mandates as effectively as possible.

Secondly, it is important for all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and ensure the legitimate rights and interests of the people of the Sahel region. We emphasize the need to safeguard unimpeded humanitarian access for those in need at the borders of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. We also call for greater commitment to humanitarian assistance from the international community for the people of this region.

Thirdly, there is a need for a holistic approach to helping countries in the Sahel region to eradicate the root causes of terrorism, along with promoting peace, stability and development. To this end, we call for greater investment in social services and economic development, including capacity-building and respect for human rights.

Fourthly, engaging, employing and empowering women and young people offers the best hope for peace, stability and recovery in the region. It is time for collective action to be undertaken to put women and young people at the centre of all efforts, support social reform and invest in social services while fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last but not least, we call on the international community to sustain its commitment to supporting the fight against terrorism and violence in the Sahel for the long term, owing to lingering difficulties, including by ensuring adequate resources. We welcome the efforts and contributions made by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and MINUSMA, in coordination with the G-5 Sahel Joint Force and other States Members of the United Nations, to address the challenges in the region.

**Annex XVI****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations, Issa Konfourou**

[Original: French]

Let me begin by conveying to members of the Security Council the regrets of the Chairman of our Group, Ambassador Sidi Mohamed Laghdaf of Mauritania. He would have liked to be with us this morning, but as I speak he is presenting his credentials to the Secretary-General. It is therefore my honour to address the Council on behalf of the Permanent Representatives of Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger, Chad and my own country, Mali.

First of all, I would like to thank the Security Council for organizing today's important meeting on the situation in the Sahel. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2020/1074) and take due note of his comments.

Allow me to make the following observations based on the report of the Secretary-General. First, the States members of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) are encouraged by the positive momentum that the Pau and Nouakchott summits have generated, not only in terms of better coordination of military operations with our partners — the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the French-led Operation Barkhane — but also in terms of strengthening the operational capacities of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. Thanks to this new dynamic, the Joint Force conducted several operations in the region during the period under review and the results are very encouraging. Indeed, several dozen terrorists, including jihadist leaders, were neutralized, military and logistical equipment was seized and terrorist bases, particularly in the central deployment area of the Joint Force — the three-border zone of Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso — were destroyed.

Clearly, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force continues to play a crucial role in the regional response to the activities of extremist armed groups in the Sahel region, as well as other cross-border challenges, such as trafficking in persons, including migrants, and other trafficking of all kinds including goods, weapons and drugs. However, despite this encouraging progress, the security situation in the Sahel, as Council members know, remains of great concern, owing to the ongoing criminal activities by terrorist groups against a backdrop of intercommunal violence.

We therefore appreciate the continuation of the strategic partnership we have with France and its Barkhane force, the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union, as well as with individual States members of the Security Council, which is helping to ward off the extremist threat in the Sahel and thereby avoid its expansion to other countries in the region.

In the G-5 Sahel, we also know that the security response alone is not a guarantee of lasting stability in our common space. The G-5 Sahel is also involved in structuring development projects for the benefit of our populations, especially women and young people. I am pleased to note here that in the report under consideration today, Secretary-General António Guterres underlined this point very well, in the following terms:

“Security challenges in the Sahel remain deeply complex. Any initiative to stabilize the region will be successful only if the root causes of instability are addressed in a holistic, integrated and comprehensive manner. Underdevelopment, poverty, the lack of governance and lack of access to basic

---

services and economic opportunities, exclusion and the effects of climate change must be addressed simultaneously” (*S/2020/1074, para. 56*).

This is the sense of the priority that our Heads of State give to the implementation of the G-5 Sahel priority investment programme. In this perspective, we are working together to improve the living conditions of our populations, particularly women and young people. But we need continued and increased support from our partners to achieve sustainable peace and development in our region. That is why we call on all our partners to accelerate their efforts and contributions to G-5 Sahel initiatives and projects. In this respect, I would like to commend the enormous contribution of the Sahel Alliance, in collaboration with the G-5 Sahel Executive Secretariat, as well as the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which needs to be revitalized and integrated into the overall approach of our partners in the region.

With regard to the human rights situation, I would like to underscore the commitment of the Heads of State at the Nouakchott summit to conducting counter-terrorism operations with strict respect for human rights. Accordingly, the G-5 Sahel welcomes the exemplary cooperation with MINUSMA and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We are concerned about the humanitarian situation in the Sahel region, which has been greatly exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic. In this respect, we welcome the conclusions of the ministerial round table held in September and organized by the United Nations, the European Union, Germany and Denmark, which pledged \$1.7 billion in humanitarian assistance for the central Sahel.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the commitment of our leaders to continuing our regional cooperation to address our common challenges. Security and development, including through good governance, respect for human rights and the provision of basic social services to the population, remain our top priorities. We call for more financial support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. We continue to call for a robust mandate under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and for predictable and sustainable funding for the Joint Force, including through the United Nations. We hope that these observations will be taken into account in the Security Council’s deliberations on this issue.

---