

A soldier in full camouflage gear, including a helmet and a balaclava, is seated in the back of a vehicle. The soldier is holding a rifle and looking back over their shoulder. The vehicle has a metal mesh fence in front of the soldier. The background shows a clear blue sky and some green foliage.

AFRICAN PEACEKEEPERS IN MALI



ROYAL DANISH DEFENCE COLLEGE



DIIS · DANISH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

This report is written by Peter Albrecht, Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde and Rikke Haugegaard as part of the Defence and Security Studies at DIIS.

Peter Albrecht is a Senior Researcher at DIIS, the Danish Institute for International Studies.
Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde is Postdoc at DIIS, the Danish Institute for International Studies.
Rikke Haugegaard is a Lecturer at FAK, the Royal Danish Defence College.

DIIS · Danish Institute for International Studies
Østbanegade 117, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark
Tel: +45 32 69 87 87
E-mail: diis@diis.dk
www.diis.dk

Layout: Lone Ravnkilde & Viki Rachlitz
Printed in Denmark by Eurographic

ISBN 978-87-7605-860-9 (print)
ISBN 978-87-7605-861-6 (pdf)

DIIS publications can be downloaded free of charge or ordered from www.diis.dk

© Copenhagen 2017, the authors and DIIS

Table of Contents

Abbreviations	4
Acknowledgments	6
Executive Summary	7
Introduction	10
Methodology	15
Mission Context: Why Mali?	18
Peacekeeping when there is “no peace to keep”	21
MINUSMA’s mandate	23
Africans on the Frontline	26
Entering the mission: Memoranda of understanding	30
Distribution of tasks, equipment and risk	33
The choreography of convoy escorts	36
Civilian drivers – a security risk?	39
Securing cantonment sites	40
Perceptions and Leadership in MINUSMA	44
Management, not leadership	50
Information and Intelligence Sharing in MINUSMA	56
Challenges to sharing and accessing information	60
Data – but who can analyze it?	61
Who can you trust?	63
Regional Interests in MINUSMA	66
Niger: Moving the frontline into Mali	68
Burkina Faso: Securing border control	69
Chad: Exporting insecurity	70
Conclusion and Recommendations	72
Notes	78
References	81

ABBREVIATIONS

AFISMA	African Union-led International Support Mission to Mali	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
AFISU	All Sources Information Fusion Unit	PSOs	Peace Support Operations
AQIM	Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb	SHQ	Sector Headquarters
AU	African Union	SOF	Special Operations Forces
CAR	Central African Republic	SOLTG	Special Operations Land Task Group
CÉDÉAO	Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Economic Community of West African States)	SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
CMA	Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (Coordination of Azawad's Movements)	SUR	Statement of Unit Requirement
COE	Contingency Owned Equipment	TCC	Troop Contributing Country
CONOPS	Concept of Operations	UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration	UN	United Nations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
FAMA	Forces Armées et de Sécurité du Mali (Armed and Security Forces of Mali)	UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
GATIA	Groupe Autodéfense Touareg Imghad et Alliés (Touareg Imghad and Allied Self-Defense Group)	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
HQ	Headquarters	UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
IED	Improvised Explosive Device		
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance		
JMAC	Joint Military Analysis Center		
MICEMA	Mission de la CÉDÉAO au Mali (ECOWAS Mission in Mali)		
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali		
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding		
MUJAO	Mouvement pour l'Unité et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa)		

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is based on unique access to MINUSMA's military hierarchy. For this, we wish to thank MINUSMA, and especially Major General Michael Lollesgaard and Colonel Jakob Henius for their support and hospitality. In addition, we wish to thank all the people in and outside MINUSMA who we interviewed in Bamako, Timbuktu and Gao, and who willingly spent their time with us and shared their experiences. As a consequence, we believe that the report has become a unique piece of work that contributes to a better understanding of United Nations peacekeeping.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Danish Ministry of Defence that provided generous funding for the project.

Ultimate responsibility for the content of this report lies with the three authors, who have added interpretation to the many reports, interviews and meetings held as the project was implemented.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When Libya collapsed in 2011, Mali became an epicenter of international security concerns over migration, terrorism and organized crime. In 2013, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was established by UN Security Council Resolution 2100 to support peace-making and -building in Mali in order to prevent further destabilization of the Sahel. MINUSMA has come to represent the emerging practice of establishing UN peacekeeping missions in asymmetrical conflict environments where there is "no peace to keep." In this context, and following large-scale international interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, European soldiers have returned to UN peacekeeping. However, African countries remain the largest troop contributors to peacekeeping missions, including MINUSMA. This report provides new insight into the roles and experiences of African soldiers serving in MINUSMA.

The report demonstrates the disproportionate dangers that confront African soldiers compared to their European and Asian counterparts in the mission. A number of factors shape these discrepancies, including where African soldiers are deployed in the mission area, the equipment at their disposal and how their governments support them before, during and after deployment. The report argues that it is the combined effect of these factors that makes MINUSMA the deadliest UN mission ever deployed. By October 2016, 91 of 109 MINUSMA personnel killed were from African countries located in the region around Mali, while only six were from European countries. These numbers directly affect MINUSMA's efficiency and prospects for contributing to the peace process in Mali.

European forces are concentrated in the strategic and coordinating roles in MINUSMA headquarters in Bamako, Mali's capital. They deploy as special operations forces, as part of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance units, and as military helicopter pilots in the different sectors of the mission. Meanwhile, it is primarily African soldiers who are based permanently in the most dangerous areas of the mission. In Kidal in northern Mali, for instance, soldiers from Chad have reportedly been deployed for 2–3 years without a break and without adequate supplies and support from the Chadian government and the United Nations itself. These conditions have a negative influence on the soldiers' morale and discipline.

Intra-mission inequality is also visible in the fact that it is primarily African troops that take on the most dangerous tasks. One of the reasons for this relates to how countries contribute troops to UN missions, both in the specific case of MINUSMA, and in general. The memorandum of understanding between each troop contributing country and the UN specifies where in the mission and under what conditions the former will deploy. While all countries have what is referred to as “national caveats,” European troops are generally speaking considerably more restricted in what they are allowed to do and under what conditions.

As such, African troops not only end up in some of the most dangerous areas of Mali, but during 2016 they took on the two biggest tasks of the military component of MINUSMA: securing provision convoys to the Kidal region, and construction of cantonment sites for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The ability to move and thereby maintain troops is the foundation of any military operation, but it has proven to be a considerable challenge for MINUSMA. It has similarly been African troops that have been tasked to secure cantonment sites in order to begin disarming signatories to the 2015 Algiers Accord. Furthermore, because of the security situation in Mali, especially in the north, MINUSMA has patrolled these areas to a very limited extent. Combined with the fact that convoy security and securing cantonment sites drain a considerable amount of resources from MINUSMA, the mission’s ability to execute other core tasks, including protection of civilians, has been severely restricted. The report also demonstrates that structural differences among troops are reflected in mutual, at times negative, perceptions that shape intra-mission alliances and networks during deployment. Indeed, these perceptions shape collaboration and general social and operational interaction between African and non-African troops. This is exemplified in how intelligence and information are shared across the mission. In a UN context, MINUSMA benefits from an unprecedented intelligence capacity with the establishment of the All Sources Information Fusion Unit. However, so far, lack of mutual trust means that African soldiers have not benefited sufficiently from the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment and capabilities that the European troop contributing countries bring into the mission.

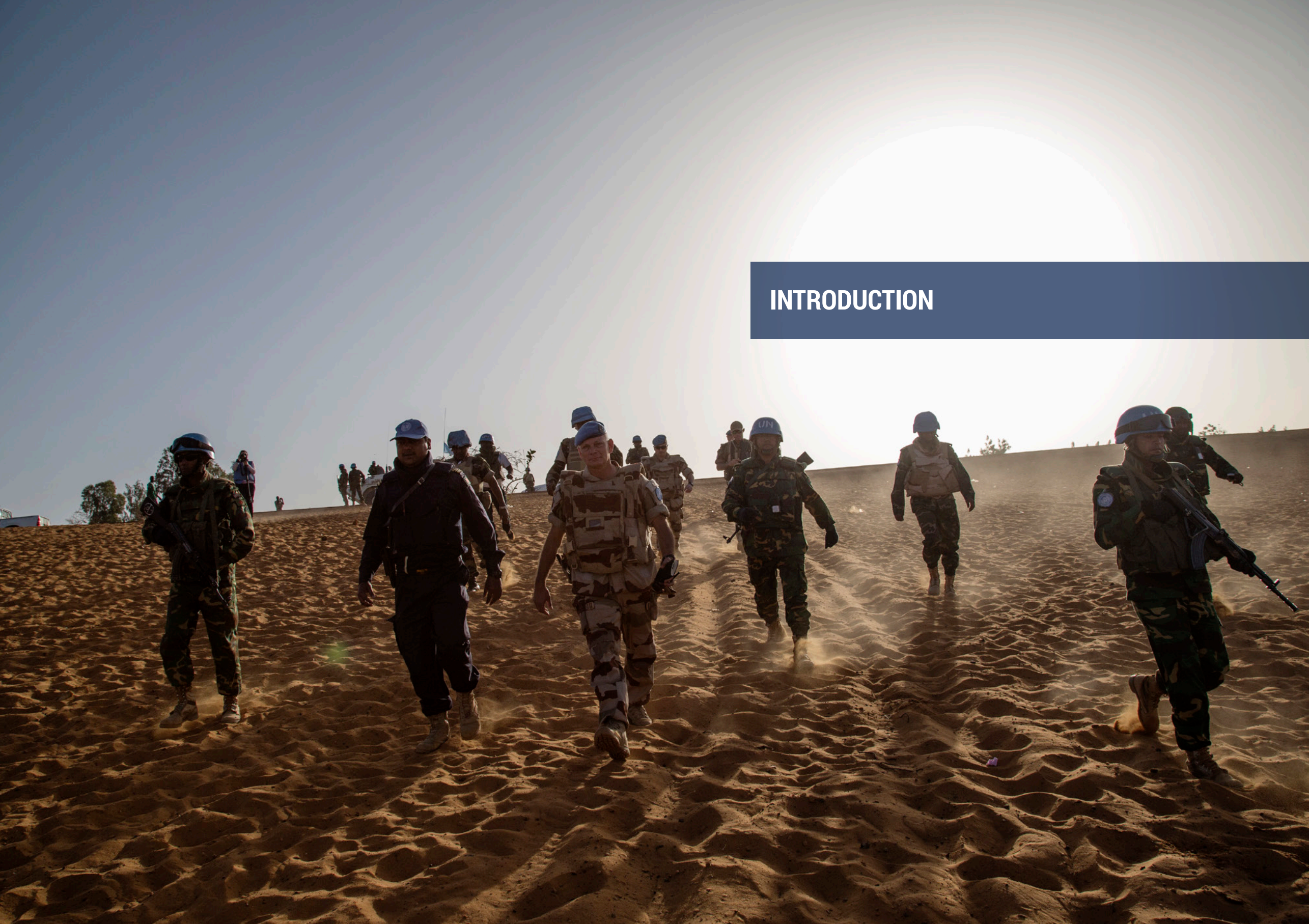
The report concludes by demonstrating how national interests determine which countries are willing to send troops to Mali. The primary contributors are not only from Sub-Saharan Africa, they are from the regions or countries that share borders with Mali.

This report illustrates how intra-mission inequality encumbers collaboration and coordination between African and non-African units in MINUSMA. Most of the time, the units operate more or less separately, to the extent that MINUSMA risks becoming a two-tier mission. Such fragmentation, which is noticeable across all elements of the mission, must be addressed – by UN headquarters in New York and by MINUSMA itself. If these challenges are not addressed, MINUSMA as a whole will not be able to benefit from the specialized support that the European countries bring into the mission. However, the capabilities that European soldiers bring with them are indispensable if United Nations peacekeepers are to function, indeed, survive in an asymmetrical conflict environment.

On the basis of report findings, 11 recommendations are presented that would enhance MINUSMA’s ability to implement the mandate it has been given by the United Nations Security Council.

The report is based on fieldwork conducted in Mali in June 2016 by researchers from the Royal Danish Defence College and the Danish Institute for International Studies.

INTRODUCTION



A key trend in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping from the 1990s and into the first decade of the 21st century has been the retreat of Western powers from the direct deployment of personnel to peace support operations (PSOs) (Utley 2006; International Peace Institute 2013). With the establishment of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in April 2013 by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2100, Europe has returned to UN peacekeeping, predominantly, if not exclusively, in coordinating and strategic roles. After sustaining high numbers of casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, limiting boots on the ground remains a prerogative for European countries, because of tightening defense budgets, and a decreasing political will to risk the lives of soldiers overseas (Luján 2013).

The military component of MINUSMA, which consists of approximately 11,000 troops,¹ might mark the return of European forces to UN peacekeeping. However, the majority of its soldiers are not only African, but are also neighbors to or from the region around Mali. While the presence of European soldiers influences interaction among troops in the mission, Europe's reentry into peacekeeping has not reversed the growth and dominance of troop contributions made by states of the global South.² African states alone contribute 67 per cent of the UN's uniformed personnel, including some of the poorest countries in the world such as Liberia, Chad and Niger – all contributors to MINUSMA. This entails a unique set of challenges to peacekeeping in general, and as this report explores, MINUSMA in particular.

A body of research has emerged that examines the motivations of African countries to contribute to peacekeeping (see Albrecht and Haenlein 2015, 2016; Bellamy and Williams 2013; Koops et al 2015; Cunliffe 2013; Wilén et al 2015). However, an in-depth understanding of how peacekeepers from the global South, and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, experience, negotiate and practice their roles and responsibilities once they are deployed have generated comparatively little attention. Understanding these dynamics is vital to policy-makers for two reasons. It provides a more nuanced understanding of the kinds of intra-mission friction that emerges when highly unequal militaries are brought together into one framework of cooperation, and gives a more realistic picture of what can be expected from PSOs.

This study contributes to the peacekeeping literature by providing insight into the roles and experiences of African soldiers serving in MINUSMA, how they relate to their European and other non-African counterparts, and vice versa. Based on fieldwork conducted in Mali in June 2016, it demonstrates the disproportionate dangers that confront African soldiers compared with their European counterparts, because of where they are deployed in the mission area, how they are supported by their governments before, during and after deployment, and because of the equipment at their disposal.³

Indeed, the reason why African soldiers have suffered the largest death toll in MINUSMA is attributable to the combined impact of these factors – and their losses are considerable.⁴ By late 2015, MINUSMA was referred to as the “world's most dangerous peacekeeping mission” by the BBC (2015). One reason why this is the case is reflected in the fact that MINUSMA – together with UN missions in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – has come to represent a de facto doctrinal change in peacekeeping towards stabilization and peace-enforcement in conflict settings, where there is “no peace to keep” (Karlsrud 2015). It is questionable whether the UN is in a position politically, if not technically and organizationally, to deal with the considerable losses that characterize such an environment. By October 2016, 91 of 109 MINUSMA personnel killed were from African countries in the region around Mali, while six came from European countries. A total of 36 were from Chad alone.

This study takes the death toll among African troops as its point of departure. It demonstrates why African soldiers are the most exposed in Mali – and with what implications for MINUSMA's ability to deliver on its mandate. Apart from illustrating the implications of these challenges for how MINUSMA performs, the death toll also provides insight into the ability of poorer states, in particular, to contribute troops to UN peacekeeping-turned-stabilization missions, and the political interests that are at stake in the process. Ultimately, this report is an exploration of how in-mission inequality between African and non-African – especially European – troop contributing countries (TCCs) is managed in MINUSMA.

Table 1: Fatalities by nation in MINUSMA (up to 31 October 2016)⁵

Bangladesh	6
Benin	2
Burkina Faso	11
Cambodia	4
Cameroon	1
Chad	36
China	1
France	1
Guinea	10
Mali	4
Netherlands	5
Niger	11
Senegal	5
Serbia	1
Togo	11
Total	109

METHODOLOGY

The research applied here is qualitative in approach, with fieldwork carried out in Mali in June 2016. The research team had unique access to MINUSMA's military contingents, because it was invited to conduct the research by the leadership of the mission. Interviewees were selected according to the following parameters: be traced to any particular respondent.

- Location of deployment within the mission area (e.g., border areas, main regional towns, capital).
- Nationality.
- Headquarter-based or based in the sectors.
- Civilian or military status.

Based on these parameters, more than 40 interviews were carried out in MINUSMA's headquarters in Bamako, the capital of Mali, in MINUSMA's Sector West, which is centered in Timbuktu, and in Sector East, which is centered in Gao. The qualitative approach used in this research means that data were gathered primarily through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with MINUSMA personnel, which fostered rich debates among discussion participants about their experiences in the mission. The purpose of the study was explained to prospective participants before the interviews, and no one was obliged to take part in the study. Participants were guaranteed anonymity, and assured that no information they provided could be traced to any particular respondent.

Table 2: MINUSMA mandated personnel (as of 31 August 2016)⁶

Uniformed personnel	11,883
Troops	10,579
Military observers	40
Police	1,264
Civilian personnel	1,246
International civilians	585
Local civilians	661
UN Volunteers	146
Total	13,275

Table 3: Troop contributions to MINUSMA per continent (as of August 2016)⁷

Africa	7,076
Asia	2,416
Europe	986
Americas	101
Total	10,579

Table 4: Top 10 troop contributing countries to MINUSMA (as of August 2016)⁸

Burkina Faso	1,721
Chad	1,440
Bangladesh	1,414
Togo	935
Guinea	858
Niger	858
Senegal	579
China	397
Netherlands	315
Cambodia	301

Mission Context:
WHY MALI?



Libya's breakdown in 2011 impacted directly on the stability of the Sahel region. It sparked the rise of Mali's fourth separatist rebellion since the country declared independence in 1960, pushed the country toward political and territorial collapse, and exacerbated jihadist violence (Cold-Ravnkilde 2013). Deployed after French-led and African-supported military interventions had prevented further escalation of Mali's immediate crisis, MINUSMA was tasked by the UN Security Council to support long-term stabilization efforts in the country.

The dominance of African TCCs in MINUSMA stems in part from the international interventions that preceded it. Following inadequate attempts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and subsequently the African Union (AU) to respond to the Malian crisis,⁹ France launched a military intervention, Operation Serval, at the request of the Malian transitional authorities in Bamako. The ECOWAS Standby Force Mission in Mali (MICEMA) and African Union-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) were on the drawing board, but lacked adequate funding, capacity and political support. However, in the end, AFISMA's concept of operations was revised and adjusted, and deployment was accelerated in January 2013 to support the Malian authorities in the recovery of the Northern territories seized by jihadist groups and the transition to stabilizing activities.

Within a few weeks of intervening, Serval pushed the jihadists out of their northern strongholds in Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. According to Thérout-Benoni (2014), France resisted long-term engagement in Mali and insisted that a multilateral solution be found, but AFISMA proved unable to maintain the gains of Operation Serval. France turned to the UN, which was expected to secure more stable funding than AFISMA had, and it was decided to re-hat AFISMA as MINUSMA. The ad hoc way in which MINUSMA's troops entered the mission has shaped MINUSMA's organizational set-up and influenced which countries have contributed to the mission,¹⁰ including a considerable number of troops from Mali's regional neighbors such as Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso. Like Mali, these countries face deep poverty and state fragility. Moreover, their foreign and domestic political interests in and motivations to contribute impact MINUSMA's effectiveness and potentially the mission's ability to maintain its troops in the future.

PEACEKEEPING WHEN THERE IS "NO PEACE TO KEEP"

The UN Security Council mandated MINUSMA "in support of the transitional authorities of Mali, to stabilise the key population centers, especially in the north of Mali and, in this context, to deter threats and take active steps to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas" (UN Security Council 2013b: 15.i).

Given Mali's complex political context, which is characterized by diverse armed factions with competing agendas, the adequacy of MINUSMA's mandate and its ability to respond to the Malian crisis have been in question ever since its initial deployment in 2013. The stabilization of Mali required an offensive mandate (Chapter VII in the Charter of the UN) far beyond the scope of traditional UN peacekeeping that is based on principles of consent of the parties to a conflict, impartiality and non-use of force, except in self-defense or in defense of the mandate (UN 2008).

Mali's government, a Tuareg-led alliance called Coordination of Azawad's Movements (CMA), and a coalition of pro-government militias called the Platform negotiated a peace agreement, the Algiers Accord, which they signed in June 2015.¹¹ From the outset, external observers and the majority of Mali's population considered the Algiers Accord an elite affair forced through by Mali's broad range of international partners in the region and further afield (ICG 2015a, Guichaoua 2016). The process excluded jihadist factions such as Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and Ansar Dine, because they were, and still are, considered terrorist organizations determined to impose an alternative religious political order on the Sahel. The context in which the international community expected MINUSMA to deliver was blurred further by the shifting affiliations and alliances within the armed groups and the government's alleged involvement in drug smuggling, which involved colluding with some of the armed groups in the North.

In Mali's northern regions in particular, the presence of the state has since independence in 1960 been associated with the abuse of power rather than with the provision of basic services and protection (Cold-Ravnkilde 2013). All of Mali's regions are characterized by their own set of actors, conflict dynamics and challenges. Kidal, in particular, is the historical epicenter of various rebellions¹² by the Tuareg, a Berber people inhabiting parts of the Saharan areas of Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and

Algeria, and is often referred to as the Gordian knot of the Malian conflict. In the past two decades, Kidal has also become a center of illicit trans-Saharan trade and the trafficking of drugs, people, vehicles and arms.¹³ Thus, the inclination of the armed groups that dominate the North to work in support of establishing law and order sanctioned by the Malian state is limited.

The precarious security situation in Mali, which is characterized by an asymmetrical threat environment, has called for a counter-terrorism intervention that the UN so far has been reluctant to undertake (Boutellis and Fink 2016). Therefore, continued support from France is necessary. Maintaining French involvement has also been a way to establish a clear de jure distinction between the UN mission's core mandate of peacekeeping and the peace enforcement and counter-terrorist activities of France (UN Security Council 2013a: 99-100). As we can see in how the UN Security Council Resolutions mandating MINUSMA have evolved, maintaining this distinction has failed in practice. (The next section of this report provides a brief overview of MINUSMA's mandates).¹⁴

From August 2014, France expanded and re-launched Serval as Operation Barkhane,¹⁵ which reflected a reinforced French military presence in the Sahel. External stakeholders often criticize the cooperation between MINUSMA and Barkhane for being integrated to an extent that undermines MINUSMA's impartiality. However, the two missions operate with different mandates and separate command structures, and have different channels to the Malian government. Although MINUSMA and Barkhane coordinate their efforts, they do not conduct joint operations. The bilateral relationship between Barkhane and the Malian government and its armed forces, the Armed and Security Forces of Mali (FAMA), gives Barkhane the strategic upper hand, and France rarely shares information with MINUSMA. One military officer from MINUSMA in Gao characterized Barkhane as effectively operating as a separate mission in Mali:

"We interact, but Barkhane is doing their own thing – in my opinion, they think it's their war, and MINUSMA is seen as a "pain in the ass." We give them a lot of info about our planning and where we operate, but we don't hear anything from them. They warn us that they will do something in a particular area, and then we can't do an ops [operation] there. That's part of the deconfliction. It can be a struggle, because they are not as open as we are."¹⁶

This statement illustrates how Barkhane, as one of several stakeholders with competing agendas in Mali, shapes the political context in which MINUSMA operates. Furthermore, at times, African and European TCCs' interests overlap and shape politics within MINUSMA. For instance, Chad has become a strategic partner in France's war against terrorism in the Sahel. With Barkhane's headquarters based in Chad's capital of N'djamena, and France holding few, but strategic posts in MINUSMA, France's anti-terror campaign also shapes what MINUSMA can and cannot do politically. MINUSMA's current head, Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Mahamat Saleh Annadif, is from Chad. However, needless to say, the national political and security situation in Mali remains the core challenge for MINUSMA. This is reflected by the fact that since MINUSMA's deployment in 2013, its mandate has become increasingly robust.

MINUSMA'S MANDATE

”
The UN is operating in a new geopolitical context and faces threats that have not been encountered before in a peacekeeping context. ”

Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali
(UN Security Council 2012)

The question of MINUSMA's engagement in counter-terrorism as part of its mandate was heatedly debated in the UN Secretariat prior to deployment, and the development towards a more robust mandate has been incremental. The majority of Security Council members supported the establishment of a stabilization mission, authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, with additional support from a parallel force (Barkhane). Yet, three years after MINUSMA's deployment, the increasing number of asymmetric terrorist attacks targeting UN peacekeepers has raised questions in Mali, the sub-region and at UN headquarters in New York about the adequacy of MINUSMA's mandate and capabilities.

The mandate's emphasis on the implementation of a peace agreement between the Government of Mali, Platform and CMA not only excludes a number of armed groups, notably a number of jihadist factions, but also misrepresents the asymmetrical conflict environment in which MINUSMA operates. While the Security Council initially drew a clear distinction between MINUSMA's and Barkhane's mandate and tasks, the capacity of the terrorists groups to destabilize the security situation on the ground has not decreased – on the contrary.

In short, MINUSMA's mandate up until UNSCR 2295 in June 2016 did not give workable directions on how peace might be achieved. As one high-ranking UN official noted: "It makes a big difference whether I am asked to support a government to conquer territory or support dialogue."¹⁷ In this regard, some in MINUSMA consider mandate clarity essential, not least if a clearer mandate articulates a shift from peacekeeping to peace enforcement. The renewed mandate (UNSCR 2295) gives the mission an unprecedented robustness in UN terms, by its emphasis on proactive offensive operations in order to keep certain armed groups out of particular territories.

At the same time, during interviews conducted for this report, there was a strong sense in some parts of the mission that neither the number of soldiers nor the mandate were the main challenge to achieving results on the ground. From the perspective of the military leadership of the mission, the problem was the "tools,"¹⁸ that is, the resources available to implement the mandate. One European special forces officer operating in Sectors East and North noted: "For instance, if there are suspicious activities, we can go in and [ensure that we] get a reaction. We know how to escalate a situation so it allows us to respond to it."¹⁹ In short, European soldiers, who have been in Iraq and Afghanistan, know how to provoke a response in order to formally act in self-defense: They are trained and equipped to handle and respond to asymmetrical threats. However, this is not the case for most of the African soldiers deployed under extremely challenging conditions in the most volatile regions of Mali.

THE EVOLUTION OF MINUSMA'S MANDATE

UNSCR 2100 of April 2013 established MINUSMA under a Chapter VII framework. Among its many roles, MINUSMA was mandated to stabilize key population centers and support reestablishment of state authority throughout the country, including implementation of a transitional road map to democracy, and assisting the national political dialogue and the electoral process. According to UNSCR 2100, MINUSMA has a support function in the peace process, and can engage in disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR) programs, mine action, and weapons and ammunition management.

UNSCR 2164 of June 2014 addresses the need to tackle the underlying causes of the Malian crisis. The resolution welcomes the successful holding of elections, the 2013 Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement and the cease-fire agreement of May 23, 2014 (following violent clashes in Kidal). However, it also reflects concerns of the UN Security Council about delays in the peace talks. In the area of political dialogue, the resolution instructs MINUSMA to help the Malian authorities coordinate negotiations, hold local elections and exercise good governance. UNSCR 2164 also addresses international cooperation on the Sahel, and urges all member states (mainly the states of Sahel and Maghreb) to coordinate their efforts to counter the threat posed by terrorist groups.

UNSCR 2295 of June 2016 authorizes a "more proactive and robust" mandate for MINUSMA, emphasizing proactive offensive operations in order to counter and deter asymmetric and other threats. In this resolution, the UN Security Council expresses the need to strengthen key capacities that MINUSMA lacks, including intelligence, surveillance and a better capacity to counter explosive devices. MINUSMA's force level is increased to a ceiling of 13,289 military personnel and 1,920 police personnel. In addition to the previously mandated protection of civilians and stabilization (including against asymmetric threats), MINUSMA's priority tasks now include countering asymmetric attacks in active defense of MINUSMA's mandate and the protection, safety and security of UN personnel. UNSCR 2295 also endorses the proposal by the Secretary-General to transfer the quick reaction force and the aviation unit supporting it from United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to MINUSMA.



AFRICANS ON THE FRONTLINE

” The challenge is that the African forces do not have the same military technique, and they do not have the same equipment and training as the European and Asian forces.²⁰ ”

Numerically and substantially, European forces are concentrated in the strategic and coordinating roles in MINUSMA's headquarters in Bamako. A former French military officer, who took part in Operation Serval and now works at a UN agency, noted: “Here we have a force headquarters that is NATO-branded [from experiences in Afghanistan],” that is, “a lot of white well-educated soldiers and countries that want their military officers out in the field. They know how to make CONOPS [concept of operations], back brief, it's so sophisticated.”²¹ Indeed, one European officer at MINUSMA's headquarters in Bamako noted that there is a “line of division between ‘white planning’ and ‘African current operations,’” i.e., between those who make orders and those who execute them.

” African forces are well-trained, but they lack modern weapons and equipment. They are poor, they cannot afford to buy new weapons, and they can't equip themselves on short notice. You have countries in MINUSMA that feel that they sacrifice a lot, and then they are criticized afterwards for being incompetent.²² ”

European forces also deploy as special operations forces (SOF), as part of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) units and as military helicopter pilots in the different sectors of the mission. However, daily patrols are carried out on the contingent level. Larger joint operations take place once a month, but European national caveats often challenge the effectiveness of multi-TCC operations. Thus, while Danish and Dutch special forces at times patrol and gather intelligence in Kidal, Mali's northeastern and most volatile region, it is primarily African soldiers (for the most part from Chad and Guinea) who are based permanently in these areas.

Some soldiers, especially from Chad, have reportedly been in the outposts of the mission – Tessalit and Aguelhok close to the Algerian border – for 2–3 years without a break, and there are verified reports of widespread substance abuse in the camps and deadly clashes between soldiers and officers. In northern Mali in particular, the presence of government-led security agencies and public service delivery

are limited: in fact, they border on the non-existent. From the perspective of some within the mission, this makes MINUSMA a proxy for the absent Malian state. One high-level security sector advisor in MINUSMA, who is based in Bamako, explained:

”Without the presence of MINUSMA, you don't have the presence of an organized state in the north of Mali. From Gao to the Algerian border, there is close to 2,000 kilometers, and it is no-man's land. I am talking about thousands of kilometers where there is not a soldier, no police. The only presence is the UN. Now, there is only one solution. Either you reconstitute the Malian administration or you establish a new state. The latter is unacceptable.”

Sector North of MINUSMA is centered in Kidal. In this region in particular, the mission is under permanent threat of attack. Jihadist groups perpetrate sporadic violence, including ambushes, kidnappings and targeted killings against rebel fighters and leaders, but also against MINUSMA, given its political association with the Malian government. The government is only now in the process of renegotiating access to northern Mali. This not only puts considerable pressure on MINUSMA to facilitate the process of establishing a government presence in Kidal, it also installs peacekeepers on the frontline of a fight that they are not prepared for, and may not fully comprehend.

The fact that MINUSMA is a terrorist target has directly influenced the mission's ability to perform. This reflects the doctrinal change that the UN is undergoing from keeping a peace to stabilizing an ongoing conflict (Karlsruud 2015). This evolution could lead to the UN being increasingly associated with counterterrorism efforts, which would present an added challenge to the ability of a mission like MINUSMA to fulfil a protection of civilians mandate (Boutellis and Fink 2016: 13). UN member states increasingly recognize the importance of addressing terrorism and organized crime as strategic threats, but have so far opposed that the UN engages directly in counterterrorism efforts. This is likely the reason why UN headquarters in New York has given missions in countries like the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali limited guidance on implementing stabilization rather than peacekeeping mandates.

The bottom line is that the large number of casualties experienced by the mission is politically unacceptable. It exposes considerable inequality between African and non-African soldiers in terms of individual safety. In turn, this has implications for MINUSMA's ability to be proactive, as one officer close to the Force Commander noted:

"We have had to scale down operations. Each sector experienced terrorist attacks and many killed, and the Force Commander decided that we can't continue to suffer such heavy losses. We'll lose international backing. We needed to plug up the hole that gave us all the losses. All of June, and maybe July, we have a more defensive posture. We need to protect ourselves, reestablish our ability to fight. Our focus has therefore been on guarding cantonments [for DDR] and convoys."²³

This report returns to a detailed analysis of how cooperation, or the lack thereof, and inequality play out between European and African troops in these two tasks – guarding cantonment sites and securing convoys – later in this section. However, before doing so, it is worth keeping in mind that in addition to the factors related to the operational environment, a number of internal organizational factors influence why some TCCs perform poorly in MINUSMA, including how they enter the mission.

ENTERING THE MISSION: MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

Contributions to peacekeeping are established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the TCC and the UN, which details major equipment, self-sustainment services and personnel that the contributing country is asked to deploy. It outlines equipment that the contingent is supposed to bring (Contingent Owned Equipment (COE)), for which the TCC is entitled to be financially reimbursed by the UN. In addition, a Statement of Unit Requirement (SUR) details the composition of different units, i.e., where they can be deployed and under what conditions. This is not a one-way relationship about financial reimbursement of the TCC. In the MoU, the TCC also pledges to deploy troops that are trained and appropriately equipped to fulfil the task it is given. A country like Niger preconditions its contribution to MINUSMA on being deployed close to the border between Mali and Niger.²⁴ In such an instance, according to a high-ranking official in MINUSMA, you "have peacekeeping in Mali, doing border monitoring to the benefit of the TCC."²⁵ Another example is Senegal: in its current MoU, its troops will not cross the border between Sector East, where the Senegalese battalion is camped, and Sector North. This has implications for how the mission organizes itself, for instance, with respect to convoy security, in which Senegal has played a key role.

The challenges of the MoU set-up hit the soldiers of a country like Chad doubly hard. Because of the strategic and financial incentives of making troop contributions to UN missions, but also as a consequence of how Chad entered the Malian conflict and domestic security concerns, the government of Chad is unable, or perhaps

unwilling, to make demands on how and where its forces should be deployed. In addition, a senior official working in MINUSMA's headquarters noted: "They do not get the support from the home country that the home country has committed to; the mission [MINUSMA] is not able to compensate, and the UN has no mechanism to pay."²⁶ To put it simply, Chad's troops are deployed in the most dangerous areas of Mali, but are not adequately supported.

Evidence from other parts of West Africa suggests that extensive external technical and financial support is required to prepare countries emerging from war to contribute to peacekeeping. In the case of Sierra Leone, for instance, which emerged from civil war in 2002, it was only due to extensive, long-term British support that the country was able to send military units to Darfur in 2009 and Somalia in 2013 (Albrecht and Jackson 2014; Albrecht and Haenlein 2015). To put it bluntly, one British officer noted that Sierra Leone was "unable to maintain a force overseas, financially, intellectually or organizationally."²⁷ Many of the neighboring countries contributing to MINUSMA, including Liberia, Chad and Niger, face similar internal challenges of state fragility and precarious security situations and therefore require considerable external support.

The mission carries out operational readiness inspection (ORI) of each TCC once every six months or "anytime the mission believes the equipment or services do not meet the standards" (MINUSMA carries out COE inspections every quarter) (Leslie 2006: 20). On the one hand, these assessments take place to ensure that the TCCs' capability is "sufficient and satisfactory" (Leslie 2006: 20). On the other hand, they also serve the purpose of "comparing the MoU and the ground holding [of a TCC]: you have signed to bring X in, but you brought in Y. So if you are not going to fill it up, if you don't have it, you are not going to be reimbursed."²⁸

There are numerous examples of discrepancies between the equipment that TCCs possess de facto when deployed, and the equipment that they pledge de jure to bring into the mission in their MoUs with the UN. "In principle," one high-ranking European officer in headquarters in Bamako noted:

"...a country has to live up to having a 100% of the contingency owned equipment, but a country cannot constantly replace equipment. Normally, also for the European countries, we say that 70% [of the COE] is the critical line. Otherwise, the country has to do something immediately. Here we have some countries that only have 29% of the COE available. At that point, the units stop functioning."²⁹

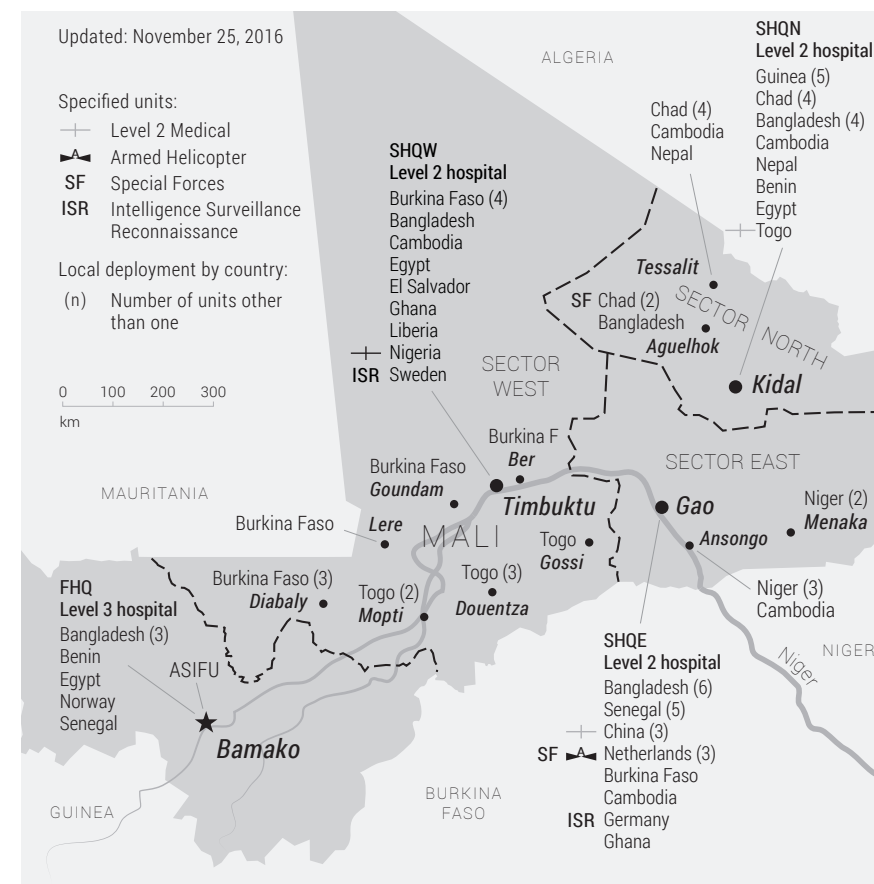
The direct consequences of such situations for MINUSMA are both technical and political. Technically, the mission is unable to deliver on its mandate, because certain TCCs do not have the equipment (or training) to operate effectively in their area of responsibility. In turn, this inability to operate effectively has led to a considerably higher death toll among the forces that come from the poorest TCCs, which is politically unacceptable for the mission. These dynamics around equipment and logistics – notably the lack thereof – play into, and directly shape the incongruence between orders given by headquarters in Bamako, and the capacity of TCCs to deliver in the sectors.

Furthermore, the European contingents, in particular, have a number of strict and unambiguous national caveats attached to their deployment in terms of where they will deploy, the tasks they will undertake and under what conditions. The bottom line is that Guinea and Chad, two of the poorest countries in the world, willingly deploy in the outposts of Sector North. Like the European TCCs, countries like Niger and Senegal have national caveats; however, caveats on the African contingents are far less restrictive in terms of protecting the individual soldier's security and ensuring his (or her) living conditions. For instance, the deployment of most European soldiers is conditioned on the availability of helicopter support and access to Level 2 hospitals within a relatively short period of time, which is not readily available in all camps.³⁰ Moreover, helicopter support has certain limitations that impede efficient support of the African troops. As one European officer noted:

"The cool thing about the African contingents [particularly the Chadians] is that they don't have the same restrictions on where they are allowed to go. We have better equipment, better training. But, our princess attitude, that we have to be able to be picked up by an helicopter within an hour and reach a hospital within two, makes it challenging for us to plan operations."³¹

The conditions that each TCC negotiate individually with the UN shape how the mission is organized; the distribution of tasks and equipment, in particular, is often to the detriment of the African units.

MINUSMA Deployment

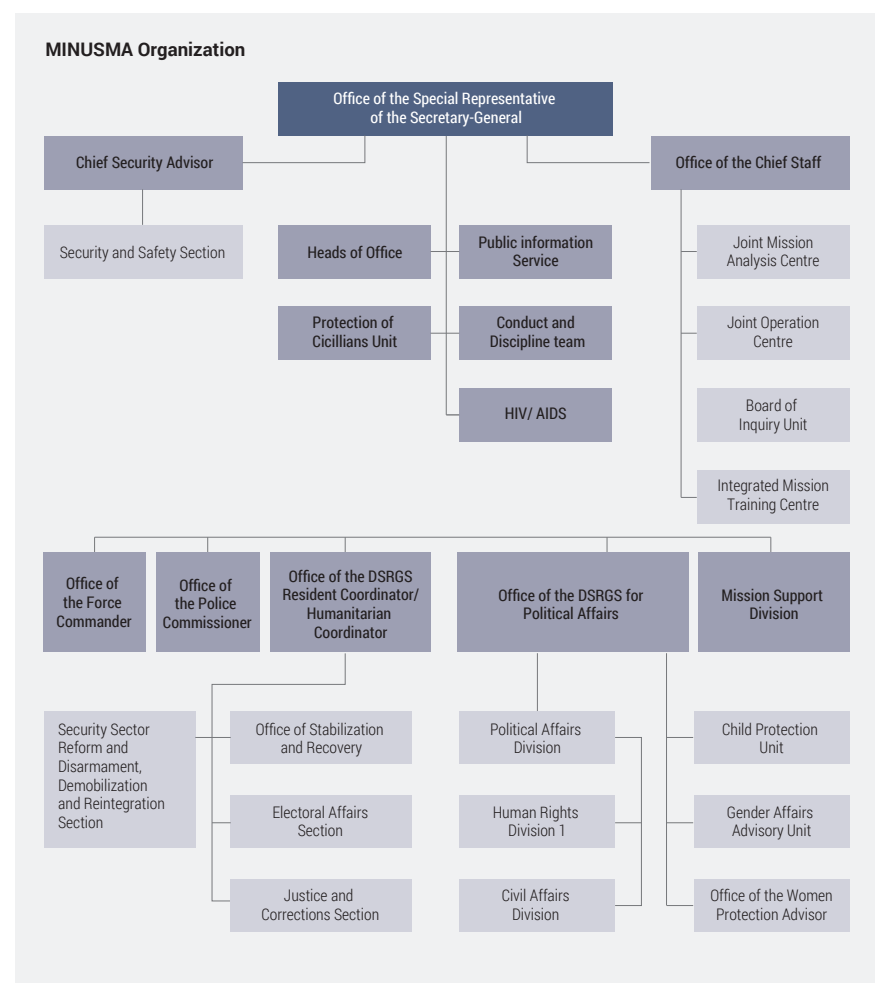


Source: MINUSMA

DISTRIBUTION OF TASKS, EQUIPMENT AND RISK

Most of the African soldiers are categorically at the frontline of the fight of MINUSMA, and thus also on the frontline of the UN's evolving role from peacekeeping to stabilization.

Figure 1: Organization of MINUSMA³²



Chadian and Guinean forces in particular were cited by a civilian officer MINUSMA as the only “ones [i.e., forces] willing to go to the dangerous and impassable parts of Sector North [of the mission].”³³ This was not necessarily seen as a matter of being brave from the perspective of their European counterparts: “Brave? I don’t know, there is a thin line between bravery and stupidity – they seem fearless. They have different norms, values and procedures.”³⁴ The fearlessness of these forces can be explained in part as the consequence of a different “combat culture” or “military doctrine.” As one African high-ranking officer in Gao explained:

“Whether there are five, six or seven casualties – it doesn’t really matter. If they see an enemy, they stop and fire [but they do not plan]. At one point, the President [of Chad] announced that it is unacceptable that more of them end up dead, but I am mentioning this [i.e., their combat culture] to say that they are brave people.”³⁵

At the same time, the Chadian forces are considered unpredictable and erratic. As one stabilization adviser based in Gao noted, reflecting a common perception across the mission: “Chadians are either on low gear or fast, violent and aggressive gear, but there is nothing in between.”³⁶

The willingness of the Chadian and Guinean governments to send their troops to some of the most exposed regions of Mali stands in stark contrast to their European counterparts. One stabilization officer in UN headquarters in Bamako noted:

“The Dutch, Swedish, German soldiers [based in Gao and Timbuktu] are in their own camps; protected areas aside from everyone else. The UN should not accept to have the losses among African military staff [that are considerably higher than among their European colleagues]. It’s a huge imbalance.”³⁷

This perception is reflected in casualties of the mission, but also in the discrepancies that exist in how troops from different countries are trained and equipped. One high-ranking African officer explained:

“It’s difficult with Chad, their army has a history of attempted state coups. They have always had clan combat, meaning that if your clan wins the presidency, the other clan is automatically considered the rebel. Therefore, many of the men have guns and vehicles [regardless of whether they are soldiers or not]. The soldiers do not go to school; they come from the villages and are enrolled directly in the army. Their army, now, does not follow the same rules as the rest of us. The president tries to help the army – he has a lot of weapons, but he is not good at organizing the army professionally.”³⁸

European and African soldiers in the mission rarely patrol together, and national caveats challenge the efficiency and coordination of cross-sector and multi-TCC operations. This means that while European special forces constitute force multipliers, their presence in the mission does not adequately benefit and support the most exposed African troops, for instance, those on the Algerian border.³⁹

The operational environment and the differentiated conditions of service of African and non-African soldiers are a considerable challenge to MINUSMA. The next two sections of this report explore two central tasks of the military component of the mission: escorting convoys and securing cantonment sites for DDR. Both of these tasks are challenging, because they are dangerous and laborious, and because they stretch scarce resources within the mission. They are also primarily, if not exclusively, managed by troops from the African contingents.

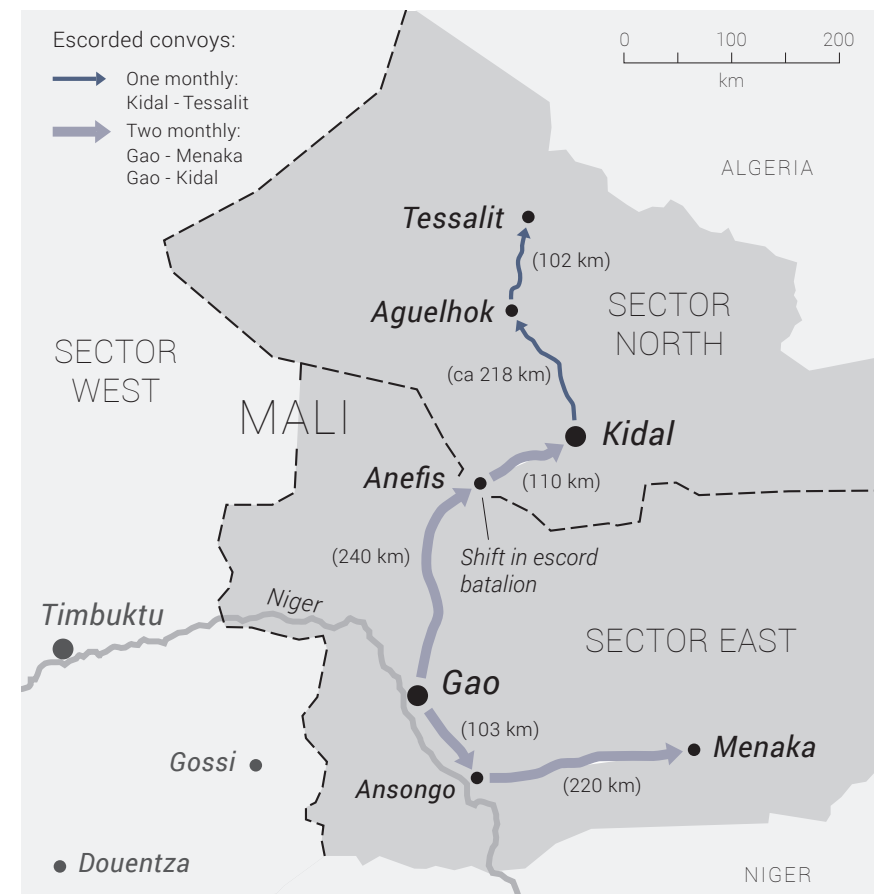
THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF CONVOY ESCORTS

The ability to plan and carry out the movement and maintenance of troops is the foundation of any military operation. For MINUSMA, it has proven particularly challenging to transport fuel, food and water to military camps in Sector North. This sector of MINUSMA is based in the Kidal region, the most volatile part of Mali, where the mission is under permanent threat of attack from armed groups, including jihadist factions. Combined with poor infrastructure in this part of the country, the supply line between Gao in Sector East and Kidal in Sector North is particularly challenging, which highlights the difficulties that MINUSMA experiences in carrying out multi-TCC and cross-sector operations. In sum, one of the central discussions in the mission during the fieldwork for this report was that the escort of convoys consumes a disproportionate amount of resources from MINUSMA's military element. Consequently, their execution has led to a general decline in the mission's ability to support implementation of MINUSMA's mandate, including the protection of civilians.

Situated in one of the worlds' most impassable desert terrains, where temperatures can reach 55 degrees Celsius, carrying out convoy escorts to Sector North is extremely demanding. Due to Mali's limited infrastructure, Gao is supply hub for both Gao and Kidal. To supply Sector North, a convoy of 50–80 heavily loaded trucks departs from Gao two times per month to drive hundreds of kilometers through the desert on missions that usually take from 10–14 days, and sometimes up to three weeks. In addition to breakdowns and becoming stuck in the sand, the convoys are frequently exposed to improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and ambush attacks from armed factions.⁴⁰

There are four convoys from Sector East per month. Two convoys go to Ménaka in Sector East, two to Kidal Town in Sector North, one of which continues to Tessalit. These operations are complicated by the fact that they involve coordination between the two sectors. The route from Gao to Kidal goes through Anefis. The distance from Gao to Anefis is 240km. Normally, the trip takes one day, but if a vehicle breaks down, the time is doubled or tripled. In Anefis, the convoy security unit from Sector East meets a convoy security unit from Sector North, which then takes over provision of convoy security. One convoy goes from Anefis to Kidal Town (110 km) and once a month another convoy goes from Kidal Town to Tessalit (320 km). The convoy security unit from Gao waits in Anefis for 4–6 days for the empty trucks to return. The trip from Gao to Anefis and back (including waiting time) normally takes around 10 days, but as noted above, can take up to three weeks.

Convoy escort from Sector East



Source: MINUSMA

As the commander in charge of Sector East explained, carrying out convoys is a considerable drain on scarce resources:

"We are handicapped by the number of convoys that we have to do, and we can not escort too many vehicles. We end up with convoys that are 8–10 km [long]. Roughly, it requires 130 soldiers, 13–14 APCs [Armed Personnel Carriers] to escort the trucks. It is difficult to safeguard the convoys effectively. 55 trucks are okay, but 70 are too many. If you hit the mines, and APCs are destroyed, you cannot move. If that happens, or if there is a breakdown, normally the soldiers take the civilian vehicles that are not as robust as military vehicles. If that happens, or if they are stuck or break down, non-military vehicles end up carrying military goods. That is also a security concern."⁴¹

The extreme weather conditions along the convoy routes put considerable physical and psychological strain on the soldiers, and equipment and vehicles also suffer. Breakdown of a heavily loaded truck is a constant risk, and if it gets stuck in the sand, the soldiers have to guard it under constant threat of attack, which puts a lot of pressure on the soldiers and their commanders back on the base in Gao: "It is stressful. My soldiers go to the field for 10–15 days and you are not at ease until they are back, because anything can happen."⁴²

In theory, the military units that escort the convoy collaborate with other units during the operation. The unit that the research team interviewed in Gao had carried out convoys for 13 months by June 2016 (and were at the time of fieldwork for this report about to be replaced). Initially, the unit was supported by Dutch special forces; however, after the unit (drawn from the Senegalese battalion in Gao) received counter-IED training in December 2015, this support was withdrawn. The escorting unit can also receive helicopter support, but the helicopters are not able to detect IEDs. Furthermore, during the unit's first five months of operation, obtaining helicopter support was very slow, even in cases of emergency. The sense of isolation that is felt by the unit is compounded by the fact that, according to the commander in charge of the convoy security unit, joint planning of operations is inadequate, and there is insufficient back-up from headquarters in Sector East. This is because, the commander noted:

"We don't plan together, and it is a real problem. Convoy escort is their priority, but people feel abandoned. When we go on mission, our people are stressed and afraid, and sector headquarters act as if they have no interest in the mission. Once my people leave the camp [in Gao], they [sector headquarters] don't coordinate with us – they start thinking about something else."⁴³

In addition to the challenges of joint operations planning, cross-sector coordination between Sector East and Sector North also poses a number of issues. For instance:

"Sometimes we have problems. When we are escorting the convoys to Sector North, at some point we stop, and Sector North comes to take over, but sometimes they are late, and we just sit there and ask ourselves: 'Where is Sector North?' We don't know. Headquarters should know, and if there are any problems, they should coordinate with Sector North. There are coordination problems and they don't take care of it down here in sector headquarters."⁴⁴

In Sector West, the convoy security unit also lacks support, because of limitations on the use of helicopter attachments. In Sector West, an engineer unit from Ghana, a counter-IED unit from Cambodia and helicopter support from El Salvador assist the convoy escorting units from Burkina Faso. However, a national caveat of El Salvador means that helicopters are only allowed to fly one hour away from the camp in the outskirts of Timbuktu. Thus, after one hour of such support, the convoy security unit is left in the field without air support. Helicopter and aviation units of the mission are not under the direct control of the Force Commander. They remain under national restrictions, and as a consequence, air support for escorts as well as general operations is a scarce resource in MINUSMA.

In sum, the organization of convoy security is a considerable challenge to and drain on the mission, both because of the context in which they are carried out and challenges within the organization that executes them. A separate, yet significant, source of insecurity for the troops that escort the convoys are the drivers of the trucks, who are civilians hired from outside the mission.

CIVILIAN DRIVERS – A SECURITY RISK?

MINUSMA hires trucks from private transport companies, which adds an additional safety risk to the escort. The convoys move slowly and use almost the same route through Sector East and Sector North, each time with relatively predictable frequency, which makes them an easy target of IEDs and ambushes. Troops expressed a sense of concern in interviews that the civilian drivers might inform armed groups about planned routes and positions of the trucks, despite the fact that the mission bans drivers from using their cell phones during the convoy. As explained by one high-ranking African officer:

"For every truck we rent, there are two civilians in the vehicle, and they can call whomever they want to call. The terrorists know who drives the trucks, and if they want information, they will pay the civilians to provide them with what they need."⁴⁵

Moreover, hiring trucks from private companies that might be involved in transporting illicit goods means that MINUSMA potentially supports racketeer networks operating in the North. In addition, some soldiers were concerned that some of the IEDs that they encounter could be a response from local companies that did not win transportation contracts from MINUSMA. Thus, apart from slowing down the mission and draining its resources, the security threats that the convoys are exposed to are further heightened by MINUSMA's dependency on private transport companies.

MINUSMA has tried to reconstruct the Kidal airstrip with the aim of flying in both military provisions and humanitarian aid. However, as soon as contractors had finalized the airstrip, jihadists and locals from the Kidal area attacked and demolished it.⁴⁶ For some time, MINUSMA's Force Commander has been looking into alternative solutions. UN procedures and national interests of the TCCs delayed all of them. The Force Commander, who is Danish, requested that Denmark provide a combat convoy unit of armored trucks and 300 men to assist them, but the Danish parliament did not support the request, because of other priorities in Eastern Europe and the Middle East (Politiken 2015a, 2015b).

Ensuring convoy security remains a considerable challenge to an already overstretched mission. In Gao/Kidal, the upshot of these convoy escort difficulties is that the units in the North do not always receive required supplies. Furthermore, the resources spent on escort could be used to defray the expenses of core functions, including the protection of civilians, which is hindered further by MINUSMA having to support the initiation of one of its most sensitive political roles: the DDR of Platform and CMA combatants.

SECURING CANTONMENT SITES

UNSCR 2295 mandates MINUSMA to monitor the ceasefire between northern separatist groups and the government in Bamako and support implementation of the Algiers Accord from June 2015. Central to the latter is an agreement to initiate DDR. This is in addition to handling the security of civilian personnel in general, and specifically when they go on missions outside the secure camps.

This puts considerable pressure on the soldiers that were tasked in 2016 to secure the construction of cantonment sites. In Ménaka, Gao, where three sites were under construction in June 2016, the UN carries full responsibility for the contractor's security, in this case the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Because Ménaka is close to the border of Niger, the Nigerien battalion was deployed there, and was responsible for securing the construction site. This was in addition to ensuring the security of the supply routes between Gao and Ménaka, a route that in June 2016 had become increasingly insecure. One civilian officer working with DDR in Ménaka out of the base in Gao explained:

"I joined last year, and I could travel to the southern part of Gao with "soft skin" [unarmored vehicle], but now I cannot. Security threats have heightened, and it is very hard to patrol here. And then there are all the requirements for civilian activities. Providing escort for DDR is a top priority, [but] human rights, civil affairs, stabilization officers – all of them want to go out of the camp. This puts considerable pressure on forces that are not sufficient [in numbers], and [have] no assets."⁴⁷

The strong emphasis on DDR in the mission reflects in part an understanding, as noted by one high-ranking civilian official in MINUSMA headquarters in Bamako, that "attacks [generally speaking] are increasing because of the delay in [establishing] cantonment sites."⁴⁸ Indeed, as noted by one high-ranking African military officer in Sector West:

"As long as the process of DDR is not ongoing, the implementation of the peace process is very slow. There is a lot of talk, and no results. This week, FAMA was attacked twice. We are here, and we know that we can always be attacked."⁴⁹

A process to address various DDR issues has been set in motion with the establishment of a national DDR commission in July 2015. It is expected that the commission will recommend a gradual redeployment of government-sanctioned security forces in the North, most of whose personnel is to come from the North.

However, at the time of the fieldwork for this report in June 2016, cantonment sites to accommodate ex-combatants were only under construction. In the entire country, by November 2016, three sites were complete, and another five could accommodate only the basic needs of combatants. At the time of this writing, no combatants were making use of the available cantonment sites.

Choosing where and how many sites to construct has proven to be a considerable and deeply political challenge in and of itself. In mid-June 2016, a UN official closely engaged in the DDR process explained that while Platform and CMA were given the option of selecting four sites each, they “ended up proposing 12; 24 proposed in total”⁵⁰ – presumably to spread out the risk of concentrating too many combatants in one site. According to a high-ranking MINUSMA officer, this exceeds the mission’s resources considerably, but it has been reluctant to state firmly to the factions of the conflict that signed the Algiers Accord that they cannot have the number of sites they request. Were MINUSMA to do that, it is anticipated that this might create further dissatisfaction with the peace process. Instead, the officer explained, “the ‘deal’ is that once the movements have proven themselves able to fill the first eight sites [with 6–800 combatants each], MINUSMA will look at the need to construct additional ones.”⁵¹ In the autumn of 2015, Platform and CMA resisted the process, which they saw as forced by MINUSMA as a proxy for the Malian government. Partly for that reason, the two factions delayed implementation of cantonment sites.

Furthermore, initiating DDR in a way that does not involve all armed factions in Mali is a fundamental challenge to successful implementation. As noted above, jihadist groups – which in some cases are not clearly distinguishable from CMA and Platform – are excluded from the process. Yet, as one high-level political advisor in MINUSMA noted: “If the North is protected from the jihadist groups, we can remain optimistic. But the fact is that they have increased their attacks – they are the enemy of the peace in Mali.”⁵² Platform’s and CMA’s mistrust of both the Malian government and MINUSMA, combined with an unclear and unpredictable security context, means that the parties to the Algiers Accord are unlikely to hand over their weapons in a DDR process. This is further complicated by the fact that Platform and CMA do not trust each other. One civilian adviser in Gao commented: “Between the Platform and CMA troops, whenever there is a conflict, instead of being part of the solution, they fall back in defending their own ethnic groups.”⁵³ A recent example is the current deadlock in and around Kidal. In late July 2016, heavy fighting broke out between CMA and an armed faction of Platform, GATIA,⁵⁴ resulting in CMA banishing GATIA from Kidal. Since then the situation has been more or less frozen: GATIA encircles Kidal, while CMA prevents the faction from returning to town. This has affected the DDR process negatively across the country. Indeed, it remains an open question when – or if – the cantonment sites will begin to serve their intended purpose.

The context in which construction of cantonment sites has taken place has been a considerable burden on the military component of the mission. On the one hand, the strong push to establish cantonment sites during 2016 is driven by the political impetus embedded in UNSCR 2295. At the same time, it reflects a limited appreciation among the civilian elements of MINUSMA of how a military force plans and operates, including the time needed to do so. One civilian officer in MINUSMA said:

“[Mission headquarters in] Bamako does not understand what goes on [on the ground, and] comes with crazy instructions that are not feasible. Decisions are hugely centralized. In the case of DDR, I got the instruction in December to go to one or two cantonment sites the day after to start construction; the instruction came from the DSRSG, but it was impossible because the force could not mobilize that quickly. Negotiations were going on between Force HQ [headquarters] and DDR to deploy the force, but it was not possible. In Gao, people knew that that was not possible. Generating a force is not easy – they know on the ground when they can spare troops.”⁵⁵

This section of the report has explored the exposed position of African soldiers in MINUSMA, which relates to how they enter the mission, both in the specific case of MINUSMA, and in general. Ultimately, the MoU between a TCC and the UN specifies where in the mission and under what conditions MINUSMA will operate. As explored above, African troops are not only permanently deployed in some of the most dangerous areas of Mali, but they also take on the laborious task of securing convoys that are essential in upholding troops in those parts of the mission as well as securing cantonment sites that are central to the DDR process. While the mission is referred to as marking Europe’s return to UN peacekeeping, the two biggest tasks of the mission during 2016 were primarily executed by troops from Senegal, Niger, Chad, and other African countries. Thus, intra-mission inequality is reflected in the distribution of tasks, equipment and danger in MINUSMA, and is bolstered by how African and non-African soldiers perceive of one another.



**PERCEPTIONS AND LEADERSHIP
IN MINUSMA**

A central objective of this study is to explore the operational experiences (and practices) of MINUSMA's African soldiers, and importantly, how they intersect with troops from non-African countries. Mutual, and at times negative, perceptions take shape prior to soldiers arriving in Mali,⁶⁶ and mold intra-mission alliances and networks during deployment. "If you compare the Danes and the Dutch," one high-ranking European officer in Gao (Sector East) noted, "we are like: 'Guys, the job has to be done. Just go and do it.' Other countries, especially Asian and African, are a lot more concerned with their own status."⁵⁷ A similar sentiment was expressed in Sector West. When mission cohesion was discussed, an officer said: "[It] is a very sensitive issue. You have to be careful; some countries are very proud. Speaking about the African countries, they do not take initiative; they are not trained to take initiative."⁵⁸

Table 5: Distribution of leadership tasks⁵⁹

AFRICAN DIRECTORS/GENERALS	Country
SRSB	Chad
Deputy SRSB-Humanitarian Affairs	Rwanda
Director Mission Support	Kenya
Police Commissioner	Benin
Deputy Force Commander	Senegal
Commander Sector North	Chad
Commander Sector West	Togo
Head of Office Gao	Comoros
Head of Office Mopti	NA

NON-AFRICAN DIRECTORS/GENERALS	Country
Force Commander	Denmark
Deputy SRSB-Political	Holland
Commander Sector East	Bangladesh
Head of Office Kidal	France
Head of Office Timbuktu	Italy
Director Security Services	France
Force Chief of Staff	France

Such perceptions may or may not be based on personal experience. However, it is clear that they do not exist in isolation and that they shape collaboration and general social and operational interaction between African/Asian and European TCCs. In Kidal, for instance, the European special forces encountered the Guinean and Chadian units, but interaction is reduced to a minimum:

"We encounter the others [Chadian and Guinean units], we stay in the Kidal Super Camp when we are there, but we do not work with them. It's difficult. They have other ways of operating, instruments, equipment – they have another way of reacting to complex attacks; other values."⁶⁰

Such perceptions directly reflect and reinforce practices and prejudices, and vice versa. One concrete example of this is how the TCCs are separated physically in different camps at battalion and company levels. "That's just the way it is," one high-ranking European officer explained:

"When the situation demands it, tactically, operationally, when there is a task to solve, the contingents meet. In the three Super Camps in Mali, where there are forces from a number of countries, the troops live separate lives. There is a limit to how low you go with respect to integration. We coordinate at the higher level, but below company and battalion level, there is none. The internal differences are simply too great when it comes to cultural differences, and differences of education and equipment. We have a long way to go, before we reach a satisfying level of integration."⁶¹

In Gao, MINUSMA's military units are split into Camp Castor, which is controlled and populated by European soldiers, and Super Camp, where African and Asian troops live and work. Camp Castor became operational in April 2014, but due to delays and an unpredictable UN system, the Dutch government proposed to establish the camp on its own terms. While the UN agreed to pay for accommodation that it could afford – i.e., tents – the Dutch government pledged to pay for the rest. “So basically, when the Dutch government came here,” one high-ranking European officer in Gao noted, “there was nothing here, it seems like the Bible story. [The camp] was wired, we were in tents; we basically built barracks right on the desert.”⁶²

Camp Castor – which covers 800,000m² and includes the regional international airport – is built to accommodate MINUSMA's special forces, and helicopter and intelligence units, which require high levels of education and a particular technical expertise. In the UN system, there are different tiers of accommodation that reflect different levels of comfort, from “Tier 1” (temporary camps) to “Tier 4” (permanent bases, which are rare). Camp Castor is at Tier 3, with a projected life span of 6–18 months. It was built initially for the Dutch special forces, and now includes Danish, Czech and German soldiers, and has some of the best living conditions in Gao. As one of the high-ranking European military officers in Gao noted: “If you take care of people, they can perform well. They should be able to take a bath, eat, use the internet – the main concern is to keep them healthy.”⁶³ This is in particularly stark contrast to the soldiers from Chad based in Tessalit and Aguelhok, who often lack food, water and support from their own government as well as from the UN. In principle, these forces should get the support that they are entitled to according to the MoU between the UN and the TCC that sent them. However, according to a high-ranking European officer based in headquarters in Bamako:

“The UN's complicated bureaucratic system of rules and regulations often makes it difficult to change the balance between what the TCC versus the UN should provide to the contingents. [The forces in the north] do not get sufficient support, no ISR [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] unit, and no helicopters, because we don't have it. They have been isolated, that's a fact, and they sense it, they feel that nobody likes them.”⁶⁴

Differentiated camp standards reinforce perceptions and prejudices, because they indicate that some contingents – and by extension human lives – are worth more than others, and intertwine with the perception of the African soldiers as inadequately prepared for the task at hand. They also reinforce a sense of disorder and lack of security outside the perimeter of Camp Castor. According to a high-ranking officer

in Gao, this was confirmed on May 31, 2016, when the MINUSMA camp Elevage, one of the three camps within the camp complex in Gao, came under attack.⁶⁵ “31 May, we had a huge explosion in Gao,” one of the leading European military officers explained:

“What happens? Huge panic over there [in Super Camp and Camp Elevage]. We have procedures, the Western guys have procedures; they are organized, on paper, they have rehearsed, whatever. They have [watch] towers [in Super Camp], but 9 out of 10 times, no one is there.”⁶⁶

To put it simply, the perception in Camp Castor is that Camp Castor is prepared for any eventuality, which Super Camp is not.

The divide between different TCCs has been compounded by differing mission experiences, which in turn shape how soldiers interpret their roles and responsibilities in MINUSMA. As noted above, reflecting the trend of how militaries in the West have developed, European troops in Mali consist of a small number of highly trained and well-equipped soldiers (Lucas Jr 2010). Moreover, and unlike their African counterparts, for more than a decade they have garnered experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the latter case, this has meant spending several years working in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operation. Many of the European TCCs have thus returned to peacekeeping after years in the NATO system; as one high-ranking European officer noted, there is “a small NATO club inside the UN club.”⁶⁷ The transition from NATO to the UN has been a process of “learning and adaptation,” especially with respect to bureaucratic practices and decision-making processes (Karlsrud 2015; Karlsrud and Smith 2015: 1). As the Europeans increasingly understand the challenges that the UN is facing in Mali, acceptance of differences is increasing. In short, as Karlsrud and Smith (2015: 11) explain, UN missions are complex instruments with interdependent parts, more so than EU and NATO missions that European countries have grown accustomed to.

The differences between European and African soldiers in terms of preparedness and general conditions of service have a fragmenting effect on the mission. These differences prevent African and European soldiers from establishing professional and informal relationships. TCCs are also separated and compartmentalized based on their regional affiliation, which leads to the reinforcement of prejudices, and a fundamental social and professional disconnect between, for instance, the Chadians in Tessalit and the Dutch in Gao. Such disconnects are reflected in practice by the fact that joint patrols are close to non-existent.

Ultimately, many factors separate the forces. It is also clear that a number of factors have a cohesive effect on the mission, not least the overall mandate of the mission that gives it direction. In particular, African officers mentioned military culture as a unifier in their interviews, where the identity and training of soldiers provide a basis for all TCCs, regardless of nationality: "All soldiers are equal, and all nations in MINUSMA are soldiers."⁶⁸ An African officer in Sector West similarly agreed:

"The army is universal; it is more or less the same everywhere in the world. It is built on a military culture of execution of orders. The workout in the Malian terrain is the same. Procedures in MINUSMA are inspired by US defense systems, and in addition we have the French system in Barkhane. However, the French and the US systems are built on the same skeleton."⁶⁹

In their interviews, African officers, in particular, emphasized the universality of military tasks as a basic unifying factor. "You show who you are through your work, so everyone should focus on their work since we all have the same end-state, [but] sometimes Europeans can have an arrogant attitude," one African Commander noted.⁷⁰ Such attitudes, it may be argued, are consolidated further by the physical separation of TCCs according to region, which allows prejudices, and at times misconceptions, to flourish.

Cultural differences do not simply lead to difficulties of communication and misunderstandings. As we emphasize in the next section, they directly influence command structures and what a force commander can and cannot do, because cultural differences overlap with political interests.

MANAGEMENT, NOT LEADERSHIP

A significant body of literature deals with the particular challenges that UN peace-keeping missions face as "multi-cultural organizations consisting of forces from different nations, speaking multiple languages and representing different cultures" (Elron et al 2003: 262). Indeed, Elron et al (2003: 262) continue, "these frameworks represent some of the most extreme cases of culturally diverse organizations..." It is therefore not surprising that we found general agreement across MINUSMA that working in a multi-national environment is challenging, not least due to the

considerable language barriers between the Francophone and the Anglophone contingents. A European commander argued: "Language is critical to integration and cohesion – it is a key to both small talk and work relations."⁷¹ A West African military officer agreed:

"In general, language issues can create friction. We are French speaking, but we also speak English. My staff speaks some of the local dialects in Mali, and through that ability, we can establish good relations to the Malians in our area of operations. However, language is a barrier when we co-operate with some of the European units, not many of them speak French. There, I have to rely on the young soldiers in my unit; they speak better English than me."⁷²

It is important to note that the African commander said that he has staff with competencies in the local languages in Mali. However, these competencies are not well used by MINUSMA.⁷³

One European officer acknowledged that while "the UN is not a very strong organization, no other organization can do the work of the UN."⁷⁴ This is reflected in a permanent state of friction at the heart of the mission's military chain of command. Indeed, one officer noted, "we have management here, not a command structure. Here in Sector West, we have 20–30 different nationalities, who all want to lead and manage things differently."⁷⁵ This is a structural condition of how multi-national UN missions are organized.

At times, national political interests challenge the management of the mission. One high-ranking officer in the Sector East headquarters in Gao described this issue not as a frustration, but as a matter of fact, a reality that he has to manage in a conscious process of negotiation:

"When a country agrees to send troops to the UN, it means that the TCCs have an agreement with the UN HQ to place their troops for a particular time under the command of the Force Commander [under MINUSMA]. The challenge is that when you tell them [a particular TCC] something, they refer back to their countries. If I tell them that they should go and do X, they might turn around and say that they can't go, because they need to check back home first. They will take time to respond to calls, and sometimes they will question [an] order. You have to negotiate sometimes,

persuade them. Although they are under your command, this happens. One of the contingent will rotate [that is, be repatriated and replaced] in 15 days, and you tell them to do a job, a patrol, but they say that they can't do it. At home, if I give my soldiers a task, I know that they will never question it. Here, they question, because the UN does not have the capacity to punish. The perimeter defense [of the camp], the outposts, are manned by soldiers from different contingents. When you tell them to guard it 24–7, sometimes they are missing, but as their commander, I do not have many things that I can do."⁷⁶

Another example, also from Sector East, illustrates how conflicting agendas and different priorities of the TCCs affect leadership and decision-making relates to convoys. Due to the amount of resources that convoys drain from the mission, headquarters in Bamako assigned the task to an African contingent that was initially deployed to the mission as a quick reaction force. This decision was made because assigning the task of escorting convoys to their special forces would, most likely, never have been accepted by the Netherlands or Denmark, for instance. The African commander in charge of the escort convoys felt that he would have been unable to influence the decision-making processes and the planning of the missions regarding this issue. This created frustration, because according to the agreement signed with the UN, contingent commanders are responsible for their soldiers and equipment. A high-ranking African officer explained:

"We are a quick reaction force – normally we should not escort convoys, just be ready to intervene if something happens, but they have problems with convoys; they don't have enough soldiers, they need security. The Force Commander said that this is his priority: to bring convoys to the North. That is why they gave us this task. Each month we have two convoys – they last ten days [each way], [so] 20 days [in total], and the ten days for maintenance. Therefore, we can't do what we were supposed to do. And then it takes ten days for our men to recover after a mission and receive training. But HQ says they only get five days until they have to go on mission again. But I am responsible to my home country. If the equipment breaks and people die, I can be put on trial."⁷⁷

From the perspective of sector headquarters, there are other more critical priorities in the mission than dwelling on the individual concerns of the TCCs. The sector headquarters and Force Commander need to take organizational measures to respond to tasks, challenges and threats and not least the demand for water, food and fuel in Sector North. One high-ranking military officer noted:

"Most of my effort is being put towards convoys. The Chadians say that they don't have enough water. There is a set procedure. The main planning is done in Bamako saying that they need to send this amount of logistics in the next three months. 50,000 liters of fuel, 100,000 liters of diesel, prefabs, food and all. This is the strategic planning. Then they send you the schedule. Based on that, we do the detailed planning. We cannot negotiate much; the timing we cannot change much; one or two days we can do. The day before the convoy moves, if the vehicles fail in inspection, then we are authorized to reject that."⁷⁸

The individual contingent commanders, operating according to TCC-specific MoUs and doctrines, may have differing interests and prioritize protecting and securing their men and equipment. It is therefore not surprising that sector commanders do not consider themselves fully in control of decision-making: "In Sector East, the Commander doesn't feel he is fully in charge. He is just a figure filling a position, a chair, but he does not feel that everything depends on him, which is not normal for a commander."⁷⁹

Meanwhile, the African TCCs said in interviews that their experiences in the field were not taken into consideration at the strategic level. As such, the African commanders saw themselves as unable to influence what they considered to be their responsibilities and could not claim authority in the decision-making processes. However, having coordination meetings, where everybody can share their opinions, was not so well perceived by the European forces in Sector East, who did not appreciate the less structured decision-making and planning processes that the UN represents. As one European military officer in Gao explained:

"They [the African forces] are doing quite well, but in the back briefs there is a lot of rumor, it isn't structured. They have power point presentations where they explain. Everybody in the room can add something to that. That is the main difference with NATO standards. At a back brief, in our case, the team leader explains the whole detailed plan to the commander, and then he can make a decision. It is a 'go,' or perhaps they need to change something. With [the African contingent in question] it is more unclear. On the power point slide, it looks pretty good, but when they explain, a lot of people talk about their own role. What are they doing now, are they going to the left, to the right or straight? Most of the time, I have to ask afterwards, what is your plan now? After that, it is mostly not clear... They are more emotional. When you are more cold-blooded, you can switch off, and do your work."⁸⁰

This example illustrates how MINUSMA's negotiated command structures are often unable to address the wide-ranging considerations and, at times, conflicting priorities in the mission. The lack of clarity in command structures had been remedied somewhat, according to a senior officer in the headquarters of MINUSMA in Bamako:

"There are no negotiated command structures. On paper, command structures are very clear. Force Commander and sector commanders have operational control and tasking authority over their troops except over certain logistical and aviation units that are under the tasking authority of the Mission Support Division. The issue with executing orders and consulting the home countries before accepting orders were more explicit in 2015. Seen from my perspective, since last year, it has not been a major problem."⁸¹

Nevertheless, although MINUSMA Force leadership has made a significant effort to improve intra-mission cooperation, distrust and prejudices as well as national political interests still impede mission effectiveness. This is illustrated by how information and intelligence are produced and shared across the mission.

**INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE
SHARING IN MINUSMA**



In order to assist MINUSMA in countering the asymmetric threats faced by mission personnel and the local population, an All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) was established in 2014. The ASIFU concept draws on lessons from previous military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and is an unprecedented intelligence capability for a UN mission (van Dalen 2015: 3).⁸² The unit gathers and analyzes information, and produces military intelligence to provide force protection and to serve mission goals. It is supposed to contribute to a better understanding of key actors, conflict drivers, the local economy, and perceptions of key constituencies in order to produce predictive and actionable intelligence that can lead to renewed and better military activities. To be effective, the ASIFU requires support from combat and support units (van Dalen 2015: 3). It relies on a number of sources of information from other mission assets provided by European TCCs, including drones, a special operations force unit, and helicopter reconnaissance missions. The ASIFU has limited human intelligence and relies primarily on information gathered by soldiers and civilian officers as well as by the UN offices and NGOs in the field (Karlsrud and Smith 2015: 4). In general, the contribution of European militaries strengthens UN peacekeeping capabilities in an asymmetric threat environment. However, a number of challenges remain if the mission is to benefit from these capabilities.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ALL SOURCES INFORMATION FUSION UNIT (ASIFU)

The ASIFU headquarters in Bamako consists of a 70-person unit, which gathers and analyses information to produce intelligence products for MINUSMA's higher leadership. The ASIFU was initiated in 2014 by the Netherlands and Norway, with support from Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia and Germany, whose personnel currently occupy key posts in the ASIFU. The unit also has an open sources section that monitors newspapers, web-based news, social media, and the like. As in any intelligence service, the open source section accounts for a substantial portion of intelligence production, which provides input to both intelligence and open source products.

The ASIFU also contains two intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) units with sensor and analysis capacity gathered from both human intelligence and drones in Gao. These units cover both Gao (Sector East) and Kidal (Sector North). In Sector East, the ISR unit was operated by the Netherlands until 2016, when it was transferred to the Germans. In Timbuktu (Sector West), the ISR unit is operated by the Swedes (Karlsrud 2015: 11), who chose to deploy a separate and more robust intelligence unit called "Task Force" to ensure that it could operate more independently (van Dalen 2015: 7).

The local ISR sub-units do not operate under the command of the sector headquarters, but under the ASIFU headquarters. According to van Dalen (2015: 5), when the ASIFU was established, it was the European TCCs that observed that the sectors did not have the knowledge necessary to collect and analyze high-quality intelligence. Therefore, a so-called "attached" model was chosen, in which the ISR units are kept under direction of the intelligence functional chain. This is opposed to an "integrated" model, where ISR units fall under the sector commanders. If certain conditions were to be met, a switch to an integrated model could occur (van Dalen 2015: 3).

At the time of our field study in June 2016, the ASIFU structure was still parallel to the U2 branch, which is an integrated part of the chain of command. Since then, the MINUSMA leadership decided to merge the ASIFU and the U2 into one unit. This process is ongoing – the formal integration will begin in January 2017 with the establishment of a new secure network and the co-location of the ASIFU and the U2 into a new "All Sources Intelligence Center" based in Force Headquarters in Bamako. The purpose of this merger is to specifically address the challenges described in the next section of this report, in particular to share the ASIFU's well-functioning procedures with non-European countries in the mission, and also to prevent unnecessary duplication between the ASIFU and U2.

CHALLENGES TO SHARING AND ACCESSING INFORMATION

Access to and sharing of information create friction in the mission in a number of ways. First, the internal organizational challenges of sharing information hamper the effectiveness of the ASIFU. Second, mission inequality disproportionately affects African soldiers, who do not benefit from the ISR equipment and capabilities that the European TCCs bring to the mission. One intelligence analyst in Gao said: "The ASIFU consists only of the so-called 'skiing nations' [a NATO term for western countries]; from top-level management there is an idea that if there is going to be intelligence analysis, it has to be within a NATO framework."⁸³ Finally, the limited acknowledgement and integration of the comparative advantages of the African TCCs constitute a missed opportunity to gather intelligence in an asymmetrical conflict environment. This missed opportunity reflects inadequate collaboration and trust between the European and African TCCs.

The ASIFU intelligence products are, in principle, shared with the U2, and thus distributed to the sectors' headquarters, which then make decisions about further distribution into the units. However, the level of classification is crucial to whether information is shared, which often depends on the topic. According to a European high-ranking officer in the headquarters of MINUSMA:

"The sharing of information and intelligence is a serious issue in MINUSMA. The NATO countries work with their own database. In reality, there is no access for African officers. Europeans primarily share their information with other European countries. We should try to establish a new UN-based system of information sharing."⁸⁴

Intelligence sharing is complex and sensitive. First, countries with a history of collaboration tend to trust each other, but lack of trust prohibits the sharing of information, at times even among European countries, according to an analyst in the ASIFU: "In reality, we do not trust all nations to work with intelligence."⁸⁵ TCCs in MINUSMA tend to put their primary effort into reporting to their national intelligence branches, and do not automatically share information with their MINUSMA colleagues.⁸⁶ Second, the UN information classification system is different from NATO's, and makes the level of confidentiality more fluid and open to interpretation. In their interviews, analysts reported that they are wary of sharing their data, because they are uncertain about the standards of classification, and because the communication networks inside the mission and between the mission and UN headquarters are not secure.⁸⁷ Third, informal networking in the sectors facilitates

information sharing in practice.⁸⁸ Interviewees reported that African units in Gao sometimes would get direct information from the special forces operating in the field, but not necessarily from the sector headquarters. Unequal access to intelligence for the African TCCs is central to how the ASIFU was set up directly under the Force Commander and for strategic purposes. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why it has been decided to merge the ASIFU and U2, that is, to strengthen information and intelligence sharing across MINUSMA.

The uneven deployment and distribution of analysts and technological assets in the mission impedes the effectiveness of the ASIFU and puts the most exposed soldiers in further danger. As noted by a high-ranking civilian official in MINUSMA:

"Regarding intelligence capacity, we are facing a dichotomy. On the one hand, they are talking about intelligence capacity, and on the other hand, they [the African TCCs] are prohibited from gathering intelligence. Those contingents have no units with information analysis capacity."⁸⁹

For instance, there is no ASIFU/ISR unit based in Kidal. According to Karlsrud (2015), in 2015 the delayed arrival of UN-contracted long-range unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in Kidal prevented the mission from having a more complete picture of the threat environment in the places where peacekeepers are most often attacked and killed (Karlsrud 2015).

DATA – BUT WHO CAN ANALYZE IT?

Sophisticated surveillance equipment and the production of data are not in and of themselves criteria for success. Depending on technology without adequate human intelligence and local expertise to interpret the data risks replicating the errors of previous anti-terror programs in the Sahel, such as the deployment of radio remote-controlled airplanes in northern Mali in 2004 to provide images of the local "situation" 24 hours a day. This method of gathering information about the area's security was not applicable to local conditions. Lecocq and Schrijver (2007) argue that local media are scarce in northern Mali: the major sources of news are gossip and conversation. Furthermore, "[t]he antagonistic stance between various peoples, tribes and clans means that all news receives a local colour so that this kind of news cannot be interpreted without knowledge of the local context" (Lecocq and Schrijver 2007: 142).

Trained European analysts with access to information may have a thorough understanding of the conflict environment. However, without being able to go on patrol, they cannot ask the right questions of the local populations. This was also a concern expressed by a European intelligence analyst based in Sector East:

"We have major challenges with establishing a link between the analysts and the troops on the ground. It is important that the troops on the ground understand the conflict in order to pose the right questions. The African soldiers say that the analyst can just come along. But they [the European analysts] are not allowed to."⁹⁰

European TCCs are further constrained because they cannot speak the local languages and dialects in Mali, and are thus limited in their interaction with the local population. Partnership with the Malian army could be an entry point, but FAMA's presence in the North is still highly contested. This highlights the inadequate use of information that the African soldiers could potentially bring into the mission. Increased involvement and collaboration with and training of African TCCs could be an important link to the local population; such collaboration would be an invaluable method of obtaining reliable intelligence.

One obstacle to this method relates to differences in what good reporting entails. "Africans do not write memos, they talk a lot," said a European officer in Sector West.⁹¹ Indeed, some African peacekeepers in Sector West expressed that to them, an oral report is considered as good and legitimate as a written report. However, this is not in line with what most European TCCs consider good reporting, which hampers cooperation in the day-to-day work of the mission. The absence of written reports also makes it difficult to benefit from "lessons learned" in the field for the benefit of future contingents. Furthermore, just as European TCCs often tend to prioritize their national intelligence branches, the African TCCs are often more inclined to report back directly to their home countries rather than through the ASIFU report channels. One civilian advisor in Gao said:

"Burkina knows everything, Niger knows everything. They don't give reports to us. They don't look particularly engaged, but they know everything. Every government has an interest in what is going on in northern Mali – Colombians [drug traders] came in 15 years ago and made the North a free-for-all among the armed groups. And everybody is involved; everyone has a finger in the pie. Either you have your troops here to collect money, and ensure that the situation is stable enough to keep

business as usual – or you facilitate passage [of illicit trade] as it goes across your border. The information you give is little, but every piece of information you think is important to your government, you will send it home."⁹²

In addition to the differences in national interests and reporting styles between African and European soldiers, a generic issue of mistrust between the units further impedes an efficient intelligence collaboration between the TCCs.

WHO CAN YOU TRUST?

Given the Malian political and security context, intelligence collaboration has only become more diffuse and dangerous. The blurred boundaries between terrorists, compliant armed groups (CMA and Platform), drug traffickers and potential politicians makes it particularly challenging to know who to trust. One European officer in the headquarters of MINUSMA noted:

"Here, terrorist groups, criminal gangs, and drug traffickers, they want to use the same roads. They are very much integrated. It is very difficult to say that the good ones are there and the bad ones are there. They fight and collaborate with one another."⁹³

The blurred and uneasy situation of collaboration between Mali's warring factions, combined with the many attacks on MINUSMA, create an environment of distrust. In this context, the African TCCs' affinity to the local population, while a considerable asset to the mission in many ways, can also be a source of mistrust and insecurity. As one official in MINUSMA explained:

"TCCs coming from Niger [for instance], they are closer to everyone – CMA, Platform and the Malian army – and even probably the terrorist groups. They know each other; they are accomplices. They speak the same language. So is it safe to take the neighboring countries [as TCCs]? Who else will come, who would survive?"⁹⁴

In general, the security situation in the sectors at the time of this report's fieldwork constrained soldiers' ability to conduct patrols, and consequently to interact with the local population, which negatively influenced the amount of information they could gather from local communities. According to a staff member in Sector East, this situation raises a couple of questions:

"Either they [African soldiers] have very little to report, because they do little, or they have unofficial way of communicating among themselves. Many of them will speak the same dialect, and have conversations that do not always appear on the weekly report, but it is info that is sent to their home countries."⁹⁵

This statement illustrates how prejudices about one another affect the trust and relationships between the TCCs. However, trust is always crucial in the collection and proper analysis of data. The bottom line is that several African officers and soldiers – for instance, from Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger and Nigeria – speak some Malian dialects. To make better use of the skills present in the African units, European special forces and intelligence officers should enhance collaboration and interaction through both joint planning and patrolling. Focus should also be on strengthening report structures both from the European to African units and vice versa. Too much focus on the African "unprofessionalism" and their lack of adequate equipment often prevents European soldiers from understanding and learning about how African soldiers operate, and how they maneuver in difficult terrain that is, in fact, familiar to them. Recognition and use of the skills of African soldiers would improve MINUSMA's situational awareness and the quality of the information that its troops gather.

Lack of trust exists from top to bottom of the mission's structure; the sensitivities that commonly surround intelligence handling, and miscommunication hamper collaboration across TCCs. This can never be fully overcome, but more can be done to integrate the intelligence production process. Furthermore, intelligence cooperation is hampered by the fact that more often than not, both African and European TCCs are more loyal to their national governments and their intelligence branches than to the aim of strengthening MINUSMA's intelligence capabilities. This emphasizes how diverging national interests can fragment core functions in the mission.

In the next and final section of this report, we turn to how national interests and domestic security concerns of some of the key TCCs in the region influence MINUSMA's ability to operate.

REGIONAL INTERESTS IN MINUSMA



”
Being ‘part’ means one of two things – either you are part of the problem or you are part of the solution. Looking at the amount of output we are getting from many of the African TCCs, I see them as part of the problem.”⁹⁶ ”

The fact that TCCs have motives and interests in contributing to MINUSMA beyond the stabilization of Mali and economic gains from reimbursement is not a controversial statement (Cunliffe 2013; Albrecht and Haenlein 2015). On the one hand, having stakes in the conflict can help maintain support to the mission. On the other hand, in a mission context, where command structures are diffuse and decentralized, and are often a matter of negotiating rather than commanding, the diverging political interests of TCCs can create conflicting agendas in the execution and planning of tasks. “The Force Commander can make an order,” one interviewee in Bamako noted, “and the TCCs decide whether they want to follow it or not. They gain financially, but they are also controlling the agenda.”⁹⁷

NIGER: MOVING THE FRONTLINE INTO MALI

Niger ranks among the poorest countries in the world. In addition to long-term structural poverty and high population growth, the country is a hub of instability in a conflict-ridden region, with Mali to the east, Libya to the North and the Boko Haram insurgency to the South. The Boko Haram insurgency itself has caused more than 20,000 deaths and the displacement of over 2.5 million people since 2009. Niger’s contribution to the Western-supported multi-national joint effort to fight Boko Haram puts enormous pressure on Nigerien military resources (Cold-Ravnkilde and Plambech 2015). Furthermore, because it shares porous borders with Mali and has a limited capacity to control the borders, Niger is a center of illicit trafficking.

Rumors about Boko Haram’s presence in Mali are widespread but unconfirmed. Nevertheless, fighting militant jihadist groups in Mali constitutes an important incentive for Niger’s government to contribute to MINUSMA. Indeed, the priority to fight Boko Haram has at times surpassed the need to fulfill the tasks assigned to Niger’s contingent by the sector headquarters that is formally in command. In Ménaka, which is close to Mali’s border with Niger, Niger’s battalion commander in 2016 withdrew two platoons from overseeing the construction of a DDR cantonment site. The two platoons had allegedly hurried back to their camp, because they received information that their base was under attack by Boko Haram:

“There was a lot of miscommunication [in the] coordination among different elements. They asked for air support, which did not come, and they asked for permission [to leave] before leaving, but could not reach the acting sector commander, so they decided to leave the cantonment site anyway.”⁹⁸

This example illustrates how interests and hidden agendas of the TCCs may hamper mission cohesion: other pressures and priorities can reverse commands, and consequently, undermine mission authority. The example also demonstrates that when African soldiers on the frontline do not get the support they need, they take measures to secure themselves independently of mission command structures.

BURKINA FASO: SECURING BORDER CONTROL

Burkina Faso is the largest troop contributing country to MINUSMA. By August 2016, Burkina Faso had deployed 1721 troops to MINUSMA’s Sector West. Initially, Burkina sent troops to MINUSMA to help stabilize the region. “We live only 350 kilometers from here,” a commander in Sector West noted. “We have a proverb: ‘Help your neighbor, or his problem can come to you tomorrow.’ We help Mali, because Mali is our close neighbor.”⁹⁹ When the jihadists took control of the city of Timbuktu in 2012, many refugees from Timbuktu fled to Burkina Faso for safety and protection, which illustrates how both the crisis in Mali and the jihadist occupation in Timbuktu and other cities affected Burkina directly.

Since the summer 2015, Burkina Faso has lost six soldiers in Sector West (for a total of 11 in MINUSMA since the start of the mission in 2013). In addition, problems with supplying spare parts for vehicles have made the daily work in Sector West even more complicated. These fatalities and logistical problems led Burkina Faso to request to be deployed closer to their own border.

In addition to the challenges facing Burkina Faso’s soldiers in Mali, unprecedented jihadist attacks at home have led public commentators to question whether MINUSMA has the right strategy to fight regional terrorism (Studio Tamani 2016). After the terrorist attack in Ouagadougou, Burkina’s capital city, in January 2016, and subsequent attacks in the north of Burkina bordering Mali and Niger, the country has engaged in discussions with the UN and Mali’s president about redeploying troops to protect its own borders. As such, the fact that MINUSMA produces slow results while soldiers die may undermine both the common goal of securing regional

stability and the countries' political will to make troop contributions to MINUSMA. While the vested interests of neighboring TCCs may create conflicting agendas on the ground, they are nevertheless crucial to maintain regional support for a mission that is facing scarce human resources. MINUSMA and UN headquarters in New York are now in the process of negotiating how a relocation of Burkina Faso's troops can take place. While the UN must maintain a focus on solving tasks for the mission, not the for individual TCCs, it is also attentive to Burkina Faso's precarious situation and wants to find a solution that can meet the needs of both.

CHAD: EXPORTING INSECURITY

Despite being one of the poorest countries in the world, Chad has gained a prominent role in the French and American fight against terrorism in the Sahel. While maneuvering "between ambition and fragility," Chad stabilized its relations with Sudan in 2010, has now begun producing oil, and in the process has become a critical military power in the Sahel (ICG 2016). By deploying its soldiers on multiple fronts – in the Central African Republic, Mali, and more recently in the Lake Chad basin to fight Boko Haram – Chad's regime is pursuing a strategy of military diplomacy; it appears that the country intends to lead the fight against terrorism in the region (Lecoutre 2016).

The authoritarian regime of President Idriss Deby has survived several coup attempts from within its own army ranks. Thus, Deby keeps a tight grip on power by sending soldiers to peacekeeping missions in Mali and the Central African Republic.¹⁰⁰ In short, he is exporting potentially destabilizing groups in Chad in order to prevent a state coup at home. Because Chad receives considerable financial and technical support from France and the US, the elite element of Chad's army is well-equipped and -trained. It consists largely of Muslim, non-Arabic tribesmen. The other part of the army is more dispersed in ethnic origin, is badly equipped, and receives close to no training. This composition of the army may explain the Chadians' ambiguous reputation of being "bold, dangerous and the only ones ready for desert combat" as well as "undisciplined, badly skilled and unpredictable."¹⁰¹ Indeed, Chad's army has a reputation of being the masters of desert warfare.

Chad contributed 1800 soldiers to AFISMA to stop the jihadist intervention in northern Mali. According to a high-ranking officer in MINUSMA's headquarters in Bamako, Chadian soldiers in operations against alleged terrorists in the North demonstrate great courage and initiative and a rashness often bordering the limits of what is permitted within the mandate. However, three years after MINUSMA was established in 2013, some Chadian soldiers appear to be losing the motivation to continue to fight against terrorists in Kidal. Chad has not replaced many of its troops since 2013, and there are rumors that its soldiers are deserting the mission, and that the mission is consequently losing an average of two soldiers per month.

In MINUSMA, Chad has also proven to be a considerable challenge to mission leadership, both because of the considerable fatalities that Chad experiences, and because of lack of discipline of its troops. The examples revealed during interviews for this report were plentiful: two incidents of Chadian soldiers shooting each other (blue on blue), one Chadian soldier marrying a local minor, soldiers jumping the fence to go to brothels in Gao. However, acting on such cases is proving increasingly difficult politically. Voices at the very top of MINUSMA's leadership are putting pressure on MINUSMA's SRSG, who is a Chadian national, to report incidents involving Chadian soldiers to the UN in New York and go through appropriate legal procedures. At the same time, repatriating soldiers from their own country could prove to be a considerable problem for the SRSG back home. Chad's ambition to become a military power in the region illustrates how a TCCs' foreign political interests can directly hamper mission cohesion.



**CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

The examples throughout this report illustrate how intra-mission inequality encumbers collaboration and coordination between African and non-African units in MINUSMA. Most of the time, the units operate more or less separately, to the extent that the mission risks becoming a two-tier mission. There are multi-TCC and cross-sector operations, such as securing convoys and cantonment sites, both of which require considerable coordination. However, this is difficult to achieve because of the current fragmented relationship between MINUSMA units. National caveats and differentiated restrictions on where and under what conditions soldiers are deployed imply that the advanced technological equipment and trained special forces from Europe do not adequately benefit and support the African soldiers, who are deployed in the most exposed areas of the mission.

In general, more interaction between African and non-African units in the everyday tasks of peacekeeping would strengthen the cohesion and sense of unity in the mission. The fact that the contingents do not eat, sleep, socially interact and train together reinforces and reproduces, in particular, European soldiers' negative perceptions of the African soldiers as inferior. Such perceptions have operational implications that negatively impact mission effectiveness. In particular, the fragmentation and inadequate knowledge about the different soldiers' backgrounds, mission experiences, education and worldviews means that important knowledge about the Malian context gets lost. Recognition and use of such knowledge could provide a more nuanced picture of regional conflict dynamics, including why and how local actors decide to join jihadist groups, and the role of women and youth in the conflict (Cold-Ravnkilde et al 2016).

MINUSMA should focus on gathering critical human intelligence from the local population. Here, African soldiers from the neighboring countries, who speak the local languages and are knowledgeable about cultural, ethnic and local customs, are key to accessing, gathering and analyzing such information. However, in order to obtain this information, these soldiers need adequate support and training.

Intelligence is a weak area in MINUSMA. Although the incentive to strengthen intelligence capabilities in an asymmetrical threat environment is considerable, questions of the validity and use of intelligence information are pertinent. Furthermore, intelligence and information gathering should not supersede operational capabilities to understand, respond and act upon information. Because the UN system operates according to principles of openness and accountability, a UN-led intelligence system will not be watertight. However, as long as intelligence in MINUSMA is controlled by a small group of 'skiing nations' – that is, Europeans – it exacerbates the already existing imbalance between the African and non-African TCCs in MINUSMA – a distortion that is reflected in the demographics of the death toll of the mission. In the long run, neighboring countries' motivations and incentives to contribute to MINUSMA will be influenced by these numbers, and will impact MINUSMA's ability to create tangible results for the peace process.

As long as MINUSMA is based on major contributions from regional forces, because no other countries are willing to risk the lives of their soldiers in Mali, the mission will have to accept that national interests unfold in and influence the mission. In this organizational context, the mission leadership will benefit from seeking to understand the complexity of national interests, which reach far beyond economic incentives for reimbursement.

**ON THE BASIS OF THIS REPORT, THE FOLLOWING
RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MADE:**

- The UN should make more of an effort to close the gap between the pledges that TCCs make in their MoUs with the UN and the quality of the troops that they deploy.
- More effort should be made by UN headquarters in New York to make a clear-cut decision on whether the organization is able to play a genuinely constructive role in stabilization contexts.
- It is important to discuss national caveats, and apply them without affecting particular TCCs in a disproportionately negative manner.
- Related to this, it must also be accepted by the international community that national interests inevitably motivate countries to contribute troops to MINUSMA.
- Joint operations between European and African soldiers need better coordination to ensure the effective support of the African soldiers, who are deployed in the most exposed areas of the mission.
- Changes to structural imbalances between the TCCs are required, which could be accomplished by improving logistics and general support to disadvantaged TCCs that are often some of the poorest countries in the world.
- MINUSMA's leadership should continue to increase and improve support for securing convoys in order for the peacekeepers to be able to focus on other core tasks, including the protection of civilians.
- Planning of activities that facilitate interaction between the contingents is mandatory in order to strengthen communication, collaboration and partnership between TCCs across regional differences.
- Current intelligence capacity needs to be developed into a system that is accessible to all TCCs, not just those from the European countries that initially established the ASIFU.
- Mission capacity to draw on regional African TCCs' understanding of the local culture and dialects needs to be built.
- Training for the TCCs to engage in collecting and/or verifying data that can support intelligence production in the mission needs to be developed.

NOTES

- 1 While MINUSMA has a mandate of 13,289 troops, only about 11,000 are currently deployed. The remaining 2000 troops, which were granted in the latest renewal of the mandate in UNSCR 2295, have still not been generated.
- 2 See the Providing for Peacekeepers Project: <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/>.
- 3 This report focuses on the consequences of the conditions of and challenges to intra-mission cooperation in MINUSMA. It is not an evaluation of progress on the peace process in Mali. For further information on this, see, for instance, International Crisis Group (2015).
- 4 Bangladeshi soldiers are deployed in some of the most exposed areas of the mission as well, but with considerably better equipment and support from their government.
- 5 Source: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/aug16_3.pdf.
- 6 Source: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml#MINUS>.
- 7 Source: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/aug16_3.pdf.
- 8 Source: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/aug16_3.pdf.
- 9 For further information on the inadequacies of the regional and international response to the crisis in Mali, see Theroux-Benoni (2014).
- 10 UNSCR 2085 of December 2012 authorized AFISMA to deploy in September 2013. However, as armed jihadists groups advanced further south, which resulted in French military intervention, AFISMA's deployment was accelerated to support Operation Serval. On January 17, 2013, the first Nigerian troops were deployed in northern Mali, and 1800 soldiers from Chad began patrolling in Kidal in early February 2013.
- 11 The previous Ouagadougou peace agreement from 2013 had ended after deadly clashes between government forces and armed groups during a visit by then-Prime Minister Moussa Mara in Kidal.
- 12 Previous rebellions include those that occurred in 1963, 1990, 2006 and 2009. The Tuaregs have never constituted a homogenous group. Throughout history, Tuareg rebels and their leaders have shifted between different militant movements and political alliances in the North. Furthermore, the previous and recent rebellions have been characterised by ideological disagreements and internal power struggles (see Cold-Ravnkilde 2013).
- 13 For an analysis of the interrelationship between politics and crime in Northern Mali, see Böås 2012 and Strazzari 2015.
- 14 In UNSCR 2100, the French forces were authorized to "use all necessary means" in support of MINUSMA when under serious threat (and upon request by the Secretary-General). This authorization has remained constant in subsequent UNSCRs.
- 15 Barkhane is composed of 3,000 French soldiers operating in the Sahel region in partnership with the G5 Sahel countries (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad), all of which are former French colonies.
- 16 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 17 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 18 Interview, European military officer, previously deployed to MINUSMA, Copenhagen, March 2016.
- 19 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 20 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 21 Interview, civilian officer, UN agency, Bamako, June 2016.
- 22 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 23 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 24 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 25 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 26 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 27 Interview, British military officer, UK Army, August 2013.
- 28 Interview, Asian military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 29 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 30 In addition to the primary health care and immediate lifesaving and resuscitation services provided at Level 1 hospitals, Level 2 hospitals provide basic surgical expertise, life support services and basic hospital and ancillary services. There is one Level 1 hospital per battalion and one Level 2 hospital in each of the sectors in Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu. Furthermore, there is a Level 3 facility (Clinique Pasteur) in Bamako as well as a Level 4 civilian hospital in Dakar in Senegal.
- 31 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 32 Source: S.J.H. Rietjens, Netherlands Defence Academy.
- 33 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 34 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 35 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 36 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 37 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 38 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 39 Levels of training differ considerably from one TCC to another. This is also the case among the African TCCs. "Senegal and Guinea," one high-ranking officer based in headquarters noted, "are good, because they get support from the Americans" (Interview, European military officer, previously deployed to MINUSMA, Copenhagen, March 2016). Equally, African officers in MINUSMA have often received extensive training beginning at the primary school level. Benin, for example, has an elite primary school that prepares its students for military careers. In addition, African officers travel to staff courses and platoon training abroad, in France, the US, China, Belgium, Ghana, among others.
- 40 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 41 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 42 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 43 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 44 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 45 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 46 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 47 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 48 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 49 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 50 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 51 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 52 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 53 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 54 Groupe Autodéfense Touareg Imghad et Allié (Touareg Imghad and Allied Self-Defense Group).
- 55 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016. Emphasis added.
- 56 Rikke Haugegaard, one of the authors of this report, has conducted pre-deployment training for soldiers to be deployed in Mali, and has first-hand experience of this.
- 57 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 58 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 59 Source: MINUSMA Force Commander's office.
- 60 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 61 Interview, European military officer, previously deployed to MINUSMA, Copenhagen, March 2016.
- 62 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 63 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.

- 64 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 65 See IHS Jane (2016) for more information on the attack.
- 66 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 67 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 68 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 69 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 70 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 71 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 72 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 73 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 74 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 75 Briefing, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016. Emphasis added.
- 76 Interview, Asian military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016. Emphasis added.
- 77 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 78 Interview, Asian military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 79 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 80 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 81 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 82 The agencies traditionally responsible for producing information relevant to the military element of UN missions are the U2, Joint Military Analysis Center (JMAC) and UN Department for Security and Safety (UNDSS). The U2 is the military intelligence component of a UN mission, and is responsible for tactical- and operational-level intelligence (van Dalen 2015).
- 83 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 84 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 85 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 86 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 87 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 88 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 89 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 90 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 91 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 92 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 93 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 94 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 95 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 96 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 97 Interview, civilian officer, MINUSMA, Bamako, June 2016.
- 98 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.
- 99 Interview, African military officer, MINUSMA, Timbuktu, June 2016.
- 100 The authoritarian regime of Idriss Deby is marked by its human rights violations, most recently by the banning of burkas and the launch of a new anti-terror law establishing the death penalty in the country.
- 101 Interview, European military officer, MINUSMA, Gao, June 2016.

References

- Abdel-Baghy, T., and Luengo-Cabrera, J. (2015). **Mali: an Endangered Peace**. Alert Issue 56. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies.
- Albrecht, P., and Haenlein, C. (2016). Fragmented Peacekeeping: The African Union in Somalia. **The RUSI Journal**, 161(1), 50–61.
- Albrecht, P., and Haenlein, C. (2015). Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Peacekeepers: Sudan, Somalia and Ebola. **The RUSI Journal**, 160(1), 26–36.
- Albrecht, P., and Jackson, P. (2014). **Securing Sierra Leone, 1997–2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action**. RUSI Whitehall Paper No. 82. Abingdon: RUSI/Taylor and Francis.
- BBC (2015). World's Most Dangerous Peacekeeping Mission. [Online]. **BBC**, November 20. Available from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34812600> [Accessed 14 December 2016].
- Bellamy, A. J., and Williams, P. D. (eds.) (2013). **Providing Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges and Future of United Nations Peacekeeping Contributions**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boutellis, A., and Fink, N. C. (October 2016). **Waging Peace: UN peace Operations Confronting Terrorism and Violent Extremism**. New York: International Peace Institute.
- Böås, M. (2012). **Violent Islamic Uprising in Northern Nigeria: From the 'Taleban' to Boko Haram II**. Oslo: NOREF.
- Cold-Ravnkilde, S. M., Albrecht, P., and Haugegaard, R. (2016). **Female Peacekeepers are Vital for the UN Mission in Mali**. DIIS Policy Brief. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Cold-Ravnkilde, S. M. and Plambech, S. (2015). **Boko Haram: From Local Grievances to Violent Insurgency**. DIIS Reports 2015:21. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Cold-Ravnkilde, S. M. (2013). **War and Peace in Mali: Background and Perspectives**. DIIS Reports 2013:33. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Corfixen, K. (2015a). Regeringen har besluttet sig: Danske soldater skal sendes til Mali. **Politiken**, October 30. Available from: <http://politiken.dk/udland/article5599744.ece> [Accessed 20 December 2016].
- Cunliffe, P. (2013). **Legions of Peace: UN Peacekeepers from the Global South**. London: C.H. Hurst & Co.
- Elron, E., Halevy, N., Ari, E. B., and Shamir, Boas (2003). Cooperation and Coordination across Cultures in the Peacekeeping Forces: Individual and Organizational Integrating Mechanisms. In: T.W. Britt and A.B. Adler (eds.) **The Psychology of the Peacekeeper**, 261–82. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Eskenen, A. H. (2015b). Dansk professor undrer sig over dansk bidrag til mission i Mali. **Politiken**, December 15. Available from: <http://politiken.dk/udland/article5602914.ece> [Accessed 20 December 2016].

ICG (2016). **Chad: Between Ambition and Fragility**. Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Group.

ICG (2015a). **Mali: An Imposed Peace?** Africa Report 226. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/mali-imposed-peace> [Accessed 14 December 2016].

ICG (2015b). **Mali: Peace from Below?** [Online]. Available from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/mali-peace-below> [Accessed 14 December 2016].

IHS Jane (2016). Rocket Attack Kills MINUSMA Peacekeepers in Mali's Gao. [Online]. Posted 2 June. Available from: <http://www.janes.com/article/60939/rocket-attack-kills-minusma-peacekeepers-in-mali-s-gao> [Accessed 14 December 2016].

International Peace Institute (June 2013). **Trends in Uniformed Contributions to UN Peacekeeping: A New Dataset, 1991–2012**. New York: International Peace Institute.

Karlsrud, J. (2015). The UN at War: Examining the Consequences of Peace Enforcement Mandates for the UN Peacekeeping Operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali. **Third World Quarterly**, 36(1), 40–54.

Karlsrud, J., and Smith, A. C. (2015). Europe's Return to UN Peacekeeping in Africa? Lessons from Mali. **Providing for Peacekeeping** 11. New York: International Peace Institute.

Koops, J. (ed.) (2015). **The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lecocq, B., and Schrijver, P. (2007). The War on Terror in a Haze of Dust: Potholes and Pitfalls on the Saharan Front. **Journal of Contemporary African Studies**, 25(1), 141–166.

Lecoutre, D. (2016). Le Tchad, Puissance de Circonstance. **Le Monde Diplomatique**, 11 June.

Leslie, D. (2006) **The Provision of Troops and Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE) and the Method for Reimbursement**. New York: UNITAR.

Lucas Jr, G. R. (2010). Postmodern War. **Journal of Military Ethics**, 9(4), 289–298.

Luján, F. M. (2013). **Light Footprints: The Future of American Military Intervention**. Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security.

MINUSMA (2016). [Online] Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/> [Accessed 14 December 2016].

Providing for Peacekeeping (2016). [Online]. Available from: <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/> [Accessed 14 December 2016].

Strazzari, F. (2015). **Azawad and the Rights of Passage: The Role of Illicit Trade in the Logic of Armed Group Formation in Northern Mali**. Oslo: NOREF.

Studio Tamani (2016). Minusma: Le Burkina Demande Le Redéploiement d'une Partie de son Contingent à la Frontière avec le Mali. [Online]. Posted 2 June 2016. Available from: <http://www.studiotamani.org/index.php/politique/7929-minusma-le-burkina-demande-le-redeploiement-d-une-partie-de-son-contingent-a-la-frontiere-avec-le-mali> [Accessed 14 December 2016].

Thérout-Bénoni, L. A. (2014). The Long Path to MINUSMA: Assessing the International Response to the Crisis in Mali. In: M. Wyss and T. Tardy (eds.). **Peacekeeping in Africa: The Evolving Security Architecture**. Abingdon: Routledge, 171–189.

UN (2008). **United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines**. New York: United Nations.

UN Security Council (2016). **SC Res 2295**, June 29, 2016, S/RES/2295.

UN Security Council (2013a). **Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali**, March 26, 2012, S/2013/189.

UN Security Council (2013b). **SC Res 2100**, April 25, 2013, S/RES/2100.

UN Security Council (2012). **Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali**, November 28, 2012, S/2012/894.

van Dalen, J. A. (2015). ASIFU - Baanbrekend Inlichtingenexperiment in Mali. **Militaire Spectator**, 184(7/8), 306–320.

Uitley, R. E. (ed.). (2006). **Major Powers and Peacekeeping: Perspectives, Priorities and the Challenges of Military Intervention**. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Wilén, N., Ambrosetti, D., and Birantamije, G. (2015). Sending Peacekeepers Abroad, Sharing Power at Home: Burundi in Somalia. **Journal of Eastern African Studies**, 9(2), 307–325.

Photos

Coverphoto: Scanpix Denmark. AFP / AFP

Page 10-11, 18-19, 26-27, 44-45 and 72-73: UN Photo, Marco Dormino

Page 56-57: Polfoto, AP

Page 66-67: Polfoto, AP Rebecca Blackwell

DIIS · Danish Institute for International Studies

The Danish Institute for International Studies is a leading public institute for independent research and analysis of international affairs. We conduct and communicate multidisciplinary research on globalisation, security, development and foreign policy. DIIS aims to use our research results to influence the agenda in research, policy and public debate, and we put great effort into informing policymakers and the public of our results and their possible applications.

Defence and Security Studies at DIIS

This publication is part of the Defence and Security Studies that DIIS carries out for the Danish Ministry of Defence. The aim of these studies is to provide multidisciplinary in-depth knowledge on topics that are central for Danish defence and security policy, both currently and in the long term. The design and the conclusions of the research are entirely independent. Conclusions do not reflect the views of the ministries involved or any other government agency, nor do they constitute an official DIIS position. Additional information about DIIS and our Defence and Security Studies can be found at www.diis.dk.



DIIS · DANISH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
Østbanegade 117 | DK-2100 Copenhagen | Denmark | www.diis.dk