

# Security Council considers measures to support regional force in the Sahel

8 December 2017 – The United Nations Security Council today adopted a resolution clarifying the ways in which the international community, including the UN mission Mali – known by its French acronym MINUSMA – is expected to provide support to a multi-country joint military force conducting counter-terrorist operations in the Sahel.

The *Force conjointe du G5 Sahel* (FC-G5S) was established by the Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) – to jointly combat terrorism and transnational organized crime in the region.

In the resolution adopted today, the 15-member Security Council welcomed progress achieved in the operationalization of the FC-G5S and underlined the need for FC-G5S operations to be conducted in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee laws, as applicable.

The Council further stressed the need to ensure that the gender perspective is taken into account in implementing all aspects of the strategic concept of FC-G5S operations, including by ensuring that gender analysis and women's participation are integrated into assessments, planning and operations.

Also in the resolution, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate steps to conclude a technical agreement between the UN, the European Union (EU) and G5 Sahel States, to provide specified operational and logistical support through MINUSMA to the FC-G5S.

The support provided pursuant to the technical agreement should “be conducted at the discretion of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, in close consultation with the Force Commander, and without affecting MINUSMA's capacity to implement its mandate and strategic priorities, and be restricted to the areas of operations of MINUSMA where such support is compatible with its current level of capacities,” added the resolution.

Also in the resolution, the Council expressed its deep concern over the “persistent delays” in the full implementation of key provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and renewed its “urgent call” on the Government of Mali and the *Plateforme* and *Coordination* armed groups to take immediate and concrete action to fully and expeditiously deliver on their remaining obligations under the Agreement.

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# UN agency begins assisting thousands of West African migrants to leave Libya

8 December 2017 – The United Nations migration agency and the Government of Niger welcomed the first 504 people from Libya to Niger, kicking off a voluntary mass evacuation of nearly 4,000 migrants.

“After the discussions at the [African Union-European Union] summit in Abidjan, the government has demonstrated its commitment to making this [evacuation a priority](#) and a reality,” Alberto Preato, the International Organization for Migration’s (IOM) Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) Programme Manager, declared on Friday.

Organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Niger with the Embassy of Niger in Libya, and under the initiative of President of Niger Mahamadou Issoufou and Prime Minister Brigi Rafini, the migrants registered for voluntary return at Niger Embassy in Tripoli.

On Wednesday, the first of eight charter flights carrying 504 migrants, including women and young children, arrived at the Diori Hamani International Airport in Niamey.

IOM is providing technical and logistic support for the registration, profiling, reception and onward transportation of the returning migrants, under the MRRM financed by the European Union.

“The success of the operation is a stepping stone in strengthening the partnership between IOM and the Government of Niger,” said Mr. Preato.

The migrants were received by the Ministers of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Health and Humanitarian Action, along with more than 50 IOM staff – including from operations, protection, medical, logistics, finance, reintegration and communication – and other senior officials.

In addition to welcoming the returnees, IOM registered, profiled, provided them with food and water, and facilitated transportation to their villages of origin.

The UN migration agency and Niger are also exploring possibilities for the socio-economic reintegration of migrants arriving in the weeks ahead.

After the successful reception of the first charter last night, Niger’s Foreign Minister officially confirmed plans for seven additional charters – carrying 500 migrants each, one per day, from Wednesday onwards – to transport the total 3,850 Nigerian migrants now registered in Tripoli.

Mohamed Bazoum, Niger’s Minister of Interior praised in his speech the fruitful partnership with IOM, and complimented the Organization for making

possible the dignified return of Nigerien migrants under the best possible conditions.

The teams left the airport early Thursday morning, ensuring that all 504 returning migrants were on their way home. IOM staff is fully prepared to welcome the second charter due Friday.

Moreover, in close collaboration with IOM staff in Libya, the mission in Niger is preparing to receive additional groups of migrants now in detention centres across Libya.

Meanwhile, IOM staff in Agadez are now assisting the 10th convoy of migrants arriving from Algeria as they prepare themselves for possible mass evacuations of stranded migrants from its northern borders.

“IOM is proud to be part of this operation and to be able to bring back hope to those who had long lost it,” Mr. Preato concluded.

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## [Human Rights Day: UN to launch campaign for 70th anniversary of Universal Declaration](#)

8 December 2017 – The United Nations will on Sunday kick off in Paris, France, a year-long campaign to honor the foundational human rights document, which next year marks its 70th anniversary.

Since the proclamation of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) in 1948, “[human rights](#) have been one of the three pillars of the United Nations, along with peace and development,” said [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in his message for [Human Rights Day](#), annually observed on 10 December.

As “one of the world’s most profound and far-reaching international agreements,” the Universal Declaration proclaimed the inalienable rights of every human being regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.

Mr. Guterres noted that while human rights abuses did not end when the Universal Declaration was adopted, the instrument has helped countless people to gain greater freedom and security, and has also helped to prevent violations, obtain justice for wrongs, and strengthen national and international human rights laws and safeguards.

“Despite these advances, the fundamental principles of the Universal

Declaration are being tested in all regions,” he said, citing rising hostility towards human rights and those who defend them by people who want to profit from exploitation and division.

“We see hatred, intolerance, atrocities and other crimes. These actions imperil us all,” he said, urging people and leaders everywhere to stand up for all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – and for the values that underpin hopes for a fairer, safer and better world for all.

The [year-long campaign](#) will start at Palais de Chaillot in Paris on Sunday, with an event also to be held on Monday at UN Headquarters in New York. UN Information Centres around the world will also launch commemorative activities.

For his part, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein said that thanks to the Universal Declaration, the daily life of millions has been improved, untold human suffering has been prevented and the foundations for a more just world have been laid.

“While its promise is yet to be fulfilled, the very fact that it has stood [the test of time](#) is testament to the enduring universality of its perennial values of equality, justice and human dignity,” he said.

The period leading up to 10 December 2018, the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration, will be “a year of intense and profound reflection on the continuing and vital importance of each and every one of the 30 articles contained in this extraordinary document.”

Today, as World War II and the Holocaust grow distant, that awareness appears to be evaporating at an alarming rate, and the enormous progress that has been achieved through progressive enactment of human rights principles, as laid out in the Universal Declaration, is being increasingly forgotten or willfully ignored, Mr. Zeid said.

He said it is right to honour its achievements and pay tribute to its inspired architects on the 70th anniversary year, but “we should be under no illusions: the legacy of the Universal Declaration is facing threats on many fronts.”

“We must organize and mobilize in defence of human decency, in defence of a better common future... We must take a robust and determined stand: by resolutely supporting the human rights of others, we also stand up for our own rights and those of generations to come,” he said.

**VIDEO:** In his annual Human Rights Day message, Secretary-General António Guterres calls for translating the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into action.

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## [UN chief calls for \\$1 billion in donor contributions to emergency response fund](#)

8 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Friday called for \$1 billion in donor contributions to the Organization's Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)) – a pool of funding that supports critical relief operations in crises around the world – as humanitarian needs have increased from \$5.2 billion in 2005 to over \$24 billion today.

“Over the past twelve years, CERF has been at the forefront of humanitarian response,” UN Secretary-General said at a pledging conference in New York, thanking the 126 Member States and Observers, and the other donors who have generously contributed to the fund since its creation in 2005.

“CERF is without question one of our most important tools to reach people quickly and save lives,” he added.

This year, CERF, managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), has funded life-saving work, allocating nearly \$130 million to help prevent famine in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

The fund also supported relief responses in other places, including for Palestine refugees in Gaza, for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and those affected by hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean.

Mr. Guterres then announced a CERF allocation of \$100 million to meet critical needs in nine underfunded emergencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, Cameroon, Mali, Philippines, Eritrea, Haiti and Pakistan.

Protracted conflict and the impact of natural disasters, compounded by structural fragility and chronic vulnerability, mean that more people than ever before survive on the brink of disaster.

In 2018, protracted crises are likely to continue, while the impact of climate change is likely to grow and intensify.

“There is no sign of a let-up in humanitarian needs,” the UN chief said, noting that this is why the General Assembly adopted a resolution a year ago that calls for an expansion of CERF's annual funding target from \$450 million to \$1 billion.

Noting that the global humanitarian funding gap stands at \$11 billion as of 30 November and humanitarian response plans are funded at an average of just

60 per cent, the Secretary-General stressed that a \$1 billion CERF will help to bolster contingency financing.

“\$1 billion is an ambitious but achievable goal,” he said. “A strong United Nations needs a strong CERF.”

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## [UN official releases funds to enable live-saving aid programmes in Gaza Strip](#)

8 December 2017 – A senior United Nations aid and development official in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) today released \$2.2 million to support health, food and livelihood programmes in the Gaza Strip.

According to a [news release](#) by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the allocation authorized Friday, by Robert Piper, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, will also enable essential and life-saving child and maternal health interventions, including the provision of incubators and phototherapy equipment to neonatal intensive care units and intensive care units in Gaza hospitals.

“With each day that passes without improvement, hopes diminish and frustrations rise. We must summon the resources and political will to bring change to Gaza,” said Mr. Piper in the news release.

“In spite of political movement towards Palestinian reconciliation in recent months, most of the measures adopted by the Palestinian Authority since March 2017, which triggered the latest deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, are yet to be reversed,” he added.

The resources from the oPt Humanitarian Fund, will enable the most vulnerable families in the Gaza Strip to immediately access fresh and nutritious local food through the provision of six-month fresh food vouchers for families falling below the deep poverty line, with insufficient or no access to means of assistance and with limited capacity to meet their households’ basic food needs.

It will also support livelihoods and improved food security of farmers to overcome the electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip, through provision of solar power systems and agricultural supplies.

The allocation comes in the context of an overall deterioration in conditions in the Gaza Strip this year following the worsening of an electricity crisis that has left Gaza’s nearly two million – already suffering from 10 years of Israeli blockade and internal Palestinian divisions – with an average of only

four to six hours of electricity per day, severely disrupting daily life and the provision of basic services, the news release added.

The oPt Humanitarian Fund is an emergency pooled fund that supports the delivery of strategic humanitarian assistance to address priority needs, while retaining the flexibility to respond unforeseen emergencies or events. It is a pooled funding mechanism, operated from donations from the Governments of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.