

11. The situation in Mali

During the period under review, the Council held six meetings and adopted one resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter in connection with the situation in Mali. Four of the meetings took the form of briefings and two were convened for the adoption of a resolution.⁴¹⁰ More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in the table below. In addition, the Council held one private meeting with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#).⁴¹¹ Council members also held informal consultations of the whole in connection with this item.⁴¹²

In 2023, the Council heard three briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA further to the periodic reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali in January, April and June.⁴¹³ After the adoption of resolution [2690 \(2023\)](#) on 30 June, by which the Council terminated the mandate of MINUSMA, the Special Representative also briefed the Council on the drawdown and withdrawal of the Mission in August.⁴¹⁴ The Council also heard briefings by two civil society representatives.⁴¹⁵ During the reporting period, the Council also failed to adopt two draft resolutions on the sanctions measures concerning Mali, after which the measures and mandate of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) expired.⁴¹⁶ During the meetings held under this item, Mali was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on two occasions.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁰ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

⁴¹¹ The private meeting was held on 7 June under the item entitled “Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#), annex II, sections A and B”. See [S/PV.9342](#).

⁴¹² Council members held informal consultations on eight occasions regarding the situation in Mali during the period under review. See [A/78/2](#), part II, chap. 38.

⁴¹³ See [S/PV.9251](#), [S/PV.9302](#) and [S/PV.9350](#). See also [S/2023/21](#), [S/2023/236](#) and [S/2023/402](#).

⁴¹⁴ See [S/PV.9407](#). See also [S/2023/611](#).

⁴¹⁵ See [S/PV.9251](#) and [S/PV.9407](#).

⁴¹⁶ See [S/PV.9408](#).

⁴¹⁷ See [S/PV.9251](#) and [S/PV.9350](#).

In 2023, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General updated Council members on increasing security challenges in the centre and north of Mali and their impact on the humanitarian situation, progress in the political transition towards the restoration of constitutional order and challenges in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. In his first briefing of the year on 27 January, the Special Representative highlighted the complex security situation, particularly in the centre of Mali and in the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, where the activities of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) continued to fuel insecurity, with the two groups both clashing against each other and deliberately attacking civilians.⁴¹⁸ He reported that, due to the persistence of security challenges, the number of internally displaced persons remained high, reaching over 410,000 in December 2022, while 8.8 million people needed humanitarian assistance, a 17 per cent increase from early 2022. Furthermore, despite the sustained efforts of MINUSMA to protect civilians in support and complementing the Malian Defence and Security Forces, he emphasized that the Mission's capacity to contribute more effectively to improving the security situation would depend on the availability of capacities and timely replacement of troop-contributing countries which had decided to leave the Mission, strengthening coordination with the Malian forces and respect for the Mission's freedom of movement, in line with the status-of-forces agreement. On the political situation, the Special Representative noted several challenges ahead of the constitutional referendum, which was expected to culminate with a restoration of constitutional order planned for March 2024, including the full operationalization of the Independent Authority for Election Management, the availability of financial and logistical resources and the evolution of the security situation. He also noted that in December 2022, signatory movements suspended their participation in the peace process following disagreements over the level of participation of the Transition Government of Mali in the ordinary sessions of the Agreement Monitoring Committee and other related issues.

In her remarks, the President of the Association Protection Sahel, a civil society organization, highlighted the challenges in Mali, including the threat of terrorist groups and food

⁴¹⁸ See [S/PV.9251](#)

insecurity. She stated that the military operations of the Malian armed forces to counter terrorism should be regularly re-evaluated in the light of the mixed results in relation to human rights. She also called on the Malian authorities to disassociate themselves from acts of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and on the judicial authorities to take concrete steps to prosecute the alleged perpetrators of those crimes. With regard to the pre-electoral process, she called for the respect for civil liberties and democratic space and noted that Malian women wanted to play a greater role in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. She further called on the authorities to seek alternative partnerships with humanitarian actors to address the issue of internally displaced persons, strengthen collaboration with MINUSMA and ensure a more equitable protection for all communities.

In his statement on 12 April, the Special Representative reported a resurgence of clashes between ISGS and JNIM in Ménaka over areas of influence and the control of supply routes, with attacks on the civilian population and the displacement of more than 30,000 people.⁴¹⁹ He noted further clashes between ISGS and JNIM and between the signatory movements and ISGS in the Gao region, while the Malian Defence and Security Forces continued activities to disrupt extremist group activities in Mopti and Segou. The Special Representative stressed the need for the Malian authorities to ensure that military operations against terrorist and extremist groups were conducted in full compliance with international humanitarian law and that violations and abuses were transparently and promptly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. He also reported that the Malian authorities had announced the postponement of the constitutional referendum and that this delay would not compromise the restoration of constitutional order within the agreed timeline by March 2024.

On 16 June, the Special Representative updated Council members that the constitutional referendum was scheduled to take place on 18 June on the draft constitution which followed the national dialogue on the reform process held in December 2021.⁴²⁰ He noted that several political parties, including parties that had dominated political life in recent decades, civil society organizations and other actors had expressed their support and called for an affirmative vote in the referendum, while some other political groups and some religious organizations called for a

⁴¹⁹ See [S/PV.9302](#).

⁴²⁰ See [S/PV.9350](#).

negative vote. Moreover, highlighting the close link between the referendum and the peace process, the Special Representative noted that on 28 March the Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad and the Plateforme and some of the Mouvements de l’inclusivité, grouped within the Cadre stratégique permanent pour la paix, la sécurité et le développement, had issued a communiqué stating that they did not see themselves in the draft constitution. He also noted that the international mediation led by Algeria published a communiqué on 11 June, listing the elements on the basis of which the peace process could resume. Moreover, with the end of the mandate of MINUSMA approaching at the end of the same month, the Special Representative highlighted the importance of the stabilizing effect of the Mission’s presence in urban centres and its efforts aimed at protecting civilian populations. He underscored the fundamental importance of cooperation with the host country and emphasized that MINUSMA had undeniable comparative advantages that could and had to be used more effectively to support the Malian State. In his remarks, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali stated that the options proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on the internal review of MINUSMA did not respond to the concerns and expectations expressed by the Government and people of Mali and noted the Government’s conclusion that the Mission had failed to provide adequate responses to the security situation in the country. In view of these circumstances, he informed Council members that the Government called for the immediate withdrawal of MINUSMA and expressed its willingness to cooperate with the United Nations in that regard.

On 30 June, by resolution [2690 \(2023\)](#) of 30 June, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter and taking note of the letter of the Transition Government of Mali requesting the Mission’s withdrawal without delay,⁴²¹ the Council unanimously decided to terminate the mandate of MINUSMA.⁴²² The Council requested MINUSMA to immediately start on 1 July the cessation of its operations, transfer of tasks, as well as the orderly and safe drawdown and withdrawal of its personnel, with the objective of completing this process by 31 December.⁴²³ The Council requested the Secretary-General to engage with the Transition Government to

⁴²¹ See [S/2023/463](#).

⁴²² Resolution [2690 \(2023\)](#), para. 1. See also [S/PV.9365](#) and [S/2023/463](#). For more information on the mandate of MINUSMA, see part X, sect. I.

⁴²³ Resolution [2690 \(2023\)](#), para. 2.

articulate a plan for the transfer of the Mission's tasks, bearing in mind the possible contribution of the United Nations country team, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and other stakeholders, including in support of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, and authorized several functions the Mission would carry out until 31 December, including responding to imminent threats of violence to civilians and contributing to the safe civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance.⁴²⁴ The Council also decided that the liquidation of MINUSMA would begin on 1 January 2024 and called upon the Transition Government to cooperate fully with the United Nations during the Mission's drawdown, withdrawal and liquidation to ensure the orderly and safe withdrawal and requested it to fully respect all provisions of the status of forces agreement until the departure of the final element of MINUSMA from Mali.⁴²⁵

In his briefing on 28 August, the Special Representative updated the Council on the drawdown and withdrawal of MINUSMA following the adoption of resolution [2690 \(2023\)](#).⁴²⁶ He explained that, as outlined in the letter of the Secretary-General of 18 August,⁴²⁷ the drawdown and closure of the Mission was unfolding in two phases: (i) the period through 31 December and (ii) the liquidation period, which would begin on 1 January 2024. As part of the first phase, the Mission focused on the closure of the smallest and farthest outposts which was completed with the closure of the Ménaka base, among other temporary operating camps and bases. He pointed, however, to several difficulties in the implementation of the first phase such as attacks on peacekeeper convoys and logistical constraints on the withdrawal of materials. He added that the closure of MINUSMA had a political dimension given that it was taking place amidst the paralysis of the monitoring structures of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation and the divergent positions adopted by the parties on the fate of the camps which would be liberated by the Mission. In that regard, the Special Representative highlighted the urgency of the situation, given the very short deadline for the closure of the Mission and the limited flexibility it had in the withdrawal process. He also updated the Council on the transfer of tasks previously carried out by MINUSMA in collaboration with the transitional authorities and discussions on

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., paras. 4 and 7.

⁴²⁶ See [S/PV.9407](#).

⁴²⁷ See [S/2023/611](#).

how to consolidate and preserve the results achieved in support of Malian partners, while also seeking to maintain an environment conducive to long-term United Nations engagement. Concluding, he noted that MINUSMA had made a tangible impact on the ground in what had proved to be one of the most challenging peacekeeping operations ever undertaken by the United Nations. He called on Member States to consider additional voluntary contributions to the United Nations country team and humanitarian actors in Mali to enable them to continue providing assistance to people in need and supporting the country's development efforts.

In her statement at the same meeting, the Acting Regional Director of Search for Common Ground, a non-governmental supporting peacebuilding and social cohesion, maintained that the withdrawal of MINUSMA should not jeopardize the efforts of Malian authorities and the Mission to ensure peace and security. Moreover, she underscored the need to maintain financing for civilian and stabilization projects in Mali through mechanisms such as the Peacebuilding Fund, for the international community to consider how it could reinvest funding allocated to the Mission to continue support for building strong institutions that could ensure the rule of law. She recommended that civilian mediation and conflict resolution efforts be strengthened in order to establish frank dialogue, especially within local communities.

On 30 August, the Council voted on two draft resolutions concerning the asset freeze and travel ban on Mali as set out in resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) which were due to expire on 31 August.⁴²⁸ The first draft resolution, which was submitted by France and the United Arab Emirates and would have renewed the sanctions measures until 31 August 2024 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 30 September 2024, failed to be adopted due to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (Russian Federation).⁴²⁹ By the draft resolution, the Council would have also acknowledged the letter from the Transition Government of 15 August and its request to lift the sanctions regime and would have expressed the Council's readiness to review the continuation of the measures, including modification, suspension or lifting.⁴³⁰ The second draft resolution, which was submitted by the Russian Federation and by which the Council would have renewed the sanctions measures for a final period of 12 months until 31 August and

⁴²⁸ See [S/PV.9408](#).

⁴²⁹ See [S/2023/638](#).

⁴³⁰ See [S/2023/605](#).

would have dissolved the Panel of Experts with immediate effect, was not adopted having failed to obtain the required number of votes.⁴³¹

In their discussions during the meetings held in 2023, Council members expressed concern regarding the security and humanitarian situation in Mali, highlighting the threat posed by terrorist groups on the civilian population. Some Council members acknowledged the counter-terrorism and stabilization efforts undertaken by the Transition Government of Mali to address the insecurity.⁴³² Several delegations, however, also underscored the importance of a regional approach to addressing the security situation, along with a holistic approach to address the root causes of the conflict in the Sahel.⁴³³ Some speakers also highlighted the connection between climate change and insecurity and the need for international support in that regard.⁴³⁴ Most speakers underscored the need for all parties to the conflict in Mali to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, with some focusing on the human rights impact of the operations of the Malian Defence and Security Forces and a private military group, particularly citing the findings of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights report into the events in Moura in 2022.⁴³⁵

On the political process, Council members acknowledged the important role of ECOWAS and the African Union in support the political transition in Mali with a view to restoring constitutional order. While noting some progress over the course of the year, multiple delegations called on the Transition Government to abide by the timelines agreed with ECOWAS to hold elections by March 2024. Most Council members further expressed concern with the impasse in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation and called on the signatories to resolve their differences and resume dialogue. Some speakers further called

⁴³¹ See [S/2023/639](#).

⁴³² See [S/PV.9251](#), Brazil, China, Russian Federation and Japan; [S/PV.9302](#), Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), China and Russian Federation; [S/PV.9350](#), Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), China and Russian Federation; and [S/PV.9407](#), China and Russian Federation.

⁴³³ See [S/PV.9251](#), United Arab Emirates and Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique); [S/PV.9302](#), United Arab Emirates, Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique) and Brazil; and [S/PV.9350](#), Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), Brazil Ecuador, and United Arab Emirates.

⁴³⁴ See [S/PV.9251](#), Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), Malta and Switzerland; [S/PV.9302](#), United Arab Emirates, Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique) and Malta; and [S/PV.9350](#), Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana) Malta, and United Arab Emirates.

⁴³⁵ See [S/PV.9350](#), France, United States, Malta, Switzerland, Japan, Ecuador and Albania.

for ensuring inclusivity in the political process, including through the participation, among others, women, youth and civil society.⁴³⁶

With regard to MINUSMA, Council members took note of the conclusions of the internal review conducted by the Secretary-General and the parameters for effective engagement by the Mission outlined therein, including advances in the political transition, progress in the implementation of the peace agreement, freedom of movement and the Mission's ability to implement its full mandate.⁴³⁷ In that context, multiple delegations called on the Transition Government to respect its obligations under the status of forces agreement and remove any obstacles which hinder the Mission's ability to implement its mandate and ensure the safety and security of its personnel.⁴³⁸

Following the adoption of resolution [2690 \(2023\)](#), most Council members called on the Transition Government to fully cooperate with MINUSMA in ensuring its safe and orderly withdrawal from Mali and recalled the primary obligation of the national authorities to ensure the protection of civilians. Some delegations emphasized the importance of effective communication between MINUSMA and the Government.⁴³⁹ Multiple Council members also underscored the need for the United Nations to remain engaged in support of the peace agreement and the political transition in Mali, including through the work of UNOWAS and the United Nations country team.⁴⁴⁰ Also speaking on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique, the representative of Ghana urged an early solution for mechanisms for monitoring the ceasefire and monitoring and reporting on human rights, and encouraged funding towards electoral support and the United Nations Development Programme basket fund to support the successful completion of the political transition and a return to constitutional order. The representative of China underscored

⁴³⁶ See [S/PV.9251](#), Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), Malta, Brazil, Ecuador, Switzerland and Japan; [S/PV.9302](#), United Arab Emirates, Albania, Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), Ecuador, Switzerland, Malta, and Brazil; and [S/PV.9350](#), Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), Malta, United Kingdom, Brazil, Japan, Ecuador and United Arab Emirates.

⁴³⁷ See [S/2023/36](#).

⁴³⁸ See [S/PV.9251](#), France, United States, Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), Albania, United Kingdom, Ecuador; [S/PV.9302](#), France, Albania, Ghana (also on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), Ecuador, United States, Brazil; and [S/PV.9350](#), France, Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), United States, Malta, Switzerland, Brazil and Albania.

⁴³⁹ See [S/PV.9365](#), Russian Federation, China and United Arab Emirates; and [S/PV.9407](#), China and United Arab Emirates.

⁴⁴⁰ See [S/PV.9365](#), Japan and Malta; and [S/PV.9407](#), Japan, Malta, Ecuador, Brazil, Switzerland and United States.

that any plan for the transfer of MINUSMA's tasks should respect the will of Mali and be conducive to maintaining the stability of the country. The representative of the Russian Federation stated that any transfer of the powers of MINUSMA regarding the peace agreement required securing the consent of the parties themselves.

Council members also expressed contrasting views with regard to the utility and future of the sanctions measures imposed on Mali under resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#). In her remarks before the vote on the draft resolution the United Arab Emirates submitted together with France, the representative of the United Arab Emirates expressed the view that the draft text acknowledged the request of Mali for the lifting of the sanctions regime and emphasized the readiness of the Council to review the continuation of those measures at any time.⁴⁴¹ Also speaking on behalf of Gabon and Ghana, the representative of Mozambique stated that, having given due consideration to the request of the Transition Government, the three African delegations had assessed that the sanctions measures should have continued and would help mitigate any adverse impacts on the peace agreement, taking note of the withdrawal of MINUSMA, which was echoed by several other Council members.⁴⁴² The representative of the United States recalled that the reporting of the Panel of Experts was a central source of information on the situation in Mali and that the travel ban and assets freeze remained necessary to stem the illicit financial transfers and ill-gotten gains both from Mali and the region. The representative of France reminded Council members that the mandate of the Panel included investigating human rights violations committed throughout Mali by all those guilty of such crimes.

In contrast, the representative of the Russian Federation stated that the adoption of the draft resolution submitted by France and the United Arab Emirates, would undermine the sanctions regime and the peace process and further antagonize the parties, given the fact that the Transition Government had submitted an official request for the lifting of the sanctions regime. The Russian Federation also expressed disagreement that the Panel of Experts was the only United Nations mechanism at the disposal of the Council to support the implementation of the peace agreement. He subsequently added that, under the draft submitted by his delegation, the sanctions regime would be maintained in order to try to harness it to help implement the

⁴⁴¹ See [S/PV.9408](#).

⁴⁴² Ibid., United Kingdom, Switzerland, Albania, Japan and Malta.

Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, but that it was of fundamental importance that the sanctions were not turned into an instrument for placing external pressure on Mali's internal political problems.⁴⁴³ The representative of China stated that the Council had the chance to conduct in-depth discussions and make reasonable adjustments to the sanctions and expressed regret that the draft resolution submitted by France and the United Arab Emirates disregarded the wishes and efforts of other members to continue mediation efforts on the process.

Meetings: The situation in Mali, 2023

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.9251 27 January	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2023/21)		Mali	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, civil society actor and President of Association Protection Sahel	13 Council members ^a , all invitees ^b	
	Report of the Secretary-General on the internal review of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (S/2023/36)					
S/PV.9302 12 April	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2023/236)		Mali	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA	13 Council members ^a , all invitees	
S/PV.9350 16 June	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2023/402)		Mali	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA	13 Council members ^c , all invitees ^d	
S/PV.9365 30 June		Draft resolution submitted by France (S/2023/480)	Mali		12 Council members ^e , invitee	Resolution 2690 (2023) (adopted under Chapter VII) 15-0-0
S/PV.9407 28 August	Letter dated 18 August 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Council (S/2023/611)		Mali	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA, Acting Regional Director of	13 Council members ^a , all invitees ^f	

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
				Search for Common Ground		
S/PV.9408 30 August	Letter dated 3 August 2023 from the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/578)	Draft resolution submitted by France and the United Arab Emirates (S/2023/638)			11 Council members ^g	Draft resolution (S/2023/638) not adopted 13-1-1 ^h Draft resolution (S/2023/639) not adopted 1-1-13 ⁱ
		Draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation (S/2023/639)				

^a Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Ghana (also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), Japan, Malta, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^b Mali was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The civil society actor participated in the meeting via videoconference.

^c Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, Mozambique (also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^d Mali was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

^e Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, Ghana (also spoke on behalf of Gabon and Mozambique), Japan, Malta, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^f The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and the Acting Regional Director of Search for Common Ground participated in the meeting via videoconference.

^g Albania, China, France, Japan, Malta, Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^h *In favour*: Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States; *Against*: Russian Federation; *Abstaining*: China.

ⁱ *In favour*: Russian Federation; *Against*: Japan; *Abstaining*: Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.