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### Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

## **Outcome evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to the rule of law and the fight against impunity in Mali**

### **Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services**

#### *Summary*

The Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an evaluation of the outcomes achieved through the contribution of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to the return, restoration and extension of State authority in the rule of law area and fight against impunity in northern and central Mali between 2017 and 2020.

During the evaluation period, MINUSMA operated in a challenging and volatile political and security environment. Plans and objectives were continuously adapted, and the Mission stretched its resources further with the expansion of the mandate to the centre of the country in 2018, and in the face of continued attacks on civilians, Malian security personnel and peacekeepers.

Highlights of achievements and processes that strengthened the rule of law and the fight against impunity included:

- Infrastructure development, rehabilitation and equipment support supported by the trust fund
- Support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
- The establishment of a framework for consultation, an informal platform to coordinate initiatives at the local and regional levels
- The establishment of a specialized judicial unit with 12 judges, more than 50 police investigators and additional judicial staff



- Support for reforms and legislation, such as the draft bill on the complementarity of formal and traditional justice and communiqués on the prevention of gender-based violence
- Support for and advocacy of judicial inspections and integrity
- Improved prison management
- Support for the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission
- The reporting of human rights violations

Those achievements aside, some cross-cutting gaps were identified. Overall, there was a lack of a joint countrywide strategy for the restoration and extension of State authority and a lack of an agreed definition of “stabilization” among the host Government, the international community, including MINUSMA, and civil society. This was considered a major hindrance in implementing a unified effort to address gaps on the basis of each actor’s comparative advantage.

Infrastructure development and capacity-building were considered to have reached points of diminishing returns, and commencing their handover to the Government was an option. Critically reviewing its comparative advantage across outcome areas explored in the present evaluation would enable the Mission to rebalance its priorities.

Community perception and partner experience suggested that future interventions should balance addressing security, political, developmental and peacebuilding needs in order to establish the rule of law in a more sustainable and holistic manner. This would also be coherent with the call of the expanded summit of the Group of Five for the Sahel held in N’Djamena in March 2021 for a “civilian surge”, acknowledging the limits of military interventions.

Finally, prosecution and processing of serious crimes, including human rights violations and abuses, slightly improved, yet the overall human rights situation in the north and the centre deteriorated and impunity for such crimes persisted. In this regard, interlocutors encouraged MINUSMA to apply its leverage more assertively by using its good offices, convening power and political advocacy.

OIOS makes a total of eight important recommendations addressed to MINUSMA. The recommendations are aligned with the findings and identified in consultation with the Mission counterparts and external partners. The recommendations refer to specific outcome areas that are both critically important and highly relevant, as well as areas where MINUSMA, together with its partners, could add significant value. The first recommendation (the development of a joint countrywide strategy on the restoration and extension of State authorities) is overarching, requiring a whole-of-mission approach and effort to enable the implementation of the other recommendations.

The recommendations touch on supporting the integrity of the judicial system, enhancing the use of good offices to further the reform processes as well as the investigation and prosecution of serious human rights violations, conducting a critical review of capacity-building efforts, strengthening collaboration with the National Commission on Human Rights and improving communication programmes to inform the population of its legal rights and obligations.

## I. Introduction

1. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which key rule of law outcomes were achieved in central and northern Mali through the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). On the basis of the assessment, proposals were made in the evaluation for improvements and changes in the MINUSMA programming and implementation strategy. The evaluation is aimed at contributing to both accountability and lesson-learning to improve the overall effectiveness of the Mission.

2. The evaluation was conducted in conformity with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system.<sup>1</sup> Comments on the draft report were sought from MINUSMA and relevant Secretariat entities and considered in the final report. The comments from MINUSMA are provided in the annex. The evaluation results are grouped in three pillars and followed by an overarching result, namely:

- A. Presence: increased accessibility and responsiveness of the justice system
- B. Capacity: consistent and credible application and use of knowledge, best practices and human rights standards
- C. Legitimacy: improved public perception and trust in the legitimacy of the justice system
- D. Overarching result

## II. Background and context

3. The situation in Mali that gave rise to the establishment of MINUSMA started to evolve in 2012 with the attacks by armed groups in the north. This led the Security Council to adopt resolution 2100 (2013), by which, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, it established MINUSMA and transferred to it tasks from the African-led International Support Mission in Mali. Since 2015, the conflict in the north has spread to central Mali and the border regions with Burkina Faso and the Niger. This prompted the Security Council to include the centre of the country in the MINUSMA mandate, starting 2018.

4. MINUSMA has primarily engaged in peace and political processes since its inception. This was evident in resolutions 2480 (2019) and 2531 (2020), by which the Council assigned two strategic priorities to MINUSMA: (a) to support the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali by the Malian parties and other relevant Malian actors; and (b) to facilitate the implementation by Malian actors of a comprehensive politically led strategy to protect civilians, reduce intercommunal conflict and re-establish State authority and basic social services in central Mali.

5. At the core of its mandate, MINUSMA continued to support the return, restoration and extension of State authorities, notably in the north and the centre, where perceived corruption and impunity had undermined the legitimacy of State institutions, which in turn exacerbated the conflict dynamics. According to the worldwide governance indicators database,<sup>2</sup> the ranking of Mali deteriorated on all indicators between 2009 and 2019, most significantly for “political stability and absence of violence/terrorism” and “rule of law”. Similarly, the World Justice Project

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, “Norms and standards for evaluation”, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports>.

placed Mali 106th out of 128 countries and jurisdictions worldwide (*Rule of Law Index 2020*) and noted a significant deterioration in order and security.<sup>3</sup>

6. The rule of law is a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and that are consistent with international human rights norms and standards (S/2004/616, para. 6). As such, the rule of law is at the heart of stabilization, legitimate governance and the contract between the Malian State and its citizens. Its absence was a critical factor in destabilizing the peace process by undermining the protection of civilians and fermenting grievances and distrust of the population vis-à-vis the State.<sup>4</sup>

7. The political and security situation remained volatile throughout the period covered by the evaluation (2017–2020).<sup>5</sup> The majority of interviewees were of the opinion that the situation, in fact, deteriorated over the period. Additional contextual factors posed challenges to MINUSMA support for the restoration and extension of State authority, including in the rule of law, creating risks of undermining achievements and progress. These factors included the following:

(a) A large number of international players that were not fully aligned and operating in the absence of an agreed-upon stabilization strategy, which limited long-term planning, financing and coordination among themselves and with the Government of Mali;

(b) Dissatisfaction with, and an unclear understanding of, the mandate of MINUSMA in terms of its level of robustness and agility in addressing security concerns threatened the reputation, credibility and influence of the Mission;

(c) Limited ownership of the peace process by key stakeholders weakened the development, acceptance and implementation of key political and institutional reforms;

(d) Financial and human resources constraints and competing priorities of the Government of Mali undermined the deployment, support and retention of State actors and institutions in the north and the centre;

(e) There is a deep-seated low level of confidence in the effectiveness and integrity of the formal justice system among experts and the Malian population.

8. While those and other challenges were found to likely persist in the medium term, MINUSMA adapted its programming and operations to address them in the short term. Some of the adaptations are described in detail in the present report.

### III. Methodology

9. The evaluation covered the period 2017–2020 and combined remote data collection and fieldwork to gather information from a wide range of national and international stakeholders and institutions that operate within the rule of law sector

<sup>3</sup> The World Justice Project *Rule of Law Index* measures rule of law performance in 128 countries and jurisdictions across eight primary factors: constraints on government powers; absence of corruption; open government; fundamental rights; order and security; regulatory enforcement; civil justice; and criminal justice. See World Justice Project, “Mali ranked 106 out of 128 countries on Rule of Law, dropping two positions”, 11 March 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Briefel and others, *Extension of State Authority in the Areas of Justice and Corrections: A Lessons Learned Study on the Work of the United Nations Peace Operations* (United Nations, Department of Peace Operations, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> This period was selected to account for the significant shifts in the mandate, such as the inclusion of the centre of the country, the latest political events in the country and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

across four locations in northern and central Mali (Timbuktu, Gao, Mopti and Bamako) through various methods. Those stakeholders and institutions were primarily judicial and correctional (e.g. tribunals, prisons, judges and corrections officers), law enforcement (e.g. police, national guard and gendarmerie), human rights, civil administration (e.g. governors and mayors) and security (e.g. Malian Defence and Security Forces) elements. Table 1 below presents a summary of the stakeholder groups that were interacted with for the purpose of the evaluation.

Table 1  
Primary evaluation stakeholders

<i>Ultimate beneficiaries</i>	<i>Service recipients</i>	<i>MINUSMA</i>	<i>United Nations partners</i>	<i>External partners</i>	<i>Civil society</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police</li> <li>• National Guard</li> <li>• Gendarmerie</li> <li>• Malian Defence and Security Forces</li> <li>• Judiciary</li> <li>• Prosecution</li> <li>• Corrections</li> <li>• Population in northern and central Mali</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Justice and Human Rights</li> <li>• Ministry of Defence and Security Forces</li> <li>• Specialized Judicial Unit to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime</li> <li>• Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice and Corrections Section</li> <li>• Human Rights Division</li> <li>• Security Sector Reform and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Section</li> <li>• Political Affairs Division</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Nations Headquarters</li> <li>• United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</li> <li>• United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)</li> <li>• United Nations Development Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select bilateral trust fund donors and regional entities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society actors, including women's groups</li> <li>• Malian judicial experts</li> </ul>

10. A total of 85 individual interviews and focus group discussions with more than 150 individuals (45 per cent from MINUSMA and the Department of Peace Operations and 55 per cent from bilateral and multilateral partners, the Government of Mali, civil society organizations and experts) were conducted, national and mission documents were reviewed, secondary data were analysed and observations were carried out.

11. Secondary data used and quoted in the present report were selected from reputable sources and institutions, including research studies, population or expert surveys, and indices. Three key secondary data sources that are referenced herein are:

(a) *Mali-Mètre*, an annual countrywide survey conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation;

(b) Quarterly population surveys carried out by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute;

(c) *The Rule of Law Index*, issued by the World Justice Project.

12. Two validation workshops, one with MINUSMA and one with bilateral and multilateral partners, were conducted in the first half of September 2021, during

which detailed evaluation results were reviewed and discussed. The workshops also provided inputs and ideas for the recommendations in section V below.

13. A major limitation that the present evaluation faced was a lack of or incomplete mission programme monitoring and implementation data on relevant outcomes or contribution to outcomes. This was compounded by the lack of national data, in particular in relation to Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

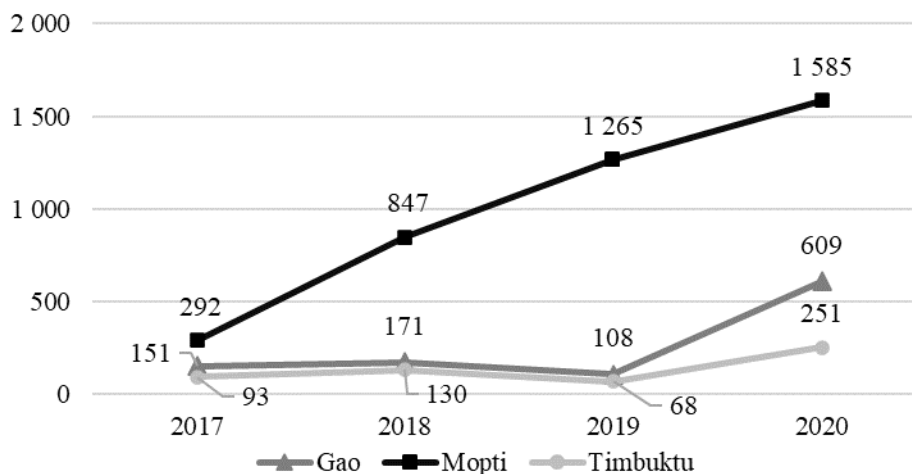
## IV. Evaluation results

### A. Presence: despite an increase in the overall presence of rule of law institutions in the north and in the centre of the country, their accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of the population were found to be unreliable and inadequate

#### 1. MINUSMA attempted to stabilize the security situation to create an environment conducive to an increased presence of rule of law institutions, with limited success

14. The security situation remained highly volatile both in the north and in the centre of the country, even though the conflict dynamics varied. Considering the number of attacks and fatalities, the north remained more stable than the centre, mainly because of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process signed in 2015.<sup>6</sup> The central region of Mali, however, continued to record the highest number of attacks against civilians since 2018, with the Mopti region as the epicentre, and was characterized by a multitude of armed elements and an absence of a peace agreement (see figure I).<sup>7</sup> In 2020, all locations experienced a sharp increase in fatalities.

Figure I  
Number of total fatalities between 2017 and 2020 in selected regions



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

<sup>6</sup> Signed between the Government of Mali and the two main armed group coalitions, namely, the Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination of Azawad Movements from the north.

<sup>7</sup> The Mission Joint Operations Centre confirmed that the data prior to 2019 were not verifiable, and hence not usable.

15. As the main victims of attacks and their consequences, Malian civilians confirmed the increased volatility. According to the combined results of *Mali-Mètre* No. 12, issued in 2021, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, about a third of the respondents noted a deterioration in security and felt in greater danger during 2020.

16. In response to the prevailing security situation in the north and the centre, MINUSMA and partners devised a plethora of security-focused interventions. Among them, key informants considered security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as the most critical elements for stabilizing security and, consequently, the restoration, return and extension of the State authority.

17. MINUSMA made significant contributions to the implementation and coordination of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in the north by building the operational and technical capacity of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. As a result of that process, in the north, a total of 75,000 members of the signatory groups pre-registered, and around 26,000 were found eligible for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, with 10,000 found eligible for integration into the Malian Defence and Security Forces and 16,000 found eligible for integration into civilian life through socioeconomic reintegration. Despite that initial momentum, the process experienced significant delays in implementation that were attributed to growing disagreements and mistrust between the signatory armed groups and the Government, as well as unfulfilled commitments by both parties.<sup>8</sup>

18. In the centre of the country, for which there was no comprehensive peace agreement, the Mission initiated a community violence reduction programme to prevent the recruitment into armed groups of young people at risk. Furthermore, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission launched a community rehabilitation programme to promote the voluntary disarmament of self-defence and militia groups.

19. In addition to security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, community-oriented policing and community security consultation groups established and supported by the United Nations police were considered promising in cultivating a mutually respectful and trusting relationship between civilians and internal security forces. The United Nations police was increasingly focusing on strengthening community policing practices, as evidenced by the amount of training delivered (see figure II).<sup>9</sup> The impact of the training was yet to be seen as it was gradually implemented in various localities. At the same time, data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute<sup>10</sup> covering the centre of the country (April 2019–November 2020) showed a substantial increase in the level of confidence in the Malian Defence and Security Forces, gendarmerie and police among the population. However, overall population satisfaction with the actions taken by the State to fight insecurity was low, with more than half (51 per cent) not satisfied.

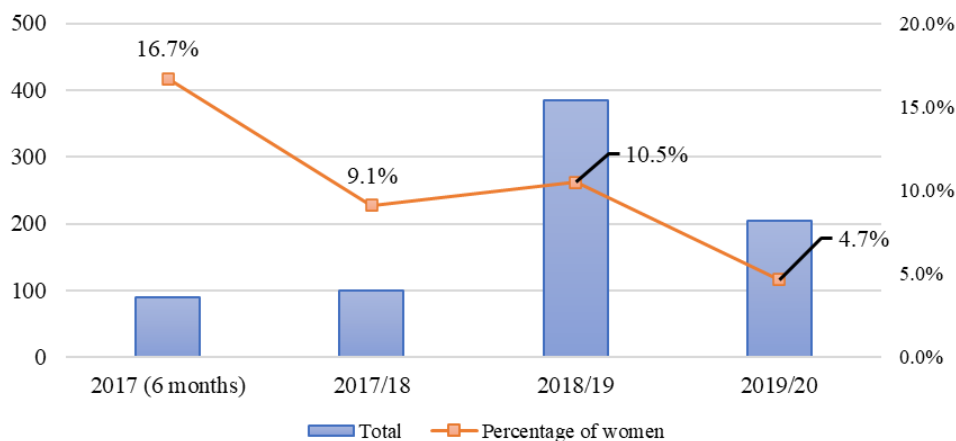
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<sup>8</sup> Also analysed in depth by the Carter Center (see The Carter Center, “Report of the independent observer: observations on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, resulting from the Algiers process”, December 2020. Available at [www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/2020/mali-121620.html](http://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/2020/mali-121620.html)).

<sup>9</sup> Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the number of trainees declined in 2019–2020.

<sup>10</sup> Data received by email, but not for disclosure or circulation.

Figure II  
**Malian security personnel trained by the United Nations police on community policing**



20. Those contributions notwithstanding, stakeholders overall acknowledged that the Mission had limited resources and the risk of being overstretched, considering the size of the area covered and the extension of its mandate in 2018, but they diverged in their views of the importance and level of the security required to restore State authority. On the one hand, key informants from MINUSMA and government entities frequently cited insecurity as the major factor against the sustainable return of judicial actors to their areas of jurisdiction. On the other hand, many partner interviewees noted two equally significant factors delaying the return of the State, namely, a perceived lack of enforcement, resources and incentives for deployment by the Government, and a lack of proportionate social protection interventions, such as humanitarian and development programmes. The expanded summit of the Group of Five for the Sahel held in N'Djamena in March 2021 acknowledged those sentiments by calling for a “civilian surge”, that is, acknowledging the limits of military interventions and emphasizing that the important work of security forces in restoring safety must be complemented by efficient public administration and public services in fragile locations.

21. Similarly, Malians did not always identify security as the most important challenge in their daily lives. This was confirmed in *Mali-Mètre* and in survey data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.<sup>11</sup> Even though the fight against insecurity remained often in the top three concerns, the respondents consistently cited poverty, (youth) unemployment, food insecurity and lack of governance as the main challenges that Mali faced.

## 2. MINUSMA contributed to increased institutional presence and the availability of the rule of law; however, their sustainability proved challenging

22. The availability and presence of rule of law institutions, such as tribunals, police stations and detention facilities, in the north and the centre of the country improved, primarily as a result of the contribution by MINUSMA to the planning, facilitating and financing of their construction and rehabilitation. Even though the actual baseline was not known, Malian governmental respondents confirmed that some localities had no prior State building or infrastructure. Since its inception, the Mission has reported

<sup>11</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and Point Sud, “Projet Mali-centre pour la sécurité et le développement : enquête menée sur les PSDG dans le centre du Mali du 10 au 24 juin 2020”, 2020. Available in hardcopy only. All *Mali-Mètre* reports are available at <https://mali.fes.de/mali-metre>.



the rehabilitation of a total of 14 tribunals and 11 prisons in Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal and Mopti.

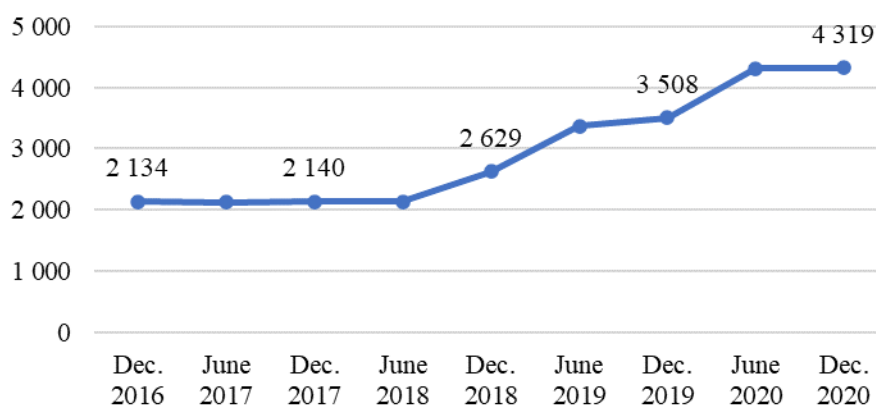
23. The MINUSMA trust fund played a key role in delivering those mandated activities. From April 2018 to June 2020, more than 20 bilateral partners<sup>12</sup> committed a total of \$28.6 million towards supporting the return of State authority, the rule of law, human rights, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The Mission supported most of the infrastructure projects through the trust fund. In addition, thanks to the \$18 million provided through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project on the restoration of State authority and of access to justice in Mali (2014–2020), 146 buildings (50 territorial administration, 13 local authorities, 60 judicial services, 14 prison services and 9 security services) were rehabilitated and equipped.

24. Similarly, major progress was achieved in extending prison services. In 2012, prior to the establishment of MINUSMA, the Malian prison system was characterized by inadequate prison infrastructure and inhumane conditions.<sup>13</sup> MINUSMA, in partnership with UNDP through the Nelson Mandela Prisons Project (2017–2021), significantly improved prison management and capabilities.

25. Such infrastructure increased the visibility of the State among the population. According to *Mali-Mètre* No. 12, 42 per cent of the surveyed population noticed an increase in police stations during the two years preceding the survey, while 62 per cent saw an increase in police forces and the gendarmerie. This heightened visibility was also confirmed by an increase in the deployment of Malian internal security forces (comprised of national police, gendarmerie, national guard and civil protection service) (see figure III). Moreover, with MINUSMA technical contribution to various civil society organizations, 686 paralegals were deployed across the country to provide judicial assistance to defendants.

Figure III

**Number of Malian security personnel deployed in the north and the centre of the country**



Source: MINUSMA United Nations police.

<sup>12</sup> Certain donors earmarked funds for justice, corrections and human rights-related projects, such as the International Commission of Inquiry on Mali, transnational organized crime and the strengthening of criminal justice chain, with an emphasis on women and children mainstreamed into projects.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Development Programme and others, “Projet GFP Prisons Mandela : projet d’appui à l’amélioration du système pénitentiaire au Mali”, project duration: 2017–2021, (n.d.). More information is available at [www.ml.undp.org/content/mali/fr/home/projects/GFP-Prisons-Mandela.html](http://www.ml.undp.org/content/mali/fr/home/projects/GFP-Prisons-Mandela.html).

26. Despite this progress, the extent to which those institutions were functional remained questionable. It was confirmed in the previous MINUSMA budget performance report (2020) that 14 of a total of 23 tribunals in the north and in the centre were partially operational, while seven courts were relocated owing to security concerns, raising the number of partially functioning courts to 21 out of 23.<sup>14</sup> At least a third of 16 prisons targeted for full operationalization by the end of 2020 continuously needed reinforcement for physical security and the protection of prison personnel and inmates.

27. This highlighted inherent challenges in maintaining and sustaining State infrastructure and presence, compounded by the harsh climate (e.g. fluctuating heavy rainfalls and extreme temperatures) and a lack of clarity as to whether the Government had sufficient resources to cover the costs of maintenance and rehabilitation.

**3. Persistent insecurity, as well as a lack of incentives and enforcement, significantly prevented, delayed or jeopardized the sustainable return of State actors and undermined the functionality of the rule of law institutions**

28. Overall, major efforts to improve the security and to build and rehabilitate State infrastructure did not automatically result in the sustainable presence of criminal justice and civil administration personnel in their areas of jurisdiction. Sporadic, limited presence and prolonged absenteeism were reported as major problems jeopardizing access to justice services by the community.

29. Owing to insecurity, some magistrates were relocated to safer locations and justice personnel were occasionally escorted by MINUSMA to their assigned jurisdictions to conduct judicial hearings. Some magistrates were continuously absent from their assigned locations or reportedly working from Bamako. The staffing situation at prison facilities improved, however, with more than 90 per cent of officers (76 officers) taking office at their appointed posts in the north and 93 per cent (80 officers) in the Mopti region.<sup>15</sup>

30. The relationship between the presence of different types of State actors and institutions was widely discussed during the interviews. Some MINUSMA staff observed that the presence of justice personnel was partially conditional on the presence of the civil administration, which presumably had a catalytic effect on the overall restoration of security and State. Since December 2016, a downward trend had been observed in the presence of civil administrators at all governance levels (i.e. governors, préfets and sous-préfets) in the north and the centre of the country, from 37 per cent to 12 per cent by December 2020 overall (see figure IV).

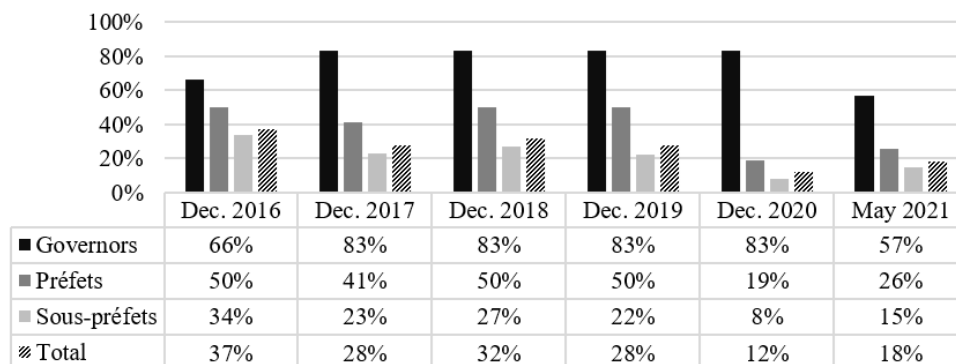
31. Malians also observed varying levels of presence of State actors, including the judiciary. According to *Mali-Mètre* No. 12 survey results, 41 per cent of the respondents believed that the availability of judges and other court personnel, such as attorneys in the north, had not changed over the past two years (Gao: 79 per cent, Timbuktu: 20 per cent), while 58 per cent of the respondents in Kidal noted a decrease.<sup>16</sup> The communities in the centre also observed varying levels of presence in their municipalities (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2020) with apparent absenteeism at between 21 per cent (sous-préfets in Ségou) and 52 per cent (préfets in Mopti).

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), “Évaluation de la performance du pilier DSRSG/RC/HC (2019–2020)”. Available in hard copy only.

<sup>15</sup> Reported by the MINUSMA Justice and Corrections Section.

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, *Mali-Mètre : Enquête d’opinion, « Que pensent les Malien(ne)s ? »* (Bamako, 2021), annex, table A7. Available at <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2021-12.pdf>.

Figure IV  
Deployment by category, December 2016 to May 2021



Source: MINUSMA Civil Affairs Division.

32. The absence, temporary presence or relocation of justice personnel was cited as one of the major obstacles to rebuilding a fully functional and responsive justice system in Mali.<sup>17</sup> According to the World Justice Project, Mali stood at 111th place for civil justice and 120th place for criminal justice of 128 countries in 2020. The country scored below average for 11 of 14 subfactors in its region and among low-income countries, and experts found the criminal investigation and criminal adjudication systems to be largely ineffective due to a lack of resources and inadequate personnel, and delays.<sup>18</sup>

33. In addition to absenteeism, Malian communities encountered structural barriers in gaining access to or receiving good-quality judicial services. The most prominent ones were: (a) distance to the closest tribunal or the judge (especially if they were only serving in urban areas or from Bamako); (b) cost of the opening and processing of judicial cases; and (c) language barriers or, in some cases, lack of information on how to seek judicial assistance.

34. Against this backdrop, one of the significant contributions of MINUSMA for improving the functionality and responsiveness of the rule of law system was the provision of support for the establishment of the Specialized Judicial Unit to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime. The Specialized Judicial Unit and its investigation brigade were fully operational, with an appointed special prosecutor, 12 magistrates and 11 other judicial staff, alongside an investigation brigade of 50 police investigators with the sole responsibility for investigating and prosecuting crimes of terrorism. The United Nations police supported the Specialized Investigation Brigade with training, technical support on forensics, crime scene management, the establishment of criminal databases and the conduct of investigations into organized crime and terrorism-related crimes.

35. Another significant contribution was the establishment of a framework for consultation for the criminal justice chain – an informal network of key governmental and non-governmental rule of law actors in several regions that met regularly and

<sup>17</sup> Presence, however, was not always equated with functionality of the judicial system, as absent justice personnel could still discharge services remotely. Hence, the evaluation considered the number of hearings and cases processed as a proxy for the functionality of the system – with Mission data being available for Timbuktu and Gao only. Apart from a dip in hearings and cases in Timbuktu in 2017–2018, the total number of criminal and civil hearings per year did not vary significantly. Available evidence could not show a discernible trend between 2016 and 2020 in terms of changes in reported cases, backlog, delays and meeting of targets, if any.

<sup>18</sup> World Justice Project, “The rule of law in Mali: key findings from the qualified respondents’ questionnaires and general population poll”, 2020. Available at <https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/publications/country-reports/rule-law-mali>.

discussed gaps and needs to keep the penal chain functioning and sustain progress. However, women and women's groups in general were barely represented at those meetings. This mirrored the already limited representation of women in the justice sector in general. Nevertheless, the framework for consultation was believed to potentially develop into a more long-term or formal approach to improving access to justice and the confidence of the population in the justice system.

36. MINUSMA adjusted its programme in several other ways to address absenteeism. Mitigation measures, such as remote hearings or mobile courts, were appreciated by both the Government of Mali and the rule of law actors themselves. However, they tended to be costly and risky, were not considered sustainable over a longer period of time and also carried the risk of normalizing the absence of justice personnel. One of the promising programmatic adjustments to overcome absenteeism and improve judicial integrity was the support to national authorities for developing a strategy for internal oversight and judicial inspections.

## **B. Capacity: MINUSMA made significant progress in supporting the legislative reform processes but fell short of achieving effectiveness and sustainability with its capacity-building activities**

### **1. MINUSMA contributed to reforming the legislative and policy framework for the criminal justice system, yet most bills remained in draft form or on hold**

37. Supporting the overall justice reform process was a key part of the MINUSMA upstream work and appreciated and commended by several partners. Within the framework of the peace agreement, the transition agenda (dated February 2021)<sup>19</sup> and constitutional reform, several legislative frameworks, laws and high-level strategies were drafted or, in some cases, adopted to create a solid foundation for the justice system in line with international human rights standards. Given its access to, and regular engagement with, the high-level governmental actors, MINUSMA played a key role in advising and advocating the adoption and implementation of those reform agendas.<sup>20</sup>

38. With regard to reform processes, progress was limited, and certain reform initiatives were contested for their apparent incompatibility with prevailing social, cultural or institutional practices in the country. Some reforms were put on hold or delayed owing to the coup d'état in August 2020 and restrictions related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Furthermore, some of the adopted strategies suffered limited implementation on the ground owing to a lack of resources or understanding of their implications.

### **2. The application and use of new knowledge and skills by the judicial actors that MINUSMA supported appeared limited as a result of challenges associated with institutional and individual capacity-building**

39. One of the intervention models that MINUSMA most frequently relied upon was building the capacity of individual rule of law actors to enhance their knowledge and skills. An illustration of the extent of training interventions was found in the number

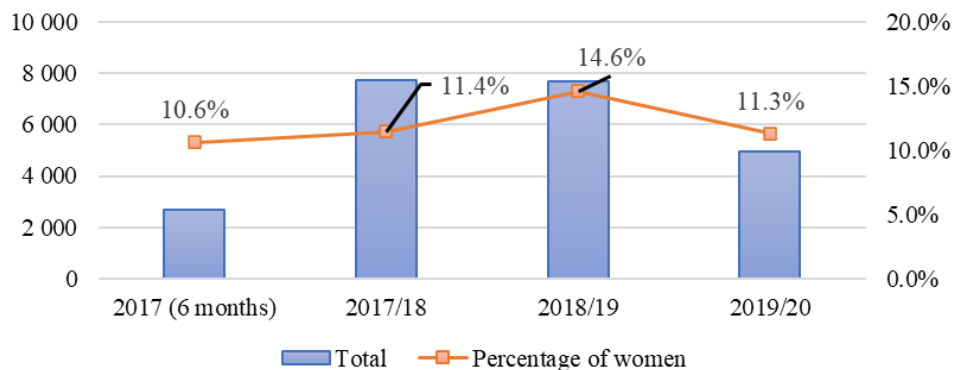
<sup>19</sup> Aligned with the Malian Transition Government action plan before the National Transitional Council (19 February 2021) and the United Nations integrated transition support plan to political transition in Mali (draft copy received in January 2021).

<sup>20</sup> Some prominent examples were the draft law on complementarities between formal and traditional justice mechanisms, the national human rights policy and its action plan (2017–2020) adopted in 2016, the national security sector reform strategy and its action plan adopted in 2018 and 2019, and joint communiqués of the United Nations and the Government and the two main signatory armed groups (the Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination of Azawad Movements) on the prevention of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

of Malian internal security forces (police, national guard and gendarmerie) trained by the United Nations police between July 2017 and December 2020 (see figure V).

Figure V

**Number and percentage of Malian internal security forces trained by MINUSMA**

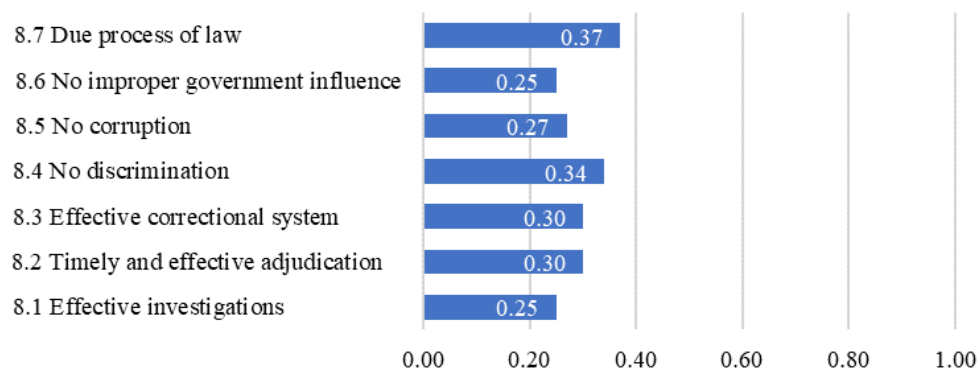


40. Another example was the partnership between MINUSMA and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in a nationwide training of 397 prison guards, including 15 prison officers in Bamako and 78 in Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti. The collaboration continues and, since January 2020, has also integrated interventions aimed at the prevention of violent extremism in prisons.

41. There was insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of those training programmes in improving the processing and concluding on the criminal cases reported. None of the implementing divisions had conducted a systematic pre/post assessment, follow-up studies or evaluations to assess the extent of use and application of the knowledge and skills acquired by the rule of law actors through those training programmes. Both the implementing staff and the national counterparts interviewed shared their concerns about the limited utility of those activities in view of the resources dedicated towards them. This was partially confirmed by the findings outlined by the World Justice Project in its *Rule of Law Index 2020*. The effectiveness of (criminal) investigations and timeliness and effectiveness of adjudication in Mali were assessed lower (see figure VI) than the average for sub-Saharan African and low-income countries on a scale from 0 to 1.<sup>21</sup>

Figure VI

**World Justice Project criminal justice factors**



Source: World Justice Project, "The rule of law in Mali".

<sup>21</sup> World Justice Project, "The rule of law in Mali".

42. Several explanations were offered in documents, reports and interviews with stakeholders as to why the trainings did not yield the expected impact. First, there was no comprehensive, holistic and coordinated rule of law training programme available that was communicated to and negotiated with the Government and, second, no systematic assessment of needs and quality assurance was routinely conducted. This exacerbated the risk of duplication of efforts across multiple actors offering training in that arena. Furthermore, some governmental interviewees felt overwhelmed by last-minute requests by MINUSMA and other international partners to appoint trainees, who were consequently regularly absent from their duty stations. Some of the interviewed trainees pointed to a need for more hands-on, on-the-job training and mentoring to address their questions and issues in real time, as opposed to conventional, one-off classroom sessions.

43. In parallel, MINUSMA staff observed a high turnover among governmental trainees and noted that they had leverage over neither the selection of participants nor the post-training deployment of the trainees. This may be best illustrated by United Nations police training. Despite a reduction during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the number of training participants (some 8,000) was about three times the number of deployed personnel in the north and the centre of the country (fewer than 3,000) for each budget cycle. This also suggested that a point of diminishing returns may have been reached regarding traditional capacity-building activities.

### 3. MINUSMA recognized the significance of and supported stronger complementarities between, formal and traditional justice mechanisms

44. Almost all interviewees confirmed that Malian people – especially in rural areas – relied on informal, traditional dispute resolution and justice mechanisms provided by community leaders, qadis,<sup>22</sup> village chiefs and, also, extremist groups.<sup>23</sup>

45. Several reasons were reported for the Malian people’s continued trust in and reliance on those traditional systems. The first is that they are immediately accessible, especially in locations where the formal justice institution has been historically absent or confined to urban areas, where travel would expose the litigant to grave security risks. Second, the traditional actors’ judgments are perceived to be neutral, fair, swift and culturally appropriate, as those actors have intimate knowledge of the context and history of the case.

46. In contrast, according to population and expert surveys, Malian people lacked trust in the formal judicial system and the fairness of verdicts, owing to perceived pervasive corruption within the judiciary. Eighty-three per cent of Malians totally agreed or agreed with the statement that “justice is corrupt” (*Mali-Mètre* No. 12). Malian judiciary scored the lowest among government institutions within Mali on the absence of corruption (0.24) and significantly lower in comparison with countries in sub-Saharan Africa and low-income countries on a scale from 0 to 1.<sup>24</sup> The present evaluation did not examine the veracity of those perceptions.

47. Recognizing the potential complementarities between the formal and informal justice mechanisms, and to avoid having competing systems exist in parallel, MINUSMA worked with the national Government to draft a law to recognize and incorporate the traditional, community-accepted mechanisms into the formal system in order to increase access to justice services in a culturally responsive manner.

<sup>22</sup> Islamic judges who render decisions in accordance with Islamic law.

<sup>23</sup> See also The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law, Justice in Mali 2018 database. Available at <https://dashboard.hiiil.org/mali-2018/>. Data were drawn from the Justice Needs and Satisfaction survey of more than 8,000 randomly selected adults.

<sup>24</sup> World Justice Project, “The rule of law in Mali”.

48. MINUSMA efforts to guide and advocate the draft bill were widely commended by the partners and the government officials, yet concerns were raised, especially by the Malian civil society organizations, on the inherent risks associated with informal mechanisms. First, no common definition of a traditional justice mechanism was found, and practices varied across the north and the centre of the country. It was argued that those systems and actors were not immune to influence, interference and corruption, and as such that they could reproduce and sustain specific power relations associated with rank, status and identity (age, gender, ethnicity and class), or even discriminate against certain population groups. Both the MINUSMA and non-governmental representatives who were interviewed acknowledged that those risks had to be mitigated to fully harness the potential of making justice accessible and equitable for all.

49. Once the draft bill was ratified, MINUSMA shared plans for providing technical guidance on demarcating areas of responsibilities for the two systems, training traditional leaders on international human rights standards and supporting the establishment of an oversight mechanism for the informal actors.

### **C. Legitimacy: the processing and prosecution of serious crimes improved slightly but was considered insufficient to build trust in the formal justice system and contribute to stabilization in the country**

#### **1. The prosecution and processing of serious crimes, including human rights violations and abuses, improved slightly, yet the overall human rights situation in the north and the centre of the country deteriorated, and impunity for such crimes persisted**

50. Albeit incomplete and inconclusive, a few trends could be observed from information available on serious crimes that had been processed or prosecuted. First, the number of reported serious crimes increased, owing to a great extent to the development of national and international reporting and monitoring mechanisms and the strengthening of civil society organizations and networks in the areas of public outreach and awareness-raising. A prime illustration of this was the conflict-related sexual violence case load. Between 2017 and 2020, 94 cases were reported, the majority of which involved (collective) rape against women and girls perpetrated mostly by unidentified armed men, signatory armed movement elements and elements of the Malian Defence and Security Forces in the northern regions (Gao, Kidal, Timbuktu and Menaka were frequently mentioned).<sup>25</sup> The reported cases have steadily increased since 2014. With the support of MINUSMA, several women civil society organization networks collected testimonials from victims and brought an additional 150 cases, including those of gender-based violence, to the attention of the national authorities between 2018 and 2020 alone.<sup>26</sup>

51. In addition, specific cases, especially crimes committed by the Malian Defence and Security Forces, terrorism-related crimes and crimes committed against peacekeepers, have gained more attention in terms of reporting and investigation over the past few years, owing to the international community's high-level advocacy and political leverage.

52. In the absence of a central or systematic reporting mechanism maintained by either national or international actors, it was difficult to discern any pattern of change in the case numbers. A majority of the known or reported cases of serious crimes across all categories appeared to have been neither investigated nor prosecuted.

<sup>25</sup> MINUSMA monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements for the conflict-related sexual violence database.

<sup>26</sup> As reported by the Women in Law and Development in Africa office in Mali.

Several respondents were also of the opinion that the underreporting of cases was common.

53. In particular, the fate of most of the serious violations of human rights that were transferred by MINUSMA to the governmental authorities for national investigation and further judicial processing was unknown.<sup>27</sup> The MINUSMA Human Rights Division confirmed that there usually was a significant time lag between the transfer of a case and the opening of an investigation, and it was rare that serious violations moved beyond the investigation phase.

54. Consequently, it was widely acknowledged that the human rights situation in the country had deteriorated, and impunity for serious crimes committed in the north and in the centre continued with few exceptions, pointing to only minor progress in the legal and justice system.<sup>28</sup> According to Afrobarometer (2020),<sup>29</sup> 67 per cent of the respondents agreed that the officials in Mali who committed crimes always or often went unpunished. Findings in *Mali-Mètre* confirmed a persistent sense of high-level impunity (answer categories “frequent” and “very frequent”) countrywide (2016: 76 per cent, 2020: 82 per cent) and in the three regions of Mopti (2020: 89 per cent), Timbuktu (2020: 87 per cent) and Gao (2020: 95 per cent).

55. MINUSMA continued to investigate and report on alleged human rights violations and abuses (see trend in table 2), with two specific activities frequently mentioned by the stakeholders, pointing to their positive contributions.

56. The first and foremost was the support provided to the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, whereby MINUSMA provided close mentoring to and monitoring of the commissioners on conducting human rights investigations, as well as operational support for two public hearings of the Commission. The first hearing was held in December 2019 and the second in December 2020, with plans for a third hearing in 2021. Almost 50,000 depositions were collected between 2017 and 2020.

Table 2  
**Human rights situation**

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of human rights violations or abuses reported	386	696	324	2 091
Number of victims in those reports	736	1 639	1 334	2 007
Cases submitted to Malian authorities for investigation...	257	110	133	129
... of which known investigations were opened by Malian authorities	151	..	..	35

Source: MINUSMA Human Rights Division.

57. The second activity was the designation of abuses and violations of human rights as emblematic, on the basis of established criteria.<sup>30</sup> Acknowledging tardy or limited national response to reported or investigated, verified cases, MINUSMA

<sup>27</sup> MINUSMA does not have the mandate to monitor whether the Malian authorities have opened an investigation on transferred cases, on the basis of the principle of the confidentiality of investigations.

<sup>28</sup> A/HRC/40/77; and Mali, National Commission on Human Rights, “Rapport alternatif sur les disparitions forcées au Mali”, June 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Afrobarometer, *Résumé des résultats : enquête Afrobarometer round 8 au Mali* (2020). Available at <https://afrobarometer.org/publications/resume-des-resultats-enquete-afrobarometer-round-8-au-mali-2020>.

<sup>30</sup> Mainly, the scale and magnitude of the violation or abuse, the number of victims, the profile of presumed perpetrators and the political significance of the case (whether it attracted widespread attention across the nation and in international quarters), as well as its immediate and long-term impact on reconciliation and stabilization.



devised a list – decided on a case-by-case basis, periodically updated, reviewed and endorsed by the Mission senior management – to elevate the profile of certain cases in order to advocate further judicial processing, including trials and prosecution. MINUSMA reported that the Malian authorities had opened independent investigations into 35 of the 129 cases transferred to them.

58. Overall, the efforts by the Mission were deemed insufficient by both the Malian and international representatives interviewed. First, MINUSMA was criticized for not fully leveraging its high-level political channels to advocate investigation into the serious crimes without prejudice to the sovereignty of the country and independence of its judicial system. Second, concerns were raised regarding the robustness of specific human rights reports, the way the findings had been communicated and the timeliness of the investigations.

## **2. Public knowledge of citizen rights and obligations was assessed as poor by Malian interlocutors, who considered this as a potential reason for the lack of confidence in the justice system**

59. Public access to information about formal and informal justice systems, as well as knowledge of their rights and obligations, was found to be limited. MINUSMA noted increased social media activity during the high-profile terrorism trials in 2018–2019, inferring that the public was becoming more educated regarding the rule of law. However, a majority of the governmental and civil society representatives commonly noted limited awareness among the population. In the absence of a systematic monitoring of public knowledge, a review of *Mali-Mètre* data between 2016 and 2018 partially confirmed that no significant change had been recorded in the public knowledge of the functioning of the justice system. In 2016, 82 per cent of respondents (77 per cent of the men and 87 per cent of the women surveyed) confirmed having little or no knowledge of it, while in 2018, this figure stood at 83 per cent, with the proportion of female respondents increasing to 92 per cent (and that of men to 78 per cent).

60. Poor perceptions of the formal justice system were sometimes associated with the perceived lack of knowledge of rights and obligations. Several obstacles were offered to explain the low level of awareness: the inaccessibility of legal texts in all locations and local languages; high levels of illiteracy and the accompanying limited understanding of complex and an ever-changing national legal landscape; and the limited presence and visibility of the formal system.

61. The Mission conducted some public awareness-raising campaigns specific to the rule of law and distributed legal documents in several local languages, but those interventions remained insufficient to change the dynamics and the public perception of formal justice. For example, 87 existing national texts and all new legal texts were featured on the website of the Ministry of Justice, but not all were distributed in a more accessible manner through physical outreach efforts to the relevant communities.

## **D. Overarching result**

62. In assessing the significance (relevance and importance) of each outcome area in its contribution to the stabilization of the country, a few overarching and cross-cutting gaps were found. First and foremost, almost all interlocutors pointed to a lack of a countrywide strategy for the restoration and extension of State authority. Furthermore, an agreed definition of “stabilization” was missing among the host Government, the international community, including MINUSMA, and societal groups. This constitutes a major hindrance in implementing a unified effort to address

gaps on the basis of each actor's comparative advantage. Second, some activities were considered ineffective, as discussed above, opening up an opportunity for the Mission and partners to consider retiring them or starting to plan the handover of those responsibilities to the host Government. In parallel, the community perception and partner experience suggested that, moving forward, interventions should balance addressing security, political, developmental and peacebuilding needs on the ground in order to achieve rule of law outcomes in a more sustainable manner, with due consideration for local justice norms. This would allow the Mission to better set priorities and critically review its comparative advantage vis-à-vis its stabilization mandate, and possibly rebalance its focus and resources going forward.

## V. Recommendations

63. The Office of Internal Oversight Services makes a total of eight important recommendations addressed to MINUSMA (R1–R8). The recommendations are aligned with the findings and identified in consultation with the Mission counterparts and external partners on the basis of the cumulative progress achieved and the significance of each immediate outcome in contributing to overall stabilization in the country. The recommendations in table 3 refer to specific outcome areas that are both highly important and highly relevant, as well as where MINUSMA, together with its partners, can add significant value. The first recommendation cuts across the three themes, requiring a whole-of-mission approach and effort, and is therefore foundational in facilitating the implementation of the other specific recommendations in the rule of law area.

Table 3  
**Recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services**

<i>Cross-cutting recommendation</i>		<i>Indicator</i>	
<b>R1.</b> MINUSMA should lead the development of an integrated United Nations countrywide strategy on the restoration and extension of State authority in close collaboration with the host Government, the United Nations and non-United Nations partners, as well as minority representatives, civil society groups and women leaders. The strategy should balance addressing security, political, developmental and peacebuilding needs and resource requirements. It should identify clear objectives and benchmarks for the handover of selected key responsibilities (e.g. security for State actors or maintenance of infrastructure) to the national Government and provide advice on a national resource mobilization strategy, taking into account different potential scenarios		<b>R1.1.</b> An integrated United Nations countrywide strategy on the return, restoration and extension of State authority	
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Immediate outcomes</i>	<i>Specific recommendations per outcome</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
A. Presence	A.1 Improved safety and security for deployment  A.2 Improved and functional infrastructure (tribunals, police stations, detention facilities)	<b>R2.</b> MINUSMA should continue to support the Government of Mali in improving the functionality of the justice system by addressing the absenteeism of personnel (A.1 and A.3). This support should be provided with a view to building trust and confidence in the formal	<b>R2.1.</b> Plans and concept notes developed on integrity mechanisms based on identified gaps and needs  <b>R2.2.</b> Development of monitoring indicators to track progress in addressing the absenteeism of formal justice actors

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Immediate outcomes</i>	<i>Specific recommendations per outcome</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
	A.3 Increased and sustainable deployment of criminal justice chain actors and related civil administration personnel	justice system among the population	<b>R2.3.</b> Integrity mechanisms established to include, inter alia, inspections of formal and informal justice actors and incentive schemes
B. Capacity	B.1 Adoption of appropriate legislative and institutional frameworks	<b>R3.</b> Through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, MINUSMA should encourage and support the Government of Mali to prioritize the adoption of key institutional reforms and policy frameworks for the sustainable extension of State authority (B.1)	<b>R3.1.</b> Increased and explicit references to legislative and institutional reforms by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General or the Mission leadership when engaging with the Government of Mali
	B.2 Increased knowledge and skills of the criminal justice chain actors	<b>R4.</b> MINUSMA should critically review the feasibility and added value of capacity development efforts on the basis of a sound analysis of the national functions and capacities, the comparative advantages of the mission vis-à-vis other providers and the prospective utility in the light of the challenges of retention and limited deployment of civil servants (e.g. judiciary, police, civil administration). Once the review is finalized, MINUSMA should reprogramme and redesign (e.g. training approaches) its support in this area (B.2)	<b>R4.1.</b> Mission-wide critical review of capacity-building efforts, considering their planning, implementation, utility and results, to determine comparative advantages  <b>R4.2.</b> New or redesigned capacity-building activities in the 2023–2024 budget and planning document
	B.3 Stronger complementarity between the formal and traditional justice mechanisms	<b>R5.</b> MINUSMA should continue its work in building complementarity between formal and traditional justice mechanisms. In doing so, the Mission should address and mitigate potential risks comprehensively and assess progress, advantages and disadvantages together with the Government of Mali and interested parties (B.3)	<b>R5.1.</b> With the Government of Mali and relevant partners, joint comprehensive risk assessment and progress report on ensuring complementarities between the formal and informal justice systems
C. Legitimacy	C.1 Improved processing and prosecution of serious crimes that risk destabilizing the peace process	<b>R6.</b> MINUSMA should strengthen the monitoring, reporting and evaluation capacity of relevant government entities and the National Commission on Human Rights for reporting on human rights violations and serious crimes that risk destabilizing the peace process (C.1)	<b>R6.1.</b> Establishment of monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems at relevant government entities to track human rights violations

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Immediate outcomes</i>	<i>Specific recommendations per outcome</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
		<p><b>R7.</b> Through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, MINUSMA should encourage and support the Government of Mali: (a) to prioritize investigating and prosecuting emblematic cases that risk destabilizing the peace process; and (b) to systematically and transparently monitor and report on those cases (C.1)</p>	<p><b>R7.1.</b> Increased and explicit references to the prosecution of serious crimes, including emblematic cases, by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Mission leadership when engaging with the Government of Mali</p>
	C.2 Improved public awareness and knowledge of rights and obligations	<p><b>R8.</b> MINUSMA should develop and implement culturally responsive communication programmes that take into account the educational, linguistic, socioeconomic and regional characteristics of the population, and monitor the physical and intellectual accessibility of information on legal rights and channels, human rights and obligations (C.2)</p>	<p><b>R8.1.</b> Development and circulation to the public of culturally and linguistically responsive programmes and projects on rights and obligations</p>

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**Annex****Comments received from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali on the draft report**

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) would like to extend its gratitude to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the opportunity to provide comments on the above-mentioned report. MINUSMA acknowledges the importance of this evaluation and appreciates the thorough, consultative evaluation process.

Restoration and Extension of State Authority (RESA) and rule of law are pivotal to support sustainable peace in Mali. In line with its mandate, the Mission continues to sequence its efforts to support the extension of State authority in support of the peace agreement and the fight against impunity for crimes that risk destabilizing the peace process. As the impact of efforts undertaken to support the restoration of State authority and rule of law take time to materialize, MINUSMA continues to base its interventions on short-, medium- and longer-term priorities.

MINUSMA takes note of the importance of increasing high-level advocacy and utilizing MINUSMA's good offices to maximize the impact of its support to judicial and prison authorities. Further, the Mission will continue to enhance collaboration and coordination with the United Nations Country Team, technical and financial partners and national authorities in these areas, in order to leverage the comparative advantage of each stakeholder.

Having reviewed the assessment, we are pleased to inform you that we accept all eight recommendations set forth in the draft report. We are confident that the evaluation and its recommendations will strengthen the Missions' contribution to RESA in the rule of law area and fight against impunity in Mali. Accordingly, we will complete a time-bound recommendation action plan which will clearly articulate how the Mission will address the recommendations.

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