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UNOCC Weekly Briefing Notes

06 January 2022

Following the last MPAC briefing on 16 December, today's briefing will cover the immediate reporting period of 16 December to 06 January.

1. MINUSMA

POLITICAL

- From 27-30 December, the national phase of the *Assises nationales de la refondation* (ANR) was held in Bamako, with delegates from all of Mali's regions. Recommendations include extending the transition period to a five-year timeframe, establishing the *Autorité indépendante de gestion des élections*, revising the peace agreement, amending the composition of the *Conseil national de transition*, establishing a Senate for a bicameral legislature and a Court of Auditors, and maintaining a unitary, republican, decentralized, secular, democratic, social state.
- The Malian opposition rejected the government's plan to extend the transition period and evoked the possibility of organizing a rally in Bamako on 8 January.
- An Extraordinary ECOWAS summit on Mali will be held in Accra on 9 January, in response to latest developments. On 5 December, the ECOWAS Mediator for Mali, Goodluck Jonathan, and Transition President Goïta, met in Bamako to discuss the conclusions of the ANR ahead of the summit.

OPERATIONAL

- In Kidal, a MINUSMA mine-protected vehicle hit an IED or mine south-west of the integrated camp on 28 December; there were no injuries. On the same day, also south-west of Kidal, a truck, part of a MINUSMA logistics convoy, was damaged by an IED or mine explosion injuring one sub-contractor.
- In Sector East, the Mission notes continued sightings of unidentified drones, most recently over the MINUSMA Ménaka camp on 27 December and the MINUSMA Ansongo camp on 30 December.
- MINUSMA reported approximately 100 new COVID-19 cases among Mission personnel over the last three weeks (17/12 – 5/01). There are currently six medium-

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sized outbreaks in MINUSMA. The most recent ones were reported on 4 and 5 January amongst civilians and uniformed personnel in Kidal and Mopti.

2. MONUSCO

POLITICAL

- In response to calls from political and civil society actors, CENI President Denis Kadima reiterated readiness to organize elections in 2023 and to address outstanding issues. Meanwhile, the last three CENI seats allocated to the opposition were filled. The candidates were endorsed by the National Assembly (23 Dec). The CENI Chairperson said that the road to elections was now ready, most certainly referring to the election roadmap, which is being elaborated, according to the Mission.
- On 20 December, following calls for a *ville morte* by citizen movements, youth erected barricades to protest urban insecurity, the state of siege and the alleged arrival of Rwandan police patrolling the city, which the Governor refuted. The Congolese police allegedly used firearms to disperse the protesters; at least six protestors were reportedly killed, and 18 injured. The situation has returned to relative calm in Goma. Similar “*villes mortes*” were organized in Butembo (North Kivu) as well as Bukavu and Uvira (South Kivu) in late December to protest insecurity and foreign interventions. They passed without major incidents.

OPERATIONAL

- In Beni (North Kivu), eight people were killed and 17 injured in a suicide bomb attack at a restaurant on 25 December. Officials blamed the attack on the ADF and ordered a series of measures, including a curfew from 7pm and the establishment of checkpoints.
- The period since mid-November saw a spike in violent incidents attributed to suspected ADF rebels, particularly in Ituri, which led to more than 1,100 people fleeing and crossing over to North Kivu. Since 22 December, high casualty numbers are reported particularly from attacks in Djugu, Mambasa, and Irumu territories. OCHA warns that armed attacks have severely restricted humanitarian access.
- In North Kivu, the UPDF and FARDC reportedly captured an ADF stronghold in the northern Virunga National Park on 24 December. Reportedly, FARDC-UPDF joint operations have also facilitated the return of IDPs in some areas.

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- MONUSCO reported approximately 200 new COVID-19 cases over the last three weeks (17/12 – 05/01). After being relatively untouched by COVID-19, the DRC has recently reported a sharp rise in cases, between 5,000 and 6,000 cases a week, up from approximately 200 cases a week in November.

3. MINUSCA

POLITICAL

- On 21 December, the Security Council adopted individual sanctions against UPC leader and founder Ali Darassa, following a proposal by France and with sponsorship of the US, India and UK.
- The IMF approved a seven-month Staff-Monitored Program (SMP) on 22 December, to help address economic challenges caused by the security crisis and COVID-19. The SMP will also support the government's reform agenda.

OPERATIONAL

- In Mambere-Kadei Prefecture, a MINUSCA convoy hit an IED or mine in Date village, northwest of Berberati last Thursday (30 Dec), injuring one peacekeeper. The following day, an anti-tank mine was discovered further south in Babaza village (Mambere-Kadei).
- In adjacent Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, on 30 December, three peacekeepers were injured (two seriously) in an explosion in Bohong village. Additionally, on 31 December, one peacekeeper was injured by small arms fire during an armed assault on the recovery patrol in Bohong. All injured peacekeepers were safely evacuated to Bangui for treatment. The recent explosions or recovered explosive devices that impacted peacekeepers, FACA personnel or civilians have been confirmed in or around core areas of the 3R group in the west.



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- The Mission reports several separate attacks involving 3R combatants over the past two weeks in Nana-Mambéré and Ouham Pendé prefectures, including villages south-west of Paoua (28 Dec) and against FACA positions in Letele, Ndim, and Nzakoundou on 1 and 2 January. Yesterday, FACA and security allies launched a large operation against 3R in the area.
- On 25 December, peacekeepers launched an operation and expelled around 200 armed UPC elements from Boyo, north-east of Bambari, in Ouaka Prefecture. This follows repeated UPC attacks against Boyo and Kouango areas, which resulted in civilian fatalities on 6 and 7 December and prompted the displacement of nearly 1,500 people. Since then, the UPC has taken over numerous homes including the mayor's residence. MINUSCA sent out a warning to the UPC against any attempt to re-occupy Boyo and reaffirmed its determination to protect the communities.
- In Ouaka, UPC combatants attacked an Internal Security Forces (ISF) position in Ngakobo, resulting in one ISF personnel killed (29/12). In Batobadja (Ouaka), the local population reportedly fled to the bush after an attack by UPC combatants, in which a civilian was injured and homes looted.
- MINUSCA reported approximately 40 new COVID-19 cases among Mission personnel between 17 December and 5 January. There are currently three active outbreaks in MINUSCA. In Bouar, one large and one medium sized outbreak were reported amongst uniformed personnel (17/12 and 25/12) as well as one medium-sized outbreak amongst civilians in Bangui (24/12). There is limited data available on COVID-19 cases in CAR.

4. UNMISS

POLITICAL

- Last Friday, President Kiir outlined the Government priorities for 2022 including the establishment of a Truth, Healing and Reconciliation commission by the end of January, in line with the Revitalized Peace Agreement. He also stressed financial, economic and infrastructure priorities.
- Relatedly, on 20 December, the Transitional Assembly passed the “Transitional Constitution Amendment Bill 2021”, paving the way for the incorporation of the 2018 peace agreement into the Constitution. The endorsement of the bill allows the peace agreement to supersede the transitional Constitution in areas of interpretation and implementation.

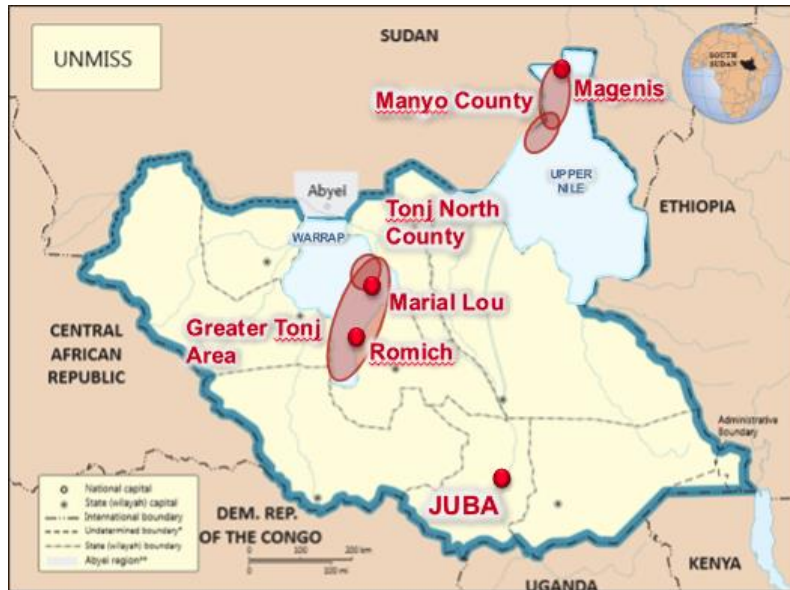
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OPERATIONAL

- In Upper Nile, fighting was reportedly focused in Manyo County, including Magenis, between SPLA-IO forces loyal to Vice President Marchar and SPLA-IO splinter forces of General Gatwech and General Olony. During clashes in December, ten pro-Machar forces, three pro-Gatwech/Olony forces and four Sudanese civilians were reportedly killed. Meanwhile, the security situation in the area has reportedly improved and most displaced civilians have returned.



- The situation in Romich, Marial Lou and other localities across Warrap State remains tense with several attacks and retaliatory attacks reported between armed Luanyjang and Lou Paher youth over the last few weeks, reportedly resulting in numerous casualties. In Tonj North County, violence reportedly displaced around 2,000 people and humanitarian access remains challenging. The Warrap State Governor accused UNMISS of harbouring and protecting Lou Paher youths. He also announced the establishment of a Monitoring Peace Committee to report and investigate intercommunal violence in the Greater Tonj area.
- UNHCR reports an increase in spontaneous refugee returns from Ethiopia to South Sudan due to the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. Returnees cite fear that the conflict may extend to refugee camp areas as well as the desire for family reunification, lack of livelihood opportunities and ethnic tension among the refugees as the main reasons for their return.
- UNMISS reported the largest recent increase in COVID-19 cases of all PKOs, approximately 260 cases between 17 December and 5 January. There is currently one active medium-sized active outbreak amongst uniformed personnel in Bentiu. Overall, South Sudan reported a 690% increase in cases between 6 and 13 December.

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5. SUDAN

POLITICAL

- Prime Minister Hamdok resigned on Sunday, amid continued mass protests in Khartoum and across the country, marking the 12th “March of Millions” since the military coup of 25 December.
- Two protesters were reportedly killed during recent events as security forces fired tear gas and struck demonstrators with batons, bringing the death toll to at least 56 since the military coup. OHCHR cites the Central Committee of Sudan Doctors informing that 235 people were injured during Christmas Day protests in Khartoum and elsewhere.
- SRSG Perthes continues to discuss the situation with Sudanese stakeholders as he seeks to narrow the gap between the political and military leaders.

OPERATIONAL

- Looting and violence was reported at the end of December at the former UN logistics base in El Fasher, which was handed over to local Sudanese authorities for civilian use. It was recommended to relocate remaining UNAMID international staff from El Fasher to Khartoum.
- In addition, a WFP facility in El Fasher was attacked on 28 December. Over 1,900 metric tons of food commodities, meant to feed 730,000 vulnerable people for a month, were looted.
- Sudanese authorities informed that troops of the joint protection force were assembled in El Fasher and would be deployed in North, West and Central Darfur in response to rising inter-communal violence.
- UN alternate work modalities remain.

6. UNIFIL

POLITICAL

- On Monday, the Lebanese pound hit an all-time low, trading at LL29,000 to one USD. This time last year, the lira was trading at LL8,500 to the US dollar. The continued devaluation comes after the central bank increased the withdrawal rate for the US dollar from LL3,900 to LL8,000. In parallel, new fuel prices announced yesterday show a high increase in the cost of gasoline, diesel and cooking gas. Aside from the impact

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of the rise in the lira-to-dollar exchange rate, the fuel price increase is reportedly linked to recent tense political rhetoric.

OPERATIONAL

- UNIFIL reports an instance of aggressive behaviour towards peacekeepers yesterday in Bint Jubail (Sector West), where a crowd of some 30 people blocked a Mission's patrol composed of two vehicles. The crowd stole some equipment and caused severe damage to the vehicles (e.g., tires slashed, and windows broken). The peacekeepers eventually left the area (along with the damaged vehicles) with LAF escort. UNIFIL will start an investigation into the incident.
- The IDF informed UNIFIL that it downed a Hizbullah drone near Manara (Sector East) on Tuesday; the Mission did not observe any crossing of the Blue Line by drone.
- Yesterday, the IDF fired two rounds of illumination shells, which landed north of the Blue Line, in the vicinity of Boustan (Sector West).
- UNIFIL reported approximately 100 new COVID-19 cases between 17 December and 5 January. There are currently six active outbreaks, of which 3 are large outbreaks amongst uniformed personnel, including Naquora and Marjaayoum.

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