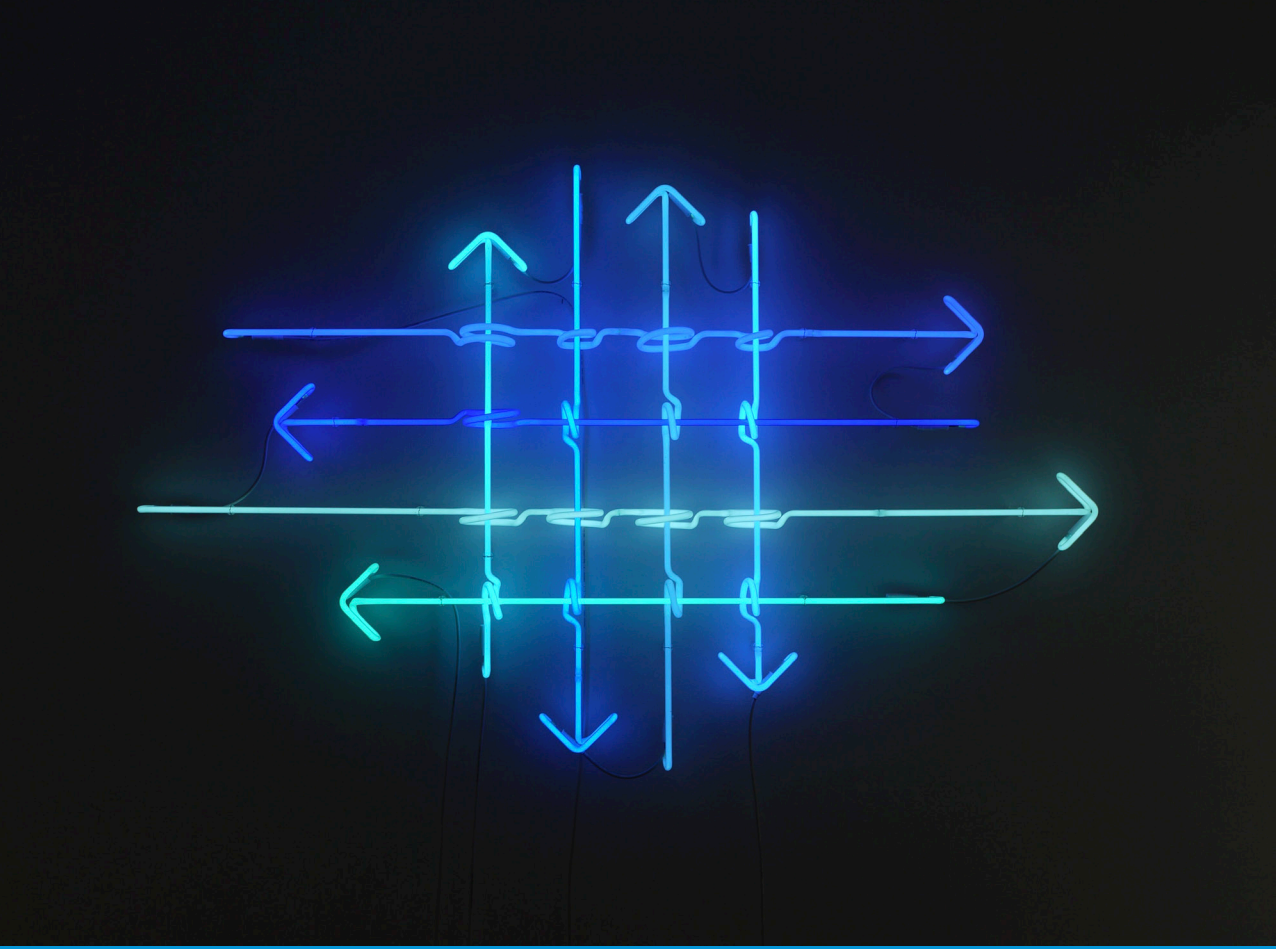

Mobility in United Nations Peacekeeping

Lessons from MINUSMA's Mobile Task Force

Elin Hellquist

FOI-R--5470--SE

June 2023

FOI

Elin Hellquist

Mobility in United Nations Peacekeeping

Lessons from MINUSMA’s Mobile Task Force

Title	Mobility in United Nations Peacekeeping – Lessons from MINUSMA's Mobile Task Force
Titel	Rörlighet i Förenta Nationernas fredsinsatser – lärdomar från Minusmas snabbrörliga stridsgrupp
Report no	FOI-R--5470--SE
Month	June
Year	2023
Pages	74
ISSN	1650-1942
Client	Ministry of Defence
Forskningsområde	Operationsanalys och strategisk planering
FoT-område	Inget FoT-område
Project no	A12316
Approved by	Malek Finn Khan
Ansvarig avdelning	Försvarsanalys

Cover: Albert Hien **„8 BLUE ARROWS“**, 2020. Neonsystems 107 x 172 x 13 cm

Summary

This report investigates the creation and application of the Mobile Task Force (MTF) within MINUSMA, the UN's peace operation in Mali. Thereby, the study aims to increase the understanding of rationales and conditions for mobility in peace operations with a high threat level and robust mandates. The report highlights two main reasons why mobility has become a priority for MINUSMA: (i) out of necessity, since the mission is expected to do more with the same resources; (ii) to match the asymmetrical conflict dynamics and be able to protect civilians through proactive, robust operations, wherever threats appear. To better grasp how mobility can be attained, the report examines four factors: mindset, capabilities, enablers, and consent. In an extremely challenging mission environment, the MTF has largely had both a mindset and capabilities for mobility, and been able to bring a UN presence to new locations. However, a lack of trust in enablers and the persistence of actual gaps among them, as well as limitations in the consent from Malian transitional authorities, have hindered the MTF from reaching the envisaged level of mobility.

Keywords: Mobile Task Force, MINUSMA, mobility, robust, international military mission, United Nations, peacekeeping

Sammanfattning

Den här rapporten undersöker tillkomsten och tillämpningen av enhetstypen Mobile Task Force (MTF), en snabbrörlig stridsgrupp, inom Minusma, Förenta nationernas fredsinsats i Mali. Studiens syfte är att öka förståelsen av innebörden av och förutsättningar för rörlighet i fredsinsatser med en hög hotnivå och robusta mandat. Rapporten pekar på två huvudanledningar *varför* rörlighet har blivit högprioriterat inom Minusma: (i) av nödvändighet, eftersom truppförstärkningar uteblivit trots vidgade mandat; (ii) för att matcha den asymmetriska konfliktdynamiken och kunna skydda civila genom proaktivt, robust agerande där hot uppstår. För att bättre förstå *hur* rörlighet kan uppnås undersöker rapporten fyra faktorer: tankesätt, förmågor, stödfunktioner och värdlandets samtycke. Studien visar att MTF bidragit med ett tänkesätt och förmåga till rörlighet och lyckats etablera FN-närvaro på nya platser. Likväl har förutsättningar inte funnits för att nå MTF:s högt ställda rörlighetsmål. Att verka inom hela landet tycks fortsatt vara ouppnåeligt, på grund av bristande tillit till och faktiska glapp i insatsens stödfunktioner, samt – på senare tid – rörlighetsbegränsningar införda av Malis övergångsmyndigheter.

Nyckelord: Mobile task force, Minusma, Mali, rörlighet, robust, insats, Förenta nationerna, fredsfrämjande

Preface

This study on the Mobile Task Force is funded by the Swedish Ministry of Defence and carried out within FOI's longstanding research programme on international military missions. It joins a series of research on MINUSMA conducted during the period of Sweden's contribution to the mission.

The author Elin Hellquist would like to thank all the interviewees for this study, they have generously shared their experiences and insights and thereby greatly enriched the analysis. A big thank you also goes to FOI Deputy Research Director Pär Eriksson for his review of an early draft of the report, to colleagues at FOI's Defence Analysis Division for their continuous support and input, and to Olivier Milland for assistance during interviews.

Emma Sjökvist
Analyst and Project Manager, FOI International Military Missions

June 2023

Contents

List of Abbreviations

APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASECNA	L'Agence pour la sécurité de la navigation aérienne en Afrique
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
CASEVAC	Casualty Evacuation
CIMIC	Civilian-Military Cooperation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAMa	Forces Armées Maliennes/Malian Armed Forces
FHQ	Force Headquarters
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
FOI	Swedish Defence Research Agency
FST	Forward Surgical Team
HQ	Headquarters
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISGS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISSP	Islamic State Sahel Province
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin
LRRG	Long Range Reconnaissance Group
MIC-R	Mechanised Infantry Company – Reconnaissance
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTF	Mobile Task Force
NSE	National Support Element

OHCHR	The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
QRF	Quick Reaction Force
PKO	Peacekeeping Operation
PMC	Private Military Company
POC	Protection of Civilians
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SUR	Standard of Unit Requirements
TAG	Terrorist Armed Group
TCC	Troop-contributing Country
TF	Task Force
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UN	United Nations
UN DFS	United Nations Department of Field Support
UN DOS	United Nations Department of Operational Support
UN DPO	United Nations Department of Peace Operations
UN OMA	United Nations Office of Military Affairs

1 Introduction

> These mobile forces resemble brigade units, with the mobility and flexibility and agility that comes with a military force that is designed to move toward the threats and the challenges.
>
> MINUSMA Force Commander Dennis Gyllensporre, in Africa Defence Forum 2021.

The United Nations (UN) peace operation in Mali, MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), has gained a reputation for being camp-bound and ineffective. Most of its circa 13,000 troops spend their time at or in the proximity of UN camps, often busy with protecting themselves, rather than responding to rapidly evolving security urgencies across the country. This static inclination stands in sharp contrast to MINUSMA's continuously expanding mandate, especially its priority task of protecting civilians. The conflict in Mali has expanded territorially and turned increasingly asymmetrical, with Terrorist Armed Groups (TAGs)[1] becoming defined as the primary threat (see UN DPO 2020c). In the wake of this development, a mismatch between the needs on the ground and MINUSMA's organisation around a few big camps has arisen. In 2019, the concept of the Mobile Task Force (MTF) was born to address this problem, as a mission-wide resource capable of responding to threats wherever they appear, in a flexible, agile, and robust manner. The MTF became operational in MINUSMA's Sector East in the spring of 2021.

This report is the first public study dedicated to the MTF concept and its implementation. Turning to the MTF experience as a laboratory for peacekeeping mobility, the study offers an analysis of which expectations surround mobility, as well as which factors shape mobility outcomes. Besides generating knowledge on the role of mobility in MINUSMA, these matters are potentially relevant for other peace operations characterised by a high threat level and a demanding mandate. The following two questions have guided the research:

Why has mobility become a priority in MINUSMA?

How can mobility be attained?

Mobility ties into some of the most important topics in contemporary UN peacekeeping. First, mobility rethinks presence as a peacekeeping strategy. Establishing UN presence remains a pillar strategy in robust peacekeeping, as presence may calm conflict escalation, protect civilians, and facilitate humanitarian aid's reaching communities in need (e.g., Fjelde, Hultman, and

[1] This report employs the term Terrorist Armed Groups to signify the various (partly linked) non-state groups, such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al Murabitoun, Ansar Dine, and Katiba Macina, which are active in Mali. These groups conduct asymmetrical attacks both against state forces, peacekeepers, and civilians.

Nilsson 2019; Hellquist and Tidblad-Lundholm 2022). As a matter of simple calculus, unless the number of boots on the ground increases, delivering a peacekeeper presence across an extensive operational area requires that a sufficient share of troops are mobile. However, in contrast to the emphasis in early peacekeeping on static presence (e.g., creating buffer zones between conflicting parties), the presence of mobile troops will by definition be more or less temporary. This is not without risk, since entering population centres only to leave shortly thereafter can, in the worst case, bring additional risks to civilians rather than protect them (see Hellquist and Tidblad-Lundholm 2022, 53-54). Mobile peacekeeping is nonetheless a crucial first step in the protection of civilians (POC). Mobility can be decisive for resolving situations of urgent threats against civilians, but it needs to be followed up by more long-term solutions.

Second, mobility initiatives highlight the decoupling that has occurred between the mandates and the performance of UN missions. Current UN peace operations are typically mandated to fulfil a palette of tasks (e.g., stabilisation, protection of civilians, reestablishment of state authority, promotion of political dialogue) in complex active conflicts and under stark resource constraints (see Blair, Salvatore, and Smidt 2022). Whereas suggestions that the UN is nowadays "at war" (Karlsrud 2015) have shaped the debate on third-generation peacekeeping, including on MINUSMA, empirical observations indicate that UN missions rarely make full use of their robust mandates (see Tull 2018, 167, 170; Beadle and Kjeksrud 2018; cf. Williams 2023). Over the last couple of decades, it has become clear that granting missions 'all necessary means' is not enough to deliver on priorities such as POC. In MINUSMA, the disparity between a demanding, and permissive, mandate and the mission's rather static approach on the ground has increased over time. The MTF was an attempt to begin closing this gap. By becoming more mobile, the mission's reach and relevance was to increase, without boosting the troop size (Smith 2020, 7; Gyllensporre in Africa Defence Forum 2021).

Third, mobility is closely linked to force protection. MINUSMA is the most dangerous currently active UN mission, with casualties disproportionally hitting peacekeepers from the region. In light of this record, and given that the most vulnerable peacekeepers are especially likely to be direct targets of attacks, the reluctance to embark on proactive operations is unsurprising. However, statistically speaking, more peacekeepers are injured or killed at the camp or when travelling in a convoy than during operations in-field (Gyllensporre in International Peace Institute 2021; S/2018/541, 12). In later years, the leadership of the military pillar has made efforts to build awareness that proactive peacekeeping is compatible with, indeed may actually improve, force protection. Clearly, this necessitates that troops have appropriate equipment and training for the threat level. However, in the past, the better-equipped and trained 'Western' troop contributing countries (TCC) of MINUSMA have also gained a reputation

for being far too static and either unable or unwilling to conduct long-range operations (e.g., Boutellis and Beary 2020). A generally more risk-averse military culture, as well as Western requirements for reliable and quick casualty evacuation (CASEVAC), are factors that reduce the level of operational activity.

Fourth, and finally, the theme of mobility highlights the relational foundation of peacekeeping. For peacekeeping operations (PKOs) that aim for mobility, a good relationship with the host country is not only a fundamental normative principle, but a practical necessity for getting the job done. Already 23 years ago, the Brahimi report (S/2000/809) discussed the risk that "[a] party may seek to limit an operation's freedom of movement". Peacekeepers depend on the approval of local authorities to move flexibly across the mission area. In addition, cooperation with state forces is key if the effects of mobile operations are to be sustained over time. Optimally, temporary UN presence brought by mobile troops could be a step in enabling state forces, and eventually civilian authorities, to re-establish control and provide long-term security, thus avoiding a boomeranging return of hostilities the moment peacekeepers leave. However, in Mali, the relationship between state authorities and MINUSMA has been steadily deteriorating during the MTF's existence.

Reaching highly set mobility goals in mission environments where there is an ongoing active conflict, without compromising force protection, leaves little margin of error. However, integrated UN peacekeeping missions are far from flawlessly sculpted military forces, but complex systems, where all stakeholders rarely march in step. This study finds that, in consequence, the units deployed to the MTF did not have a realistic chance to become as mobile as envisaged by the concept. Whereas both the mindset and capabilities suitable for mobility were largely present, the lack of reliable enablers throughout the period, together with the more recent cracks in host-nation consent, have rendered the goal of operating Mali-wide infeasible. Despite these obstacles, the MTF has succeeded in bringing UN presence to new areas, disturbing terrorist armed groups and, at least temporarily, protecting civilians from harm. This is a major achievement, given the uphill circumstances.

1.1 Context

The launch of the MTF took place in a volatile context, during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the constellation of international military missions in Mali on the verge of collapse. These circumstances added to already known challenges to mobility, such as the inaccessibility and vastness of the territory, as well as the highly mobile antagonists, making the Malian mission environment a hard test for a mobility concept such as the MTF.

When the MTF concept was first drafted, the French-led Opération Barkhane and Task Force Takuba; the regional JF-G5 Sahel forces; and the EU's training

mission, EUTM, were all active in Mali (see Hellquist and Sandman 2020). After the military coups in August 2020 and, in particular, the second coup in May 2021, continued military engagements alongside Malian authorities were increasingly questioned, adding to pre-existing mission fatigue.

During the spring of 2022, an already tense situation turned dramatically worse, leading to the collapse of the constellation of international military missions in a matter of months. The French and European forces of Barkhane and Task Force Takuba withdrew from Mali. The EU suspended operational training within the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) and cancelled planned deliveries of military equipment (see Council of the European Union 2022). In addition, Mali itself left the regional G5 Sahel Joint Force in May 2022 (UN News 2022a). According to the January 2023 internal review of MINUSMA, violence in the three-border Liptako-Gourma region has increased, following the cessation of operations from the G5 joint forces (S/2023/36, 9).

Several factors brought the mission constellation towards its collapse, including the delays in democratic transition, and a sharply deteriorated relationship between Mali and France. That the Malian transitional government chose to partner with Russia, and invite 'foreign security personnel' from the Wagner Group to Mali,[2] also contributed to making the continuation of European counterterrorism engagements politically unsustainable.

The MTF was not intended to rely directly on support from the French-led counterterrorism forces (interview 3; interview 4¸ interview 7), which acted in parallel to MINUSMA under distinct mandates (interview 6; see Hellquist and Sandman 2020). The agreement that existed between Barkhane and MINUSMA was such that French support could not be planned for, or integrated in UN concept formation, but would materialise in situations of emergency (interview 3; see, e.g., S/RES/2423 [2018], § 53). Nonetheless, France's leaving Mali, together with the overall reconfiguration of the international military presence, has had major consequences for MINUSMA, including the MTF. The Secretary General report of October 2022 summarises the situation: "[T]he Mission will no longer be able to rely on the presence, within Mali, of a parallel counter-terrorism force" (S/2022/446, p. 17). The French forces provided three forms of support to MINUSMA that are essential for mobility: (1) intelligence-sharing, although selective; (2) force response, with attack helicopters; and (3) access to the French role 2 hospital in Gao. France considered retaining its air support to MINUSMA, after Barkhane's withdrawal, but the Malian government rejected this (Boutellis 2023). The departure of Barkhane from Mali has therefore added to the "urgency of generating additional capabilities" within MINUSMA (S/2022/731, 11). To partly fill the vacuum after the departure of the French

[2] The Malian government claims that there are no Russian mercenaries in Mali, only military instructors (see S/2023/36, 4).

forces, Germany agreed to provide further CH-53 helicopters and prepared to deploy further staff to maintain the airport in Gao, if need be.[3] Germany also began planning for a more advanced hospital (Bundeswehr 2023; German Federal Foreign Office 2022). Nonetheless, as described in Section 3.3, insufficiencies in rotary-wing assets and in medical facilities have been major concerns for the MTF.

Furthermore, the security situation has continued to deteriorate after the end of French-led counterterrorism operations. The surge in terrorist attacks has increased the threat level for both civilians and peacekeepers, thus making so-called "protected mobility" (S/2019/454, 13, §78; S/RES/2531 [2020], 3) more challenging to achieve (ACLED-data in Africa Center for Strategic Studies 2023; interview 4; interview 9). The French troops brought an important presence to the area around Gao, covering territory through patrolling and thereby calming the security situation (interview 13). Whereas the recent security developments suggest that TAGs had less leeway when Barkhane and Takuba were operating, the capacity of terrorist groups to rapidly expand their activities is also proof of the shortcomings of military counterterrorism. After all, violence from these groups increased during most of Barkhane and Takuba's existence. The "tactical gains" on the battlefield, including the killing a number of Jihadist leaders, did not translate into a strategic victory over terrorism (see, e.g., Doxsee, Thompson, and Harris 2022).

The launch of the MTF also coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, an unforeseen exogenous shock to societies, institutions, and individuals around the world. UN peacekeepers have found themselves in the midst of health crises before, for instance cholera, in Haiti (2010), and Ebola, in Liberia (2014) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, 2019) (Gowan and Riis Andersen 2020).The pandemic delayed and limited the launch of the MTF as a mobility concept. MINUSMA units needed to adapt to multiple quarantine and behavioural rules. The mission itself adopted quarantine rules and put a halt to rotations (interview 10). On top of the UN's own rules, COVID-related rules and restrictions from the Malian authorities, the respective national armed forces, and from fellow TCCs at the camp influenced what contingents could do, and how (interview 14). For some staff categories, digital meetings could replace physical encounters, but imperfectly so (S/2020/952, 7; interview 4). Cases of sickness also affected MINUSMA (interview 4). However, the MTF's handling of the pandemic also showed proof of determination and resilience. Despite the pandemic, operations were planned and, eventually, conducted; a new command came into place for the MTF, and relationships were built between the units.

[3] However, Malian authorities, through *l'Agence pour la sécurité de la navigation aérienne en Afrique* (ASECNA), resumed responsibility for the airport in Gao during the autumn of 2022.

1.2 Methodology

This report offers a case study of MINUSMA's Mobile Task Force as a concept and evolving practice in UN peacekeeping. The overarching aim of the study is to provide a fuller understanding of what a commitment to mobility entails for robust peace operations. There is a lack of publicly available analysis focusing on the MTF concept or on the experiences of individual MTF units.[4] This is a research gap that merits filling, given the MTF's innovative character and the challenging conditions under which it has operated. As the first in-depth inquiry on the MTF, this study has the potential to both offer new empirical insights and contribute to ongoing debates about the promises and perils of robust peacekeeping.

1.2.1 Research design

To grasp *why* mobility has become a sought-for quality in MINUSMA, the report surveys previous research on mobility in UN peacekeeping, and in MINUSMA, and combines these with insights from interviews. This overview focuses on expectations that are tied to military mobility in the context of robust peace operations. Mobility outcomes, that is, the extent to which anticipated positive effects of mobility are actually fulfilled, largely lie outside of the study's scope. This is partly due to methodological limitations, as an evaluation of such outcomes would require extensive embedded fieldwork, which was not feasible within the time and resource constraints of this study. More importantly, the results of the study suggest that the intended levels of mobility have not been reached, which makes it warranted to take a step back and scrutinise how mobility could be attained.

Consequently, the "How?" question in this study is approached as a matter of "What does it take?" to be mobile, rather than "In what way?" is mobility performed. To capture what it takes to achieve mobility in a robust peacekeeping mission, the author has constructed a simple analytical grid consisting of four factors: Mindset, Capabilities, Enablers, and Consent. Each of the four elements is understood to be a necessary condition for meaningful mobility to materialise in a peace operation characterised by a high threat level and a demanding mandate (see, e.g., Braumoeller and Goertz 2000). Moreover, the four conditions together are theorised as, under normal circumstances, being *sufficient* for mobility to be possible.

The categories were constructed with an inductive starting point, through the author's analysis of the primary empirical material for this report (interviews and UN documents). The indications resulting from this inductive exercise were

[4] By contrast, the Swedish ISR task force has been the subject of several studies (e.g, Nilsson and Tham Lindell 2015; Hull Wiklund and Lackenbauer 2017; Hellquist and Tidblad-Lundholm 2022; Swedish Armed Forces 2022c).

thereafter further developed in engagement with scholarship on mobility in different types of military operations, and especially in peacekeeping.

In this report, a *mindset* refers to the professional attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions that shape how a military organisation makes sense of its tasks and navigates options for action (inspired by Huntington 1957; Cassidy 2004, 74–75; Ben-Ari 2011, 35; Lönnberg 2020). To grasp whether the MTF has been characterised by a mindset for mobility, the empirical analysis considers three aspects: doctrine, leadership/command, and culture. Doctrine often seeks to promote a particular mindset that is understood to facilitate desired outcomes. As the present study demonstrates, ideas about the importance of mobility reflect a broader doctrinal transformation of UN peacekeeping. However, a mindset can hardly emerge through handbooks and policies alone. Rather, this report conceives of a mindset as a set of ideas that develops organically through the (sometimes contradictory) experiences of soldiers and officers, and is shaped by their pre-existing views and convictions. Military leadership and command, in turn, are crucial for translating doctrine into operationally relevant concepts. Finally, a mindset is strongly associated with military culture. In the context of peacekeeping, national military culture and experiences from other types of military operations meet the distinctive values and principles of UN peacekeeping.

With *capabilities*, this report intends those abilities that have a directly executive role vis-à-vis the effect that an operation seeks to achieve. This follows a conventional understanding of military capability as "the ability to achieve a specified wartime objective (win a war or battle, destroy a target set)" (United States Department of Defense 2007, 340). Applied to peacekeeping operations, the end-purpose is not to win a war, but to fulfil the mandate. In a UN context, capabilities tend to be equated with "assets", which are planned for in relation to mission mandates and created through force generation (see United Nations 2022). Thus, conventionally, capabilities are perceived to be embodied by designated units of peacekeepers. The expected effects that capabilities are to deliver in a robust peacekeeping context include deterring antagonists, protecting civilians, and securing areas through a UN presence. The MTF was created with mobility (and associated qualities, e.g., robustness, flexibility, agility) as a means to better reach such operational goals. The focus here is on the material dimension of capabilities, a.k.a. the materiel and personnel of front-row units. Ideas certainly also matter for being able to reach an intended operational effect, but, for analytical purposes, these are dealt with here under the notion of mindset. To assess whether the MTF has had capabilities suited for mobility, and by extension for catalysing mandate fulfilment, this report looks into the types of units deployed and examples of operations that they have carried out, as well as the extent to which the units have been integrated into a joint task force.

In the following, military *enablers* are distinguished from capabilities in that the former are not intended to themselves directly contribute to the operational objective, but to support the front-line executors in doing so. As discussed by

Marcum (2017), enablers are therefore defined in relation to the situation in question, as those indispensable functions that make it possible for performing units to fulfil operational goals. So, for instance, an ISR asset can be an operational capability in one situation and an enabler in another. The analysis of enablers in Chapter 3 centres on logistics, air assets, and CASEVAC.

Finally, *consent* is not only a fundamental principle of peacekeeping, it is a mobility factor that logically precedes the other three factors just discussed. Without the consent of host-state authorities, even highly capable units with the right mindset and top-notch enablers will have trouble being mobile. As discussed by Gray (1996, 251), consent is more than the host state's initial, legal approval of foreign troops on its soil. By agreeing to the presence and mandate of a UN mission, the host state "has undertaken to cooperate" with the forces (Gray 1996, 251). Nonetheless, mismatches between legal consent and conditions on the ground are recurrent within UN peacekeeping (see Hunt and Zimmerman 2019, 71-71). In countries that experience crises that warrant UN action, host-state authorities tend to be unstable and internally disputed (see Johnstone 2011, 174-175). This underlines that consent is not a matter that can be ticked off prior to deployment, but which "must continually be re-negotiated" (Hunt and Zimmernan 2019, 71). Over time, consent "can be manipulated in many ways" (S/2000/809, ix), leading to "limited", "weak", or even "compromised", consent (see Sebastián and Gorur 2018). Consent is a deeply relational factor, determined by and dependent on interactions at different levels, between the peace operation, the host state, and other stakeholders, not least the local population (see Johnston 2011). The peace operation influences the prospects of practical consent through the relationship it builds with the host country, but, in contrast to the other three factors, it cannot control this factor on its own. This report discusses consent from three angles: strategic agreement, cooperation on the ground, and access to the territory.

The following analysis recognises that the boundaries between mindset, capabilities, enablers, and consent are not definite, as these characteristics reinforce one another and may shift category depending on the context. Furthermore, the analytical grid developed here does not aim to capture all factors and subfactors that could potentially influence mobility. Rather, the grid serves to organise the empirical material in a way that highlights where the most critical strengths and vulnerabilities lie in the MTF's mobility concept and its application.

Table 1. A model for mobility in peacekeeping

Conditions	*Core mechanism*	*Role for mobility*	*Indicators*
Presence of **Mindset**	Ideational	Necessary [Not sufficient]	• Doctrine • Leadership & Command • Culture
Presence of **Capabilities**	Material	Necessary [Not sufficient]	• Tailored units • Operational record • Unit integration
Presence of **Enablers**	Supporting	Necessary [Not sufficient]	• Logistics • Air assets • CASEVAC
Presence of **Consent**	Relational	Necessary [Not sufficient]	• Strategic agreement • Cooperation • Access to the territory
Presence of mindset + capabilities + enablers + consent = sufficient for mobility			

1.2.2 Material

The study builds on a combination of written primary sources and fourteen interviews with military and civilian staff at UN headquarters, as well as with senior military officers who have been deployed to the Swedish MIC-R or to positions within MINUSMA's command. In the following, the interviews are referred to with randomised numbers. Secretary General reports on the situation in Mali, MINUSMA *points de presse*, mission mandates and other official UN documentation have been important to obtain a structured idea of how mobility has evolved as a theme in UN peacekeeping and in MINUSMA. Scholarship on mobility in peacekeeping and military operations, more generally, has been consulted to develop suitable analytical categories and anchor the analysis in broader debates. All translations from Swedish and French to English are by the author.

The interviews were semi-structured and adapted to the background of each respondent. Twelve interviews were conducted with one respondent, one interview took place as a group conversation, and one interview included two respondents. Five interviews were held in person, seven were conducted as video meetings, and two were carried out over the phone. The interviews lasted between approximately 60 and 90 minutes. All respondents were asked questions about the role of mobility in peacekeeping, as well as, more specifically, the MTF concept and its implementation. Thus, the aim of the interviews was to illuminate the issue of mobility from several angles, including facilitating and hindering factors, as well as intended effects and unintended consequences.

Through these actor interviews, combined with primary documents, the study touches upon understandings of mobility from the strategic down to the tactical levels. The strategic level includes the perspective from UN HQ, as well as the theatre-specific strategy of MINUSMA's command. The operational and tactical experience of the MTF is mainly analysed through the lens of the Swedish Mechanised Infantry Reconnaissance Company, deployed to Gao between 2020 and 2022, in the following rotations: Mali 12, Mali 13, Mali 14, Mali 15 and Mali 16.[5] It should thus be recognised that the analysis, in these parts, is likely coloured by the nationality of the respondents, whose interpretations and impressions do not necessarily extend to other units within the MTF.

However, the perspective from the Swedish company, as one of the foundational units set to implement a novel mobility concept, is central to understanding the MTF. Contributing to developing the UN's policy and capacity in peacekeeping has long been a priority for the Swedish government. The deployments, first of an ISR task force to Timbuktu, and thereafter of the infantry unit to the MTF in Gao, both testify to this ambition. Just like the SWE ISR TF in Timbuktu, the MTF unit in Gao took part in conceptual development in UN peacekeeping. The commander of the 13th Swedish rotation to MINUSMA, Fredrik Åkerman, has highlighted precisely conceptual development as one of the two overarching goals of the rotation (Swedish Armed Forces 2021b). Besides the troop contribution itself, Sweden has had a leading role in the launch of MTF, through key commanders (e.g., FC, C-MTF, C-Sector East).

The last Swedish soldiers left Mali in April 2023, thereby concluding almost a decade of military presence in the country.[6] The repatriation of the Swedish MTF unit also means that an almost 70-year-long tradition of contributing troops to international military missions is broken (Swedish Armed Forces 2023; see Hellquist and Tidblad-Lundholm 2021). Although no new deployment of this scale is planned at the moment, it is important that experience gained in international military missions does not fall into oblivion. Requests for Swedish participation in different types of military missions and operations are unlikely to cease, as both the UN and the EU (as well as other coalition leaders) are working hard with force generation. Lessons from the MTF can help build awareness of what types of challenges and results can be expected from a contribution of this scale and type (on evaluating results, see Government of Sweden 2021, 19–20). Moreover, insights gained under the tough conditions of an international military

[5] These are the rotations that were operationally active. Mali 11 was charged with disassembling Camp Nobel, in Timbuktu, and preparing Camp Estelle, in Gao, and is outside of the study's empirical scope. Mali 17 was responsible for packing up Camp Estelle and is likewise not part of the study. Mali 12 was a hybrid rotation, combining logistics with infantry.

[6] The contribution was initially planned to last until (at least) 2024, but, on the 3rd of March 2022, the Swedish government decided to withdraw by the spring of 2023 (see Swedish Armed Forces 2022a).

mission provide valuable guidance as Sweden seeks to navigate its historic defence-policy transformation (see Stefan Andersson, former commander of MINUSMA's Sector West and Sector East, in Widehed 2023).

1.3 Outline

The report proceeds as follows. The next chapter offers an overview of *why* mobility has become a desired property in peacekeeping, and more specifically in MINUSMA. Thereafter, Chapter 3 turns to the question of *how* mobility can be achieved, investigating the implementation of the MTF concept seen through the conditions of mindset, capabilities, enablers, and consent. Finally, Chapter 4 summarises the main conclusions of the report, and discusses the future prospects for mobility in UN peace operations.

2 Why Mobility?

> Peacekeepers exist in space, and their presence plausibly affects the locations of conflict and peace.
>
> Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015, 68.

Mobility has become desired in peacekeeping for the same basic reason as for military operations, more generally. Mobility enables quickly getting where attention is called for, covering vast territories and thus ensuring relevance in evolving conflicts where the antagonists are highly mobile. It is no coincidence that mobility gained prominence in UN peacekeeping once missions received more robust mandates. As described by Tull (2018, 171) "[t]hese are missions that are deployed to countries that constitute 'non-permissive environments' where violence by a host of actors is widespread and no political process is in place for peacekeepers to support."

Bluntly put, the more traits that UN peacekeeping has borrowed from other military operations, the more important mobility has become. Yet, mobility in a peacekeeping context involves other considerations than mobility in military operations conducted in a context of national defence, or intrastate war. Importantly, combat is not a primary task of peacekeeping, but something that has become considered necessary, in some specified situations, for mandate fulfilment or self-defence. Although UN missions have become increasingly "robust" (Tardy 2011), or "assertive" (Wentges 1998), it still happens that peacekeepers "stand aside and/or be withdrawn as armed actors mobilize, to keep peacekeepers out of the line of fire" (Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015, 68). Hence, the different perspective on combat also implies a different perspective on mobility, as peacekeepers at times do not seek proximity, but distance, to the antagonist.

The notions of antagonists, enemies and threats that exist in today's robust missions would not have been compatible with the view on impartiality in traditional peacekeeping, which was mostly occupied with overseeing truces. According to Charbonneau (2019): "[W]hat distinguishes UN peacekeeping from other types of military operation is its morality: it does not have and cannot have, in theory at least, enemies." At the turn of the millennium, the Brahimi report outlined a modified view on impartiality, taking impression from the devastating consequences of UN passivity in the Balkans and Rwanda. The report forcefully concluded that "continued equal treatment of all parties by the United Nations can in the best case result in ineffectiveness and in the worst may amount to complicity with evil" (S/2000/809, ix). Whereas the Brahimi report left a huge conceptual imprint, the call for "bigger forces, better equipped and more costly but able to be a credible deterrent" (S/2000/809, x) has not been fully answered.

As is elaborated below, the persistent mandate/resource gap in peacekeeping has been an important trigger for mobility.

MINUSMA's MTF is the first of its kind in UN peacekeeping, but it was not created on a blank slate. Its principal source of inspiration was the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the UN mission to the DRC, MONUSCO. Shortly before MINUSMA was established, MONUSCO received a peace enforcement mandate. In conjunction, the FIB was created and tasked to conduct offensive military operations in MONUSCO, including the neutralising of designated antagonists (Tull 2018, 168–169). The brigade was the first of its kind in the context of UN peace operations and it is an important precedent to MINUSMA's MTF (interview 1; interview 3; interview 5; interview 10). The infantry units in MONUSCO were replaced with new battalions that brought their own equipment, including C-130 transport aircraft for some units (interview 1). By becoming more mobile, MONUSCO's FIB sought to replace the resource-demanding approach of *protection through presence* with more troop-lean *protection through projection*. No longer being able to uphold permanent presence in numerous UN bases across the country, the push was for peacekeepers to "be highly mobile and able to deploy temporarily, without establishing bases, to areas where security appears to be deteriorating or where the Mission needs to implement activities to fulfill its mandate" (Spink 2018, 3).

As an "'offensive' combat force" (UN Press 2013), the FIB was questioned from its inception for breaking with the fundamental principles of peacekeeping, for placing civilians and MONUSCO's civilian component under risk, and for over-relying on military solutions to complex conflict (see Cammaert and Blyth 2013; Fabricius 2014). The UNSC recognised that the arrangement was controversial, repeating in its MONUSCO resolutions that the brigade's inclusion was "on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent or any prejudice to the agreed principles of peacekeeping" (e.g., S/RES/2098 [2013]). Moreover, although the FIB was initially successful in pushing back targeted rebel groups, with time it has met criticism of being ineffective, harmful and counterproductive (Day 2017; Tull 2018). By the time of the MTF's creation, the FIB had become a "damaged brand" – "a concept one never ever should mention" (interview 3). Thus, rather than replicating the concept from DRC, the MTF was presented as a novelty, under its own label.

2.1 Creating the Mobile Task Force

Mobility became a central topic in conjunction with MINUSMA's so-called "significant adaptation", initiated to improve mandate fulfilment in a deteriorating and increasingly complex threat environment. The prospect of significant adaptation was first raised by the UNSC in its June 2018 resolution (S/RES/2423 [2018], 6). Towards the end of 2018, the Security Council issued a request to proceed with outlining options for adaptation (interview 3). At the

time, the US, a minor TCC, but which finances at least 25 percent of MINUSMA's budget, was pushing for the reduction of the mission, due to lacking results (interview 3). In particular, the Americans have long criticised UN missions for the tendency of troops to stay at the camp, doing little more than protecting themselves (Assemblée Nationale 2021, 105). France resisted the US's reduction plans and initiated the Security Council request for adaptation (interview 3). At the time, Swedish Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre had recently been appointed Force Commander of MINUSMA, a position that he was to hold between October 2018 and October 2021.

In response to the adaptation request, the military leadership of MINUSMA worked out options based on different models for counterinsurgency. From other parts of the UN establishment, alternative options were put forward, including the transformation of MINUSMA into a fully political mission. Despite several more or less radical options being on the table, at first the process resulted only in the confirmation of the status quo: "Don't rock the boat" (interview 3). This perspective changed after 20 January 2019, when a complex attack on the Chadian unit in Aguelhok, Kidal Cercle, left 10 soldiers dead and 25 injured during combat (UN News 2019). The attack exposed MINUSMA's vulnerability in the high-threat environment, thus reawakening the question of adaptation. This time, the concept earlier developed by the mission's military leadership gained support from Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre La Croix, as well as from the French representation.

Thus, although mobility has been a growing topic for UN peacekeeping at large since the move towards robustness in the early 2000s, the MTF concept was initiated by MINUSMA's military pillar (interview 5; interview 7). The contours of the concept were thereafter developed through months of interaction between different parts of the UN headquarters (HQ) and MINUSMA's military leadership. Moreover, a practical apparatus for implementing the concept needed to be set up, including the acquisition of land for expanding the camp, runways for flights, and hangar space; and obtaining running water (interview 10).

In parallel to conceptual development at the UN headquarters, efforts to increase mobility took off in the mission area. Prior to the arrival of the designated MTF units, resources were reshuffled to "free up additional units previously used for force protection" (S/2019/454, 13, §77). As a result, MINUSMA more than doubled the number of patrols carried out between October 2018 and February 2019 (S/2019/454, 4, §25). Starting in February 2019, the Swedish ISR TF conducted Operation Folon, in Mopti, at the direct request of FC Gyllensporre. The operation was a pilot for the MTF concept, with the unit's moving 400 kilometres from Timbuktu to the Mopti area to conduct a POC-oriented operation, for a full three months (see Hellquist and Tidblad-Lundholm 2022, 32–33).

In late May 2019, the Secretary-General report announced the "creation of a mission quick-reaction capability, which will combine realigned infantry units as the primary manoeuvre elements, with enablers and other mission components, when required" (S/2019/454, 13, §79). Mobility was presented as "a critical factor" for the mission to be able to "cope with the dynamic operational environment." In January 2020, La Croix "unveiled 'ambitious' plans in the Security Council for a mobile task force able to adapt to changing power dynamics" (UN Press 2020). The MTF was to be the "locomotive" of MINUSMA's adaptation plan (interview 3). The Security Council resolutions in the summers of 2020 and 2021 similarly mention the setting-up of a Mobile Task Force as central for MINUSMA's adaptation (S/RES/2531 [2020], 3; S/RES/2584 [2021], 4).

The plan was to establish MTFs in all of MINUSMA's four sectors (UN DPO 2020c; interview 7; interview 10; interview 8). However, only in Sector East has a multiunit MTF become operational (interview 10). From early 2020 until the end of 2022, the MTF in Sector East consisted of a Swedish Mechanised Infantry Company-Reconnaissance (MIC-R) and a British Long Range Reconnaissance Group (LRRG), joined in late 2020 by a Jordanian Quick Reaction Force (QRF).[7] Initially, the German Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Task Force (ISR TF) was also a part of the MTF (Swedish Armed Forces 2021b; interview 3; interview 4; interview 11; interview 13). However, "the parts jumped in and out; sometimes they were in the MTF, sometimes they were not" (interview 14). Even after the Germans chose to formally leave the MTF structure, preferring to be led directly from FHQ (interview 13), its ISR resources and logistical support remained important for the MTF concept to be realised in Sector East (interview 9).

Even in Sector East, the implementation of MTF's mobility concept was delayed and incomplete, partly because of difficulties in acquiring land for new infrastructure (interview 10). It was only in the spring of 2021 that the MTF became operational (S/2021/657, 1).

[7] The Egyptian SOF unit in Sector West was also under the MTF command, as was the Chadian SOF unit in Sector North (interview 6). With FC approval, the Egyptian unit could also be tasked by Sector West HQ, which had an Egyptian commander (interview 3). The Egyptian SOF was also available for the MTF, and could be flown out to remote villages, for instance to provide security for investigations of suspected war crimes (interview 6). So, for instance, could the Egyptian SOF unit move from Sector West to the Centre, in June 2020, to carry out the first step of an operation called Mongoose and to try out aspects of the mobility concept there (S/2020/952, 14). As for the Chadian unit, it was geographically tied to an operational area around Aguelhok, in contrast to the other MTF units that were deployed without an area of responsibility (interview 6).

2.2 Expected benefits with mobility

There are important effect-oriented arguments for mobility, but the most decisive rationale has been pragmatic: budget. The MTF concept was "driven by budget" and its authors were determined to make it "resource-neutral" (interview 1; interview 3). Mobility was the logical solution to the quandary of dealing with an enormous operational area and limited troop availability (interview 4; interview 7; interview 10; interview 11). As reminded by a couple of the respondents, MINUSMA has a troop size of around 13,000, in a country 114 times bigger than Kosovo, to which 40,000 troops were deployed in the 1990s (interview 8; interview 14).

As noted in the 2019 Uniformed Capability Requirements for United Nations Peacekeeping, mobility is "essential", since the complex mandates have not been matched with increased resources, indeed often quite the reverse (UN DPO 2019b, 2). Also in MINUSMA, the aspiration for mobility was catalysed by the fact that new tasks were not matched with new resources. In particular, the 2019 mandate, making POC a second strategic priority and creating a fourth geographical sector in the Centre, "overstretched the Mission" and highlighted the need for mobility (S/2023/36, 16; interview 10). Static peacekeeping alone simply has no chance to deliver on expanding mandates that require UN troops to protect civilians in ongoing asymmetrical conflicts (interview 7).

As mentioned above (Section 2.1), the MTF intended to cluster high-end mobile capabilities in four geographical hubs, thus compensating for the unfeasibility of being "present at all times" (interview 7). To make room for these more mobile contributions, a "reprioritization" took place between types of troops within the mission (Gyllensporre, in Africa Defence Forum 2021). In practice, this meant that some existing units, among them peacekeepers from neighbouring countries, had to be reduced, to make room for the more mobile contributions (interview 3). A new balance was sought between the traditional territorially connected, static peacekeepers, and MTF's brigade-like mobile units (interview 3; interview 4; interview 11; interview 12). This mix was intended to cater to different types of TCCs, matching with the profiles of both African and European armed forces (interview 3). Peace operations normally strive for a combination of troops "that gives the FC a sense that he can handle the situation if it evolves" (interview 12). There can also be reasons to expand the share of mobile troops temporarily, for instance prior to an election (interview 12).

The type of presence that can be achieved by a light-footprint mobile troop is, by definition, more scattered and temporary than when securing an area by physically, quasi-permanently placing a large quantity of blue berets there. Mobile troops are suitable for conducting initial security operations, clearing an area of an urgent threat (interview 2). However, MTF units were supposed to be not only mobile but to bring an "extended presence" (UNSC 2022, 2), taking turns in areas where the UN has hitherto not been present, "thereby providing

security for a longer period of time" (Swedish Armed Forces 2022b). To reach more long-term results, mobile troops would eventually need to be replaced by more traditional peacekeepers, state forces, and civilian authorities capable of upholding security.

Mobility and robustness

A second fundamental impetus behind the creation of the MTF was to make the mission better fit to meet the escalating security crisis with a robust posture. Despite a continuous mandate expansion, just like other robust operations MINUSMA operates under a basic contradiction: it is a peacekeeping mission in a setting where there is no peace to keep (e.g., S/2023/36, 3; see Gyllensporre, in Swedish Armed Forces 2020a). In reply to an expanding mandate, the mission had been requested to act in a "proactive" and "robust" manner, and it was mandated to "engage in direct operations" to protect civilians and defend the mandate of the mission against "serious and credible threats" (S/RES/2295 [2016]; see discussion in Tull 2018, 167–168).

Yet, rather than taking on a consistently robust posture, the MINUSMA force has gained a reputation for being largely occupied with protecting itself. Asymmetric threats cannot be effectively countered, nor civilians protected, by peacekeepers who spend most of their time in the camp.[8] The MTF troops were to make robust peacekeeping happen on a broader front, thereby setting an example for other contingents to leave the camp and begin operating where their attention was called for. As put in the Swedish contingent's official blog: "A new course was a necessity to be able to eventually influence the conflict in a positive direction" (Swedish Armed Forces 2021b), not the least to protect the Malian population (see Gyllensporre 2021). To implement the mandate, MINUSMA must have a "proactive, robust, flexible and agile posture" (S/RES/2531 [2020], 7).

Permanent presence in a few fixed UN bases had proved inefficient in meeting demands on the ground, especially the protection of civilians. In a mission environment where the main counterparts are compliant armed groups, such camp-based peacekeeping might be fine, but an active conflict with many oppositional parties, including terrorist groups, requires a more "modern" concept, in which villages are secured and terrorists are physically hindered from harming civilians, around the clock (interview 6; interview 14). As raised by Di Razza, during a panel discussion at the International Peace Institute (2020), even in the "immediate proximity of UN bases", missions have failed to fulfil the crucial task of protecting civilians.

[8] Whether or not robust peacekeeping actually 'works' in countering these threats, or more broadly in resolving security crises, is a matter that this report does not aim to settle. Regardless, robustness is a necessity if peacekeepers are to operate in ongoing asymmetrical conflict, without disproportionately risking their safety.

Thus, the modus operandi of highly mobile antagonists is a core reason why mobility has become imperative in MINUSMA. At the same time, the amplified threat level, especially of improvised explosive devices (IED), keeps constraining mobility (interview 7; interview 10; Sharland 2015, 590). To become mobile in a high-threat environment, the MTF concept goes beyond traditional peacekeeper presence to aim for deterring antagonists through a robust posture, a "show of force" (interview 8). This requires not only that peacekeepers reach new geographical locations, but that they do so quickly (reasoning in interview 2). Thus, the MTF troops were expected to be qualified to meet the threat wherever it was, to quickly and unexpectedly turn up and "reach an effect on the 'hooligans' [*Swedish:* buset]" (interview 2; also interview 14).

MINUSMA still has implementation of the 2015 Algiers agreement[9] as its first strategic priority, although its signatories are no longer those who are driving the Malian conflict(s) (interview 14). However, the MTF concept is designed primarily to boost MINUSMA's delivery on the *second* strategic priority: the protection of civilians, including in Central Mali and with "all necessary means", that is, including the use of force if needed. To protect civilians, MINUSMA troops have to be faster than the antagonist is, and at least as good (interview 8; interview 11). However, with all the considerations a peace operation has to take, including the omnipresent force protection concerns, it is hard to match the mobility of an irregular antagonist (interview 2).

One way for mobility to advance POC is to deprive antagonists of their mobility. Beardsley and Gleditsch (2015, 67, 72) found that peacekeeping operations "reduce the geographic scope of violence" by constraining rebels' manoeuvrability and decreasing their "tactical advantage." In MINUSMA's case, TAGs are highly mobile, often transporting themselves on motorcycles between villages, and hiding among civilians. By quickly establishing presence in places where there is a confirmed or imminent asymmetric threat, MINUSMA seeks to disturb these groups and protect civilians, at least for the duration of the operation. More mobile MINUSMA troops can also disturb TAGs by hindering them from taking root in villages. This is potentially important, since groups that "stay localized" have been found to be "better able to compete with the state as the side with legitimate authority and win local support" (Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015, 72).

Military and civilian mobility

Military mobility also changes the premises for Civilian-Military Cooperation (CIMIC). In security situations as difficult as that in Mali, military escort is a must for the civilian pillar to move around in most of the country. Thus, more mobile military troops, *ceteris paribus*, contribute to a more mobile civilian

[9] Full formal name: Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers Process.

pillar. The MTF was expected to enable other parts of the mission to "operate in a more proactive and community-oriented manner" (S/2020/223, 16, §100).

One of the MTF's roles has been to support the civilian pillar in reaching new areas (interview 6). To take just one example, the Swedish unit escorted the UN Head of Office to a village north of Gao, something that "no one else managed" (interview 14). However, MINUSMA troops face demands from several directions, and only some of them are available to assist the civilian pillar at any given moment (interview 7). Moreover, escorting the civilian pillar is not always compatible with other operational goals. Few military units are able to offer secure escorts, and even those combat convoy companies tasked to provide escorts sometimes want, in turn, their own escorts (interview 5). In consequence, one respondent estimated that the civilian parts of MINUSMA "rely too much on the MTF units, because they have more tactical mobility, a better level of protection and sensors" (interview 4).

Moreover, the military pillar is to some extent dependent on the civilian pillar's approval for its own mobility, for instance regarding access to helicopters and supplies during operations. In addition, as emphasised by Swedish liaison officer Sante in a MINUSMA reportage on a CIVIC operation, the civilian parts "have much more local knowledge, knowledge of the languages that are spoken in these villages, we need the civilian pillars to actually connect with the local population" (MINUSMA 2022).

The Malian population's opinions about MINUSMA have become increasingly critical (interview 4). To gain the population's trust, the impression that peacekeepers are "tourists" stuck at camp must be countered (interview 4; interview 8; interview 12). According to public opinion data, in early 2023 only 23 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with MINUSMA's work; 57 per cent were dissatisfied (Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung 2023, 6). The by far most common critique among Malians was that MINUSMA fails to protect the population against violence. By contrast, more than nine out of ten respondents had confidence in Russia helping Mali to counter insecurity (Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung 2023, 65).

2.3 Expected risks with mobility

Although mobility has several intuitive benefits, bringing mobility into a high-threat operational environment is not without risk. Indeed, research has found that "[s]afety and security concerns from operating in an asymmetric threat environment have resulted in reduced mission mobility" (Sharland 2015, 588). With increased mobility comes increased exposure to everything from traffic accidents to IEDs and other hostile attacks (interview 7; also interview 4). If somebody moves faster, the potential for mistakes goes up (interview 10). Whereas risks are "part of the military profession" (interview 7), and can be

mitigated with the right equipment and skills, “the life and health of the individual had higher priority than increased mobility” (interview 2). When the priority is force protection, which it tends to be, then mobility is hard to achieve (interview 2).

As is elaborated in Section 3.3, some of the reasons why the MTF did not advance further in terms of mobility have to do with force protection and, especially, CASEVAC. MINUSMA is infamously the UN’s most lethal operation, but few Western peacekeepers have paid the highest price in duty in Mali (UN Peacekeeping 2023). According to one respondent, losing soldiers in missions far away “would make them [Western TCCs] leave immediately” (interview 5).

Furthermore, if mobility brings a short-lived UN presence, which tends to be the case, there is a high probability that the threat against civilians returns as soon as peacekeepers have left. In the worst case, civilians face additional harm, including killings, when TAGs come back to villages that peacekeepers have visited (interview 4). Even those who had not talked to the UN risked being threatened or harmed (interview 8). As put by one respondent (interview 10):

> If the military goes on patrol, then doesn’t come back for one month because there are not enough people – and then the village is targeted, is that civilian harm or POC?

Typically, when MTF units arrived, the antagonists left. On the one hand, this meant that security was momentarily strengthened and civilians protected: “we reached the goals” (interview 2). On the other hand, the TAGs could return when the units had left, since “there were no other units to follow-up” (interview 2). Consequently, there is widespread frustration that although MTF peacekeepers have a possibility to “actually affect the terrorists”, “it is just limited operations with little effect on the big picture” (respondent in Dahl 2021, 28; interview 13). Notably, the problem with boomerang effects is not unique to the UN. A French parliamentary report described how Opération Barkhane failed to keep terrain “in sufficient proportions to annihilate the terrorists’ inclination to return” (Assemblée Nationale 2021, 73). The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) faced a similar problem in Afghanistan (Farrell 2010, 577–578).

Under these circumstances, it happens that locals are reluctant to cooperate with the UN because they are scared (interview 4). In addition, negative attitudes towards MINUSMA are fuelled by disinformation from antagonists; to the extent that peacekeepers on patrol experience that some areas have been “‘poisoned’ against the UN” (interview 10). This means that, just as parts of the population do not trust the UN, in an asymmetrical conflict environment where antagonists mix with civilians, peacekeepers may become guarded in their relationship to the population (reasoning in interview 14).

Furthermore, it is through interaction with the population that the mission can be explained (interview 10), and that peacekeepers can become aware of the security challenges that civilians endure. As described in the Secretary General report of March 2020, the MTF was expected to become "a force multiplier and enhance the Mission's ability to engage with communities daily" (S/2020/223, 13). However, the homogeneity of the MTF can pose problems when it comes to mobility and protecting civilians. The MTF is, essentially, a Western concept (interview 1), hitherto largely implemented by Western units, which often do not operate with other MINUSMA units. If Western peacekeepers who do not speak local languages show up and try to speak to people in Malian villages, they might not be trusted (interview 12). In addition, mobility can inflict undesired side-effects on local society. Mobile troops put amplified strain on local infrastructure, and may affect the mobility patterns of the local population (interview 7). The increased activity that mobility signifies demands much energy (interview 11) and has thereby an environmental cost (interview 10). MINUSMA stands for a major part of energy consumption in Mali, a country with low per capita energy use. The mission relies heavily on diesel generators to cover its energy needs (Druet and Lyammouri 2021, 22).

A final concern is that mobility is costly also in monetary terms: much fuel is consumed, start motors are needed, fan belts break, tires have to be replaced, etc. (interview 5; interview 9; interview 14). Mobility poses high demands on the mobile unit's equipment, as well as on a whole chain of support, from helicopters to mobile kitchens (interview 7). At the same time, as discussed above, mobility has become topical to keep peacekeeping relevant *without* adding new resources. This equation builds on the (accurate) premise that a mobile approach requires fewer front-line peacekeepers. However, for mobility to reach its full potential, these troops must have appropriate equipment and be supported by relevant enablers. This is no low-budget project. As the analysis in Chapter 3 demonstrates, the tension between the prerequisite of resource neutrality and highly set mobility goals have led to much frustration.

2.4 Summary

Mobility has become prioritised in MINUSMA, both out of budgetary necessity and to adapt to operating in ongoing conflicts with irregular antagonists. There is broad agreement that the MTF concept "makes sense": "It is positive, we have to be mobile" (interview 1; interview 14). Something had to be done to break with the clearly suboptimal situation of having thousands of peacekeepers mainly staying in camp, where they could do little for mandate fulfilment and risked being targets of attacks. If MINUSMA is to live up to its task to protect civilians, it must be out there, with the local communities, and it must be able to deter antagonists from further attacks. However, by definition, mobile forces do not bring the advantages of long-term presence. As discussed by one respondent,

mobility is tricky because “you lose contact power” (interview 7). Even an increased troop ceiling would not in itself change this fact. The key to sustainable security is ultimately a legitimate state that holds the monopoly of violence across the territory.

Figure 1 summarises the main positive and negative expectations associated with mobility.

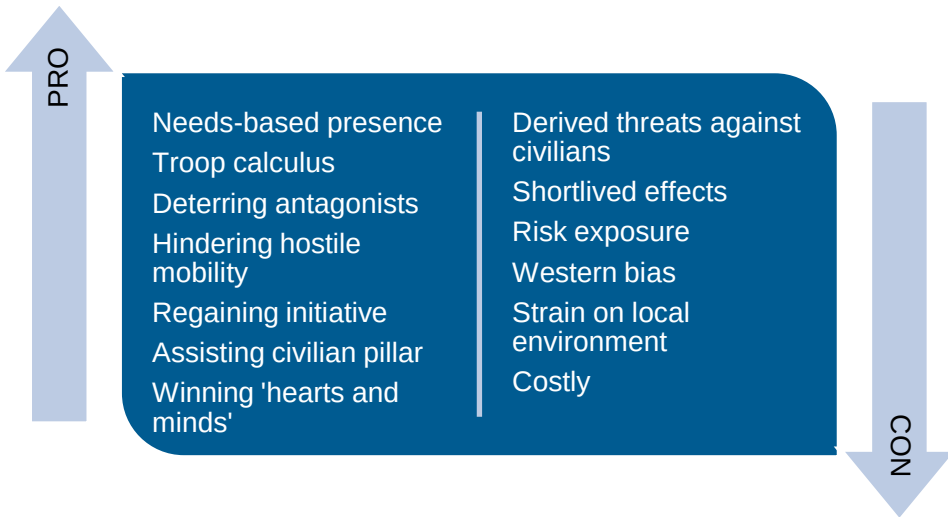

Figure 1. Weighing aspects of mobility

3 How to attain Mobility?

In a complex high-threat mission environment, mobility is not an isolated quality that can simply be implemented on its own (and if it were, the consequences could be catastrophic). Mobility is rather a system feature, which will only materialise if several favourable conditions are simultaneously in place. This chapter sets out to answer the question of *how* mobility can be attained, by discussing the extent to which four such fundamental conditions for mobility have been in place for the MTF.

Three of the four conditions, mindset, capabilities, and enablers, are in principle applicable for understanding mobility in military operations more generally. Throughout military history, mobility in different types of military operations has proceeded through a combination of capability advancement and conceptual evolution. Moreover, mobility has typically been premised on the availability of logistical and subsistence enablers. Indeed, revolutions in military affairs have largely been characterised by leaps in mobility. The fourth factor, consent, is typical of UN peacekeeping and other forms of international military missions that are deployed in support of host-state authorities.

3.1 Mindset

It is clear from both written documentation and the interviews that mobility has been the MTF's leitmotiv. The Swedish contingents defined their role in MINUSMA around mobility: they knew that they were deployed to bring a more mobile, flexible and durable component to the forces. The essence of MTF's mindset was to become a 'Mali-wide' asset. However, as this study underlines, practical conditions were simply not in place for this mindset to be realised on the ground. The realistic aim became "get to a specific location for a limited period" (interview 2). Nonetheless, the idea of a Mali-wide taskforce was valuable as a mindset that "there should not be a blind spot…" (interview 6).

Doctrine

As alluded to in Chapter 2, the MTF concept reflects and reinforces a broader transformation in the principles and practices of UN peace operations, especially the turn towards robustness. However, although mobility is a topic of interest inside the UN system, doctrine-wise it is at an early stage (interview 10). Mobility is not a topic in the Brahimi report (S/2000/809), nor in the Capstone Doctrine (UN PDKO and DFS 2008), and it is not stated among the shared commitments made within Action 4 Peacekeeping (United Nations 2018). However, there is a mention of "more mobile, adaptable and agile forces for effective operations" in the A4P+ Priorities for 2021–2023 (United Nations no date).

Most UN HQ documents that write about mobility are directed at the operational and tactical levels. Mobility is discussed in some detail in the UN's *Infantry Battalion Manual*, which for instance states that "All battalions must possess an expeditionary mindset with a capability to task-organize its components to operate from temporary bases for up to 30 days" (UN DPO 2020a, 74). The *Handbook for Military Peacekeeping Intelligence* and the *Military Logistics Unit Manual* also touch upon mobility (UN DPO 2019a; UN DPO 2022b). A UN document on peacekeepers' safety lists the development of "guidance on mobile peacekeeping operations in coordination with missions" as one action point for the HQ (UN Peacekeeping 2018, 5, §1b). Somewhat surprisingly, operational mobility is not a theme of the UN's policy nor its handbook for the protection of civilians (UN DPO 2019c; UN DPO 2020b). The risks of "inefficient mobility" are brought up, however, in the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, which, although produced outside the UN system, deal with peacekeeping (High-level International Conference on the Protection of Civilians 2015, §18).

In the absence of a mature UN doctrine on peacekeeping mobility, the MTF was created through genuine conceptual innovation, driven by needs within the mission. During the first years of MINUSMA's existence, the Secretary-General reports discussed mobility mainly as a practical issue linked to the lack of air assets. However, the Secretary-General report of September 2014 had already described efforts to "expand the Mission outreach" through "mobile approaches" (S/2014/692, 13). The following year, another Secretary-General report spoke of "[a] qualitative rather than a quantitative approach" for "mobility and flexibility […] that can be sustained in remote areas" (S/2015/426, 15). The same report informed that MINUSMA was preparing "innovative 'survivability packages' to improve the operational status of some contingents", adding that "in the longer term […] non-performing units will have to be reviewed and replaced" to achieve "robust flexibility and mobility" (S/2015/426, 15).

For MINUSMA, the urgency of mobility came with the expansion of the mandate, in 2019. In April 2019, then Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Annadif spoke of a "change of mentality" towards more mobility and patrolling outside of camp, since "we are facing an asymmetrical war where the enemy is invisible, where the enemy is mobile, where the enemy has no boundaries" (quoted in Assemblée Nationale 2021, 103). The first mention of mobility in a UNSC resolution on MINUSMA comes a couple of months later, in June 2019 (S/RES/2480 [2019], 8), when the UNSC calls for the mission to "take mobile, flexible, robust and proactive steps to protect civilians", especially in "high-risk areas." A paragraph on the importance of mobility for POC is thereafter included in all subsequent MINUSMA resolutions (S/RES/2531 [2020], 9; S/RES/2584 [2021], 11; S/RES/2640 [2022], 17).

Leadership and Command

Following standard procedure for Quick Reaction Forces (QRF), the MTF units were at first placed directly under FC/FHQ, with a Forward Command Post (FCP) becoming a part of the FHQ based in Gao (UN DPO 2020c; Swedish Armed Forces 2021b; S/2021/519, 14; interview 10). The FCP was "to deploy with the mobile task force to command this enhanced element for the time of the intervention" (S/2020/223, 13). A similar model had been tried out during the above-mentioned Operation Folon, in the spring of 2019 (interview 3; interview 11).

However, in this initial arrangement, the command and control relationships between FHQ Bamako, FCP Gao, and the Sector HQs were not fully sorted out (interview 6). The FCP was short-lived, replaced with an MTF command, following "lessons learned" from the Mongoose operation (S/2021/519, 14; on Mongoose, see S/2020/952, 14). Thereby, a new level of command was formed, directly under the Force Commander (interview 10). Swedish Colonel Marcus Höök headed the MTF command between January 2021 and January 2022, and was succeeded by Colonel Reza MD Mohasin, from Bangladesh.

At first, the MTF command was made up of military observers, who were to be re-hatted into Military Staff (interview 6; S/2019/983, 11). These were gradually replaced, as around forty officers were recruited directly to the MTF command (interview 4; interview 6). Creating a team of officers recruited for the designated task of leading the MTF was decisive for promoting a new mindset centred on the intention to conduct military operations (interview 6). The purpose of the new command was thus "operational mobility; a command that can lead tactically and operationally in field; that is not behind a desk…" (interview 8). According to the Secretary General report of June 2021 (S/2021/519, 14), the reorganisation was done to "strengthen unity of effort and command across the area of operations." However, even under the MTF flag, some ambiguity remained concerning the command and control hierarchy (interview 14). The Swedish contingent occasionally carried out operations for the Sector, when Sector resources were insufficient and the FHQ so permitted (interview 4; interview 14; interview 2). Although "it is easiest to have one boss", there is no indication in the interviews that the contingent faced a doubling of tasks and demands (interview 2; interview 8). Once the MTF command was established, the units were not supposed to be available at all for tasks from the sector (interview 3).

The military leadership has an important role in promoting a mindset that helps to achieve the goals of a mission. This role can be expected to be particularly important when a change in mindset is sought for, as is the case with the MTF (interview 6). Mobility will hardly materialise, unless the entire chain of command in a mission agrees that it is desirable. The fact that a considerable share of MINUSMA's resources has been static reflected that "[t]he mindset, the will to do something, was missing" (interview 3). Some peacekeepers had "quite

bad self-confidence", although they were superior to the armed groups, both in terms of equipment and training (interview 3). To enable mobility, the threat perception had to be modified. A "fundamental misconception" of threats had fed a passive, reactive approach among many, though not all, MINUSMA units (interview 3). MINUSMA's leadership thus sought to get the message through that a proactive approach is compatible with force protection, indeed more so than staying in camp. Most attacks have targeted camps and logistics convoys, which in the worst case are "sitting ducks" (interview 10), rather than units that are out on operations. Through a proactive, unpredictable approach, MINUSMA can gain an advantage over antagonists (interview 11). This includes tactical adaptation, such as driving in the terrain, rather than on the IED-scattered roads (interview 2). Indications are that these efforts succeeded in modifying the mindset among peacekeepers in MINUSMA, as well as within the UN system (interview 3; interview 11). However, the message had to be repeated for each new rotation (interview 3).

Moreover, the mindset that unpredictability is a form of force protection only holds if peacekeepers are equipped and trained to handle threat exposure during operations, especially since these may include direct confrontation with terrorist groups. An unpredictable modus operandi is advisable, but it must not replace efforts to operate proactively against threats, for instance IEDs. According to one respondent, despite the priority given to risk in UNSC resolutions, "what MINUSMA does well is to convey condolences, but then they continue as if nothing had happened" (interview 4).

Culture

> The approaches required for combat and peace keeping are as different as night and day. (Noyes 1995, 2)

To have a mindset for mobility in a UN mission is a balancing act. Awareness of the values and standard operating procedures associated with the UN must exist alongside a readiness to approach the task robustly and proactively. The MTF brought together highly skilled units, with recent experience from NATO operations, but less so from UN peacekeeping. The Swedish, British, Jordanian, and German armed forces have all had formative experiences from the NATO-led operations in Afghanistan, the Balkans, and Libya. Noyes (1995, 9) proposes that "going from a combat mindset to a peace keeping one, without some retraining is exceptionally difficult." It is one thing to measure up to NATO standards, another to deliver on "softer" UN priorities (interview 1). TCCs primed by NATO's ISAF operation in Afghanistan risk going through a double culture shock in Mali: first, Mali "is not Afghanistan" (interview 5); second, UN standards and NATO standards are very different (interview 12).

In Mali, it can be extremely hard to distinguish antagonists from civilians, as TAGs often hide among civilians and are not easily detectible by uniforms or

other conventional combatant attributes. In addition, there is a possibility to encounter child soldiers (S/2022/493, 17). For a concept that aims at combining robustness with proactive POC, these factors call for tactical adaptation.

Moreover, coming to a UN mission with an "ISAF mindset" (Karlsrud and Smith 2015, 15) can lead to frustration with UN rules and procedures. For instance, the UN system for airlifting units is "quite cumbersome" (interview 2), and air support requests must be made with more forewarning than in a NATO context (Novosseloff 2017, 18). One way to moderate clashes in mindsets is to provide pre-deployment training on the nature of UN peacekeeping, both its values and procedures. One example given in the interviews is the Jordanian special forces deployed to the MTF. Whereas they had brand-new equipment and were well suited for the task, in terms of military skills, their pledge was accepted only once they had undergone training focusing on the UN mindset (e.g., "POC, soft power community engagement", interview 1).

The highly bureaucratic character of a UN peace operation sometimes clashes with a mindset of mobility and flexibility. Although the MTF was purposely created and sanctioned from the top nodes of MINUSMA and UN DPO, it was not recognised as an "authorised actor" in the pre-existing formal orders and routines (interview 6). Establishing which tools and methods were legally within the mandate became a big issue for the MTF, partly because the civilian pillar had a preference for diplomatic means (interview 6).

Somewhat paradoxically, informal solutions tend to become important in a system that contains many formal hurdles. The hierarchy of documents, from security council resolutions, handbooks, and strategic reviews, to Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and Standard of Unit Requirements (SUR), which guide UN peace operations, give an impression of a rules-based centralised order. However, there is a considerable de facto space for individuals to interpret and operationalise these. Moreover, realities on the ground sometimes require reacting quickly in situations that have not been foreseen or that are too urgent to allow for following protocol. Such pragmatic circumventions often emerge from personal relationships (e.g., interview 6) and thus tend to be highly dependent on individuals. Informal solutions are a way to make things work in a system that is too slow for its own good, but they tend to be short-lived and can be questioned from an accountability perspective.

Finally, the change from a high-profile ISR unit equipped with advanced technical sensors to an infantry contribution occurred at a time when the Swedish Armed Forces was intensifying its reprioritisation of traditional national defence over international tasks. With war in its own neighbourhood, the mindset in the Swedish military sector had turned away from international missions. As elaborated by respondents in Schmidt (2021), and confirmed in interviews for this study, there have been frustrations over a lack both of support and recognition from home of the importance of the MTF's mission. The budget for

the infantry company was significantly lower than the one for the ISR contribution (see Swedish Armed Forces 2022d, expense post 1.2, 2015–2022). For the MTF to reach its mobility goals, the deployments would likely have had to have been much more costly and, optimally, include their own air assets. As put by one respondent: "If you are demanding highly mobile force, be ready to pay for it" (interview 12).

A side-effect of the allegedly low level of interest from home was that the Swedish contingents had considerable freedom when it came to the conduct of operations. According to one respondent, the situation was the opposite for the British unit: they had support from home, but also needed to get approval from there for everything (interview 14).

3.2 Capabilities

As discussed in the previous section, a mindset for mobility was articulated in various UN documents and speeches in the years preceding the creation of the MTF. However, MINUSMA has long had trouble 'walking the talk' and making the concrete operational changes necessary to implement strategic pledges (see the discussion in Assemblée Nationale 2021, 103). The MTF was to bring a mobile mindset to life, and doing so required a substantial capability boost (see Gyllensporre in Swedish Armed Forces 2020b).

Tailored units

Through a combination of "tailored units" (UN Press 2020), "draw[ing] synergies from each other's differences" (interview 14), the MTF was to establish quick presence, deter antagonists, and deliver the desired effects on POC in a quickly evolving conflict. The Secretary General report of March 2020 (S/2020/223, 13) speaks of "the establishment of a mobile task force to respond to emerging situations, thereby enabling the Mission to mobilize at any given time required capabilities." The MTF was thought of as a system within the system, bringing together infantry, ISR, military enablers, specialised ground units, and increased air mobility (UN DPO 2020c). The bar was set high: the units were expected to conduct proactive operations, Mali-wide, including in austere locations and up to 30 days (UN DPO 2020c, 46).

All three MTF units deployed to Gao (the Swedish MIC-R, the British LRRG, and the Jordanian QRF) had Standard of Unit Requirements (SUR) permitting, in principle, Mali-wide operations (interview 6). Hence, they had no defined geographical area of responsibility or formal national caveats restricting their operational reach (interview 6; interview 8). The Swedish government proposals during the MTF period explicitly state that the "Swedish contribution can be used in MINUSMA's entire operational area" (Government of Sweden 2019, 16; also Government of Sweden 2021, 1).

Whereas MTF sought to innovate UN peacekeeping, it did so building on a classical peacekeeping capability: infantry. As noted by Gyllensporre (in Africa Defence Forum 2021; see UN DPO 2020a), "[p]eacekeeping pretty much revolves around infantry battalions being within the communities." MTF has "realigned infantry units as the primary manoeuvre elements" (S/2019/454, 13, §79). For infantry to be mobile in an environment where antagonists use increasingly sophisticated techniques to obstruct their manoeuvres (e.g., through IEDs, drones, burning bridges) (interview 7), reliable means of ground transportation are key. To achieve high tactical mobility, that is, manoeuvre during operations, a combination of heavy and light vehicles is advantageous (interview 4).

Units that have very heavy vehicles can only travel by road and are therefore easier targets of IEDs[10] and direct attacks from TAGs (interview 4). The British long-range unit mainly relied on lighter vehicles, including open ones, which permitted more flexible manoeuvre in the terrain (interview 4). However, a downside of the lighter vehicles is that they increase the exposure to tough weather and thus the risk of heat stroke (interview 4). Moreover, since "agile ATVs" (all-terrain vehicles) carry only a few people each, around 10 vehicles would be needed to move a platoon, which means that the peacekeepers will "raise dust" and risk their security cover (interview 1).

The Swedish unit also operated in terrain, enabling a less predictable behaviour; "if they do not see us there is no threat" (interview 14). The Swedish contingent relied heavily on RG 32 terrain vehicles [*Swedish*: 'Galtar'], which, apart from transportation during operations, also carried supplies (ammunition, water, food) (interview 14). The RG32s wore out from the heavy use (already in Sector West); they got stuck and broke down (interview 8; interview 14). One respondent pointed out that dedicating a few terrain trucks for supplies would have reduced the wear and tear on the RG 32s, as well as made them lighter and thereby increasing mobility (interview 14; also interview 13).

However, the MTF did not only seek to evade antagonists, but to proactively deter them through the show of force or – if needed – use of force. In comparison to other MINUSMA peacekeepers, the MTF troops indeed displayed a violence capacity that had great potential for deterrence. The antagonists avoided the Swedish unit, knowing that they would "get a beating" in case of direct confrontation (Niklas in Swedish Armed Forces 2023d, 1.22-1.27). The Swedish peacekeepers were to "put fear in those who wish us ill" (Contingent Commander Andersson in Swedish Armed Forces 2023c, 12:22-12.24).

[10] The internal strategic review of January 2023 estimates that IED-related casualties have increased by 71 percent since 2015, with 13 fatalities in 2022 (S/2023/36, 3).

Operational record

The MTF units in Sector East have been less mobile than initially intended, mainly operating in the proximity of Gao. What was supposed to be the first real in-field trial of the MTF concept did not work out as planned. Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom were going to take part in operation Mongoose III, but their participation was cancelled due to doubts over the UN's CASEVAC chain, which the MTF was supposed to rely on (see Smith 2022, 15). This meant that other TCCs had to be activated to fulfil tasks that were envisaged for the MTF (interview 11). That Bangladesh and Senegal, among others, stepped in to cover for the Western elite units became a talking matter within the UN (interview 11; see Ullah 2021). In MINUSMA, there are "those who bleed and those who remain [in camp]" (interview 11).

Moreover, in view of the novelty of the MTF, it was not entirely clear how the Swedish deployment was to be used, or what Sweden had committed to deliver to the UN (interview 2; interview 13; interview 14). One Standard of Unit Requirement (SUR) had been signed, which stated that the Swedish contribution should be able to operate self-sufficiently outside of camp, with a tactical operative base in the desert, for 30 days (Schmidt 2021, 46; interview 14). In practice, the contingent did not have the resources to do so (interview 2; interview 9; Schmidt 2021, 46). Eventually it "boiled down to seven days", "close to camp", which was not what the UN had been promised (interview 14). Discussions on what to expect from the Swedish contingent in terms of mobility re-emerged when staff changed at the FHQ or at the MTF command (interview 13).

Yet, the MTF has stood for some important operational progress. At the time of the MTF's creation, the UN's planning period "was not more than a week; the TAGs played the [UN's] fiddle" (interview 6). A year later, around the time that a new FC, Dutch General Kees Matthijssen, arrived, this reactive pattern had been broken and the "planning horizon" for the MTF significantly expanded to include both follow-up and new operations (interview 6). Moreover, although the Swedish unit never became a Mali-wide resource, it had a high level of operational activity in Sector East (e.g. interview 8; interview 9).

The first joint operational experience of MTF East became Operation Meerkat, which took place in April/May 2021, around Ansongo-Intellit-Tessit. close to Gao (S/2021/520, 2; S/2021/844, 14–15). The Swedish, British, and German units carried out three short operations simultaneously, but in different locations (interview 2), with the Germans providing logistical support. The purpose of the operation was to stabilise the security situation and support civil society, by disturbing TAGs, as well as "establishing MTF as a concept" (interview 2). Concrete action taken during the Meerkat operation included searching three villages and collecting weapons and other lethal equipment (MINUSMA 2021-05-06).

When the concept was tried out in operations in the field, even if closer to base than initially envisaged, its usefulness was confirmed (e.g., interview 11; interview 14). In October 2021, the Secretary General report noted:

> Through its mobile task force, the MINUSMA force has improved its mobility across its operational area and its ability to respond more quickly. The ability of the mobile task force units to deploy quickly and respond to security situations throughout the theatre of operations has significantly enhanced the way that the MINUSMA force operates. Its agility and flexibility to intervene in remote areas has contributed to reassuring the local population and deterring the activities of terrorist armed groups. (S/2021/844, 14)

The combined capabilities made it possible for the MTF to go where the UN had hitherto never been, establishing UN presence in previously TAG-ruled areas (interview 6). To take one example, it was possible, with the help of UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) and helicopters, for the MTF to reach north of Tessit, where TAGs were fighting over control of mineral findings (interview 6). The MTF conducted operations there, some together with the Malian Armed Forces (FAMa), and could plot where the mines and areas of excavation were located (interview 6). Overall, most MTF operations have taken place in Sector East, including towards the three-nation border in Liptako-Gourma (interview 6).

Between June and November 2021, the MTF carried out a sustained three-step protection/security operation, called Makara, in the area around Ménaka and Ansongo. On the evening of 8 August 2021, at least 58 civilians were massacred in several villages in the Ouattagouna municipality, south of Ansongo. Already the next morning, MTF units were deployed there to protect the population against any new atrocities, facilitate access to basic services, bring stability, and render investigations possible (S/2022/8, 2-3; MINUSMA 2021-08-12). In coordination with FAMa, the MTF stayed to patrol and surveil the villages day and night, both on the ground and in the air (MINUSMA 2021-08-12; MINUSMA 2021-08-26; MINUSMA 2021-09-30; MINUSMA 2021-11-04). Due to its "robust posture", the MTF managed to significantly decrease hostile activities. Unfortunately, this effect did not last, as "extremist violence and criminality increased following the withdrawal of the unit" (S/2022/8, 2–3). For sustainable POC to be realistic, MINUSMA would in fact need to be vested with much more resources, both in terms of troops and equipment. For as long as this is not within reach, mobile peacekeeping can give some breathing space to populations under threat. The value of being able to resume daily activities – going to school or to the hospital, or even smoking cigarettes and playing music – is arguably significant even if it is temporary (Fracasso and Hübel, in Swedish Armed Forces 2023b, 8.08-8.18).

Unit integration

Whereas each of the MTF units brought sought-for capabilities to MINUSMA, the real capability gain in the service of mobility was to come from synergies

between different units. Operations involving several TCCs occur in MINUSMA, but they have usually been "separated in time and/or geographically" (Contingent Commander Löfvenborg, in Swedish Armed Forces 2021c). The MTF units were set up to operate together "in time and space, towards a common goal" (Contingent Commander Löfvenborg, in Swedish Armed Forces 2021c). Building interoperability through cooperation was also one of the strategic goals for the Swedish deployment to MINUSMA (e.g., Government of Sweden 2019, 15).

Since the start of operational activities, in 2021, the MTF has developed from a situation where each unit was mainly in its own "bubble", to one where units were conducting some joint operations (interview 14). Respondents were generally positive about cooperation between units (e.g., interview 2; interview 9). That the Germans provided helicopter support, although there was no formal agreement, was highly appreciated (interview 2). When the Swedish and British units received extra maintenance and logistical support from the Germans, their time on field operations could be doubled (interview 6).

However, during the MTF's brief life span, the different units did not reach the point of being a fully integrated task force (interview 5). The MTF command stood for broad operational planning and coordination of effort, directing an "open question" to individual units concerning their capacity and availability to contribute to a specified purpose within a certain time frame (interview 6). However, at least to begin with, each nation led its own units during operations when they were under way (interview 2; interview 4).

For a mobility concept such as the MTF, operating in a high-threat environment, air assets are important not only as enablers but as capabilities in their own right. Armed helicopters, for instance, are in themselves a "show of force" during operations, which is crucial both for deterrence and force protection purposes. As noted in the Secretary General report for October–December 2021, "the chronic lack of aerial assets and personnel hinders the Mission's ability to increase its deterrent activities and operations" (S/2021/1117, 9). That the MTF is "stuck in Sector East" is directly linked to the shortage of aerial assets, especially armed helicopters and supporting UAVs. Without air support, TCCs are reluctant to conduct operations in field (interview 4; interview 12).

There are other ways to draw synergies from capabilities than through joint operations. Intelligence is a crucial piece in the MTF's mobility puzzle, which does not build on operating side-by-side. To be proactive requires being able to anticipate developments that are around the corner. This, in turn, is only possible if you have access to relevant information (reasoning in interview 7). The MTF was expected to go where threats emerge, and then "one has to know where to put the cards" (interview 14). In an environment with a high threat level, mobility that is not supported by intelligence is not recommendable, as it can be both dangerous and ineffective, or even counterproductive. Apart from providing

indications of evolving and urgent threats, intelligence may enlighten peacekeepers about the situation in villages, including sentiments towards the UN. This is important to adapt operational behaviour and expectations (interview 4).

In its early days, MINUSMA set up an innovative intelligence function to supply the entire mission with sophisticated analyses of emerging threats, not the least to enable proactive POC (see Hellquist and Tidblad-Lundholm 2022). However, even when intelligence units succeeded in pinpointing a threat, MINUSMA often lacked the troops willing and able to proactively move towards the threat. During the time of SWE ISR TF, in Sector West, the absence of units with capabilities to deliver operational effects produced much frustration. The MTF addressed this problem by aligning highly capable mobile infantry closely with an ISR task force and a long-range reconnaissance unit. The MTF units were expected to have such capabilities that they would be willing and able to conduct operations based on intelligence.

Yet, assessments diverge on whether MINUSMA has come closer to collecting and sharing actionable intelligence, ultimately resulting in intelligence-driven operations. According to some respondents, considerable progress has been made (interview 4; interview 6; interview 11). There are, nowadays, "many mechanisms" to access information of relevance to conduct field operations (interview 4). One concrete example is how the MTF, breaking new ground in UN peacekeeping, could follow suspected TAGs with the help of UAVs, and thereby conduct targeted search operations (interview 6). However, another respondent deemed the pace of development to have been "scarily low", with intelligence still mostly being shared bilaterally, or trilaterally (interview 14). Reservations to sharing intelligence with within the mission are familiar from the Swedish ISR TF in Timbuktu.

Moreover, being without their own intelligence analysts was a problem for the Swedish unit (interview 8). In contrast to other Swedish deployments, for instance to Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Liberia, the MTF unit had no "generic intelligence function", only drones for their own force protection (interview 14). Nonetheless, the Swedes were still associated with the ISR task force, hence, they sometimes met expectations that the Swedish unit would still possess sophisticated ISR assets (interview 8).

The German ISR TF was expected to operate as a mission-wide resource (interview 4; interview 9; interview 11). The two German Heron drones were force assets that in theory were supposed to cover the entire operational area, though this was "practically impossible" (interview 10). Instead, the German UAV system played an important role for the MTF when operating in Sector East.

Surveillance via different types of drones can expand the patrolling range, facilitate a common operating picture and provide real-time information during

operations (interview 5, Sgt Johansson in Savage 2022). During an operation in July 2021, the German forces “delivered a live feed of the operational environment”, via its Heron UAV system, to British and Swedish peacekeepers moving in their Foxhound and RG32 vehicles (Löfvenborg in Savage 2022). Armed groups are also exploiting new technologies; some now have access to drones and use them prior to attacks on MINUSMA (interview 10; see Haugstvedt 2020).

According to one respondent, the flow of intelligence from GE ISR TF was at first limited, but took off after a serious incident in which injured Germans were helped by Swedish medical staff (interview 14). At least for some time, the Swedish and German contingents operated in different parts of the sector, thus diminishing the prospect of feedback between units leading to intelligence-driven operations (interview 13). Other respondents described a well-functioning interaction, in which the Swedish contingent received intelligence directly from GE ISR TF (interview 8; interview 2). As Section 3.4 elaborates, in the autumn of 2022 unmanned ISR flights were put to a halt, as the Malian authorities denied flight permissions. Whereas some flights were resumed towards the end of 2022, having a sustainable agreement with the host authorities is imperative for intelligence-based operations to be possible.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic stalled the emergence of potential capability synergies. For the Swedish peacekeepers, the requirement of taking two leaves during deployment was retained, although contingents made efforts to adapt to the pandemic circumstances by having only one leave. This implied new quarantine periods upon return to the mission area and less personnel available for operations. Sweden stood out in this regard; the German and British contingents cancelled their leave trips during the pandemic (Schmidt 2021, 46; interview 2; interview 14). The fact that a significant share of the contingent was missing affected both operational results and the relationship to other TCCs negatively (interview 2).

To make the MTF into one true ‘task force’, where units begin operating together shortly after arriving to the mission, joint pre-deployment training would be helpful (interview 1). Joint training in a spirit of “train as you fight” is familiar from the NATO context, for instance operations in Afghanistan. By contrast, in the UN, training is a national responsibility (interview 1; interview 5). Contingent Commander Löfvenborg has similarly pointed out “insufficient collective training” as being an obstacle for cooperation between units in Mali (in Savage 2022).

In sum, what the MTF concept requires bears resemblance to an “expeditionary capability”, where units can deploy “on short notice to austere locations and being capable of immediately conducting operations” (United States Department of the Army 2017). For this to be possible, units need to have “a level of initial self-sufficiency” (Gayler 2018, 2). However, the MTF contingents were

deployed as rather slimmed units that were expected to rely on UN enablers, rather than equipped with resources for self-sufficiency commensurate to the task. In this sense, the organisation of enablers in MINUSMA was a capability deficit for the MTF. The next section elaborates on the role of three types of enablers for mobility: logistics, air assets, and CASEVAC.

3.3 Enablers

Just as has been the case for other types of military operations throughout history, mobility in peacekeeping depends on having the right equipment for the environment and reliable access to the necessary supplies. As discussed in the previous section, the MTF was rather small in troop size, but in possession of relevant frontline capabilities. However, for these units to achieve the intended level of mobility, a long chain of supporting functions would be necessary (interview 12). Accordingly, sourcing enablers was given high priority in MINUSMA's force adaptation plan. Nonetheless, as of December 2022, "many were still missing" (S/2023/36, 9). The MTF has had both the muscles and the mind for mobility, but this is not enough when the road gets flooded: "you do not get anywhere" (interview 14). Indeed, during the rain period, the MTF was limited to conducting short air-bound operations, saving "more ambitious operations" for times of drought (interview 6).

Logistics

Mobility in a PKO setting is strongly affected by how well the logistics chain is adapted to the climatic and infrastructural conditions in the mission area (interview 7), as well as to the level and types of threats (interview 12). The operational environment in Mali is extraordinarily difficult in this regard. A large, landlocked country with mostly inaccessible terrain, poor infrastructure, high IED incidence, extreme temperatures, reoccurring flooding, and seasonal desert storms, Mali is a hard test for logistics.

Recognition of these challenges was part of the impetus for the creation of the MTF. Mobility could not emerge spontaneously within existing mission parameters, but had to be conceptualised and actively enabled. However, the logistics team at the Department of Operational Support already had reservations about the concept at the stage of drafting MTF (interview 3). According to one respondent, the UN's civilian-run logistics system is old-fashioned, formed after the traditional mission model, where there is a peace agreement, a demilitarised zone that the UN supervises, and a few UN camps, to which, and only to which, logistics are delivered (interview 6; cf UN DPO 2022b). Consequently, "the entire logistical support system is not there to support operations" (interview 3). Thus, there was no way to "deliver to the desert where the units were…this only happened with the unit's own resources" (interview 6). At the same time, the mobile units tend to be slim, perhaps even "too slim" (interview 4). This can be an impediment to mobility unless cooperative solutions are found, for instance regarding logistical support.

In Mali, mobility is “a big challenge to all TCCs, and also for the citizenry” (interview 12). Even travelling on-road is very slow, and vehicles regularly get stuck in the desert terrain (interview 1). Despite the importance that infrastructure has for PKOs to be able to fulfil their demanding mandates, including through increased mobility (interview 14), the UN is not involved in building roads or runways (interview 5).

MINUSMA’s supply lines are very long. The convoys that sustain mission bases can take up to a month to reach the furthest localities (S/2023/36, 9), and their movements are highly predictable (interview 14). Besides being an impediment to the mission’s effectiveness, the unwieldy convoys are a huge force protection problem: “Since July 2013, 548 improvised explosive device attacks have targeted MINUSMA, killing 103 and wounding 638 uniformed personnel” (S/2023/36, 9). As in many other matters, the level of protection for the vehicles is higher among countries with “economic muscles” than among TCCs from Africa (interview 4).

The MTF was set up in Sector East, but within its Mali-wide instruction it was expected to conduct operations in Sector Centre, where MINUSMA’s capabilities were insufficient and the security crisis escalating (interview 8). The ‘super camp’ in Gao was considered most suitable for hosting the MTF, infrastructure-wise (interview 6). By the spring of 2020, the Malian Government had agreed to allocate “an additional 49.45 ha” to Gao (S/2020/223, 13). Nonetheless, getting the camp set up became a source of delay for the MTF (interview 3). Moreover, the lack of logistical support available to facilitate movements between sectors has made some units refuse to go to the Centre (interview 4).

As Dahl (2021) refers to in some detail, vulnerabilities in supplies extended to such a fundamental matter as access to bottled water (also interview 3). At the camp, the German hosts were responsible for delivering bottled water, whereas the UN was in charge of water during mobile operations. The water supplied by the UN was not bottled, however, and dismissed as “potentially lethal” (Dahl 2021, 33). According to Dahl (2021, 33), “[t]he solution was to help the Germans with different ‘chores’ around the camp, and in return the Swedish contingent hoped they could stretch the water allocation so that clean, bottled water could be brought on operations”.

Contingent Commander Löfvenborg (in Savage 2022) provided another example of how problems with basic supplies obstructed operational performance. When out on duty 250 km away from the camp, the Swedish unit requested additional food, water and fuel to be able to continue the operation. The FC accepted, but the civilian pillar rejected the request, for cost reasons. As a result, the operation had to end earlier than intended.

Air assets

Rotary-wing assets, a.k.a. helicopters, have been under-dimensioned for the mission's needs since the beginning of MINUSMA (e.g., Smith 2022; UN DPO 2020c, 47). Nonetheless, air assets are an integral part of the MTF concept, envisaged as a fundamental mobility enhancer for the infantry battalions. The Secretary-General report of May 2019 (S/2019/454, 13) specified that "helicopters would be used to rapidly move small elements of the task force for the conduct of limited-scale operations or initiate operations of a longer duration".

However, in 2021, the whole of MINUSMA possessed only three transport helicopters, provided by Pakistan, and five attack helicopters, from El Salvador (Assemblée Nationale 2021, 104). For most of its transportation and evacuation, MINUSMA has procured civilian helicopters with a shorter reach (Assemblée Nationale 2021, 104; interview 6). Moreover, some of the private companies that supply the civilian helicopters refuse to fly to high-risk areas (interview 11). The response times of the UN helicopters were considered unreliable: "They were not to be trusted; [we] never go further out than that we can make it back on own resources" (interview 8; interview 13; cf. discussion in Novosseloff 2017).

Indeed, the failure to generate sufficient aerial assets, without gaps, has made some TCCs bring in their own resources (interview 2). In late 2021, the German unit rented helicopters from a commercial provider (Smith 2022, 33, note 72). After Barkhane's departure, this contract was replaced by the Bundeswehr's own military helicopters (interview 6). These only flew in the Sector East, where they became highly important to the MTF (interview 13). The UK also deployed resources of their own, an additional helicopter, within their at the time ongoing contribution to Opération Barkhane. Although in principle reserved for Barkhane, the British helicopter, together with the German helicopters, became "a lifeline" for MINUSMA (interview 6). The Swedish MTF deployment itself did not include any helicopters, likely for cost reasons (interview 9; interview 13). However, from February 2021 until the spring of 2022, the Swedish Armed Forces contributed a helicopter-borne rapid response force to the European Special Forces coalition, Task Force Takuba, based in Ménaka, circa 310 kilometres from Gao (Swedish Armed Forces 2021a).

In addition, Russia's war against Ukraine is influencing MINUSMA's access to aerial assets negatively. According to MINUSMA's head, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane (UN Web TV 2022), in October 2022 eight Russian-registered aircraft were grounded, due to sanctions. These may now only be employed in CASEVAC emergency situations. Moreover, many of the helicopters used in UN PKOs were made in Russia and Ukraine , which creates uncertainty about whether the spare part supply chain will be maintained ahead (interview 7).

The scarcity of air assets is a problem not only for MINUSMA, but for UN robust peacekeeping in general; indeed it has been called its "Achilles heel"

(Novosseloff 2017). Yet, air assets are the second most expensive item in the UN's peacekeeping budget, only superseded by personnel costs (Novosseloff 2017, 1). Moreover, there has been a tendency to underuse assets, in order to reduce costs. This goes especially for TCC-provided military helicopters, which are billed by the hour, whereas commercially contracted civilian helicopters often have a high fixed fee and low costs per mileage (Pece, in International Peace Institute 2018). Furthermore, air mobility goes beyond simply having access to an airplane or a helicopter, to training personnel, measuring how to fit equipment, making sure there is engineering capacity, fuel, and generators; taking into consideration the type of tarmac available and how it could be impacted by weather conditions (interview 1; interview 5).

CASEVAC

The UN is unable to guarantee CASEVAC and medical care at the level required by some TCCs within the specified time horizons. In consequence, the CASEVAC standards of the MTF units in Sector East have been a de facto major caveat hindering mobility (interview 6). The Swedish government proposals explicitly state that the Swedish contribution "adapts its activities to the availability of helicopters" and that "the lack of helicopters does not influence the medical standards but only the operational radius of the Swedish unit" (e.g., Government of Sweden 2021, 17). CASEVAC problems are both an actual failure of the UN and its member states, and an indication of how risk perception and expected medical standards vary between TCCs from different regions of the world.

Even if an appropriate level of airborne evacuation is guaranteed, a major issue is where to transport injured peacekeepers (interview 8). As long as Barkhane was in Mali, the MTF units relied on the French hospital in Gao, rather than the Chinese level-2 UN hospital (interview 11; interview 5; Smith 2022, 2, 15; Dahl 2021, 33; Bundeswehr 2023). After the French forces left, Germany upgraded its role-1 hospital to a role-2 facility, and began building a state-of-the-art-clinic, role 2+, at the camp in Gao (interview 9). The hospitals run by other MINUSMA units are not considered good enough, which puts increasing pressure on the insufficient means of quick transportation discussed above. The Swedish unit tried to solve this by bringing along its own Forward Surgical Team (FST) on operations. However, this was far from an optimal solution, since the FST would have had trouble to handle more than one casualty simultaneously (interview 13). Moreover, the dependency on the FST became an operational vulnerability, since whenever there was a vacancy in the FST, the unit was unable to operate further than two hours away from camp (Dahl 2021, 29, 33). Surgeons and anaesthesiologists are thus crucial staff for mobile peacekeeping to be possible (interview 8).

The fact that the UN's medical evacuation routines and medical facilities, including field hospitals, are not perceived as acceptable by all TCCs diminishes

the possibilities for mobility. However, not all TCCs view risk in the same way (interview 5). “It is different worlds that meet” (interview 4), and it is not a given whether the UN’s standards are too low or the requirements from Western TCCs are too high (interview 11; interview 4). The Swedish medical team had ruled out using the hospital in Niger (interview 4), even for uncomplicated medical cases. In a multinational UN operation, with most troops being contributed from the region, this selectivity provokes the question of “Why do you not trust us Africans?” (interview 4).

That medical and casualty evacuation is a major topic for European TCCs was well-known when the MTF was set up. Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom follow NATO’s 10-1-2 evacuation timeline, which states that first aid should be provided within ten minutes, care during transportation should be given by qualified medical staff within an hour, and surgery initiated within two hours. The two-hour requirement was especially challenging to fulfil (interview 2; interview 13).

As a part of MINUSMA’s strategic adaptation, the MTF units were expected to deliver a robust posture to high-risk areas, which implies that there was an imminent risk of injuries that require adequate medical care (interview 2). Yet, the mission did not manage to generate the enablers needed to reach operational goals (interview 3). The support chain was described with “circle diagrams with different ranges and helicopters, but these were only theoretical numbers that were impossible to implement” (interview 2). According to another respondent, “there was a gap of around 150 kilometres, which made it hard to advance on the ground” with the UN’s resources (interview 6). The price of this gap in enablers became clear in January 2021, when the German, Swedish, and British units all opted out from the first planned joint MTF operation in Sector Centre, because they would have had to depend on the UN CASEVAC system (Smith 2022; 15; interview 2; see Section 3.2).

3.4 Consent

> [T]he government is either feeling weak or feeling strong, that’s why they want to assert themselves in this regard. (Interview 5)

The launch of the MTF coincided with Mali’s amplified domestic political turbulence, which culminated in a military coup in August 2020 and yet another one in May 2021. Whereas the first coup did not lead to any major changes in the relationship between MINUSMA and the host government, after the second coup, also known as the ‘coup-in-the-coup’, the Malian authorities have changed their approach to the international military presence, including the UN mission. Meanwhile, the attitudes of the population towards MINUSMA have become increasingly critical, mirroring widespread disappointment that the UN has not managed to reverse the escalating security crisis. As this section demonstrates, limited consent is one expression of the increasingly complicated relationship between MINUSMA and the Malian host authorities.

Strategic agreement

Any military presence on Malian territory must be approved by local authorities. MINUSMA retained this basic consent until 16 June 2023, when Mali's Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop urged MINUSMA forces to "leave without delay" (Transitional Government of Mali 2023b).[11] MINUSMA's head, El-Ghassim Wane, called it "extremely challenging, if not impossible" for the mission to stay in Mali without the consent of the host country (UN Web TV 2023).

Episodes during 2022 had already indicated that the Malian authorities were rethinking the strategic consent they give to foreign deployments to the country. In January 2022, the Malian government claimed that the newly arrived Danish contribution to Task Force Takuba had entered the country without authorisation. Consequently, the Danish troops left the country within days (see, e.g., Munshi 2022). After a subsequent period of highly-pitched political rhetoric, from both the Malian and French sides, the French military presence in Mali was declared illegal in May 2022 (Le Cam 2022; on the "divorce" between Mali and France, see Gunnarson and Körling 2023). In July 2022, 49 Ivorian soldiers were arrested at the airport in Bamako, accused of illegal entry as mercenaries. Whereas UN communication on the status of these soldiers was somewhat ambiguous, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire (2022) claimed that they came to Mali as the eighth rotation of a National Support Element (NSE) to MINUSMA.[12] One consequence of this episode was that the Malian authorities froze all MINUSMA rotations for one month. Rotations were resumed in August 2022, after an agreement was reached that all requests would go through the Malian Foreign Affairs office (UN News 2022b).

Beyond formal consent, there have been longstanding cracks in the strategic agreement about what MINUSMA should be and do. The transitional government has deplored that although it is MINUSMA's "client", it has had little possibility to influence the direction the mission has taken (S/2023/36, 22). In the UN, France has had the lead on MINUSMA policy from the very beginning. In March 2023, the Malian government "officially reject[ed]" France as 'penholder' for UNSC resolutions, citing "acts of aggression, violation of our airspace, subversion and destabilization" (S/2023/161).

In January 2023, the transitional Malian regime demanded that MINUSMA prioritise "the security aspect of the mandate", which it argued "is a prerequisite" for the improvement of other issues, including human rights (S/2023/36, 23).

---

[11] Observers attribute this dramatic turn of events to a UN investigation publicised in May 2023, which claims that FAMa and "armed white men" are guilty of massacring 500 persons in the town of Moura in March 2023 (OHCHR 2023; Mcallister and Lewis 2023). Mali and Russia have denied these accusations.

[12] Three female soldiers were released in September 2022. 46 soldiers were sentenced in Malian Court to 20 years in prison for "attacking and plotting against the government" and "undermining the external security of the state"; 3 soldiers were sentenced to death, in absentia (Devine 2023). In January 2023, all soldiers were released (Transitional government of Mali 2023a).

MINUSMA was asked to avoid actions that, according to the transitional government, threaten national reconciliation, "including the politicization and instrumentalization of the human rights issue." That local elites are unenthusiastic about broader 'liberal' governance and human rights clauses, preferring material aid, is by no means unique to Mali. As argued by Johnston (2011, 174), "it is easier to sustain genuine consent for minimal goals."

Notably, in line with its call for a UN mission that prioritises hard security, the host state has, in principle, been in favour of MINUSMA's becoming more mobile. Despite its de facto obstruction of mobility, the Malian government has been calling for MINUSMA to "[c]hange its static posture, move out of the camps and engage in offensive actions and patrols" (S/2023/36, 23). Still in January 2023, the Malian government expected MINUSMA, within the authorised troop ceiling, to "plan jointly with the Malian Armed Forces to help to stabilize areas freed from the presence of extremist groups; provide rations and fuel, medical and casualty evacuations, transportation and logistics to the Malian Armed Forces and share intelligence with it; and construct and rehabilitate military infrastructure, especially in the centre" (S/2023/36, 10).

Cooperation

Interviews for this report indicate that for the first half of the MTF's short life, the relationship between MINUSMA and FAMa commanders was still good. In Gao, the contact between the different parts of MINUSMA and FAMa at first proceeded well even after the coups: "It was business as usual, we got our flight permissions" (interview 14; also interview 6; interview 8); "I have to focus on maintaining a good relationship with FAMa" (interview 4). The Swedish unit commanders were not involved with "the political side" in Mali, but took part in regular information-sharing meetings with FAMa and Barkhane (interview 2). These tripartite meetings ceased after the French forces left (interview 13).

Whereas some interaction between MINUSMA and Malian counterparts has continued locally, different formal procedures in the relationship between the mission and Malian authorities have become more complicated. So, for instance, the allocations of territory for mission infrastructure in Mopti and Timbuktu have become protracted affairs. According to the Internal Review (S/2023/36, 9), this is why, despite TCC pledges, no ISR unit has been deployed to Sector West since the departure of the Swedish TF (S/2023/36, 9). Likewise, although there are no explicit limitations on equipment, the processes for bringing in equipment have become much more demanding: the mission was placed in "the slow lane" at the airport, "filling out more forms" (interview 5).

Trust between MINUSMA and host country authorities has declined quickly and sharply. Under FC Gyllensporre, the mission specified "a line of effort that we call 'partnering,' to put more emphasis on supporting the national security forces and regional security forces for capacity-building" (Gyllensporre in Africa

Defence Forum 2021). By contrast, MINUSMA has begun to limit assistance to the Malian forces with reference to the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (S/2023/36, 6). In the making of the MTF concept, the topic of how to prepare for MINUSMA's orderly exit from Mali was "somewhere in the horizon" (interview 3). The idea, then, was that FAMa would gradually take over responsibility for security, thus leaving MTF as the last boots on the ground, supporting the political side.

Even as political tension increased, commanders of FAMa and MINUSMA sometimes found decentralised solutions to the demands for submitting formal requests (interview 4). Restrictions and bureaucratic procedures were bypassed through interpersonal contacts, keeping the high politics at arm's length. As reasoned by one respondent:

> Don't fight the setting. We have to accept that the partner [FMP] is here now, so that we can do as much as possible out of the mandate. (Interview 4)

Such decentralised pragmatism was a way for MINUSMA to stay relevant in the short term, including by better meeting urgent POC needs through mobility. However, it did not solve the mission's bigger dilemma, of being mandated to support a host government that lacks electoral legitimacy and local forces that break international humanitarian law.

Access to the territory

Since late 2021, new procedures for approving air and ground movements have begun to directly impede MINUSMA's mobility (interview 12; interview 11), to the extent that it became "quite problematic" to try out a concept such as the MTF (interview 10). Starting in November–December 2021, MINUSMA was requested to preannounce its flights and, around the same time, the Malian government established no-fly areas in the Centre (interview 6). This coincided with the arrival on Malian soil of "over 1000 personnel and military equipment" from Russian private military company (PMC) Wagner (United States Federal Aviation Administration 2022). MINUSMA was made subject to a pre-approval process of several steps, providing "micro-details about the missions: when, where and why are you going?" to be allowed entry into Malian airspace (interview 4; see Transitional Government of Mali in S/2023/36, 26). Between early October and mid-December 2022, 237 of MINUSMA's flight requests, 218 of which referred to drones, were denied or left unanswered (S/2023/21, 12). Towards the end of 2022, a new procedure was agreed that appeared to have improved the situation for ISR unmanned flights (S/2023/21, 12). However, restrictions have remained in areas where the Malian Armed Forces are operating (S/2023/21, 12). Being without reliable flight permits has both harmed MINUSMA's operational capacity and the force protection of those whom, even under these circumstances, are in-field, e.g., convoys that have been deprived of

their ISR unmanned aviation support (S/2022/446, 13; S/2023/21, 12; on restrictions and force protection, see S/2023/36, 9).

During approximately the same period, the mission also faced limits on its ground movements, with peacekeepers and civilian MINUSMA representatives being denied entry into areas where they were to conduct human rights investigations or assessment missions after attacks, or (S/2022/446, 13; S/2023/36, 8; interview 10; interview 11). In mid-May 2022, MINUSMA was refused entry to Djenné, in Mopti, where peacekeepers had been deployed to secure the weekly market (Baché 2022). A MINUSMA officer interviewed by Radio France Internationale (RFI) claimed that the reason was that FAMa wished to "operate in full discretion" alongside Wagner (Baché 2022). The Secretary General report of October 2022 mentioned 27 episodes in which MINUSMA's movement had been stalled by the Malian forces (16/27 cases), the gendarmerie (4/27 cases), the local population (5/27 cases), and the Dozo militia[13] (2/27 cases) (S/2022/731, 12). Whereas the direct restrictions on movement have been fairly limited in number, "they tend to occur where protection needs are critical, and thus they undermine the Mission's ability to respond pre-emptively or quickly to protection of civilians concerns" (S/2023/36, 9; also S/2022/731, 16).

For a transitory government that seeks popular legitimacy on the basis of being the champion of Malian sovereignty (rather than through the ballot box), it is not farfetched to assert full control over its territory and air space (for a similar reasoning, see Lupel in International Peace Institute 2018). After all, the movement of military equipment and staff, in particular the use of ISR assets (interview 11; see Hellquist and Tidblad-Lundholm 2022) is a highly sensitive matter, not only in Mali. As discussed by Fiott (2017), there are important "physical, legal, and regulatory barriers" to military transportation between European countries, as well, despite the Schengen Agreement and NATO's collective defence clause.

The Malian government has rejected the description that there are "restrictions", and denied that it obstructs MINUSMA's freedom of movement. The government's version is that movement requests have been denied, "as they [MINUSMA] did not respect the procedure agreed upon by both parties" (S/2023/264, 6). One respondent referred to a conversation he had had with Malian representatives who said that "we only want to have control over what enters and exits our country" (interview 4).

The reconfiguration of Malian security partnerships, with Russia replacing France as the main sponsor, is viewed as a major underlying factor in the new procedures regulating MINUSMA's daily movements. Already in the second quarter of 2021, a MINUSMA unit from Nepal who were investigating the scene

[13] The Dozo are traditional hunters, living across West Africa, some of whom have organised themselves in self-defence militias (see Hagberg 2019).

of an IED attack against FAMa, in Sector Centre, came across deceased persons who were Caucasian-looking and carrying Russian-brand cigarettes: “This was the first indication that they were on location in the operational area; they had patrolled with FAMa and died then” (interview 6). Since then, Wagner’s presence has expanded and there are numerous reports of their involvement in counterterrorism operations, alongside FAMa, as well as of war crimes against civilians (e.g., ACLED 2022; Human Rights Watch 2022, 2023; Thompson, Doxsee, and Bermudez Jr. 2022; S/2023/36, 6; S/2023/236, 10).

Next to sovereignty concerns, an explicit reason why mobility has been restricted is to avoid disturbances, or aerial encounters, during FAMa operations (S/2023/36, 9; interview 4; interview 11; Baché 2022). One respondent was convinced that “the answers [to flight requests] are directed from a country east of Finland”; he observed a “pattern” of rejected flight requests in areas where FAMa was known to be operating together with the so-called “foreign military partner” (interview 4).

In addition, the bad atmosphere has spilled over, including through deliberate disinformation campaigns, affecting the rapport between MINUSMA and the Malian population. According to the internal review of January 2023, three key “narratives” have taken hold: the mission is ineffective, it seeks to advance foreign rather than Malian interests, and it engages intentionally in “harmful activities” (S/2023/36, 10). That there is frustration about the mission’s results is understandable; MINUSMA has obviously not managed to live up to its encompassing mandate (see S/2023/36, 6). Governments come and go, but the trust or support of the local population must remain, if a PKO is to remain relevant and legitimate.

The UN tends to vest consent primarily with the host-state authorities, even if their legitimacy as representatives of the people may be questioned. As argued by de Coning (2021, 217), this gives the host state significant leverage: as it “is the only party that have provided consent, it is also the only party that can withdraw consent.” If the UN is to be active in a member state, it has an obligation and interest in maintaining a good relationship with host-state authorities. It does take two to tango. However, as discussed by Johnstone (2011, 176-177), the UN should be careful not to concede too much for “the mere right to be there.”

3.5 Summary

- A mobility-oriented mindset has permeated both MTF units and command. Despite facing continuous obstacles in an extremely challenging mission environment, the concept has made much progress during its relatively brief existence.
- Prior to joining a demanding mobility concept, it is essential that a shared understanding of tasks is reached between national HQs, the UN, and contingents. Otherwise, there is a risk that a discrepancy between expectations and actual conditions on the ground will materialise.
- In view of the homogeneity of MTF units in Sector East, and the concept's ambition to deliver units able to show force, it is crucial to balance the 'robust' mindset with awareness of the distinctiveness of UN peacekeeping in relation to other types of international military operations.
- Capability-wise, the MTF units have been apposite for mobility and have drawn mobility advantages from each other's distinct capability profiles. Thanks to their cooperation and robust posture, the MTF has managed to reach new areas, including where civilians faced urgent threats.
- Insufficient enablers have most decisively reduced the MTF's mobility level. A higher degree of self-sufficiency would have been necessary to fully implement the concept. Such an arrangement would, however, be more costly for TCCs, further raising the threshold for participation. In addition, equipping mobile troops with their own, specific and superior, enablers could create unfortunate cleavages within the mission.
- The scarcity of aerial assets in MINUSMA has reduced mobility in two interrelated ways: (i) operations cannot be planned around access to air transportation and air support; and (ii) CASEVAC requirements cannot be fulfilled. These two aspects alone are sufficient to puncture any chance of reaching the MTF's ambitious mobility goals.
- During the period of study, MINUSMA retained the legal consent of the transitionary authorities to be present in Mali. However, consent has been considerably weakened since 2022. The military-led government's criticism of both the content of, and process of deciding on, MINUSMA's strategic direction has mounted. However, until its request for the mission's withdrawal in June 2023, it has in principle been in favour of a more mobile MINUSMA.

- Despite growing tensions at the political level, some room for decentralised cooperation between MINUSMA and FAMa has remained during the period of study.
- However, issues involving the host state's approval for air and ground movements, especially of ISR assets, suggest that practical consent has been limited. Whether denials of movement requests were deliberate restrictions, or rather reflected procedural problems (as has been claimed by the Malian government), the limiting consequences for MINUSMA's mobility and operational performance have been significant.

4 Conclusions

This report has scrutinised ‘the why and the how’ of mobility in MINUSMA, from the perspective of its novel unit type: the Mobile Task Force (MTF). The present analysis finds that there is a highly convincing and intuitive case for mobility in contemporary robust peacekeeping. If these missions are to have any chance in living up to their demanding mandates, more peacekeepers have to be willing and able to leave the camp, and be provided the conditions to do so. Mobility is desirable, both out of simple mathematical necessity, since missions are expected to do more with the same number of people, and as part of a strategic adaptation to evolving and ever-more asymmetric conflict dynamics. By being mobile, peacekeepers demonstrate to the local population that they are not idle in an escalating security crisis, which is important for gaining their trust and building awareness of the UN’s efforts. As discussed in the beginning of this report, mobility links to a set of other qualities, enabling peacekeeping to become more agile, robust, flexible, and proactive. Efforts to increase mobility will continue to make sense for as long as these qualities are valued in relation to mission mandates.

Nonetheless, mobility is not a universal cure for all weaknesses and dilemmas of UN peacekeeping. Rather, opting for mobility implies choosing some qualities of peacekeeping over others. A central trade-off is between being able to react quickly to threats wherever they are, providing momentary security, and establishing the type of territorial connectivity that can protect civilians over time. As the UN consistently points out, the protection of civilians is primarily the responsibility of the host nation. However, in practice, the Malian state not only fails to protect its people, it is sometimes the perpetrator (see, e.g., ACLED 2021). The UN’s POC policy acknowledges that “state defence and security forces” and “state-sponsored armed actors” can threaten civilians (UN DPO 2019b, § 23), but, mobile or not, MINUSMA has limited possibilities to take action against state actors who do so. Moreover, in a mission environment where peacekeepers are the direct targets of terrorist attacks, it is hard to avoid that concerns for force protection limit mobility. As true as it may be that proactivity and unpredictability are a form of protection, without trust in the CASEVAC system, the operational reach will still be reduced. There are also downsides to building a concept around homogenous, predominantly ‘Western’, elite units. Whereas these possess the capabilities to live up to a mobile mindset, other TCCs might have a better understanding of local culture, languages, and conflict dynamics. This is familiar from when MINUSMA’s intelligence function started, when the all-Western club of intelligence specialists was less expert when it came to sociocultural aspects (see Hellquist and Tidblad-Lundholm 2022, 30, 63).

Furthermore, though it is clear *why* mobility is wanted, the study suggests that it has been less evident *how* the desired level of mobility can be attained. A

peacekeeping operation is a complex and vulnerable system, with many indispensable constituent parts. Mobility requires that the full system, from the strategic leadership to the CASEVAC routines to the means of transportation and down to the mobile kitchen, works without hiccups. The MTF suffered from a highly problematic discrepancy between an ambitious conceptual design and unfavourable conditions on the ground. In particular, the absence of reliable enablers within the mission rendered the motto of Mali-wide mobility impracticable. The weaknesses in logistical and air support should have been possible to foresee and handle, or expectations adapted accordingly. In addition, the MTF was never intended to make mobility a concern exclusively for a few designated units. On the contrary, for the concept to work as intended, other units would have also needed to become more mobile and operationally active. If there is no one who can keep a UN (or deliver FAMa) presence when the MTF leaves a location, there is an overarching risk of boomeranging security threats.

The MTF experience highlights how important it is, for morale and output, that the political initiators and military implementers, at all levels, agree on the fundamental why and how of deploying troops to a highly challenging mission. As central as UN mandates are in setting strategic priorities and empowering missions with tools for action, the evolution of peacekeeping ultimately happens on the ground, in the daily operations, encounters, and collaborations the deployed peacekeepers engage in. Conceptual development around themes such as mobility is crucial to fill gaps between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of peacekeeping. In the case of the MTF, a strong drive from within the mission led to the creation of the mobility concept, but the concept's high goals and demanding character do not appear to have been fully anchored with all stakeholders.

In sum, the MTF MINUSMA is a story of innovation, of effort, of achievement, and of partial disappointment. Despite all obstacles, the MTF has persistently worked towards its goal and managed to conduct several operations in areas where civilians faced urgent threats and where the UN had hitherto not been present. This is a noteworthy accomplishment.

4.1 Future outlook

MINUSMA's future, and with it the future of the Mobile Task Force, is looking gloomy. As noted in Section 3.4, just weeks before the expected mandate prolongation in June 2023, the transitional government demanded MINUSMA to leave Mali. Unless the host state reconsiders its position, MINUSMA is indeed likely to withdraw.

However, MINUSMA's mobility concept could remain relevant also beyond the Malian context. Prior to the 16 June Declaration, in January 2023, a strategic review submitted by the UN Secretary-General's office outlined three possible

roads ahead for the mission, of which two focus on further increasing troop manoeuvrability (S/2023/36, 16; see Wane in *France 24* 2023). These strategic alternatives reflect choices that UN peacekeeping, more broadly, may face in coming years. The first option confirmed the current mandate's priorities and operational area, and required an augmentation by either 3680 (option 1a), or 2000 (option 1b), additional uniformed personnel. The second option was a reconfigured mission, either within the existing mandate priorities (option 2a; see S/2023/36, 18), or with a focus on implementation of the peace agreement in the North, leaving the Centre of Mali (option 2b; see S/2023/36, 19). The third option would transform MINUSMA into a special political mission, without uniformed troops beyond a small number in charge of protecting mission premises and staff. In that case, "the Mission would not be able to maintain a civilian presence outside Bamako, owing to the asymmetric threat environment" (S/2023/36, 19).

In a matter of months, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Jordan, and Benin have withdrawn, or begun the process of withdrawing from MINUSMA (see S/2023/36, 10; S/2023/236, 12). Although there have been relentless efforts to replace departing forces within the current mandate parameters, the prospects for MINUSMA's being able to deliver robustness, agility, and flexibility have already declined.[14] For instance, the Secretary General report of October 2022 states that the departure of the Swedish contingent "will create significant gaps in the capabilities of the mobile task force" (S/2022/731, 11). The internal review noted that, by 2023, rather than aiming for further geographical reach, "MINUSMA will prioritize the use of available capacity and resources to respond to early warning in areas where it is already conducting regular operations" (S/2023/36, 14).

According to the Secretary General report of January 2023, some TCCs have been interested in filling the gaps in the MTF Gao, but the mission's equipment requirements have rendered deployment unlikely for at least a year (S/2023/21, 11, also interview 12). If pledges were to be accepted from countries that do not have the right capabilities for robust mobility, not only would the concept likely decline, the safety of peacekeepers would be at risk (interview 10). Moreover, as this report highlights, if critical enablers are not provided, additional troops may have trouble being operationally effective (interview 4).

Adding to an already complicated situation, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has influenced force generation both directly and indirectly. An immediate consequence has been the repatriation of Ukrainian peacekeepers from UN PKOs, including the cancellation of plans to deploy a new unit to MINUSMA (interview 7). There is a risk that the indirect effects of the war on

[14] In late 2022, a Mechanized Infantry Company QRF from Bangladesh began its deployment in Mopti, according to then Force Commander Kees Matthijssen (2022); it is "a robust company with tactical mobility that will bring much added value in the central region."

the possibilities to generate mobile troops to UN peacekeeping, especially from European countries, will be dramatic. At a time when the pressure on military resources is augmenting closer to home, it has become hard to justify a sustained engagement in a high-threat environment with an unelected host government that has chosen to cooperate with Russia. Military staff and equipment are considered to be more needed at home, or closer to it, than in a mission with a less obvious relevance for national security priorities.

For many TCCs that could potentially contribute to a mobility concept, the political equation has increasingly pointed against engagement in MINUSMA. In addition, the numerous practical obstacles for MINUSMA have disincentivised further military engagements. As put by German Minister of Defence (since January 2023) Boris Pistorius, "If we could do what we came here to do, we would stay" (quoted in *Africanews* 2023). A few months earlier, the British Minister for the Armed Forces, James Heappey, MP, reasoned along similar lines, as he announced the withdrawal of the long-range reconnaissance group from MINUSMA: "[W]e should be clear that responsibility for all of this sits in Bamako" (Government of the United Kingdom 2022).

One important argument has remained for continued engagement in Mali: the urgency of the Malian security crisis. With unprecedented levels of civilian fatalities, caused by both TAGs and FAMa operating together with the Wagner Group, the need for a more mobile PKO that takes POC seriously can be argued to be bigger than ever. As put in MINUSMA's January 2023 internal review:

> While new dynamics have emerged and the security architecture that presided over the deployment of MINUSMA has changed, the overall objective of the United Nations presence in Mali remains as relevant today as it was a decade ago. (S/2023/36, 21)

Only a few years back, MINUSMA represented the European, or Western, return to UN peacekeeping (Boutellis and Beary 2020; Koops and Tercovich 2016; Karlsrud and Smith 2015; Karlsrud and Novosseloff 2020). Indeed, in 2017, seventeen European Union countries contributed in some way to MINUSMA (UN News 2017), beginning to even out the representational skewedness just described. The contrast to the present situation, in which Western TCCs are leaving MINUSMA *en masse*, is striking.

Under these circumstances, it is imperative to contemplate how commitments to UN PKOs can be made less burdensome for individual TCCs (interview 1). Cooperation on deployments to UN missions within world regions could promote broad representation and ensure that the important conceptual development within UN peacekeeping, for instance regarding mobility, continues. Developing "something like the NATO long-term rotation plan" for UN peacekeeping would also facilitate boosting mobile-mission capacity in situations such as elections, when tensions predictably rise (interview 1). If this proves too demanding, other multinational rotation concepts could facilitate the provision of specific

capabilities, or assets, as was tried out when Sweden, Norway, Belgium, and Portugal took turns being in charge of C-130 transport flights in MINUSMA (see Boutellis and Karlsrud 2017). Another variant would be that those states that possess the desired capabilities, but are unwilling to deploy, commit to training or providing equipment to those states that are willing to deploy, but lack the necessary capabilities (see Smith 2022, 23).

Such arrangements, though, do not solve, but risk further adding to, the asymmetries within UN peacekeeping. Whereas high-income countries largely finance PKOs, and have a major influence on their mandates, since the end of the Cold War, low-income countries have deployed by far the most troops, and suffered the most casualties (Karlsrud and Smith 2015, 15). Moreover, traditionally, the UN has seen contributions from neighbours to its operations as problematic, since they might jeopardise impartiality by having a "special interest" in the crisis at hand (see UN General Assembly 1958, § 58). Neighbourly participation has steadily increased since 2008, however (Williams and Nguyen 2018). According to MINUSMA's troop data from March 2023, 32% of all peacekeepers to the mission came from a country bordering Mali (author's calculation, based on S/2023/236, annex).

The issue of representation and reasonable burden-sharing is both principally and practically important for the future of UN peacekeeping, including for the prossspect of further developing mobile peacekeeping. Observations of declining Western commitment to UN PKOs, alongside expected blockages in the Security Council, have reawakened the old debate about regionalising peacekeeping. In May 2022, UN Secretary General António Guterres (on *Radio France International* 2022) opened up for MINUSMA to be replaced with an African-led force, mandated to "enforce peace and fight terrorism." Whereas the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) should in theory be able to respond to crises on the continent, in practice ad hoc solutions are often favoured over the intended institutional routes. A division of labour in which the UN focuses on traditional static peacekeeping, while predominantly African, regional organisations, or ad hoc coalitions, lead highly mobile counterterrorism operations would not be without its dilemmas. Even if more sustainable ways for the international community to fund African-led missions are developed, placing the human costs of operating in active conflict zones predominantly on African soldiers is ethically debatable. Furthermore, to the extent that a regionalisation of peacekeeping implies a turn to counterterrorism operations, it also reawakens the question of how effective military means are in countering security crises with an asymmetric profile. If experience from, for instance, Mali (Barkhane), Somalia (Amisom/Atmis), and Afghanistan (ISAF) are any indication, there is no obvious recipe for success.

References

ACLED (2021). Sahel 2021: Communal Wars, Broken Ceasefires, and Shifting Frontlines. 17 June 2021. Available at https://acleddata.com/2021/06/17/sahel-2021-communal-wars-broken-ceasefires-and-shifting-frontlines/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

ACLED (2022). Wagner Group Operations in Africa – Civilian Targeting Trends in the Central African Republic and Mali. 30 August 2022. Available at: https://acleddata.com/2022/08/30/wagner-group-operations-in-africa-civilian-targeting-trends-in-the-central-african-republic-and-mali/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Africanews (2023). With AFP. Mali: Germany gives itself 9 to 12 months to withdraw its soldiers but will maintain its aid. Available at: https://www.africanews.com/2023/04/14/mali-germany-gives-itself-9-to-12-months-to-withdraw-its-soldiers-but-will-maintain-its-ai/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2023). Fatalities from Militant Islamist Violence in Africa Surge by Nearly 50 Percent. February 6, 2023. Available at: https://africacenter.org/spotlight/fatalities-from-militant-islamist-violence-in-africa-surge-by-nearly-50-percent/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Africa Defence Forum (2021). Protection, Partnering, Posture: MINUSMA's force commander talks about successes and challenges in the world's most dangerous peacekeeping mission. *AFD Magazine* May 26, 2021. Available at: https://adf-magazine.com/2021/05/protection-partnering-posture/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Assemblée Nationale (2021). Rapport d'information…sur l'Opération Barkhane. 4089, 14 avril 2021. Available at: https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/rapports/cion_def/l15b4089_rapport-information.pdf (accessed 2023-06-01).

Baché, David (2022) "Mali: les autorités restreignent encore le champ d'action de la Minusma." RFI 2022-05-19. Available at: https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20220519-mali-les-autorit%C3%A9s-restreignent-encore-le-champ-d-action-de-la-minusma (accessed 2023-06-01).

Beadle, Alexander William and Stian Kjeksrud (2018). The utility of military force to protect civilians in UN peace operations. In Nadin, Peter (ed.) *The Use of Force in UN Peacekeeping*. London: Routledge, 100–123.)

Beardsley, Kyle, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. (2015) "Peacekeeping as Conflict Containment." *International Studies Review* 17 (1): 67–89.

Ben-Ari, Eyal (2011) “Core Values and the Expeditionary Mindset: Armed Forces in Metamorphosis”. In Fürst, Henrik and Gerhard Kümmel *Challenges of Military Leadership in Contemporary Expeditionary Operations*, Militär und Sozialwissenschaften 45. Nomos: Baden-Baden, 35–51.

Blair, Robert A., Jessica Di Salvatore, and Hannah M. Smidt (2022). “When Do UN Peacekeeping Operations Implement Their Mandates?” *American Journal of Political Science* 66 (3): 664–680.

Boutellis, Arthur (2023). Will it Be MINUSMA à la Carte, or Geopolitical Endgame in Mali? The Global Observatory International Peace Institute, 30 March 2023. Available at: https://theglobalobservatory.org/2023/03/minusma-a-la-carte-or-geopolitical-end-game-in-mali/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Boutellis, Arthur and Michael Beary (2020). Sharing the Burden: Lessons from the European Return to Multidimensional Peacekeeping, International Peace Institute, January 2020.

Boutellis, Arthur and John Karlsrud (2017). *Plug and Play – Multinational Rotation Contributions for UN Peacekeeping Operations*. NUPI Report No. 3 2017.

Braumoeller, Bear F., and Gary Goertz (2000). “The methodology of necessary conditions.” *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (4): 844–858.

Bundeswehr (2023). Warum wurde die Mandatsobergrenze auf 1.400 Soldatinnen und Soldaten erhöht? Available at: https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/einsaetze-bundeswehr/mali-einsaetze/minusma-bundeswehr-un-einsatz-mali/warum-wurde-die-mandatsobergrenze-auf-1-400-soldatinnen-und-soldaten-erhoeht--5430212 (accessed 2023-06-01).

Cammaert, Patrick and Fiona Blyth (2013). The UN Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Issue Brief. IPI International Peace Institute. July 2013. Available at: https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/ipi_e_pub_un_intervention_brigade_rev.pdf (accessed 2023-06-01).

Cassidy, Robert M. (2004). Back to the street without joy: Counterinsurgency lessons from Vietnam and other small wars. *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 34 (2): 73–83.

Charbonneau, Bruno (2019). It is Not About Peace: UN Peacekeeping and Perpetual War. *International Peacekeeping* 26 (5): 531-535.

de Coning, Cedric (2021). The future of UN peace operations: Principled adaptation through phases of contraction, moderation, and renewal. *Contemporary Security Policy* 42 (2): 211–224.

Council of the European Union (2022). Foreign Affairs Council (Defence), 17 May 2022. Available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2022/05/17/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Dahl, Axel (2021). *Mission Impossible? How insufficient operational conditions limit the chances of mission success in Mali*. Bachelor thesis. Swedish Defence University.

Day, Adam (2017). "The Best Defence Is No Offence: Why Cuts to UN Troops in Congo Could Be a Good Thing". *Small Wars Journal*, 4 August 2017. Available at https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-best-defense-is-no-offense-why-cuts-to-un-troops-in-congo-could-be-a-good-thing (accessed 2023-06-01).

Devine, Lauren (2023). Ivory Coast soldiers sentenced to prison for conspiring against Mali government. Jurist. 2 January 2023. Available at: https://www.jurist.org/news/2023/01/ivory-coast-soldiers-sentenced-to-prison-for-conspiring-against-mali-government/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Doxsee, Catrina, Jared Thompson, and Marielle Harris (2022). The End of Operation Barkhane and the Future of Counterterrorism in Mali. *Critical Questions*. Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Druet, Dirk and Rida Lammouri (2021). With David Mozersky. *From Renewable Energy to Peacebuilding in Mali: MINUSMA's Opportunity to Bridge the Gap*. Stimson Center, 25 June 2021.

Fabricius, Peter (2014). Is the Force Intervention Brigade neutral? *ISS Today*. Institute for Security Studies. 26 November 2014. Available at: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-the-force-intervention-brigade-neutral (accessed 2023-06-01).

Farrell, Theo (2010). Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009. *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 33 (4): 567–594.

Fiott, Daniel (2017). Towards military mobility?, European Union Institute for Security Studies. *EUISS Brief*, Issue 31.

Fjelde, Hanne, Lisa Hultman, and Desirée Nilsson (2019). "Protection Through Presence: UN Peacekeeping and the Costs of Targeting Civilians." *International Organization* 73(1): 103–131.

France 24 (2023). Head of Minusma speaks to France 24: Mali mission currently unsustainable says representative. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzWHvijKHOU (accessed 2023-06-01).

Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (2023). Mali-Mètre 2023. Enquête d'opinion. « Que pensent les Malien(ne)s? » Available at : https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2023.pdf (accessed 2023-06-07).

Gayler, William K. (2018) The Command Corner. *Aviation Digest* 6 (1): 2.

German Federal Foreign Office (2022). Erklärungen des Auswärtigen Amts in der Regierungspressekonferenz vom 11.05.2022. Available at: https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/regierungspressekonferenz/2526120 (accessed 2023-06-01).

Government of Côte d'Ivoire (2022). @Gouvci. Communiqué du Conseil National de Sécurité, 12 July 2022. Available at: https://twitter.com/Gouvci/status/1546899673524355074/photo/1 (accessed 2023-06-01).

Government of Sweden (2019). Svenskt deltagande i Förenta nationernas stabiliseringsinsats i Mali. 2019/20:29. Available at https://www.regeringen.se (accessed 2023-06-01).

Government of Sweden (2021). Svenskt deltagande i Förenta nationernas stabiliseringsinsats i Mali. 2020/21:32. Available at https://www.regeringen.se (accessed 2023-06-01).

Government of the United Kingdom (2022). Oral statement to Parliament: Minister for the Armed Forces statement on the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Mali. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/minister-for-the-armed-forces-statement-on-the-un-peacekeeping-mission-in-mali (accessed 2023-06-01).

Gowan, Richard and Louise Riis Andersen (2020). Short-term responses and long-term consequences: peacekeeping in the shadow of Covid-19 era. DIIS Policy Brief.

Gray, Christine (1996). Host-state consent and United Nations peacekeeping in Yugoslavia. *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law* 7 (1): 241–270.

Gunnarson, Carina and Gabriella Körling (2023). *Relationerna mellan Frankrike och Mali 2017-2022 – Historien om en skilsmässa.* FOI-R--5347--SE. January 2023.

Gyllensporre, Dennis (2021). [@Gyllensporre] *I visited the #British contingent of the new Mobile Task Force, which will increase #MINUSMA's mobility, agility and flexibility in the execution of our important task of #protecting the Malian population.* [Tweet 1:48 PM · Mar 9, 2021]. Twitter. Available at: https://twitter.com/gyllensporre/status/1369268857760866305 (accessed 2023-06-01).

Hagberg, Sten (2019). Performing Tradition while Doing Politics: A comparative study of the dozos and koglweogos self-defense movements in Burkina Faso. *African Studies Review* 62 (1): 173–193.

Haugstvedt, Håvard (2020). "A Flying Threat Coming to Sahel and East Africa? A Brief Review." *Journal of Strategic Security* 14 (1): 92–105.

Hellquist Elin and Kajsa Tidblad-Lundholm (2022). *Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance to Protect Civilians and Troops? The Swedish ISR Task Force in MINUSMA 2015–2019*. FOI-R--5212--SE. June 2022.

Hellquist Elin and Kajsa Tidblad-Lundholm (2021). *National Defence and International Military Missions – The Swedish Armed Forces at home and abroad 1958-2020*. FOI-R--5060--SE. February 2021.

Hellquist, Elin and Tua Sandman (2020). *Synergies Between Military Missions in Mali*. FOI-R--4915--SE. March 2020.

High-level International Conference on the Protection of Civilians (2015). Kigali principles. Available at: https://www.globalr2p.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/KP-Principles-13-April-2020.pdf (accessed 2023-06-01).

Hull Wiklund, Cecilia and Helené Lackenbauer (2017). *An analysis of the fourth and fifth Swedish ISR contributions to the UN mission in Mali*. FOI-R--4487--SE.

Human Rights Watch (2022). Mali: Massacre by Army, Foreign Soliders. 2022-04-05. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/05/mali-massacre-army-foreign-soldiers (accessed 2022-05-19).

Human Rights Watch (2023). Mali – Events of 2022. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/mali (accessed 2023-03-27).

Hunt, Charles T. and Shannon Zimmerman (2019). "Twenty Years of the Protection of Civilians in UN Peace Operations." *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 23 (1-2): 50-81.

Huntington, Samuel P. (1957). The Military Mind: Conservative Realism of the Professional Military Ethic. In *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil–Military Relations*. Harvard University Press, 59–79.

International Peace Institute (2018). Event: Keeping Peace from Above: Air Assets in UN Peace Operations. May 1, 2018. Available at: https://www.ipinst.org/2018/05/air-assets-un-peace-operations-event#1 (accessed 2023-03-17).

International Peace Institute (2020) Event: Lessons from the Implementation of the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations. May 29, 2020; (1.11 – 1.17). Available at: https://www.ipinst.org/2020/05/poc-lessons-from-the-implementation-of-kigali-principles#5 (accessed 2023-02-27).

International Peace Institute (2021). A Conversation with Lieutenant General Dr. Dennis Gyllensporre, Former Force Commander of MINUSMA November 12, 2021. Available at: https://www.ipinst.org/ (accessed 2022-05-02).

Johnstone Ian (2011). Managing Consent in Contemporary Peacekeeping Operations. *International Peacekeeping* 18 (2): 168–182.

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

Karlsrud, John and Adam C. Smith (2015*). Europe's Return to UN Peacekeeping in Africa? Lessons from Mal*i, New York: International Peace Institute July 2015.

Karlsrud, John, and Alexandra Novosseloff (2020). *Doing Less with More? The Difficult 'Return'of Western Troop Contributing Countries to United Nations Peacekeeping*. GGI Analysis, February, Brussels: Global Governance Institute.

Koops, Joachim A. and Giulia and Tercovich (2016). "A European return to United Nations peacekeeping? Opportunities, challenges and ways ahead." *International Peacekeeping* 23 (5): 597–609.

Le Cam, Morgane (2022). Le Mali considère désormais la présence des militaires français et européens sur son sol comme illégale. *Le Monde* 2022-05-03 [10:45; updated 12:14]. Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/05/03/le-mali-considere-la-presence-des-militaires-francais-et-europeens-sur-son-sol-comme-illegale_6124559_3212.html (accessed 2023-06-01).

Lönnberg, Linnea (2020). *The Military Profession in Times of Change – Understanding the Capacities for Handling Military Change among Swedish Officers*. Master's Thesis, Politics and War. Swedish Defence University.

Macallister, Edward and David Lewis (2023). Analysis: Mali faces spectre of anarchy after demanding UN's departure. *Reuters* June 19, 2023. Available at: www.reuters.com (accessed 2023-06-19).

Marcum, Colin (2017). How Enablers Shape the Deep Fight for the BCT. *Fires*, March-April 2017.

Matthijssen, Kees (2022). Linkedin post.

MINUSMA (2021-05-06). Point de presse de la MINUSMA du 6 mai 2021. Available at: https://peacekeeping.un.org/fr/point-de-presse-de-la-minusma-du-6-mai-2021 (accessed 2023-06-01).

MINUSMA (2021-08-12). Point de presse de la MINUSMA du 12 août 2021. Available at: https://minusma.unmissions.org/point-de-presse-de-la-minusma-du-12-ao%C3%BBt-2021 (accessed 2023-06-01).

MINUSMA (2021-08-26). Point de presse de la MINUSMA du 26 août 2021. Available at: https://minusma.unmissions.org/point-de-presse-de-la-minusma-du-26-ao%C3%BBt-2021 (accessed 2023-06-01).

MINUSMA (2021-09-30). Point de presse de la MINUSMA du 30 septembre 2021. https://minusma.unmissions.org/point-de-presse-de-la-minusma-du%C2%A030-septembre-2021 (accessed 2023-06-01).

MINUSMA (2021-11-04). Point de presse de la MINUSMA du 4 novembre 2021. Available at: https://minusma.unmissions.org/point-de-presse-de-la-minusma-du%C2%A04-novembre-2021 (accessed 2023-06-01).

MINUSMA (2022). Video at [@UN_MINUSMA] The #swedish #peacekeepers secured an integrated civilian and military mission in the #Gao region. Objective: Enable MINUSMA teams to exchange safely with the communities and discuss the regional Malian authorities. [Tweet 7:13 PM · Dec 9, 2022]. Twitter. Available at: https://twitter.com/UN_MINUSMA/status/1601279003855179776 (accessed 2023-06-01).

Munshi, Neil (2022). Denmark begins withdrawing special forces troops from Mali. *Financial Times* 2022-01-27. Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/822fb15c-ed74-4cd9-be87-0ef40fe35652 (accessed 2023-06-01).

Nilsson, Claes and Magdalena Tham Lindell (2015). *Pergite Sahel. An assessment of Sweden's troop contribution to the UN peace operation in Mali*. FOI-R--4172--SE.

Novosseloff, Alexandra (2017). *Keeping Peace from Above: Air Assets in UN Peace Operations*. International Peace Institute IPI.

Noyes, Winn (1995). Peace Keepers and War Fighters: Same Force, Different Mindset. Report submitted 16 May 1995. Joint Military Operations Department, Naval War College. Available at: https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA297850.pdf (accessed 2023-06-01).

OHCHR (2023). *Rapport sur les évènements de Moura du 27 au 31 mars 2022*. 12 May 2023. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/mali/20230512-Moura-Report.pdf (accessed 2023-06-20).

Radio France International (2022). Interview with Antonió Guterres. 6 May 2022.

S/2000/809. Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. United Nations Security Council. Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations [Brahimi Report].

S/2014/692. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. United Nations Security Council, 22 September 2014.

S/2015/426. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. United Nations Security Council, 11 June 2015.

S/2018/541. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 6 June 2018.

S/2019/454. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 31 May 2019.

S/2019/983. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 30 December 2019.

S/2020/223. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 20 March 2020.

S/2020/952. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 29 September 2020.

S/2021/519. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 1 June 2021.

S/2021/520. Letter dated 1 June 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council. United Nations Security Council, 1 June 2021.

S/2021/657. Adaptation and authorized strength of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 16 July 2021.

S/2021/844. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 1 October 2021.

S/2021/1117. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 4 January 2022.

S/2022/8. Letter dated 4 January 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council. United Nations Security Council, 4 January 2022.

S/2022/446. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 2 June 2022.

S/2022/493. Children and armed conflict. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations General Assembly and United Nations Security Council, 23 June 2022.

S/2022/731. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 3 October 2022.

S/2023/21. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 6 January 2023.

S/2023/36. Internal review of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 16 January 2023.

S/2023/161 Letter dated 1 March 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council. Signed Issa Konfourou. United Nations Security Council 15 March 2023.

S/2023/236. Situation in Mali. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations Security Council, 30 March 2023.

S/2023/264. United Nations Security Council. Letter dated 11 April 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council. 12 April 2023.

S/RES/2098 (2013). Resolution 2098 (2013). Adopted by the Security Council at its 6943rd meeting, on 28 March 2013.

S/RES/2295 (2016). Resolution 2295 (2016). Adopted by the Security Council at its 7727th meeting, on 29 June 2016.

S/RES/2423 (2018). Resolution 2423 (2018) Adopted by the Security Council at its 8298th meeting, on 28 June 2018.

S/RES/2480 (2019). Resolution 2480 (2019) Adopted by the Security Council at its 8568th meeting, on 28 June 2019.

S/RES/2531 (2020). Resolution 2531 (2020) Adopted by the Security Council on 29 June 2020.

S/RES/2584 (2021). Resolution 2584 (2021) Adopted by the Security Council at its 8809th meeting, on 29 June 2021

S/RES/2640 (2022). Resolution 2640 (2022) Adopted by the Security Council at its 9082nd meeting, on 29 June 2022.

Savage, Olivia (2022). Fragility with interoperability: UN mission in Mali struggles to establish a co-ordinated response. *Janes defence* October 2022.

Schmidt, Christian (2021). *Nationell styrning av internationella militära insatser – eftersträvansvärt eller meningslöst?* Master thesis in war studies, Swedish Defence University.

Sebastián, Sofía and Aditi Gorur (2018). *U.N. Peacekeeping & Host-State Consent - How Missions Navigate Relationships with Governments*. Stimson Center March 2018.

Sharland, Lisa (2015). "Counter-IED Technology in UN Peacekeeping: Expanding Capability and Mitigating Risks". *International Peacekeeping* 22 (5): 587–602.

Smith, Seán (2020). Protecting Civilians in Mali: Why Air Assets Matter for MINUSMA. Center for Civilians in Conflict, May 2020.

Smith, Seán (2022). *Improving Casualty Evacuations in UN Peacekeeping: MINUSMA's Experience of Decentralizing Launch Authority*, Center for Civilians in Conflict, January 2022.

Spink, Lauren (2018). *Protection with less presence: How the Peacekeeping Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo is Attempting to Deliver Protection with Fewer Resources.* Center for Civilians in Conflict.

Swedish Armed Forces (2020a). "Ett mer robust uppträdande." *Malibloggen* 2020-09-24. Available at: https://blogg.forsvarsmakten.se/malibloggen/2020/09/24/ett-mer-robust-upptradande/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Swedish Armed Forces (2020b). Sweden takes the lead for a new tactic in Mali. News. 30 September 2020. Available at: https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/news/2020/09/sweden-takes-the-lead-for-a-new-tactic-in-mali/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Swedish Armed Forces (2021a). "Swedish Special Forces Unit on site in Mali." 2021-02-08. Available at: https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/news/2021/02/swedish-special-forces-unit-on-site-in-mali/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Swedish Armed Forces (2021b). Utvecklingen av ett nytt koncept inom FN. *Malibloggen* 2021-06-04. Available at: https://blogg.forsvarsmakten.se/malibloggen/2021/06/04/utvecklingen-av-ett-nytt-koncept-inom-fn/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Swedish Armed Forces (2021c). Gemensamma operationer. *Malibloggen* 2021-11-03. Available at: https://blogg.forsvarsmakten.se/malibloggen/2021/11/03/samordning-ute-pa-plats/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Swedish Armed Forces (2022a). Svenska FN-styrkan i Mali avslutas 2023. 2022-03-03. Available at https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/aktuellt/2022/03/svenska-fn-styrkan-i-mali-avslutas-2023/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Swedish Armed Forces (2022b). Nytt befäl besökte Gao. *Malibloggen* 2022-03-05. Available at: https://blogg.forsvarsmakten.se/malibloggen/2022/03/05/nytt-befal-besokte-gao/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Swedish Armed Forces (2022c). *Försvarsmaktens ISR-bidrag till Minusma 2014-2020*. FM2019-17646:4, 20 May 2022.

Swedish Armed Forces (2022d). Regleringsbrev. Available at: https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/om-forsvarsmakten/Dokument/Regleringsbrev/ (accessed 2023-06-07).

Swedish Armed Forces (2023a). Sista svenska soldaten åter från Mali. 19 April 2023, updated 20 April 2023 09:38. Available at: https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/aktuellt/2023/04/sista-svenska-soldaten-ater-fran-mali/ (accessed 2023-06-01).

Swedish Armed Forces (2023b). Studio Utlandstjänst – Mali, Libanon och kamratskap. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTPCFIdvKDY (accessed 2023-06-07).

Swedish Armed Forces (2023c). Försvarsmakten Inblick. Fredssoldat # 1 - Första nedslaget. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBZ4UNq2R1g (accessed 2023-06-07).

Swedish Armed Forces (2023d). Försvarsmakten Inblick. Fredssoldat #3 - Motståndaren. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hw0pTog32ko (accessed 2023-06-07).

Tardy, Thierry (2011). A critique of robust peacekeeping in contemporary peace operations. *International Peacekeeping* 18 (2): 152–167.

Thompson, Jared, Catrina Doxsee, and Joseph S. Bermudez Jr. (2022) Tracking the Arrival of Russia's Wagner Group in Mali. February 2, 2022. Centre for Strategic International Studies. Commentary. Available at: https://www.csis.org/analysis/tracking-arrival-russias-wagner-group-mali (accessed 2023-06-01).

Transitional Government of Mali (2023a). Official Twitter account of Ministry of Foreign affairs & Int. Coop. [@MaliMaeci] Communique No 043 du Gouvernement de la transition. Available at: https://twitter.com/MaliMaeci/status/1611471046883872769/photo/1 (accessed 2023-06-01).

Transitional Government of Mali (2023b). Official Twitter account of Ministry of Foreign affairs & Int. Coop. [@MaliMaeci] Communique No 055 du Gouvernement de la transition. Available at: https://twitter.com/MaliMaeci/status/1669819344694419457/photo/1 (accessed 2023-06-20).

Tull, Denis M. (2018). The Limits and Unintended Consequences of UN Peace Enforcement: The Force Intervention Brigade in the DR Congo. *International Peacekeeping* 25 (2): 167–190.

Ullah, Ahamed (2021). Heroics of Bangladesh army in Mali – Peacekeepers between life and death. *Daily Sun* 2021-06-27. Available at: https://www.daily-sun.com/post/561247/Heroics-of-Bangladesh-army-in-Mali (accessed 2023-06-01).

United Nations (2018). Action for Peacekeeping. Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations. Available at: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-declaration-en.pdf (accessed 2023-06-01).

United Nations (no date). A4P+ Priorities for 2021–2023. Available at: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p_background_paper.pdf (accessed 2023-06-01).

UN DPKO and DFS (2008). United Nations Peacekeeping Operations – Principles and Guidelines. Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support.

UN DPO (2019a). DPO/DPET/Integrated Training Service, *Military Peacekeeping – Intelligence Handbook* (MPKI HB), 22 April 2019.

UN DPO (2019b). Current and Emerging Uniformed Capability Requirements for United Nations Peacekeeping. May 2019. Available at: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/uniformed-capability-requirements-un-peacekeeping_may-2019.pdf (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN DPO (2019c). *Policy – The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping*, 1 November 2019.

UN DPO (2020a). United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual (UNIBAM). Second Edition, January 2020.

UN DPO (2020b). The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping. Handbook. United Nations Department of Peace Operations, May 2020.

UN DPO (2020c). Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell. Quick Reaction Force Company Seminar. 8 October 2020. Available at: https://pcrs.un.org/ (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN DPO (2022a). Current and Emerging Uniformed Capability Requirements. September 2022. Available at https://pcrs.un.org (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN DPO (2022b). United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Logistics Unit Manual. Second Edition. Date of approval: 9 November 2022. Available at https://pcrs.un.org/ (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN General Assembly (1958). Summary Study of the Experience Derived from the Establishment and Operation of the United Nations Emergency Force – Report of the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/3943, October 9, 1958, para. 60.

UN News (2017). INTERVIEW: Fast-response "vanguard brigade" of peacekeepers now a reality. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/04/554672-interview-fast-response-vanguard-brigade-peacekeepers-now-reality (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN News (2019). Ten UN peacekeepers killed in a terrorist attack in northern Mali. 20 January 2019. Available at https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/01/1030892 (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN News (2022a). Mali's withdrawal from G5 Sahel, Joint Force "a setback" for the region. 18 May 2022. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/05/1118582 (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN News (2022b). "Mali: Security situation deteriorates, human rights concerns rise." 15 August 2022. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/08/1124692 (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN Peacekeeping (2018). Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers – Action Plan for Implementation of Fatalities Report, 4/9 April 2018. Available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/180406_action_plan_revised.pdf (accessed 2023-06-05).

UN Peacekeeping (2023). Peacekeeper Fatalities Open Data, Downloaded from https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/peacekeeper-fatalities, 2023-05-13.

UN Press (2013). "Intervention Brigade" Authorized as Security Council Grants Mandate Renewal for United Nations Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo, SC/10964. Security Council 28 March 2013.

UN Press (2020). Rapid, Thorough Implementation of Peace Agreement Remains “Only Viable Path” for Stabilizing Mali, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council, SC/14080. Security Council 8703rd meeting, 15 January 2020.

UN Web TV (2022). El Ghassim Wane (MINUSMA) on Mali - Security Council Media Stakeout. 18 October 2022. Available at: https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1l/k1laly9atd (accessed 2023-06-20).

UN Web TV (2023). El-Ghassim Wane (MINUSMA) on Mali - Security Council Media Stakeout. 16 June 2023. Available at: https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1s/k1spfrav5r (accessed 2023-06-20).

United States Department of Defense (2007). Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms. 12 April 2001 (As Amended Through 17 October 2007). Available at: https://dcsg9.army.mil/assets/docs/dod-terms.pdf (accessed 2023-06-01).

United States Department of the Army (2017). FM 3-0 Operations. October 2017.

United States Federal Aviation Administration (2022). FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation – Mali. 26 February. Available at: https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/us_restrictions/media/FAA-Background-Note_Mali-(20220225-1900Z).pdf (accessed 2023-06-01).

Wentges, Taylor (1998). Force, Function and Phase: Three Dimensions of United Nations Peacekeeping. *International Peacekeeping* 5 (3): 5–7.

Widehed, Maria (2023). Övningsledaren om Aurora 23: “Bästa träningsmatchen för att kliva in som en trovärdig aktör i Nato.” *Officerstidningen* 2023-03-08.

Williams, Paul D. (2023). “How Peacekeepers Fight: Assessing Combat Effectiveness in United Nations Peace Operations.” *Security Studies*: 1–34. Published online: 15 February 2023.

Williams, Paul D. and Thong Nguyen (2018). Neighborhood Dynamics in UN Peacekeeping Operations, 1990–2017. *Providing for Peacekeeping* No. 16. New York: International Peace Institute, April 2018.

Interviews, chronological

UN DOS	Online	September 2022
UN DOS	New York	September 2022
UN OMA	Online	September 2022
UN DPO	New York	September 2022
UN DOS	New York	September 2022
Swedish Armed Forces	Online	October 2022
UN representation	Stockholm	October 2022
MINUSMA	Online	October 2022
Swedish Armed Forces	Online	October 2022
MINUSMA	Phone	November 2022
MINUSMA	Online	November 2022
Swedish Armed Forces	Online	December 2022
Swedish Armed Forces	Stockholm	March 2023
Swedish Armed Forces	Phone	June 2023

FOI

ISSN 1650-1942

www.foi.se