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THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL IN MALI CRISIS (2012-2021)

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Abstract

Over the years, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has made efforts to halt the crisis in Mali through the establishment of the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission.(MINUSMA). It is in this connection that this paper investigates the role of the United Nations Security Council in the Mali crisis and the political dimension of the crisis. The paper also examines the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council in addressing the Mali crisis. The study employed a qualitative research method with the use of both primary and secondary sources. The findings of this study revealed that the core of MINUSMA's mandate is to support the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. It also shows that MINUSMA has played a big role in addressing the Mali crisis by prioritizing the protection of civilians and providing support for the Malian armed forces in the fight against terrorist. However, despite these laudable gains, there are still some challenges that inhibits the overall effectiveness of the UN mission which includes logistics, funding and political leadership failure which is a major cause of the crisis. Leveraging collective security theory, the study established the appropriateness of United Nations role in Mali crisis. The paper concludes and recommends that the United Nations Security Council should provide adequate equipments and other resources for MINUSMA to achieve its mandate.

Keywords: Role, United Nations Security Council, MINUSMA, Mali, Crisis.

Introduction

The Mali crisis started as an insurgency in the northern part of Mali. The insurgency was driven by desire to gain independence from Mali itself and to create an independent Azward state. This development led to a military coup in the capital city of Bamako which ousted the elected President (Amadou Toumani Touré) from his office. A military leader (Amadou Haya Sanogo) took over the reins of power afterwards. On the 18th of August 2020, the Malian Armed forces revolted against the government by detaining several government officials including President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita; thus, leading to the fifth coup in Mali since independence in 1960 and the second coup in ten years. The coup that took place on the 18th

of august 2020 was instigated by political instability as well as influence from terrorist network and militant groups. Attempts to stabilize Mali have focused majorly on security with less focus on the Mali's failed governance system.

Regional and international organization such as African Union, ECOWAS have suspended Mali from their organization. Europe and America have sent troops to Mali to provide security assistance. France has sent 4,500 troops so far to manage the extremist threats. The United Nations organization whose mandate is to maintain international peace and security has played a lead role in the crisis which is geared towards resolutions. The 2020 Mali coup left the country in dire conditions with the suspension by ECOWAS and the African Union. The coup also has a corresponding effect on the country's economy as it nosedived. Other accompanying effects were the absence of peace and stability in Mali.

Consequently, this has in turn, led to diminished support from international actors such as the United States, the UK, the European Union and France. Against the background of the foregoing, this paper examines the Mali crisis within the period (2012-2020). It looks at the role of the United Nations (MINUSMA) specifically with regard to the effectiveness and challenges of its intervention in Mali. The paper also interrogates the ethno-political dimensions of the crisis.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC): Overview of its Charter Role

The United Nations is an international organization, made up of its member states, and founded in 1945 as a replacement for the League of Nations after World War II. The purposes of the UN include maintaining international peace and security and achieving international cooperation in solving international problems of political, economic, social, cultural, human rights, and humanitarian issues.(Ariye, 2014)

After the Second World War, on 24 October 1945, the United Nation (UN) was developing to maintain international peace and security (Chopra., 2001) and developing friendly relations between nations promoting respect for human rights (Art, 1945) Furthermore adopting its decisions, all UN Member States have insisted on the sovereignty of UNSC and promoting cooperation in the peaceful resolution of international problems. The UN operates with the help of the six principal organs. One of them is a fifteen-member United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN), with the mandate of ensuring international peace and security in all member state, recommending the admission of new UN members to the General Assembly, and approving any changes to the UN Charter. Its powers include establishing peacekeeping operations, enacting international sanctions, and authorizing military action. The UNSC is the only United Nations body with the authority to issue binding resolutions on member states (Fasulo, 2004).

There is a service laid down to be implemented by the UNSC to preserve international peace and security. For instance, in the event the dispute, the council has to first convince the parties concerned to settle their conflicts in a friendly or peaceful manner. In this case, the council may interfere by nominating a special representative or may ask the UN Security Council to

nominate a special representative to investigate the matter (Charter, 2000). Therefore, it is the duty of the council to lay down those rules or principles for the sake to resolve disputes peacefully. The UNSC takes the initiative to see that the maintenance of international peace and security in the world is without risk or danger. It also means that violence does not happen (Roberts, 2000). It calls on the contested nations to settle in a peaceful manner their misunderstandings or disputes. It also proposes settlement methods and it Uses force in some situations to restore peace and security in the world (Breckon, 2005). Security can be preserved everywhere in this way. The council may also choose to take robust action including: not allowing diplomatic relations; termination of diplomatic relations; blockade; joint military action. Economic and punitive fines, travel bans, etc. furthermore, the UNSC, which is furthermore harmonizing nation policy, may also recommend the UN General Assembly, the appointment of the Secretary-General and the incorporation of new members in the UN. For addition, the UNSC also elects judges from the International Court of Justice.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security (Chopra., 2001). After approval by the Security Council, the UN may send peacekeepers to regions where armed conflict has recently ceased or paused to enforce the terms of peace agreements and to discourage combatants from resuming hostilities. Since the UN does not maintain its own military, peacekeeping forces are voluntarily provided by member states (Neuhold, 2001).

The Mali Crisis and United Nations Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)

The Security Council established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in 2013 after state institutions collapsed in the face of an ethnic separatist rebellion in the north, a military coup, and an Islamist insurgent takeover of the north of the country. The mission absorbed a short-lived African intervention force and U.N. political mission. (Arieff, 2013) France also had launched a unilateral military intervention in early 2013 to free northern towns from Islamist militant control, and pressed for both the African-led mission and the transition to a UN conducted operation. MINUSMA was initially mandated to support Mali's transitional authorities in stabilizing "key population centers," support the extension of state authority throughout the country, and prepare for elections, in addition to protecting civilians and UN personnel, promoting human rights, and protecting humanitarian aid, among other tasks. Civilian protection was elevated within the mandate in 2014, as was support for the launching of "an inclusive and credible negotiation process" for northern Mali, following a ceasefire between the government and separatist rebels and elections in late 2013 (Nadin P. , 2013). After the government and two northern armed group coalitions signed a peace accord in 2015, the Security Council deemed support for implementation of the accord to be the mission's top priority. (Penney, 2015)

As of mid-2019, the peace agreement remains largely un-implemented, while the Islamist insurgency (excluded from the peace process by design) has expanded into previously government-controlled central Mali, as well as neighboring Burkina Faso and, to a lesser extent,

Niger (Boukhars, 2013). Since 2017, observers have raised alarm over a spate of civilian massacres in the center, attributed to state security forces and to ethnically based militias (some of which appear to have ties to state elements), which may constitute "ethnic cleansing." Renewing MINUSMA's mandate in June 2019, the Security Council decided that the mission's "second strategic priority," after support for implementation of the 2015 accord, would be to "facilitate" a future Malian-led strategy to protect civilians, reduce inter-communal violence, and reestablish state authority in the center of the country, followed by other tasks (Resolution 2480).

Unlike most UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, MINUSMA includes sizable Western contingents, including from Canada (134), Germany (381), the Netherlands (116), Norway (92), and Sweden (253). The countries contributing the largest uniformed contingents (1,000 each), however, are nearby (Burkina Faso, Chad, Senegal, Togo) or major global peacekeeping troop contributors (Bangladesh, Egypt). MINUSMA is the world's deadliest current UN peacekeeping operation, with 126 personnel cumulatively killed in "malicious acts" (roughly 20 per year on average), including at least 20 in the first half of 2019.

Theoretical Framework

Collective Security Theory

According to Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, The Dictionary of World Politics (Hemel Hempstead, 1990), the theory of collective security is a "theory in international relations". According to them, "nations achieve security from attack by collective military agreements of all nations with each other to join forces against any aggressor". Collective security can be understood as a security arrangement in which all states cooperate collectively to provide security for all by the actions of all against any states within the groups which might challenge the existing order by using force. Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council can take enforcement measures to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such measures range from economic sanctions to international military action. This can be seen in the role of the United Nations Security Council in the Mali crisis. The Council also establishes UN Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions. (Sharp, 2013)

Collective security penetrates from the inside in order to create security within sovereign states. From this we can confirm that the level of collective security depends in large measure on liberal democracy. On the other hand, the unity in the field of collective security is followed by strong economic cooperation within the region, joint respect of the rule of law, supported by the fact that all of the Western European countries are liberal democracies, which is an imperative today for all countries in transition. In a system of collective security, the enemy is a threat to regional or international peace and security. If the system of collective security is international in its reach, a threat can originate in any region, anywhere on the globe. Any nation within the regional or international system that commits aggression, imperils the peace, or grossly exceeds the bounds of civilized behavior violates the norms of that collective security system and is subject to enforcement action. No nation is excluded from the responsibility of maintaining peace and security regardless of where, within its collective security system, the threat originates. Collective security can be triggered in another way. A threatened nation, exercising its inherent right of collective self-defense, can call on others to help.

The Political dimension of Mali crisis

For the ten years, Mali has been mired in overlapping security, political, and humanitarian crises. Islamist extremist groups expanded their presence in the country's vast, Saharan north following a March 2012 coup d'état that overthrew Mali's democratically elected government and led the military chain of command to collapse (Arieff, 2013). According to military officer the Malian government forces were ill-equipped to fight the rebellion in the north. Suffering an embarrassing defeat in the rebellion, a faction within the Malian military mutinied against President Amadou Toumani Touré's government; this in turn created series of political uproar in the country (Military officer, field survey 2021). In March 21, 2012 Mutinying military forces storm several sites in Bamako. The day after, President Toure's government was overthrown and replaced by the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State (CNRDR), led by Amadou Sanogo. (Arieff, 2013)

In April 12, 2012Dioncounda Traoré is sworn as interim President, and with Cheick Modibo Diarra as interim Prime Minister, assumes responsibility for leading Mali's transitional authority in the country after overthrown President Amadou Toumani Touré submitted his formal resignation. (Arieff, 2013) stated that later in 2013 President Kéïta won the election and became president of Mali. He was later reelected in 2018, but opposition mounted over his administration's apparent interference in legislative election results, corruption scandals, worsening insecurity, militia violence, and economic hardships. In June and July 2020, a loose alliance of politicians, civil society actors, and supporters of an influential Bamako religious leader convened large protests and called for Kéïta to resign. (Arieff, 2013)

According to the same respondent a violent state crackdown further discredited Kéïta's leadership, and regional mediation efforts failed (Military officer, field survey 2021).The August 2020 coup d'état followed. Criminal proceedings against the 2012 coup leader, Captain Amadou Sanogo, were dropped in early 2021. A political crisis resulted in the August toppling of the government in a military coup in 2020. (Report, 2021)

A civil servant respondent stated that the March 29 and April19 parliamentary elections were marred by violence and irregularities. Controversial constitutional court rulings on 30 contested seats gave the ruling party a parliamentary majority and sparked massive protests during June and July (Field survey 2021). (Report, 2021) claims that the protests, underscored by frustrations over government corruption and slow progress on addressing the security crisis, were led by a coalition of opposition political parties, religious leaders, and civil society organizations under the umbrella of The June 5 Rally of Patriotic Forces Movement.

In May, three opposition leaders including Clement Dembele, also an anti-corruption campaigner, were arrested for disrupting public order. Two of them were released within days, but Dembele was held for two weeks without due process. Charges against him were later dropped (Fitzpatrick, 2021). During demonstrations on July 10-12, protesters erected barricades; threw stones and used slingshots; occupied, burned, and looted parts of government buildings; and threatened a judge's home. Security forces arrested, but released on July 13 at least five opposition leaders, ransacked the M5-RFP headquarters, and used teargas and live rounds to disperse protesters. Authorities blocked social media and messaging services in the country for several days during the unrest. (Report, 2021)

A military officer also mentioned that in August, military officers overthrew the government in a coup, and detained the president, prime minister, several cabinet members, and generals (Military officer, field survey 2021). The coup leaders, called the National Committee for the Salvation of the People and led by Col. Assimi Goïta, appointed Bah Ndaw, a former colonel and defense minister, as interim president on September 21. Ndaw promised a civilian government would be elected within 18 months. (Report, 2021). The same respondent also stated that in May 2021, the same soldiers overthrew the transitional civilian leaders whom they had put in place, after chafing at Transition President Bah N'Daw's effort to replace two junta members as cabinet ministers. (Fitzpatrick, 2021) stated that the leader of both coups, Colonel Assimi Goïta, has replaced N'Daw as Transition President; allied officers hold four cabinet posts and lead the transitional legislature. Under regional pressure, Goïta has promised elections in February 2022 in which he will not be a candidate, but observers question his commitment. Transitional leaders also have pledged a constitutional referendum to advance the government's 2015 peace deal with northern rebels. (Report, 2021)

The Ethnic Dimension of Malian Crisis

According to Arieff (2013) stated that in 2012, struck with an ethnic insurgency, coup d'etat, and an al-Qaida-linked land grab within months of one another, Mali descended into statelessness and lost control of two-thirds of its territory with dizzying speed. One NIIA personnel stated that during 2020, at least 400 villagers were killed in numerous incidents of communal violence, mostly in the Mopti region. The violence pitted ethnic Dogon self-defense groups against those of Peuhl, or Fulani, who sometimes had the support of armed Islamist groups. Most of those killed in 2020 were ethnic Dogon. The attacks targeted people in their villages, farms, or markets, and provoked widespread displacement and a hunger crisis. (NIIA personnel, field survey 2021)

According to the same NIIA personnel during attacks in March, Peuhl militia men were implicated in the killing of48 Dogon civilians in several villages in the Bankass administrative area, and at least 27 others on May 26 and 27, near Tillé village (NIIA personnel, field survey 2021). In August, at least six Dogon were killed in Timiniri Administrative area near Bandiagara. Dogon militiamen were implicated in several attacks.

Fitzpatrick (2021) stated that in January on Siba village, killing 14, the March 14 massacre of 35 Peuhl villagers in Ogossagou village, site of the 2019 massacre of 150 civilians, the March 22 killing of at least 20 Peuhl in Baye commune, and the May 5 killing of 18 near Djenne.

MINUSMA Intervention in Mali crisis

According to (Chauzal, 2015) The United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali, UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was authorized in 2013 to support peace and stability in Mali. The core of MINUSMA's mandate is to support the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali that resulted from the Algiers negotiations. This agreement was signed in May 2015 by the Malian government and two-armed group coalitions: the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and the Platform of Armed Groups (Platform).

A UN staff from the UN office in Abuja stated that the Security Council has also identified the protection of civilians as a priority task for the mission. UN Security Council Resolution 2295

provides MINUSMA with a strong protection of civilian mandate, authorizing the mission to anticipate, deter and counter threats and to take robust and active steps to protect civilians (UN staff, field survey 2021).

Another UN staff spoke on a military group that was created under the MINUSMA which is known has the Long-Range Reconnaissance Group (LRRG). The specialty of the LRRG is the ability to go a long distance, stay deployed for a long time and to provide reconnaissance for the forced commander and the special representative for the secretary general. It is also not just for reconnaissance but also to act as well. According to the same respondent the group moves from their bases in Gao and stay on the ground for a long period of time. To not only find and understand the situation but also to protect the civilians as well (UN staff, field Survey, 2021).

According to the same UN staff the LRRG is formed of different element but is primarily a vehicle platform that all them to go further into areas where previously there has not been much presence of the host nation's security forces. Also, for the group to go on long distances and the long duration that they are able to go out is a unique selling point for them. It allows them to help the people of Mali by understanding their security issues and then give feedback to the United Nations, so that they may better tailor a security solution for the civilians.(UN staff, field Survey, 2021)

Another UN staff stated that scores of gunmen attacked a number of villages on 8 august 2021 around Ouuttagouna, in the south-east of the country leaving dozens of people dead. Armed groups aligned to Daesh and Al-Qaeda is known to operate in the region. In the hours after the killings, MINUSMA's force leader tasked the LRRG to bring forward planned operations and launch immediately to the area in the specially designed off-road desert vehicles. After securing the area and protecting the civilians, the LRRG was able to spend more time with the humanitarian investigators that went to the site of the attack. And they were able to apply the knowledge they gained in various ways, one of them is to more experts down to the site which is in the wake of the August 8 attacks (UN staff, field Survey, 2021).

Also, the respondent said a number of families have left the area up to 20 families. They are trying to understand the state of people coming back, so those internally displaced people returning to their residence and also tries to understand what conditions they need to have faced to come back and thereby better again tailoring their response as MINUSMA and the United Nations to support them in that return to normalcy. Also, MINUSMA plans on setting up projects to improve their situation after getting them back to their villages **(**Field Survey, 2021).

According to a military officer the role of the LRRG is to get into the spaces where no one else can get to whilst providing security when they are there. There is an area between Ansongo where families have their bases down in Lavazanga the same area has armed groups and the Malian armed forces. They move the villagers at the greatest range between those two bases and provide security for weeks at a time. **(**Field Survey, 2021)

The respondent also stated that they have modern equipment used in peacekeeping like drones, the drones allow them to see beyond the horizon seeing what is happening between

20 or 30 kilometers away and more importantly protecting civilians over a wider range. Each of the companies in the LRRG has one drone each that they can use to cover large distance. Drones are really a critical capability for them. (Report, 2021) claims there have been multiple reports especially from the civilians themselves saying that they feel safer when they are there with them because the bandits and the insurgency groups would not come closer to them and also the United Nations flag being there gives them safer protection.

Challenges facing MINUSMA in Mali

There a quite a number of challenges facing the United Nations Security Council in handling the Mali crisis. According to a UN staff, the UN peace keepers have been in Mali since 2013 with almost 11,000 military peace keepers serving in the country. Women account for 2.2% of military personnel. The respondent also said there are critical gaps between their capabilities and enablers. The critical gaps they face are the need for; helicopters, explosive ordinance disposal capabilities, aero-medical evacuation teams and hospitals and pre-deployment training asymmetric threats (UN staff, field Survey, 2021).

Other challenges they face are threats from terrorist and suicide attacks, indirect fire, mortal shells and rocket attacks, ambushes, direct fire and complex attacks. MINUSMA is known to be the most dangerous and deadliest peace keeping mission (Report, 2021).

A military officer stated other fatalities faced by MINUSMA. He stated they had faced a lot of attacks since 2013 from 67 IED/ mine attacks killing 39 peacekeepers and wounding 219 others. **(**Field Survey, 2021) There have been 130 attacks since 2013, 30 in 2017. 149 peacekeepers dead since 2013 and 513 peacekeepers severely wounded. 58% of all fatalities in the mission were due to hostile incidents. 57% of causalities (wounds and injuries) from hostile incidents were due to IED attacks. (Beadle, 2014)

Another challenge facing the UN mission in Mali is lack of adequate is that between the troops from different countries with different pieces of training and understanding of what or who they were fighting against, this must have contributed to the reason why the Islamic groups were spreading more as it has been argued by some scholars, because an understanding of the fact that they were fighting terrorist groups with no clear reasons behind their actions and thinking that they were fighting mere civilian militants with no much military training, this lack of understanding is the reasons why so many African soldiers were casualties in the Malian conflict (MINUSMA), out of 109soldiers 91 were been reported dead 7 out of the 109 were Europeans **(**Field Survey, 2021).

Lotze, (2014) stated that another challenge that has been encountered by the UNis the attitude of the Malian population that delayed the Algiers Accord because of the perception that the initiative is a western agenda to dominate Mali.

MINUSMA relies on member states to provide essential equipment and the latest technology to effectively implement its mandate. Equipments like helicopter, long and short-range surveillance drones will help the mission to carry out its daily works better protect the civilians as well as its self against threats. Despite the challenges and threats MINUSMA continues to implement its mandate. The mission provides critical support to Malian armed forces on intelligences training, convoy escorts and medical evacuation. (Natons, 2013)

A Critique of (MINUSMA) Effectiveness in Mali crisis

According to a UN staff, MINUSMA has supported a lot of grassroots projects that promotes economic and social development in communities. One of the projects run by the association is called "GORE" (UN staff, field Survey, 2021). They train people with disabilities to manufacture and sell liquid soap. This project was launched in 2014. (Bove, 2018) also stated in his work that the members of "GORE" work every day to produce 90liters of soap in several colors proving that their handicap is not an obstacle and contributing to the development of the region just like others.

The same respondent also stated the effectiveness of MINNUSMA in working with the regional bureau of Kidal and an NGO called "AFORD" to provide solar power kits to over a thousand households. These kits consist of photovoltaic panels and batteries to provide a reliable source of electricity for the communities. (Bove, 2018)

Another UN staff stated that although MINUSMA had been effective in some economic areas, its effectiveness in terms of stabilization and the protection of civilians has decreased since 2016 (UN staff, field Survey, 2021). Violence has increased as jihadist groups have been attacking MINUSMA, the Forces Armées Maliennes (FAMA), and the Algiers Agreement signatories (Lijn, 2019).

The same respondent also stated that in addition to the challenging situation in the North, Central Mali has destabilized significantly, particularly since 2016. . (Lijn, 2019) asserted that without the assistance of MINUSMA, the security situation in Mali, and perhaps even the whole region, would likely deteriorated gravely.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper examined the role of (MINUSMA) in the Mali Crisis. The findings of this paper show that (MINUSMA) has played a major role in addressing the Mali crisis by protecting civilians and through the provision of logistics and military support to Malian armed forces in fight against terrorist. However, with the incessant coups in the country, returning Mali back to normalcy will be an uphill task unless the political elites in Mali assume demonstrable and result-driven efforts to arrest the trend of misgovernance and leadership failure in their country. The fact is that there is little to the extent to which (MINUSMA) could go in restoring peace in Mali if the political actors are unwilling to cooperate with the world body mission. It is in this connection that this paper recommends as follows:

First, the Malian government should focus not only on the fight against terrorists, bandits and other armed groups but also purge themselves of greed and lust for power which has led to incessant coups.

Second, the government of Mali should do all that is necessary to protect the various ethnic nationalities in the country.

Third, the government should work more closely with international military forces in the battle against murderous Islamic groups.

Fourth, there is also a need for the United Nations Security Council through MINUSMA to cut off arms/fund supply for the Islamic militants.

Fifth, the UN Security Council should strengthen MINUSMA both with military equipments and financial support. These would help facilitate a comprehensive success of the Mission.

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