

Intervention by H.E. Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de  
Buytswerve, Permanent Representative,

in the United Nations Security Council

**Open VTC**  
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We would like to thank Jean Pierre Lacroix as well as the 3 Force commanders for their insights into the additional challenges peacekeeping is facing during these unusual times. I would like to begin with honouring the peacekeepers on the ground for their courage and resilience as they are facing this pandemic. Our sincere thoughts are today going to the victims in the missions, including the victims of COVID-19.

Belgium is a Troop Contributing Country in 3 missions. . Together with the other Member States of the European Union, we committed at the beginning of the crisis to continuing to support peacekeeping by not withdrawing our troops because of COVID-19.

I would like to ask several questions to the Force Commanders. First, on the impact of this pandemic on your operations:

- **Engagement with local communities** is critical to Protection of civilians and prevention of attacks. The events of last week in the center of Mali are worrisome - and so are the number of COVID-19 cases in the mission. What is the impact of social distancing on this engagement? How is it impacting your situational awareness and how do you adapt your working methods to this new reality?
- Lieutenant General Tinaikar, both you and SRSG Shearer have promoted the "hub & spoke" model to project the capacity to **protect civilians** also outside PoC sites and near established bases. Given the COVID restrictions on mobility, what are the consequences for the "hub & spoke" approach, and therefore on protection of civilians in more remote areas?

Let me turn to other challenges of peacekeeping - unfortunately, those are not disappearing in times of COVID-19 and we recognize the efforts of all - at HQ and in the missions - to ensure business continuity.

- **Performance** is at the heart of your action and we know how critical the integration of the different components is for the success of the mission. Lieutenant General Tinaikar (UNMISS), could you update us on the implementation of C-PAS within UNMISS? What are, in your opinion, the biggest benefits of the tool? Does C-PAS serve as a catalyst to improve

integrated planning between the military, police and civilian components of the mission?

- Going back to MINUSMA, we support the **Force Adaptation Plan** on the basis of the general principles that have been shared with member states. Access to a higher level of detail – including on troop availability – could be useful for planning purposes. We hear that some critical assets – such as air assets and intelligence capacity – remain unavailable as of yet. These assets are key for the success of your Adaptation Plan; how do you see the impact the implementation of the Plan?

I would like to finish with a more open - maybe even philosophical question - to our 3 guests from the field:

- What is - from your perspective - the main challenge peacekeeping will have to face in the next few years? How can the Security Council better help you to be “fit for purpose” for that challenge?

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our support to the peace missions in those difficult circumstances.

I thank you.