

SIPRI YEARBOOK 2013

Armaments, Disarmament and International Security

New peace operations in 2012

JANE DUNDON AND JAÏR VAN DER LIJN



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II. New peace operations in 2012

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Three new multilateral peace operations opened in 2012: the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) and the European Union (EU) Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger). EUCAP Sahel Niger was part of broader attempts by the international community to respond to growing instability in the Sahel region. Hence, this section also discusses progress in 2012 towards the deployment of a multilateral operation in Niger's neighbour, Mali, where an internal conflict broke out in 2012.¹

Syria: the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria

In early 2012 the year-old intrastate conflict in Syria showed little sign of abating. International condemnation of the violence in Syria was widespread. Following the closure of the League of Arab States Observer Mission to Syria in January, after barely a month's deployment, the UN took on a central role in mediating the conflict. Kofi Annan, a former UN Secretary-General, was appointed Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League on the Syria crisis on 23 February.²

Annan submitted a six-point peace plan to the Syrian Government, which included a proviso that the government should cease troop movements to, stop the use of heavy weapons in, and pull back troop concentrations in and around population centres.³ The government accepted the proposal and Annan succeeded in brokering a ceasefire between the government and opposition forces in late March.⁴ The government undertook to withdraw its military forces from residential areas beginning on 1 April.⁵ However, immediately afterwards, and with negotiations ongoing, new government attacks on civilian centres were reported.⁶ In response, the UN Security

¹ On the conflict in Mali see chapter I, section I, in this volume.

² United Nations, Secretary-General, 'Kofi Annan appointed Joint Special Envoy of United Nations, League of Arab States on Syrian crisis', Joint statement, SG/SM 14124, 23 Feb. 2012.

³ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/6, 21 Mar. 2012.

⁴ 'Briefing by Special Envoy for Syria', What's in Blue blog, Security Council Report, 30 Mar 2012, <<http://whatsinblue.org/2012/03/briefing-by-the-joint-special-envoy-on-syria.php>>.

⁵ United Nations, Security Council, Letter from Kofi Annan to the UN Secretary-General, Annex to S/2012/206, 10 Apr. 2012.

⁶ Human Rights Watch (HRW), '*They Burned My Heart*: War Crimes in Northern Idlib during Peace Plan Negotiations' (HRW: New York, May 2012).

Council called on the Syrian Government to immediately implement the terms of the agreement.⁷

On 14 April, when it appeared that the government was beginning to implement its commitments, the Security Council authorized an advance team of 30 unarmed military observers to report on the implementation of the ceasefire pending the deployment of a UN mission.⁸ One week later, Security Council Resolution 2043 established UNSMIS to monitor the cessation of hostilities and support and monitor the implementation of Annan's six-point plan.⁹ Amid growing concerns over the continuation of violence in Syria, Annan called for UNSMIS to be deployed urgently. Although it was initially planned that the mission would be deployed in three phases over a three-month period, the Arab League also emphasized the need for the urgent deployment and called for support to be provided from other UN missions in the region.¹⁰ Subsequently, inter-mission cooperation played a vital role in the rapid deployment and operationalization of UNSMIS. Staff were redeployed from UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which also provided logistical support.¹¹

UNSMIS had an authorized strength of 300 unarmed military personnel and an appropriate civilian component.¹² The mission achieved full operational capacity within a month and, by the end of May, 271 military observers had been deployed to Syria. By June, 121 international civilian staff were deployed at the mission's Damascus headquarters to work on civil and political affairs, human rights, administration and support. Observers were based at the headquarters and eight sites around the country.¹³

Despite the rapid deployment of the UNSMIS observers, the security situation in Syria continued to deteriorate. On 20 July, as the ceasefire broke down, the Security Council decided that UNSMIS's mandate would be renewed for a final 30 days during which it must be reconfigured.¹⁴ The renewal took several rounds of negotiations and demonstrated the stark divisions in the Security Council over whether or not to issue a resolution under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which would permit action 'necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security'. Furthermore,

⁷ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/10, 5 Apr. 2012.

⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 2042, 14 Apr. 2012.

⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 2043, 21 Apr. 2012.

¹⁰ 'UNSMIS (Syria)', *Security Council Report: Monthly Forecast*, May 2012.

¹¹ Haq, A., Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Statement at UN Security Council Open Meeting on Inter-Mission Cooperation, 12 Dec. 2012, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/articles/usg_ameerahhaq_12122012.pdf>.

¹² UN Security Council Resolution 2043 (note 9).

¹³ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2043, S/2012/523, 6 July 2012.

¹⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 2059, 20 July 2012.

in July China and Russia blocked an attempt to threaten the Syrian Government with economic sanctions for its continued use of violence, limiting the capacity and leverage of UNSMIS.¹⁵

From 2011, with memories of the intervention in Libya still fresh, there was much discussion, both inside and outside the Security Council, about the applicability of the responsibility to protect (R2P) to the Syrian crisis.¹⁶ While R2P action up to and including armed intervention was vocally supported by several member states, including France, there was significant opposition from China and Russia. Also India and South Africa, among others, advocated a Syrian-led process.¹⁷ With the failure to reach consensus, R2P was never invoked. According to many analysts, Western powers, unwilling to become embroiled in another complex, drawn out and costly conflict and fearful of the possible destabilization of the wider region, were not unhappy to use Chinese and Russian opposition as an excuse for inaction.¹⁸

Due to escalating violence and the mission's consequent inability to implement its mandate adequately, UNSMIS was terminated on 19 August 2012. It was to be replaced with a special liaison office mandated to support efforts to find a political solution to the crisis; however, that office had not been established by early 2013.¹⁹

The Sahel: the EU Capacity Building Mission in Niger and developments in Mali

Following the 2011 conflict in Libya, the Sahel region was increasingly afflicted by a combination of transnational organized crime, such as arms and drug trafficking, and groups designated by the EU and UN as terrorist organizations.²⁰ This exacerbated the proliferation of weapons in the region. As a result, regional stability, governance, and social and economic development, as well as the provision of humanitarian aid, came under threat, which in turn created more space for armed groups to operate.²¹ Three issues received particular attention from the UN Security Council: a

¹⁵ United Nations, Security Council, 6810th meeting, S/PV.6810, 19 July 2012; and United Nations, Security Council, Draft resolution, S/2012/538, 19 July 2012. See also chapter 10, section II, in this volume.

¹⁶ Evans, G., 'Responding to atrocities: the new geopolitics of intervention', *SIPRI Yearbook 2012*.

¹⁷ See International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, 'Crisis in Syria', <<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-syria>>.

¹⁸ See e.g. Etzioni, A., 'Now is the time for U.S. to act on Syria', CNN, 16 Aug. 2012, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/07/opinion/etzioni-syria>>.

¹⁹ 'Syria: UN observer mission to end, to be replaced by liaison office, official says', UN News Service, 16 Aug. 2012, <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42694>>.

²⁰ On the conflict in Libya see Allansson, M. et al., 'The first year of the Arab Spring', *SIPRI Yearbook 2012*; and Fanchini, C., 'New peace operations in 2011', *SIPRI Yearbook 2012*, pp. 99–103.

²¹ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/2, 21 Feb. 2012.

developing humanitarian crisis in the Sahel; instability in northern Mali; and the presence of extremist elements and terrorist groups, particularly al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Mouvement pour le Tawhîd et du Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa), both accused of human rights violations. The Security Council stated several times that it considered these challenges to be threats to international peace and security, that it welcomed initiatives to counter them, and that it recognized the efforts of, among others, the EU, the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS in this field. Combatting AQIM and affiliated groups was identified as a top priority and for this purpose capacity building for states in the Sahel in areas such as security sector reform (SSR) was encouraged.²²

The EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, adopted by the Council of the EU in March 2011, argues that because the region is located in the EU's backyard, its stability and security are key concerns to the EU.²³ Instability would threaten EU interests in a number of spheres, including energy supplies, commerce and security, for example as a result of terrorism. The strategy focuses on Mali, Mauretania and Niger and advocates a 'regional, integrated and holistic strategy' to tackle the problems in the region, through fighting extremism, SSR, and strengthening governance and the rule of law. The strategy has been criticized for not including Algeria and Nigeria, two pivotal states in the region.²⁴ As part of the strategy's implementation, in 2012 the EU launched its first Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission in the Sahel, in Niger.²⁵

The EU Capacity Building Mission in Niger

On 21 March 2012 the Council of the EU approved the crisis-management concept for a potential CSDP civilian mission in the Sahel. Two months later, the Prime Minister of Niger, Brigi Rafini, requested such a mission in his country with the aim of reinforcing the capacity of the Nigerien security forces, particularly in the field of counterterrorism and the fight against organized crime. EUCAP Sahel Niger was established on 16 July. It has its headquarters in Niamey and is supported by two liaison offices in Bamako, Mali, and Nouakchott, Mauritania. Its main tasks are to (a) advise and assist in the implementation of the Nigerien security strategy; (b) support a regional approach in the fight against terrorism and organized crime;

²² United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/26, 10 Dec. 2012.

²³ European External Action Service, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, adopted 23 Mar. 2011, <http://eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf>. Publication of the strategy was delayed until September.

²⁴ Bello, O. W., *Quick Fix or Quicksand? Implementing the EU Sahel Strategy*, FRIDE Working Paper no. 114 (FRIDE: Madrid, Nov. 2012), pp. 11–15.

²⁵ The EU Training Mission in Mali was launched on 18 Feb. 2013.

(c) strengthen the rule of law; and (d) support the sustainability of the Nigerien security forces.²⁶ While the mission's mandate focuses primarily on assisting Nigerien authorities, it also has regional dimensions. In addition, in late 2012, following the increase in terrorist activities in northern Mali, it was decided that the mission should focus on preventing the spill-over of the conflict into Niger.²⁷

EUCAP Sahel Niger was mandated for an initial two-year period.²⁸ Deployment began in August 2012. The mission has a total authorized capacity of 78 staff, comprising police and military experts. By the end of 2012 it had reached half of its capacity. The mission will run alongside EU development programmes in the country.

Developments in Mali

In addition to the instability in Niger, the Libya conflict was also directly linked to the intensification of the conflict in Mali.²⁹ In March elements of the armed forces, dissatisfied with the level of the support they received from the Malian Government in their fight against the Tuareg rebels in the north of the country, seized power from the democratically elected government. The rebels exploited the chaos following the coup and started an offensive in the following days.³⁰ Within a short time, with the help of AQIM, they seized control of the major cities of northern Mali.³¹

On 6 April, under the auspices of ECOWAS, a framework agreement was signed containing a road map for the restoration of constitutional order, a national dialogue and the organization of presidential elections. The Malian armed forces were, however, still unable to recover the territories in northern Mali, and in September the transitional authorities asked ECOWAS to assist through the deployment of an international stabilization force mandated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. On 12 October the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2071 calling on member states and international organizations to assist the Malian armed forces, where required, to restore the authority of the government over its territory and reduce the threat posed by AQIM.³²

Despite the framework agreement, relations between the transitional government and the armed forces deteriorated again. The prime minister,

²⁶ Council Decision 2012/392/CFSP of 16 July 2012 on the European Union CSDP mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger), *Official Journal of the European Union*, L187, 17 July 2012.

²⁷ Mouawad, E., 'CSDP and EU mission update, Nov. 2012', CSDP Note no. 5, *European Security Review*, Nov. 2012.

²⁸ Council Decision 2012/392/CFSP (note 26).

²⁹ See chapter 2, section I, in this volume.

³⁰ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/7, 26 Mar. 2012.

³¹ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/9, 4 Apr. 2012.

³² UN Security Council Resolution 2071, 12 Oct. 2012.

Cheick Modibo Diarra, was arrested on 10 December and a day later he resigned and the government was dismissed. In the meantime, however, a joint strategic concept of operations for the international military force and the Malian armed forces was developed and endorsed by the ECOWAS heads of state and the AU Peace and Security Council. On 20 December the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) for an initial period of one year. Its main tasks would be to (a) rebuild the capacity of the Malian defence and security forces; (b) support recovery of the rebel-controlled areas in the north of the country and reduce the threat of terrorist organizations; (c) transition its activities to stabilization; (d) support the protection of Malian citizens; and (e) support the creation of a secure environment for the provision of humanitarian assistance.³³

The Security Council stressed that the military planning needed to be refined before the start of offensive operations. It called on member states and international organizations to provide financial support, troops and equipment to AFISMA to enable deployment. The EU provided such support through the mobilization of the African Peace Facility and the Security Council considered providing UN-funded logistical support packages.³⁴

The UN did not expect the deployment of AFISMA to happen before September 2013. However, on 10 January 2013 Islamist forces captured the strategic town of Konna, putting the nearby Sévaré military airport, which was vital to any future intervention, at risk. Pushed by France, the Security Council reiterated the call for assistance to the Malian Government in its struggle against the Tuareg and Islamist forces.³⁵ In order to accelerate international involvement, France deployed a military force, *Opération Serval*.³⁶ ECOWAS then stated it would speed up its deployments to AFISMA.³⁷ On 17 January 2013 EU foreign ministers, in a meeting attended by the Malian foreign minister, Tièmen Hubert Coulibaly, decided to deploy the EU Training Mission Mali (EUTM Mali). This mission was designed to respond to the operational needs of the Malian armed forces.³⁸

³³ UN Security Council Resolution 2085, 20 Dec. 2012.

³⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 2085 (note 33).

³⁵ United Nations, Security Council, 'Security Council press statement on Mali', SC/10878, 10 Jan. 2013.

³⁶ Irish, J. and Felix, B., 'Malian army beats back Islamist rebels with French help', Reuters, 11 Jan. 2013.

³⁷ 'Statement of the President of the ECOWAS Commission on the Situation in Mali', Press Release no. 006/2013, 12 Jan. 2013, <<http://news.ecowas.int/presseshow.php?nb=006&lang=en&annee=2013>>.

³⁸ Council Decision 2013/34/CFSP of 17 Jan. 2013 on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali), *Official Journal of the European Union*, L14/19, 18 Jan. 2013.

Guinea-Bissau: the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau, one of the smallest and poorest countries in Africa, has been prone to political instability since it gained independence in 1974. In the past 10 years, it has experienced five military coups and no president has completed his mandate.³⁹ In late 2010 ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, CPLP) drew up a ‘road map’ to contribute to the peacebuilding process in Guinea-Bissau, with a focus on SSR.⁴⁰ In addition, the Angolan Technical and Military Assistance Mission in Guinea-Bissau (MISSANG)—a technical assistance mission on security and defence reform—replaced an EU mission with a similar mandate in February 2011.⁴¹

Relations between the government and the military remained tense in 2012 while those between the military and MISSANG deteriorated. The prime minister, Carlos Gomes Júnior, resigned in February in order to run in the 2012 presidential elections. He indicated his intention to curtail the power of the military and combat the drug cartels in the country, which reportedly have a close relationship with some military figures.⁴² On 12 April, with Gomes looking likely to win, preparations for the elections were halted by a military coup. The coup leaders established the Transitional National Council and detained both Gomes and the interim president, Raimundo Pereira. Peaceful demonstrations were suppressed and civilians arbitrarily arrested.⁴³

In response, the AU suspended Guinea-Bissau’s membership.⁴⁴ ECOWAS immediately condemned the coup and demanded a return to constitutional order allowing the completion of the electoral process.⁴⁵ Further, it requested the immediate release of Gomes and Pereira, called on Guinea-Bissau to accept the immediate deployment of a contingent of the ECOWAS Standby Force, and established a regional contact and follow-up group on Guinea-Bissau to be chaired by Nigeria.⁴⁶ After negotiations with the

³⁹ Ramet, V., ‘Civil–military relations in Guinea-Bissau: an unresolved issue’, Policy Briefing, EU Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies, Policy Department, DG EXPO/B/PolDep/ Note/2012_149, Aug. 2012.

⁴⁰ UN Integrated Peace-building Office in Guinea-Bissau, ‘SRSG calls on Bissau-Guinean authorities to endorse ECOWAS-CPLP road map’, Press release, 10 Dec. 2010.

⁴¹ ‘Guinea-Bissau’, *Security Council Report: Update Report*, 4 May 2012. The EU mission was the EU Advisory Mission for Security Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau (EU SSR Guinea-Bissau).

⁴² Ramet (note 39).

⁴³ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/15, 21 Apr. 2012.

⁴⁴ African Union, Peace and Security Council, 319th Ministerial Meeting, Communiqué PSC/MIN/COMM/1.(CCCIX), 24 Apr. 2012.

⁴⁵ Ouedraogo, D. K., President of the ECOWAS Commission, ‘ECOWAS reaction to on-going coup attempt in Guinea-Bissau’, 12 Apr. 2012, <<http://www.ecowas.int/publications/en/statement/guineabissau13042012.pdf>>.

⁴⁶ ECOWAS, Extraordinary summit of ECOWAS heads of state and government, Final communiqué, 26 Apr. 2012.

Transitional National Council broke down at the end of April, ECOWAS imposed sanctions on Guinea-Bissau.⁴⁷ Eventually, a deal was reached between ECOWAS and the military command that secured the preservation of the parliament and the release of political detainees. Power was passed to a new civilian transitional government on 23 May and a period of one year was agreed to organize new elections.⁴⁸

ECOMIB was established on 26 April for an initial period of six months. It was mandated to facilitate the withdrawal of MISSANG, to secure the transitional process, and to ensure the implementation of the Defence and Security Sector Reform Programme (DSSRP).⁴⁹ The deployment of approximately 630 troops began just over a month after the coup. The ECOMIB force was deployed to the port, the airport and most ministries in the capital, Bissau, to ensure the security of state institutions.⁵⁰ In June MISSANG withdrew without incident.⁵¹

In October, in the aftermath of an alleged counter-coup, a memorandum of understanding on the DSSRP was signed between the ECOWAS Commission and the Guinea-Bissau authorities. The extension of ECOMIB's mandate in November for a further six months should allow the mission to assist in securing the transition process and ensuring peaceful and fair elections in April 2013.⁵²

While the UN Security Council supported the involvement of ECOWAS in the restoration of the constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau, neither the AU, the EU or the UN has recognized the new civilian transitional government.⁵³ The agreement negotiated by ECOWAS has divided international opinion, with some criticizing it for not being inclusive of all political parties and for creating a transitional government principally composed of opponents of Gomes.⁵⁴

In December 2012 an AU-led joint assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau was conducted in cooperation with ECOWAS, the EU and the UN in order to improve the coordination of international efforts on SSR and political and economic reforms, on combating drug trafficking, and on fighting

⁴⁷ ECOWAS, 'ECOWAS sanctions Guinea Bissau after failed talks', Press release no. 124/2012, 1 May 2012.

⁴⁸ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country, S/2012/554 17 July 2012.

⁴⁹ ECOWAS (note 46), p. 8

⁵⁰ United Nations, Security Council, 'Security Council urged to call for unified strategy that would restore legitimate order to Guinea-Bissau', Press release, SC/10732, 26 July 2012.

⁵¹ ECOWAS, Forty-first ordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Final communiqué, 29 June 2012.

⁵² ECOWAS, Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, Final communiqué, 11 Nov. 2012.

⁵³ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2012/15, 21 Apr. 2012.

⁵⁴ United Nations, Security Council (note 53).

impunity.⁵⁵ The mission in part reflected an effort to enhance international, regional and subregional engagement, despite the disagreements over the course of action following the April 2012 coup. It was later agreed that a second assessment mission would be carried out once the transitional government had accepted a ‘transition road map’.⁵⁶

Conclusions

The launch of the 2011 military intervention in Libya, with the backing of the Security Council, raised hopes that R2P was moving from idealistic words to a genuine commitment to intervene—militarily, if needed—to protect a state’s civilians from state-based violence. The launch of the Arab League Observer Mission to Syria in December 2011 and UNSMIS in 2012 gave supporters of R2P further grounds for optimism. However, the rapid disintegration of these missions and the failure to agree on any international response to the mounting violence highlighted the limits of the concept and of the international commitment to R2P. The case of Syria in 2012 shows that if the Security Council is divided and permanent members have significant interests in the country at stake, R2P offers no solution.

The Syria crisis also highlighted increasing international disagreement about how to manage conflicts. Such divisions were visible, too, in relation to the military coup in Guinea-Bissau, where the AU, the EU and UN preferred to take a hard line against the coup leaders, while ECOWAS preferred mediation and less direct steps.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the budget constraints and pressure to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness applied to existing missions were not applied to new missions with the same rigour.

⁵⁵ UN Security Council Resolution 2048, 18 May 2012.

⁵⁶ African Union, ‘Convening of a consultative meeting on the situation in Guinea-Bissau’, Press release, 27 Jan. 2013, <<http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/convening-of-a-consultative-meeting-on-the-situation-in-guinea-bissau>>.