

III. Multilateral non-peace operations

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An increasing number of military and civilian personnel are being deployed in operations that fall within the grey zone of just outside the SIPRI definition of multilateral peace operations. These kinds of multilateral non-peace operations are mandated or welcomed by the United Nations Security Council but fall outside the SIPRI definition, for example, because they do not serve as instruments to facilitate the implementation of peace agreements, support peace processes, or assist conflict prevention or peacebuilding efforts. Other multilateral non-peace operations may fall outside the SIPRI definition of multilateral peace operations because their units operate on their own territory.¹

In 2017, two operations drew extra attention in the UN Security Council: the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) Joint Force (Force Conjointe des Etats du G5 Sahel, FC-G5S) and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram (see below). In addition to these two, other operations that have undertaken considerable efforts are: the 4000-troop French Operation Barkhane, which also implements Security Council-mandated tasks; the European Union Military Operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED, or Operation Sophia), which deployed multiple European navy vessels and nearly 1000 personnel in 2017 and is mandated to implement the Libyan arms embargo by means of maritime interdiction; and the 1031-strong Regional Task Force (RTF) of the African Union (AU) Regional Coordination Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army. Following the withdrawal of US Special Forces in May and the Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) in August, however, the RTF has been left toothless, despite its mandate renewal of one year by the AU Peace and Security Council in May.²

The Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force

On 6 February 2017, the G5 Sahel set up FC-G5S to fight terrorism and organized crime on the territory of its member states—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.³ On 13 April, the AU Peace and Security Council

¹ For a discussion of the SIPRI definition of multilateral peace operations and the missions that fall in the grey zone outside this definition see Smit, T., 'Global trends in peace operations', *SIPRI Yearbook 2017*, pp. 165–75. The increased deployment of multilateral non-peace operations, particularly when they involve military operations, will demand increased attention in future editions of the SIPRI Yearbook.

² African Union, Peace and Security Council, Communiqué 685th meeting, PSC/PR/COMM(D-CLXXXV), 12 May 2017.

³ G5 Sahel, Permanent Secretariat, Resolution 00-01/2017, Relative a la creation d'une force conjointe du G5 Sahel [Resolution on the creation of a joint G5 Sahel force], 6 Feb. 2017. On the conflict in

endorsed the strategic concept and authorized a 5000-strong mission. The mission was to have military, police and civilian components, and the latter two were to deal in particular with human rights and the protection of civilians. The FC-G5S mandate is to: (a) combat terrorism, drug trafficking and human trafficking, with the aim of creating a more secure environment in the Sahel region by eradicating ‘terrorist armed groups’ and organized criminal groups; (b) contribute to the restoration of state authority and the return of displaced persons and refugees; (c) facilitate humanitarian assistance; and (d) assist development efforts.⁴ Once it is fully operational, the FC-G5S will consist of 5000 personnel, including 500 police.

The Secretary-General recommended that the Security Council approve the deployment of the FC-G5S and authorize him to look into financial and other modalities for support.⁵ The FC-G5S was of particular importance to France, as part of its strategy to reduce the pressure on its overstretched armed forces deployed in operations such as Barkhane. France was therefore willing to push hard against the United States, which was resistant to any potential UN financial or other support as it sought to reduce the UN peacekeeping budget (but perhaps could not be seen to be vetoing a counterterrorism force). The USA argued that: (a) the force did not need a UN mandate because it would be operating on the territory of its own member states; (b) its mandate was too broad and unclear, as the force would be eradicating ‘undefined criminal networks’; (c) it lacked sufficient accountability and oversight; (d) coordination with other operations in the region needed to be further operationalized; and (e) the lack of an exit strategy meant that it would be prone to mission creep.⁶ Eventually, the Security Council welcomed—rather than authorized as France had wanted but the USA had opposed—the deployment of the FC-G5S, encouraged bilateral and non-UN funding and agreed to review the mission after four months.⁷ The Security Council also requested MINUSMA to coordinate with the FC-G5S, through information and intelligence sharing among other things.⁸

The FC-G5S reached its initial operational capacity by 17 October and undertook its first operation, Hawbi, in the central boundary zone. It is scheduled to be fully operational by March 2018.⁹ The FC-G5S managed to

the Sahel region see also chapter 2, section VI, in this volume.

⁴ African Union, Peace and Security Council, Communiqué, 679th meeting, PSC/PR/COMM (DCLXXIX), 13 Apr. 2017.

⁵ United Nations, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali, S/2017/478, 6 June 2017.

⁶ Lynch, C., ‘Trump weighs vetoing France’s African anti-terrorism plan’, *Foreign Policy*, 13 June 2017; and Nichols, M., ‘US wary of French push for UN to back Sahel force: Diplomats’, Reuters, 6 June 2017.

⁷ UN Security Council Resolution 2359, 21 June 2017.

⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 2364, 29 June 2017.

⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 2391, 8 Dec. 2017.

collect over half of its estimated budget of €500 million from donors such as the European Union (€50 million), Saudi Arabia (€100 million), the United Arab Emirates (€30 million) and the USA (\$60 million).¹⁰ In addition, the Security Council decided after four months that the FC-G5S was contributing to the stability of Mali and, as such, to the fulfilment of MINUSMA's mandate. It therefore requested MINUSMA to provide operational and logistical support to the FC-G5S on Malian territory until it becomes self-reliant. This will include the provision of medical and casualty evacuation (MEDEVAC and CASEVAC), access to water, rations and fuel, and use of engineers to assist with the preparation of operational bases in Mali. Moreover, given that military operations like FC-G5S run the risk of having adverse effects if they do not fully respect human rights, the support guarantees a compliance framework based on the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) on UN support to non-UN security forces.¹¹

The Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram

Like the FC-G5S, the 10 772-strong MNJTF involves countries deploying operations on their own territory. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) member states (Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria) and Benin are working together to combat Boko Haram. The MNJTF developed its concept of operations and received support from the AU Peace and Security Council in 2014. In the context of the UN, in March 2015 the Security Council considered a draft resolution on providing assistance, including financial support, to the MNJTF under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. After the election of President Muhammadu Buhari in Nigeria, however, the country changed its position, no longer sought a Chapter VII mandate and instead chose to fund most of the operation itself.¹² Subsequently, the Security Council commended the efforts of the MNJTF and asked it to mitigate the security, development and humanitarian consequences of the fighting.¹³ At the same time, the Security Council has encouraged other actors to share intelligence with the MNJTF.¹⁴

In 2017 the Security Council addressed the MNJTF in a separate resolution for the first time. It stressed the need for operations to be conducted in accordance with international law, and again emphasized the need for a

¹⁰ France Diplomatie, 'G5 Sahel joint force and alliance for the Sahel' [n.d.].

¹¹ United Nations, Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel', S/2017/869, 16 Oct. 2017; and UN Security Council Resolution 2391, 8 Dec. 2017.

¹² African Union, Peace and Security Council, 484th meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, Communiqué, PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV), 29 Jan. 2015; and UN Office for West Africa, Security Council Report, 'July 2015 monthly forecast', 1 July 2015. On the conflict in the Lake Chad region see also chapter 2, section VI, in this volume.

¹³ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2015/14, 28 July 2015.

¹⁴ United Nations, Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2016/7, 13 May 2016.

holistic approach that goes beyond military operations to include civilian efforts such as improving governance, inclusivity and economic development.¹⁵

The year seemed to be a relatively successful one for the MNJTF. It was able to make important territorial gains, liberate a number of hostages and increase the number of defectors. The countries in the region also paid increasing attention to the root causes of the conflict, by means of development efforts such as the 'Buhari Plan' in Nigeria. In January 2017, however, the Nigerian Air Force accidentally bombed a refugee camp in Rann. The Security Council called for an investigation into the incident, for the deployment of civilian personnel, including human rights and gender advisers, and for donors to fulfil their pledges.¹⁶ After losing territory, Boko Haram dispersed and instead intensified its suicide attacks. Thus, in spite of the progress made, Boko Haram remains a threat capable of causing large-scale humanitarian suffering.¹⁷

¹⁵ UN Security Council Resolution 2349, 31 Mar. 2017.

¹⁶ UN Security Council Resolution 2349, 31 Mar. 2017.

¹⁷ United Nations, Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Lake Chad Basin region', S/2017/764, 7 Sep. 2017.