

Forum: General Assembly 5

Issue: Financing of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali

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Introduction

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (abbreviated as MINUSMA) was set up by the United Nations Security Council on the 25th of April 2013 by order of its Resolution No 2100. It was aimed to support political activities and processes in the unstable nation of Mali and to execute security related tasks and plans. The agenda of the mission was focused on protecting population centers, lines of communication and the protection of civilians, local residents, and safeguarding of their human rights. All these actions aimed to create a safe and peaceful environment for the return of displaced people to their homes and for the conduction of successful and harmonious elections.

It was proposed that MINUSMA would contain about 11,200 military personnel, which would include reserve battalions, deployable to any part of the country as and when required. The United Nations office in Mali (UNOM), established in 2012, was also be subsumed under this mission immediately after the adoption of Resolution 2100 by the Security Council. The mission was greatly relied on and it was believed that it would serve as a major initiative for bringing peace, harmony and stability to the nation, and the region as a whole.

However, a major issue erupted in just a span of a few months of the execution of the mission. This was none other than the issue of funding or financing. Initially, the mission fell short of the number of troops it had aimed to keep. This was due to two main reasons. Firstly the delay in bringing peacekeeping forces on the ground, which was due to the delayed response of nations in their affirmation of sending troops on the ground in Mali. The second reason was the delay in the execution of the US Budget process. The United States, being the largest financial contributor to the UN, was expected to provide a huge sum of money to the cause of this mission, however, it was seen that the vagaries of the UN Budgeting Procedure hindered it from funding the mission on time, and in the full amount that it had committed to the cause in the first place.

The US Congress did not include the funding of the mission in its agenda and this created serious worldwide concern for the funding of the mission in Mali, considering the fact that the US was the

wealthiest nation in the world and had a significant say in Security Council proceeding, being a Veto Nation. Even today, the mission lacks sufficient funding, despite the fact that its presence in the region has had a significant role in improving political stability and progress. Nations should realize their role in contributing effectively to the mission, in terms of both finance, as well as defense forces.

Moreover, it is essential to understand that the load of effective funding of the mission should not be enforced only on wealthy MEDCs such as the United States. The funding of the operations in Mali should be collective, with all capable nations providing their contributions to make the mission a true success. All nations should understand, that missions such as those in Mali, are flag bearers of the UN and its ideologue of promoting global peace, harmony, and well being of all global citizens.

Definition of Key Terms

MINUSMA

This is the abbreviated form of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, a nation in North Africa. Its establishment was aimed at maintaining peace and stability in the nation, as it underwent a change in its political set up. It was proposed that MINUSMA would help in battling terrorist attacks in the Northern region of the country, and also ensure the smooth conduction of Presidential elections and political activities.

African-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA)

This refers to the peacekeeping force, which operated in Mali, before the advent of the MINUSMA. Although this task force did help restore stability to the region to some extent, it was felt that what it was doing was not enough to tackle rising tensions in the region. It was hence, expanded to form the MINUSMA in on 25th of April 2013.

United Nations Office in Mali (UNOM)

This refers to the office of the UN in Mali, which was established in 2012. It helped in monitoring the ground level situation in the region, which involved detailed analysis and reports, which finally culminated in the advent of MINUSMA in April 2013.

Security Council Resolution 2100

The UN Security Council adopted this resolution on the 25th of April 2013. The adoption of this resolution led to the establishment of the MINUSMA as a peacekeeping entity in the North African nation of Mali, replacing the erstwhile AFISMA and inducting the UNOM under its wing.

Background Information

As discussed before, the establishment of MINUSMA as an independent entity - replacing the erstwhile AFISMA - was a strong step in ensuring peace, stability and political harmony in the region. The issue of funding, however, came to haunt the mission in its early stages itself and this was credited to the lack of proper fund allocation to the cause of MINUSMA by the US Congress, despite the fact that the United States had actively supported the cause of MINUSMA and its establishment in the UN Security Council. It is important to note here, however, that the fault of improper fund allocation should not only be burdened onto the United States alone, especially in the present case scenario.

In recent times, the United States has emerged as one of the biggest financial contributors to the cause of MINUSMA. This is in contrast to what was seen in the initial months of MINUSMA's establishment, as the US had not allocated fund to the cause effectively back then. Nonetheless, its contribution to the mission today, together with China and Japan, cannot be refuted. These three nations together contribute 48% of the overall fund to the mission.

In the UN budget of the fiscal year 2015-16, the General Assembly had allocated a sum of \$923,305,800 to fund the mission. However, member states were only able to raise a sum of \$923,193,800, which was clearly \$112,000 short of the allocated amount. This may have had little impact on the funding of the mission, since 99% of the funds had been accumulated, it still showed the lack of fulfillment of the original budgetary target. This was an indication of several things, some of which shall be explained in detail further on in this report.

The three major contributors- United States, China and Japan

In recent years, three of the world's wealthiest economies- the United States, China and Japan have emerged as the biggest contributors to the fund allocated to MINUSMA. Standing at 28.47%, it has emerged as one of the largest contributors to peacekeeping operations across the globe, including Africa. China and Japan are at position number 2 and 3 respectively, with an average contribution of 10.25% and 9.68% respectively.

The Role of France

French forces played an important role in maintaining peace and stability in the region as well. In 2012, Northern Mali was under threat by several terrorist organizations. Forced Marriage, militancy, prostitution and mass killings haunted the region. Amidst the chaos, French forces intervened and achieved major breakthroughs in stabilizing the region.

The French intervention began in early 2013 and was successful in eradicating militant presence in the North, but this was only temporarily. The terrorist groups regrouped in Southern Libya and neighboring parts of Niger, and resumed militant activities as soon as French presence declined.

Although many regions of the North was under no single authority and remained to be areas of crossfire and conflict, the French were able to largely keep away terrorist organizations from exerting direct control over the region.

When MINUSMA was established in April 2013, its main agenda was to ensure stability and a peaceful environment for smooth functioning of political activities and daily routine. The agenda of battling terrorist groups was, and still is the main purpose of the French troops stationed on the ground in Northern Mali. The efforts of the French forces, in maintaining peace and harmony are, therefore, undeniable and appreciable.

Ideas, Reforms, and Innovations in MINUSMA

Over the years, the mission in Mali has undergone several transformations, which have contributed to its positive role in the region. Courtesy Denmark, Sweden and Norway, the mission is now supported by an All Source Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU), which has helped it to acquire, analyze and utilise timely and effective intelligence. Courtesy to its support, peacekeepers have been able to respond much quicker to incidents in various parts of the region.

Another step towards improving the functioning of the mission has been the establishment of a trust fund, which is being used for the purchase of specialized defense equipment, such as armored and mine-protected vehicles.

Other initiatives, such as the establishment of weapon identification squads and mentoring programs have greatly benefitted peacekeeping contingents that have little or no experience of fighting in terrorized environments. The use of unarmed drones for monitoring and the deployment of European Battalions on the ground, including the Dutch contingent of 350 troops, has also helped in making the mission an immensely successful one. They have together helped in enhancing the mission's mobility, intelligence and military capabilities.

The 'funding' problem

As discussed before, lack of funds and military contribution to the mission has severely affected its ability to discharge its duties and contribute to the region's stability effectively. It is, without doubt, a fact that the reinforcements and innovations brought to the mission have significantly enhanced its capabilities, but nonetheless, the number of troops and fund available to the mission, is still a matter of concern.

Like most other UN peacekeeping missions, MINUSMA has also suffered from lack of adequate funds and forces, right from the time of its inception. Every year, the General Assembly stipulates a specified amount of money to the cause of the mission, but it is a hard fact that the sum of money that is actually raised for the mission always falls short. This, in addition to the lack of sufficient blue helmets on the ground, brings down the efficiency of the mission to stabilize the region.

The lack of resources can be attributed to several reasons. One of these is the lack of strong consensus of UN member nations to actively support the cause. As mentioned before, the fund which is actually collected for the cause often falls short of what is actually devoted to it in the fiscal budget by the General Assembly each year. Although this difference is very small, even being as small as 1%, it indicates the lack of strong consensus among nations to actively fund the cause in any way possible. Moreover, most of the resources collected are usually from wealthy nations such as the US, China and Japan. Nations such as India and Brazil, being less wealthy than many other less contributing nations, are also playing an active role in funding the cause by sending troops and peacekeeping forces on the ground. But the fact of the matter is, that many of the top 10 world economies, are not contributing as effectively and enthusiastically as they should, and this is erupting as one of the main reasons for the lack of resources for the mission. It is imperative that prominent MEDCs realize their role for the cause and contribute more effectively to the agenda of MINUSMA.

Other problems harming the cause of MINUSMA

Other than the issue of funding, there are a few more obstacles that hinder the path of the progress of the cause of MINUSMA. The first and foremost, is the lack of adequate number of personnel on the ground in Mali. Statistics reveal that only about 76% of the stipulated number of troops are available for the mission. The reason is yet again the same- lack of commitment from member nations. This is something which has been reflected in the funding issue as well and the explanation for this cause is the same yet again.

Peacekeepers stationed on the ground do not perform a single function, but have dual purpose. These are- protection of local residents and also winning their trust and support. While the former has been executed well, the latter has served to be a problem. Local residents in Northern Mali have often opposed peacekeepers, and this has led to violent disruptions and protests in the region. This is probably due to disagreement between the two parties, which has taken a violent turn. This has rendered the mission to be largely inefficient due to lack of local support and communication with the Mali government.

In a nutshell, lack of proper funding, resources, peacekeeping personnel, and local support coupled with improper communication between the mission leadership and Mali government has made this issue one of serious concern which requires immediate action. The UN needs to begin working hard to improve collaboration between member nations, and solutions need to be drawn up to improve the condition of MINUSMA and increase its efficiency.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Republic of Mali

A nation in West Africa, Mali has been haunted by terrorist organizations and militant activities for a long time now. Mali was once considered the 'pillar of democracy' in the West African region, and was regarded as an ideal nation for the promotion of democratic principles in the region. However in recent years, especially since the year 2012, radical fundamentalists have created an atmosphere of violence and unrest in the northern part of the region. This has had a very negative impact on the lives of local residents, including women and children, many of whom have been displaced or forced to live in camps and refugee shelters in neighboring areas.

The unrest was sparked off by an uprising, which was initiated by the National Movement for the liberation of Azawad (MNLA), which later joined hands with radical organizations including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine (AD) and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA). These organizations created a large-scale insurrection against the government and took control of a large part of Northern Mali by June 2012. At the same time, the three militant groups broke off their association with the MNLA, and by using arms, ammunition and other essential supplies coming from neighboring Libya, took control over Northern Mali. It was only when the French forces intervened in 2013 that their influence was reduced and the area under the control of these terrorists could be recovered.

When MINUSMA was established in April 2013, it was widely regarded as 'the most dangerous mission' undertaken by the UN. Although the Mali government announced formal support for the mission, the communication between the MINUSMA leadership and the Mali Government hasn't been so impressive and is still an area of debate and discussion.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

The Security Council, like in all other peacekeeping missions, is also responsible for the analysis and functioning of the MINUSMA and publishes periodic reports on the working of the mission. It plays a crucial role in deciding the budget to be allocated to the mission by the General Assembly in each fiscal year. The SC has also played a pivotal role in providing regular updates to member nations regarding the ground level situation in Mali, and the role played by the MINUSMA to stabilize it. The UNSC is responsible for taking all major decisions regarding innovations, funding and personnel involved in the MINUSMA. Healthy debate and dialogue at the UN, led by P5 nations, can play a positive role in encouraging member nations to contribute generously to the cause of the mission.

France

As mentioned earlier in this report, the role of France has been pivotal in keeping terrorist organizations away from the Northern Part of Mali. Though this does not mean they have been

eradicated completely, but nonetheless, the presence of a contingent of French troops in the northern region since 2013 has played an eminent role in keeping militant groups far away from the nation.

United States

The United States has emerged as one of the biggest supporters of the MINUSMA, right from its inception. The US is the largest contributor of the funds to the cause, followed by Japan and China. It also makes a mark as the biggest contributor of peacekeeping personnel to the mission. Though the initial mismanagement of budgetary by the US Congress with regards to the issue may have inhibited the US from actively contributing to the cause, its contribution to the mission in recent years, in terms of both force and funds, is undeniable.

China

The role of China in sending peacekeepers to MINUSMA has been remarkable and, to a large extent, quite unique as well. MINUSMA serves as the first example of China sending a special protection unit of infantry and Special Forces, to a UN mission. This sudden shift in military preference can be attributed to two reasons – one, to gain military experience and two, to develop a name as an important global stakeholder. Regardless of the reason, the contribution of China in the cause has been largely positive and commendable.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
January 2012	The MNLA launches a resurrection against the Mali government; joins hands with three prominent terrorist groups in the region; within a few months, the three gain a control of large parts of Northern Mali
June 2012	The alliance between the MNLA and the three terrorist groups is called off; the three militant groups gain massive control over Northern Mali with the help of supplies from neighboring Libya
January-March 2013	French Forces battle terror groups in Northern Mali, and gradually recover a large part of the occupied region; terror groups regroup in neighboring nations of Libya and Niger
25th April 2013	The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 2100, establishing MINUSMA; the UNOM and the AFISMA are subsumed under the new mission; French forces continue functioning independently

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The issue of funding and lack of resources has been addressed over the years with innovations, ideas and techniques, suggested and supported by a handful of responsible nations- including France, US, China, Japan etc. As has been discussed previously in this report, various innovations in the mission have helped to a large extent. The establishment of the intelligence unit ASIFU, the formation of the Trust Fund to obtain specialized defense equipment, establishment of weapon identification squads and monitoring units, coupled with the usage of drones, have played a major role in improving the efficiency of the mission.

These techniques have been facilitated by support from the Scandinavian nations- Norway, Sweden and Denmark, in addition to intelligence research by UN authorities and economically developed nations such as the US and Japan. Although these played a pivotal and crucial role in enhancing results, the efficiency of the mission is still not up to the mark. This is partially due to lack of strong support from member states, and also due to the fact that MINUSMA peacekeepers haven't really been able to win the support and trust of local residents, which is evident in the periodic protests and violent demonstrations against the mission in the region. These have severely affected peacekeeping operations in the region.

Hence, the resolution of the funding problem and lack of resources has to be done using two kinds of steps- one is through technical means involving initiatives by member nations and important organizations, and the other involves a tactical approach to target the social aspect of the problem, and win the trust and faith of the Malian people.

Possible Solutions

This complete report stresses on how MINUSMA has been faced by problems, which include funding, lack of resources, lack of local support, and how these issues have surfaced in the first place. The root causes include lack of strong support from UN Member nations, lack of proper defense facilities, improper fund allocation and, more importantly, an overall fault in the agenda of the peacekeeping operation. Therefore, in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the mission, these root causes need to be addressed seriously.

Firstly, let's analyze the support issue. The issue of lack of strong consensus among member nations for support to the issue is a serious one, and a great way in which it can be resolved is through dialogue and discussion at various levels, and in various forums. Influential nations such as the US, China and Japan can play a major role in spearheading dialogue in this regard. These nations can address the General Assembly and Security Council members, and urge them to actively contribute to the cause. Although this may not have any guaranteed results, but it will definitely play a pivotal role in

bringing the message through to other member nations. The US and China, being P5 nations, can play a major role in increasing funding and support for the mission on the diplomatic front. Nations need to be made to realize how their contribution to the cause will play a major role in upholding their image as the guards of the UN charter around the world. Diplomatic means and communication between nations can also serve the purpose.

Additionally, more developed nations and countries of high economic status should increase their contribution to the mission. This can be in the form of peacekeeping forces, funds, intelligence or defense equipment. Nations such as India (the third largest contributor to forces in UN peacekeeping missions) and Brazil (a major financial supporter) can be good examples to cite to member nations to encourage active participation to resolve the issue.

Another way to increase the efficiency of the mission is to improve communication mechanisms between the MINUSMA leadership and the Malian Government. If this is successfully done, peacekeeping forces can enormously increase their positive role in the region. Better communication can enhance the transportation facilities, logistics and supplies available to the mission, and hence increase its efficiency to bring peace in the region. Member nations of the UN can play a pivotal role in contributing supplies, and coming up with means to improve logistics in the affected areas, which will not only benefit UN peacekeepers, but will also help local residents, thereby creating a positive attitude towards peacekeepers, bringing down hostility and violence against them.

Shifting focus from fund collection to resource development can also be a very viable option. Instead of urging nations to donate in monetary form, they can be urged to help the mission by contributing defense resources such as vehicles, equipment or intelligence. They may also help in training peacekeeping contingents, especially those which have little or no experience in terrorist affected areas. In this way, nations will have a sense of security with regards to the usage of their contributed resources, as they will be assured of the fact that their contribution is being used for the right cause and for the intended purpose.

Finally, the UN, and especially the Security Council, should be urged to revisit the set agenda of the mission. MINUSMA cannot be treated as any ordinary peacekeeping operation, as it is, and remains to be, one of the most dangerous missions in the history of the United Nations. Generally, peacekeeping forces are said to be 'neutral', and their military aspect only relates to self-defense, thereby working under a 'defensive' agenda. However, it is imperative to note, that MINUSMA is a high risk mission, and simply labeling it under the 'defensive' agenda can greatly reduce its efficiency. Hence, a consensus needs to be sought, to shift the agenda of MINUSMA, from a mere 'peacekeeper' to a 'peace enforcer', and offensive rights should be discharged to its forces, to actively combat militant groups. This, however, is very difficult, as Russia and some nations from the global South, have expressed their strong disapproval on this transition. They may be right in some sense, as the transition may prove to be dangerous to peacekeeping forces, as it may increase hostility of local residents against them. Hence,

this solution is one of controversy, and needs to be introduced in a way, that it is able to generate a sense of consensus among member nations, which may be a bit difficult to achieve.

Lastly, the social aspect of the issue needs to be seriously addressed. The Mali population's growing hostility and disapproval of MINUSMA has made it exceedingly difficult for it to discharge its duties. Hence, a sense of trust needs to be cultivated among the local people towards the mission, and this can be done in a variety of ways. Trust building efforts should be undertaken to improve cultural communication and collaboration between the Malian authorities and MINUSMA leadership. If the Malian government develops a strong relationship with the MINUSMA leadership, it will be able to encourage local residents to do the same. In addition to this, peacekeepers should try to reach out to the local people, and effectively communicate its message to them. They should be able to help them understand the positive role the mission can play in the region, if it has local support and trust. Trust building activities can help serve this purpose immensely. Peacekeepers should be trained before being stationed in Mali, particularly with regards to language (as majority of the population is French speaking) and culture of the local people. This will help them understand the locals better, and will in turn help them in better communication with local residents.

These are a few, of the many creative approaches that can be undertaken to resolve the issue. Remember, MINUSMA is a delicate mission, with growing complexities and barriers. However, addressing the root causes of the problems in Mali, and those affecting the mission directly or indirectly, can really help in improving the lives of local people, and changing the future, for the better.

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