

The President (*spoke in French*):

I would like to thank Mr. Arthur Boutellis for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad.

This morning's debate is perhaps one of the most important discussions the Security Council has ever had. Indeed, one year after the submission of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/446) and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/682), it is time for us to grapple with one of the most complex challenges that peacekeeping missions still face: asymmetrical threats. This phenomenon, which threatens the lives of civilians and undermines the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations from Africa to the Middle East, deserves particular focus and attention, in particular on the part of the Security Council.

It is against this backdrop that the President of the Republic of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Macky Sall, has taken the initiative of convening this high-level debate in order to strategically reflect on peace operations facing asymmetrical threats in order to consider the need to adapt the tools on which the Organization's peace and security architecture rests.

I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Director of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations for their relevant briefings, which speak volumes about the severity of the phenomenon we are considering today and the options we have in countering that threat.

We must agree that the international security order has completely changed in today's world with the proliferation of violent internal conflicts, as a result of the emergence of large numbers of non-State actors, including terrorist groups. This is especially true when we see the worrying trend of conflicts and the emergence of new cross-cutting and asymmetrical threats, ranging from terrorism to transnational organized crime, which continues to mark the current environment.

From northern Mali to Afghanistan, through the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and the Middle East, criminal groups regularly target United Nations staff and civilian populations, in particular those most vulnerable: women and children. The examples of this in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United

Nations Mission in South Sudan are symptomatic of serious and repeated abuses against civilians and peacekeeping forces.

According to the report of the Secretary-General on Mali (S/2016/819), the number of attacks on the Malian Defence and Security Forces and MINUSMA increased significantly in the period under review. The Malian Defence and Security Forces were attacked 39 times, MINUSMA was attacked 27 times and a company that works for MINUSMA was attacked once; whereas during the previous period, there were 9 attacks on the Malian Defence and Security Forces and 15 on MINUSMA. A total of 34 peacekeepers were killed and 190 were injured between January 2015 and November 2016 in Mali and, on 13 August 2016 alone, 50 civilians were killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Just the day before yesterday, attacks against a MINUSMA convoy north of the town of Douentza led to the deaths of two peacekeepers and the injury of seven, three of whom are in serious condition. These attacks and the modus operandi of these terrorist groups underscore the insecurity in which United Nations troops operate. Carrying out a peacekeeping and peacebuilding mission in such circumstances has become a perilous exercise, as evidenced by the heavy price paid by peacekeepers in MINUSMA, which has become one of the most dangerous and deadly operations ever.

The gravity of the situation is such that it affects the very effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping operations and undermines their credibility. In that regard, we have several options before us. We could maintain the status quo and ignore the threats and their devastating consequences. We could refuse to get involved when terrorist movements are present and thereby give up on our main objective of maintaining peace and security. Our final option is to try to adapt peacekeeping operations so that they can better respond to the threats posed by the emergence of asymmetrical threats and terrorism.

It is the firmly held belief of the Government of the Republic of Senegal that the current and future success of peacekeeping operations in fulfilling their mandates will depend largely on their ability to adapt to the changing environments in which they are deployed. Any other course of action would divert us further from our primary goal of maintaining international peace and security. We should not satisfy ourselves with simply taking note of the fact that United Nations peacekeeping missions are not in a position to carry out counter-terrorist military operations, as noted quite rightly in the report of the High-level Independent

Panel on Peace Operations. In addition, we must also think of other ways and means to equip our missions with the necessary capacity to effectively respond to the threats, which are today an indisputable fact of life.

My country, Senegal, which is the seventh-largest troop contributor in the world, the third-largest in Africa and the largest in West Africa, believes that in the context of adapting peacekeeping missions to the new and asymmetrical circumstances, there are two major areas of action on which we must focus our attention and mobilize our efforts. It is first and foremost a matter of equipping peacekeeping operations with the capacities necessary to carrying out their mandate both safely and effectively. This requires an objective review of the reality and daily lives of staff deployed in these theatres areas of operations.

In this respect, it would be advisable to review and readjust operational concepts for peacekeeping operations, tailored to the contexts within which they operate in order to endow them with more robust mandates. In that respect, resolution 2295 (2016), on the mandate of MINUSMA, is a welcome step forward towards the consideration of this need.

However, in order to have a better impact on the ground, we must strengthen our missions in terms of equipment and operational capacity, making greater use of modern technology. In fact, better access to detection technology, programmes to mitigate threats linked to improvised explosive devices, intelligence-gathering and resilience improvement through the development of improved mobility and medical support capacities could allow peacekeeping operations to function more safely and effectively.

In any case, the experiences of MINUSMA, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MINUSCA, which now rely on military capacities and modern technologies, have demonstrated that the responsible use of these tools has a multiplier effect on effectiveness. In this connection, we pay tribute to the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to reinforce that component of peacekeeping operations. We welcome the discussions under way for the development of a political framework for intelligence-gathering in the aforementioned peacekeeping operations.

The second major axis of action relates to innovative interinstitutional collaboration in the fight against asymmetric threats. Relevant organizations involved

in the fight against terrorism must therefore support peacekeeping operations by sharing their expertise and experience in terms of prevention and in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. In order to optimize the contribution of these institutions, it would undoubtedly be beneficial to ensure that they are closely engaged in the planning stage of missions. The strengthening of such interinstitutional cooperation must therefore involve a wider-scale synergy and coordination among the competent entities of the United Nations, including through dialogue and the exchange of information, especially during

the conception and planning stages of missions.

It would also be beneficial to develop a strengthened cooperation among peacekeeping operations and counter-terrorism institutions, troop- and police-contributing countries and host States in developing an innovative collaborative strategy that could serve to mitigate the vulnerability of our missions to asymmetric threats. It is clear that, through collaboration and the sharing of efforts, experiences and expertise, we will be able to better understand these threats and thereby develop coherent, holistic and global strategies and approaches in order to provide an effective response.

As I conclude my statement, I stress that the strengthening of the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations not only requires but demands an unwavering and constant political commensurate with the impact of asymmetric threats. That is the full scope of this open debate, convened by Senegal, as a sign of our commitment to peace and security in Africa and throughout the world.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to other members of the Council, starting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.