



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2025-5312

15 April 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 5 March 2025 to the Ministry of Defence requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information regarding New Zealand's involvement in military operations in Mali. Your request for the following information was transferred to the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) for response.

1. *A detailed summary of New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) operations in Mali, including the objectives and specific missions undertaken in the region.*
2. *The dates and duration of New Zealand's military involvement in Mali, including any deployments and specific operations conducted in the area.*
3. *Any official documents, reports, or assessments that have been created in relation to New Zealand's participation in operations in Mali, including but not limited to after-action reports, operational briefings, or intelligence assessments.*
4. *Information on the number of New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed to Mali, including any supporting roles and the military assets involved.*
5. *A list of any collaborative efforts or partnerships between New Zealand's military and other international forces or organizations in Mali.*

The NZDF did not conduct operations in Mali but did support the operations of the United Nations with the attachment of staff including: a RNZAF pilot attached to the RAF; and a senior NZDF Officer into an intelligence leadership role [CAB-17-MIN-0547 refers]. This particular NZDF deployment was designated Operation Tawhiti. The Commander Joint Forces (NZ) also conducted an operational visit to Operation Tawhiti in Mali in 2018.

Enclosed are relevant documents regarding the NZDF contribution (enclosure one) and the 2018 visit by the Commander Joint Forces New Zealand to Mali (enclosure two and three). Where indicated information is withheld: in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand and the international relations of the Government of New Zealand; in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA to protect privacy; in accordance with section 9(2)(k) of the OIA to avoid the malicious or inappropriate use of staff information, such as phishing, scams or unsolicited advertising.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosures:

1. Joint Briefing Note dated 24 November 2017
2. Briefing Note for Minister of Defence, 16 August 2018
3. Extract from Post Activity Report – relevant to 2018 Commander Joint Forces New Zealand visit to Mali

Submission to the Minister of Defence:

Proposed deployments to United Nations Missions in Mali and South Sudan

MoD ref: 133/17.

NZDF tracking: 2017 - 349.

MFAT ref:

Type of submission:	For agreement in-principle	For action by:	30 November 2017
Purpose:	To seek your in-principle agreement to the deployment of: a New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) s.6(a) to an intelligence leadership role in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali; and a NZDF s.6(a) to the Chief of Staff role in the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for one year from May 2018.		
Cost:	Indicative direct costs of both deployments are \$776,000		
Current status:	For agreement in-principle		
Key risks / Limitations:	N/A		

Recommended actions:

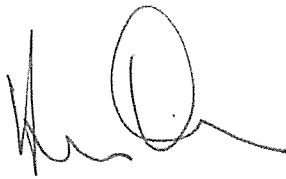
- note** that the NZDF has received a request to deploy s.6(a) to an intelligence leadership role in the UN Stabilisation Mission in Mali; Yes / No
- note** that the NZDF has received a request to deploy s.6(a) to the role of Chief of Staff in UNMISS Headquarters in South Sudan; Yes / No
- note** the volatile nature of the security situation in both Mali and South Sudan and that this is mitigated through the continual monitoring of operational risk and force protection measures implemented by the respective UN Missions; Yes / No
- agree** that officials advise the United Nations that New Zealand is considering the MINUSMA and UNMISS requests and will respond in December; Yes / No
- note** the opportunities to increase NZDF's situational awareness and influence in the UN through the two deployments; Yes / No

- f) **agree** that officials draft a paper on the two deployments for consideration at the 6 December Cabinet Business Committee; Yes / No
- g) **note** that officials are preparing a submission which provides an overview of current and potential future deployments; and Yes / No
- h) **agree** to refer a copy of this submission to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. Yes / No

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Date:

MINISTER OF DEFENCE
Date:

s.9(2)(k)



s.9(2)(k)

for
T.J. KEATING
Lieutenant General
Chief of Defence Force
Date: 24/11/17

HELENE QUILTER
Secretary of Defence
Date: 24.11.17

BEDE CORY
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs
and Trade
Date: 23 November 2017

NZDF contact:	s.6(a)	Ph:	s.9(2)(a)	A/H:	s.9(2)(a)
MOD contact:	s.9(2)(a)	Ph:	s.9(2)(a)	A/H:	s.9(2)(a)
MFAT contact:	s.9(2)(a)	Ph:	s.9(2)(a)	A/H:	s.9(2)(a)
Agencies involved:	Ministry of Defence, New Zealand Defence Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs				



24 November 2017

Minister of Defence
Minister of Foreign Affairs

PROPOSED DEPLOYMENTS TO UNITED NATIONS MISSIONS IN MALI AND SOUTH SUDAN

Purpose

1. To seek your in-principle agreement to the deployment of:
 - o a New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) s.6(a) to an intelligence leadership role in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for one year from early 2018; and
 - o a NZDF s.6(a) to the Chief of Staff role in the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for one year from May 2018.
2. This paper outlines the nature of the respective deployments and provides detail on the security situation in both Mali and South Sudan and the corresponding force protection measures. If you are supportive, officials will draft one Cabinet paper for the two deployments for consideration by Ministers at the 6 December Cabinet Business Committee. This will include greater detail on all aspects of the deployments.

Background

3. On 3 November the NZDF received a request from the United Nations (UN) for a named NZDF officer, s.6(a), to fill an intelligence officer role in the MINUSMA Force Headquarters in Bamako, Mali. In addition, on 11 November the NZDF also received a request from the UN that New Zealand provide a s.6(a) to fill the role of Chief of Staff in UNMISS Headquarters in Juba, South Sudan, for one year commencing in May 2018. The acceptance of these roles would be positively received by the UN and key defence partners s.6(a). It would also be an opportunity to make a small but high quality and impactful increase to our overall UN peacekeeping contribution.

4. In addition to this submission and (with your agreement) subsequent Cabinet paper, officials are in the process of drafting a submission to Ministers outlining New Zealand’s current deployments, providing an outline of the decision making process, and noting possible future deployment requests or peacekeeping contributions. It was intended that future deployment decisions be highlighted within this context, but as a decision on the MINUSMA deployment is time sensitive, officials have sought your in-principle agreement now ahead of this broader advice. We will ensure that you receive this background advice shortly and ahead of the Cabinet committee meeting on these African peacekeeping deployments.

Mali: MINUSMA Senior Intelligence Officer Request

5. A rebellion, a coup and an Islamic insurgency in Mali saw the establishment of MINUSMA in 2013 (through UN Security Council resolution 2100). MINUSMA has a mandate to support the Mali political progress, including by supporting the historic, but stalled, 2015 peace deal between the Malian Government and an alliance of Tuareg-led rebels. The recent resumption of fighting between the signatory armed groups in northern Mali, growing insecurity in the centre of the country and mounting political turmoil surrounding the constitutional review process have delayed the implementation of the Agreement. MINUSMA has a strong counter-terrorism focus, through countering extremist groups, some of whom are aligned with al-Qaida. The mandate also carries out a number of security-related stabilisations tasks. Fifty-two nations contribute troops to the Mission, including [redacted] s.6(a) [redacted] s.6(a) In addition, [redacted] s.6(a) [redacted] as part of a separate mission, ‘Operation Barkhane’, a counter-terrorism mission that operates throughout the African Sahel region, including in northern Mali.

6. The UN request to NZDF is to provide the Chief Intelligence Officer (U2) at the MINUSMA Force Headquarters. This role is responsible for defining the intelligence priorities, and provision of information and assessments to the Force Commander. The UN has specifically requested NZDF [redacted] s.6(a) [redacted] for the role. [redacted] s.6(a) [redacted] s.6(a) [redacted] is well regarded by senior UN staff and by likeminded troop contributing countries in Mali. [redacted] s.6(a) is also fluent in French.

7. There are no NZDF personnel deployed to MINUSMA and, noting the specialised nature of the request, NZDF would be unable to provide anyone else for this deployment. Should you agree to [redacted] s.6(a) [redacted] taking-up this role, we would recommend that it be a one-off deployment. The NZDF would not propose to replace [redacted] s.6(a) following the completion of the one-year deployment.

Security situation in Mali

8. The security situation in Mali is highly volatile, with violent extremist groups continuing to launch attacks against MINUSMA, Malian and international defence and security personnel. Extremist groups include some with links to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the ISIL-aligned Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. These groups operate in northern and central Mali and have launched occasional attacks in the south of the country, predominantly targeting hotels and venues used by Westerners in the capital, Bamako.

9. MINUSMA is the United Nations' most dangerous mission based on peacekeeper casualties. The majority of these casualties occur in the north of Mali, in the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions where the (predominantly African) peacekeepers have tended to be inadequately trained and equipped. The threat to peacekeepers is predominantly from IEDs and indirect fire. This risk is being mitigated by a concerted effort to get Mine Protected Vehicles into theatre rather than simply Armoured Personnel Carriers/Vehicles.

10. In theatre force protection for MINUSMA's UN military personnel is provided by the deployed forces. Armed personnel escorts are provided for all movements, which are conducted using UN aircraft or vehicle convoys. Personnel are accommodated within established compounds, bordered by perimeter fencing and secured by security personnel. Movement outside of compound accommodation is kept to a minimum and for essential purposes only.

s.6(a) would most likely be accommodated with the German contingent in German House, where s.6(a) would have the support of German and Swedish intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) resources, in-place force protection measures as well as a comprehensive Medevac capability. Further detail on force protection measures and the threat assessment will be included in the Cabinet paper. As a result of these force protection measures, the Chief of the Defence Force is satisfied that the threat environment, while volatile, is mitigated to a sufficient degree. However, should the security situation deteriorate to an untenable level, it is recommended that the Chief of the Defence Force, in consultation with the Minister of Defence, be authorised to facilitate the withdrawal of s.6(a). Further detail on this provision will be included in the Cabinet paper.

South Sudan: UNMISS Chief of Staff Request

11. UNMISS was established in 2011 (through UN Security Council resolution 1996) when South Sudan achieved independence from Sudan after a decades-long war, with a focus on consolidating peace and security and providing governance support to the newly independent country. In 2013, South Sudan erupted into a civil war after President Salva Kiir accused former Vice President Riek Machar and others of an attempted coup. While both Kiir (from the Dinka ethnic group) and Machar (from the Nuer ethnic group) had supporters from across South Sudan's 64 ethnic groups, an inter-ethnic war has followed. After several aborted efforts at peace, an Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan was signed in 2015. Despite this, the country remains perilously fragile and is plagued by spikes of violence, including the July 2016 fighting in Juba in which two peacekeepers were killed. The UNMISS mandate now focuses on the protection of civilians, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and support to the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement. There are currently four NZDF officers deployed to this Mission: s.6(a)

12. The Chief of Staff occupies a position of significant influence within the Mission as the director and coordinator of the work of the military staff in the Force Headquarters in Juba. This role works closely with both the Force Commander and the Mission's SRSG – currently filled by New Zealander, s.9(2)(a). In recognition of the quality and influence of the personnel New Zealand provides across UN Missions, the Military Adviser to the UN, General Carlos Loitey from Uruguay, made a personal request to our Vice Chief of the Defence Force for the NZDF to fill this role. The deployment would be for one year from May 2018. The current Chief of Staff is a British Army Brigadier, reflecting the UK's ongoing interest and engagement in UNMISS. The UK is supportive of New Zealand filling the role.

13. There is not the same immediate deadline to respond to this request as is attached to the deployment with MINUSMA. However, given the high-level nature of the request and in order to provide the UN with appropriate planning time, we recommend seeking Cabinet approval at the same time as for the MINUSMA role, in order to provide a timely response to the UN Military Adviser.

Security situation in South Sudan

14. The security situation in South Sudan remains fragile, with continued low-level violence across the country despite repeated attempts to resume peace talks. At present, Juba is effectively a stronghold for the government-aligned Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which provides a degree of stability for the capital's security environment. UNMISS personnel face a serious collateral threat due to miscalculation or misidentification, particularly in areas where fighting between the SPLA and the armed opposition is ongoing. There have been instances in which UNMISS bases in proximity to active fighting have been hit by live fire.

15. Operational risk and in-theatre force protection in South Sudan are managed by the UN Mission. This includes the provision of UN quick response forces and contracted aero-medical evacuation provisions. The NZDF also mitigates operational risk through a range of measures including robust pre-deployment training, personal protective equipment and mission risk assessments. Following the violence in Juba in July 2016, both the UN and the NZDF have reviewed and made changes to security and response measures. The operational threat level in South Sudan is continually monitored by the NZDF and should the situation become untenable, the Chief of the Defence Force, in consultation with the Minister of Defence, can facilitate the withdrawal of NZDF personnel.

Benefit to New Zealand

16. New Zealand currently contributes 12 personnel to two UN Missions (in South Sudan and in the Golan Heights) and in terms of numbers deployed, is ranked 99th out of the 125 troop and/or police contributors from the 193 UN member states. While the two deployments will not significantly increase our overall troop commitment, it is an opportunity to make a high quality and impactful contribution, resulting in more influence, profile and leverage.

17. A presence in MINUSMA will provide insight into an area of US and European counter-terrorism focus outside of the Middle East, furthering New Zealand's exposure and contribution to the breadth of global counter-terrorism. This deployment would complement New Zealand's efforts, including while we were on the UN Security Council, to improve the intelligence function in UN Peacekeeping in support of Mission safety, security and effectiveness. Likewise additional high-level support to UNMISS will help capitalise on the positive improvements that the SRSG s.9(2)(a) has made in the mission as well as New Zealand's positive profile in UNMISS and in UN Peacekeeping more broadly. This Mission attracts high-level interest from New Zealand's key security partners, most of whom contribute personnel to the Mission.

Recommended next steps

18. Given the short-notice period for the MINUSMA deployment, if you are supportive in-principle of the NZDF meeting the request to deploy s.6(a) to a senior intelligence role, officials will give an early indication to the UN that we are actively considering the deployment. We would then propose drafting a paper seeking approval for the deployment of two personnel, one to MINUSMA and one to UNMISS, for you both to take to the 6 December Cabinet Business Committee.

19. As the MINUSMA request is currently outside of our current range of deployments and the Vote Defence Force appropriation 'Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA (M22)' is fully committed to existing deployments, new funding will be sought for both deployments as part of the Cabinet paper process. The indicative direct costs of both deployments are \$776,000. It is proposed that this be charged against the tagged Operating Contingency established as part of Budget 17 for Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order. Further details on funding will be included in the Cabinet paper.

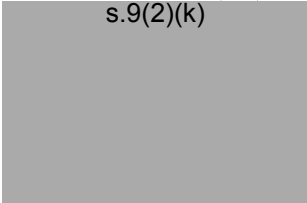
Recommendations

20. It is recommended that you:

- a. **note** that the NZDF has received a request to deploy s.6(a) to an intelligence leadership role in the UN Stabilisation Mission in Mali;
- b. **note** that the NZDF has received a request to deploy s.6(a) to the role of Chief of Staff in UNMISS Headquarters in South Sudan;
- c. **note** the volatile nature of the security situation in both Mali and South Sudan and that this is mitigated through the continual monitoring of operational risk and force protection measures implemented by the respective UN Missions;
- d. **agree** that officials advise the United Nations that New Zealand is considering the MINUSMA and UNMISS requests and will respond in December;

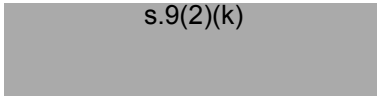
- e. **note** the opportunities to increase NZDF's situational awareness and influence in the UN through the two deployments;
- f. **agree** that officials draft a paper on the two deployments for consideration at the 6 December Cabinet Business Committee;
- g. **note** that officials are preparing a submission which provides an overview of current and potential future deployments; and
- h. **agree** to refer a copy of this submission to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance.

s.9(2)(k)



fw
T.J. KEATING
 Lieutenant General
 Chief of Defence Force
 Date: 24/11/17

s.9(2)(k)



BEDE CORRY
 for Secretary of Foreign Affairs
 and Trade
 Date: 24 November

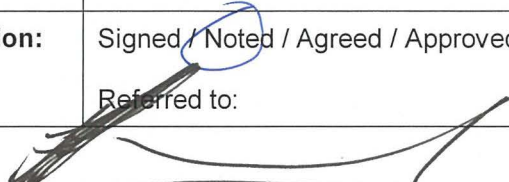
HELENE QUILTER
 Secretary of Defence
 Date: 24.11.17

2017



New Zealand
**DEFENCE
FORCE**
Te Ope Kātua O Aotearoa

BRIEFING NOTE FOR
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Title:	COMMANDER JOINT FORCES NEW ZEALAND AND MILITARY SECURITY ASSURANCE AND ASSESSMENT TEAM VISIT TO MALI				
NZDF File No: 3130/DSC/META	NZDF Tracking #: 2018-354 (For OCDF Use Only)		Minister's Tracking#: (For Minister's Office)		
Importance of the Issue:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Routine
Request Ministerial response by:	N/A				
Contact:	s. 6(a)		s. 9(2)(a)		
<p>1. The purpose of this Note is to inform you that the Commander Joint Forces New Zealand (COMJFNZ) will undertake an operational visit to Mali from 19 to 23 August 2018, as part of a programme of visits across the wider Middle East Region. s. 6(a)</p> <p>2. While in Mali, s. 6(a) will conduct a Military Security Assurance and Assessment process for Colonel Angela Fitzsimons, currently deployed with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The s. 6(a) will arrive in Mali on 16 August to complete preparations specific to COMJFNZ's visit, and then remain from 24 to 26 August, to allow for a comprehensive Military Security Assurance and Assessment of Bamako, the Malian capital where Colonel Fitzsimons is based. The s. 6(a) will also use this period to complete United Nations administration & clearance processes and support arrangements with coalition partners, before departing the operational area. The s. 6(a) will depart Mali early morning of 27 August and travel to Burkino Faso where it will engage with United States and French military elements s. 6(a). The CPT will depart 28 August.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>3. It is recommended that you:</p> <p>a. Note that the Commander Joint Forces New Zealand will conduct an operational visit to Mali from 19 to 23 August 2018, s. 6(a)</p> <p>b. Note that s. 6(a) will conduct a Military Security Assurance and Assessment process for Colonel Angela Fitzsimons, currently deployed with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, from 24 to 26 August 2018, and then travel to Burkino Faso to engage with United States and French military partners s. 6(a) from 27 to 28 August 2018.</p>					
Minister's Comments:					
Minister's Action:	Signed / <u>Noted</u> / Agreed / Approved / Declined / Discussion Required				
Signature: s. 9(2)(k)					Date: 20 Aug 2018.

For K.K. SHORT
Air Marshal
Chief of Defence Force

Date: 16 August 2018

12 Sep 18

COMJFNZ VISIT TO OP TAWHITI 19-22 AUG 18

1. COMJFNZ visited OP TAWHITI completing a programme coordinated by the SNO, which included a visit to Gao (Camp Castor and the UN Super Camp) and a visit to the UN Main Operating Base and the Swedish NSE. Calls were conducted with the Force Commander, Senior Military Liaison Officer, Canadian and German SNOs, the J3 and the J2. Key observations as below:

OP TAWHITI Observations:

Mali Environment

2. The sheer size of Mali poses an issue to conduct operations for any force. In terms of supply chain, the first step is to transport IOS into the country. For those operating from Gao, it is 1000km from Bamako, which serves as the second step – internal transport. The Germans operate charter aircraft from Bamako to Gao (a 2.5hr flight) to support their operations in Gao. Therefore, a robust supply chain would need to be established, as well as support from industry to supply requirements of platforms. Operating with nations of similar equipment or platforms may assist with supply chain related matters. The NZDF would need a partner nation(s) to conduct any sort of large scale operation.
3. The dry season offers constant dust and heat, and the wet season sees flash storms and down-pours, turning dust and sand to mud in a matter of minutes. Sandstorms, rain and wind had the ability to ground aircraft when operating within the AO, to which was not infrequent. All of which causes significant engineering related issues for equipment and platforms. This highlights the requirement for suitable infrastructure to operate land and air based platforms, not only from a MOB, but FOBs as well, to which FOBs have not been suitably established for aircraft. This includes locations such as Kidal, Tombouctou and Mopti.
4. MINUSMA is a reasonably sought after mission internationally that provides both significant resources and quality enablers, however, it is

Enclosure 2 to
COMJFNZ OPERATIONAL VISIT 17-31 AUG 18 POST ACTIVITY REPORT

expected that this would come at a significant cost. In saying this, enablers are in high demand, and therefore, are of a high profile for the EU and UN.
s. 6(a)

Information Sharing Among Forces

5. The office calls conducted highlighted how there are multiple forces (below) operating in Mali with limited interconnection.

a. MINUSMA – protection of civilians mission

b. s. 6(a)

c.

d. EU Training Mission in Mali – BPC mission

6. Although their presence is to serve various mission sets, it became apparent that one force would often come across information that may be beneficial to another. There was no apparent mechanism to share information. s. 6(a)

Aeromedical Evacuation (AME) Mission - Gao

7. The AME mission proves to provide significant flying hours within the Gao AO. Utility tasking can also be conducted outside of the AME mission.

8. s. 6(a)

SOPs are currently under development, to which COMJFNZ was provided a copy of for reference.

COMJFNZ OPERATIONAL VISIT 17-31 AUG 18 POST ACTIVITY REPORT

9. s. 6(a)

Threat

10. Although Bamako, a reasonably developed city with reasonable infrastructure seemed to be safer than first thought, the volatility and unpredictability would see the threat level remain as extreme, especially as you progress north. Therefore, Bamako was perceived to be reasonably quiet, but a soft target. A common comment was that the UN are directly targeted within the MINUSMA mission, to which is a fundamental difference to that of the UNMISS and other UN missions.

SNO – s. 6(a)

11. The s. 6(a) is making a difference and considered a high profile UN position. The SNO provided a tour of the Main Operating Base, where the s. 6(a) location was viewed and the function explained. The importance of this being the fact that MINUSMA is the first UN mission to have a s. 6(a) s. 6(a) seeing approx. 20 staff involved in this output.

12. The SNO provided a tour of the Swedish NSE (where the SNO resided for three months prior to moving locations). The accommodation was tent based, 10 people per tent, allowing for only a small segregated space per person, at a cost of \$1000 per month. It was deemed not appropriate for a long duration deployment.

13. Consistent messaging was received from MINUSMA and UNMISS with regard to training teams, in that there is a desire for them.