



# SPC NEWS

Standing Police Capacity, United Nations Police Division

Number 09

SEPTEMBER 2013

## IN-FOCUS: Mali



Photo taken during a training of UNPOL officers held in August 2013.

## SPC backs start-up of MINUSMA Police Component

Shortly after the transfer of authority to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) from the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) on 1 July 2013, the Standing Police Capacity (SPC) deployed a start-up team to Bamako to assist in the establishment of the MINUSMA Police Component and to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the police-related aspects of the Security Council Resolution 2100.

"MINUSMA is the fourth DPKO mission, after MINURCAT, UNMISS and UNISFA, for which SPC have deployed members to support the start-up of a new mission," said SPC Chief General Du Toit. "Prior to the creation of MINUSMA, our members, together with colleagues in Police Division have actively engaged in several activities in Mali – from the initial UN planning convened in November 2012 to the preparation for the transfer of authority from AFISMA to MINUSMA in April 2013."

coordinating various activities as part of the start-up phase for the Police Component.

"My deployment to Mali is my first assignment since I joined the SPC in early May 2013. It was extremely urgent and for what I understood, it was not of a "usual kind," said Mr. Vermeir. "I recall when the Mission was at the early stage and no UN facilities available, but just members tirelessly working on a corner of a table in a hotel, having internet from time to time and organizing incoming people and other related issues."

"Amidst all the challenges faced by the SPC Team in the field, the most rewarding part is the "silent" but very genuine gratitude of the Malian people to the efforts of MINUSMA," the SPC Team Leader added.

To facilitate the urgent deployment of Formed Police Units (FPUs), locations were identified in which the SPC has played a key role. While the official start-up date for MINUSMA was



SPC Public Order Adviser Paolo Bonanno briefs UN Police Adviser Stefan Feller on the security situation during PolAd's visit to Gao Police in June 2013.

### *SPC Team and start-up activities in Mali*

In May 2013, in advance of the arrival of the start-up team, SPC Team Leader Lucien Vermeir was deployed to reinforce the ground-work laid down by SPC Advisers Amod Gurung and Paolo Bonanno, both of whom had undertaken liaison, coordination and planning as part of the transition from AFISMA.

Acting as Police Commissioner for MINUSMA until early September 2013, Mr. Vermeir led the SPC team in

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on 1 July, only days later an FPU detachment was urgently deployed to Kidal, in support of the military component and Operation Serval, to manage the daily demonstrations. SPC also participated in negotiations between parties to defuse the crisis.

Against all expectations, MINUSMA, in support of the Malian transitional authorities, ensured a peaceful and incident-free presidential election in Mali on 28 July and 11 August. The SPC Team assisted the Mission in supporting the Malian police and authorities in this crucial undertaking.

Following the successful election, MINUSMA concentrated on its original concept and focused, with the support of the SPC, on organizing the administrative and operational aspects of the Mission. Contributions were provided to put in place the available personnel, awaiting the recruited staff, as well as in drafting strategic documents such as deployment plan, RBB and SOP.

SPC's on-going support to MINUSMA focuses also on seven core areas which include human resources management, transnational crime and Interpol, criminal investigations, police analysis, legal affairs, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and gender, and police operation coordination.

A complete, well working Administration was organized, all immediately required legal documents and training programmes were put in place, although everything related to criminal investigations had to be delayed whilst the Mallians focused on more urgent priorities. These included re-establishing state authority in Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao during the elections, as well as in the return of State administration in which protection for the civilian population was and continues to be provided with FPU patrols. The SPC again played an important role in these specific areas.

Working under the guidance of the Police Commissioner who joined MINUSMA in early September 2013, the SPC Team in Mali continues to play an essential role in the Mission – from performing most of the key functions to formulating strategic and operational decisions. At the same time, a dedicated "Remote Assistance Team" in Brindisi provides continuous support as needed by the Team in MINUSMA.

With the handover of the management of the Mission to the appointed Police Commissioner and Deputy Police Commissioner as well as to incoming personnel, some of the SPC members who will end their mission in October 2013, includes Mr. Lucien Vermeir (Team Leader), Mr. Paolo Bonnano (Public Order Adviser), Mr. Ahmed Abdelrahim (Police Human Resources Management Adviser), Mr. Mahmoud Abu-Salman (Investigations Officer), Mr. Fernando Moya (Transnational Crime Officer), Ms. Odile Kantyono (Gender Issues Officer), and Ms. Stefania Putignano (Team Assistant).

SPC remains committed to provide continuous support to MINUSMA with the extension of the deployment until January 2014 of SPC members, Mr. Georg Fliege (Police Reform Adviser), Mr. Jeffrey Buenger (Legal Adviser), and Ms. Melanie Blais (Police Analyst).



The SPC Team in Mali. From left: Mr. Georg Fliege, Mr. Paolo Bonanno, Mr. Lucien Vermeir, Ms. Stefania Putignano, Ms. Melanie Blais, Mr. Jeffrey Buenger, Mr. Mahmoud Abu-Salman, Mr. Fernando Moya Castro, Ms. Odile Kantyono, and Mr. Ahmed Abdelrahim.



SPC Team Leader (in blue beret) with the Togolese FPU platoon that was urgently deployed to Kidal, following tensions with the MNLA, on 5 July 2013.



SPC Team Leader Lucien Vermeir (standing left) with MINUSMA Forge Commander Gen. Kazura (right, in blue beret) taking over the troops from AFISMA Commander (in green beret) during the official start-up ceremony on 1 July 2013.

