

**Joint Statement on Behalf of A3 (Niger, South Africa and Tunisia) and Saint
Vincent and the Grenadines**

Delivered by

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**Open Videoconference on Peacekeeping Operations: Meeting With Force
Commanders**

United Nations Security Council

June 4th, 2020

New York

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for convening this important and timely meeting on Peacekeeping Operations when the world is dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the challenge of implementation of the mandates of these missions within the prevailing global health crisis. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the A3+1, namely Niger, South Africa, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

We would like to thank General O'Brien, the Force Commanders of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for their briefings.

Mr. President,

Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterate their support for UN peacekeeping as one of the mechanisms at the disposal of the UN to promote international peace and security, in particular the protection of civilians. We further echo the view of pursuing peacekeeping operations that are relevant, effective, efficient and fit for purpose. We are pleased that the A4P also delineates the roles and responsibilities of the UN, troop- and police-contributing countries, the host countries and regional organisations.

However, we note with concern, the changing nature of threats to international peace and security and the complex, volatile and dangerous environments in which peacekeeping missions operate, including their increasing exposure to asymmetrical threats. For example, MINUSMA, AMISOM and to a certain extent MONUSCO. The former remains the UN peacekeeping mission with the highest casualties.

Our peacekeepers are increasingly becoming vulnerable and frequently subjected to targeted attacks.

It is against this background that Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are of the view that emphasis should be placed on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers by adopting the use of modern technology in peacekeeping operations, amongst other measures. The UN should adopt the use of smart technology and enhance key capabilities to enable peacekeepers to counter any attack by armed groups and other forms of asymmetrical threats increasingly prevalent in peacekeeping.

Mr President,

Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recognize that the prevailing global health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the challenges related to the safety and security of peacekeepers. It is essential for the UN to mitigate the impact of this pandemic on the peacekeepers and improve their safety and security.

At the same time, we encourage force commanders to ensure that all necessary measures are implemented within their missions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 from peacekeepers to civilian populations as this may significantly tarnish the reputation of the UN mission and aggravate anti-international sentiments that exist in some theatres of operation.

The 2010 cholera outbreak in Haiti is a pertinent example where the unmanaged spread of a disease amongst peacekeepers created significant challenges for the host-country and led to permanent reputational damage for the United Nations. Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also encourage those missions that have had varying degrees of success in implementing their mandates during the pandemic, to share their experiences and lessons learned with host-state authorities in order to strengthen capacities and build resilience.

Mr. President,

We note the close link between Security Council mandates given to peacekeeping missions and their performance. The performance of peace operations depends on the nature of the mandate, capabilities, available resources, appropriate force multipliers and enablers, commensurate with the theatre of operations for the peacekeepers. Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines attach great importance to issues of effectiveness of peace operations but the performance of peacekeeping missions must be assessed in a fair and evidence-based manner.

As a beacon of hope for many civilians, it is incumbent on the UN uniformed and civilian personnel to uphold the values of the UN and conduct themselves in accordance with the rules and regulations of the UN. Misconduct by UN peacekeeping personnel must not be tolerated. In this regard, we are committed to eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse committed by our forces. We have taken corrective measures to address this problem.

Additionally, greater emphasis should be put on cultural awareness of peacekeepers in host countries in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and to harness the support of local communities.

Mr President,

On 29 May we celebrated the international day of UN peacekeepers. The theme for this year was, “*Women in Peacekeeping: A Key to Peace*”. As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325, we must acknowledge that some of the objectives of this resolution have not been achieved including aspects pertaining to peacekeeping operations, where women remain underrepresented. We therefore reiterate our position that transformative strategies must be adopted to fully implement the commitments made on advancing the women, peace and security agenda. These strategies should amongst others implement the aspirations in UNSC Resolution 2242 (2015) and the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018-2028) to increase the deployment of uniformed women in military and police roles, including in leadership positions.

All means must therefore be pursued to ensure the realisation of these goals including targeted recruitment, adequate and appropriate facilities conducive for women peacekeepers, and women mentorship and training programmes to ensure higher levels of participation for women in peacekeeping operations.

Finally, Mr. President,

We encourage the UN to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations in the field of peacekeeping and welcome the continued support and collaboration for mutual enrichment particularly in these difficult moments in order to alleviate the impact of COVID-19.

We take this opportunity to commend the continued commitment of troop- and police-contributing countries and the sacrifices of uniformed and civilian personnel in implementing UN peacekeeping mandates, in challenging environments as well as adapting to the current challenges posed by COVID-19.

I thank you!