



**Hervé Ladsous
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Department of Peacekeeping Operations
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Near Verbatim Transcript

Spokesperson Nesirky: Good afternoon, welcome to the briefing. I am joined today by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr Hervé Ladsous. Welcome back again, Mr Ladsous. He's here to brief you, of course, on a range of peacekeeping matters and to take your questions. I think we have about half an hour with Mr Ladsous and then after that I have a couple of more items and would be happy to take a couple of questions at that point. So, first of all, Mr Ladsous, the floor is yours and welcome again.

Opening Remarks

Well, thank you very much and it is still time to wish you a Happy New Year, especially in view of the time, the Year of the Snake is about to start in another part of the world, so I will say *xin nian kuai le, kung hei fat choy* (Happy New Year).

Certainly this new year for us has started in a very active way because we have a number of challenges, some which have been with us for some time, some which are new. And maybe I'll say a few words about those new challenges which are coming our way.

The first one I would mention is, of course, Mali. You will have seen that yesterday the follow-up committee in Brussels expressed what seems to be a well shared desire to see this operation, which is underway in Mali, transforming into a peacekeeping operation. Now, clearly of course, this will be a matter for the Security Council to consider. I understand they were having consultations this morning on this subject. It is clear that this will require, of course, an invitation by the government of Mali but already I note that the African Union as well as the ECOWAS and a number of Member States of the United Nations have already expressed themselves in that direction. It is also clear that a peacekeeping operation in Mali cannot

develop itself in any sort of circumstances to keep the peace, there has to be some peace, precisely. So, this will be evaluated including also in light of security considerations. But I think there is clearly a shared desire of the international community to do what needs to be done in Mali.

In December the assumption was that first the stakeholders would deal with the restoration of the constitutional order in the country and probably at a later stage take up the restoration of the integrity of the country. Events in the course of January, all that you know, have in a way inverted that logic. But there will be certainly the need both to stabilize the country and also to restore the normal order of things, the rule of law, the security issues, so this again let me say will be considered by the Council but we are already working on different possible scenarios.

Another part of the world where we have been working on scenarios is of course the situation in Syria. Clearly in that case we have to see how the political process or processes evolve because it is again a situation where we may not be able to consider a peacekeeping operation. In all circumstances the security factor will of course be key, because there is an absolutely, inordinate amount of violence in that country which one of course cannot be stopped. We hope it will stop but we have to consider the possibility that in certain scenarios we will be called to help in participating in the stabilization of the country and support the political process and do what it will be possible to do to give the greatest sense of security to some groups who may feel threatened. So it is contingency planning, but we have to be aware of all this and do all that we can to be prepared if, as one hopes, some political process under the auspices of Lakhdar Brahimi does materialize.

Then we have some more long term challenges which are still very much with us and the most urgent right now I think would be the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where as you know we are in the final stages of concluding a framework agreement, which hopefully should be signed in the coming weeks. It had been hoped that it could be signed in Addis Ababa during the African Union Summit eight days ago. Let me tell you again, after the Secretary-General, that it was not an issue of substance which delayed the signature but a matter of process with the regional actors. And this in the way of being handled, a process, a framework agreement which will put together commitments by the Democratic Republic of Congo itself to do what is necessary in terms of reform of the security sector, reform of the army, reasserting the authority of the state in the eastern provinces. And that cluster of commitments will be coupled with commitments by the countries of the region to respect the sovereignty of each other and go into much more regional cooperation to solve many of the outstanding issues which are the root causes of these recurring cycles of violence we have seen in that part of eastern Congo.

Of course, within that framework, it has been considered that the MONUSCO operation should be taken a fresh look at. And one of the concepts which have emerged is that of an, initially, an international neutral force which would deal with peace enforcement duties in the Kivus. And through consultation, extensive consultation with the countries of the region and organizations, the idea is now emerging that the best way to handle this would be to create an intervention brigade within MONUSCO. And this is what we are working upon for the consideration again of the Security Council, which I briefed yesterday on the subject. So, we will see over the next few weeks whether, how, this can materialize, again let me say, to enforce, take enforcement action on those armed groups which had been direct causes for the massive suffering of the population in the whole region.

In the meantime, MONUSCO of course is carrying out actively all its tasks, taking measures necessary to face the possible new military movements in the region, to protect civilians, and in particular displaced persons in the camps around Goma. The enquiry about the terrible events in Minova at the time of the campaign again around Goma is actively being pursued. One hundred and twenty-six acts of rape have been established by MONUSCO and of course we are pushing actively for the perpetrators to be acted upon through the judiciary, and of course we take this totally into account in the framework of our due diligence policy.

Let me mention also the situation in the Sudans, where clearly much more progress needs to be made to implement the agreements made by the Sudan and the South Sudan in September last year. There was, as you know, yet another Summit in Addis Ababa ten days ago, which unfortunately, did not bring about results. But clearly, for these two countries to live in good company, there needs to be much more done to handle the security aspects, to handle the issue of Abyei, to handle also the terrible situation in the two states in South Kordofan and Blue Nile where, as you know, a very large number of civilians are the victims of ongoing combat. Of course again it was the case of an agreement being made but which has not yet been implemented. This needs to be faced very solidly and rapidly by the two countries.

Let me maybe leave these geographic issues just aside for a moment. Of course, I will be happy to respond to your questions. Just a few comments to finish my introduction, about horizontal subjects.

First, you would have noticed the Security Council adopted ten days ago, two weeks ago, a very important Resolution 2086, which is the first all encompassing resolution from the Security Council about peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the first in 11 years. I think it creates a very good framework for us to push yet further the partnership that is peacekeeping. I think this is very solid work which needs to be commended.

More generally, in those times of financial austerity throughout the world we need to be good citizens. We need to be watchful, mindful of the resources that are given to us. We need to do all we can to improve performance and there are several subjects on which we are working actively to do this, precisely to improve performance, to give our Member States good value for money. I would mention the deployment of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for surveillance purpose in the Kivus, which was given an okay by the Security Council and that certainly will improve our situational awareness and will I am sure will exert some deterrent over all those people who move around with bad intentions in that particular area.

We are moving ahead also, and will be discussing with the legislative bodies over the next weeks, the concept of what will be in effect an Inspector General for uniformed personnel. Again to improve the systemic and specific performance of all that we are doing on the ground.

We are also using very innovative methods for instance to create with several countries in Africa a common squadron of helicopters which will be, I think, a very necessary tool.

We are developing, wherever and whenever we can, inter-mission cooperation to give more nimbleness to the way we deploy our assets and to face new unexpected needs.

So this is the constant quest for trying to do, as a Secretary-General says, to do more and better, whenever we can with less, certainly not with more, means. So these are very exciting times and, of course, I think the year ahead will be again an interesting one but you know the Chinese curse, to go yet again to Asia, "may you live in interesting times," and that certainly we are trying to do.

Spokesperson Nesirky: Thank you very much. Please.

Question (Lou Charbonneau, Reuters): Thank you Mr Ladsous on behalf of the UN Correspondents Association [inaudible]. Two questions that I think my colleagues are also interested in. Regarding AFISMA, there seems to be disagreement over whether it is actually in operation or whether the African troops in Mali are there at the request of the Malian government. Could you explain whether AFISMA is actually in your estimation up and running, because there is expected to be a sort of a bridge between AFISMA and a peacekeeping operation however that might be created. And then on DRC, you said yesterday on your way into the Council that it looks like this political, this peace deal, is on the cusp of being agreed and that maybe it could be signed later this month. There was disagreement last week, one of the reasons that the deal fell apart was over the chain of command for the

enforcement brigade. Have these disputes been dealt with properly, because some of SADC countries would like to have autonomy if they are going to be acting as a peace enforcement brigade.

USG Ladsous: Thank you. First on AFISMA, the latest figures are that there are about 2,000 soldiers from AFISMA, who are deployed in Mali. Plus I think the larger part of the 2,000-and-some are the contingent from Chad, which is now under AFISMA. So, as they are moving into Bamako of course they are starting to move into the operational areas in the northern part of the country. It is clear that again, subject to a Security Council decision, the larger part of AFISMA will be considered as a matter of priority for re-hatting under a peacekeeping operation if that is indeed the decision by the Security Council.

Now clearly these troops would not be in Mali without the consent of the Government of Mali. As you know for any peacekeeping operation we need the consent, the actual request of the host country. So this is all being worked upon. But I think the consensus that it will have to be a peacekeeping operation when conditions allow, and that could happen I think fairly quickly, then that is the way to go.

Regarding the DRC, no I will certainly not say that the deal fell apart. No, no no. There were further discussions. I myself had some, several with ministers of defense and chiefs of staff. I think it has to be clear that this mission will be within MONUSCO, but this brigade will have, of course, a specific mandate. A mandate to do what? First to prevent the expansion of armed groups, second to neutralize them, third to disarm them.

That of course needs to be accommodated in such a way that everybody feels comfortable. For instance, we are in the process of establishing a consultation mechanism with the two regional organizations, the International Conference for the Great Lakes and the SADC and of course the countries concerned to make sure that everyone is fully aware of all that is happening. But I think the concept is really taking shape. I derive some comfort from the discussions in the Council yesterday.

We have to move against those armed groups, but again that is not just an end in itself. The end, the global aim, is to have a political process with this balance of commitments from the Congo, from its regional partners and a renewed and strengthened tool, exemplified by MONUSCO, to show that we are trying really to address all the root causes of instability for the Congo and for the whole region.

Spokesperson Nesirky: Okay Talal, followed by (*inaudible*)

Question (Talal *inaudible*, Talk News Radio): My question is regarding

sexual exploitation and abuse in the DRC and part of your Due Diligence Policy and that framework. I was speaking with the former Police Adviser earlier this morning and she had said that you are using mobile technology, mobile phones, to equip the women with this technology to be able to call for help. Are you in fact advancing that policy in order to expand the mobile technology network?

USG Ladsous: I confirm that absolutely. In fact MONUSCO has been one of the main laboratories for establishing this Due Diligence Policy. Many experiments have been carried out in eastern Congo which are now being extended to other missions on the ground.

The example you gave, the use of mobile technology, of mobile radio, to send alerts when the people in a particular area feel signs that an attack is about to happen by an armed group. That certainly serves a purpose.

Similarly, we had noticed sometime ago that many women were attacked while they were carrying their wares to local markets, so we have established weekly patrols, on the day of the market, to take out these women from their villages, escort them to the market and back. And I think this is the sort of innovative approach which is called for.

And of course in this particular situation right now, we are trying also to address the phenomenon of retribution. When our troops, after an operation, get back to their base, there have been acts of vengeance committed by the armed groups who return to their usual grounds. And that we have again to prevent. This is what we are doing, because protection of civilians and in particular women, is at of the core, if not the core, of the mandate of MONUSCO. So, a lot of work is going on on this.

Spokesperson Nesirky: Neil, followed by Joe.

Question (Neil Macfarquhar, The New York Times): My name is Neil Macfarquhar from the New York Times. Mr Ladsous forgive me I am a little bit confused on the evolution of the force in Mali. My colleagues might not be but I am. When I was last here, the AFISMA was going to be an African force that was supported financially by the UN, but now it seems to becoming a full fledged UN peacekeeping force. Can you sort of walk us through that decision? And we are hearing one of the reasons is because people feel like the hybrid forces in Somalia and Darfur did not work. Can you address that question of why, you think, they did not work? Finally, I understand that there is some resistance from the part of Mali on accepting a UN peacekeeping force. Can you talk about that please?

USG Ladsous: Thank you for asking that. I think one of the difficulties in Mali has been that the scene was evolving so quickly. Indeed as I said

initially, that was two months ago in December, when the Resolution 2085 was voted. It was thought that the military intervention in the northern part of Mali could not happen until probably the beginning of the cooler, dry, season, say September or October, because the Malian army which was supposed to be the spearhead of the operation needed to be trained, and that by the way is starting right now with strong support from the European Union. But it was also because the AFISMA troops took time to deploy, to be equipped, to be trained together. And indeed at that time the issue was one of what sort of the support could the United Nations provide to AFISMA. And you may recall that in early January the Secretary-General sent a letter to the Security Council outlining options for support.

But then of course the events on the ground started moving very quickly. The French intervention, the acceleration of the deployment of AFISMA. And indeed we are now in a situation where, as I said, yesterday the follow-up group in Brussels was an opportunity for both ECOWAS and the African Union to express jointly the view that this should now become, when conditions allow, as soon as conditions allow, a UN peacekeeping operation.

Why not a hybrid operation? I think, the example in particular in Somalia has shown that one of the issues is one of sustainability, of support, of resources. A peacekeeping operation handled by the UN provides a set framework, provides set resources. And I think this makes it much more predictable for the actors on the ground, for the troop contributors. So we are of course discussing with the Malian authorities. Clearly their concurrence will be necessary but I think all indications show that this is the way it is heading and we are getting ready for that.

Spokesperson Nesirky: Okay Joe, I think we need to move on to Joe then Matthew.

Question (Joseph Klein, Canada Free Press): Okay, I'm Joseph Klein from Canada Free Press. Will the drone surveillance programme that you had alluded to be limited at least for the foreseeable future to the Congo and if not, in your view, how extensive in terms of peacekeeping missions and territory do you envision it to be? And given your reference to the brigade, which sounds like it would be more proactive, do you see the possibility of the use of the drones going beyond mere surveillance? And finally who do you see, who would the information that's collected during the surveillance be shared with?

USG Ladsous: Let me say first that maybe the word should not be "drones" because these days you know people associate drones with the image of missiles being launched. No, no, no. This clearly is UAVs for surveillance purposes only, basically a flying camera. And that of course will be, the information gathered, will be fed first and foremost to the force commander

as a tool for situational awareness. But of course I am very open to sharing it with the regional body, you know, which has been established by the International Conference of the Great Lakes, the enlarged verification mechanism, if they so wish of course.

Clearly, this is a situation of its own and the green light given by the Security Council was given for the DRC in light, in particular, of the agreement I secured from the Government of the DRC and also the agreement of the neighbours, and we shall see how this experiment goes on. Of course there are a number of other operations where this could be considered as a useful tool, but I think we have first and foremost to see how it works on the ground and if it does indeed help MONUSCO to be in your words more proactive and do the job better.

Spokesperson Nesirky: Matthew, then Hassan.

Question (Matthew Lee, Inner City Press): Sure, great. On behalf of the Free UN Coalition for Access, thanks for being here and I'm hoping to get this question answered and I'll try to ask it as civilly as I can.

The rapes in Minova, the 126 rapes seemed to have taken place in late November. And although the Congolese authorities are investigating, it seems that none of the people arrested, people have been arrested even for rape but in other places and in other times. It's unclear, I guess to some, which units of the FARDC were present at the time and whether, in these two months since, whether MONUSCO has continued to work with them. So I guess I'm just asking you to tie the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy to these two months and who may have been there.

And just one other question has to do with the cholera in Haiti which some attribute to MINUSTAH, inadvertently, possibly having brought it in. Have any reforms, or is there any thinking about trying to avoid spreading diseases in the future? Is anything learned from that? Thank you for taking the question.

USG Ladsous: On the first point, I think we are in a situation where our own UN investigations have identified 126 cases of rape and in most cases the identity of perpetrators. Clearly of course it is for the Congolese justice to - how do you say in English? - to sue them, to prosecute, thank you. Sorry for my poor English. That is what we are pushing for. But knowing the identity of those perpetrators of course they are identified and that is a thing to take permanently into consideration within the Due Diligence Policy. Meaning that these people, we will not accept to work with them. But I think what is necessary is really to continue and this we are doing, to call for actual prosecutions to happen on a more significant scale than the very few individual cases which have been launched so far.

On cholera, I would simply say that you have seen all that the UN has been doing over the last couple of years in helping address one of the issues which is the issue of very poor water sanitation in the country. We have done many quick impact projects, we have spent I believe \$118 already, sorry, \$118 million on projects related to clean water because that is what is crucially necessary. The Secretary-General also launched his initiative called the Eradication of Cholera in Hispaniola, that is to say both Haiti and Santo Domingo. And there will be a vaccination campaign for the groups who are at risk. So this is an issue which I think is being tackled by all those who want to help Haiti in those difficult circumstances.

Let me add that I was in Haiti in January to look at all the work that is being done by MINUSTAH. It is very clear that there are a number of processes which need to be speeded up in Haiti. In particular, the remaining elections, that is for the Senate, that is for the local elections. The Security Council did indeed make a presidential statement on this. It is essential that this be moved as fast as possible, because otherwise the legislative processes, all the number of reforms that need to be implemented in Haiti simply cannot be worked upon in that country and that is crucial. One example, the Penal Code which has not changed since 1835. Clearly there is a need to work and elections are necessary for that.

Spokesperson Nesirky: Okay, please and then the last question will be to Column. I know there are many other questions. I do understand that Mr Ladsous will be answering some questions in French right after this.

USG Ladsous: But I can do it right here if there are questions in French, of course.

Question (Al Jazeera): I would like to follow up on Neil's question regarding consent of the Malian government for a UN peacekeeping force there. Some government officials have publicly said that they are not keen to have a UN force there. What are the concerns or objections by the Malian government or military? What can the UN do to address those?

USG Ladsous: Look, it is not for me to speak for the Government of Mali. I think what has to be clear is whether there is a consensus, you know, to try and solve all these outstanding issues that have led to the present situation in Mali. They have to do with internal processes both in Bamako and presumably between the south and the north. They have to do with how to deal with those terrorist groups, with those criminal groups. How to restore security. How to give the country of Mali, which only until recently was exemplified as a good case, a showcase, of democracy. I think it is necessary for the country to move again with the support of the international community and see to it that it does not turn into a cycle of

recurrent problems. We have to solve, help solve all these issues. The solution will come from the Malians themselves but clearly the active support of the international community is necessary as it is indeed for the whole of the Sahel region. And this is why there is a global strategy for the Sahel to address all these problems which have accumulated over the recent years.

Spokesperson Nesirky: Okay last question, Column.

Question (Column Lynch, Washington Post): (*Inaudible*) In the case of Syria, where you have a peacekeeping, observing presence in UNDOF ... (inaudible) ... When the Israeli strike in Syria occurred ... I am curious as to why the UN was not able to verify something like that ... Was it a matter of you not having radar capacity, was it a question of being outside the mandate? I would have expected the UN presence to try to ensure that these ceasefires are maintained by reporting ... (inaudible)

USG Ladsous: Well, you would know that there are violations of the Lebanese airspace occurring almost on a daily basis. So, going beyond that is somewhat difficult and certainly UNDOF on its side has no radar equipment.

Thank you for mentioning UNDOF because actually this is one area of concern to us that this very important mission, which was unspoken of for many, many years because there was not much, if anything, happening, has now come very much to light as sort of a fall-out from the situation in Syria. There have been large numbers of incidents in recent months, which could lead our concern for the safety of our people. But let me say it again, monitoring the situation over the Golan is an essential piece in the chessboard of the Middle East. This is something that has to be kept in mind at all times.

Question (Column Lynch, Washington Post): *Inaudible*

USG Ladsous: In the case of UNDOF, certainly, it is the absence of relevant equipment. In the case of UNIFIL, as I said, you do see that there are, violations have occurred, but you cannot link necessarily the chain of events.

Spokesperson Nesirky: Thank you very much indeed.

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