

PRESS RELEASE

Briefing of Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas to the Security Council on recent developments in West Africa and the Sahel

Dakar, 11 January 2018 - Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), presented on 11 January to the Security Council his activity report covering the period from 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2017.

During the second semester of 2017, political tensions relating to constitutional reform and political dialogue processes in Guinea, Mauritania, Niger and Togo took centre stage in those countries. Elections were held in Liberia and Senegal. Some progress was made in key reform processes in Burkina Faso and The Gambia. Nevertheless, the security situation in West Africa and the Sahel remained fragile.

In his briefing, Mr. Ibn Chambas focused on the worrying security situation in the Sahel and in the Lake Chad Basin. He said Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria have intensified since September 2017 with the use of children as suicide bombers which has increased fivefold in 2017.

"The comprehensive response of the region to address the Boko Haram threat must be supported by the international community," said Ibn Chambas. He also stressed the importance of complementing security responses by measures to enhance governance, boost economic development, and strengthen resilience of the people of the Sahel as articulated in the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

Ibn Chambas also congratulated the people of Liberia on the peaceful election of their new president. "Further attention now needs to be paid to forthcoming elections in Sierra Leone and Guinea," he said. On Togo, the SRSB welcomed the mediation efforts by the Presidents of Ghana and Guinea and pointed out that the lack of consensus on the implementation of constitutional reforms could threaten the holding of legislative and local elections in 2018.

The report of the Secretary General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2017 is available on our website: <https://unowas.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/n1742696.pdf>.

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Bureau de la Communication et de l'Information Publique

Kouider Zerrouk, Chef de bureau – (+221) 33-869-8560 / 77- 3324928 – zerrouk@un.org
Vicky Delore Ndjeuga, Chargé de communication – (+221) 33-869-8544 / 77- 3339414 – ndjeuga@un.org
Angelita Mendy Diop, Chargée de communication – (+221) 33-869-8547 / 77-450-6181– mendya@un.org
Cheikh A. Bamba Seye, Webmaster – (+221) 33-869-8560 / 77-185-9954– seyec@un.org

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