



Bureau des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et le Sahel

UNOWAS

United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel

Ensemble pour la paix

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INFORMATION NOTE

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

Dakar, 25 July 2019- 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 24 July 2019 to the Security Council latest report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOWAS.

During the first semester of 2019, the peace and security environment in West Africa and the Sahel has remained relatively stable despite worsening security situation in the entire Sahel. Successful elections especially in Nigeria, Senegal and Mauritania as well as political dialogues recently initiated mainly in Benin, Burkina Faso and Ghana show further progress made in the consolidation of democracy in the region.

“Further progress has been made in democratic consolidation in West Africa and the Sahel. Such progress in the democratic space has not been linear nor without complications. It has been the result of contestations, which have sometimes been palpably antagonistic” SRSG Mohamed Ibn Chambas said.

“Addressing such potential sources of conflict remains a major priority ahead of the upcoming cycle of high-stake presidential elections in West Africa scheduled for next year in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Niger and Togo,” Mr. Ibn Chambas told to the Security Council.

He also cautioned that democratic progress in the region has been delayed and complicated, and sometimes, almost negated by a rapid expansion of violent extremism.

He also raised human rights challenges that several countries in the region continue to struggle with. Mr. Ibn Chambas expressed his concerns “about the instrumentalization of the judiciary for political objectives in some cases as well as a predominant sentiment of impunity for violent crimes, undermining respect for the rule of law”.

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SRSG Chambas also highlighted the volatile security situation in the entire Sahel, where escalating violence and insecurity have sparked an unprecedented humanitarian crisis leaving a total of 5.1 million Burkinabe, Nigeriens and Malians in need. In Burkina Faso, a total of 226 security incidents contributed to an accelerated displacement from 47,000 in December 2018 up to 220,000 internally displaced people and more than 25,000 refugees in June 2019, representing an almost five-fold increase.

“In the Lake Chad Basin, attacks by Boko Haram splinter groups continue to threaten the peace and stability of the region,” SRSG Ibn Chambas said.

He urged “governments and partners to redouble their efforts in defining a concerted approach to prevent a further expansion of the terrorist threat and foster support to much-needed medium and long-term stabilization measures aligned to the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel”.

Mr. Ibn Chambas also called for an “enhanced support to the implementation of the Regional Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin as well as the Priority Investment Programme of the Group of Five of the Sahel, along a concerted effort to support national development plans” to boost development of the region.

The full speech of Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas is available on our website :

<https://unowas.unmissions.org/briefing-security-council-report-secretary-general-activities-united-nations-office-west-africa-5>

The latest report of the Secretary General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), is available on our website:

https://unowas.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2019_549_e.pdf

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