



Cabinet Business Committee

Minute of Decision

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United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali: Proposed Deployment

Portfolios Foreign Affairs / Defence

On 13 December 2017, the Cabinet Business Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has received a request from the United Nations for the deployment of Colonel Angela Fitzsimons to an intelligence leadership role in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA);
- 2 **noted** the volatile nature of the security situation in Mali, and that this is mitigated through operational risk monitoring, NZDF Force Preparation, and force protection measures implemented by the United Nations Mission;
- 3 **approved** the deployment of Colonel Fitzsimons to an intelligence leadership role in the MINUSMA for one year from March 2018;
- 4 **authorised** the Chief of Defence Force to withdraw Colonel Fitzsimons should the security situation warrant it;
- 5 **noted** that the total estimated cost of the deployment is assessed as \$0.455 million;
- 6 **noted** that there is a shortfall of \$0.122 million in 2017/18 and \$0.333 million in 2018/19 that cannot be met within existing baselines;
- 7 **approved** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the above paragraphs, with a corresponding impact on the operating balance:

	NZ \$m – increase / (decrease)				
	2017/18	2018/19	2018/20	2020/21	2021/22 & out-years
Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence					
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure					
Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests MCA					
Departmental Output Expense:					
Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)	0.122	0.333	-	-	-

- 8 **agreed** that the additional expenses required in 2017/18 and 2018/19 under paragraph 3 above be a charge against the tagged Operating contingency established as part of Budget 2017 for *Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order*;
- 9 **agreed** that the change to appropriations for 2017/18 above be included in the 2017/18 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply.

Janine Harvey
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)
Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Phil Twyford
Hon Dr Megan Woods
Hon Chris Hipkins
Hon Andrew Little
Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Hon David Clark
Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Hon Stuart Nash
Hon Tracey Martin
Hon Shane Jones
Hon Ron Mark
Hon James Shaw
Hon Eugenie Sage

Hard-copy distribution:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister of Defence

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

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Chair

Cabinet Business Committee

DEPLOYMENT TO UNITED NATIONS MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTEGRATED STABILISATION MISSION IN MALI

Proposal

That Cabinet approve the deployment of a New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Colonel to an intelligence leadership role in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for one year from early March 2018.

Executive Summary

2. On 3 November the NZDF received a request from the United Nations (UN) for a named NZDF officer, Colonel Angela Fitzsimons, to fill an intelligence leadership role from early March 2018 in the MINUSMA Force Headquarters in Bamako, Mali. The post had become vacant at short notice. New Zealand's only current UN deployment to Africa is to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan where we currently have four NZDF personnel deployed and which is the mission led by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General David Shearer.

3. A New Zealand presence in MINUSMA will boost our contribution to global peacekeeping efforts, while also providing New Zealand with a small, but valuable, insight into a conflict that has a significant impact on regional stability and counter-terrorism efforts. This deployment would also complement New Zealand's efforts to improve the intelligence function in UN peacekeeping in support of mission safety, security and effectiveness. This deployment would also positively contribute to New Zealand's reputation within the United Nations and would be appreciated by key partners, in particular those operating in the Sahel¹ such as France, Germany and the United States.

4. The deployment would be a discretionary contribution, providing a one year opportunity for the named NZDF officer. It would not signal a broader New Zealand involvement or commitment to deploying personnel to Mali or the Sahel region. Despite the security risks inherent in the MINUSMA operation, the Chief of the Defence Force is confident that, under current circumstances, sufficient protections will be available to mitigate the risk to Colonel Fitzsimons.

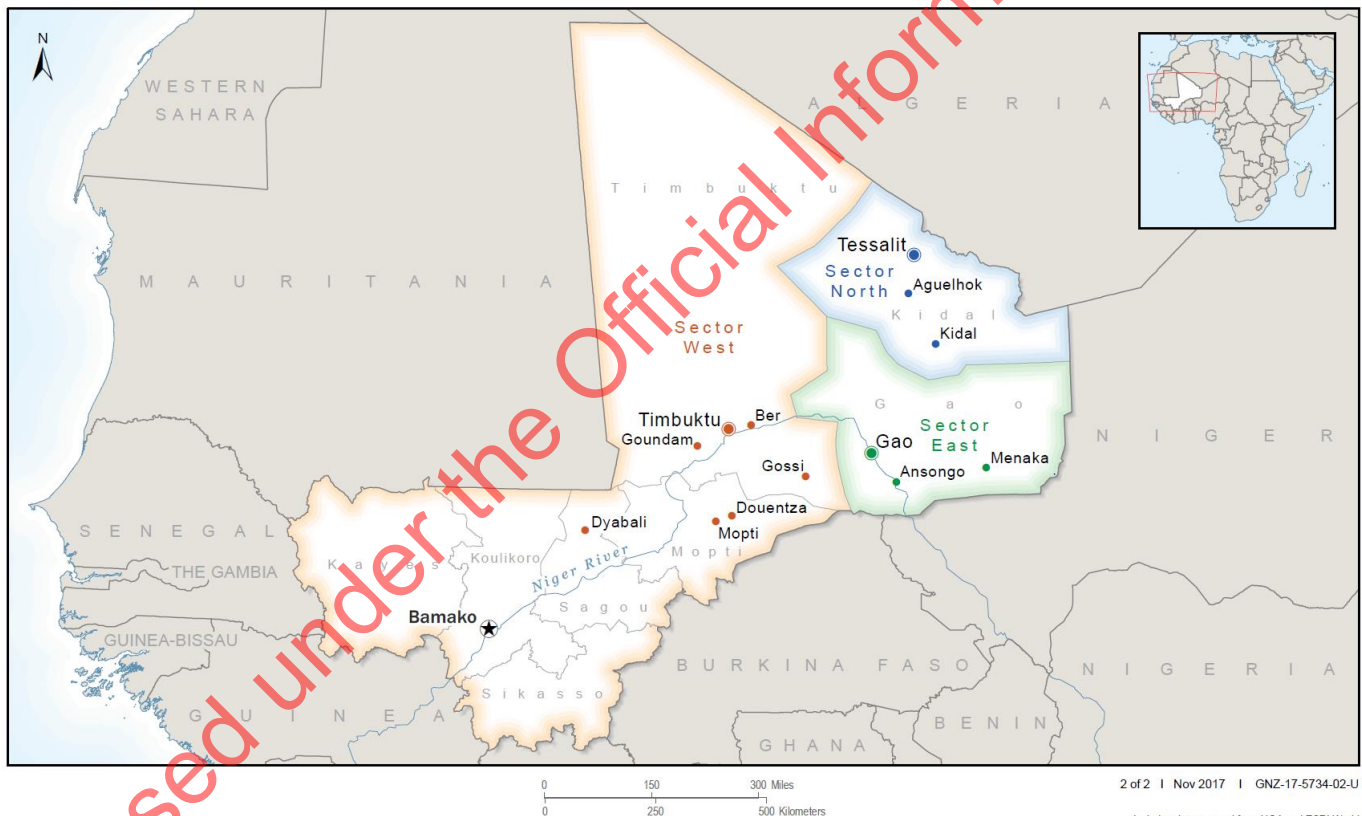
¹ Africa's Sahel region - the continent's most vulnerable region – covers the southern edge of the Sahara desert, extending at least 4,500 km from Cape Verde through Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad.

Background

5. Mali is the eighth largest country in Africa and its capital Bamako is one of the fastest growing cities on the continent. Mali's population of 18 million is projected to double by 2035. Demographic pressure is likely to exacerbate existing problems caused by poverty. More than half of the population currently live below the international poverty line. The Malian population is made up of diverse ethnic groups, with French and Bambara as the main languages spoken. Over 90% of the population is Muslim.

6. Mali gained independence from France in 1960 and, after a period of one-party rule, became a democratic multi-party state in 1991. Mutual distrust between the Government and its northern territory have contributed to ongoing instability in the country. Tuareg² and Arab groups in the North have accused the capital of denying them opportunities for economic development and political representation. These demographic fractures have endured and contribute to the current conflict.

MINUSMA Deployment Locations



UNCLASSIFIED

The conflict in Mali and MINUSMA's mandate

7. A rebellion, a coup and an Islamic insurgency in Mali saw the establishment of MINUSMA in 2013 (through UN Security Council resolution 2100). MINUSMA has a mandate to support the Mali political progress, including by supporting the historic, but stalled, 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation (the Agreement) between the Malian Government

² The Tuareg are a large Berber nomadic ethnic group that inhabit the Saharan regions of North Africa - Niger, Mali, Libya, Algeria and Burkina Faso.

and an alliance of Tuareg-led rebels. The Agreement would, if enacted, hand greater autonomy to the northern region of Mali. The recent resumption of fighting between the signatory armed groups in northern Mali, growing insecurity in the centre of the country and mounting political turmoil surrounding the constitutional review process have delayed the implementation of the Agreement.

8. The security situation remains highly volatile. Various ceasefires between extremist groups and the Malian government have been breached and hostage-taking and terrorist activities have increased. The Malian government and security forces have a limited presence in the north, creating a governance and security vacuum as various armed groups compete for territorial control. Violent clashes between northern militias are ongoing and violent extremist groups continue to launch attacks against Malian and international defence and security personnel including MINUSMA, in order to undermine peace efforts and stoke tensions, ensuring the environment remains permissive for extremist organisations. In addition, central Mali is experiencing heightened insecurity as extremist groups expand their areas of operation, including beyond Mali's borders.

9. Instability in Mali has significant implications for wider regional stability. According to UN estimates, there are at least 4.5 million people who have been displaced within the Sahel as a result of the conflict. Around 150,000 Malian refugees remain in neighbouring countries, with approximately 50,000 internally displaced people (half of which are children). The Sahel's already fragile humanitarian situation is under considerable strain as communities struggle to manage the volume of displaced people caused by Mali's conflict. Mali's neighbours are suffering from increased military overstretch as violence emanating from Mali continues to encroach on their territory.

What is MINUSMA mandated to do?

10. MINUSMA is mandated to support the 2015 Agreement; assist the redeployment of the Malian Defence and Security Forces in the centre and north of the country; and to protect civilians and promote and protect human rights. While not directly authorised to confront terrorist organisations militarily, MINUSMA is authorised to counter asymmetric attacks in active defence of its mandate and to take steps to prevent the return of armed elements as part of its stabilisation activities. There is a strong counter-terrorism focus in Mali and the wider region, through countering extremist groups, some of whom are aligned with al-Qaida. The mandate also carries out a number of security-related stabilisation tasks.

11. MINUSMA faces significant challenges to achieve the completion of its mandate, however a strategic review is now under way which is intended to improve its operational effectiveness.

12. There are 14,865 personnel deployed to MINUSMA. Fifty-two nations contribute troops to the Mission, including Germany with approximately 600 personnel deployed and the United States with 26.

13. MINUSMA is supported by other international security forces including:

- the French Operation Barkhane – a deployment of 4,000 troops headquartered in Chad’s capital of N’Djamena and which aims to secure the region and fight terrorism in partnership with regional actors. It involves joint operations with local forces in northern Mali, Niger and Chad,
- the new UN-backed and African Union authorised G5 Sahel Joint Force – a partnership among five states in Africa’s Sahel region (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad) launched in February 2017 to improve security along their shared borders including through improved cooperation an deployment of joint patrols to interdict the flow of terror groups and traffickers,
- the EU Capacity Building Mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali) – a small mission providing assistance and advice to national police, the national gendarmerie and the national guard, and
- the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) – a capacity building mission of 500 support personnel mandated to train and advise the military of Mali.

MINUSMA Senior Intelligence Officer Request

14. The UN has specifically requested NZDF Colonel Angela Fitzsimons to be the Chief Intelligence Officer (U2) at the MINUSMA Force Headquarters in Bamako. [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] MINUSMA is currently the only UN peacekeeping operation with [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED]; something recommended by the Brahimi Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations.

15. A well-managed intelligence architecture is fundamental to the success of military operations. Timely and accurate information is crucial to inform operational decisions, enhances situational awareness, and results in increased safety and security. This has been a priority for New Zealand including during the UN Security Council term. Colonel Fitzsimons has recently finished a two-year secondment to the UN Headquarters in New York as the Chief of the Intelligence Assessment Team, in the Office of Military Affairs within the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

16. The request from the UN is a strong endorsement for Colonel Fitzsimons who is well regarded by senior UN staff. She is also fluent in French. In 2012, Colonel Fitzsimons was deployed to a senior position in the UN Supervision Mission in Syria, headquartered in Damascus.

Safety, Security and Threat Assessment

17. MINUSMA is the UN's most dangerous mission based on peacekeeper casualties. The majority of these casualties occur in the north of Mali (in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu) where the peacekeepers have tended to be inadequately trained and equipped. [REDACTED] s6(a)

18. [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii), s6(d)

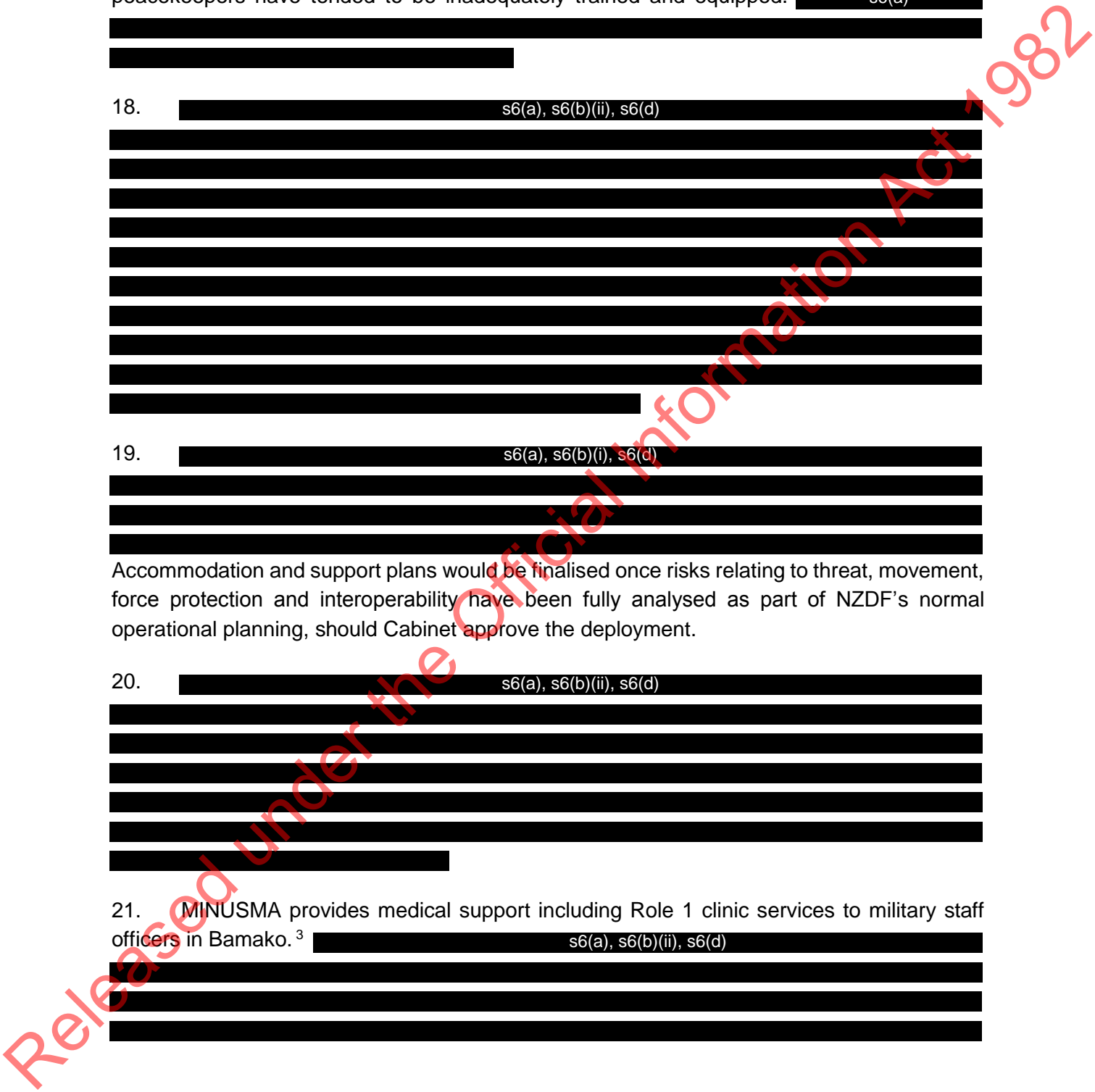
19. [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(d)

Accommodation and support plans would be finalised once risks relating to threat, movement, force protection and interoperability have been fully analysed as part of NZDF's normal operational planning, should Cabinet approve the deployment.

20. [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii), s6(d)

21. MINUSMA provides medical support including Role 1 clinic services to military staff officers in Bamako.³ [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii), s6(d)

³ NATO defined levels of medical care:
Role 1 = primary care, emergency treatment and preparation for transfer, under guidance of medical officer. Normally integral to a major land-based Unit.
Role 2 = Patient triage, elements of damage control resuscitation and casualty treatment. Includes wider range of medical & nursing interventions and enhanced laboratory & imaging facilities.



22. As a result of in-theatre force protection, NZDF force preparation measures, and operational risk monitoring, the Chief of the Defence Force is confident that the threat environment, while volatile, can be mitigated to a sufficient degree. Should the security situation deteriorate to an untenable level as identified by the UN or Commander Joint Forces New Zealand, it is recommended that the Chief of the Defence Force, in consultation with the Minister of Defence, be authorised to facilitate the withdrawal of Colonel Fitzsimons. Nations can withdraw their UN contributions at any time. An evacuation plan would be developed by the NZDF as part of their normal operational planning process, if the deployment is approved by Cabinet.

Additional benefits to New Zealand

23. New Zealand currently contributes 12 personnel to two UN Missions (in South Sudan and in the Golan Heights). In terms of numbers deployed, New Zealand is ranked 100th out of the 125 troop and/or police contributors from the 193 UN member states. While only one person, this deployment is an opportunity to make a small but high quality and impactful contribution in the intelligence area which will enhance the safety and effectiveness of the mission, and contribute to the long term success of the intelligence function in UN Peacekeeping more broadly.

24. We have raised New Zealand's proposed MINUSMA deployment with key partners including Germany (Germany's contribution to Mali is its second-largest behind only Afghanistan), Canada and the African Union. New Zealand's initiative has been welcomed especially as it is targeted towards increasing capacity in MINUSMA's intelligence leadership group. The African Union welcomed New Zealand's constructive contributions to peace and security in Africa through peacekeeping deployments and other practical contributions to peace support and capacity building on the continent.

Consultation

25. This paper was prepared by the Ministry of Defence, the New Zealand Defence Force, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The New Zealand Treasury and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Policy Advisory Group) have been consulted.

Financial Implications

26. The estimated cost of the deployment is \$0.455M

27. There is a shortfall in funding available from current appropriations of \$0.455M because funding for *Vote Defence Force: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests* is fully committed for 2017/18 and 2018/19 as a result of existing mandated missions.⁴

28. A Tagged Contingency was established at Budget 17 to provide a funding source for future military deployments to be approved by Cabinet in *Support of a Rules-based*

⁴ The mandated missions include Iraq, United Arab Emirates (C-130 deployment), the wider Middle East region, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

International Order. The additional funding required of \$0.455M is proposed to be charged against this tagged Operating Contingency for *Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order*.

29. The following table sets out the expenditure and funding arrangements for this deployment.

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Estimated cost of proposed deployment	0.122	0.333	-	-	0.455
Total funded from existing appropriation: Operations Contributing to New Zealand's Security, Stability and Interests	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Funding Required	0.122	0.333	-	-	0.455

30. The following table sets out the impact for this deployment on the tagged Operating contingency established as part of Budget 17 for *Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order*:

Vote Defence Force	NZ \$million				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Balance of tagged Operating contingency	2.420	20.000	20.000	0.000	42.420
Previously approved deployments	(2.809)	(4.283)	0.000	0.000	(7.092)
Funding for this mission	(0.122)	(0.333)	0.000	0.000	(0.455)
Remaining tagged operating contingency balance	(0.511)	15.384	20.000	0.000	34.873

Publicity

31. If Cabinet approves the deployments, the Minister of Defence will issue a press release just prior to Colonel Fitzsimons' deployment.

32. The United Nations and our partners will be informed separately through normal diplomatic and military channels.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the Committee:

- a. **note** the UN’s request that Colonel Angela Fitzsimons is deployed to an intelligence leadership role in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA);
- b. **note** the volatile nature of the security situation in Mali and that this is mitigated through operational risk monitoring, NZDF Force Preparation, and force protection measures implemented by the UN Mission;
- c. **approve** the deployment of Colonel Fitzsimons to an intelligence leadership role in the MINUSMA for one year from March 2018;
- d. **agree** to the Chief of the Defence Force being authorised to withdraw Colonel Fitzsimons should the security situation warrant it;
- e. **note** that the total estimated cost of the deployment is assessed as \$0.455M;
- f. **note** that there is a shortfall of \$0.122M in 2017/18 and \$0.333M in 2018/19 that cannot be met within existing baselines;
- g. **approve** the following changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decision in recommendation (c) above with a corresponding impact on the operating balance;

Vote Defence Force Minister of Defence	NZ \$m – increase / (decrease)				
	2017/18	2018/19	2018/20	2020/21	2021/22 & out- years
Multi-Category Expenses and Capital Expenditure					
Operations Contributing to New Zealand’s Security, Stability and Interests MCA					
Departmental Output Expense:					
Military Operations in Support of a Rules-Based International Order (funded by revenue Crown)	0.122	0.333	-	-	-

- h. **agree** that the additional expenses required in 2017/18 and 2018/19 under recommendation (c) above be a charge against the tagged Operating contingency established as part of Budget 17 for *Military Operations in Support of a Rules-based International Order*;

- i. **agree** that the proposed change to appropriations for 2017/18 above be included in the 2017/18 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increase be met from Imprest Supply.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark
MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Rt Hon Winston Peters
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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