

# Module 2 – MINUSMA



## Scenarios and Snap Situations

## **Part II: MINUSMA CRSV Operational Scenarios**

### **Scenario 1: Requisitions**

#### **Background.**

A significant part of the Tuareg Rebellion comprised young Touregs returning from Chad and Libya, with no cultural and societal bonds with the locals. Having secured most part of Northern Mali, these loosely knit fighters had a free hand in exercising their writ in the areas of occupation. With no opposition from MDSF, Toureg groups such as MNLA, Ansar Dine, etc. committed enormous human right violations. Most young fighters and even commanders took this opportunity to commit sexual violence with impunity and it slowly became a routine affair and an established practice. One of the modus-operandi followed by these rebel groups is through “requisitions” to a nominated community/district, who are asked to provide a certain number of women and girls on a daily basis. If the community does not comply with the requisition, they will in any case abduct women and girls at free will from the community/district. Each night a different district in rotation would be required to provide the required number of women and girls to the rebels. It was used as a tactic to subjugate local populations that was condoned by top commanders. Men who opposed it were brutally punished, including with death penalties.

#### **Scene 1.**

Your unit is deployed recently in Gao. One day, a group of eminent local people from a nearby village (approximately 20 km from the Sector HQ) approach you and report that the rebel groups operating in the area are targeting their community to forcibly take women and girls to spend the night in their camps. Requisition for 15 young women/girls is made to the community chief today morning. The community delegation requests you to provide protection for the women and girls and asks you to take measures to end this practice of requisitioning by rebel groups.

#### **Additional Information.**

- a. Two rebel groups are active in the area and reportedly have camped approximately five and seven km from the Village.
- b. Rebel group’s strength is approximately between 10 and 15 in each location.
- c. They are well equipped and organised.
- d. In the past, the rebels have attacked UN peacekeepers (through IED blasts, suicide attacks and standoff fire).

#### **Points for Deliberation.**

- a. As a Battalion Commander, what is your assessment of the situation?
- b. What are your options and the best course of action?
- c. What measures will you institute protection of the villagers, particularly the women and girls?
- d. How do you intend to check human rights violations of the rebel groups operating with impunity in your AOR?
- e. What assistance do you require from the Sector/Force/Mission HQ?

#### **Scene 2.**

Despite deploying patrols in the vicinity and engaging with the rebel groups, five rebel armed men makes a clandestine entry into the village, impounds a pickup truck and are in the process of picking up the women and girls. An informer from the community informs you of the latest developments and requests you for assistance. There are three patrols (with a strength of 20 peacekeepers each) in the general area (one standing patrol in the near vicinity of the village; one

roving patrol towards the suspected camp of one of the rebel groups (approximately 4 km from the village) and another mobile patrol (approximately 8 km from the village).

**Points for Deliberation.**

- a. As a Battalion Commander, what is your assessment of the situation?
- b. What actions will you take to protect the women and girls as a Battalion, Company, and patrol leaders?
- c. What assistance do you require from the Sector/Force/Mission HQ?
- d. What preventive measures do you suggest to avert such incidents in the future?

**Scenario 2: Raid on a Village**

**Background.**

Historically, acquisition of cattle and women through raids are part of the traditional Toureg style of warfare. Traditionally, Tuaregs have also subjugated people seen as low-caste; such as the Bella community. Taking advantage of the security vacuum created by the withdrawal of the MDSF; MNLA (Tuareg) fighters unleashed a reign of terror through raid-style attacks on villages, community settlements and hamlets; primarily for cattle rustling, followed by looting, torture of the inhabitants and gang-rape of slave-caste women and girls. Reports also indicate that women and girls of the farming and cattle-herding community, particularly the darker-skinned Bella community were targeted by Ansar Dine and MUJAO, a radical Islamic group which had a many Toureg fighters in its ranks.

**Scene 1.**

Your unit is deployed in Kidal. One day at noon, an official of an NGO along with another local civilian approaches you with the following information:

- a. A radical group is likely to attack Village X, approximately 50 km to the North East of Kidal.
- b. Village X is spread out in an area of 1 km x 700 meters and has approximately 200 residents (70 men, 60 women, 40 boys and 30 girls); with substantial numbers of cattle.
- c. The residents of the village are predominantly from the Bella community.
- d. The radical group is presumed to comprise 15 to 20 armed men.

**Points for Deliberation.**

- a. As a Battalion Commander, what is your assessment of the situation?
- b. What are your options and the best course of action?
- c. What measures will you institute for protection of the villagers, particularly the women and girls?
- d. What assistance do you require from the Force/Mission HQ?

**Scene 2.**

Due to proactive steps, the threat of attack did not materialise on the intended day. However, on the third day, at about midnight, a mobile operating base established by your unit observes suspicious movement (approximately 700 meters from the base) of unspecified number of personnel towards the Village X.

**Points for Deliberation.**

- a. As the commander in-situ, what is your assessment of the situation?
- b. What are your options and the best course of action?

- c. What assistance do you envisage from the Battalion HQ?
- d. What measures at the level of community and by UN peacekeepers could augment prevention and response to such attacks, including threat to women and girls?

### **Scenario 3: Abduction**

During Toureg uprising Northern Mali was under the control of rebel militants (Toureg insurgents, Arab militants and Islamist fighters). In the Northern cities of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal, members of MNLA or MAA forcibly picked up girls as they walked along the streets, or lifted them from their homes or market and took/drove them to the abandoned barracks of the Malian Army and raped. Abducted girls were usually handcuffed and locked inside rooms (sometimes for 48 to 72 hours) and raped collectively by as many as four men at a time. Some of the abducted girls were taken even to the police station, where they were locked up, beaten, tortured and gang-raped. After raping, most of the abducted girls were dropped back in the general area where they were picked up. Many such victims fled their homes due to shame and fearing social stigma and banishment to South of Mali.

#### **Scene 1.**

Your unit is deployed in Kidal. A community delegation is at the gate of your COB and demands an immediate meeting with the Battalion Commander. The delegation is followed by a large group of local men and women, including some children. On meeting with the delegation, you are informed of the following:

- a. Five girls going to school have been abducted by six armed men in a pickup truck approximately two hours back.
- b. As reported by other students at the scene of the incident, the armed men spoke in Arabic and Tamasheq.
- c. The community is ready to provide guides to take the UN soldiers to the likely camping/holding up areas.
- d. The younger members of the community are preparing to take revenge and attack camps of armed men.

As you are in the process of reporting and discussing the incident with the Force HQ, the local civilian crowd is swelling up and there are approximately 300 people at the gate sloganeering against armed men and condemning UN of inaction.

A routine monitoring and area domination patrol reports movement of a white pickup truck with many civilians speeding past to North-Westerly direction.

#### **Points for Deliberation.**

- a. As a Battalion Commander, what is your assessment of the situation?
- b. What are your options and the best course of action?
- c. What actions do you intend to take to save/extricate the abducted girls.
- d. What measures will you institute to manage the crowd?
- e. What actions will you take to prevent an escalation of violence?
- f. What assistance do you require from the Force/Mission HQ?

#### **Scene 2.**

After four hours of the abduction, one of the Quick Reaction Team (duly guided by a local civilian) has been able to home on to the area (a group of six houses spread about 100 meters) where the girls are probably holed up. Two to three armed men are seen tactically deployed and are watching the movement of UN peacekeepers. There is pin-drop silence, but the atmosphere is

tense. The QRT commander reports the matter to you and asks for further direction. In the meantime, as troops were jockeying to take up tactical position, a single round is fired from one of the houses.

**Points for Deliberation.**

- a. As a QRT Commander, what is your assessment and what immediate actions would you like to take?
- b. As a Battalion Commander, what is your assessment of the situation; and what advice will you provide to the QRT Commander?
- c. At the Battalion level what actions do you intend to take to support the QRT and extricate the girls?
- d. What assistance do you require from the Force/Mission HQ?
- e. Analyse and explain the following:
  - i. Engagement of armed group.
  - ii. Provision of survivor assistance.
  - iii. Handling of perpetrators.
- f. What measures at the level of community and by UN peacekeepers could augment prevention and response to such attacks, including threat to women and girls?

**Scenario 4: SV by MDSF/Self-defence Militias**

In the wake of Tuareg rebellion and subsequent consolidation of the Northern Mali under the Jihadists, the French forces quickly cleared major population centres paving the way for the MDSF to take control of key cities. However, the MDSF/FAMA as well as associated self-defence militias committed grave human right violations, including sexual violence to target people suspected as sympathisers of MNLA/AD/MAA in the process of carrying out house to house search or at checkpoints.

**Scene 1.**

Your company is deployed in the general area of Ansongo. Early one morning, a civilian source informs you that some militia men have established two road blocks (checkpoints) around a village approximately 20 km from Ansongo and are checking/harassing passers-by. After an hour, the civilian provides you with the following additional information:

- a. A third checkpoint/road block has also been established.
- b. Approximately three light vehicles and seven military trucks have arrived in the area and many uniformed and armed men are dismounting.
- c. The civilian anticipate house to house search and fear human rights violation and rape of women and girls based on the precedents.

**Points for Deliberation.**

- a. As a Company Commander, what is your assessment of the situation?
- b. What are your options and the best course of action?
- c. What actions do you intend to take to:
  - i. Remove the checkpoints/roadblocks.
  - ii. Stop MDSF/FAMA from committing human rights violation.
- d. What assistance do you require from the Force/Mission HQ?

**Scene 2.**

As the mobile column approached the encircled village, you are stopped by five armed men in assorted uniforms (presumably from the militia group associated with MDSF) approximately 700 to 800 meters from the village. One of the militia men queries with the commander of the first

vehicle as to understand the reason for UN troop's presence and where they intend to go. At the same time, the column commander observes the following:

- a. Subdued wailing and screaming of women and children can be heard.
- b. Smoke is emanating from three houses and one house is in flames.
- c. Two gun shots were heard.
- d. Groups of men are rounded up and are probably being beaten.

**Points for Deliberation.**

- a. What is your assessment of the situation?
- b. What guidance would you (as a company commander or battalion commander) like to provide to the mobile column commander?
- c. What assistance do you require from the Battalion/Force/Mission HQ?
- d. Analyse the situation and explain procedures for reporting, handling of State forces, handling of perpetrators/violators and survivor assistance.
- e. What preventive measures (such as advocacy, constructive engagement, early-warning, community engagement, proactive actions, etc.) could have averted such type of incidents?

## MINUSMA: CRSV Snap Situations

### Snap Situation 1: Rape of Family Members of Women Leaders

On a rainy day, a group of rebel armed personnel arrived in the Western part of Gao. Having dismounted from the vehicles, they slapped whomever they saw and enquired for whereabouts of a middle aged woman who used to run a women's organisation in Gao and is well known as an activist. Having got the wind of it, the traumatised woman managed to hide herself along with her 13 year old daughter in a friend's house and somehow escaped from the area and headed for Bamako. However, the women leader's family members were not so fortunate; before they could escape from the house, the armed group fighters gate crashed into the house and took everyone into custody. Having learned of the probable escape of the woman leader, the furious fighters tied all 3 male members of the house (husbands of the woman leader and her two sisters) and gang raped the woman's two sisters in front of their husbands. After that the fighters went through the neighbourhood, systematically stealing from some and assaulting others.

***What is your Response?***

### Snap Situation 2: Forced Marriage

In a village near Gossi (Gao Region) a group of rebels landed up in a wealthy man's house. The leader of the group told the man and his wife that he would like to marry their daughter and offered an equivalent amount of USD 14. Dismayed and sensing danger, the parents of the girl informed the rebel leader that the girl is only 13-years-old and not yet ready for the marriage. When the negotiations with the parents did not make any headway, the leader threatened the parents of serious consequence, tossed some cash at them and forcibly took the girl along and drove off; as the other members prevented the parents from rescuing their daughter. Your company was approached by the community chief and the parents, requesting for help to rescue their daughter. Historical precedents indicate that the minor would be forcibly married and then gang raped in the rebel/militia base on a daily basis and may even be handed over to other groups.

***What is your Response?***

### Snap Situation 3: House Break and Rape

Gao was under occupation of Tuareg rebels for most part of 2012. People were targeted for money and gold ornaments. Often they committed rape of women and girls from wealthy Songhai and slave Bella caste as well. One day at dusk, two light-skinned, turban-wearing men speaking Tamacheq (spoken by Tuareg) in a Toyota Hilux pickup truck flying a yellow, black, red and green flag (used by MNLA) drove in to a secluded area of Gao. The pickup stopped in front of the house of a wealthy 36-year-old Songhai woman. Observing the area shortly, the men broke into the house probably with an intention to loot and rape. A neighbour, who has been patronised as part of the Community Alert Network informed

you about the incident, and as he was speaking, he could hear veiled screams of the woman from the house.

***What is your Response?***

#### **Snap Situation 4: Mass Rape**

After Malian army fled from Northern Mali, MNLA no longer had an enemy to fight so they turned on the local population. During occupation, Tuareg fighters indulged in gang rapes and forced marriages. Many young men who committed these acts did not grow up in Mali – They are Tuareg men who spent their formative years fighting in Chad and Libya. Women and girls (ranging from girls under 12 to women over 60) were raped; even in front of the family members. During the house to house search, in addition to rape, the rebels looted valuables and tortured men and women alike. Menaka, a dusty town in the shadow of the Ader Douchi hills in North-Eastern Mali witnessed worst atrocities, particularly against the noble Songhai and slave caste Bella ethnic group. Your Company is recently deployed in the outskirts of Menaka. A group of community elders approached you and informed that their community is under threat from armed groups operating in the area and going by past incidents, a large scale attack is likely to happen in the near future for cattle rustling, looting and eventual rape of women and girls.

***What is your Response?***

#### **Snap Situation 5: Rape of a Kidnapped Man – Iblalene**

Kidnapping men and women has been one of the main tactics used by Islamists in Northern Mali (e.g. Kidal). The kidnapped women and girls are usually tortured, forcibly married and used as sexual slaves. Men are tortured, sometimes punished with amputations or even death.

One early morning, as the Sun was about to rise, around a dozen armed men on-board three vehicles (pick-ups) carrying MAA flag launched a sudden attack on the Eastern side of an Idnan Touareg camp at Iblalene (50km West of Tessalit in Kidal Region). After firing few rounds in the air, they barged into a house and enquired the whereabouts of three Idnan Touareg men who are suspected of passing information to the MDSF. In the search that followed in three adjacent houses, they recovered a weapon and some ammunition, and in a fit of rage two armed men fired rockets and destroyed two trucks and a motorcycle. The group then caught hold of one young local Idnan Touareg man and beat him severely in the process of questioning. The group leader threatened to kill the captive man if the inmates did not bring the three men they were looking for to their camp within 3 days. One of the armed men broke open a car in the camp, two of them pushed the captive into it and the group drove off the camp firing in the air and threatening to come back again. All this happened in a span of 15 minutes, and the camp slowly came to life hearing the sound of firing and yelling. By the time, the prominent persons in the camp realised what has happened, the attackers had decamped. Realising that the camp has been raided and a young man is kidnapped, the Tuaregs quickly reorganised themselves and chased the attackers for about 10 km northward, but could not catch up with the speeding Islamists. One of the attackers was reportedly identified as being a member of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).



Your Company has been deployed in Tessalit town recently and got this information at about 8.30 AM through the local community chief. A delegation from the Iblalane is expected by 9.30 AM to meet the UN and local authorities. You have information that the Islamists are probably camping approximately 20 KM North of Iblalene.

***What is your Response?***

### **Snap Situation 6. Forced Prostitution (South)**

Sexual attacks provoke displacement (to increase aggressor's access to resources [DRC]). Sexual attacks also disrupt reproduction among targeted ethnic groups, interfering with population growth. Women may be afraid of facing reprisals in cultures where victims are urged to keep quiet. Many women and girls fearing sexual violence from the Touregs (MNLA) and forced marriages and sexual slavery from Islamists escaped from Northern Mali and congregated around Bamako. A significant part of these displaced people included victims of sexual violence as well, who had to leave their families or communities due to shame, stigma and banishment from the communities. Mostly living under the mercy of others for shelter and food, some of these displaced women and girls were exploited, abused and eventually forced into prostitution.

Your company is deployed in Bamako and a local national staff approached you with information that some of the girls escaped from Northern Mali are held captive and being used for prostitution in the downtown area. The National Staff member was willing to link you with an informant, who would take you to the area where forced prostitution is being perpetrated. It appears that the prostitution racket is being run by a socially influential local group that includes local women.

***What is your Response?***

### **Snap Situation 7: Abduction and Rape in CP**

Your Company is deployed in the Douentza in Mopti Region. MDSF has been recently very active in the neighbourhood through patrolling, searches, etc. and has established checkpoints in some places. Sometimes their activities have led to complaints and protests by sections of local people. One afternoon, your CLA informs you that in Checkpoint X, a woman and a girl made to dismount from a vehicle and forcibly taken into a nearby hut for further examination and presumably being raped. The protesting men accompanying the woman and girl are beaten and handcuffed by the soldiers.

***What is your Response?***