



UN Volunteers serve peace through
MINUSMA in Mali.

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Volunteers play an integral role in restoring peace in Mali

On this international day of peace, 172 UN Volunteers are serving with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). They are called Semhar from Eritrea, Shirin from the State of Palestine, Natasha from Slovakia, or Trinite from Chad; women and men of 57 nationalities deployed throughout the country. While some are starting their careers, others, already retired, have chosen to return to help build the much-needed peace.

The volunteers occupy various functions within the fifty sections of MINUSMA. Among them are medical staff, human rights specialists, electoral advisers, air movement specialists and logisticians.

“ Like an orchestra, everyone plays their part in this large ensemble in order to restore peace. The experiences and life paths of these UN Volunteers differ, but cardinal values animate them and bring them together. They have the merit of being committed, dynamic and of offering solutions.

Volunteers demonstrate self-sacrifice and have strong resistance skills. While serving as a volunteer on a peacekeeping mission is an honour, it requires deprioritizing an important part of your life, sometimes all the sidelines. This personal sacrifice is motivated by the desire to participate in something great, to contribute, at one's level, to changing the course of history. Many will want to, not all will be able!

At the same time, it is a unique opportunity for our volunteers to put their skills to good use, to grow humanly and professionally, to meet new people of different nationalities, to rub shoulders with civilians and uniformed personnel, to learn from one another. Thus, none of our volunteers will be quite the same, for all there will be a before and an after.

With the COVID-19 crisis, everyone has redoubled their efforts to best respond to the crisis. Doctors and nurses are serve at bedsides, demonstrating unwavering commitment. Volunteers have cut their holidays abroad short to return to Mali before the borders closed. Others have become fathers, but are yet to see their newborn children. Some have fallen sick. Fortunately, all of them have recovered!

On this International Day of Peace, may their commitment be recognized for what it is, a source of inspiration and pride for all of us, here or elsewhere.



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