UN Volunteers as ambassadors of coexistence, humility and courage in Northern Mali

“Never leave the desert, because the desert purifies the soul. Far from it, you are deaf and blind. So speak the Tuareg mothers.” --Mano Dayak

In Tessalit MINUSMA camp, among the sixteen civilian personnel, the two UN Volunteers play a critical role for the proper functioning and implementation of the mandate of the Mission.

Jackson Mwakwilay (United States), is a UN Volunteer Movement Control Officer. In his capacity, he coordinates the air transport of freight and passengers from and to Tessalit. This role is essential as liaison with Bamako, Kidal and Gao is done mostly by air, as is the provision of food and supplies. Jackson has been serving and sharing his knowledge with his
Rontal Dixon Saint-Juste (Haiti) has been contributing to MINUMA as a UN Volunteer Logistics Officer since November 2017. As part of the Mission Support Center, he has been coordinating logistics with the military contingents and the Malian Forces based in Tessalit. Besides, for operational needs of the Mission, Dixon also supports human resources and financial processes when there is a need.

Despite the challenging working and living conditions, Jackson and Dixon do not regret their engagement as UN Volunteers, and the spirit of solidarity and commitment which drives them, is an incentive to continue their mission.

Beyond their respective functions and daily tasks, the UVolunteers embody the values of solidarity, mutual respect, and humanism.

"We live as a family here. This family life is also characterized by moments of welfare and recreation, around sports, games, and shared meals, which always maintain team spirit."

Tessalit is surely far away from the tumult of the city; the climate is arid and the immensity of the desert all around is barely measurable. In this environment, probably more than anywhere else, the UN Volunteers have become, through their contributions to MINUSMA, ambassadors of coexistence, humility and courage.

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Sub-Saharan Africa

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals