

NEW YORK, □ US, September 20 (Infosplusgabon) - Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita took the podium of the General Assembly on Tuesday to praise United Nations efforts in aiding his country recover from rebel attacks, and called on the international community to help fund a new five-nation force to combat terrorism in the region.

"I am duty-bound to hail the remarkable work of the civilian and military personnel of MINUSMA, who work in conditions that I know are difficult, even often perilous," he told the Assembly on the opening day of its 72nd annual general debate, referring to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

MINUSMA was established by the Security Council in 2013 after extremists took over part of the north of the country. The Mission currently has over 12,000 uniformed personnel and 1,350 civilians deployed to support the political processes and carry out security-related tasks in the country which has suffered from continuing rebel and terrorist attacks.

Mr. Keita said the UN Security Council-endorsed G5 Sahel group, comprising Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, is slated to deploy its first joint force next month to combat terrorism and drugs, arms and human trafficking throughout Africa's sub-Saharan Sahel region.

"I call on friendly countries and partner international organizations to support the G5 Sahel joint

force with equipment, logistics, communications. Emergency medical evacuations and the fight against improvised explosive devices," he added.

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