

**Question for written answer E-003096/2020
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy**

Rule 138

Dominique Bilde (ID)

Subject: UK commitment in the Sahel and Senegal and consequences of Brexit

The UK is supporting the UN mission in Mali and the French Operation Barkhane in the Sahel. On 22 August 2019 it announced the deployment of an additional 250 troops to Mali¹.

The UK is also taking part in a US-led training mission in Senegal involving some 1600 troops².

The mission is part of the effort to step up the fight against terrorism beyond the Sahel.

Colonel Matthew Botsford, who oversees the British military training team in Nigeria, said: "What none of us want to see is a caliphate anywhere near West Africa that imposes its own regime and Islamic law. That's the worst case for us."³

1. The mandate for negotiations between the EU and the UK reaffirms the importance of cooperation in the area of defence. Will the Vice-President / High Representative be raising the issue of this UK military presence in the talks?
2. On 27 January 2020 the French Minister of the Armed Forces went to the United States to argue the case for maintaining US support in the Sahel. How will the Vice-President / High Representative support these diplomatic efforts or seek to offset the impact of a possible US withdrawal⁴?

¹ <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2019/07/22/uk-mali-minusma-250-troops/>

² 'In Senegal, a team of around 30 UK soldiers and Royal Marines have been training special forces from a number of West African nations in a US-led counter-terrorism exercise involving more than 1,600 troops.'
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51699107>

³ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8063103/British-troops-sent-Senegal-provide-counter-terrorism-training.html>

⁴ https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2020/01/27/retenir-l-armee-americaine-au-sahel-la-mission-de-florence-parly-a-washington_6027356_3212.html