

France resumes joint military operations in Mali



France has about 5,100 troops in the Sahel under its Barkhane operation [Philippe Desmazes/AFP]

Paris, July 4 (RHC)-- France has announced it will resume joint military operations in Mali -- its formal colony -- after suspending them early last month following the West African country's second coup in less than a year.

Following consultations with the Malian transitional authorities and the countries of the region, France "decided to resume joint military operations as well as national advisory missions, which had been suspended since June 3," the armed forces minister said in a statement released in Paris.

France has about 5,100 troops in the Sahel under its Barkhane operation across five countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. On June 10, French President Emmanuel Macron announced a major drawdown of France’s military presence in the Sahel where forces have been battling rebel groups for nearly a decade.

Macron said the existing Barkhane operation would end, with France’s presence becoming part of the so-called Takuba international task force in which “hundreds” of French soldiers would form the backbone. That Takuba force currently numbers about 600 troops, half of whom are French.

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