Four UN peacekeepers killed in Mali attack

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A Senegalese soldier of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on patrol. (Photo: AFP)

United Nations, January 14 (RHC)-- Four United Nations peacekeepers have lost their lives and five others sustained injuries after their convoy struck an explosive device and came under fire in central Mali. The UN mission in Mali, known as MINUSMA, said in a statement that the casualties took place about 20 kilometers north of the town of Bambara-Maoudé in the Timbuktu region on Wednesday.

MINUSMA's statement fell short of saying who was behind the deadly attack but mentioned that the deceased peacekeepers were from the Ivory Coast. Militants linked to the Takfiri terrorist groups of al-Qaeda and Daesh operate in the region and have been a major source of instability in much of the West African country.

MINUSMA, with over 13,000 troops to contain violence by armed groups in the country's north and center, has recorded about 230 fatalities since 2013 — the deadliest of the UN's more than dozen peacekeeping missions.

The militant-led violence in Mali has also spilled over to neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger.

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