A Canadian woman and her Italian partner kidnapped in Burkina Faso in 2018 have been found in good health in the northwest of Mali after fleeing their captors and were set to be repatriated, diplomatic and UN sources said on Saturday.

Tedith Blais and Luca Tacchetto, both in their thirties, managed to escape near the northern city of Kidal on Friday and were taken to the local base of the UN mission in Mali, known by its French acronym MINUSMA.

The pair were then flown out on Saturday afternoon on a special plane to Mali’s capital Bamako.

They appeared in good spirits but seemed taken aback when greeted by the Malian, UN and Canadian officials with extended elbows. The pair were then informed about the coronavirus crisis and the new social etiquette.

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