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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
703RD MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
20 JULY 2017

PSC/PR/BR.(DCCIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 703th meeting held on 20 July 2017, received a briefing on the situation in Mali.

Council took note of the briefing made by the High Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Mali and the Sahel, former President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi, and that by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Head of the United Nations Multidimensional integrated Mission for stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA), Mahamat Saleh Annadif, on the situation in Mali. Council also took note of the statements made by the representatives of Mali and Togo, Chair of the Economic Community of the West Africa States (ECOWAS), as well as by the representatives of the ECOWAS Commission, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

Council recalled its previous pronouncements on the situation in Mali and the Sahelo-Saharan region, including communiqué PSC/PR/comm.(DXLIV) of its 544th meeting held on 18 September 2015, as well as communiqué PSC/PR/COMM(DCLXXIX) of its 679th meeting held on 13 April 2017.

Council reiterated its commitment to the respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Mali, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act of the AU.

Council, once again, urged all the Malian parties to redouble their efforts to overcome the challenges facing the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers process, in order to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation in Mali. In this regard, Council welcomed the progress made during the recent period, including the establishment of the interim authorities in Northern Mali and the holding of the Conference of National Accord. Council called for an acceleration of the implementation of the Agreement, notably through the new consensual time frame agreed by the Signatories in June 2017, in particular with regard to the deployment of the Malian administrative authorities and Institutional on the whole of the territory of Mali. Council stressed the need, to this effect, to accelerate the process of the Operational co-ordination Mechanism (MOC), as provided for in the Agreement, with a view to ensure the early launching of the DDR process. Council encouraged the political actors in Mali to rapidly find, through dialogue, a consensus with regard to the review of the Constitution. Council expressed its appreciation to the countries of the region, in particular Algeria, *Chef de file* of the Mediation and Chair of the Follow up Committee of the Agreement (CSA).

Council took note with concern of the continuing deterioration of the security situation, not only in the North of Mali, but also in the central part of the country. In this regard, Council strongly condemned the persistent clashes between signatories movements to the Algiers Agreement in Northern Mali, in violation of all cease-fire provisions concluded to this date, emphasizing that only the armed terrorist groups are taking advantage of these divisions, since the current situation allow them to continue perpetrating their attacks. Council also strongly

condemned the intercommunal violence, which cause many civilian victims in the Kidal region and expressed its determination, in close cooperation with the international community, to take measures against the signatory movements of the Agreement, which continue to violate the cease-fire.

Council reaffirmed its strong condemnation of the heinous terrorist attacks against the civilians, the Malian and international forces of MINUSMA and *Operation Barkhane*.

Council renewed its full support to the timely initiative of the countries of the G5 Sahel, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, which has led to the creation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force and welcomed the adoption by the Security Council of the United Nations (UNSC) of resolution 2359 (2017), welcoming the deployment of the Force and expressed its appreciation to the EU for its pledged financial support to the G5 Sahel initiative. Council expressed AU's readiness to pursue its consultations with the UNSC and the larger international community with a view to ensuring sustainable and predictable funding to the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel.

Council stressed the imperative to strengthen the capabilities of the Malian Defense and Security Forces, both in terms of training and equipment, with a view to enable them playing better national role in the efforts aimed at fighting terrorism and transnational organized crime, in particular in the north of Mali, and better contributing, in the future, to regional and international efforts for peace and security. Council underscored the imperative for a continuous strengthening of security cooperation between the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region in the fight against terrorism and transnational organised crime, in particular through the Nouakchott Process, which will support the G5 Sahel initiative, in the context of the AU Strategy for the Sahel region. In this regard, Council welcomed the training awards pledged by the Arab Republic of Egypt for a thousand of officers and NCOs from the Sahelo-Saharan region.

Council welcomed the adoption, on 29 June 2017, by the UNSC of resolution 2364(2017), renewing the mandate of the MINUSMA for an additional period of twelve (12) months. Council welcomed the enhancement of the mandate of MINUSMA, in particular with regard to the support to the Malian armed forces and to the G5 Joint Force, as well as the contribution of the Mission in the organisation and holding of the elections scheduled to take place in 2018, in Mali.

Council paid tribute to the High Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Mali and the Sahel, former President Pierre Buyoya, and his team of the MISAHHEL, for their sustained commitment and support to the promotion of peace and security in Mali and in the Sahel in general. Council requested the Commission to take the necessary measures to enable the MISAHHEL to fully fulfil its mandate, in close cooperation with MINUSMA and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in West Africa and the Sahel.

Council expressed its gratitude to the international community for the support that it continues to provide to the AU in its efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability in Mali, and

encouraged it to pursue and intensify its contribution to the fight against radicalisation and terrorist and criminal groups in Mali and in the Sahel in general.

Council requested the Commission to regularly update Council on the situation in Mali with a view to enable it to take the appropriate decisions.

Council has decided to remain actively seized of the matter.

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