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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE SITUATION IN MALI

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ON THE SITUATION IN MALI**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. During the period under review, the multi-dimensional crisis faced by Mali and the situation in the Sahel, in general, continued to actively engage Africa, as well as the rest of the international community. The Commission actively endeavored to implement the relevant decisions of Council, and closely followed the developments of the situation, in order to adjust its action accordingly.

2. The present report provides an update on the different initiatives taken as a follow-up to the communiqué adopted by the 327th meeting of Council, held in Addis Ababa, on 14 July 2012, at the level of the Heads of State and Government. It also covers the latest developments on the ground and the international community's response to this rapidly evolving situation. It concludes with observations on the way forward.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ OF 14 JULY 2012

3. In its communiqué of 14 July 2012, Council took a number of actions to give greater urgency to, and enhance the efficiency of, the efforts to resolve the Malian crisis. These decisions were informed by an acknowledgment of the seriousness of the crisis, which is marked by the occupation of a large part of the Malian territory by armed rebel, terrorist and criminal groups, as well as by the calling into question of fundamental AU principles, notably the respect of the unity and territorial integrity of Member States.

4. The past six months have been characterized by continued abuses perpetrated against the civilian population living in the areas occupied by the armed rebel, terrorist and criminal groups (amputations and stoning, deprivation of the most fundamental freedoms, summary executions and rape), as well as by the destruction of monuments of historical, cultural and religious significance. In addition, the situation has resulted in forced displacement both within Mali and into the neighboring countries.

5. During the period under review, the Commission paid sustained attention to the preparation of the documents required by the Security Council, under resolutions 2056 (2012) and 2071 (2012) of 5 July and 12 October 2012, respectively, to consider the request made by ECOWAS and the AU regarding the deployment of an international force in Mali. In particular, the Commission took the lead in preparing the Strategic Concept on the Resolution of the Crises in Mali. The document, which was the subject of thorough consultations, articulated the different measures to be taken to hasten the resolution of the crises faced by Mali, and aim to frame Africa and international community's response to the situation in Mali. It focuses on the following elements: political process and governance, restoration of state authority and preservation of the national unity and territorial integrity of Mali, organization of free and fair elections, defense and security sector reform, stabilization, justice and support for post-conflict and peace building efforts, structural challenges faced by the Sahel-Saharan region, including terrorism and organized transnational crime, humanitarian aid, return of displaced persons and refugees and restoration of basic social services, regional and international coordination, and follow-up.

6. The Strategic Concept was adopted by the meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group, held in Bamako on 19 October 2012 and co-chaired by the AU, the United Nations and ECOWAS. I took part in that meeting, which constituted my first international travel after I assumed office on 15 October 2012, and marked a decisive step in Mali's reengagement with the international community and its ownership of the efforts to resolve the crisis. The Strategic Concept was endorsed by Council on 24 October 2012, and immediately thereafter transmitted to the Security Council through a letter to the UN Secretary-General.

7. Furthermore, the Commission, in close coordination with ECOWAS, the core countries, the United Nations and other partners, was actively involved in the preparation of the harmonized Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the deployment of an operation in Mali, following the request made by the Malian authorities. The draft harmonized CONOPS was endorsed by ECOWAS and Council on 11 and 13 November 2012, respectively. It provides for the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) of 3300 troops, to help train and restructure the Malian Defense and Security Forces, and assist in the restoration of state authority over the entire national territory. Council requested the Security Council to support the Strategic Concept, and to authorize the deployment of AFISMA, the establishment of a support package funded by UN assessed contributions, as well as of a Trust Fund to support the Malian Defense and Security Forces.

8. On 20 December 2012, the Security Council adopted resolution 2085 (2012), in which, among other things, it authorized the deployment of AFISMA for an initial period of one year. The Security Council also appealed to the Member States and international organizations to provide the financial resources and in-kind contributions required by AFISMA, requested the UN Secretary-General to establish a Trust Fund for AFISMA and the Malian Defense and Security Forces, and called upon the Secretary-General to support the convening of a pledging conference to mobilize contributions for the Trust Fund.

9. On 25 October 2012, subsequent to the meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group, I appointed former President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi as the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel. As part of his mandate, he has undertaken missions to Mali, where, on several occasions, he met with President Dioncounda Traoré, as well as with other senior officials of the Transition. He also visited other countries in the region, meeting with Presidents Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger, Faure Gnassingbe of Togo, and Alassane Dramane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, he travelled to Abuja to attend the ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit of 11 November 2012, seizing the opportunity to meet several regional leaders, including President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria and the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Kadré Désiré Ouedraogo. He has also established contacts with international partners, including the United Nations. In this regard, he participated in the meeting of Special Envoys for the Sahel, held in Rome on 7 December 2012, at the initiative of the former Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, currently, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel.

10. In all its efforts, the Commission has been mindful of the need for an inclusive Transition, under the authority of the Interim President, Mr. Dioncounda Traoré, as an essential element to ensure Mali's ownership in the search for a lasting solution to the current crisis. In this perspective, both Council and the Commission, in cooperation with ECOWAS and the United Nations, continued to lend their support to the authorities of the Transition and to urge them, as well as the other Malian stakeholders, to promote the broadest possible consensus on the

challenges at hand. It was within that framework that a joint AU/ECOWAS/UN/OIF delegation, coordinated by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, visited Bamako at the end of July 2012, upon President Dioncounda Traoré's return to the capital, following his medical treatment in France for injuries sustained in the physical assault against him in May 2012. Similarly, Council, at its meeting of 24 October 2012, decided to lift the suspension of Mali's participation in the AU's activities, taking into account, in this regard, the formation of a Government of National Unity, on 20 August 2012.

11. During the period under review, ECOWAS has remained actively engaged in the search for a solution to the crisis in Mali, through its Chairman, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, the Mediator and the Associate Mediator, Presidents Blaise Compaore and Goodluck Jonathan, as well as through the action of its Commission. Two Extraordinary Summits were held on 11 November 2012, in Abuja, and on 19 January 2013, in Abidjan. In all, between March 2012 and January 2013, ECOWAS has held ten summits devoted to the crisis in Mali, demonstrating the commitment of the countries of the region and their determination to expedite the search for a solution.

12. The Commission has maintained close contact with ECOWAS. I note, in particular, the close coordination that characterized the efforts that led to the adoption of the Strategic Concept, as well as resolution 2085 (2012). Similarly, the Commission maintained liaison with the core countries, which have well-established common mechanisms dedicated to the fight against terrorism and transnational crime. Through this interaction with all stakeholders, the objective of the Commission is to promote the most effective coordination and synergy to further AU's objectives in Mali and the Sahel, whose achievements requires a unity of purpose among all the African stakeholders.

III. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND RELATED INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

13. In the past weeks, the situation on the ground has witnessed a sudden escalation. Indeed, as the above-mentioned efforts were underway, rebel, terrorist and criminal armed groups, in an alliance bringing together Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Din (the Defenders of the Faith) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), launched a massive attack on the positions of the Malian army, with the clear objective to seize the area of Ségou, which controls access to the strategic town of Mopti, leading directly to Bamako. The risk of this alliance seizing the Malian capital was very real.

14. Meeting on the evening of 10 January 2013, the members of the Security Council, having expressed their grave concern over the situation, as well as the urgent need to counter the increasing terrorist threat in Mali, reiterated their call to Member States to provide assistance to the Malian Defense and Security Forces. They also called for a rapid deployment of AFISMA. On my part, in a communiqué issued on 11 January 2013, I strongly condemned the attacks launched by armed rebel, terrorist and criminal groups in northern Mali; expressed AU's solidarity with Mali; and made an appeal to all AU Member States to extend, in conformity to the relevant Council's decisions and UN Security Council resolutions, the necessary logistical, financial and capacity building support to the Malian Defense and Security Forces. Furthermore, I reiterated the support of the AU to the Malian transitional authorities, particularly President Dioncounda Traoré and Prime Minister Diango Cissoko. Finally, I have maintained close contact with ECOWAS, in particular its Chairman, President Alassane Dramane Ouattara. Similarly, I maintained contacts with international partners, including the French Foreign Minister, Laurent

Fabius. The Commissioner for Peace and Security has also had several interactions with stakeholders.

15. At the request of the Malian Government and within the framework of resolution 2085 (2012), France launched the “Serval” Operation to block the attempted progress of the rebel, terrorist and criminal armed groups. The cities of Konna, Djabally and Douentza have since been regained. At the same time, several ECOWAS Member States and other countries of the continent have either announced troop contributions to AFISMA and/or expedited their deployment (Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal), or, in the case of Mali’s immediate neighbors, taken steps to further enhance the monitoring of their borders, or even close them, to prevent any movement of arms or combatants in favor of the armed rebel, terrorist and criminal groups.

16. At its meeting of 14 January 2013, Council pronounced itself on the issue. Recalling that it had repeatedly drawn attention to the seriousness of the situation in the north of Mali and the need for sustained international support to Africa’s efforts, it acknowledged the assistance given by France at the request of the Malian authorities and within the framework of UN Security Council resolution 2085 (2012), and expressed its gratitude to all other AU partners providing support to Mali. Council encouraged the partners to pursue and intensify their efforts and support.

17. On 16 January 2013, and as part of their efforts to accelerate the deployment of AFISMA, the AU and ECOWAS Commissions held a consultative meeting in Addis Ababa to discuss ways and means of speeding up the implementation of resolution 2085 (2012). The meeting was co-chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, and the ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ms. Hussaini Suleiman Salamata. Among other things, it was agreed to convene in Addis Ababa, on 29 January 2013, the donors’ conference referred to in Council’s communiqué of 13 November 2012 and supported by resolution 2085 (2012), in order to mobilize both financial and logistical support for AFISMA and the Malian Defense and Security Forces.

18. On 19 January 2013, ECOWAS held an Extraordinary Summit in Abidjan to discuss the situation in Mali, against the background of the recent developments on the ground. The Summit provided an opportunity for the countries of the region to express their immense gratitude to France for having, in full respect of Malian sovereignty and international law, conducted operations that helped contain the advance of the terrorist groups and pave the way for the implementation of resolution 2085 (2012), as well as to renew their solidarity with Mali, notably by pledging to avail troops and speed up their deployment. The Summit stressed the need to mobilize adequate financial support from the international community, on the occasion of the donors’ conference to be held in Addis Ababa, on 29 January 2013. The ECOWAS Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their support for President Dioncounda Traoré and his Government, and urged them to fully exercise their powers, in particular by expediting the adoption of the Transition Roadmap.

19. Meanwhile, on 16 January 2013, an offshoot of AQIM, the “Signatories in blood”, attacked gas processing facilities in In Amenas, Algeria. This attack testifies to the ever-growing seriousness of terrorism as a trans-border criminal phenomenon and its changing manifestations, as it involved a large group of heavily armed terrorists from several different nationalities, including non-Africans, conducting a mass-hostage taking of Algerian and foreign

workers in hundreds. The rescue operation conducted by the Algerian armed forces helped save hundreds of human lives and limited the damages to the facilities. In a communiqué I issued, I strongly condemned this terrorist attack, conveyed AU's sympathy and condolences to the victims and their families, as well as to the Government of Algeria and the other countries whose nationals were affected. I reiterated the need for vigorous and sustained efforts to combat terrorism.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

20. With the attack perpetrated by the alliance of armed rebel, terrorist and criminal groups, the situation in northern Mali has entered a new phase, validating the concerns expressed by the AU early on, with regard to the impact of the proliferation of weapons emanating from the Libyan military depots, and the consequences of the attacks launched by the "National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad" (MNLA), in January 2012, which the AU Commission was the first to condemn, warning against the dangers they carried. The current situation threatens not only Mali and the region, but also the rest of the continent and the international community as a whole. Tackling it requires an ever greater commitment of the continent and stronger support by international partners.

21. From this point of view, the present meeting of Council must send a strong message of Africa's support and solidarity with Mali, a founding member of the AU whose commitment to Pan-Africanism and the causes of the continent has never wavered since the time of its independence. It is with this imperative in mind that I decided, immediately after taking office in mid-October 2012, to travel to Bamako to convey the continent's solidarity with Mali and its people. The donors' conference, to be held in Addis Ababa on 29 January 2013, offers a unique opportunity to concretely express this solidarity, regardless of the size of the contributions. In the meantime, I wish to reiterate my appreciation to all the Member States, from the region and beyond, that, after the terrorist attack, pledged troops and decided to speed up their deployments. I also thank Mali's immediate neighbors, particularly the core countries, for their efforts.

22. In the days and weeks ahead, the Commission, in conjunction with ECOWAS, will strive to hasten the deployment of AFISMA, as well as strengthen coordination and synergy between ECOWAS and the core countries. In all its efforts, the Commission remains mindful of the African character of the Mission and the special responsibility of the AU in this regard. I strongly encourage all AU Member States to contribute, in a spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility, to the Addis Ababa donors' conference of 29 January 2013. In so doing, they will also further Member States' collective efforts to revitalize pan-Africanism and promote Africa's renaissance. The Malian crisis is so serious that it requires continental action, and the principles at stake are essential to the survival of all African states.

23. I reiterate AU's gratitude to the UN, the European Union and all other multilateral and bilateral partners supporting the efforts of the continent. I urge them to persevere. In this regard, I reiterate my appeal to the Security Council to authorize the immediate establishment of a support package funded through UN assessed contributions. The AU's experience in Darfur and Somalia has clearly demonstrated that the type of mission envisioned in Mali cannot succeed without reliable, predictable and sustainable funding. The Security Council must assume its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in full.

24. I reiterate the AU's support to President Dioncounda Traoré and his Prime Minister Diango Cissoko, who are responsible for successfully carrying out the Transition. A clear message must be sent to the members of the former junta and other spoilers seeking to undermine the current efforts and the military chain of command, in pursuit of narrow interests. It is crucial that the Malian stakeholders reach a consensus on the major challenges at hand, in order to tackle the root causes of the crisis facing their country. It is equally important, as the prospects for the liberation of the northern part of the country increase, that Malians from all sides preserve national cohesion and refrain from any act of violence or retaliation against any section of the population. The Commission will continue to assist Mali, on the basis of the Strategic Concept, bearing in mind that the holistic approach articulated therein is more relevant than ever, as well as on the basis of all relevant Council decisions and the Solemn Declaration on the situation in Mali adopted by the 19th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union.

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