

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 8 April 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, the Niger — on behalf of the A3+1, namely, Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam in connection with the video-teleconference on “The situation in Mali” convened on Tuesday, 6 April 2021. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Mali.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372) by the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Council, which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus pandemic, this briefing and these statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mr. Dinh Quy **Dang**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations,
Jean-Pierre Lacroix**

[Original: English and French]

It is an honour to take the floor in the Security Council on the latest report (S/2021/299) of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali and to brief you on recent developments in the country.

As we meet here today, the latest major attack against our peacekeepers, which took place this past Friday, serves to remind us of the challenges facing Mali and the Sahel subregion alike. Nevertheless, this tragedy is an illustration of the bravery and determination of our peacekeepers in supporting the people of Mali.

At about 6.15 p.m. local time on Friday, 2 April, a group of heavily armed terrorists attacked the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) camp at Aguelhok, located in the Kidal region of northern Mali. Although 26 of our brave Blue Helmets from Chad were injured and four were killed in the attack, their determined and heroic defence of the camp made it possible to inflict a very serious setback on the assailants.

Allow me to express my most sincere condolences to the families of the soldiers of peace who perished and to the people of Chad, as well as to wish the injured a speedy recovery. I echo the words of the Secretary-General in his statement following the attack: it will not cause us to waver in our determination.

This latest attack took place against the backdrop of a deteriorating security situation in central and northern Mali. Since the beginning of this year, MINUSMA forces and Malian defence and security forces have suffered repeated attacks and significant losses, while several large cities are living under constant threat from armed groups.

As we mourn the deaths of our peacekeepers, I reiterate the Secretary-General's call to the stakeholders concerned to scale up and strengthen the international community's response to the issue of terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel region, including by ensuring the swift implementation of the recommendations of the 2020 Pau and 2021 N'Djamena summits.

In addition to the threat posed by terrorist groups, I remain concerned about ongoing destabilizing activities by militias operating along ethnic lines in central Mali. Despite the encouraging improvements in the security situation in some areas across the region as a result of local peace agreements supported by MINUSMA, I call on the transitional Government of Mali to devise a comprehensive approach to improve the security situation in parallel with efforts to protect civilians and restore State authority and basic social services. This approach would also include sustainable solutions to ensure militias and armed groups lay down their arms and join the dialogue process. This approach should also include a robust effort to ensure accountability and tackle impunity for actors accused of having committed violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Any sustainable improvement in the security situation in Mali is, in no small measure, predicated on the success of the current political transition. And while the transition remains fragile, over the past three months encouraging signs have been recorded.

As outlined in the report under consideration, seven months into a political transition scheduled to last 18 months, transition authorities have kick-started the

functioning of the main institutions of the transition. In February, the Government issued its agenda for the period ahead, and the transitional Parliament swiftly voted to approve it during its first session.

I am encouraged by the steps taken since then by the transitional authorities to implement their agenda of reforms. I call on all stakeholders concerned in Mali to join these efforts. It is crucial that the pace of these reforms be urgently accelerated, while ensuring that the largest number of actors join the process. In the weeks and months ahead, the success of the transition will depend on the commitment of the Malian stakeholders to ensure that the transition and the key reform processes underpinning it remain inclusive, transparent and credible. MINUSMA, including through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, will continue to support Malian stakeholders.

Among the Government's pressing priorities is the completion of a series of crucial political and institutional reforms. These include the territorial redistricting, the electoral reforms and the reform of the Constitution. I welcome the issuance six days ago, on 31 March, by President Bah N'Daou of a decree establishing the Comité d'orientation stratégique, in charge of political and institutional reforms. Under the authority of the Prime Minister, this committee of 50 members representing all major stakeholders in Mali — from political parties to civil society groups and traditional leaders — is tasked with defining the scope of the reforms to be enacted in the remaining months of the transition.

I remain convinced that, working together and building on the conclusions of previous discussions, such as the Inclusive National Dialogue held in 2019, Malian women and men can and must seize this opportunity to find common ground and practical solutions to be implemented in the shortest time frame possible.

With regard to preparations for elections at the end of the transition period, discussions over the past few weeks among transition authorities, political actors and civil society groups have yet to result in an agreement over which reforms should be enacted, including on the important issue of the management of the polls. As a result, an official electoral calendar has not been issued. It is expected that the outcome of the work of the Comité d'orientation stratégique will include a draft reform of the electoral code and an electoral calendar.

At this critical juncture, I encourage Malian political actors to work in a spirit of compromise and enact reforms aimed at creating an environment conducive to peaceful, inclusive, transparent and credible elections. These elections represent the litmus test for the current transition and a necessary step towards Mali's return to constitutional rule. Increasing participation, including among women and youth, and boosting the credibility of the polls will be key in avoiding that this landmark of the democratic process once again becomes the trigger of further political instability in Mali.

While the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali has remained slow, positive momentum and a new sense of trust among the Malian parties have emerged in recent weeks, and efforts to improve Malian's ownership of the Agreement have been undertaken. A meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee took place in Kayes, southern Mali, on 31 March, less than a month after the previous meeting had taken place in Kidal, northern Mali. This was the second such meeting to take place outside Bamako since the signing of the Agreement in 2015. Both gatherings are of major symbolic significance and are seen as positive and essential steps in improving the Agreement's ownership among Malian stakeholders, a key factor in its implementation.

I urge Malian parties to build on the momentum generated in recent weeks to accelerate the redeployment and effective use of the reconstituted units of the

army in the north, the operationalization of the Northern Development Zone and the establishment of the territorial police. Six months after representatives of the signatory movements joined a Malian Government, a first in the years since the signing of the Agreement, now is the time to translate the commitments made into concrete progress on the ground.

As Mali continues to face a host of political, security, human rights and humanitarian challenges, the support of the international community and of the Council remains of the utmost importance to ensure that national stakeholders live up to their commitments. In the words of the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, when he addressed you last October,

“The success of the political transition in Mali is within reach. The ball remains in the court of Malian women and men. (*S/PV.8765, p. 3*)

“The United Nations must also seize this opportunity to continue supporting and assisting throughout this important phase for a way out of the crisis in Mali”. (*ibid.*)

Annex II**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Dai Bing**

[Original: Chinese]

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We are confident that, under your leadership, the Security Council will successfully complete all its agenda items. I also wish to congratulate the United States delegation for the successful completion of its presidency in the month of March. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

At present, the overall situation in Mali is improving. The Malian Government has made positive progress in the transitional process in establishing transitional institutions, implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and preparing for the elections. At the same time, however, Mali still faces multiple challenges, such as terrorism, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and a humanitarian crisis. The international community should continue to focus on Mali and provide the necessary support. To that end, I wish to make the following observations.

First, the good momentum in the political process must be maintained. The Malian Government has formulated a transitional action plan, and its implementation is the main task for the next stage. As the Malian Government works to coordinate and advance preparations for the elections, positive efforts are also needed to promote development and improve people's livelihoods in a way that can bring more benefits to its people. The Agreement Monitoring Committee has met for the first time in northern Mali, which is of great significance. The signatories must consolidate the existing results, continue to develop mutual trust, achieve more results on issues such as the deployment of armed forces and the Northern Development Zone, properly handle the issue of reopening negotiations on the relevant provisions of the peace agreement and firmly advance the implementation of the agreement. China supports the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in continuing their positive and constructive role in the political process of Mali.

Secondly, comprehensive policies must be implemented in order to improve the security situation. Terrorist activities are rampant in central and northern Mali. With frequent attacks that have led to continued deterioration of the security situation on the ground, a comprehensive military, political, economic, judicial and social response must be adopted in accordance with the recommendations in the report (S/2021/299) of the Secretary-General. Actions to combat terrorist organizations must be accompanied by efforts to eliminate the root causes of terrorism and extremism in order to remove both the symptoms and root causes. There must be support to the Malian Government so that it can continue to actively participate in the counter-terrorism operations of the Group of Five for the Sahel. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) must focus on its core mandate and honestly follow the Malian-led and Malian-owned principle as it strengthens coordination and cooperation with regional organizations. MINUSMA must develop its road map based on the actual situation on the ground and make sure that its implementation is coordinated and consistent. Foreign counter-terrorism operations in Mali need to respect Mali's sovereignty, abide by international humanitarian law and protect the safety of Malian people.

Thirdly, it is imperative to organize an effective response to challenges such as COVID-19. The pandemic has started to rebound in Mali, which has caused

concerns. The international community should provide Mali with support to fight the disease, including ensuring timely and fair access to COVID-19 vaccines for those in need to contain the spread of the pandemic. With Mali's economic decline, about 800,000 people slipped back into poverty last year, with 3 million people in urgent need of emergency food assistance and a large number of people displaced. The international community must increase assistance to ease the difficulties of the Malian people.

Fourthly, the safety of peacekeepers must be effectively maintained. MINUSMA has suffered multiple attacks this year, during which 10 peacekeepers — from countries including Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Togo and Chad — were killed. More than 240 peacekeepers have sacrificed their lives since the founding of MINUSMA. China extends its highest respect to the countries concerned and to all the peacekeepers who have laid down their lives and expresses condolences to the families of all the victims. The safety of peacekeepers is an extremely urgent issue, and it is a responsibility of all parties. These attacks must be investigated, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. It is necessary to analyse the causes of the incidents and identify the weakest areas, so that practical and effective measures can be adopted to implement resolution 2518 (2020) and ensure the safety of all peacekeepers.

Finally, China wishes to thank Special Representative Annadif for his contributions to the peace and stability of Mali over the past five years. We welcome Mr. Wane's appointment as Special Representative and look forward to a greater role being played by MINUSMA in maintaining peace and stability in Mali.

Annex III**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. We welcome the appointment of Mr. El-Ghassim Wane to the position of Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mali and offer our full support to him and to the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Estonia is following very carefully the developments in the political transition in Mali. We take note of the latest progress, such as the adoption of the Government's action plan and road map for the transition period, as well as the creation of the strategic committee on political and institutional reforms. At the same time, we encourage the Malian authorities to fully honour the commitments that they have made for themselves and for the Malian people. We recognize that the reform agenda for the transition period is ambitious, and we call on the Malian authorities to identify and implement its most pressing priorities. It is of the utmost importance to take concrete, transparent and credible steps beginning now to make the elections in March 2022 a reality.

In the preparations for the holding of elections, we urge the Malian authorities to focus on working out a detailed and operational electoral calendar. I would like to stress the need for inclusivity in the electoral process. Full, equal and meaningful participation by women — as candidates, community organizers and voters — is of key importance. We call on all parties to comply with the 2015 gender quota law. Women as well as youth need to be given an opportunity and a safe space to make their voices heard and their ideas taken onboard. More attention needs to be given to building trust and consensus in society.

I would like to recognize the positive role and engagement of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in supporting the political transition in Mali. Regional organizations can have an important role and offer their support in the transition process.

The security situation in Mali remains extremely concerning. All attacks against the national and international security presence, such as last week's heinous attack against a MINUSMA camp in Kidal, must be condemned in the strongest terms. The deliberate targeting of civilians by terrorists and armed groups is simply unacceptable, and every effort needs to be made to alleviate the suffering of the people. Estonia will continue contributing to the fight against terrorism in Mali by participating in the international operations and training missions that are there to support the Malian authorities.

However, a military approach alone will not suffice. A long-term solution to the Malian conflict can come about only through political will and inclusive dialogue, as well as full ownership and commitment by all the parties. In this regard, the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali will continue to be an essential framework and basis for such a dialogue. We are encouraged by the show of goodwill during the two meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee that took place outside of the capital in February and March. It is positive that progress was made on increasing women's participation during those meetings. At the same time, we urge the parties to focus on achieving tangible progress in the implementation of the Agreement. More needs to be done for the redeployment and effective use of reconstituted army units, as well as in the area of re-establishing State presence and services in the north of Mali.

We remain very concerned about the continued negative trends in the human rights and the humanitarian situation. The recent steps taken by the Malian authorities to fight impunity for violations and abuses of international human rights law in central Mali are a step in the right direction. We urge the authorities to follow through with the relevant investigations and legal proceedings. Breaking the cycle of impunity and ensuring that all perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses, as well as violators of international humanitarian law, are brought to justice must be political and judicial priorities. The only way forward in achieving lasting peace is to focus on reconciliation and rebuilding trust in society.

The humanitarian situation in Mali continues to be a source of concern. The adverse effects of climate change as well as the spreading insecurity in Central Mali and the ongoing coronavirus disease pandemic continue to exacerbate the suffering of civilians, especially the most vulnerable groups in society. In this regard, we call on all the relevant parties to allow access to humanitarian aid and relief efforts.

Annex IV

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nathalie Broadhurst

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Mali, Mr. Issa Konfourou.

The Security Council condemned the terrorist attack on 2 April at Aguelhok against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which claimed the lives of four Chadian peacekeepers. I salute the bravery shown by the Chadian contingent in repelling this attack.

We are one year away from the elections, which should mark the end of the transition in Mali. As time progresses, it is essential that all Malian actors seize the opportunity that this period represents. First of all, I would like to reaffirm the political objectives of the coming months.

The implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali remains imperative. The holding of two sessions of the Agreement Follow-up Committee in Kidal and Kayes are positive steps. But commitments must now be translated into action. In particular, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process must be accelerated to allow the integration of combatants from the signatory groups into the national forces and the redeployment of the reconstituted army throughout the country. It is also a question of making progress on decentralization and development in the north of the country and of setting up the territorial police, as well as ensuring greater participation by women in the process. These specific objectives are achievable in the coming months.

Furthermore, we encourage the transitional authorities to accelerate preparations for the March 2022 elections. It is essential that the process be accompanied by an open and thorough dialogue with the entire political class and representatives of civil society. Strong participation by women and youth will be necessary.

It also seems important to us that the political reforms be carried out before the elections, while of course setting priorities to be achieved in this relatively short period of time. I am thinking in particular of the overhaul of the bodies in charge of elections and of progress on constitutional reform.

Beyond these political objectives, the N'Djamena summit of 15 and 16 February drew up a global road map for the coming months in the Sahel.

First of all, we must continue the fight against terrorism and support the countries of the Sahel so that they can manage this threat independently. France salutes all partners, in particular the European Union and its member States, who are contributing to supporting the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Joint Force. At the N'Djamena summit, the G-5 Sahel Heads of State, the African Union and the European Union and its member States called for increased and sustained United Nations support for the Joint Force to enable it to continue to gain operational strength. The support provided by MINUSMA via the tripartite mechanism is still necessary for the operations of the Joint Force. And today I am making an urgent appeal to the United Nations and the European Union to speed up the use of contractors. We regret that this provision has not yet been implemented, even though the Council called for its launch 10 months ago.

To be effective, those security efforts must also be accompanied by a genuine civilian surge, as agreed at the N'Djamena summit. This consists of a strong political

commitment by the Malian authorities to deploy public services in the remote areas of Mali. We hope that MINUSMA will fully play its role and accompany the redeployment of the defence forces, the security forces and all Government services. We also encourage close coordination between the Malian armed forces and MINUSMA.

Respect for the rule of law is also essential. France welcomes the measures that have already been implemented by the Malian authorities to put an end to human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law. We call on them to go even further in order to put an end to impunity.

Beyond these actions in terms of security and governance, we all know that stabilizing the region requires a substantial effort in terms of humanitarian aid and development. France welcomes the appointment of the United Nations Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye. We hope that his work will enable more effective implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. The French Development Agency has accelerated the implementation of its projects, with €350 million disbursed in 2020 in the G-5 Sahel countries. We also welcome Mark Lowcock's decision to set up a regional fund for Central and West Africa, which will focus in particular on the Sahel. France's contribution to that fund will amount to €1 million. This will come in addition to France's funding for United Nations humanitarian agencies in the Sahel, which amounted to almost €5 million in 2021.

Annex V

Statement by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations.

I would like to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing on the political and security situation in Mali and on the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). I would like to take this opportunity to also thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of MINUSMA, for his outstanding leadership over the past five years. I welcome the presence of His Excellency Ambassador Issa Konfourou of Mali in our midst.

At the outset, allow me to express our deepest condolences to the families of the deceased in the attack on the MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok, in the Kidal region, on 2 April. While strongly condemning the attack, we express our solidarity with the Government and the people of Chad, whose four peacekeepers lost their lives. We also wish a speedy recovery to those injured.

The security situation in Mali, particularly in central and northern Mali, remains a matter of concern. In the last three months, MINUSMA has lost 10 peacekeepers to attacks by terrorist groups in Mali. The latest attack, on the MINUSMA camp, reflects the gravity of the situation. But for the valiant efforts of the peacekeepers, the casualties could have been much greater. The Malian security forces have also lost several soldiers in the recent months to targeted attacks by militants in central and northern Mali. We strongly condemn attacks against peacekeepers and Malian security forces and express our solidarity with the Government of Mali and those troop-contributing countries that lost peacekeepers in these attacks.

The upsurge in violence by terrorist groups in Mali is of serious concern. Terrorist groups such as Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara are growing in strength, as evident from the increasing number of attacks. Given the spread of terrorist groups in the Sahel region, we reiterate the need for more robust support from the Security Council and from the international community to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

The Council also needs to be cognizant of the fact that MINUSMA has been seriously affected by attacks involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in recent years. Since 2018, MINUSMA has lost more than 20 peacekeepers to IED attacks. We hope that the Department of Peace Operations will continue taking measures to mitigate IED threats faced by the Mission by providing dedicated resources and upgrading the security infrastructure of camps. India has always advocated for more proactive measures to protect the protectors.

MINUSMA is playing an important role in stabilizing the security situation in Mali through its political and military support to the peace process, along with its confidence-building measures. We applaud the efforts of MINUSMA peacekeepers, who are functioning under complex and challenging circumstances.

There is an urgent need for a comprehensive approach to address the security challenges arising out of these increasing asymmetrical attacks. While the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali remains fundamental to peace and participatory governance in the northern region, the transitional authorities in Mali need to take urgent measures to redeploy and expand State administration, police and social services in both central and northern parts of the country.

In that context, we welcome the fifth meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, held in Kidal on 11 February, and compliment the Malian Government and other stakeholders for this initiative of significant value to the peace process.

The attack on MINUSMA should not deter stakeholders from continuing their engagement. We hope the signatory parties will continue to work closely to advance the peace process. The operationalization of the reconstituted battalion of the army deployed in Kidal and the transformation of the joint security commission into territorial police needs to be expedited. There has been positive progress in the redeployment of former combatants into the Malian Defence and Security Forces. These measures need to be continued in the coming months.

The political transition in Mali has witnessed forward movement. The Transitional National Council has approved the action plan. The six priority areas outlined in the action plan need legislative and institutional measures, particularly a uniform electoral code and an independent electoral body and the creation of a senate. We also take note of steps being taken towards holding a constitutional referendum and convening local and general elections. With less than one year left in the transition, it is important that efforts be oriented towards reforms that will facilitate timely elections and pave the way for an elected Government that can deal with long-term reforms.

The transitional Government must continue engaging the political parties on the transition process to ensure that the process is inclusive, particularly the full participation of women and youth. The dialogue with labour unions is another important step that will help address socioeconomic issues. We hope these measures will contribute positively to the process of redeploying State institutions in central and northern Mali.

We support the mediation role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) towards the restoration of constitutional order. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General should continue to work closely with ECOWAS and the AU in extending all possible assistance to the transitional Government during the transition period.

We have taken note of Secretary-General's road map on MINUSMA's mandate implementation and a phased transition plan. We welcome the evaluation of MINUSMA formed police units. We look forward to the implementation of the Integrated Performance Policy Framework to systematically assess all Mission components equally, not just formed police units.

What Mali needs today is the continuing support of the international community to overcome the multifaceted crisis. While India has been supporting Mali through development cooperation, more recently we facilitated the supply of 396,000 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility to help Mali fight the COVID19 pandemic.

I would like to reiterate India's commitment to supporting Mali to overcome the present political and security crisis.

Annex VI

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason

[Original: English and French]

First of all, I would like to thank the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his leadership during the past five years, as well as to congratulate the new Special Representative, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane. Likewise, I thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his very relevant briefing. I also warmly welcome the Permanent Representative of Mali, Mr. Issa Konfourou.

I express my sincerest condolences with regard to the Blue Helmets of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) who lost their lives in the recent attack. Ireland condemns any attack against peacekeepers in the strongest terms. I would also like to express my condolences for the members of the Malian armed forces killed recently, as well as all those who have lost their lives in Mali.

The transitional authorities showed great ambition by adopting the Government's action plan in February. That illustrates the political will to bring about change — a change that is desired and expected by the Malian people. In order to meet those expectations, political will and practicality will have to work together.

The first priority remains the return to constitutional order led by a democratic Government. There is less than a year of the transition period left. The holding of free, fair and open elections during that period remains key.

We encourage the Malian authorities to ensure that the political and institutional reform processes are fully transparent and inclusive. We call on the transitional Government to confirm the timeline for elections and to urgently establish an electoral body that is representative, inclusive and independent.

The representation of women on that body is crucial and will be a first step towards removing barriers to women's participation in the electoral process. Every effort should be made to facilitate the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, as provided for in the Transition Charter. Women should be encouraged to vote, and they should be supported as candidates and elected representatives of their communities.

We welcome the renewed commitment of the Malian parties to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The decentralization of meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee is welcome and laudable, as is the agreement to increase the number of women representatives in the Committee and subcommittees. We echo the urgent call by the women members of the Committee to address education as a prerequisite for lasting peace in Mali.

Critical priorities for the coming months include progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the deployment of the reconstituted army units, the establishment of the territorial police and the implementation of projects for the Northern Development Zone. We welcome the continued support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in advancing those important tasks.

As we have heard from many speakers this morning, ending impunity is integral to breaking the cycle of conflict and strengthening the essential social contract between the Malian people and the State. Impunity for human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by numerous actors, including the national security forces, must

end. Those responsible for such violations must be brought to justice without delay, and we welcome the progress made by the Malian authorities, including through the issuing of prosecution orders against alleged perpetrators of human rights violations.

We urge the transitional authorities, with the support of MINUSMA, to act on the report of the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali, beginning with the establishment of a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

We believe that it is important to recognize the essential role of MINUSMA in promoting and protecting human rights by monitoring, documenting and reporting on allegations of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. We see MINUSMA's work on human rights as critical to supporting efforts to promote accountability in Mali, including the work of the Human Rights and Protection Division of MINUSMA, which deserves our attention.

We know that the coronavirus disease, insecurity and the effects of climate change continue to exacerbate the suffering of Malians. We are deeply concerned about the increase in attacks against civilians, which underlines the necessity for the continued prioritization of the protection of civilians in MINUSMA's mandate. Attacks against humanitarian personnel and the deliberate targeting of United Nations peacekeepers are also of grave concern. We express our sincere condolences to the families of those who lost their lives, and we emphasize the need for the transitional Government to support MINUSMA in creating a secure environment for its own people and for humanitarian workers.

Finally, the Secretary-General's long-term road map on Mali is welcome. We support the phased approach. We recognize that the long-term aim of achieving a sustainable and peaceful transition, over which the people of Mali have ownership, should be met in a gradual manner, in line with the security conditions on the ground. Our focus must now be on ensuring that MINUSMA has the resources and the capacity to implement its mandate in this crucial phase.

Mali continues to face many challenges, but we know the political will to make deep and lasting changes exists. Ireland stands committed to supporting Mali throughout that process.

Annex VII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez**

[Original: Spanish]

I reiterate my delegation's support, Sir, for your successful presidency of the Security Council this month. I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his report on the situation in Mali. On behalf of my country, I express our sincere condolences for the personnel of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) who lost their lives in the course of their duties in the first few months, including in the recent attack in Kidal. I also welcome the representative of Mali to this meeting.

Mexico welcomes the adoption in February of the action plan submitted by Prime Minister Moctar Ouane, which, together with the road map for the implementation of the peace agreement, can lay the foundations for progress towards a democratic transition. Mexico believes that the Security Council should provide the necessary support for the implementation of the commitments made by the transitional Government. At the same time, we call on the Malian authorities to create the necessary spaces for the various political forces to actively participate in implementing that plan. Efforts to achieve a successful transition should be an opportunity for reconciliation.

We agree with the Secretary-General's report on MINUSMA's exit strategy (S/2021/300, annex), namely, that the success of the transition depends on the holding of free, fair and peaceful elections throughout the national territory within the established time frame. We therefore believe it essential that the Malian authorities and the National Transition Council give priority to adopting the legal framework and creating the institutions to organize the electoral processes in 2021 and 2022. It is clearly at this stage that the necessary legislative measures must be taken to ensure that progress is made towards the full, meaningful and equal participation of women and young people in the local and national elections.

Mexico views with great concern the further deterioration of the security situation in Mali, which has a direct impact on civilians, who are the main victims of the conflict. We therefore condemn all attacks against the civilian population and reiterate our call for such acts to be investigated and punished, regardless of who committed them.

We urge all parties to the conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. According to data from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, almost 6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and we urge that unrestricted access to such aid be guaranteed.

In addition, Mexico calls on the Government of Mali to redouble its efforts to implement its national action plan to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Such weapons continue to fuel the conflict in Mali and the Sahel region, causing an appalling number of victims. Greater cooperation with neighbouring countries is therefore necessary to combat illicit trafficking and to strengthen cooperation mechanisms.

My country welcomes the arrival in Mali, during the month of March, of almost 400,000 doses of coronavirus disease vaccines, within the framework of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility initiative. These vaccines, while insufficient in quantity, will undoubtedly contribute to reducing the health risks faced by the most vulnerable population.

Given the unfortunate spread of violence towards the south of the country and its intensification in the centre, we must insist on the importance of addressing the socioeconomic causes that fuel the conflict.

By showing us the persistent fragility of the situation in Mali, almost eight years after the deployment of MINUSMA, the reports of the Secretary-General and the organizations active in that country lead us to continue to reflect on the need for a renewed and comprehensive approach to achieving the stability to which the population aspires, with a multidimensional vision that addresses the socioeconomic roots of the conflicts in the Sahel region. In that regard, the outcomes of the summit of the Group of Five for the Sahel held in N'Djamena are a step in the right direction.

In the case of Mali, the activation of the Northern Development Zone with financing from the sustainable development fund is urgent. We believe that, in this process, it would be useful to have the support of the Peacebuilding Commission to achieve both the priorities and the objectives that the Malian actors have established.

Finally, we consider the support of regional and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, essential to bringing the efforts in Mali in line regional dynamics.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Minister Counsellor of the Niger to the United Nations, Niandou Aougi

[Original: English and French]

At the outset of my remarks, I would like, on behalf of the African members of the Security Council, namely, Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1), to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his presentation and to pay a vibrant tribute to Mr. Annadif Mahamat Saleh, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his efforts in creating the conditions for the return of peace in Mali, which, now 12 months from the end of the transition period, is at the crossroads of its long-awaited stabilization.

We congratulate Mr. El-Ghassim Wane on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). To carry out his new tasks successfully, Mr. Wane will need threefold support in the months to come: support from the population, support from the Malian authorities and, finally, support from the international community. With that in mind, allow me to touch upon the following key points.

First, on the political front, the A3+1 welcomes the efforts and the willingness shown by the transitional authorities to ease the political tension that preceded the events of August 2020. The recent meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee remains an achievement to be consolidated, as is the fight against impunity in the centre of the country.

With 12 months to go before the end of the transition, all Malian stakeholders need to listen to each other and agree on the priorities of the moment, particularly in terms of constitutional, institutional and electoral reforms, which are the foundations of democracy. The participation of women and youth must be encouraged. In this regard, we welcome the launch by the Government of consultations to identify citizens' expectations for the new constitution.

As for the international community and MINUSMA, we expect them to continue to play a constructive role, providing valuable political, logistical and financial support.

We call on the Government to continue to combat intercommunal violence by strengthening its actions to restore peaceful relations among communities and by effectively punishing those who interfere with the implementation of the peace agreement.

Secondly, with regard to the economy, it is also important to note that peace thrives on development. To this end, we call on Mali's development partners to resume the aid that has been suspended since the last coup d'état, to enable the country to better cope with the multiple and multifaceted crises that risk exacerbating the economic, social, health, humanitarian and security situation.

Mali is at crossroads, as I said earlier. The Peacebuilding Commission should at this point play a more prominent role in its stabilization. The implementation of direct impact and replicable projects at the local level will help consolidate the gains of stabilization.

Thirdly, on the security front, we welcome the progress achieved so far and encourage the effective return of the national armed forces and the Administration throughout the country. To achieve this, the redeployment and effective use of the

reconstituted army units in the north and the establishment of the territorial police are equally essential.

The rise of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as the proliferation of weapons, have a great impact on the security of Mali and the Sahel. In this regard, we remain deeply concerned about the presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries in Libya and look forward to discussing this issue further in the Security Council at the informal interactive dialogue scheduled for 20 April.

We reiterate that any death is one too many. The recent loss of life among MINUSMA personnel, civilians of the Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso and members of national, regional and international armed forces is a reminder that the context remains quite worrisome and that we are far from having reached the objectives that would allow us to consider withdrawing or reducing the size of MINUSMA.

We condemn in the strongest terms the latest attack against MINUSMA, which caused the death of four peacekeepers from the Chadian contingent and extend our deepest condolences to their families and the Government of Chad.

The A3+1 reiterates the importance of MINUSMA having the necessary capacities to fulfil its mandate and promote the safety and security of the United Nations peacekeepers, pursuant to resolution 2531 (2020). MINUSMA should be stronger and more robust, as the integrity of our territories continues to be significantly threatened by terrorist acts of rare cruelty.

We welcome the strengthening of the operational capabilities of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel through the deployment of the eighth infantry battalion of 1,200 additional Chadians in the central zone. In the long term, however, the operationalization of this new battalion will require the active and sustained mobilization of all partners present in the theatre, including the United Nations.

The A3+1 strongly reiterates that the next renewal of MINUSMA's mandate must have two major outcomes: first, the readjustment of MINUSMA's mandate in view of providing holistic support to the transition and, secondly, the withdrawal of the tasks of supporting the Joint Force in order for it to better focus on its strategic priorities.

To that effect, we have the intention, hopefully with the support of the entire Security Council, to request the Secretary-General to indicate to us by the end of May 2021, through a white note, the modalities and needs for the creation of a support office dedicated to the Joint Force, which we firmly believe would be more appropriate than the tripartite technical arrangement, which no longer corresponds to the current context. On the basis of the white note and the high sense of responsibility of all Council members, which we count on, we will introduce, in June, a consensual draft resolution creating the aforementioned support office.

In conclusion, the A3+1 reaffirms the importance of respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in the noble fight against the forces of evil that we are waging as national, regional and international armed forces.

Annex IX

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, Mona Juul

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. We appreciate Mali's consistent participation in these meetings. Let me also thank former Special Representative Annadif for his relentless efforts for peace and security in Mali, and we warmly welcome his successor, Mr. Wane.

I want to start by recognizing some of the good news since we last met on this topic (see S/2021/47): the arrival of the first coronavirus disease vaccines in Mali through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility initiative, the meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in Kidal and Kayes and, not least, the increasing participation of women in that Committee.

Yet, at the same time, we have continued to witness horrific attacks against civilians in and around Mali. And we have again seen loss of life among the brave personnel of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and its partners. We repeat our sympathy and condolences to Chad and all those affected by Friday's unacceptable attacks.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation also calls for increased action to ensure the protection of civilians as well as safe and unhindered humanitarian access. Recent reports about sexual and gender-based violence and violence against children, including recruitment to armed forces and groups, are deeply worrisome. We urge all parties to the conflict in Mali to implement the conclusions adopted by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in December.

Persistent security and governance challenges in Mali tell us at least four things.

First, MINUSMA is still needed. This is why we agree that it was wise to keep the road map focused on the transition for now. The useful description of a "phase 1 end state" will help the preparations for phase 2, to be done jointly with the United Nations country team. However, decisions on an exit are best left for later.

Secondly, military force alone can never solve problems in the long term. Lasting security depends on inclusive and sustainable development, good governance and respect for the rights of all Malians. They deserve to see the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali become a reality. This means the return of a civilian State that protects its population against violence and injustices and that provides basic services, such as education, along with full disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

Thirdly, the fight against impunity must be stepped up in Mali. All perpetrators must be held accountable for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. In this regard, we reiterate the call for follow-up on the recommendations of the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali.

And fourthly, local mediation and dialogue should be supported to mitigate and address conflicts and to reduce violence. Intercommunal mediation has demonstrated some results recently when it comes to addressing competition over natural resources, which is increasingly a cause of conflict owing to climate change. These results give reason for optimism. MINUSMA also has a role to play in this regard, alongside various actors on the ground. As we stated at the ministerial meeting of the Coalition for the Sahel, Norway stands ready to expand its engagement in peace and reconciliation work.

There is now less than a year left until peaceful and credible elections must be held in Mali. For the Malian people, there should be no doubt that the transition will

end democratically with political reforms and the restoration of constitutional order. We commend the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and neighbouring countries for their continued engagement. We also commend the Government's action plan approved in February. But this must be followed by a concrete timeline for the elections.

More than anything, the legacy of the transition Government will be determined by its ability to ensure inclusive democracy in Mali — not least through the full, equal and meaningful participation of women.

Annex X**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva**

[Original: Russian]

We would like to thank Under-Secretary General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing on the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the situation in that country.

The situation in Mali remains tense. Extremists continue to terrorize the local population, carrying out attacks on Malian troops, United Nations peacekeepers and other contingents of international armed forces. The Malian Armed Forces and MINUSMA's Blue Helmets suffered heavy losses in March. Unfortunately, intercommunal clashes in the centre of Mali continue unabated, despite all the mediation efforts. The clashes are provoked, in no small part, by the activity of the extremists. According to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/299), the previously calm southern regions of Mali are now at risk of destabilization.

We are deeply concerned over the situation in the border region of Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso — the Liptako-Gourma triangle. Insurgent attacks have been reported there recently on an almost daily basis. Several horrible terrorist attacks have taken place in the Niger. Russia conveys its condolences to the peoples and the Governments of the affected States whose citizens and peacekeepers are being killed by terrorists in the region. We expect the authorities of Mali and the neighbouring States to act even more resolutely to eradicate terrorism on their soil.

On the political front, we welcome the steps taken by the Government of Mali to establish transitional institutions. The National Transitional Council has commenced its work, and an action plan and a road map were adopted in order to restore the constitutional order and hold elections. We hope that all those important measures will be implemented in a timely manner within the 18-month transition period. Much will depend on whether the authorities and all the stakeholders concerned, including the Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014 and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, continue dialogue on these issues.

We appreciate the efforts of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States to address the situation in Mali. We are steadfast in our support for such steps.

The stabilization of the situation in the country is directly linked to the strict implementation of the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali by the transitional Government and the other political forces. We hope that constructive dialogue to that end with the signatory groups will continue. In that regard, we welcome the outcomes of the meetings that the Agreement Monitoring Committee held in February and March. The process of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and the deployment of new units in the country's north need to accelerate. This should happen alongside the Government reform and the creation of the conditions for socioeconomic recovery of the affected areas. The interests of all peoples of Mali, especially of its northern territories, must be taken into account.

The humanitarian situation in Mali is of great concern. The number of people in need of food assistance has significantly increased. The number of internally displaced persons has grown by more than half in the past year. These developments require an appropriate response by humanitarian agencies.

The situation in Mali is a key factor in regional security. We expect the Malian Armed Forces to continue to participate fully in operations of the Joint Force of

the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and that the decisions taken by West African countries in 2020 and 2021 to step up the fight against terrorism will be implemented. The proposal of the African Union Commission to deploy an African standby force in the Sahel merits thorough consideration.

Close cooperation and coordination between Bamako and MINUSMA remain imperative. Peacekeepers must continue to strictly implement their mandate in northern and central Mali. We welcome the assistance provided by MINUSMA to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. In general, we agree with the proposed modalities for the future work of the Blue Helmets in Mali set out in the Secretary-General's road map. The priorities are clearly to help restore constitutional order and implement the peace agreement. Therefore, the presence of MINUSMA remains key for further stabilization. At the same time, the main responsibility for protecting the civilians, regaining control over the northern territories, and addressing the urgent socioeconomic and other problems rests with the Malians themselves.

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif for his able leadership of MINUSMA during these challenging years. We wish him every success in his new role. We welcome the appointment of Mr. El-Ghassim Wane as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali. We reiterate our commitment to close interaction aimed at stabilizing the situation in Mali and in the region at large.

Annex XI

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Barbara Woodward

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing, and, although he is absent today, I would like to extend my thanks also to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the wider international community have benefited from his leadership and guidance. We wish him luck in his next role and welcome the appointment of Mr. El-Ghassim Wane.

I would like to focus my remarks on two priorities for action.

First, the issue of impunity for human rights abuses and violations remains a concern. The attack against the MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok, in the Kidal region, last Friday, which killed four Chadian peacekeepers and injured another twenty-four, underlines the complex and challenging circumstances in which MINUSMA operates. And, on behalf of the United Kingdom, I pay tribute to those peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice and given their lives for peace and security in Mali. I offer my deep condolences to their families and friends and to the Mission, and I wish those injured a speedy recovery.

In the light of this attack and the other significant attacks against peacekeepers earlier this year, I want also to reiterate what I said in January (see S/2021/47) — these crimes should not go unpunished and those who perpetrate them should be aware that they may constitute war crimes. While recent prosecution orders and investigations are positive steps, we urge the Malian authorities to ensure transparency and accountability for such acts. As the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/299) points out, justice is necessary in order to achieve sustainable peace and help build trust between the State and its people.

Secondly, the need for an inclusive political process based on consultations and dialogue will foster a sense of ownership among all parties to the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

The recent meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee of Kidal, as well as efforts by the transitional Government to initiate dialogue with political parties, were encouraging developments. However, with less than a year to go until the end of the transitional period, progress on the implementation of the Peace Agreement has been limited. We hope to see accelerated progress and concrete achievements, in line with the roadmap agreed in December.

Finally, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for sharing the roadmap for MINUSMA's transition. It contains some important guiding principles, including the need for Government-led reform. As we prepare for MINUSMA's mandate renewal in June, we will draw on this roadmap and from the experience of our own deployment to MINUSMA, to understand how the Mission can best support the Malian Government to assume increasing responsibility for the security tasks currently carried out by the Mission.

The United Kingdom remains committed to supporting MINUSMA's core objectives. We are contributing to stabilization efforts that will help reduce violent conflict. We are supporting projects aimed at increasing the meaningful participation of women, both in the peace process and in wider conflict-resolution mechanisms. We are providing international humanitarian law training to Malian forces and supporting engagement with communities by the Joint Force of the Group

of Five for the Sahel. We are helping protect civilians through our humanitarian aid and by working through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to strengthen civilian military coordination. We will continue working closely with our Malian and international partners to coordinate efforts.

By working together and integrating our defence, development and diplomatic efforts, we stand the best chance of delivering our shared vision of long-term peace and stability in Mali and the region.

Annex XII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield

Let me start by thanking you, Sir, for your kind words and to wish you the best of luck during your month's presidency of the Council.

Let me thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing today. And I also want to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif for his service. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wane. We look forward to his arrival at the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and we wish him great success.

Today, I would like to discuss three aspects of MINUSMA and the situation in Mali: violence against people and peacekeepers; violations and abuses of human rights; and the need for free and fair elections on schedule.

First, the United States extends its deepest sympathies to the victims of terrorism in Mali and their families, including the MINUSMA peacekeepers killed and injured in recent attacks.

Each time we convene the Council to discuss the situation in Mali, it seems that national or international security forces are reeling from a deadly attack. Just as in January, today we meet after a brazen and devastating attack on a MINUSMA base, in which gunmen killed four Chadian peacekeepers and injured dozens more. On that very same day, gunmen attacked a Malian military base, killing and injuring soldiers.

We condemn such violence in the strongest terms possible and commend the bravery and dedication of our peacekeepers. The safety and security of peacekeepers is a priority for the United States, and we will continue to take concrete action to strengthen peacekeeper safety. That includes implementing the Action Plan to Improve the Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, and providing training and equipment, through the United States Global Peace Operations Initiative, to troop- and police-contributing partners.

Secondly, Malian authorities and regional security actors must end human rights violations and abuses. That especially includes ending all gender-based violence. We are encouraged to see additional steps taken by Malian authorities to prosecute those responsible for such crimes.

Thorough investigations and accountability for wrongdoing are necessary to increase trust in Government. And that means looking into the allegations against the Malian defence and security forces, Government-aligned armed groups, and regional security actors such as the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. Unjustifiable killings and other abuses by security forces will only further destabilize the Sahel and exacerbate people's mistrust of their Government.

Finally, we need to make sure free and fair elections happen on time.

We commend Mali's National Transition Council's adoption of the transitional Government's ambitious action plan. The dissolution of the military junta in January was an important step toward a peaceful and democratic transition. Now the top priority must be organizing and holding free and fair elections by the end of the transition period. These must be administered by competent and impartial election authorities using transparent processes. So, we strongly encourage Malian authorities to issue a finalized timeline confirming dates for the electoral process and to fully use MINUSMA's election support capacities.

The transitional Government must also make a renewed effort to make tangible and significant progress in implementing the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We echo the Secretary-General's encouragement that the signatory parties remain within the agreed framework. Reopening the accord would impede implementation. Let me repeat that — reopening the accord would impede implementation. February's meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, which was held in northern Mali for the first time ever, is a symbol of increased attention in advancing the implementation of the Algiers accord.

We are particularly heartened to see women's increased participation in the peace process, and we call for their full, effective and meaningful participation going forward. Women should fill seats at every table and at every level. If solutions are being discussed, and decisions are being made, women should be there.

As the largest humanitarian donor to the Sahel region, the United States remains a steadfast partner to the Malian people. We recently announced more than \$80 million in humanitarian assistance to the region. This aid will provide shelter, clean drinking water, emergency food assistance and hygiene services for refugees, internally displaced people and vulnerable host communities.

But what is needed is peace and stability. We look forward to Mali moving towards a stable transition and sustainable reform. It is a future the people of Mali deserve.

Annex XIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy

As this is the first open meeting of the Council this month, we would like to congratulate Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and her team at the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations on the success of their presidency of the Security Council in March 2021. Her able leadership in her very first month at the United Nations and her team's tireless efforts made significant contributions to the work of the Security Council in March 2021.

I wish to thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his dedicated contributions to the work of MINUSMA, as well as to peace and security in Mali.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. El-Ghassim Wane and wish him every success in his new position as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA.

We also would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for his comprehensive briefing.

We welcome Ambassador Issa Konfourou, the Permanent Representative of Mali, to this meeting.

We take note of the efforts that the transitional Government and concerned parties have made so far in Mali. With the Government's recent release of the action plan, it is expected that the elections will take place as planned. The outcome of the ministerial meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali contributed to the positive momentum for signatory parties to move ahead in the peace process in Mali.

Although gains have been made, progress in the political process is still modest. Greater effort is required in implementing the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

In this context, we stress the need for the transitional Government and concerned parties to enhance trust, resolve differences and work together in a spirit of reconciliation. The international community should continue to provide assistance to and support Mali in this matter. Moreover, the meaningful participation of women in the political process should be further ensured and promoted.

For the past six months, the region and Mali itself have not witnessed any significant security improvement. Terrorism, extremism, violence and intercommunal conflicts have continued to constitute grave risks to peace and security in Mali. Persistent attacks due to those factors, as mentioned above, have not decreased in the northern and central regions.

We join other Member States in condemning the recent attacks against civilians, security forces and United Nations peacekeepers. We echo the Secretary-General's call on authorities in Mali to spare no effort in identifying perpetrators of the heinous attack against MINUSMA on 2 April, which left four peacekeepers dead and 19 others injured. We also reiterate our call for the cessation of hostilities and further efforts to help Mali overcome its challenges at this difficult time.

MINUSMA has been doing great work in Mali since 2015. We commend MINUSMA's unwavering efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in Mali. With its support, the transitional Government has made certain progress in terms of

securing its presence in the northern and central regions. MINUSMA has provided significant logistical support to the fighting against terrorists by the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

However, MINUSMA is deployed in a complex and dangerous environment. The increasing attacks and the loss of peacekeepers' lives in recent months have required further measures to ensure the safety of peacekeepers. We must make sure that MINUSMA has adequate equipment and resources to carry out its mandate while defending itself.

We are concerned about the dire situation in the country. Sexual violence and child recruitment and abuse have remained severe challenges. The coronavirus-disease pandemic, among other things, has added a layer of complexity to the humanitarian situation in Mali. Those factors have not only made the protection of civilians more difficult but also caused food insecurity and malnutrition to increase and massive population movements to surge.

Against this backdrop, it is imperative that all parties fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and protect civilians, especially women and children. We also call for further support from the international community to help Mali tackle its humanitarian challenges.

Before concluding, we would like to reiterate our support for the unity, independence, self-reliance and territorial integrity of Mali. We commend the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the international community for assisting Mali in implementing the transition roadmap and promoting peace and security.

Annex XIV

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations, Issa Konfourou

[Original: French]

At the outset, I wish to express the warm congratulations of the delegation of Mali to you, Sir, upon the accession of your country, Viet Nam, to the presidency of the Security Council.

It is always a pleasurable duty for me to reiterate the profound gratitude of the President of the Transition, the people and the Government of Mali to the Security Council, Secretary-General António Guterres, troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and all Mali's partners for their immeasurable efforts towards peace and stability in Mali and the Sahel.

The delegation of Mali takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/299) and thanks Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, for his briefing. I paid close attention to his urgent observations as well as his apt recommendations. I should like to assure him of the determination of the transition and the other Malian parties when it comes to the diligent implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which emerged from the Algiers process.

That determination on the part of the Malian authorities is reaffirmed in the transitional Government's action plan, adopted almost unanimously by the National Transition Council. It notably includes stepping up political and institutional reforms. In that regard, I am happy to inform you that the President of the Transition created, by a decree of 31 March 2021, the strategic orientation committee on political and institutional reforms, which is tasked with supporting the Prime Minister in carrying out those reforms. The committee is made up of 50 personalities from the political class, academia, civil society, the private sector, unions and traditional and religious legitimacy.

The goal is also to expedite the review, ownership and implementation of the agreement; accelerate the process of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants in the northern and central parts of the country; proceed with the effective dissolution of all self-defence militias; and redeploy the defence and security forces nationwide.

We in Mali are aware that while the challenges to be met are certainly numerous, the Government has chosen to carry out urgent reforms that are essential to the holding of free and transparent elections, organized in an inclusive process.

In that context, it is important to note that the Prime Minister met with Malian political leaders on 10 February in order to agree, within the framework of a formal political dialogue, on the reform process to be carried out.

I can assure you that that positive dynamic will continue with the involvement of all the active forces of the nation in order to reach a consensus around the timetable for future electoral deadlines as well as the organization of referendum operations and general elections, which will mark the end of the transition.

The holding of the fifth high-level meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in Kidal on 11 February was also of major significance. Beyond the symbolism represented by the Malian flag flying again in Kidal, that delocalized meeting of the Committee is an additional sign of the gradual return of trust among the Malian parties. The second delocalized session of the Committee was held in Kayes on 29 March in order to ensure better national ownership of the Agreement.

Those two delocalized Committee meetings allowed the Malian parties to engage in order to initiate, in the short term, priority actions concerning, in particular, the resumption of consultations at the decision-making level on defence and security issues, which were begun in February; the completion and closure of an accelerated DDR process, in particular the deployment of the third Operational Coordination Mechanism company in Kidal and the operationalization of the reconstituted army battalion already deployed in Kidal, Timbuktu, Gao and Ménaka, as well as the consensual launch of new phases of the DDR process. In that context, the Malian parties will continue to deploy the necessary efforts for the integration of the 1,687 remaining ex-combatants into the Malian Defence and Security Forces in order to reach a total of 3,000 combatants.

Regarding the participation of women in the peace process, I am pleased to indicate here that the Government and the other signatory parties are committed to significantly increasing the number of women in the Agreement Monitoring Committee, which will go from 9 to 12 people. In the same vein, women's representatives will participate in the four subcommittees of the sustainable development fund.

The parties also agreed to adopt the text on the establishment of the territorial police; the return of basic social and administrative services; and the handling of organizational issues in relation to the sustainable development fund, with a view to launching the pilot projects that were identified.

The situation in the central part of the country remains a major concern of the Government, which, with the support of MINUSMA, within the framework of the implementation of the adaptation plan, in particular the protection of the civilian population and the provision of humanitarian aid, continues to promote dialogue between communities with the involvement of the relevant actors, including traditional and religious leaders.

We are pleased to note today that that dynamic made it possible to lift, a few days ago, the blockade that had imposed for several months on the town of Farabougou, in the Ségou region.

On the issue of human rights, as mentioned in the report (S/2021/299), the Malian Government will continue to take all measures necessary to ensure that all documented cases of violations or abuses are investigated and brought to justice, including those allegedly attributable to the Malian military.

I wish to indicate here that the hearings held by the Court of Appeals and the military court of the Mopti region resulted in the convictions of people involved in intercommunal violence and of Malian soldiers in connection with violations committed in the context of counter-terrorism operations.

Concerning the humanitarian situation, which was made even more complex by the coronavirus disease pandemic, it should be noted that the Government of Mali has undertaken a number of efforts in crisis-affected areas. I would like to highlight in particular the visits carried out by the Prime Minister and Ministers to camps for displaced persons and the distribution of food to the populations affected.

With respect to the regional dimension, the recent terrorist attacks against the Chadian Blue Helmets in Tessalit, civilian populations in the Niger and the Malian Armed Forces in the tri-border area are reminders of the urgent need to strengthen the coordination of our joint actions in the fight against terrorism.

In that vein, Mali welcomes the deployment of the Chadian unit in the tri-border area, within the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force. However, given the immensity of the challenges on the ground, we reiterate our appeal to the Security

Council for a robust and adequate mandate, that is to say, a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the predictable and sustainable funding of the Joint Force, including through the United Nations.

I wish to end by reiterating the gratitude of the people and the Government of Mali to the United Nations and all our bilateral and multilateral partners for the tremendous sacrifices made for the sake of a final and lasting settlement of the Malian crisis. I pay tribute to the memory of all fallen civilian and military victims in Mali, foreigners and Malians both. Here I commend in particular the brave Chadian soldiers of MINUSMA for their courage and responsiveness during the recent terrorist attack on their camp in Aguelhok. I commend also the outstanding work done by the women and men of MINUSMA and the French Barkhane force in the process of the stabilization of Mali and the Sahel.

Finally, allow me to congratulate Mr. El-Ghassim Wane on his appointment to the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mali and Head of MINUSMA and to assure him of the full cooperation of my authorities. I also reiterate the gratitude of the Government and the people of Mali to Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif for the outstanding work he did during his five years as Head of MINUSMA. I wish them every success in their respective functions.
