



Security Council

Distr. General
9 April 2020

Original : English

Letter dated 9 April 2020 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. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger (on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council - the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia - as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), 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 convened on Tuesday, 7 April 2020. A statement was also delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali**

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to address the Council remotely, at a time when the whole world is facing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, to present the Secretary-General's report on Mali (S/2020/223) and to commend the technical performance that enables us to have this meeting.

Mali is not an exception to the pandemic. As of today, the country has recorded 46 positive cases, including one in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and five deaths. This has led MINUSMA and the country team to develop a contingency plan with different scenarios that allows many of us to continue to work from our respective residences and some others, for special reasons and on a voluntary basis, to return to their countries of usual residence while working remotely.

As members can see, despite these exceptional conditions MINUSMA is continuing to fulfil the mission entrusted to it by the Council in accordance with resolution 2480 (2019), which assigns MINUSMA two priorities, namely, the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and supporting the political framework for the management of the crisis in the centre, including the protection of civilians, the reduction of intercommunal violence, the strengthening of the presence of the State and the return of basic social services.

As part of the implementation of the Agreement and as a result of the impetus provided by the holding of the inclusive national dialogue, I am pleased to report the following.

The redeployment of the first reconstituted units of the Malian defence and security forces in the north, notably in Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal and Ménaka, has become a reality, with more than 1,000 elements deployed since February 2020. The Prime Minister's visit to the northern regions, notably to Kidal, Tessalit and Aguelhok, is a demonstration of trust-building among the signatory parties to the Agreement. The Agreement Monitoring Committee has resumed its activities, unlike the inter-Malian framework, whose activities are slowing down. A high-level workshop on the inclusion of women was held and enjoyed strong participation, and the first round of the legislative elections was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere despite the kidnapping of the leader of the opposition, Soumaïla Cissé, three days before election day. At the national level, the 30 per cent quota for women has been respected.

With regard to the centre, as a second strategic priority of the United Nations, MINUSMA continues to implement its adaptation plan. A total of 19 additional civilian staff have already been redeployed to Mopti. In addition, as part of MINUSMA's efforts to respond to early warnings, a hotline has been established in Mopti to serve the civilian population, and the Force has continued Operation Buffalo to better protect civilians and established temporary operating bases around sensitive localities.

With the support of MINUSMA, the Malian authorities have continued to conduct dialogue and reconciliation initiatives. The consultation framework of the Permanent Secretariat of the Cadre politique de gestion de la crise au centre du Mali held a series

of meetings in Mopti with local authorities, civil society and representatives of the Dogon and the Fulani from Bandiagara, Bankass, Douentza and Koro.

The Prime Minister's visit sent a strong signal by ordering the dismantling of checkpoints illegally installed by militias along the main Mopti-Bankass road.

It is to be hoped that concrete actions to fight impunity will be taken, as the number of displaced persons continues to increase, reaching 218,000 people in March 2020, compared with 199,385 in November 2019.

In terms of regional security cooperation, MINUSMA continues to provide logistical support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. In that context, I am pleased to inform the Council that construction work on the Joint Force headquarters in Bamako has started.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the exemplary cooperation that has been established between the United Nations system in Mali and the Government in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 19 March, commercial flights to Mali have been suspended, group gatherings have been prohibited and a curfew has been introduced from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. However, MINUSMA and the country team continue to fulfil their mandates while complying with Government decisions.

Thus, by decision of the Secretary-General, the rotation of uniformed contingents is suspended until 30 June 2020. However, exceptions may be envisaged for the implementation of the mandate, with authorizations on a case-by-case basis and respecting isolation periods and other guidelines to prevent the spread of the virus. Staff with medical conditions or wishing to join their families have been given the opportunity to do so using special flights requested by some embassies and authorized by the Government.

This is a brief account of the evolution of the situation in Mali. As members can see, we face many challenges, including the safety and well-being of the whole United Nations family in Mali, but also have real hopes given the Malian people's capacity for resilience.

Annex II**Statement by Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations**

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to thank China for its work in March.

I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif for his briefing and for his leadership of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We pay tribute to his commitment and to all MINUSMA staff for their unwavering efforts in support of peace and stability in Mali.

Again, far too many victims have suffered violence, injury or even death since our most recent meeting in January (see S/PV.8703), and I would like to acknowledge their suffering.

The implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali has witnessed some positive steps in the past three months. The deployment of elements of the reconstituted army in Kidal and other towns in northern Mali is very encouraging. The same is true of the peaceful visit of the Prime Minister there to witness that new reality. The long-overdue workshop on improving the participation of women in the peace process is a first step in the right direction, in line with resolution 2480 (2019).

I would like to stress and express my gratitude for the indispensable role that the Mission has played in making all three developments possible; it is probably safe to say that without MINUSMA, this positive evolution might not have happened.

Intercommunal tensions in the centre remain of utmost concern. Whereas the situation has certainly improved from a year ago thanks to the efforts of the Government and MINUSMA, regular violence against civilians persists.

We note with concern the increase in the number of improvised explosive device (IED) attacks against the Malian security forces and international peacekeepers. We welcome the counter-IED training already provided by MINUSMA to the national security forces, in cooperation with the European Union. We support additional efforts in this regard.

We commend the recent military operations against terrorists in Liptako-Gourma. That fight is an integral aspect of the various efforts, international and national, to stabilize Mali and the region. However, the overall situation continues to be very fragile, and Mali remains a country that is struggling to emerge from crisis.

Belgium is convinced that the way forward should include consolidating Mali's democracy by strengthening the legitimacy of the State and providing public services while strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights. Impunity needs to be effectively tackled by holding trials in order to fight corruption and criminal abuses, including by security forces.

The Mission's adaptation plan is crucial, and my country has already expressed its political support therefor. Belgium is currently assessing if and how it can contribute.

Finally, I would like to express my encouragement to Mali and to MINUSMA to continue their efforts as safely as possible in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

While this situation will inevitably complicate the achievement of meaningful progress in the short term, it could also be an opportunity to build the large front needed to pass the necessary reforms and curb insecurity. Fighting the coronavirus is of course a top priority for all of us, but that certainly does not mean that the implementation of the peace agreement and the consolidation of Malian democracy should be put on hold.

Annex III

Statement by Mr. Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) Mahamat Saleh Annadif for his comprehensive, in-depth briefing on the situation in Mali and the work of MINUSMA, and I welcome the participation of Mr. Tiébilé Dramé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, in this meeting.

I am pleased to see the positive developments in the overall situation in Mali, including in the political, security and economic dimensions, which are moving in the right direction. Regarding our efforts in connection with the next step, I would like to make the following three points.

First, it is hoped that the positive progress made in political dialogues, especially with respect to the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, can be translated into more concrete outcomes. The relevant parties in Mali need to step up dialogue and cooperation and to invest more energy into consolidating the progress and made and continuing to implement the Peace Agreement.

Secondly, a holistic and integrated approach is necessary to bring about long-term stability in Mali. While we see progress in many areas, challenges remain. In addition to deploying political and security efforts, the international community must support the Malian Government in achieving sustainable development and improving the livelihoods of its people.

Thirdly, close attention should be paid to the security situation in northern and central Mali, in particular as concerns the threat of terrorism. The international community should enhance coordination and cooperation and provide greater support for the Malian Government so as to build its capacity to combat terrorism, better protect its people and restore national peace and stability.

MINUSMA has played an important role in the peace process in Mali. China will continue to support the work of the Mission, and we encourage the United Nations to provide it with additional resources and support in order to build its capacity.

China is following closely the situation in Mali with respect to the coronavirus disease and has been providing assistance to the best of our capacity. In March, China organized a video conference with more than 20 African countries, including Mali, to share best experiences. On 27 March, the first batch of 100,000 masks, 1,000 gowns and face shields, and 20,000 testing kits arrived in Mali. We will join hands with the international community to continue providing the necessary support to the Malian Government.

Annex IV**Statement by Mr. José Singer Weisinger, Special Envoy of the Dominican Republic to the Security Council**

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the presence of Minister Dramé. We would like to express our condolences for the deaths of the 25 members of the Malian security forces.

All of us going through the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic – one of the greatest threats to humankind ever recorded, having exceeded the fateful number of 1.2 million people infected and more than 70,000 deaths worldwide – must join in the demand for a ceasefire in all conflicts and appeal to everyone to work together to overcome an unprecedented crisis that affects us all equally.

I want to express our deep gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for joining us today via video-teleconference, a modality to which we have all had to resort, and hope that his leadership skills will assist him in successfully tackling this new challenge.

Although our immediate attention has been focused on COVID-19, the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/223) gives us reasons for optimism, specifically in terms of the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, as well as Government actions taken to address the situation in the centre of the country. In this regard, we are encouraged by progress made in the political arena, with the conclusion of the inclusive national dialogue and the dialogue's contributions, which have resulted in a more positive dynamic in the implementation of the Agreement, including on such critical matters as the holding of legislative elections, a constitutional referendum, the redeployment of the reconstituted armed forces and State administration throughout the country.

We also consider actions and trends contributing to and highlighting the essential role of women at all levels of society to be positive steps forward. In particular, we commend the holding of a high-level workshop on the participation of women in the decision-making bodies of the peace process and the broader political system, and we refer to the number of women candidates in the legislative elections, 426 out of a total of 1,417. We would add that that number could be higher.

The deployment of the first reconstituted units of the Malian armed forces to Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, with essential support from MINUSMA, is great news. MINUSMA's adaptation plan, which has allowed for the supply of critical elements, must be maintained to provide needed security for citizens and representatives of the State and to contribute to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Despite this positive news, communal violence continues at alarming levels, requiring the Government to intensify its actions aimed at restoring public order and security and at reducing the current vacuum that has allowed for the creation of groups responsible for such atrocities as the recent massacre in Ogossagou and for the usurpation by these groups of the inherent State functions with little or no accountability.

Finally, we urge the continued strengthening of regional and international cooperation, particularly within the framework of the Group of Five for the Sahel, for the fight against terrorism, which has not stopped claiming the lives of hundreds of

members of the security forces, keeping in mind the various interconnected matters that stand in the way of Mali's long-awaited return to peace and security.

Annex V**Statement by Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations**

Allow me to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mahamat Saleh Annadif for his informative briefing and express Estonia's continued support for the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and for the work of the Special Representative. I would also like to welcome the participation of the Foreign Minister of Mali in today's meeting.

While there have been some encouraging developments in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali since the Security Council's last discussion of the topic (see S/PV.8703), in January, we remain extremely concerned about the deteriorating security situation in the country. Moreover, the growing global pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which has also reached Mali, threatens to impose further strain on the already fragile health-care, governance and security systems. Estonia wholeheartedly supports the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire with a view to combating the coronavirus disease pandemic and helping to save lives.

Even though the fear of COVID-19 played its part in the relatively low voter turnout in the first round of the legislative elections on 29 March, it is the overall security situation that continues to affect the voters the most. The growing number of violent attacks against both civilians and military outposts in the centre and north of Mali continues to be of serious concern. Attacks, such as the attack on a military base in the northern town of Bamba on Monday, 6 April, which left at least 25 Malian soldiers dead, must be condemned in the strongest terms. Mali's effective State participation in and full ownership of counter-terrorist efforts is of key importance; that is also the case for the country's neighbouring States. Estonia fully supports the efforts of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and continues to contribute to Operation Barkhane and the Takuba task force.

We are encouraged by the positive steps taken in the implementation of the Malian peace agreement, especially the redeployment of the reconstituted units of the Mali armed forces to the north of the country and the resumption of the meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee. However, further steps need to be taken in the political process, including concrete steps in favour of increasing the full, effective and meaningful participation of women and youth. We note positively that, on 22 and 23 January, the Government held a high-level workshop on the participation of women in the decision-making process. We encourage all participants to take steps to implement the recommendations made in the workshop.

It is important to address the root causes of the conflict and engage the local communities through a comprehensive approach, an essential aspect of which is addressing the grave violations and abuses of human rights and holding all perpetrators of such crimes accountable, regardless of their status. Allowing the culture of impunity to thrive will only breed more violence.

Annex VI

Statement by Mr. Nicolas de Rivière, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I would like to emphasize four points.

First, allow me to highlight the dynamic created by the Pau summit, which reaffirmed the determination of France and the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to fight terrorism and re-establish peace, security and development in the region.

We recognize that it is necessary to improve security, but there must also be better governance and development if we are to enable national authorities' sustainable ownership of these processes and improve people's living conditions. We have therefore established a coalition for the Sahel with a view to better integrating the fight against terrorism, the strengthening of national capacities, support for the return of State authority, and humanitarian and development programmes.

Secondly, against this backdrop, France welcomes the recent and positive steps taken to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, including the start of the deployment of the reconstituted army in Kidal and other towns, the visit of the Prime Minister to the north of the country, and progress in women's participation in the peace process. I commend the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for its work, which was instrumental in bringing about these achievements.

Much work remains to be done, however, and France encourages the Malian parties to accelerate the implementation of the peace agreement, in particular through necessary progress in institutional reforms and the completion of the deployment of the reconstituted army on the basis of agreed criteria.

The first round of the legislative elections, held on 29 March, was an important outcome of the national inclusive dialogue. Unfortunately, it was marked by an atmosphere of insecurity and by concerns about the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We wish to express concern at the kidnapping of opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé and call for his swift release.

Thirdly, the security situation in Mali remains worrying. Terrorist groups, particularly those affiliated with Da'esh or Al-Qaida, have proven their capacity to adjust. We condemn the 6 April attack against the Malian army in Bamba.

Nevertheless, we see reasons for hope. Following the Pau summit, France and its G-5 Sahel partners have inaugurated joint structures and stepped up their operations. The results are evident. Dozens of terrorists have been neutralized since January, and in March the G-5 Sahel Joint Force conducted an operation unprecedented in scale in the three-border zone. We reiterate our call for greater support for the Joint Force.

Another positive development is the launch of the Takuba task force to support the Malian army, together with the task force's endorsement by 11 European countries. France thanks Security Council members Belgium and Estonia, which are among those countries that have pledged troops.

Finally, I would like to address the humanitarian and human rights situation in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. France is concerned about the spread of COVID-19 in Mali. We welcome the efforts of United Nations agencies and their partners; these efforts need to be supported. Ensuring safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need is also key.

In Central Mali, the human rights situation remains worrying. Yet again, in February, an atrocious massacre occurred in Ogossagou. We acknowledge the efforts of the Government of Mali, but more needs to be done. Those responsible must be arrested and prosecuted. To effectively protect the people, militias must be disarmed and the Malian security forces deployed.

We reiterate our support for MINUSMA's adaptation plan, which has the potential to improve the effectiveness of the Mission, including for the protection of civilians. Its success will depend on the allocation of appropriate resources and on the capacity to generate new forces. We call on troop-contributing countries to respond to the Secretariat's requests in this regard.

Annex VII

Statement by Mr. Jürgen Schulz, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

With regard to the political process and benchmarks in Mali, we are pleased that the democratic process in the country is making headway. The first round of parliamentary elections was an important step. However, we must note that a negative shadow was cast over the first round by low voter turnout, the closing of many polling stations, particularly in the centre of the country, threats against voters, the destruction of election materials and the kidnapping of opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé.

We welcome the tangible steps forward that have been taken in the implementation of the peace process and are pleased that some prior blockages have been overcome. The redeployment of the first units of the reconstituted Malian armed forces to the north of the country is an essential element in this respect. It is also a positive step that a high-level workshop on the participation of women in the peace process was held. These positive trends need to be continued and accelerated so that the Security Council benchmarks set last year can be reached. A renewed effort by both the Government and the signatory parties is necessary if the upward trajectory is to continue.

With regard to the security situation, we are shocked and saddened by the killing of at least 20 members of the Malian security forces in the north of Mali on Monday, 6 April. This attack once again underlines both the enormity of the challenges facing the Malian security forces and the utmost importance of international support in bringing safety and security to Mali and the Sahel region as a whole.

The most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/223) underscores the fact that the security situation in Mali continues to deteriorate. Malian authorities are called upon to respond to this situation and protect civilians from violence. As the report refers to human rights violations by Malian State actors as well, let me be clear – when fighting terrorism and insurgencies, State actors also have the obligation to respect human rights.

Malian authorities are taking the lead and they can continue to count on international support.

I offer a case in point. Concrete European Union (EU) support will be strengthened through the renewal of the EU Training Mission mandate until May 2024. Assistance to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5) and the G-5 nations will be extended through military advice, training and mentoring.

In terms of the support being provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), we are convinced that the Mission's ongoing political and integrated civil-military support is critical for the stabilization of Mali. We support efforts to make MINUSMA even more operational, including through the Mission adaptation plan.

However, there is a limit to what MINUSMA can do. Giving more and broader tasks to the Mission will backfire if we do not collectively ensure that the Mission has the right amount and kind of personnel and resources. Efficiency gains go hand in hand with a realistic mandate scope; doing more with less is not feasible. We also need the countries of the Sahel, partner nations and organizations, and other missions in the area to engage in complementary efforts.

With regard to the coronavirus disease pandemic, we are concerned about the pandemic's impact on the situation in Mali, including on the political process, particularly with the disease's potential for disrupting the second round of legislative elections. Germany calls on MINUSMA and the United Nations Secretariat to closely monitor the situation and keep the Security Council informed – outside the usual reporting cycle, if necessary.

As to the Mission itself, the safety and security of all MINUSMA personnel is of utmost importance. We welcome the procedures announced by the United Nations. For them to be effective, however, they must be followed and reviewed. At the same time, the Mission – with all its parts, both civilian and uniformed – needs to remain operational so as to implement the mandate. In terms of the German military and police contingents in MINUSMA, we will maintain our deployments and follow all relevant regulations set by the Malian authorities and the Mission in order to ensure the safety and security of all concerned.

Annex VIII**Statement by Mr. Dian Triansyah Djani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations**

As this is the first time that you are presiding over the Security Council this month, Sir, let me wish you all the best. You may rest assured of our full support. We would also like to express our appreciation to Mr. Zhang Jun and his team for the excellent presidency last month amid difficult challenges.

I would first like to thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his comprehensive briefing. I also welcome His Excellency Mr. Dramé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali.

This meeting takes place at a very challenging time, amid the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We all must continue to show our solidarity and support to the Government and the people of Mali. Mali, like all of us, is not immune to COVID-19 and therefore needs international support. Having said that, allow me to share three points.

First, we welcome several political developments. Those include the conclusion of an inclusive national dialogue, the first round of legislative elections, the deployment to Kidal of the first reconstituted unit of the Malian armed forces, and the high-level workshop on women's participation. Women are an important element.

We concur with the Secretary-General that it will take time for these achievements to translate into tangible improvements in the situation on the ground. Yet it is crucial to continue supporting the Malian stakeholders in the ongoing implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which remains the only viable path for long-term peace and stability in Mali.

We look forward to further progress, including decentralization, the functioning of local authorities, the development of the northern development zone, and the catch-up phase of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

Secondly, the security situation is dire, with ongoing and increasing terrorist activities in northern and central Mali. We welcome the commitment to step up efforts to fight terrorism in Mali and the region, including through the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. We also welcome the consideration by the African Union of the possible deployment of the Multinational Joint Task Force to further degrade terrorist groups in the Sahel.

We particularly deplore the continued targeting of MINUSMA and the international forces in Mali. We would like to express our deepest sympathy for the victims and pray for the rapid recovery of those injured.

Despite this challenging situation, we commend MINUSMA, which continues to implement its mandate, and we welcome the efforts to move forward with the adaptation plan.

Thirdly, the humanitarian situation is worsening, with an increase in the number of people displaced and suffering from food insecurity. We must also consider the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in Mali, which will put a further strain on the humanitarian situation.

We are concerned that humanitarian access in northern and central Mali continues to face challenges due to the security situation. We call for safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, all Malian stakeholders, with regional and international support, must continue their efforts to advance the peace process and to improve the security situation at this difficult time. We, as the Security Council, should continue to support the efforts of the Government of Mali. We must ensure that the gains achieved so far are not reversed and will eventually translate into long-term peace, stability and prosperity in Mali.

Annex IX**Statement by Mr. Abdou Abarry, Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations**

Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his briefing as well as his tireless efforts and good offices role to help restore peace in the country, which is a prerequisite for achieving stability in the broader Sahel.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/223) indicates that, despite the persistence of violence due to continued attacks by armed groups and intercommunal conflicts, tangible progress has been made in the peace process in Mali, particularly since the holding of the inclusive national dialogue in December 2019.

We particularly welcome the outcome of the inclusive national dialogue, which created an enabling environment for the Malian parties to refocus their attention on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali of 2015.

The inclusive national dialogue has helped to reduce tensions and mistrust between the signatories of the peace agreement and has generated a renewed willingness by the parties to move forward with the implementation of its conclusions. In that regard, we encourage the renewed cooperation among the parties in continuing with the implementation process, including by convening regular meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee.

The organization of the legislative elections on 29 March amid the increasing threat of the coronavirus and the threat of terrorism clearly demonstrates to the world the commitment of the Malian people to democracy and the return of peace and stability to the country.

We welcome the role played by MINUSMA in the redeployment of a reconstituted unit of the Malian armed forces as well as the Prime Minister's visit to Kidal and other parts of central and northern Mali. These events bear witness to the progress, albeit gradual in some respects, in the redeployment of the administration of the Malian State and the restoration of its authority in these areas.

We commend the Government's efforts to stabilize the areas in the centre of Mali through the policy framework for crisis management in central Mali. We welcome the series of meetings involving civil society and leaders of the central regions, which led to the signing of agreements for peaceful coexistence among the communities and the disarmament and dismantling of self-defence groups.

Furthermore, we welcome the recommendations of the high-level national workshop organized by the Government, which called for concrete measures to increase the participation of women in the various mechanisms of the peace agreement to at least 30 per cent. We also applaud the decision of the Agreement Monitoring Committee to increase women's participation in the mechanism.

We wish to underscore the importance of a holistic approach to addressing the challenges in Mali that includes not only military but also political, social and economic interventions. In that respect, we emphasize the operationalization of the northern development zone as an important initiative for the development of the

northern regions. It is important for the international community to support this initiative, including by mobilizing resources for its funding.

We reiterate that development and sustained security are interconnected and inextricable, and therefore encourage the authorities of Mali and MINUSMA to continue to pay due attention to the sustainable development aspects of the peace agreement.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, soldiers of the armed forces of Mali, MINUSMA and the international forces continue to be the target of attacks by terrorist groups in the north and centre, often resulting in deaths and injuries. We would like to pay tribute to the valiant men and women who operate in this difficult and dangerous environment. We condemn these acts and we urge the Government of Mali to ensure that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes are held accountable.

We believe that the current security situation, which is characterized by a persistent terrorist threat and violent extremism, calls for a stronger and more robust MINUSMA mandate, with its capabilities increased to cope with the terrorist acts and violent extremism, as well as the intercommunal violence that threaten the integrity of the Liptako-Gourma countries. We call on all Member States to contribute the required capabilities and to match MINUSMA's mandate with adequate resources, in line with their commitments under the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

We are encouraged by the development of the MINUSMA adaptation plan for central Mali towards the achievement of secondary mandated tasks of resolution 2480 (2019). However, we note with concern the implementation of the plan without the requisite resources. In that regard, we urge the Council to favourably consider support for the required additional financial resources to assist the effective implementation of the plan.

At the regional and subregional levels, we commend the continued efforts of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) in discharging its mandate in cooperation with international forces, including the French Operation Barkhane, under challenging circumstances. We reiterate the need for adequate, sustainable and predictable support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

In March 2020, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force has launched a large-scale operation in the central region, in coordination with Operation Barkhane and the national armed forces, aimed at dismantling the armed groups in the region. Thus, an operation carried out last month in the area of the three borders by the forces of the G-5 Sahel, those of partner countries and the Barkhane Force led to the neutralization of several terrorists of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and to the freeing, on 17 March 2020, of five young girls and a woman, who had been held hostage.

We welcome the joint meeting of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the G-5 Sahel held in Niamey, on 16 March 2020, which decided to deploy an African force of 3,000 troops to support the countries of the Sahel in their fight against terrorism. The meeting followed the decision of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union taken at the thirty-third ordinary session of the Assembly, held last February in Addis Ababa, and the ECOWAS decision taken in September 2019 to contribute to financing the fight against terrorism with up to \$2.3 billion over five years, including \$1 billion from its own resources.

With regard to the human rights situation, we remain concerned about the increase in violence against civilians due to the resurgence of attacks by terrorist groups and intercommunal conflicts. We encourage the Government of Mali to

continue its efforts to reconcile communities and ensure justice for victims. The support of MINUSMA through its good offices is crucial in that regard.

We also express our grave concern regarding the recruitment and use of children by the signatory armed groups and deplore the increasing number of such incidents. More efforts must be made to prevent the recruitment and use of children and MINUSMA must play an active role in that regard.

On the humanitarian front, and at a time when the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is spreading throughout the whole world, the already precarious humanitarian situation in the region is likely to worsen due to food insecurity caused by the effects of climate change; hence the urgent need to support the humanitarian response plan, which is only 49 per cent funded, according to the latest report of the Human Rights Council of January 2020. We are also concerned that all these factors combined could have a devastating impact on civilian populations, including internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are women and children.

The COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly have a negative impact on the operations of MINUSMA and international forces engaged in Mali in terms of the safety, security and health of troops, their rotation and the logistics chain. We are greatly concerned that four French soldiers from Operation Barkhane have tested positive for COVID-19.

In that context, we conclude by expressing our full support for the appeal launched by Secretary-General António Guterres on 23 March for an “immediate ceasefire, everywhere in the world” in order to protect the most vulnerable civilians from the rapid spread of COVID-19, especially in countries in conflict.

Annex X**Statement by Mr. Dmitry Polyanskiy First Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations**

Since this is our first meeting this month, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and express the certitude that, with your capable team, you will do your best to lead us through this difficult time. I am absolutely sure that you will succeed in this. May I also note the excellent work of our Chinese colleagues last month. I think that you made history, and I thank you very much for what you have done.

We also thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, for his briefing.

The course of events in Mali over the past three months represents a mixed picture. On the one hand, the situation in the country is gradually stabilizing. Serious progress has been made in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We would like to particularly highlight the launch of the work of the reformed units of the armed forces in Timbuktu, Kidal, Ménaka and Gao. We welcome the support provided in this regard by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We hope that, with the passage of time, the deployment of armed forces will be an important step towards the return of the northern regions to normal life.

At the political level, we are encouraged by the successful completion of the national dialogue, which outlined the main avenues in the field of State reform. Just several days ago, on 29 March, the parliamentary elections were finally held as scheduled. In addition, the central authorities are stepping up efforts to reduce intercommunal clashes in the central region of Mali.

On the other hand, unfortunately, the security situation is not improving. While there were fewer terrorist attacks overall in recent months, the past two weeks have shown that such attacks are quite large-scale and continue to occur both in Mali and in neighbouring countries. All this demonstrates the magnitude and severity of the threats that the country and the region are facing, as well as their vulnerability to destabilizing factors like terrorism, organized crime and extremist ideology. Factors such as inter-ethnic tensions, constant attacks by terrorists and extremists and the delay in restoring a State presence in the central and northern regions of the country may seriously slow down, or even call into question, the emerging positive changes.

The humanitarian situation in Mali is also of grave concern. The number of people in need of food is growing from one year to another. Obviously, the coronavirus pandemic is already becoming an additional negative factor that jeopardizes the ability to provide international assistance to the region.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight the role of MINUSMA in facilitating the progress on the ground. We are convinced that the Mission needs comprehensive support, especially in a situation where it has to fulfil its mandate on two fronts at once – in the centre and in the north of Mali. It is clear that at the current stage, it is premature to consider its reduction. At the same time, it is our understanding that the adaptation of MINUSMA should be carried out strictly, in accordance with the mandate provided for in resolution 2480 (2019). Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his effective leadership.

Annex XI**Statement by Mr. James Roscoe, Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations**

May I begin by joining others in welcoming you to the presidency. It is good to see your commitment to transparency already in place with the broadcast of the briefing this morning. I thought that was a very useful innovation.

I would like to thank China, as others have, for its presidency. It was good to see them also willing to be innovative and open in such challenging circumstances.

I also want to thank Special Representative Annadif for his excellent briefing and to join others in welcoming Minister for Foreign Affairs Dramé to this discussion. It is good to see the Malian Government engaging at this level with our consultations.

The United Kingdom continues to give its full support to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) as it works in challenging and complex circumstances, helping to build the conditions for lasting peace and stability in Mali and so, by extension, in the wider region. The extent of those changing circumstances were underlined again on Monday by the attacks in Bamba, in which many Malian soldiers lost their lives. On behalf of the United Kingdom, I offer you, Mr. Foreign Minister, and the families of those soldiers our sincere condolences.

The last three months have seen some long overdue steps towards implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We join others in welcoming the deployment of the reconstituted armed forces to Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu and Ménaka, the completion of the first round of the legislative elections with support from MINUSMA and the revival of the agreement monitoring committee, including, critically, the commitments to increase female participation in the peace process. This is welcome progress, but it does not go far enough. We once again urge the parties to the peace agreement to redouble their efforts and continue to accelerate its implementation, and hope that when the Secretary-General next updates the Council there will be more progress to report.

The United Kingdom is also concerned by a number of worrying trends outlined in the Secretary-General's report, including the spread of terrorist activity in parts of the Mopti and Ségou regions, increased violence against and exploitation of women and children, as well as increased asymmetric threats against MINUSMA itself. The stark increase in human rights violations and abuses, including among signatories to the 2015 peace agreement, is unacceptable. It is vital that the Mission report in full on such violations and abuses where they occur and that the Government investigate those cases, holding perpetrators to account.

Of course, in addition to these concerns, the United Kingdom shares the concerns already expressed by Council colleagues about the potentially catastrophic impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the Sahel. The peak of the outbreak is likely to hit in the middle of Mali's lean season. This could significantly increase the number of those at risk in the region owing to food insecurity, which we already estimate to be at 13.8 million in 2020.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting the international COVID-19 response, including through further funding, mobilizing partners and providing

technical assistance. Globally, the United Kingdom is spending \$665 million to help in the development of vaccines, treatments and testing, as well as to support the International Monetary Fund in its help to vulnerable economies. In the Sahel, we are working closely with our humanitarian implementation partners to help them continue their work while addressing the extra pressures from COVID-19. In that regard, we welcome yesterday's announcement by the United Nations of a further \$6 million of support to strengthen the Government of Mali's response.

We are also concerned by reports of COVID-19 cases among the MINUSMA team. COVID-19 will inevitably have implications for MINUSMA itself, whether through requests from the Government of Mali for support in its pandemic response or owing to public health restrictions impacting the day-to-day operation of the Mission. We would welcome reassurance from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General that contingency plans are being drawn up for how the Mission will mitigate those possible impacts on core mandate delivery.

In conclusion, while we cannot ignore the potentially disastrous impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we also cannot let it derail or delay progress towards lasting peace in Mali. Intensified political, security and development efforts are required. The United Kingdom remains committed to playing our part in this, including through the deployment of 250 British troops to Mali later this year. A sustainable peace will not be won by MINUSMA alone; the commitment of all parties to full implementation of the peace agreement and addressing the underlying causes of instability in the region is the only way to ensure long-term security.

Annex XII

Statement by Ms. Cherith Norman-Chalet, Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif for the briefing.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is working around the clock to address the impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), while ensuring that it continues to accomplish its mission, which is not an easy task. We commend MINUSMA, along with the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and international security forces, for their critical work during this challenging time.

I want to recognize the progress that has been made over recent months to meet benchmarks of the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, including the redeployment of reconstituted elements of the Malian armed forces to northern Mali, a high-level workshop on women's participation in the peace process and recent legislative elections. However, despite these examples of progress, the security situation continues to deteriorate, gross human rights abuses against civilians continue to be committed and the Algiers accord remains far from being fully implemented.

As we approach MINUSMA's mandate renewal in June, the Council needs to reflect on why the situation has continued to deteriorate so rapidly and on what changes should be made to the mandate to more effectively achieve MINUSMA's objectives. The new mandate must further encourage the Government of Mali and the signatory armed groups to swiftly implement the 2015 Algiers peace accord so that MINUSMA can begin its eventual exit.

The United States is committed to helping bring about peace, security and a brighter future for the people of Mali, the Sahel and West Africa. Included in that commitment is our dedication to helping the United Nations and Mali counter the threat of COVID-19.

MINUSMA has reached a critical juncture, and we must now determine what the Mission can realistically accomplish in the face of a growing terrorist threat that is both asymmetric and kinetic. I look forward to working with the members of the Council between now and June to develop an approach that can deliver the lasting peace and stability that all Malians deserve.

Annex XIII

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

I would like to congratulate the Dominican Republic on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month.

I would like to thank China for its leadership and hard work as the presidency of the Security Council in March.

I also welcome His Excellency Mr. Tiébilé Dramé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, to this meeting.

I would like to thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for his insightful briefing.

Viet Nam would like to join other members of the Security Council in welcoming the significant progress made by the Government of Mali and concerned parties in the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The visits of the Prime Minister of Mali to provinces in the north and centre of Mali present a good opportunity for a political settlement and reconciliation in Mali. We take note that the first round of legislative election was conducted peacefully on 29 March 2020.

Viet Nam welcomes the implementation of the adaptation plan. The increased presence of the United Nations peacekeeping forces of MINUSMA in central Mali will meet the challenges to security and protect civilians in the region. Moreover, the redeployment of the reconstituted units of the Malian armed forces in Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu represents an essential step towards the restoration of State authority in northern Mali and paves the way for a more significant deployment of State administration and judicial processes.

However, the instability and deteriorating security situation remain of concern to us. There have been more attacks against civilians, Malian security forces, international forces and peacekeeping forces in the north and centre of Mali. Children are still the target of armed group attacks and that must be stopped. We also condemn recent terrorist attacks against the Malian security forces leaving 29 soldiers dead. The current situation, coupled with the rising threat of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, poses a huge threat to the safety and livelihood of the Malian people.

Against that backdrop, my delegation wishes to make the following observations.

First, the implementation of the 2015 agreement is the key to and viable strategy for sustaining peace and security in Mali. Therefore, we encourage the Government of Mali and concerned parties to continue to work closely and bridge their differences through dialogue. Peaceful and credible legislative elections are part of the political process and essential to the stability of the country. We also call on all relevant parties in Mali to heed the call of the Secretary-General to reach a permanent ceasefire, thereby allowing adequate preparation and humanitarian access to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondly, we urge concerned parties to uphold their responsibilities to protect civilians, especially women and children. The participation of women should be increased in public and political life in Mali in order to ensure that women represent 30 per cent of elected officials in the upcoming second round of legislative elections.

Thirdly, we support the implementation of the MINUSMA adaptation plan to enhance the Mission's ability to project force throughout Mali. We also support the call of the Secretary-General on all Member States to contribute the required capabilities and to match MINUSMA's mandate with adequate resources in keeping with their commitments under the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Fourthly, we call on regional and international partners to speed up the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and its support plan. We also welcome the cooperation among the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, France and the European Union in the fight against terrorism and extremism, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, we welcome closer cooperation among the United Nations, regional organizations, international partners and the Government of Mali in the fight against COVID-19. More than ever before, the protection of people in Mali and the Sahel from the pandemic and violence must be our first priority now.

Annex XIV

Statement by Mr. Tiébilé Dramé, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali

Let me thank you, Sir, for allowing me to participate in this meeting.

I would like to congratulate the Dominican Republic on its presidency of the Council for this month and to express our deepest appreciation to China for the able manner in which it conducted the Council last month.

On behalf of my principals — Head of State and Head of Government — I would like to express the gratitude of the people of Mali to Secretary-General Guterres and to the Security Council for their continued support to Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

The Government of Mali takes good note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/223). Allow me to make briefly the following comments on its behalf.

Since the last reporting period, there have been positive developments in Mali. The success of our national inclusive dialogue in December has led to key steps in the stabilization of the country: the historical session of the Monitoring Committee of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, held in January; the deployment in the north of the first battalions of the new Malian army, in February; the Prime Minister's visit to Kidal and Ménaka, in early March; and the holding of the first round of parliamentary elections, on 29 March.

Before moving to the next chapter, I should mention that our opposition leader, the Honourable Soumaïla Cissé, and members of his delegation were taken hostage on March 25 by extremist groups, while campaigning for the elections. Since then, the Government has been undertaking all measures to secure his release. A former Prime Minister was appointed last week to coordinate efforts leading to his release.

On development issues, the Government has established a special fund for the development of the northern regions. During this 2020 budgetary year, the Government has made a first contribution of \$44 million to the Fund and will continue to provide peace dividends to our populations in need, in terms of security and basic services: education, health care, water, energy, economic and job opportunities for the population, particularly youth.

On the issue of women's participation in the peace process, a high-level workshop was held in January 2020, which gathered 200 women leaders. All signatory parties have pledged their full support towards the implementation of the recommendations of the meeting, including the creation of an independent women's observatory to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement.

I must say that the Government is concerned at reports of human rights violations in Mali, particularly in the northern and central regions. In this regard, I want to assure the Council that the Government is committed to respecting human rights. Investigations are under way and those responsible for violations of human rights will be brought to justice. In the same vein, the Government has decided to disarm and to dismantle all militias in the centre. We will continue to implement our integrated strategy for the stabilization of the central region, including through dialogue with local and traditional authorities.

As you know, Mali is implementing its peace agreement in very challenging circumstances, including terrorism, all types of trafficking, intercommunal tensions and, now, the coronavirus.

The Pau summit in France in January 2020 brought new dynamics to the fight against terrorism in the Sahel region and to the restoration of State authority, capacity-building and development initiatives. I pay tribute to the national forces of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the French Barkhane troops for their positive gains in the fight against terrorism. I commend the countries of the Europe Union for their commitment to deploying the special forces of operation Takuba in order to fight terrorism in the Sahel region.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the Malian stakeholders' commitment to accelerating the implementation of the peace agreement. We need the Council's continued support in this regard, in order particularly to help overcome the challenges ahead.

I would like also to reiterate the gratitude of the President, the Government and the people of Mali to the Security Council, the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in Mali, troop-contributing countries to MINUSMA, regional and international organizations and bilateral partners for their continued commitment to peace, security and development in Mali and Sahel region.

I pay tribute to all fallen personnel in Mali and wish a quick recovery to the wounded.

Finally, I call on the Security Council to make sure that the first battalions of the new Malian army deployed in the northern region will not be confined to their barracks. If they remain confined, they will not be able to play their role in the fight against terrorism.

I urge the Security Council to make sure that the former rebellion forces are disarmed in accordance with the mechanisms set by the peace agreement. To ensure lasting peace, this disarmament should be effective and measurable.
