

# Mali: The reports from Moura underline the extent of Russia's malign activity globally: UK at UN Security Council

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I want to start by thanking SRSW Wane for his remarks today – and through him, pay tribute to all members of MINUSMA, whether civilians or in uniform, serving the UN in Mali. I also want to thank Madame Samaké for her briefing. Her words are a clear reminder of the invaluable contribution women make, including in societies affected by conflict and poverty. We must ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the pursuit of lasting peace. I also welcome the Representative of Mali to our meeting.

Like other Council members, the United Kingdom is horrified by reports indicating that hundreds of people were killed in Moura last week, following a counterterrorism operation carried out by the Malian Armed Forces, with the alleged involvement of the Wagner Group. This needs an urgent, transparent and impartial investigation, to bring those responsible to justice. The government must grant MINUSMA full access to Moura, without further delay.

The latest reports from Moura follow a clear trend in a surge of human rights abuses since the deployment of the Wagner Group to Mali – as also highlighted in the deeply concerning Human Rights Watch report in March. We know that, as of early 2022, around 1,000 Russian mercenary personnel have been stationed across Mali. Just as the presence of Russian mercenaries drove an increase in human rights violations and abuses in the Central African Republic last year, we fear we are now seeing the same in Mali. This underlines the extent of Russia's malign activity globally, which serves to damage efforts to address peace and security in contexts beyond Ukraine.

With the threat to communities in Mali growing, it is vital that MINUSMA is able to carry out its human rights tasks. We thank MINUSMA for their continued efforts to investigate, document and report on all allegations. We encourage the publication of human rights findings in full, and at the earliest opportunity.

We note with concern the increasing restrictions imposed by the Malian authorities on MINUSMA operations. MINUSMA's freedom of movement and its Status of Forces Agreement must be respected. Only last month, UK Peacekeepers came under fire from a Malian Armed Forces helicopter. We look forward to receiving the outcome of the UN's investigation into this concerning incident as soon as possible. We were deeply saddened to learn that three Egyptian peacekeepers were killed last month in IED attacks. On behalf of the UK, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies.

On the political transition, the United Kingdom continues to support ECOWAS's

dialogue with the Malian authorities on a revised timeline for elections, so that sanctions can gradually be lifted, and attention turned towards electoral preparations. We recognise the sincere desire of many Malians for substantive reform. However, we believe it is only through elections and a return to constitutional, democratic rule, that long-term reform can be driven forward, with the support of partners.

The United Kingdom remains committed to supporting those most in need in Mali, and we provided more than \$16 million in humanitarian aid in 2021. However, the mobilisation of resource by the international community must also be accompanied by unimpeded, safe and sustained humanitarian access – including in those areas that are hardest to reach.

I resume my function as President of the Council.