

Speech: Mandate renewal's effects on peace and stability in Mali

Thank you, Mr President. Let me begin by thanking the SRSB Annadif for his very clear and objective briefing. And I'd also like to welcome Foreign Minister Dramé to the Council and we look forward to hearing from you in a few minutes' time.

Mr President, let me begin by joining others in offering my sincere condolences on behalf of the United Kingdom for the tragic deaths of those killed as a result of the massacre in Mopti region just a few days ago. I very much agree with the Russian Ambassador when he said that the perpetrators must be brought to justice. This horrific attack highlights just how important it is for the international community and the Government of Mali to step up our collective efforts to help achieve long-term peace and stability in the country.

MINUSMA's mandate renewal offers an opportunity to make progress towards that goal. And I'd like to highlight three brief points in that regard.

First, this mandate renewal should be used to help drive forward implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. And this was very much a focus of the Security Council's visit to Mali just a few months ago. While I very much welcome the fact that we have seen some progress since that visit – particularly, the SRSB mentioned the draft law establishing the northern development zones and you also talked about the progress on training and the reintegration of opposition fighters – we regret that overall, the pace of implementation has slowed down in recent months in part due to political developments. We must not lose sight of the fact that there is still a lot of work to do. The United Kingdom supports the call made by France just now that those that impede implementation of the peace agreement should be subject to sanctions by this Council.

This mandate renewal offers the chance to inject new momentum into the process through the use of ambitious benchmarks to be met by the Government of Mali and signatory armed groups. From the United Kingdom's perspective, these benchmarks should include advancement on constitutional reform and decentralisation, security sector reform, the economic development of northern Mali and, as the SRSB mentioned and the Ambassador from South Africa mentioned, the meaningful participation of women in the peace process.

Second, I agree with all previous speakers that we have an opportunity now with the mandate renewal to tackle the instability in central Mali that has caused so many tragic deaths in recent months. Specifically, there is a need for both MINUSMA and the Malian Government to do more in the centre to restore State authority and protect civilians. MINUSMA has a unique role to play in the centre in using its good offices to reduce inter-community tensions – tensions that this most recent attack shows are currently all too high. On the part of the Government, there is a need for a truly

comprehensive political strategy to deal with the situation in the centre in order to ensure that its efforts are effective. And from our perspective, a comprehensive solution should include the disarming of all armed actors, the restoration of peaceful relations between communities, and also the revision of the integrated security plan for the regions of the centre.

Third, Mr President, we recognise very much the challenging circumstances in which MINUSMA is operating and the UK unequivocally condemns recent attacks against MINUSMA personnel on the ground. To perform its mandate effectively in such circumstances, MINUSMA will need to further adapt to become a more flexible, agile and robust force, as recommended in the Secretary-General's most recent report. The UK commends the actions taken by the Mission leadership, including the Force Commander, to do this already, and we welcome the increase in tempo of operations in recent months.

Mr President, in conclusion, I think we should all recognise that MINUSMA is cannot be a permanent solution but a means to an end in Mali – a means to achieve sustainable peace in Mali. We welcome the steps that have been taken so far by the Government, other Malian parties and MINUSMA to foster stability in Mali, but we can see from the fact that large parts of the peace agreement remain unimplemented and that security in the centre is quickly deteriorating that more needs to be done. This mandate renewal can catalyse progress towards a more sustainable peace across Mali.

Thank you.