

Speech: Rapid progress on peace agreement in Mali

Thank you Mr President.

Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing and wish her well in her new role, since it's the first time since I've seen her in her new role. And I also welcome the presence of Her Excellency Foreign Minister Camara and welcome her to the Council.

Mr President, I will focus largely on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in my statement.

2018 saw renewed commitments by the Government of Mali and the signatory armed groups to the expedited and full implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. In March, we saw the parties commit to a roadmap for the implementation of priority actions and in October, the Pact for Peace was signed, recommitting to the swift and inclusive implementation of the Agreement.

The United Kingdom welcomes recent progress, notably the launching of the accelerated disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration (DDR) and integration process and the establishment of a working group on the participation of women in the peace process. We welcome the efforts of the Malian Prime Minister in support of the implementation of the Agreement, including the establishment of a new Ministry.

Mr President, these developments are welcome and they underscore the genuine importance that the Government attaches to the process. And having heard the Minister speak with passion and conviction, I know that she is also personally committed. However, there must be considerable and rapid further action in order to achieve the full implementation committed to by all parties to the Agreement.

For example, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, progress has been made to establish ten district level interim administrations. But steps must now be taken to operationalise these interim administrations. Of 72 civil administrators appointed in June of last year, only seven, we understand, have been deployed to their duty stations.

It is now three and a half years since the Agreement was signed. Timelines in the March 2018 roadmap have passed unfulfilled. We are encouraged by the Government's plans for 2019 and we hope that these will be successful in order for the Malian people to enjoy a more peaceful and prosperous future.

As ASG Keita recalls and the parties to Agreement will recall the Security Council's decision last month to place three individuals on the 2374 sanctions list for impeding the peace process. The parties will also recall our expressed readiness to take further such measures if needed.

The United Kingdom therefore reiterates our previous calls on the Government of Mali and the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups to redouble their efforts and take the additional steps needed for the immediate and full implementation of the Agreement. As ASG Keita said there is an impatience around the table about the missed milestones we have heard about session after session in this Council.

Mr President, turning to the situation on the ground, we recognise the challenging circumstances in which the Malian Government and MINUSMA operate. The United Kingdom unequivocally condemns recent attacks against MINUSMA personnel and supporting contractors. We express our condolences to the families of those who have tragically lost their lives and we thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and all of his staff for their important work in very challenging circumstances.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned by the large numbers of civilians who continue to be affected by targeted terrorist attacks and intercommunal clashes, particularly in the centre of Mali.

We welcome the steps taken by the Government of Mali to re-establish state presence via their integrated security plan for the centre. However, to ensure that the root causes of the instability in the centre are sustainably addressed, and to enable MINUSMA to provide complementary support, the United Kingdom encourages the Government to also develop a comprehensive political strategy for the centre.

Mr President, the human rights situation remains concerning. However the United Kingdom welcomes the progress that has been made in the prosecution of members of the Malian defence and security forces who were accused of perpetrating human rights violations. To increase the people's confidence in those defence forces, it is critical to thoroughly investigate all human rights violations and ensure justice and accountability.

Mr President, in conclusion, the United Kingdom welcomes recent steps that have been taken to foster stability in Mali. Now is the time for further action. Rapid progress is needed on the implementation of the peace agreement in a full, effective and inclusive manner while political, security and development efforts – particularly in central Mali – are intensified. And the United Kingdom stands ready to support. We are increasing our diplomatic presence in Mali, Niger and Chad. We have deployed Chinook helicopters to Operation Barkhane which provides logistical support to the G5 Sahel force. Our Department for International Development is spending \$370 million across the Sahel in the last four to five years, and we will significantly increase our development assistance in coming years.

Thank you Mr President.