

Speech: Towards a basis for sustainable peace and stability in Mali

Thank you very much Mr President. Thank you Mr Foreign Minister for taking time to join us today and I'd like to join colleagues in thanking the SRS for his briefing and my Swedish colleague for his report and the expeditious work of his committee.

Like other speakers Mr President, we too condemn the recent attacks against the peacekeepers in Mali and we offer our condolences to the families of the three United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeepers who were killed last week, to MINUSMA, and to the Governments and people of Chad and Niger. I would just like to say how much I agree with what the Ethiopian Ambassador said about the greatest reward being progress on the ground and I think we all want to help MINUSMA to that end.

The UK strongly supports the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. It is the primary basis for sustainable peace and stability in Mali and we need progress also in order to deny space to extremists.

As other speakers have noted, at the Security Council's last meeting on Mali in January and also in its subsequent press statement, we welcomed the renewed commitment of the Government of Mali and the signatory armed groups to actual implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation by the end of March and that was agreed in the revised timetable of 16 January.

However, and disappointingly Mr President, it has been common theme of all interventions today that the persistent delays, which tested the Council's patience in January are still continuing to frustrate us today, some time after the original deadline.

There has been some positive progress and I don't want to underplay that. It is also clear that this just has not been enough. The parties have agreed yet another new "road map" rather than focusing on implementation of the existing timetable. There have been numerous revised deadlines and they have not been met.

The delay to implementation will unfortunately have an impact on Mali's ability to conduct peaceful and inclusive presidential and parliamentary elections this year and that in turn, risks a further destabilisation to the security and humanitarian situation.

In January, this Council Mr President noted the tools available to it under the Mali sanctions regime, and it expressed its intention to respond with appropriate steps should the parties not implement the commitments they have made. In view of the lack of progress, the United Kingdom now supports action to identify those obstructing, delaying and threatening the implementation of

the Agreement, with a view to imposing sanctions on those actors.

As I have stated Mr President, it is down to the parties themselves to implement the Agreement but like others I would like to note the key role played by MINUSMA in supporting this implementation. We commend the work of the Special Representative, the Secretary-General and all the staff, especially considering the challenging circumstances in which the military and the civilian components are operating.

And as we look forward to renewal of MINUSMA's mandate in June, we must ensure that its mandate is clear and that it focusses on supporting implementation of the Agreement and it is adequately equipped to support peace in Mali.

With that in mind, I have another call Mr President on all member states to ensure that the continued shortfall of troop numbers and equipment including the need for further air cover, reconnaissance capability and armoured personnel carriers are generously met.

The UK is committed to tackling threats in the Sahel. Following the Anglo-French summit in January. We have contributed Chinook helicopters to support Op Barkhane. These are aligned and working closely with MINUSMA. This is all designed to promote stabilisation in a bid to enable MINUSMA to carry out its core mandate.

Finally Mr President, let me say that we too are disturbed by reports of summary executions by FAMA and strongly encourage the Government to investigate those reports and ensure accountability for those responsible. I join the French Ambassador in stressing how important this is. Human rights reporting and monitoring should be prioritised in the MINUSMA mandate and we hope that it will be able to address these and other important human rights violations by signatory armed groups.

Thank you Mr President.