

Window of opportunity for peace in Mali 'slowly narrowing,' warns Secretary-General

20 September 2017 – Speaking at a ministerial meeting at United Nations Headquarters, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today voiced concern over the delayed implementation of the peace agreement in Mali.

“We meet less than a year before the next presidential election,” [said](#) Mr. Guterres, stressing that the coming months will be an opportunity for Malians and their institutions to show their dedication to peace and the rule of law.

Noting that municipal elections in November last year were not held in all regions and suffered a low turnout, he encouraged the Malian authorities to ensure the success of the presidential election.

He added that numerous delays and slow implementation of critical provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali are always a cause of concern, including the postponement of the review of the Constitution.

Delays in security sector reform related to the redeployment of the reformed and reconstituted Malian defence and security forces in the centre and north are also to be noted.

Mr. Guterres added that a number of achievements were recorded in recent months encompassing security, development, reductions in community violence, efforts to prevent the recruitment of youth.

“Yet the country’s achievements – that are remarkable – remain fragile, especially in light of the recent confrontations between armed groups and recurring attacks,” he went on. “Trust is being tested but we welcome the signature, earlier today, of a ceasefire agreement between the two signatory movements which also re-emphasizes their commitment to the implementation of the peace agreement.”

New institutions, processes and laws have yet to translate into significant improvements in the daily lives of Malians, the Secretary-General stated, adding that inclusivity, especially of women, youth and other under-represented social groups, remains insufficient, and constraints to humanitarian access persist.

“The window of opportunity for the Government to provide long-awaited peace dividends is slowly narrowing,” said Mr. Guterres.

The UN chief also urged the international community to ensure unity of purpose in financially and logistically supporting regional undertaking, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force, to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime because, if successful, the Force can not only contribute to an enabling environment for the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali to fully

implement its mandate but also advance progress in the Malian peace process.

But the most sustainable solution remains the strengthening of Mali's own security architecture, Mr. Guterres said, stressing that the absence of a comprehensive strategy for security sector reform needs to be urgently addressed.