



Security Council

Distr.: General
18 January 2021

Original: English

Letter dated 15 January 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, the Niger (on behalf of the three African countries that are members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “The situation in Mali” convened on Wednesday, 13 January 2021. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Mali.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the enclosed briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tarek **Ladeb**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Mahamat Saleh Annadif**

[Original: English and French]

It is always an honour and a pleasure for me to present the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2020/1281) to the Security Council.

At our previous briefing, on 8 October 2020, I had the opportunity to update the Council on the designation of the President of the transition, the appointment of the Prime Minister and the formation of the Government (see S/PV.8765). The period covered by the current report was marked by the negotiations for the establishment of the National Transition Council (NTC), whose members were very late in being appointed and which came into being only on 9 November with the election of Colonel Malick Diaw, former Vice-President of the Comité national pour le salut du peuple, as President.

I am pleased to recall that the NTC, which will serve as the national Parliament during the transition, is in charge of approving the political, institutional, electoral and administrative reforms that are crucial for the consolidation of democracy and the success of credible elections, allowing for a return to constitutional order, as provided for in the Transition Charter. Despite its late establishment, the setting up of the NTC did not bring together the necessary consensus among political actors, including representatives of Malian civil society. It is this lack of consensus in the creation of the institutions for the transition that is fuelling the deterioration of the socioeconomic situation, characterized by numerous strikes in various sectors of activity.

While all Malians are in favour of the fight against corruption and impunity, which are at the root of the various crises that the country has experienced, the recent arrest orders involving various individuals are likely to obscure the search for the truth if they are not carried out in strict compliance with the rule of law. As I have repeatedly pointed out, the transition period represents a real opportunity for Mali to break out of the vicious cycle of political crises followed by coups d'état.

As members of the Council know, almost four of the 18 months allotted for the transition have already passed. However, it is never too late to reach a minimum consensus on the essentials of peace and stability, because the future of Mali is at stake. From this point of view, the international community — through the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union and the International Organization of the Francophonie — has always been ready to support the transition institutions.

Since 18 August 2020, several missions and meetings have taken place in Bamako. The Monitoring Committee of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali continues its good offices, and the latest consultations between the Government and the signatory movements are encouraging. It is within this framework of positive dynamics that we should note the visit to Kidal by key justice officials, notably the President of the Court, the Public Prosecutor and the Chief Registrar, to organize the solemn swearing-in hearing of the new Governor, which took place on 31 December 2020. Such an event had not taken place in Kidal for almost 10 years.

As it has in the rest of the world, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has been on the rise in Mali for the past three months. The successive deaths of

President Pierre Buyoya, former High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel, and the Honourable Soumaïla Cissé, former leader of the opposition, are a perfect illustration of this. Neither has United Nations staff in Mali been spared by the pandemic, although the situation remains under control. In addition to this bleak picture occasioned by COVID-19, we must note the deaths of such eminent Malian political figures as former Presidents Moussa Traoré and Amadou Toumani Touré and former Prime Minister Modibo Keita.

Despite significant successes achieved by international forces against terrorists, the security environment in Mali and the region remains worrisome and unpredictable, with recurrent attacks in the tri-border area that have claimed the lives of many civilians, including more than 100 Nigeriens on 2 January in Ouallam prefecture. Faced with these multifaceted challenges, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) continues to adapt and strengthen its capacities to better respond to the two strategic priorities set forth in its mandate.

With regard to intercommunal violence in the centre of the country, MINUSMA remains committed to supporting the Government's strategy for stabilizing that region. Its adaptation plan is producing significant results, with the increase in number of temporary bases and the intensification of patrols dedicated to the protection of civilians. It is out of this same concern that MINUSMA and United Nations agencies are supporting the regional reconciliation support teams to promote social cohesion and conflict prevention and management. In addition, MINUSMA has carried out joint field missions with Guina Dogon and Tabital Pulaaku to advance reconciliation processes between communities in areas or sites of local conflict identified as priorities.

Just as 2020 was a challenging year, so should 2021 be a hopeful one for Malians first and foremost. Despite the lack of consensus throughout the negotiations on the appointment of members of both the Government and the National Transition Council, which I mentioned earlier, it is worth noting with satisfaction that all organs of the transition are operational today.

With regard to the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, on 18 December 2020, the signatory parties adopted a new revised road map of priority actions to speed up the Agreement's implementation. The road map, which is consensual and quite comprehensive, will be presented to the Agreement Monitoring Committee at its forty-second session, which is scheduled for 19 January 2021. The mindset and proactive stance that guided the development of the road map are reasons for optimism, even if that optimism must be cautious.

The transitional Government has more than once indicated the importance it attaches to the holding of elections, work on which has already begun. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that the success of the transition depends upon carrying out political, institutional, electoral and administrative reforms with a view to inclusive and credible elections whose outcome is accepted by the majority of Malians. Whatever the encouragement and support by the international community to that process, it will not be viable if it does not come as a result of the willingness of Mali's political actors.

As the Special Representative for Mali and Head of MINUSMA for the past five years, and above and beyond any impatience or existing frustration, I hold out the hope that this window of opportunity will not be another missed chance.

Annex II**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Dai Bing**

[Original: English and Chinese]

I thank Special Representative Annadif for his briefing. Based on that briefing and in connection with the report (S/2020/1281) of the Secretary-General, I wish to emphasize the following.

First, the transition process in Mali is in general moving forward smoothly, with good progress made in establishing the transitional Government and the National Transitional Council and implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, among other things. All parties in the country must put the interests of the nation and its people first, seize the opportunity of this crucial stage and forge consensus on institution-building and election preparations, with a view to laying a solid foundation for the general elections next year, as well as development in the long run. At the same time, it is important to honour the commitments made, implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in earnest, speed up the reconfiguration and deployment of the armed forces and promote the development zone in the north, to name a few tasks.

The African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States have played a leading role in defusing the crisis in Mali and promoting the transition process. The United Nations and international partners must strengthen coordination with regional and subregional organizations and work in synergy to jointly maintain peace and stability in Mali.

Secondly, it is imperative to continue the counter-terrorism work. The Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) has had some achievements in combating terrorism in the country. However, terrorist and extremist forces are still rampant in northern and central Mali and have been launching frequent attacks. There shall be no complacency in combating terrorism. China supports the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in assisting the G-5 Sahel Joint Force as mandated, as well as the continued and active participation of the Malian transitional Government in counter-terrorism efforts by the G-5 Sahel.

MINUSMA suffered multiple terrorist attacks last year, which China has strongly condemned and for which China has asked for immediate investigation to bring perpetrators to justice. Resolution 2518 (2020) must be fully implemented to beef up security measures for United Nations peacekeeping forces and to protect the safety of peacekeepers.

Thirdly, the root causes of turbulence must be eradicated. Mali is facing such challenges as political instability and a shortage of food. The coronavirus disease pandemic has made the economic situation in the country even worse, with over 600,000 people unable to return home and over 3 million people in urgent need of food assistance. The Malian transitional Government must shoulder its responsibility, increase input in security development and other areas, restore economic activities and promote sustainable development, with a view to providing basic livelihoods and security guarantees for its population.

The Secretary-General recently appointed a special coordinator for development in the Sahel, whom we hope will play an active role and work together with relevant United Nations agencies and international partners to promote regional security, humanitarian assistance and development in a coherent manner, provide

more financial and technical support to effectively facilitate sustainable development in Mali and the region at large, and eliminate the root causes for instability.

For a long time, China has been firm in supporting Mali in its socioeconomic development. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, we have provided Mali with multiple shipments of anti-pandemic supplies and emergency food assistance. We recently dispatched the twenty-seventh medical team to the country. Despite the difficulties brought about by the pandemic, China has been successful in such assistance projects as a vocational training centre and the University of Bamako Kabala Campus project. China has been implementing its commitment of military aid to the AU worth \$100 million. Through multilateral and bilateral channels, we have provided military assistance to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. The China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund has also contributed funds to some of MINUSMA's cooperation projects. China stands ready to work with the international community to contribute to peace and development in Mali.

Annex III**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif for his briefing and to express Estonia's full support to the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Mali is now a little more than four months into the 18-month transition period. We take note of the steps that have been taken thus far, including the formation of the transitional Government and the National Transition Council. The representation of the signatory armed groups for the first time presents an opportunity for a more inclusive political process. But now is the time to act. We urge all parties to take concrete steps to work together for the common goal of peace in Mali. All groups in society need to be included in the process.

In preparation for the presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of the transitional period, we call on the transitional authorities to step up the implementation of the necessary institutional and governance reforms. It is of the utmost importance to maintain the rule of law and constitutional order in Mali.

I would further like to underline the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the political process as well as in the society at large. Making women's voices heard at every stage of the decision-making process and ensuring the representation of women will help create more inclusive and stable conditions for achieving peace in Mali.

I would like to commend the African Union and Economic Community of West African States for their commitment and engagement in supporting the political transition in Mali. Regional organizations can play an indispensable role in supporting political transitions.

The overall security situation in Mali remains of great concern. We are extremely alarmed by the coordinated attacks against the national and international security presence as well as the deliberate targeting of civilians by terrorists and armed groups. Estonia will continue to do its part in the fight against terrorism by contributing to MINUSMA, the European Union Training Mission in Mali, the French-led Operation Barkhane and its special operations Task Force Takuba.

However, the international efforts in achieving peace in Mali, including in the framework of the Coalition for the Sahel, are there only to support the Malian authorities. A stable, long-lasting and adequate State presence all over the country can be achieved only with clear political will and full cooperation with all Malian parties.

I would like to reiterate our firm understanding that the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali remains the basis for a political solution to the Malian conflict. It is positive that the Agreement Monitoring Committee could meet in November after a five-month break, and we are encouraged by the discussions that took place. Now the parties need to show full political ownership and take concrete steps in implementing the Agreement.

I would like to turn to the question of accountability. The continuing rise in grave human rights violations and abuses is appalling and simply unacceptable. It is of the utmost importance to break the cycle of impunity and ensure that all those who perpetrate human rights violations and abuses or violate international humanitarian law are brought to justice. Reconciliation and rebuilding trust within society is the only way to achieve lasting peace.

We strongly urge the Malian authorities to conduct full investigations into all attacks on civilians, including allegations against the national security forces. We note that some trials have taken place and encourage more to follow. We also encourage the Malian authorities to consider the recommendations made in the recent report by the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali. Every effort must be made to build a transparent and fully functioning judicial system.

Finally, I would like to express our continued concern about the dire humanitarian situation in Mali. We call on all relevant parties to allow access to humanitarian aid to those most in need.

Annex IV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I thank Special Representative Annadif for his briefing. I would like in particular to thank him for the work he has conducted over the past five years as Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

In October the Council reiterated the priorities: political and institutional reforms with a view to the holding of elections, the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali, the stabilization of central Mali and the fight against terrorism. Today the situation appears to have changed. The current climate is conducive to progress in the implementation of the peace agreement. Meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee have resumed. Signatory group members are part of the Government. The parties have agreed on a road map that includes the objectives we set with regard to integrating former rebels into the national forces, undertaking institutional reforms and developing the northern regions. In addition to those commitments, the Council expects concrete results by the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate in June. I know that all Malian parties are fully aware of that.

With regard to the stabilization of central Mali, the initial results in the fight against impunity, including the start of proceedings and the holding of hearings, are encouraging. More needs to be done to enable lasting reconciliation. MINUSMA continues to play a useful role, particularly through military operations coordinated with the Malian army and community dialogue programmes.

In the area of counter-terrorism, one year after the Pau summit, the overall assessment is positive. Many terrorist elements, including several high-ranking leaders, have been neutralized. Coordination between Operation Barkhane, the national armed forces and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) has improved thanks to the setting up of a joint command post in Niamey. The Malian army remains fully committed, despite political changes.

However, many challenges remain. Last year was the deadliest one in the past decade in central Mali, where the crisis has taken deep root. The latest attacks, unfortunately, claimed French soldiers, and show that terrorist groups can still cause great harm. Efforts to restore State and public services throughout the territory remain insufficient.

Those mixed results force us to step up our efforts. Security measures must be accompanied by the return of administrations and services to the population. Those efforts will make it possible to restore confidence among the State, local authorities and the people living there, and to combat the hold that terrorists have. Special attention should be paid to development projects and humanitarian assistance, bearing in mind the integrated approach carried out by the Coalition for the Sahel. Preserving the humanitarian space and the protection of humanitarian and health workers are crucial. France commends the work of the European Union and its member States in those areas.

In the military sphere, the internationalization of efforts has continued in recent months, with the increase in the work of Task Force Takuba. Mali's armed forces must step up their reconstruction while maintaining their operational commitment. The European Union Training Mission in Mali, which recently expanded its scope of action, can help them do so. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force also plays an essential role and deserves enhanced support, including from the United Nations. We welcome the

support provided by MINUSMA through the tripartite mechanism funded by the European Union. But we must go further.

Finally, it is essential that the implementation of the MINUSMA adaptation plan continue, so that its effectiveness can be strengthened. I encourage contributing countries to respond positively to the Secretariat's requests to fill the force's capacity gaps.

In this decisive period, a consensual and peaceful political climate is needed. Mali cannot allow divisions that would only undermine the objectives of the transition, especially the March 2022 elections. In that context, France supports the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States, which once again visited Bamako to take stock of the organization of the elections.

Annex V**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Nagaraj Naidu Kakanur**

I would like to start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his insightful briefing on the political and security situation in Mali and his update on the activities of MINUSMA.

I express my condolences over the recent unfortunate deaths of Malian defence personnel, MINUSMA peacekeepers and French soldiers. We should not lose sight of the fact that the seeds of the crisis in Mali were sown in the Libyan conflict in 2011. The return of fighters to northern Mali and the proliferation of weapons out of Libya contributed to the Tuareg rebellion in the north.

The main reason for the coup d'état and overthrow of the civilian Government in 2012 was the alleged mishandling of the situation in northern Mali. The situation further worsened due to the offensive by terrorist and extremist armed groups in southern Mali in early 2013. MINUSMA took over from the African-led International Support Mission to Mali.

Despite MINUSMA's presence for nearly eight years and the ongoing efforts of the international community, particularly France, Mali is witnessing a repeat of the events of 2012. The political situation remains precarious, the Malian Government lacks capacity and resources, the security situation in central and northern Mali remains worrisome, terrorist groups such as Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin and the Islamic State in Greater Sahara are growing in strength, and attacks against civilians, MINUSMA, the Malian Defence and Security forces, international forces and humanitarian agencies continue unabated.

MINUSMA is overburdened with a huge mandate, and the lack of commensurate resources is affecting its functioning. When discussing the situation in Mali and MINUSMA, we must therefore be cognizant of factors contributing to the prolonged crisis in the country. In that context, I would like to make some observations.

Political developments in Mali over the past three months allow for cautious optimism in the coming days. The appointment of the civilian President and Prime Minister, the formation of the transitional Government, the issuance of a Transitional Charter and road map and the constitution of the 121-member National Transition Council are all welcome developments. The transitional Government has also shown its commitment to advance the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali and has accommodated stakeholders from the north on the National Transition Council. While the implementation of the peace agreement is critical for stability in the north, the authorities must give equal attention to issues concerning central Mali.

First, expeditious progress on institutional, political and electoral reforms is needed to achieve the ambitious target of holding elections by the end of the 18-month transition period. The recommendations of the inclusive national dialogue provide a basis to build consensus around issues of national importance. We welcome the setting up of a transitional support group by the African Union (AU) and a follow-up committee by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and hope that there will be positive progress in the coming months.

Secondly, re-establishing State presence and State authority is fundamental to achieving peace and stability in Mali. The international community should support Mali in its efforts to effectively restore State institutions, civil administration and

judicial entities, particularly in northern and central Mali. To that end, training and capacity-building of the civilian establishment and support for the ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process will be important. Malian Defence and Security Forces operations require MINUSMA's ongoing support.

Thirdly, we have taken note of the Secretary-General's update (S/2020/1282) on MINUSMA's operations, security challenges and transition plan, including a possible exit strategy. MINUSMA plays an important role in stabilizing the security situation in Mali through its political and military support for the peace process and its confidence-building measures. We applaud the efforts of MINUSMA peacekeepers in these complex and difficult circumstances.

Fourthly, if MINUSMA is to carry out its mandate more effectively, it must be adequately equipped. Expecting more with diminishing resources is counterproductive. My Government will consider the Secretary-General's proposal for the deployment of air assets to MINUSMA. India also contributed \$1 million, in 2013, to the fund of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali.

Fifthly, the menace of terrorism cannot be tackled alone — by Mali or any other State in the Sahel region. The Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel therefore requires more robust support from the Council and from the international community.

Sixthly, we support the mediation role of ECOWAS and the AU in efforts to restore constitutional order. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General should continue to work closely with ECOWAS and the AU to extend all possible assistance to the transitional Government during the transition period.

India believes that the ongoing support of the international community is crucial for Mali at this critical time. For its part, India has extended soft loans totalling \$353.6 million for various development projects in Mali, including in the energy sector.

India also offers a significant number of training slots for Malian officials under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme. Mali is one of the beneficiaries of the Duty-Free Tariff Preference Scheme for Least Developed Countries, enjoying zero duty on nearly 95 per cent of its exports to India. Earlier this year, India also provided Mali critical medicines to help it fight the coronavirus disease pandemic.

After ECOWAS and the AU recognized Mali's transitional Government, India has extended its full support. India has also supported Mali's continued membership in the Governing Council of the Community of Democracies.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to helping Mali overcome the current political and security crisis.

Annex VI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason**

[Original: English and French]

I would first like to thank Mr. Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, for his illuminating briefing and for the important work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Ireland is proud to be a troop-contributing country to the stabilization efforts in Mali.

As we heard this morning, the presence of MINUSMA in Mali remains critical. The level of violence in Mali is alarming, and we recognize that much more needs to be done to protect human lives. It is therefore imperative that the Mission have the capacity and resources it needs to fulfil its mission.

We welcome the continued implementation of the MINUSMA adaptation plan. In particular, we support the objective of proactively protecting civilians in central Mali. We encourage the full implementation of the plan as soon as possible.

I express my deepest condolences to the victims who have been killed recently in Mali, including members of MINUSMA and the French armed forces. I would like to pay tribute to all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace and security in Mali.

Mali is at an important juncture. Ireland strongly welcomes the progress made in establishing the transitional Government and institutions. We commend the leadership demonstrated by the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union in supporting that transition. Today we encourage all Malians to continue to work to ensure a successful civilian-led transition and return to constitutional order. We call on the Government to move towards holding inclusive, transparent, free, fair and credible elections within the 18-month time frame.

There is now a real opportunity in Mali to make progress towards inclusive and lasting peace. President N'Daw's New Year's message gives hope and offers a way forward. We look forward to those commitments being translated into actions.

I would like to outline a number of areas where progress is both needed and possible. We know many Malians also share this view.

The implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali remains critical. We strongly welcome the inclusion of civil society in the transitional cabinet of representatives, as well as the inclusion, for the first time, of four representatives of signatory movements. We see that as an opportunity to advance the peace process. MINUSMA's continued support to mediation and communal reconciliation efforts are vital to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. They will reinforce the implementation of the plan.

I want to highlight and welcome the steps taken to increase the engagement of women in the peace process. We heard several speakers refer to that this morning, and we call for greater participation by women in the political transition. Women's participation will help to anchor the process. Looking forward, I underline that women must be encouraged and supported to participate fully, equally and meaningfully as voters, candidates and representatives of their communities. That is in Mali's interests. As co-Chair of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, alongside Mexico, we intend to follow, monitor and, hopefully, support progress.

We remain concerned about levels of violence, including from intercommunal conflict and — as we heard this morning — terrorist activity. We also recognize that those challenges cannot be resolved through security efforts alone. We must help to address the root causes of instability by working together to support sustainable and inclusive development. That must be at the heart of all our efforts. We must also act to promote good governance, the rule of law and human rights, and to strengthen democratic institutions in Mali.

The restoration of State authority is clearly integral to Mali's security. MINUSMA's support for the Malian security forces and the judicial authorities play an important role in that regard. We also welcome efforts also to advance disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and integration processes, and stress that mainstreaming child protection in that work needs to be given consideration.

Ireland takes note of the report of the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali and encourages the Government to respond comprehensively. Ending impunity is integral to breaking the cycle of conflict and, importantly, to building confidence in the State's institutions. We strongly support the Secretary-General's call for investigations into human rights violations and abuses.

We continue to be particularly concerned by the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, which we know is exacerbated by the coronavirus disease. Violence, increased displacement, growing food insecurity and the adverse effects of climate change all have their impact. A lack of access to education, especially for adolescent girls, remains a key challenge and, I would say, a risk. We call on the Government to address conflict-related sexual violence and ensure access for survivors to justice and services, including sexual and reproductive health care, and, of course, to hold perpetrators accountable. We call on all parties to support humanitarian action and to respect humanitarian principles and facilitate the basic delivery of essential assistance to those in need.

Ireland is particularly conscious of the adverse impacts of climate change on security in Mali. We were honoured last year to chair, alongside Mali and the Niger, an event on United Nations peacekeeping operations and pastoral-related insecurity. In our view, we must do more to integrate current and projected climate-related threats in our analysis and actions in Mali. Working with the Niger in deepening the Security Council's understanding of the links between climate and security, we hope to shine a light on the Sahel and the particular challenges those links cause.

In conclusion, I call on all States Members of the United Nations to ensure that MINUSMA has the full resources necessary to allow it to continue to deliver on its core priorities, namely, protecting civilians and supporting the delivery of peace in Mali. Ireland, my country, knows from lived experience that the path to peace is not easy or linear, but peace is possible, and it should be pursued with vigour. We know — and we know well — that Mali has a significant burden of responsibility in rising to meet such complex challenges and obligations, and we want to reiterate our support for accompanying Mali on this path. As Mr. Annadif said today, we dare to hope that this path points to a brighter and stable future for Mali and the Malian people.

Annex VII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Alicia Buenrostro Massieu

[Original: Spanish]

I thank Special Representative Annadif for his briefing, which reminds us of the challenges that are still to be met in order to achieve peace in Mali. I also wish to congratulate the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on its work in favour of peace and to express, on behalf of my country, our condolences for the regrettable loss of a member of its personnel.

Mexico recognizes the importance of the Government's commitment to respecting the Transition Charter and all that it implies for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. It is the only viable alternative for advancing towards national reconciliation. The establishment of the National Transition Council last month lays the institutional foundations for preparing for just that: the democratic transition that Malian society demands and deserves. It is important that, with the support of the Security Council and the cooperation of the international community, legislative work is begun and the necessary institutions be put in place to organize elections within the agreed time frames.

Given the fragility of the current situation, MINUSMA should use its good offices to ensure that the transition process is inclusive and does not generate new hostilities among Mali's political actors. Close cooperation with such regional organizations as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States is therefore desirable.

While Mexico welcomes the fact that nine women participated in last November's meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, women represent only 31 per cent of participants therein. Their participation should go beyond a quota. It is therefore desirable that future reports of the Secretary-General provide us with more qualitative data to better assess the role played by women in the peace process and in Mali's political life. Such data will allow us to assess the extent that women are present and participating in these processes and will help us to verify that conditions of inclusion are indeed being created.

Moreover, my country deplores the fact that violations of children's rights continue to occur with widespread impunity. Mexico unequivocally condemns the recruitment of children by armed groups and calls on the national authorities to comply with their international commitments to investigate and punish those guilty of these unacceptable crimes.

Access to justice is essential to facilitating the reconciliation among Malians. The international community must support the strengthening of the country's judicial institutions, and the national authorities must respect the independence of these institutions and not profit politically from them.

Unfortunately, the activities of terrorist groups and intercommunal violence continue to cause civilian deaths and the destruction of the livelihoods of entire communities, especially in central and northern Mali. We note with concern this expansion of violence. It is particularly serious that improvised-explosive-device attacks have been reported in the south of the country in recent months. The coordination of all international actors with a military presence, as well as the Malian Government, is essential to preventing the violence from escalating further.

The proliferation of small arms, light weapons and improvised explosive devices remains a major challenge. We acknowledge MINUSMA's efforts in this

area, but they are not sufficient to effectively combat a scourge that is so damaging to Malian society.

As Chair of the Mali Sanctions Committee, Mexico expresses its interest in maintaining close cooperation with members of the Security Council and in nurturing a permanent dialogue with regional organizations and neighbouring countries. The sanctions regime should support the internal political process and not be merely an administrative matter without a specific purpose.

Annex VIII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

[Original: French]

On behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — the Niger, Kenya and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1), I would like to pay glowing tribute to Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his excellent briefing and for the personal efforts he is making towards the lasting stabilization of Mali.

Almost four months after the establishment of the transitional authorities, the time has come to take a look back at what has been done and what remains to be done in the brotherly country of Mali. It is no exaggeration to say that the transitional authorities have successfully worked to improve the political climate, which not so long ago had been of great concern to us.

Two days ago, as we took up the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2020/1293), the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) gave us an unvarnished briefing on the situation in a region that is full of hope with regard to the political processes despite strong concerns about the security situation (see S/2021/43). It must be said that the progress made is to the credit of the countries that organized the peaceful elections and of such institutions as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and UNOWAS, which supported the progress.

With particular reference to Mali, I would like, on behalf of the A3+1, to commend the efforts made by the transitional authorities in implementing the peace agreement in the process of organizing elections to mark the country's return to a normal constitutional order. The A3+1 also welcomes the completion of establishing the organs of the transition; the setting by the parties to the peace agreement, on 18 December 2020, of the updated road map of priority actions for the implementation of the agreement; the setting of deadlines for revising the Constitution and reviewing legislation on local authorities and the territorial police; and the expected clarification of the concept of reconstituted defence and security forces; measures taken and foreseen in the framework of the development zone in the northern regions of the country; measures relating to reconciliation and justice; marked progress in the fight against impunity; the security situation in the centre of the country; and the role of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and its Joint Force.

On behalf of the A3+1, I would like to thank the European Union (EU) and its member States for the valuable support they provide in the implementation of the human rights compliance framework through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as for their additional support. The EU's making a command post in Bamako available to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force since 3 June 2020 is another achievement that we welcome, given its importance. In this crucial phase of its transition, Mali needs the support of all, to make the aforementioned advances irreversible.

Accordingly, and as advocated so far by the new authorities, everything should be done to ensure that the next elections are free, transparent and inclusive, given that, in recent years, electoral disputes have regularly been at the root of the crises that have severely shaken the Malian nation. It is our hope that the recent visit to Mali of Mr. Goodluck Jonathan, ECOWAS High Representative for Mali, will

help pave the way for the organization of such elections. Undoubtedly, the ECOWAS summit scheduled to take place in Abuja next February will focus on assisting Mali in its transition.

We also welcome the willingness of the Malian authorities to revitalize the Malian army so that it can better ensure its overarching role in defending the sovereignty and integrity of the Malian territory. It is already achieving victories against the forces of evil. It is also participating in all joint operations with its allies.

On behalf of the A3+1, I would also like to salute the successful efforts that MINUSMA continues to deploy and deplore the loss of human life in its ranks, either as a result of cowardly attacks by armed terrorist groups or as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the second wave of which promises to be even more worrisome for the States of the region than the first one. In this regard, the fight against terrorism and violent extremism must remain a priority, not only for Mali but throughout Africa, where terrorist trends are of great concern. In particular, the use of improvised explosive devices on main supply routes is a matter of concern.

The A3+1 therefore counts on the Security Council's continued support for the Malian national authorities, so that the progress made is not lost to extremist elements. It is in this context that we support the Joint Force of the G-5 for the Sahel and seek to call for it to receive continuous and adequate support, including financial support, which is essential for it to carry out its tasks and fulfil its mandate. MINUSMA's decisive support in the context of the stabilization and gradual restoration of State authority in the centre and north of the country is therefore to be welcomed. The same applies to its decisive support that has enabled the redeployment of reconstituted units, despite some residual difficulties.

The A3+1 believes that, like the socioeconomic programme for unintegrated fighters implemented with the support of MINUSMA and the World Bank, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme should be structured in such a way as to make the army a major player in development. To this end, the training that integrated soldiers and former combatants receive should go beyond the security aspect alone. We are convinced that additional skills in the fields of civil engineering, agriculture and animal husbandry will enable these former combatants to make a valuable contribution in the recovery of affected areas and in building a Mali of prosperity, peace and justice.

Furthermore, the A3+1 is deeply concerned at the humanitarian situation, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend bilateral and multilateral partners for intensifying their efforts to address humanitarian needs. In the light of the second wave of the pandemic, the deteriorating security situation and the tense political context, assistance to vulnerable populations, in particular women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities, must remain unimpeded and commensurate with their needs.

It is with that in mind that we commend the mediation and humanitarian assistance activities of MINUSMA, which, in several locations, have facilitated access to humanitarian aid and, more important, the de-escalated violence between communities. We welcome the easing of tensions linked to the management of the commune of Aguelhok, following the recent agreement dated 7 and 8 January 2021, and in Anéfis, between the leaders of the former rebels of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014. In this regard, Kenya, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Niger reiterate their call for greater attention to be paid to the destabilizing phenomenon of intercommunity conflicts through coordinated action, which could consist of setting

up a joint project between the G-5 Sahel and the United Nations, with a view to addressing root causes and preventing the recurrence of these conflicts.

Today, one year after the Pau summit of 13 January 2020, the situation in Mali and the subregion continues to be a source of grave concern, even though the counter-terrorism operations of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force have significantly reduced the number of conflicts and the capacity of terrorist armed groups to do harm in the central Sahel, as the most recent report of the Secretary-General on this issue, of course, attests. The asymmetrical nature of the attacks that we are experiencing, including those that recently took place in the Niger and Nigeria, requires that we be increasingly and permanently vigilant.

While we appreciate the support of other partners and MINUSMA in assisting the Joint Force, we must, owing to the inadequacies of the support mechanism identified in the recent assessments of the Secretary-General, make an effort to readjust our intervention strategies in the Sahel. It is the opinion of the A3+1 that the next renewal of the MINUSMA mandate should provide us with an opportunity to remove the task of supporting the Joint Force entrusted to the Mission by resolution 2391 (2017) from its mandate, in order to enable it to better focus on its strategic priorities, given the current situation on the ground. In exchange, a United Nations support office dedicated to the Joint Force should be established. Alternatively, such a support office could make voluntary contributions to fund logistical, operational and tactical support for the Joint Force.

In conclusion, and as I said at the outset, it is time to take stock of the situation in order to evaluate and adjust our actions. We must rethink and harmonize our intervention strategies in order to enable Malians to be the major players in the stabilization of their country.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, Mona Juul**

I thank Special Representative Annadif for his timely updates. I also welcome the presence of Ambassador Issa Konfourou and Mali's consistent participation in these meetings.

Five months have passed since the coup in Bamako. Progress in Mali and stability in the region now hinge on a peaceful, inclusive and effective transition back to constitutional normality. Just over a year remains until free, fair and democratic elections are scheduled to take place. But the Malian people must already start to feel a sense of improvement during the transition, and that needs to happen in line with the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Looking ahead to the transition and beyond, let me highlight three key issues.

First, inclusive political processes are essential, and women's participation is necessary for sustainable outcomes. While there is a need for more inclusivity, let me here highlight one of the positive developments. We welcome the inclusion of nine women in the Agreement Monitoring Committee. Their input into discussions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, reforms, education, development, reconciliation, justice and other issues is crucial. We hope that their inclusion marks a trend towards the full, equal and meaningful participation and representation of women at all levels. Norway will continue to support those efforts every step of the way.

Secondly, civilians, including children, must be protected. That is why Norway has been involved in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) since its outset. As we speak, we are again deploying a transport aircraft to the Mission as part of an innovative rotation scheme established with partner countries in 2016. We also provide a specialized police team that is assisting Mali in building capacity in its fight against impunity.

We are worried about recent reports of grave violations and abuses against children, including forced recruitment and sexual and gender-based violence. In that light, we see MINUSMA's contribution to strengthening the rule of law as being as important as ever.

We call upon the Malian authorities, with the assistance of partners, to follow up on the recommendations contained in the report of the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali. Compliance with international law obligations and accountability are key to rebuilding trust, breaking spirals of violence and restoring authority and the legitimacy of a State. Impunity must end, and national authorities must lead by example. We therefore welcome the fact that the fight against impunity is a priority in the transitional Government's road map.

Thirdly, in order to ensure viable and long-term solutions to Mali's complex challenges, there is a need to address comprehensive security goals beyond combating armed groups. A swift return of State authority and basic services across the country, including quality education, is essential. Mali cannot afford a lost generation.

We also urge all stakeholders to continue to ensure safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors and to strengthen civil-military coordination. Furthermore, it is important to address and adapt to the current and long-term effects of climate change, which leads to resource scarcity and reinforces existing conflicts.

Last but not least are dialogue and reconciliation. MINUSMA's mandate includes support for dialogue with and among all stakeholders. In short, it is necessary to address root causes.

Before I conclude, and in the light of the new year, let me pay tribute to everyone working to support progress in Mali. The Secretary-General's report (S/2020/1281) clearly shows the difficult tasks that they face.

We extend our condolences to France, which recently lost five soldiers combating terrorism in Mali, and express our concern about the improvised-explosive-device attack on a MINUSMA convoy in Timbuktu this morning.

We also commend Special Representative Annadif, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union for the key roles they are continuing to play after the coup in August. We have heard their calls for continued support for Mali.

As a new member of the Council, Norway will remain a constructive partner of Mali, including through MINUSMA and other international efforts.

Annex X**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva**

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his briefing on the situation in the country and on the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We note his cautiously optimistic stance.

We commend the fact that the transitional authorities are taking the proper steps to restore constitutional order. A Transition Charter was adopted, and the National Transition Council has begun its work. It is important that authorities engage in dialogue with all stakeholders, including the Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin 2014 and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad. Their representatives have joined the Government, which represents an important step on the way to national reconciliation. We trust that the new authorities will do everything they can to ensure that the time frame for the transitional period — 18 months — is adhered to, after which general parliamentary and presidential elections are to be held.

Stabilizing the situation in the country depends on the strict implementation by the transitional Government and other political forces of the provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, signed at Algiers. We hope that the constructive dialogue in this regard with signatory groups, which is already bearing fruit, will continue. A second phase of the process of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants has been agreed upon. Security-sector and State governance reforms must continue, and the interests of all of the country's peoples, in particular those living in its northern territories, must be taken into account.

We cannot allow terrorists to capitalize on the current difficulties. Judging by the increasing frequency of their attacks, they are feeling more confident. Their attacks target civilians, United Nations peacekeepers and service personnel from other States who are assisting Mali in the fight against terrorism.

We are concerned about the situation in the Liptako-Gourma triangle, where militants are fighting over the boundaries of their spheres of influence and for control over smuggling channels and supplies of drugs and weapons. There are now chronic intercommunal clashes in Mopti and Ségou. Across the country there has been an increase in the frequency of attacks, and abductions, banditry, racketeering and robberies are flourishing, and there has been a growing number of human rights violations.

The humanitarian situation in Mali is a source of great concern. Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, the number of people in need of food assistance has increased substantially. Many schools remain closed, and medical facilities are overburdened. All of that requires an urgent response on the part of humanitarian agencies.

We support the efforts of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the area of political mediation in Mali. We particularly commend the role of ECOWAS and call on the Malian authorities to cooperate actively with their colleagues in the region. We welcome the fact that steps aimed at the restoration of constitutional rule have resulted in the lifting of ECOWAS's restrictions on Mali.

We must keep in mind that the situation in Mali is a key factor in regional security. We hope that the full participation of the Malian Armed Forces in the operations of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Joint Force and the 2020 decision by African countries to ramp up action against terrorism will be

implemented. The African Union Commission's idea to deploy African standby forces in the Sahel region merits support.

Close cooperation and coordination between Bamako and MINUSMA remain imperative. Peacekeepers must continue to strictly fulfil their mandate in the north and the centre of the country. We welcome the assistance provided by MINUSMA in the construction of Malian Armed Forces bases in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, as well as its assistance to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. However, we would recall that the primary responsibility for protecting civilians, restoring control over the northern regions and resolving socioeconomic and other problems lies with the Malians themselves.

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif for his effective leadership of the Mission.

Annex XI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Barbara Woodward**

I should like to thank Special Representative Annadif for his insightful and detailed briefing, and I want to begin by offering my condolences in connection with all those who have lost their lives in the conflict, including members of the Malian and international forces and United Nations peacekeepers — recently, French troops serving in Operation Barkhane and including the improvised-explosive-device attack on a convoy in Timbuktu this morning.

During the most recent Council meeting on Mali, in October (see S/PV.8765), the United Kingdom called on the parties to implement fully the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali without further delay. We noted in particular that we hoped to see the transitional Government taking steps to assume leadership of the peace process, address impunity and work towards holding elections within 18 months.

I commend and welcome the efforts made over the last three months in those respects by the transitional Government and other signatory parties. The United Kingdom welcomes the establishment of the National Transition Council, the publication of the road map for the transition and the consultations now under way on the full operationalization of the Northern Development Zone.

We also welcome the steps taken to finalize the first phase of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and to launch the second phase, and we hope that this will pave the way for wider security-sector reform.

We also very much welcome the fact that, for the first time, nine women have been included as representatives of signatory movements in the Agreement Monitoring Committee. We would encourage the transitional Government to continue those efforts as well as to ensure that the necessary reforms are implemented and that the preparations for elections proceed without delay.

However, much more remains to be done. We remain concerned by reports of human rights abuses and violations, including gender-based violence and cases of child recruitment by armed groups. We hope that the transitional Government will ensure prompt, thorough and transparent investigations into such allegations, including those outlined in the recent report of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on the protests that took place in Bamako and wider regions in July.

As the Secretary-General has said, the cycle of violence can be broken through justice and reconciliation. We fully agree, and we continue to encourage cooperation by Malian and other regional forces with the United Nations monitoring of human rights. That is essential not only as a matter of principle but also as a pillar of peacebuilding and counter-insurgency.

In a similar vein, we also urge the transitional authorities to ensure that human rights and due process are respected with regard to the administration of the current state of emergency and the recent arrests of Malian political and media figures. The safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and personnel is also of paramount importance. I agree with the Secretary-General that we need to see meaningful progress in the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed against United Nations peacekeepers in Mali, not least to send a strong message that such crimes will not go unpunished.

I would like to make a final point on the importance of inclusivity. Achieving the core goals of the peace agreement relies on all parties having a sense of ownership of the process. It is very welcome that, for the first time, representatives of each of the signatory movements are part of the Government and that women representing each of the signatory parties have participated in meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee. That is a significant step towards inclusivity.

We encourage the transitional Government to take similar steps towards a more inclusive approach as it works to achieve its other priorities, including all stakeholders so as to help build consensus on how to implement difficult but necessary reforms and how to resolve issues that have led to labour strikes.

In conclusion, in the coming months we hope to see further progress on the implementation of the peace process, addressing impunity and preparing for elections. In the context of continued insecurity and worsening humanitarian needs, inclusive and effective action on those priorities is more urgent than ever.

The United Kingdom stands ready to provide support. We recently announced more than \$10.5 million in extra emergency aid to those most vulnerable in Central Sahel. We are proud to be joining peacekeepers from more than 60 nations as part of MINUSMA. That is a testament to the importance that the United Kingdom attaches to United Nations peacekeeping and its role in helping to achieve global peace and security.

I should like to close by extending my thanks to United Nations colleagues for all their sterling support to our troops in their first weeks in Mali.

Annex XII**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Richard Mills**

I thank the Special Representative for his briefing.

Let me begin by joining my colleagues in extending my deepest sympathies to the family members of those killed in the recent violence in the region, including in the recent terrorist attacks in the Niger, and the attacks against the French soldiers in Mali that killed five. The United States condemns those attacks and others like them in the strongest terms.

As we heard from the Special Representative, the transitional Government in Mali has a window of opportunity to lay the foundation for a safer, more prosperous, more democratic country. The United States commends the steps that the Malian transitional Government has taken to deliver on its commitments to its citizens and to move forward towards those goals.

The United States supports the reform agenda that the transitional Government and the African-led Transitional Support Group announced last November. That agenda focuses on security, governance, a renewed social compact, elections and the implementation of the Algiers accord — the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

The United States urges the transitional Government to focus its efforts on priority issues to ensure concrete progress by April 2022. What are those? First, free and fair elections need to be organized in the agreed-upon time frame. Secondly, Malians must tackle impunity — impunity for corruption — and they must address human rights violations and abuses. Progress in those areas is crucial to rebuilding the relationship between the Government and its citizens. Thirdly, Malians must demonstrate a commitment to inclusive governance, especially the focused delivery of basic service programmes to Mali's north, as is outlined in the Algiers accord.

Holding free and fair elections within the next 14 months is vital to returning the country to a democratically elected Government. The United States welcomes the transitional Government's recent assurances that the timeline for both the legislative and presidential elections will be well within the prescribed period. Malians deserve the opportunity to choose their own leaders, as my colleagues have said, and to ensure that the next elected Government has the necessary legitimacy to advance reforms.

The United States urges the transitional Government to organize the elections in a credible and transparent manner and through a very inclusive process. The Government also should designate election authorities that are, and will be, perceived to be independent and technically competent to administer the polls.

The transitional Government has taken a noteworthy step forward in fighting corruption by publicly stating its commitment to requiring public officials to declare their assets. That must now be enforced, and those who abuse public assets must be held accountable.

The rule of law must also extend to human rights. We applaud the transitional President's public commitment to improving the human rights record of Mali's defence forces, and we take note of the Defence Ministry's strict prohibition on the recruitment of children younger than 15 years of age. We call for strong enforcement of that prohibition and for continued progress towards further professionalizing the Malian Defence and Security Forces. The United States urges the transitional

Government to follow through to complete transparent investigations and prosecute cases of human rights violations and abuses in a timely manner.

On the Algiers accord, the United States is encouraged to hear that women, in significant numbers, participated in the first meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee held by the transitional Government, and we hope to see women's full, effective and meaningful participation, as my Irish colleague underscored (annex VI), in the implementation of the Agreement moving forward.

As the largest humanitarian donor to the Sahel region, the United States remains a steadfast partner to the Malian people, and we are hopeful that, in the months ahead, the country will move forward towards sustainable reform and progress on the Algiers accord benchmarks.

Annex XIII**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Pham Hai Anh**

We would like to thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his insightful briefing (annex I). We welcome Ambassador Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative of Mali, to this meeting.

We welcome the efforts and progress made by the parties concerned with regard to the implementation of the transition road map in Mali. The establishment of the transitional Government and the institutions of the transition constitute important steps for the work ahead in the country in 2021. While stressing the importance of the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, we also see the representation of the signatory movements in the Government as an important opportunity, which should be used to advance the peace process.

In that context, we echo the Special Representative's call for a peaceful and inclusive transition process in order to achieve the institutional and electoral reforms prior to the anticipated elections. It is important for the transitional Government, Parliament and the parties concerned to strengthen mutual trust, resolve their differences and work together in the spirit of reconciliation. A calendar for the elections can help the planning of not only the organization and participation by the people of Mali, but also the assistance of the international community and the United Nations, as may be required. We continue to emphasize the importance of the increased and meaningful participation of women in the political process and welcome MINUSMA's assistance to Mali in that regard, while noting MINUSMA's strong female presence in the police and civilian components.

In addition, we reiterate the need for the parties concerned and the signatory armed groups to assume their responsibilities and ownership of the peace process and show good faith in speeding up the implementation of the peace agreement.

The security situation in Mali is still worrisome due to violence, terrorist acts and intercommunal conflicts. Terrorist and extremist groups have increased persistent attacks against civilians, United Nations peacekeepers and security forces, especially in central Mali, including Ségou and Mopti. We condemn those attacks and express our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Mali, especially the families of those who lost their lives. The perpetrators of those acts must be brought to justice.

We call on the relevant parties and signatories to heed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. It is imperative for all parties to cease all hostilities and spare no effort in tackling the tremendous challenges facing Mali.

In that regard, we commend MINUSMA for its efforts to promote the presence of State authority in northern and central Mali, as well as the operations against terrorism by the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. We stress the importance of the redeployment of the reconstituted units of the Malian armed forces, especially in the north.

We remain concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Mali, as well as the increase in sexual violence, abuses linked to the spread of violent extremism, terrorism, the recruitment of children, food insecurity and organized crime. Moreover, the coronavirus disease pandemic, intercommunal violence and the adverse impacts of climate change continue to further exacerbate humanitarian needs. As of October 2020, more than 300,000 people were internally displaced,

an increase of nearly 23,000 as compared to the number in July. More than 188,000 children aged between 6 and 59 months are expected to face severe acute malnutrition, which is also an increase of more than 20,000 as compared to an earlier period in 2020.

We therefore reiterate our call on parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and protect civilians, especially women and children. We join the Secretary-General's call on donors and partners to provide adequate support to help Mali to address those humanitarian needs.

Last but not least, we stress the need for a coherent and integrated approach to the security, humanitarian and social development challenges in Mali. We reaffirm our support for the efforts of the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the international community in facilitating the transitional process and promoting peace and security in Mali.

Annex XIV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations, Issa Konfourou**

[Original: French]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Tunisia's outstanding presidency of the Security Council for the month of January and to assure you of Mali's full cooperation. Allow me also to reiterate my warm congratulations and my best wishes for success to India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway in fulfilling their mandates as new members of the Council.

In the same vein, I would like to thank the delegations of Belgium, Germany, Indonesia, South Africa and the Dominican Republic for their immense contribution to the pursuit of international peace and security over the past two years.

I would not want to conclude such expression of appreciation without reiterating the deep gratitude of the people and the Government of Mali to the Security Council, Secretary-General, António Guterres, the countries contributing troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and all friendly countries and partner organizations to Mali for their continuing invaluable efforts in support of peace, stability and reconciliation in Mali.

The Government of Mali takes note of the report of the Secretary-General under consideration (S/2020/1281), and I thank Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mali and Head of MINUSMA, for his briefing and updates on the most recent developments in Mali. I also take note of the comments and strong expectations that the members of the Council just expressed with regard to the situation in Mali. I would now like to share with the Security Council the observations of the Government of Mali on the report of the Secretary-General.

I begin by affirming that the period under review was marked by the completion of the establishment of the transitional organs, with the installation of the National Transition Council, composed of 121 members drawn from all the political forces of the Malian nation. I recall that the National Transition Council is the transitional legislative body. In that regard, it will play a leading role in the review and adoption of the political and institutional reforms necessary to rebuild the Malian State.

As Council members know, the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and its diligent implementation remain one of the pillars of the transition's road map. The resumption of the work of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, after several months of suspension in view of the country's turbulent socio-political situation, therefore marked a major step in the relaunching of the peace process. The Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Moctar Ouane, chaired the opening ceremony of the forty-first session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in Bamako on 16 November 2020. The Prime Minister took the opportunity to call for strengthening the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, accelerating political and institutional reforms, supporting development actions and relaunching the national reconciliation process.

Following that important meeting, the inter-Malian consultations continued, leading to the signing, on 18 December 2020, of the revised road map of priority actions for the implementation of the Agreement. With regard to the political and institutional issues, the revised road map sets June 2021 as the deadline for the constitutional review process, in line with the provisions of the Agreement and

with the participation of the signatory movements. Similarly, the review of texts, such as the code of territorial authorities and the law on free administration, in line with the revised Constitution and the provisions of the Agreement, will take place in August 2022 at the latest. The texts relating to the territorial police and territorial reorganization will be finalized and adopted in February and March 2021, respectively.

With regard to defence and security issues, the Malian parties have agreed, in the new road map, to hold a meeting at the decision-making level in January 2021 to achieve a common understanding of the concept of the reconstituted Malian Defence and Security Forces, as well as the modalities for its implementation. That meeting will aim to settle definitively the issue of civilian and military quotas, the chain of command and the unfit and former combatants of the Malian Defence and Security Forces. However, the overall DDR and integration process is still ongoing. In that regard, the goal of integrating 1,687 ex-combatants into the Malian Defence and Security Forces under the second phase of accelerated DDR by the end of 2020 has been achieved, with the integration of 1,313 ex-combatants from the signatory movements and the registration of the remaining 451.

With regard to economic and social development issues, in January 2020 the Government set up a development zone for the northern regions of Mali, the Northern Development Zone, particularly its secretariat through the appointment of the President and Vice-President of the interregional advisory council of the Development Zone and the conditions for the appointment of the Permanent Secretary. In February 2021, the Government will organize a round table with the participation of partners for the financing of the specific development strategy for the northern regions of Mali. From the funds available, the Government intends to launch in February 2021 at least one structural project per region in the Development Zone.

Finally, in terms of reconciliation, justice and humanitarian issues, the Government aims, first, to expedite the adoption of the law on the role of the qadis and traditional authorities in administering justice by April 2021; secondly, expedite the adoption of the national reparation policy, proposed by the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, in the first quarter of 2021; and, thirdly, adopt the implementing decree for the National Accord Act by March 2021. Moreover, I would like to point out that the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, after having collected more than 19,000 victims' testimonies, held its second public hearing on 5 December, during which 12 survivors of atrocities testified before it.

For its part, the Malian judiciary held a session of the Court of Assizes from September to December 2020, during which the Court in particular handed down several convictions in cases of terrorism and other crimes. I am pleased that the Secretary-General mentions some of that progress in his current report.

Despite a complex national and regional context and the many challenges still facing our peace process, the Government remains aware of the need to continue and intensify efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement so as to enable the people of Mali as a whole to fully enjoy the peace dividend.

The situation in the central regions of Mali still remains a source of major concern for the Government. In addition to spreading terror daily in our common space, those forces of evil exploit and pit our populations against each other. Those associations, created and maintained by these criminal groups, continue to fuel intercommunal violence, which has deeply afflicted our country and those of the Sahel region.

The Government is aware of the complexity of the situation in central Mali. That is why, in addition to a military solution, it is working to find political answers, with

the involvement of the traditional leaders, with a view to establishing a framework for exchange and dialogue among the different communities and strengthening the security mechanism to protect the populations and their property.

In that regard, I would like to thank MINUSMA for its support to the Permanent Secretariat of the Cadre politique de gestion de la crise au centre du Mali, including support for the strengthening of the awareness-raising campaign, in order to promote widespread support among women, youth and vulnerable people for the process.

With regard to the human rights situation, I would like to stress that the Government remains committed to respecting and ensuring respect for human rights and to fighting impunity. Examples of that are the opening of investigations into the cases of the attacks committed against the village of Gouari and others in the Bankass Cercle in July 2020, which resulted in the deaths of civilians and military personnel, and the opening of the hearings of the Mopti Court of Assizes.

In addition, the first hearings of the military court of Mopti region, which has jurisdiction over the northern regions, were held and resulted in the conviction of eight Malian soldiers. That means that in Mali the fight against terrorism cannot justify the perpetration of acts of serious human rights violations and war crimes, including within the defence and security forces.

The regional dimension of instability remains a source of great concern for Mali and other countries of the Sahel. The particularly deadly attack on two villages in the Niger on 2 January near the border with Mali and Burkina Faso has just reminded us that we were right to set up the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and its Joint Force. We believe that the G-5 Sahel, through its two pillars of security and development, is a comprehensive, appropriate and sustainable response to the multiple challenges of our common area. We therefore call on our partners once again to continue to support the joint actions of the five countries.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that Mali's sustainable stabilization process is at a critical point. Its success, first and foremost, depends upon the sacred union of Malian stakeholders to save our country, and I can assure the Security Council that the transition authorities are committed to laying the groundwork for the rebuilding of Mali.

I must also say emphatically that the success of the sustainable stabilization process also depends upon the quality of international support as we emerge from the crisis. I would like to take this opportunity to express the sincere thanks of the transition authorities and the people of Mali to all our partners for the tireless efforts they are making on a daily basis to support Mali as it emerges from the crisis.

I also commend the outstanding work undertaken by the women and men of MINUSMA on the ground since July 2013, under the able leadership of Special Representative Annadif, in what I know are extremely difficult conditions, far from their families and their countries.

I reiterate the gratitude of the transition authorities and the Malian people to the French forces of Operation Barkhane, the troop-contributing countries of MINUSMA and all partners, both multilateral and bilateral, for their constant support with a view to achieving a lasting and definitive settlement of the Malian crisis.

I would like to end by paying a particularly heartfelt tribute to all the victims of the Malian crisis, civilian and military, foreign and Malian, who died in action in Mali.