

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 314TH MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL

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Bamako, Mali

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 314th meeting held at the ministerial level in Bamako, Mali, on 20 March 2012, adopted the following decision on the situation in the northern part of Mali:

Council,

1. Takes note of the report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in the Sahel region, in particular the paragraphs on the situation in the northern part of Mali [PSC/MIN/3.(CCCXIV)];
2. Expresses its deep concern about the situation created by the attacks that the rebel elements of the Mouvement national pour la Libération de l'Azawad – MNLA (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) and other rebel groups, including major displacement of people within Mali and towards the neighboring countries. Council stresses the seriousness of the threats that this new crisis poses for peace, security and stability in Mali and in the region as a whole, particularly in view of the overall fragility of the situation, which is marked by the proliferation of all types of arms, terrorism and transnational organized crime;
3. Reaffirms the relevant provisions of decision Assembly/AU/Dec.408 (XVIII), adopted by the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa, on

29 and 30 January 2012, as well as those of the final communiqué of the 40th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Council welcomes the press releases on the situation in the northern part of Mali issued by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, on 18 January and 12 March 2012, as well as by the President of the ECOWAS Commission, on 19 March 2012;

4. Further reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the respect of the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali and stresses the determination of the AU and its Member States to guard against their violation. Council expresses the solidarity of Africa with the people and Government of Mali, as well as its support to their efforts towards the speedy restoration of normalcy in the areas affected by the conflict;

5. Stresses the rejection by the AU of the recourse to armed rebellion in Mali, a country whose democratic institutions offer a framework for the expression of all legitimate claims and make it possible to find, through dialogue, solutions to the concerns of the different components of the Malian nation. Council underscores its conviction that recourse to armed rebellion poses a serious threat to the democratization process on the continent, as well as to Africa's stability and development, and must, as such, be discouraged and strongly fought against. Council requests all AU partners to mark their support for the principled position of the AU and consequently promote a unified position of the entire international community on this matter;

6. Demands the immediate cessation of hostilities and urges the different rebel groups to commit themselves, without delay, to the search of a peaceful solution to the crisis within the strict framework of the AU principles, particularly the respect and preservation of the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali. Council

expresses its appreciation to the Government of Mali for its affirmed readiness to work towards a peaceful and fair solution to the crisis;

7. Expresses its determination to actively support a mediation process spearheaded by the neighboring countries of Mali, particularly the core countries and especially Algeria, considering the crucial role this country has always played in the search for solutions to the situation, as well as by ECOWAS, and requests the Chairperson of the Commission to determine the modalities for the immediate implementation of such a mediation process and the promotion of the necessary synergies, to facilitate a peaceful settlement. Council also requests the Chairperson of the Commission to take all necessary steps for the mobilization by the AU of support from the rest of the continent and international community as a whole to this process, including through the establishment, under the aegis of the AU and the United Nations, of a support and follow-up group comprising all the neighboring countries, the relevant Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS and the Community of the Sahelo-Saharan States – CEN-SAD), as well as the international partners concerned;

8. Pays tribute to the neighboring countries of Mali, which, in spite of the effects of the food crisis faced by the Sahel, are hosting Malian refugees on their territories. Council encourages the host countries, in line with the guidelines of the AU and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, to take the necessary steps to relocate the refugee camps away from the border areas. Council expresses its gratitude to the international community as a whole for the humanitarian assistance provided to the Malian population affected by the present crisis in the northern part of the country;

9. Requests the Chairperson of the Commission, in cooperation with the Government of Mali, ECOWAS, the neighboring countries and the United Nations, to take all the necessary measures for the organization, as soon as possible, of a round table of

development partners on the modalities for enhancing and intensifying their support for Mali. Council also requests the Chairperson of the Commission to speedily convene an African Solidarity Conference in favor of Mali and the equitable development of the affected regions;

10. Requests the Chairperson of the Commission to submit to it quarterly reports on the developments of the situation and the follow up of the present communiqué, and decides to remain actively seized with the matter.