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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
736TH MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ÉTHIOPIA
20 NOVEMBER 2017

PSC/PR/BR.(DCCXXXVI)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 736th meeting, held on 20 November 2017, received a briefing on the situation in Mali and the Sahel.

Council took note of the briefings made by the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel and Head of MISAHEL, former President Pierre Buyoya and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Mahamat Saleh Annadif, on the situation in Mali and Sahel. Council also took note of the statements made by the Permanent Representatives of Mali and Togo, in its capacity as the current chair the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as by the representatives of Egypt and Senegal, in their capacity as African members of the United Nations Security Council, the representative of Algeria, in its capacity as chair of the Monitoring Committee of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, and the representative of the European Union (EU).

Council recalled its previous decisions on the Situation in Mali and the Sahelo-Saharan region, including Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM (DCLXXIX)] adopted at its 679th meeting, held on 13 April 2017 and Press Statement PSC/PR/BR (DCCIII) adopted at its 703rd meeting, held on 20 July 2017.

Council reiterated its commitment to ensure scrupulous respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Mali, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the AU Constitutive Act.

Council once again took note, with concern, of the slow progress in the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers Process, which is the only viable framework for restoring sustainable peace and genuine reconciliation in Mali. Council welcomed the progress made in the establishment of the institutions provided for in the Agreement, particularly the interim authorities, as well as the installation of Governors in some areas of northern Mali. In this respect, Council took note of the returning of the Governor to Kidal, as well as the appointment of the Carter Center as Independent Observer, in line with the provision of Article 63 of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Council stressed the critical need for the Malian parties to redouble their efforts, in order to ensure a diligent implementation of the provisions of the Agreement, particularly the acceleration of the process of setting up the Operational Coordinating Mechanism (MOC), with a view to facilitating the beginning of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process, as soon as possible, which is essential for the stabilisation process in Mali. Council emphasized that effective implementation of the Agreement, in good faith, by all the Malian parties concerned was the best way to further isolate the terrorist and criminal armed groups, which are the only beneficiaries of the delays in the implementation chronogram of the Agreement. In this respect, Council welcomed the signing of a Ceasefire Agreement on 23 August 2017 by the armed groups that are signatories to the Algiers Agreement. Council

expressed its appreciation to the countries of the region, in particular Algeria, *Chef de file* of the Mediation and Chair of the Monitoring Committee on the Agreement (CSA).

Council welcomed the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of Resolution 2374 (2017), in which the Security Council decided to impose targeted sanctions against any person or entity whose activities are undermining the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Council took note of the arrangements put in place by the Government of Mali for the organisation of local by-elections and regional elections on 17 December 2017, as well as Presidential and Legislative elections in the second half of 2018. In this regard, Council stressed the need for all Malian actors to work for the widest possible consensus, in order to ensure the organisation of elections in the best possible conditions of peace, transparency and credibility.

Council reiterated its deep concern over the continuing deterioration of the security situation not only in the northern parts of Mali, but also in the central part of the country, characterized by the proliferation of terrorist groups and the increasingly coordinated attacks which have also become more complex than ever before. Council, once again, strongly condemned the terrorist attacks against the civilian population, the Malian Defence and Security Forces, as well as the international forces of MINUSMA and *Operation Barkhane*. Council noted, with deep concern, the increasing number of attacks by the groups operating from northern Mali against the Defence and Security Forces of Niger and Burkina Faso.

Council reaffirmed its conviction that the situation obtaining in Mali is inseparable from the general state of peace and security in the Sahel region as a whole. In this regard, Council renewed its full commitment to continue supporting the G5 Sahel countries, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, in their efforts to promote peace and security, through the gradual establishment of the Joint G5 Sahel Force. In this regard, Council took note, with appreciation, of the progress made in the operationalisation of the Joint G5 Sahel Force, including the establishment of its headquarters in Sévaré, Mali, and the conduct of its first operation.

Council, in the framework of its Communiqué of 13 April 2017 and the UN Security Council Resolution 2359 (2017), welcomed the contributions pledged by various partners, in particular the EU and some of its Member States and looked forward to the conclusions of the next Conference on the Sahel, to be held in Brussels. Council expressed the hope that the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, would take the necessary decisions, following the recommendations contained in the Report of the Secretary General of 16 October 2017, to ensure sustainable and predictable funding for the G5 Sahel Force, within the framework of efforts to fight terrorism and violent extremism.

Council, bearing in mind the innovative nature of the regional initiatives such as the one of the G5 Sahel, in the context of the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, underlined the need for a support based on requirements expressed by Members of the G5 Sahel, with a view to enhance their ownership of the operation.

Council reiterated its full support to MINUSMA for its stabilizing efforts in Mali and encouraged it to continue and intensify its support to the Malian armed forces, the Joint G5 Sahel Force and the planned elections to be held in Mali in December 2017 and in 2018.

Council paid tribute to the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel and Head of MISAHEL, former President Pierre Buyoya, for his relentless efforts to contribute towards the promotion of peace and security in Mali and in the Sahel, in general. Council requested the Commission to take the necessary measures, including deploying adequate human resources, in order to enable MISAHEL to more effectively discharge its mandate, in close cooperation with MINUSMA and the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary -General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

Council also requested the Commission to continue to regularly inform Council on the evolution of the situation in Mali in order for Council to take appropriate decisions.

Council decided to remain actively seized of the matter.