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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1027TH MEETING (VIRTUAL MEETING)

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PSC/PR/FMR. MALI. 1027 (2021)

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE EVALUATION MISSION OF THE PEACE AND
SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO THE
REPUBLIC OF MALI, FROM 14th TO 17th JULY, 2021**

I. **INTRODUCTION:**

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) undertook an evaluation mission to Mali from 14th to 17th July, 2021 in fulfilment of the decision in paragraph 11 of its Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM. 1001 (2021)]. See Annex 2. The mission was led by the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Victor Adeleke, in his capacity as the PSC Chairperson for July 2021, other members of the delegation included the Permanent Representatives of the following PSC Member States; Algeria (H.E. Ambassador Salah Francis Elhamdi); Burundi (H.E. Ambassador Joel Nkurabagaya); Cameroon (H.E. Ambassador Churchill Ewumbue-Monono); Kenya (H.E. Ambassador Jean Njeri Kamau); Senegal (H.E. Ambassador Baye Moctar Diop); and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, (H.E. Ambassador Eshete Tilahun Woldeyes); as well as the representatives of Algeria, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi and Nigeria. The Delegation also included the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the AU High Representative for Mali and Head of AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), Ambassador Maman Sambo Sidikou, accompanied by staff from the AU Commission.

II. **MANDATE:**

2. The objectives of the evaluation mission was to engage with all concerned Malian stakeholders, in order to identify areas in which the AU could provide support to Mali, particularly as it relates to the implementation of the transition programme and conduct of elections, (paragraph 11 of Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1001(2021)]) . The mission was also undertaken as an expression of the AU's solidarity, as well as to reaffirm an unwavering commitment with the Government and people of Mali. It was the second PSC mission to Mali since the Joint Field Mission conducted by Peace & Security Council with the European Union Political and Security Committee from 10th to 14th February, 2015.

III. **METHODOLOGY:**

3. The PSC delegation held consultations with Leaders of the Transition and Senior Government Officials in Mali, including the President of the Transition, H.E. Colonel Assimi Goïta; the Prime Minister, H.E. Choguel Kokalla Maiga; the President of the National Transitional Council (NTC), H.E. Malick Diaw; the Speaker of National Assembly, H.E. Moussa Timbine; Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, H.E. Abdoulaye Diop; the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, H.E. Lt. Colonel Abdoulaye Maiga; the Minister –in-charge of the Re-foundation of the State and the Relationship with the Institutions, H.E. Ibrahim Ikassa Maiga; the Minister for Malian Diaspora and African Integration, H.E. Alhamdou A.G Ilyene. Other government officials met were representatives of the Ministries of Economy and Finance; Reconciliation, Peace and

Implementation of Peace Agreement; Justice; as well as officials from Ministry of Security and Civil Protection.

4. The delegation also held consultations with non-government entities including the Local Follow Up Committee on the Transition, comprising of the Representatives of AU, ECOWAS, UN, Ambassadors of Ghana and Nigeria, which was set up by the ECOWAS Mediator and former President of Nigeria, H.E Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. The delegation also met members of the Diplomatic Corps in Mali, political parties, civil society organizations (CSOs), religious groups as well as Movements that are Signatories to the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers process, otherwise referred to as the Platform and the Coordination of Azawad Movements.

IV. **KEY FINDINGS:**

Political Transition:

5. During the consultations with the President and other Senior Government officials, the PSC delegation called for strict adherence to the Transition Plan for the return of Mali to normal constitutional order by February 2022. The delegation also emphasized that any form of military self-succession, incompatible with democratic principles enshrined in the AU Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Elections and Governance, will not be acceptable. Furthermore, the delegation called on the President of the Transition to lift all forms of restrictions, including house arrest on all political leaders including the former President, Bah N'Daw and former Prime Minister, Moctar Ouane.

6. In their various responses, the representatives of the Government, including Colonel Assimi Goita, welcomed the PSC evaluation mission and appealed that it should focus less on the effects of the change of government in May 2021, but rather on the factors that triggered it. They pointed out the negative consequences of the sanctions imposed against Mali on the ordinary citizens of Mali. The President explained that the Transition Government inherited several challenges that must be addressed and appealed to the PSC to support the government's efforts and plea for the lifting of sanctions against Mali. He reiterated that those challenges as well as sanctions were seriously impacting negatively on the Malian economy and compounding the already dire humanitarian as well as socio-economic situation of Mali. This according to the President includes reluctance by foreign investors to invest in Mali.

7. On the fate of political prisoners, the representatives of the Transition Government argued that in accordance with the Malian Constitution, it is the responsibility of Government to ensure the personal security and safety of all former Presidents and Prime Ministers. It was added that the restrictions imposed on the

former President and former Prime Minister were meant to ensure their personal security and safety. Nevertheless, the PSC Delegation was assured that they would soon be out of house arrest. Be that as it may, some members of the diplomatic community however appealed to the PSC to pile pressure on the Transition Government to immediately lift the restrictions imposed on the two former leaders.

8. The PSC delegation was assured by the Transition Government as follows:-
- a) That they are committed to ensure full implementation of the Transition Charter, leading to elections by February 2022;
 - b) That they will continue to implement the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers Process;
 - c) That government would release its Plan of Action by the end of July 2021 to guide the implementation of an inclusive national dialogue and organization of credible elections within the stipulated timelines;
 - d) That government had announced its five (5) priority areas in June 2021, for implementation, namely:-
 - (i) Improvement of the security situation in the country;
 - (ii) implementation of political and institutional reforms that will include the establishment of a single independent election management body;
 - (iii) organization of credible elections in February 2022;
 - (iv) Re-orientation of the Malian public; and
 - (v) Fighting impunity and addressing social ills.

9. However, the Transition Government acknowledged that it has limited time to implement all of these priorities, but expressed the commitment of its leadership to achieve the set goals. They therefore appealed for sustained AU support in the implementation of these priorities.

10. More importantly, the leadership of the National Transition Council (NTC), the body which exercises oversight functions over the Transition government assured the PSC delegation that it will ensure social justice as well as promote national reconciliation, unity, good governance and adherence to the rule of law. The body also added that it will encourage Malians to participate in the upcoming inclusive national dialogue proposed for September/October 2021. During the interaction, the NTC also stated that one of the main challenges facing the Transition Government relates to the debate as to whether to have a single independent election management body or to maintain the current system of having three institutions managing elections in Mali, namely, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MADT), the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) and the General Office of Elections (DGE).

11. From consultations with other stakeholders including political parties, religious groups, Movements and civil society organizations, most of whom prefer the current system, so that government will stick to the transition timeline, which they think would guarantee organization of elections. These actors fear that the legal process of establishing a single independent elections management body may take more time, which they feel may entail reviewing the current Constitution, thereby inevitably compelling the Malian Transition authorities to extend the transition beyond February 2022.

12. Some however argued that the volatile security situation prevailing in the central and northern parts of the country, occupied and controlled by armed/terrorist groups may affect organization of credible elections. They stressed the need for the Government to first create conducive atmosphere for credible elections to hold and in regard appealed for support from AU and other International partners.

Security Situation:

13. The PSC delegation was apprised of the volatile security situation in Mali, which is largely due to the proliferation of terrorist and armed groups, particularly in northern and central parts of the country, going by their increasing attacks, not only against the Malian Defence and Security Forces (FDS), foreign forces, MINUSMA, G5-Sahel, but also against the civilian population. The situation is also exacerbated by increasing incidences of inter-communal violence, acts of banditry, kidnappings, organized crime, drug and human trafficking, arms trafficking and illegal exploitation of the country's natural resources. It was also revealed that the terrorists and armed groups are spreading attacks down the southern parts of the country, causing a dire humanitarian situation, including internal displacement of the population.

Socio-Economic Situation:

14. Consultations with various stakeholders reveal that Mali is facing a dire socio-economic situation as a result of a combination of factors, including ECOWAS sanctions, AU suspension as well as the effect of COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions also showed that the Malian education sector is one of the most affected sectors, as most schools outside Bamako remained closed due to the volatile security situation around the country. Furthermore, there is a lot of agitation by various syndicates/trade unions and social groups, making demands on the Transition Government. These groups include the National Union of Workers of Mali (UNTM), the main Trade Union in the country, persistently demanding salary increments and other benefits for the workers, particularly teachers.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

15. In view of the findings of the evaluation mission to Mali, the PSC may wish to:

- a. Commend the Transition Government for its commitment to abide by the timelines stipulated in the Transition Charter by organizing elections by February 2022 and encourage them to follow the political transition to its logical conclusion;
- b. Commend all Malian Stakeholders for the progress made so far towards the implementation of the Transition Charter;
- c. Urge the Transition Government to come out with its transition road map and action plan towards the organization of elections by February, 2022;
- d. Stress that the national dialogue being proposed for September/October 2021 should be inclusive and aimed at producing outcomes that the Malian society will fully own, respect and commit to implement in order to effectively address the multidimensional challenges facing the country;
- e. Underscore the need for the Transition Government to undertake extensive consultations with all Malian stakeholders in order to reach consensus on the establishment of a single independent election management body to manage the February 2022 elections;
- f. Reiterate that the current leadership of the transition process, including the Head of the Transition, Vice-President and Prime Minister, should not contest in the forthcoming presidential election in Mali;
- g. Urge the Transition Government to immediately lift all restrictions imposed on the former President and Prime Minister;
- h. Underscore the importance of the inclusion and participation of women and youth in the proposed national dialogue in Mali;
- i. Acknowledge the support of international partners in the ongoing political transition in Mali and underscore the need for enhanced coordination and harmonization of efforts by all international actors on the ground, in order to avoid duplication;
- j. Urge all international partners to fulfil their pledges of support to Mali;
- k. Commend the efforts of the ECOWAS Special Envoy and Mediator to Mali, H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as the High Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and Head of AU Mission in Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) for their efforts in finding peaceful solution to the crisis in Mali;
- l. Re-affirm the unwavering commitment of the AU to continue to support the Government and people of Mali to comprehensively address the current challenges facing the country and implore them to set aside their differences by placing the interests of the country above all other considerations;

- m. Request the AU Commission to continue to engage with the Transition Government of Mali with a view to providing necessary support for a successful return to constitutional order;
- n. Express gratitude to the Malian authorities and all other stakeholders for their fruitful engagement with the PSC Delegation during the evaluation mission; and
- o. Express gratitude to MISAHEL for facilitating a successful evaluation mission to Mali.

ANNEXES:

1. Full List of Participants
2. Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1001(2021)]
3. Memorandum Submitted to Head of the PSC Delegation