

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**REPUBLIC OF MALI
One People – One Goal – One Faith**

----- O -----



**ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. ABDOULAYE DIOP, MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE REVIEW BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE
SITUATION IN MALI**

.....

NEW YORK, JUNE 16, 2023

- **Madam Chairperson,**
- **Members of the Security Council,**

First of all, I would like to congratulate the United Arab Emirates on its presidency of the Security Council.

The Government of Mali takes note of the Secretary-General's report under review and I thank Mr. El-Ghassim WANE, Head of MINUSMA, for his presentation and the updates.

The detailed comments by the Government of Mali were the subject of the Memorandum transmitted to your Council.

For my part, I would like to make the following major comments.

I shall begin with the **political situation, and in particular developments in the transition process**. You will recall that one of the priorities assigned to the Transitional Government was to carry out political and institutional reforms that would guarantee a better future for our people through lasting institutional stability in Mali. This legitimate request from our compatriots is about to become a reality,

As part of an inclusive and broadly consensual approach, the Transitional Government has taken strong and irreversible measures to return to a calm and secure constitutional order, within the agreed timeframe.

The Transitional Government is working towards the successful organization of the referendum ballot, scheduled for 18 June 2023, in order to provide Mali with a new Constitution, in accordance with the profound aspirations of the Malian people, as expressed during the National Rebuilding Conference. The smooth running of the disseminating process of the draft Constitution and the related electoral campaign augur well for a peaceful and credible referendum ballot.

- **Madam Chairperson,**

With respect to the security situation, I would like to remind you once again that since the military intervention in Libya in 2011, the people of my country and those of the Sahel region have been experiencing a real tragedy. Unfortunately, our countries and our peoples are still waiting, and have been doing so for over a decade, for an international response commensurate with the threat created and its worrying humanitarian consequences for the region.

To mention only of the specific case of my country, I have to say that international prescriptions, particularly those provided by MINUSMA since its inception in 2013, have clearly shown their limits. If not, why is it that the security situation in Mali in 2013 is so much better than it is today? Realism dictates that we acknowledge the failure of MINUSMA, whose mandate does not meet the security challenges.

For its part, the Transitional Government has never lost sight of the fact that the primary responsibility for defending the national territory and protecting the population and property lies with the Malian State. This is why it has placed particular attention on capacity-building and equipping of the Malian Defense and Security Forces, to enable them to carry out their sovereign missions. Thanks to this judicious choice, our Forces continue to win decisive

victories against terrorist armed groups, which are recognized and appreciated by the Malian people. I know that this increase in power of the Malian Defence and Security Forces has given rise to a great deal of comment, and even hostile campaigns of disinformation and destabilization to which Mali has unfortunately been subjected since 2021, including through the **instrumentalization and politicization of the human rights issue**.

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to certain comments and statements concerning the report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the events in Moura. It was common knowledge that the town of Moura and its surrounding villages had been under siege by terrorist organizations for many years. During this long period, no force, not even the deployed international forces, had access to this locality, leaving the people to their sad fate. I wonder, by the way, where were the voices that are being raised today, when the terrorists were inflicting inhumane and degrading treatment on our defenseless civilian population, stoning women, burning villages and crops and taking away livestock, as was the case in Ogossagou, Sobane Da and Diallassagou, to name but a few.

In addition, based on reliable and precise information indicating that the main terrorist leaders were present in Moura to collect the fruits of rackets against the population, and to organize and plan large-scale attacks, the Malian Defence and Security Forces decided to carry out an air-land opportunity operation commensurate with this threat, in order to put an end to the suffering of our people.

The first units deployed by our airborne resources, as well as the reinforcements, came under fire, confirming the terrorist presence. Clashes ensued around and in the town of Moura, resulting in the neutralization of 203 terrorist fighters, the seizure of a large quantity of weapons and ammunition, the destruction of more than 200 motorbikes and the arrest and bringing to justice of several suspected terrorists. Sadly, eight of our valiant soldiers also fell on the field of honour in this operation, which made it possible to free the population from the yoke of terrorists.

Following allegations of abuses, the relevant authorities immediately opened investigations. A team from the Mopti and Bamako public prosecutor's offices, investigators from the Gendarmerie Nationale, the technical and forensic police and a forensic doctor carried out a judicial transport to the scene. The conclusions will be made public.

The Government strongly rejects the hasty conclusions of the biased report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We see in this biased report a real desire on the part of certain States to use our common Organisation to harm, or even punish Mali for its sovereign choices. Better still, what credit can we give to a report that tends desperately to make people believe that the Defence and Security Forces are targeting civilians whom they are protecting, in accordance with their mission? What's more, this report includes images obtained using satellites, without the knowledge of the national authorities, which constitutes espionage. We must be humble and understand that nobody loves Mali more than the Malians and nobody loves the Malians more than the Malian authorities.

The Government is not alone in rejecting the fictitious conclusions of this report. Many residents of Moura, including women, have travelled to Bamako to deny the contents of this report. Testimonies of the inhabitants of Moura, documented and widely available, clearly deny the unfounded accusations contained in the report and, better still, denounce the methods

used by the investigators. These inhabitants testified that the Malian Armed Forces only targeted terrorists.

In the same vein, and since the first allegations were made in April 2022 by certain States and human rights organizations, the President of the Tabital Pulaaku Association has categorically rejected some of the accusations made against the Malian forces, in particular the accusations of rape of women.

In addition, the President of the Malian Association for Human Rights (AMDH) vigorously denounced the methodology and findings of the investigation.

These strong and freely-expressed positions deserve to be noted, as they come from organizations and individuals who have experienced the events or have received credible and verifiable information about them.

We reiterate our firm opposition to any attempt to instrumentalize and politicize the issue of human rights and to the variable-geometry treatment of this problem. It is paradoxical to note the celerity with which the fact-finding mission was set up when, at the same time, Mali was lodging a complaint with the United Nations Security Council on 15 August 2022 about serious acts of aggression by France against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Mali for destabilization purposes.

- **Madam Chairperson,**

With respect to the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, resulting from the Algiers process, despite the unilateral decision by the CMA and the Platform to suspend their participation in the Agreement's monitoring mechanisms, I would like to reaffirm the Government's commitment to pursuing its efficient and smart implementation, particularly with the Inclusive Movements. We remain open to dialogue with our brothers from the signatory movements, as demonstrated by the visit to Kidal on 12 May 2023 by the Minister in charge reconciliation.

- **Madam Chairperson,**
- **Members of the Council,**

I will devote my last major comment to MINUSMA.

At a time when the members of the Security Council have begun negotiations on the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate, I would like to provide a brief overview of the evolution of the Mission in Mali, from its inception to the present day. Allow me first of all to pay tribute to all the civilian and military victims who have fallen in Mali.

In 2013, the rationale behind the establishment of MINUSMA was to support the Malian authorities in stabilizing the situation in the northern regions of Mali, averting threats and taking active steps to prevent the return of armed elements to these areas, particularly by re-establishing the authority of the State throughout the country.

After several years of deployment of MINUSMA forces on the ground, the security situation in the north of the country has gradually deteriorated in the other regions of Mali, particularly in the centre.

For the Government of Mali, the facts are clear: MINUSMA has not achieved its fundamental objective.

Today, Malians are happy to see their Defence and Security Forces carrying out, in complete autonomy, the missions of securing people and property; fighting crime, organized crime, human trafficking and drug trafficking; escorting transport vehicles; securing weekly fairs in sensitive locations; as well as border security missions, thanks to the strengthening of the security and defence apparatus, in accordance with the vision of His Excellency Colonel Assimi GOITA, President of the Transition, Head of State.

Mali is perfectly aware that the fight against terrorism is not part of the doctrine of United Nations peace operations, but it has always called for a change in the posture of MINUSMA to enable it to carry out its mandate properly and to provide support for the Government's efforts.

Mali has always cooperated with the United Nations in good faith. As part of this constructive approach, we have, for example, fully engaged with the United Nations Secretariat as part of the internal review of MINUSMA in order to strengthen the operational capabilities of the UN force with a view to helping Mali stabilize.

I regret to reaffirm today that the options proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on the interim review of UNMISMA do not meet the concerns and expectations repeatedly expressed by the Government and people of Mali.

We have no choice but to come to the objective conclusions of the assessment of the ten-year presence of MINUSMA, which has not been able to provide adequate responses to the security situation in Mali, and whose prospects for continuation do not meet the security imperatives of the Malian people.

Neither the Secretary-General's proposals, nor the draft resolution currently being negotiated by the members of this Council, provide an appropriate response to the expectations of the people of Mali. This draft resolution confirms the disqualification of France as the penholder, its content being so hostile to Mali.

In addition to the security dimension, which we are now providing with our own resources, we legitimately expected MINUSMA to be a Mission to assist and support the efforts of the Government. Unfortunately, MINUSMA seems to have become part of the problem by fueling inter-community tensions exacerbated by extremely serious allegations that are highly detrimental to peace, reconciliation and national cohesion. This situation is generating a feeling of mistrust among the Malian population towards MINUSMA, and a crisis of confidence between the Malian authorities and MINUSMA.

In view of the foregoing, the Government of Mali calls for the withdrawal without delay of MINUSMA. However, the Government is prepared to cooperate with the United Nations to this end.

- **Madam Chairperson,**
- **Members of the Security Council,**

In conclusion, I would like to express the gratitude of the Government and the people of Mali to all our partners, both bilateral and multilateral, who are supporting us in the important work of rebuilding Mali.

The Government of Mali remains ready to cooperate with partners who respect its sovereignty, its strategic choices and the interests of the Malian people. Faithful to our tradition of hospitality, the "*diatiguiya*", Mali remains open to all peoples of the world.

Thank you for your kind attention.