United Nations

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

7179th meeting
Tuesday, 20 May 2014, 5.20 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Oh Joon ........................................... (Republic of Korea)

Members: Argentina ................................................. Mrs. Perceval
Australia .......................................................... Ms. King
Chad ................................................................. Mr. Cherif
Chile ................................................................. Mr. Barros Melet
China ............................................................... Mr. Wang Min
France .............................................................. Mr. Araud
Jordan ............................................................... Mr. Omaish
Lithuania ........................................................... Ms. Murmokaité
Luxembourg ....................................................... Ms. Lucas
Nigeria .............................................................. Mr. Laro
Russian Federation ............................................. Mr. Iliichev
Rwanda ............................................................. Mr. Sana
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ... Sir Mark Lyall Grant
United States of America ....................................... Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in Mali

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The meeting was called to order at 5.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Security Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, who is joining today’s meeting via video teleconference from Bamako.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Albert Koenders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Koenders, who is also joining today’s meeting via video teleconference from Bamako.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Koenders.

Mr. Koenders (spoke in French): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Security Council following the violent incidents that have rocked Kidal over the past few days, particularly on 16 and 17 May. We regret the loss of lives resulting from these events, and we especially condemn the acts of violence, including those committed by Malian Government forces. In these difficult times for Mali, I would like to reiterate our deepest condolences to President Keita and the families of the victims executed in Kidal. The perpetrators of this hateful crime must be identified and brought to justice as soon as possible, with the support of the international community. These acts of violence by armed groups are a violation of resolution 2100 (2013) and the Preliminary Agreement of 18 June 2013.

The Security Council and the international community, from which 43 countries are contributing men and women peacekeepers to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), have not been spared. In the past few days, two Blue Helmets and 21 police officers from MINUSMA were wounded in Kidal as they supported the Malian armed forces and gendarmerie in accordance with their mandate in the days preceding and during the visit of the Prime Minister and his delegation to the northern region. We wish them a speedy recovery.

These serious incidents, occurring during an important visit by the Malian Head of Government, have highlighted the political and security challenges in Mali that the United Nations has identified over the past few months and again very recently in the context of the strategic review of MINUSMA. In particular, they reveal how complex and difficult it will be to restore State institutions in the North of the country and how urgent it is that progress be made at the level of the political process.

In accordance with resolution 2100 (2013) and the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement of June 2013, the United Nations remains deeply committed to effectively restoring the sovereignty and authority of the Malian State over its entire territory, including — indeed, above all — in Kidal. The restoration of the State in northern Mali is essential to achieving a solution to the underlying causes of the Malian conflict. The acts of the armed groups in Kidal against the Governorate and the Malian State forces are thus totally unacceptable. Indifference is not an option; the people suffer when the violence continues. In order to prevent any further loss of life, particularly among the civilian population, it is crucial that political initiatives be made an urgent priority, as provided for in the Ouagadougou Agreement and requested in resolution 2100 (2013).

(spoke in English)

The priority today is to pull Kidal back from the brink of renewed confrontation. It is imperative that every possible action be taken to avoid further violence. That is essential to prevent northern Mali from slipping into a spiral of violence that risks pulling the country back into the state of crisis that put it on the Council’s agenda and that could destabilize the entire subregion. We must call on all concerned to take concrete action now to help to de-escalate tensions and avoid any further provocation. The Mouvement national pour la libération de l’Azawad must hand over the Governorate and the administrative buildings as soon as possible. The cantonment process must move forward, and the peace initiatives taken recently, including through the
appointment of a High Representative, Mr. Modibo Keita, should proceed without delay. More violence will breed only further violence and risk reversing the progress made so far. The people of Mali will be the first to suffer, as they have all too often been in the past.

Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson called President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita yesterday to convey his extreme concern about the recent violence. Mr. Eliasson stressed the importance of following a political path in order to resolve the current crisis. While he acknowledged that the recent fighting in Kidal has unleashed a strong and understandable emotional reaction among large parts of the population, he appealed for calm and stressed the importance of de-escalating tensions.

The priority for tomorrow is to revive the political process. The international community should be unanimous in impressing on the armed groups that are signatories or adherents to the Preliminary Agreement of 18 June 2013, particularly the Mouvement national de libération de l’Azawad, that their grievances can be addressed and resolved only through peaceful and political means.

*(spoke in French)*

The United Nations will continue to support the parties concerned in their process of reconciliation and political dialogue, and hopes that inclusive peace talks will start as soon as possible, in order to repair the damage to the social tissue inflicted by this crisis, including during the past few days. We are unreservedly committed to continuing our support for this process and other key elements of our mandate in Mali, including development, capacity-building and institutional reforms.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

**Mr. Diop** (Malî) *(spoke in French):* I would first like to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on the Republic of Korea’s accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May, and to express our appreciation for Nigeria’s outstanding leadership of the Council’s work in April.

I would also like to thank the Council for convening this emergency meeting on the situation in Mali and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his account of the serious events that occurred in Kidal on Saturday, 17 May.

We should recall that on 23 April (see S/PV.7158), when we were considering the Secretary-General’s third report (S/2014/229) on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), I spoke to the Council about the Government of Mali’s firm commitment to reaching a definitive solution to the crisis affecting the North of our country, and emphasized the importance of respect for Mali’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity. At that meeting I discussed the joint preparations for inclusive peace talks led by the Government of Mali and MINUSMA, as well as the appointment of former Prime Minister Modibo Keita as High Representative of the Head of State for the inclusive inter-Malian talks.

Less than a month later, and at a time when every effort is being made to restart the talks aimed at achieving a lasting peace, the armed groups that have benefited from the status quo to remarshal their forces chose to declare war on the State of Mali by attacking our Defence and Security Forces as they were carrying out their peaceful and pacific mission to secure the Prime Minister’s visit to Kidal on 17 May.

In his capacity as head of the Administration, the Prime Minister undertook a tour the Mali’s northern regions with a group of 10 Ministers, including Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. Among other things, the purpose of the visit was to ensure the Administration’s gradual redeployment in the northern regions of Mali; to assess the achievements and shortcomings on the ground in order to address in order to create the best conditions for the success of the inter-Malian inclusive talks and the intercommunity and intracommunity meetings under way to prepare for the return of displaced persons and Malian refugees; and, finally, to give a boost to the process of restoring the State’s authority, national reconciliation, strengthening social cohesion and consolidating our country’s national unity. That is the purpose of the battle waged by the Malian people, along with the international community, to bring about peace and national reconciliation and to rebuild the country.

While they were warmly welcomed in Gao and Timbuktu, the Prime Minister and his delegation were, unfortunately, received in Kidal with bullets and the firing of heavy weapons by armed groups in collusion with international terrorism. That resulted in dozens of
dead and wounded and in civilians being murdered in
cold blood at their places of work. Hostages were also
taken, and subsequently released.

If your camera will allow, I would like to show the
Council some pictures of people whose heads were cut
off. The photo below shows one of the assailants — a
woman — who is wearing the hat of one of the prefects
who was savagely murdered. Those are crimes against
humanity, and the Security Council should take strong
action to demonstrate the Council’s determination to
put an end to impunity and atrocities.

In that regard, I should point out that large banners
of the Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Ansar Dine
flew over the aggressors’ vehicles, alongside those of
the Mouvement national pour la libération de l’Azawad
(MNLA). The links between the partners of the peace
process and the terrorist groups is therefore clearly
established and should be rejected and condemned by
the Council in the strongest terms.

We consider that attack a heinous act and a
flagrant, deliberate and premeditated violation of all
the commitments previously undertaken, including the
relevant Security Council resolutions. The attack on the
delegation of the Prime Minister and the Governor of
Kidal is a despicable act — as the Council can see in
the photo — in the face of which no one can remain
indifferent. The Government of Mali welcomes the
expressions of compassion, solidarity and support
shown to our people.

However, we note that the Government’s delegation
did not benefit from the support and protection to
which it had a right to expect under the circumstances.
This situation could have lead to much more tragic
developments. The few troops of the Malian armed
forces present on the ground — “few” because that was
what was stipulated in the Ouagadougou Agreement
and respected by the Malian side — had to make do
against throngs of heavily armed narco-terrorists.

Under the circumstances, I think that the Council
should take the clear position that there is an agressor
in this case — namely, the MNLA and its accomplices —
and that they attacked the Prime Minister and his peaceful
delegation, who were travelling as part of a routine
administrative visit. I hope that the Council’s statement
and recommendations will clearly make clear that there
are not two belligerents; there is one agressor here,
which must be clearly identified. The Government of
Mali deserves the Council’s support.

In accordance with resolution 2100 (2013), the
international community as a whole recognizes
Mali’s sovereignty throughout its national territory.
Furthermore, it defends Mali’s territorial integrity,
unity and the secular and republican form of the Malian
State.

Kidal is part of Mali’s northern region, and of Mali
as a whole. Kidal has always been, and will always
remain, an integral part of the Republic of Mali. There
is no reason that Mali’s senior officials should not be
able to go there. The Malian army is in Kidal today and
will remain deployed there to ensure that the State’s
authority is in effect in every centimetre of our national
territory. Kidal is no different from Timbuktu or Kayes.
I hope that the Council will likewise take note of that
fact.

The attack in Kidal cannot go unpunished. We
ask that an international commission be established
to verify the facts so that the perpetrators are brought
before national and international courts.

The Republic of Mali will assume and respect all
its international commitments, as it has always done.
I can assure you of that, Mr. President. Nothing and
no one will distract the Government of Mali from its
objectives, including the opening of a sincere dialogue
that leads to a comprehensive and definitive peace
agreement.

We solemnly reiterate here the desire for dialogue
and peace restlessly expressed by His Excellency
Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic
and Head of State — a desire widely shared by the vast
majority of the Malian people. Despite the criminal acts
of armed groups, the Kidal region is made up primarily
by Malians who aspire only to peace and well-being.
The Government will also continue its development
efforts throughout the territory of Mali.

Based on the lessons learned since the deployment
of MINUSMA, and against the backdrop of the renewal
of its mandate, among other things, we ask the Security
Council for a much more robust mandate under Chapter
VII of the Charter of the United Nations, so as to
tackle the risks in the field, especially based on what
we have learned from the events in Kidal on 17 May,
as well as to disarm all armed groups, in particular
the MNLA, as has been done elsewhere. I think there
are precedents in the Council’s work to better respond
to the situation in our country. I hope that all of those
paths can be explored and that our country can benefit from that type of support.

Once again, Mali will never lose sight of one of its core values, namely, respecting its commitments. We will therefore pursue dialogue, as we are convinced that it is the appropriate solution, if, of course, all parties — the Government of Mali, the international community and the armed movements — fulfil their commitments, each at its own level, with resolve and the utmost commitment.

That will be the price of capitalizing on the great solidarity of the international community, from which our country has benefited and for which I reiterate the gratitude of our entire nation. It is the price of being able to support the fragile process of stabilization in Mali to which the Council has devoted so much time and energy and so many resources. We must now move beyond rhetoric to truly ensure that what happened never happens again and that the Malian State and Government are affirmed in its desire for dialogue and to restore State authority throughout its territory.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.