



# Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

**8794**<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Monday, 14 June 2021, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Auväärt . . . . .	(Estonia)
<i>Members:</i>	China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
	France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivi�re
	India . . . . .	Mr. Kakanur
	Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya . . . . .	Mrs. Toroitich
	Mexico . . . . .	Mr. De la Fuente Ram�rez
	Niger . . . . .	Mr. Abarry
	Norway . . . . .	Mr. Kvalheim
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ladeb
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. DeLaurentis
	Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Dang

## Agenda

### The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2021/519)

Letter dated 1 June 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2021/520)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in Mali**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2021/519)**

#### **Letter dated 1 June 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2021/520)**

**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.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; and Ms. Fatima Maïga, independent consultant, founding member and President of the Coalition des Femmes Leaders Nord, Sud et Centre du Mali.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/519, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali, and document S/2021/520, which contains a letter dated 1 June 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Wane.

**Mr. Wane** (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Council on developments in Mali and the evolution of the situation in that country.

The report of the Secretary-General before the Council (S/2021/519) provides an update on the situation on the ground, marked by continued insecurity in northern and central Mali and the ongoing threat of terrorist attacks affecting other parts of the country.

I briefed the Council in a closed meeting on the events leading up to 24 May, when the President and Prime Minister of the transitional Government were overthrown. Allow me to briefly recap events since then.

As Council members are aware, the coup was condemned by the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), meeting in Accra on 30 May, and by the African Union Peace and Security Council, meeting in Addis Ababa on 1 June. Both organizations suspended Mali from their respective membership. ECOWAS reaffirmed the need to respect the transition time frame, including the date set for the presidential elections, namely, 27 February 2022. ECOWAS called for the immediate appointment of a civilian Prime Minister and reiterated its earlier decisions that the transitional President, the Vice President and the Prime Minister should not, under any circumstances, be candidates for the elections aimed at restoring the constitutional order.

Colonel Assimi Goïta was sworn-in as President of the transition in Bamako on 7 June. One the same day, he signed a decree appointing the head of the Mouvement du 5 juin-Rassemblement des forces patriotiques, Mr. Choguel Maïga, as Prime Minister, who announced the formation of a new Government, on 11 June, made up of 28 members, among them six women, by which women make up 21.42 per cent of the new Government.

These events occurred nine months before the end of the agreed transition period. Immediate action is now required to initiate critical reforms and lay the groundwork for a credible electoral process. That entails an inclusive approach, strong Malian ownership and, of course, political compromise. The steadfast support of international partners will also remain vital to ensuring the success of the transition. I would also mention that the ECOWAS mediator, former President of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan, has been actively involved in efforts to ensure the implementation of the decisions taken, with the support of the local follow-up committee, of which the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is a member. In that connection, the ECOWAS mediator visited Mali on 8 and 9 June, where he met with the follow-up committee and the new transitional President and Prime Minister

The transitional President and the Prime Minister reassured that they would respect the transitional calendar, which envisages elections by February, and that neither the President nor Prime Minister would run for office. They also reiterated their commitment to working with the signatory armed movements to the Algiers process, who are represented in the new

Government, with a view to doing everything in their power to accelerate the implementation of the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

*(spoke in English)*

Those commitments now need to translate into urgent and concrete action, which requires the constructive contribution of all Malian stakeholders. The time has come for Malian leaders to rise above partisan politics and personal interests and work together in earnest to address the crisis in the interest of their country and its future. MINUSMA's support will remain critical in that regard.

That is all the more necessary as the security situation in northern and central Mali remains of the utmost concern. Its impact on the everyday lives of people is devastating and continues to take a heavy toll. At the first Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that improving security remains a top priority for the transitional Government. There are now more displaced Malians than during at the peak of the crisis in June 2013. Many of them live in very difficult conditions, and reports of human rights violations are deeply disturbing. Almost half of the schools in Central Mali are closed, mostly due to the threat of armed groups. In some areas marked by the presence of violent extremist groups, school closures are as high as 84 per cent.

Since my arrival in Mali on 5 May, I have visited all MINUSMA's main field offices. The testimonies of the representatives of the local authorities and civil society in Aguelhok, Tessalit, Kidal, Mopti, Douentza, Gao and Menaka confirmed that the multitude of political, governance and security challenges is driving human suffering. While Bamako is the centre of political attention and political engagement in the capital will remain essential, the Mission's efforts need to be field-focused. Insecurity and the lack of access to education and water and other basic services were identified as major challenges impacting the lives of Malian people outside Bamako.

At the same time, all my interlocutors in the region expressed appreciation for MINUSMA's contribution. Most of them urged MINUSMA to do more. Indeed, expectations are high. That is understandable. Where they live, there is little or no State presence, and the Mission is seen as the only provider of security and other basic services. MINUSMA is clearly making a tangible impact, even if not everyone is aware of what is being

done on the ground. But it is also clear that MINUSMA is not in a position to meet all the expectations of the local populations. That is why the Mission will have to step up its strategic communication efforts to ensure a better understanding of its mandate and its own limitations.

Following my assumption of duties in MINUSMA, the Mission developed a 60-day plan outlining priority action to be implemented by the end of the Mission's mandate, on 30 June. In keeping with its mandated strategic priorities, concrete initiatives were identified to expedite the implementation of key provisions under the peace agreement and to facilitate a more inclusive political transition process and agreement on the prioritization and sequencing of key reforms. We also developed an action plan for central Mali, where civilians are most at risk, which I will launch in Mopti tomorrow. The plan is called *An Ka Barokè* — which means “let's talk together” — and focusses on promoting political engagement to stabilize the centre, enhancing the protection of civilians, fostering community engagement, social cohesion and reconciliation, and facilitating the return of State administration and services, while strengthening the resilience and participation of women and youth.

The implementation of the plan will benefit in some areas from the establishment of the mobile task force, which is a core part of the MINUSMA adaptation plan, which is now partially operational. It has already enabled the conduct of an integrated MINUSMA mission to Tessit, with Government participation, which was greatly appreciated by the local population. A unit of the mobile task force is also scheduled to deploy in Sector North to reinforce MINUSMA peacekeepers in areas at risk.

The 60-day plan is based on several key guiding principles; the most important being Malian ownership and leadership. Achieving progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the political transition requires ownership by Malian leaders across the spectrum and buy-in from the communities. That is particularly important for central Mali. A coordinated and coherent vision by the transitional Government and stronger presence of the State are indispensable for MINUSMA's peacekeepers to be effective.

MINUSMA is also committed to fostering a more people-centred and action-oriented approach. I am convinced that placing people at the centre of the way

our operations are planned and implemented will make them more accountable, locally grounded and effective. Ultimately, we will be judged by the impact we have on the lives of the people who suffer most and those we are here to serve.

MINUSMA is only one part of a much larger international response. Consequently, leveraging partnerships is critical to ensure that Mali receives all the support it needs. That will entail strengthening coordination within the Mission, with the United Nations country team and other multilateral and bilateral partners, in particular ECOWAS, the African Union and the European Union. That is another principle that must be obeyed, and that will be done in close coordination with other United Nations presences in the subregion and beyond.

Achieving greater representation of women in political and economic decision-making processes is another aspect that is essential. I was impressed by the resilience of the women I met in the field. They were engaged, specific in all their concerns and requests and action-oriented. There is still a long way to go to achieve more effective participation so as to ensure that their interests and experiences are adequately taken into account and considered. The encroachment of violent extremism on many Malian communities presents a serious setback, as many extremist groups violate the rights of women and seek to remove them from the public sphere altogether.

Finally, Mali is vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and diminished resilience. That is poised to further intensify resource competition and exacerbate conflicts. That is why Mali's partners should be encouraged to do more to support the Government in addressing that daunting challenge.

Let me conclude by underscoring the need for the continued support of the Security Council and the international community more broadly. Mali is at a critical juncture, and we cannot allow it to slide into further instability, with far-reaching consequences for the subregion and beyond. That would be failing the Malian people, who deserve better. As challenging, desperate and frustrating the situation in Mali is, I was encouraged by the resolve of the Malian women, men and youth whom I met during my visits to the regions. They genuinely care about their country. They are proud of their cultural heritage and rich history, and they are determined to forge a better future for

themselves and their children. That should be leveraged wherever possible to expedite the way out of the crisis. Let us focus on building their resilience and continue to support their legitimate quest for a more stable and peaceful future for their country.

**The President:** I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wane for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Maiga.

**Ms. Maiga** (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, as well as the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and OXFAM, for giving me the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Mali and the women and peace and security agenda. I am Fatima Maiga, President of a coalition of women from the signatory groups of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and Director of the consulting firm ESEN, which has notably piloted the process of integrating women into the Agreement Monitoring Committee on behalf of the Norwegian Embassy.

The realization of the women and peace and security agenda in Mali remains dependent on strong political will and relative political and institutional stability. Unfortunately, the fifth post-coup transition in Mali in 60 years of independence, two of which have taken place under the current mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), shows us the long way to go to stabilize Mali, in accordance with the Mission's primary objectives. It also shows that without a more meaningful treatment of the root causes of the multifaceted crisis that has shaken the country since 2012, the vicious cycle of instability will continue. That includes the issues of inclusive and equitable governance of land and productive resources and access to justice.

My statement will focus on two points, together with recommendations: first, the observation of a marked deterioration in women's rights before and during the current transition; and secondly, the priorities and challenges of the current transition in relation to the women and peace and security agenda and their implications for the MINUSMA mandate.

With regard to my first point, the 2020 to 2021 MINUSMA mandate has been marked by a strong trend of closing the space for women's rights in Mali, despite notable progress. As part of that progress, nine women

from the signatory parties are now members of the Agreement Monitoring Committee for the first time in six years. In that regard, Norway is to be congratulated for its pivotal role in achieving that result.

However, the overall situation of women's rights in Mali remains critical. There are 2.9 million women and girls who are in need of emergency humanitarian assistance. In areas under the partial control of armed groups — estimated today as covering about two-thirds of the territory — and sometimes under local agreements between those groups and the besieged populations, hundreds of thousands of girls and women are today deprived of access to schools, health centres, markets or fields. In addition, too many of them continue to suffer sexual violence, including gang rape and sexual slavery, with impunity for the perpetrators and without knowledge of or access to the still too few comprehensive care services. In 23 per cent of recorded cases, survivors cannot access health care and 48 per cent of health centres are not equipped with forensic kits for rape cases.

Furthermore, the judicial treatment of the 115 cases of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence committed since 2012-2013, almost a decade ago, has seen no progress to date. The repeated violations of Act No. 052 on gender equality throughout the Government implemented since its adoption in 2018 and, in a more pronounced manner, during the 100 or so high-level appointments made by the transitional authorities from September 2020 to the present day. Lastly, the suspension in 2020 by the transitional Government of the draft law against gender-based violence, under pressure from religious groups, was a setback for all Malian women.

With regard to my second point, the Security Council and MINUSMA have a key role to play in putting the issue of gender and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) back at the heart of the transition's priorities. Indeed, 8 of the 12 months of MINUSMA's new mandate will take place during the new phase of the transition, which has set as a priority the holding of free and credible elections by February 2022, as well as ensuring the security, stabilization and protection of people throughout the country. It should be noted that gender issues, in particular the prevention and management of sexual violence and gender-based violence, were not included among the six priorities of the initial road map of the transition. The expected process of adjusting those priorities for the remaining

nine months of the transition must therefore be used to try to strengthen their inclusive nature both from the point of view of stakeholders and of geographical and thematic coverage. That can be done only if there is a real break with the wait-and-see attitude that has largely prevailed over the past nine months regarding the women and peace and security agenda, despite being backed by a robust national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In particular, the women and peace and security agenda must move from being just a general responsibility to being the clearly defined responsibility of certain key stakeholders and one that is subject to assessment.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Security Council broaden the political and operational mandate of MINUSMA beyond the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali to include current reconciliation and peace efforts through political dialogue and negotiations with armed groups, including those designated as terrorists, in central Mali. In that regard, we welcome the announcement by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wane of the launching of the plan for the centre of the country. These recommendations in favour of negotiations are in line with the 2020 inclusive national dialogue, which were reaffirmed in the transition road map.

We also recommend the urgent strengthening of the institutional gender mechanism and the means of action of women's civil society organizations to enable them to monitor and influence the course of the two priorities outlined earlier. A new mechanism entirely dedicated to strengthening the transition and electoral and negotiation processes by comprehensively and effectively taking gender issues into account could be envisaged.

We also recommend that the Security Council and MINUSMA urgently support the transition authorities in affirming and respecting Mali's national and international commitments, particularly with regard to the representation of women in appointed and elected posts, as well as humanitarian law and human rights law, including in the context of negotiations with armed groups. In that regard, the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) calling for the effective involvement of women in such processes must be reaffirmed and implemented.

Finally, we call for according priority in the new MINUSMA mandate to a tightened women and peace and security agenda with precise indicators, particularly

with regard to the issue of prosecuting cases of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and the holistic care of survivors of such violence.

It goes without saying that the people of Mali are in desperate need of peace and prosperity after a decade of violent conflict and recurrent instability. Those aspirations, however, will become a reality only if women's rights are safeguarded and women are truly involved in building a lasting peace. I therefore call on the members of the Security Council to support them to that end.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Maiga for her briefing.

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*):** I thank Mr. Wane and Ms. Maiga for their briefings.

This is a particularly critical time for Mali. France strongly condemned the coup d' tat that led to the forced resignation of the President and the Prime Minister of the transitional Government. We have taken note of Mali's suspension from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. We support the efforts of ECOWAS and the demands that it has made.

As it indicated in its press statement on 26 May (SC/14532), the Security Council will continue to follow events closely. Highest priority must be accorded to the holding of presidential elections on 27 February 2022, in which the authorities responsible for the transition will not be allowed to participate. As a temporary precautionary measure, France has suspended its joint military operations with the Malian armed forces pending clarification. ECOWAS mediation efforts have seen some progress, in particular the appointment of a civilian Prime Minister and the formation of a Government. We will closely follow the outcome of the ECOWAS summit to be held on 19 June.

Given the precariousness of the situation, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) remains an essential

tool. With regard to the renewal of its mandate, we propose that it maintain its two strategic priorities: first, support for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which remains a central issue for the stabilization of Mali; and, secondly, its support for the stabilization of the central part of the country. We will also recommend that it continue its work on the protection of civilians, as intercommunal violence persists.

Nonetheless, the task of addressing those issues will remain incomplete so long as the Malians lack a clear political strategy and fail to take resolute action in dealing with all dimensions of the crisis, including in particular the political dimension related to the requirements set forth to conclude the transition and the security dimension, as well as the humanitarian, human rights and sustainable development dimensions. We will call for the mandate to take into account those aspects, as well as the crucial issues that concern the full participation of women and young people in political life and the effects of climate change, which are one of the causes of the crisis in the Sahel.

We note that MINUSMA's resources remain limited in terms of addressing the situation in central Mali. That priority was conferred upon MINUSMA in 2019 without providing it with the needed additional resources. The Mission has only 2,000 peacekeepers and three helicopters at its disposal every two weeks in the area. We therefore would like to seriously propose an increase in resources and the troop ceiling, which would enable the Mission to protect civilians more effectively and promote reconciliation among communities without jeopardizing its operations in the rest of the country. Such reinforcement would complement the implementation of the adaptation plan, which we support and call for the full implementation of.

Although the support mechanism for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in coordination with MINUSMA is very useful, it is not enough. We believe that increased and predictable United Nations support for the Joint Force is crucial. That would involve the establishment a support office financed by obligatory assessed contributions. Such a solution does not require placing the Joint Force under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. France intends to support the efforts of African countries to reach that goal within the framework of a conversation that we hope to see concluded as soon as possible.

Lastly, I would like to mention the announcement made on 10 June by the President of the Republic concerning the transformation of France's military presence in the Sahel. The transformation had already been discussed at the N'Djamena summit held in February. In terms of an approach, we are currently holding consultations with our Sahelian and international partners. The new framework will uphold our commitments to MINUSMA and our international partners at our side on the ground.

**Mr. Abarry (Niger)** (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to sincerely apologize for keeping the members of the Security Council waiting.

I have the honour of making this statement on behalf of Kenya, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Niger (A3+1).

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Special Representative of the Secretary General Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his comprehensive briefing and efforts to stabilize Mali. Our thanks also go to Ms. Fatima Maiga, President of the Coalition des Femmes Leaders Nord, Sud et Centre du Mali, for her informative briefing. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Mali, Mr. Issa Konfourou.

On the eve of the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate, the attention of the international community has been drawn to both encouraging and sometimes disturbing events during the period under review. The A3+1 welcomes and appreciates the invaluable contribution that MINUSMA continues to make to the stabilization of Mali. We reiterate our support for its mandate, which is more necessary than ever at this crucial time in Mali's march towards democratization, stabilization and reconciliation. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Mali.

I will focus my remarks on two aspects, namely, the main observations and the recommendations of the A3+1.

First, with regard to the main observations, at the political level, we welcome the efforts of the Malians in having overcome recent turbulence and having gotten the transition process back on track, including the recent formation of a Government led by a civilian Prime Minister, Mr. Choguel Maïga. We call on the new

executive to spare no effort in resolutely pursuing the implementation of the transitional road map, for which the electoral calendar has already been published.

In that regard, it is more necessary than ever that the international community maintain its support for the transitional process until the holding of credible, inclusive and transparent elections in February 2022. The process must guarantee the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth.

We take this opportunity to commend the ongoing commitment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the crucial mediation role played by its Special Envoy and the African Union. The A3+1 also commends the good offices and efforts to promote reconciliation on the part of MINUSMA, which has consistently steered Malians to conciliatory positions, both at the national and local levels.

Furthermore, we take note of the creation of the Cadre stratégique permanent by the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups in order to optimize efforts to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali and to operationalize joint mechanisms so as to better address the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Mali. We encourage them to focus on national unity and dialogue to advance the national reconciliation agenda.

On the security front, Mali and other countries of the Sahel continue to be exposed to the horrors of terrorism. Moreover, the impact of the uncontrolled departure of foreign fighters and mercenaries, coupled with the proliferation of arms from Libya, underlines the urgent need for a sustainable and holistic solution for the Sahel.

Violent extremism, intercommunal violence and transnational organized crime are on the rise and require greater attention from the Security Council. We remain concerned about the continued attacks on civilians, MINUSMA and regional and international armed forces. In that regard, the announcement of Mali's partners suspending military cooperation, including the phasing out of Operation Barkhane raises concerns for a Mali that is at a crossroads.

With regard to MINUSMA's adaptation plan, the results of the establishment and operationalization of the mobile task force have been compelling and encouraging.

On the humanitarian front, the current situation in Mali and the Sahel is a source of great concern. The effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic and food insecurity necessitate urgent funding for the humanitarian response plan for 2021, of which only 14.3 per cent of the \$563 million needed has been secured. We must act urgently to save the 5.9 million vulnerable people in Mali who need assistance, as a bad rainy season is likely to have grave consequences if the necessary aid is not provided in time.

As duly noted by the Special Representative, the humanitarian situation, exacerbated by intercommunal conflicts and food insecurity induced by the effects of climate change, hinders stabilization and peacebuilding efforts in Mali. The A3+1 therefore believes that the analysis and integration of security risks related to climate change is necessary as part of MINUSMA's mandate.

In the light of what I have mentioned here, I would like to make several recommendations on behalf of the A3+1.

We believe that the support so desperately needed at this stage by the people of Mali must be driven by the aspirations of the Malian people, who should take ownership and be the central actors in the stabilization and reconciliation process in their country. In that respect, it is important to adjust international intervention, including the role of MINUSMA.

Moreover, we call for better coordinated and more coherent interventions to maximize their effects and thereby give the transition and the establishment of stable democratic institutions a guarantee of stability and prosperity for the country and a better chance of success.

In that context, the A3+1 encourages the Malian authorities to capitalize on the progress made in the first phase of the transition by ensuring that the timetable for the elections and the 18-month duration of the transition be respected, in accordance with the road map and the ECOWAS recommendations. We also encourage them to accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the peace agreement, the protection of civilians and the dialogue process in the centre of the country.

Furthermore, the A3+1 believes that sanctions can only further complicate the already worrisome security and humanitarian situation in Mali. In that regard, we support the recommendations and decisions of the

most recent ECOWAS summit on Mali. Moreover, the decisions that partners take must not aggravate the situation in Mali or jeopardize the achievements of the fight against terrorism in the region.

In conclusion, the A3+1 would like MINUSMA's next mandate to focus on supporting the Malian transition. The country will also need economic support for rebuilding. That is why we call on all of Mali's partners and the international financial institutions to support the Malian people in this critical phase.

While we appreciate the support of other partners and MINUSMA to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the shortcomings of the support mechanism identified in the Secretary-General's recent assessments and the suspension of military cooperation with Mali call, on the one hand, for a more robust mandate for MINUSMA and, on the other hand, for the removal of the additional task of supporting the Joint Force, pursuant to resolution 2391 (2017), in order to enable the Mission to focus on its strategic priorities, given the current situation on the ground. The establishment of the United Nations Support Office dedicated to this regional force and all other operational and effective support mechanisms are critical to that end.

Finally, the A3+1 will support the extension of MINUSMA's mandate for one year, which should be adjusted to reflect the reality on the ground, where there is no peace to keep, and to enable the Mission to ensure better protection of civilians and be more involved in the resolution of intercommunal violence in the country.

**Mr. Dai Bing** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Wane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing, and welcome the representative of Mali to today's meeting. I also listened attentively to the statement by Ms. Maiga in her capacity as a representative of civil society.

The situation in Mali bears on the security and stability of the Sahel region, and even that of the African continent as a whole. A stable, unified, prosperous and progressive Mali is in the common interests of the international community. At present, Mali faces multiple challenges in the political, economic, humanitarian, security and other fields. China hopes that the Malian parties will prioritize the interests of the country's people and unite the people of Mali to tackle the challenges together.

China notes that the Malian authorities reaffirmed their commitment to the political transition. We hope that all parties can advance the election preparations in earnest, resolve differences through dialogue and restore constitutional order as soon as possible. China welcomes the fact that the Malian parties have renewed their commitment to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali. China encourages more progress on restoring State authority, the redeployment of armed forces and the operationalization of the Northern Development Zone to lay a solid foundation for the stability and development of Mali.

China supports the continuing important role of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union and supports solving African problems in African ways by the African countries. Central and northern Mali have seen frequent activities of extremist forces, as well as increasing terrorist attacks and intercommunal conflicts, resulting in numerous civilian casualties and a humanitarian crisis. The international community and relevant partner countries will continue to support Mali's counter-terrorism operations to protect civilians. Military means alone cannot solve the fundamental problems.

As suggested by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2021/519), multi-pronged efforts are needed on the political, economic, judicial and social fronts in order to help Mali restore State authority, carry out disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, achieve development, eliminate poverty and improve the well-being of the people of Mali, with a view to extirpating the root causes of conflicts while treating their symptoms.

Under the leadership of Special Representative Wane, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has diligently fulfilled its mandate under very difficult circumstances and has done a great deal of work in order to maintain peace and stability in the country. China appreciates that and will continue to support the work of the Special Representative and the Mission.

China supports, in principle, the extension of MINUSMA's mandate and the Secretary-General's proposal to maintain the existing ceiling for uniformed personnel. The Mission should continue to provide logistical support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), in accordance with relevant

Security Council resolution, and keep improving its modes of support in order to meet the needs of the Joint Force to the best of its abilities. China welcomes the efforts of the European Union, the United Nations and the G-5 Sahel aimed at intensifying cooperation in this regard.

MINUSMA has experienced a palpable rise in security risks this year. Eleven people have died so far, which is heartbreaking. Accountability is an important measure for improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. China further welcomes the conviction by the Bamako Court of Assizes of multiple suspects in relation to attacking and killing peacekeepers.

It is important to implement resolution 2518 (2020) and the recent presidential statement on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers (S/PRST/2021/11) by identifying vulnerabilities and by solving key and difficult problems, in the light of the situation on the ground. It is also important to make greater efforts to strengthen peacekeeping operations' situational awareness, emergency response and rescue capabilities, improve their ability to address threats posed by improvised explosive devices, and vaccinate peacekeepers.

**Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative Wane for his explanation of the latest developments in Mali and wish him every success in his new responsibilities. I also welcome the valuable participation of Ms. Fatima Maïga in today's meeting. Mexico hopes that the Security Council will more frequently include women representatives of civil society in its discussions. I also welcome the presence of the representative of Mali in the Chamber today.

My country deeply regrets the action by a group from the Malian Defence and Security Forces that culminated in the arrest and resignation of the transitional president and prime minister last month. This second suspension of the Constitutional order by a military intervention in less than nine months hinders the path towards a democratic transition and contributes to the weakening of the State, which can only work to the benefit of extremist groups.

We take note of the inauguration of Colonel Goïta as President and the formation of a new Government headed by Mr. Choguel Maïga. We urge them to resume the transition process as soon as possible, in accordance with the previously agreed terms and timetable and in

accordance with the Security Council communiqué (SC/14532) of 26 May, the road map and the Transition Charter. We urge regional organizations, in particular the Economic Community of West African States, to exert their utmost influence on the new authorities in order to avoid further setbacks in the transition process and in the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

I wish to draw the attention of the Security Council to three points.

First, it is essential that the new authorities give absolute priority to the holding of free, inclusive and credible elections. The attention of the Government and the international community should be focused on resolving such pending issues as finalizing the electoral legal framework and the composition of the electoral commission, integrating the voter register, and setting up a security mechanism that will allow for the peaceful conduct of the campaigns and orderly election days for the constitutional referendum, the local and regional elections and the legislative and presidential elections throughout the country's territory.

Mexico urges the Malian Government to take the measures necessary to guarantee the participation of women in the political process and to set aside at least 30 per cent of posts of responsibility to women, in accordance with the law. We regret that the newly formed Government falls short in upholding this minimum. We also expect the electoral authority to do what is necessary to ensure the participation of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Secondly, we condemn the terrorist activities and intracommunal violence that continue to claim civilian lives and aggravate the humanitarian situation. We reiterate our concern about the expansion of violent acts southwards and their escalation in such neighbouring countries as Burkina Faso. We view with concern the increasing sophistication of attacks perpetrated by armed groups and the use of increasingly sophisticated equipment. In this regard, I would like to hear the Special Representative's views on what additional measures can be taken to combat the armed groups' supply networks for weapons and military equipment.

Keeping in mind that the main responsibility for protecting the population against violence lies with the Malian State, Mexico calls on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the international forces to coordinate their actions to strengthen the capacities of

the Malian security forces so that they can guarantee the protection of civilians and the human rights of the population. In this regard, we acknowledge the positive results of MINUSMA's work to reduce the number of incidents against civilians in Ansongo. Also noteworthy is the cooperation between the United Nations Police and the European Union's capacity-building mission to train security forces in the Mopti region.

Thirdly, Mexico condemns the attack launched in April against the MINUSMA base at Anguelhok, in which regrettably four members of the Mission died. We reiterate that such actions may constitute war crimes. My country calls on the Malian authorities to combat disinformation campaigns aimed at stirring up animosity against MINUSMA in the region.

We welcome the first conviction in March of an individual involved in two attacks against MINUSMA. This precedent should pave the way for justice for peacekeepers who have lost their lives in Mali.

In conclusion, my country expresses its full support for MINUSMA and takes note of the Secretary-General's recommendation on the renewal of its mandate. Mexico will participate constructively in the negotiations to strengthen the implementation of the strategic priorities of this Mission with the protection of civilians at the centre of its action.

**Mr. DeLaurentis** (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Wane and Ms. Maiga for their briefings today.

Yet again we are meeting following another attack on the peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). I join colleagues in expressing condolences to the brave peacekeepers injured in the attack.

We join members of the international community in calling for Mali to respect the schedule for making its transition to a democratically elected Government. We support the establishment by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of a mechanism to monitor compliance with the transition period and the holding of presidential elections on 27 February 2022, as already scheduled. We support the statement issued by ECOWAS following its extraordinary summit on 30 May, including its call for the immediate release of detainees and those under house arrest, strict adherence to the transition period of 18 months and

the appointment of a civilian Prime Minister and an inclusive Government, as well as for the transitional President, Vice President and Prime Minister not to be candidates in the upcoming presidential election under any circumstances.

We reiterate our condemnation of the detention and subsequent house arrest of the former transitional president, prime minister and other officials. Their detention is a direct assault on the country's ongoing transition to the return of democracy and on the rule of law.

The United States will work with our partners throughout the region to support respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We will consider a range of foreign policy options in response to any actions that impede the transition to a duly elected Government. We stand firmly with the people of Mali in their aspirations for democracy, peace, development and respect for human rights.

It is critical that the February 2022 elections be free and fair and administered by competent and impartial election authorities, using transparent processes. We strongly urge the transitional Government to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the elections. Women should be both on the ballot and registered to vote.

At the same time, the transitional Government must not lose sight of its primary responsibility for protection of civilians and human rights. The transitional Government must create conditions for stability and address social grievances. This requires the full implementation of the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, especially the meaningful inclusion of women and women-led civil society organizations in the accord's implementation. Further, the transitional Government must work to re-establish State authority, including civil, judicial and security authority, throughout the country and take credible steps to combat all forms of impunity, especially related to violations of human rights and abuses.

The renewal of MINUSMA's mandate must be responsive to the fragile transition to democratic governance, provide the needed logistical and security support to the February 2022 elections, and prioritize both the protection of civilians and the implementation of the Algiers accord.

But MINUSMA is only one piece of a sustainable peace in Mali, and it cannot replace the Malian Government. The transitional Government must take greater ownership and credible steps to combat impunity and protect civilians throughout Mali.

In the light of MINUSMA's immense tasks, we reiterate that it is important to maintain a clear line between counterterrorism and peacekeeping to protect the United Nations impartiality and personnel. Neither United Nations-assessed peacekeeping funds nor Chapter VII authorization are appropriate for supporting the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), an offensive counter-terrorism operation. The Joint Force is a coalition of domestic forces and is directed by the G-5 Sahel Governments and not the Security Council.

The United States is a committed partner to the G-5 Sahel countries. We support the G-5 Sahel Joint Force with equipment, training and advisory support to fill critical capability gaps on a bilateral basis. In the past four years, we have committed more than \$580 million to providing security assistance and other support for countering violent extremism to Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. In addition to our bilateral support, we are committed to working with Council partners on identifying ways to support the region together.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): I too want to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Wane, for his briefing this morning. I wish to welcome the presence of Ms. Maiga as a strong voice and advocate for women in Mali. Her message, which was thoughtful and forward-looking, has really resonated with us this morning. She has Ireland's support.

I also want to welcome our friend and colleague, Ambassador Issa Konfourou, among us.

The events unfolding in Mali are deeply concerning — we have heard that from several speakers. Two weeks ago, this Council collectively called for the release of all detained officials (see SC/14532). The fact that today Bah N'Daw and Moctar Ouane remain under house arrest is completely unacceptable. We reiterate our call for their immediate, unconditional and safe release.

We wish especially to welcome the constructive leadership of the region in resolving this crisis. We believe that parties should strictly adhere to the

conditions set out by the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union, which call for compliance with the Transition Charter. The transition is intended to be inclusive and lead to a return to constitutional order and democratic elections within the established 18-month timeline. We also commend the good offices support provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) over recent weeks under difficult circumstances.

The Transition Charter guarantees an inclusive and democratically elected civilian Government for the citizens of Mali. These guarantees must be upheld. As set out in the Charter, the transitional President and transitional Vice President are not eligible for election in the presidential and legislative elections. We want to see that respected.

Delaying elections will not help stability in Mali. We are concerned that, as of yet, no decision has been taken on the establishment of a single electoral management body. We call for such a body to be appointed as soon as possible, and it must be independent and inclusive.

We have said it before, but it bears repeating again today — the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali is vital to a just and durable peace in Mali. There can be no doubt in the minds of Malians that this is the case, and no wavering from this path by the leadership of the country. As the Special Representative said earlier, now is the time to rise above the political challenges in the interests of ordinary Malians and Malian society.

We encourage MINUSMA to continue outreach in support of the peace agreement, not just at the political level, but also at the local level. Increasing understanding of and support for the agreement will lead to greater buy-in and commitment at all levels. On this point, my country, Ireland, speaks from experience.

I want to thank Ms. Maiga again for her powerful call to action. As I see it, gender equality is not about idealism, and neither should it be seen as a luxury to be enjoyed only after peace is achieved; it is fundamentally a peace and security issue in itself. Gender equality is about the distribution of power in the interests of society as a whole. For that reason, in Mali it is imperative that civil society space for women be protected and, indeed, increased and that women not be restricted in the public sphere. I recently met with Malian women and, like

the Special Representative, I found them engaged and action-oriented. Above all they are courageous.

We believe that Malian women must be encouraged, supported and empowered to participate fully in the upcoming elections, both as voters and as candidates on the ballot paper. Their representation is also a critical consideration in the filling of Cabinet positions. Supporting Malian women to assume those responsibilities is in all our interests, and above all in the interests of the people of Mali as a whole. On that point, I want to underline that women's political participation is a right, not a request, and we regret that not enough progress has been made, as we heard this morning. We cannot, as Ms. Maiga has said, wait and see.

We are deeply concerned by the lack of justice afforded to victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Mali. The documentation of conflict-related sexual violence cases remains disturbingly low, as we heard earlier. We call on MINUSMA to support the Malian authorities in urgently prosecuting perpetrators, and we urge the Malian authorities to adopt legislation on sexual and gender-based violence, in compliance with international and regional conventions, and to establish specialized prosecutors and police units dedicated to tackling this issue.

*(spoke in French)*

Impunity for conflict-related sexual violence and for ongoing human rights violations committed by several actors in Mali, including the armed forces, must end. As a troop-contributing country to MINUSMA, Ireland welcomes the progress made by the Malian authorities with the first direct conviction for the murder of a peacekeeper. This is an important milestone and we encourage further progress in this regard.

In addition to the insurrection and the humanitarian needs, insecurity continues to exacerbate the suffering of Malians. We are concerned about the increase in attacks on civilians. That increase underscores the need to prioritize the protection of civilians within MINUSMA's mandate. It also demonstrates the urgent need for the Malian authorities to take measures to prevent and reduce violence against civilians. Persistent violations against children are of great concern and the Malian Government must ensure that child protection measures are put in place.

In conclusion, we commend MINUSMA for its important role in extremely difficult conditions. Its work is crucial, and Ireland fully supports the renewal of its mandate at the end of the month.

However, the challenges facing Mali cannot be resolved by security efforts alone. We must address the root causes of the instability. The upcoming elections present an opportunity to usher in a new era of democratic and inclusive governance. I would like to reiterate the firm commitment of my country, Ireland, to accompany Mali in these efforts.

**Mr. Kvalheim** (Norway): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wane for his first briefing this morning. We also appreciated the insights of Ms. Fatima Maiga — a treasured former consultant at our Embassy in Bamako. We strongly commend her leadership in strengthening the voices of women in Mali. I also thank her for the kind words she addressed to us. We also appreciate the presence of Ambassador Issa Konfourou.

Recently, Norway joined Mali, the United Kingdom and France in an event that underscored one of the achievements Ms. Maiga has contributed to: the increased participation of women in the Monitoring Committee for the Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The ideas and recommendations shared by those women clearly demonstrated why their participation is a master key to progress.

But make no mistake — more inclusive processes are still needed. Only days after that encouraging event, another coup was reported in Mali, potentially jeopardizing some of the hard-won progress achieved to date. A huge responsibility now rests with those who took it upon themselves to forcefully take over Mali's transition.

Let me be clear: we join the calls for the immediate release of former transitional leaders from house arrest and detention. We expect the recently appointed transitional Government to respect the timeline for holding inclusive, transparent and credible presidential elections by March 2022. As the Transitional Charter stipulates, neither the transitional President nor the members of the transitional Government are eligible to run for office in the elections. Norway strongly supports the roles of the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in monitoring the transition.

Amid these turbulent times, we are embarking on a mandate renewal for MINUSMA. In addition to women and peace and security, let me highlight three other priority areas for Norway.

Our first priority is the protection of civilians, in particular children. We repeat our deepest condolences for the victims of the recent horrific attacks in Burkina Faso and elsewhere in the region. As Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wane mentioned, we also know that more than 1,300 schools in Mali remain closed, which affects hundreds of thousands of children. More than half of those closures are the result of attacks and threats by armed groups. Attacks on education have significant long-term negative impacts on children and their communities.

There is no question that safe and unhindered humanitarian access is crucial to protect and assist people in need; provide education; and prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. We echo the Secretary-General's words that: "Mali needs now, more than ever, leaders who stand together in the interest of their country and the future of their children" (see S/2021/519, para. 91).

My second point is the importance of ensuring human rights and accountability, which is a prerequisite for the trust-building needed to move Mali forward as a country.

We are deeply concerned by the worsening human rights situation, including the reported violations by national, regional and international forces. We commend MINUSMA for its efforts to support investigations into allegations of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. We call on the authorities to hold perpetrators to account. To that end, Norway together with France is proud to provide a specialized capacity-building police team to MINUSMA.

We ask again for follow-up to the recommendations of the International Commission of Inquiry for Mali — a report requested by the parties to the Algiers Agreement. A concrete first step could be a conference on impunity and fair criminal justice, in line with the Commission's final recommendation. Norway stands ready to provide its support.

Thirdly and finally, we know the effects of climate change on security through its impact on increasingly scarce resources. It is time for the Security Council

to follow the African Union and African leadership and take climate and security seriously. At the same time, we acknowledge that MINUSMA's resources are limited. That is why we are looking at ways to financially support its climate and security work.

In conclusion, as we will also highlight in Norway's updated Sahel strategy later this month, we wish to emphasize that security depends on inclusive and sustainable development, good governance and respect for the human rights of all Malians. They deserve to see the Algiers Agreement become a reality.

**Ms. Evstigneeva** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General El-Ghassim Wane for his briefing on the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the situation in that country. I also thank Ms. Fatima Maiga for her comments.

It is clear that the improvement of the situation in Mali, the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, the elimination of terrorism and the improvement of the socioeconomic situation depend above all on internal political stability. Political infighting, which has led to two acute crises over the past year, has hardly helped the situation.

We have taken note of the assurances of the new authorities that all commitments undertaken previously with regard to the transition period, including the holding of a constitutional referendum and general democratic elections within the agreed time frame, will be honoured. Much will depend on the continuation of dialogue among all interested parties with a view to forming public consensus in the country and restoring the constitutional order as quickly as possible.

We believe that stabilizing the situation in the country depends directly on the strict implementation by the transitional Government and other political forces of the Algiers Agreement. We trust that constructive interaction with the signatory groups will continue in that regard. We expect the process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants and deploying new units to the north of the country to be accelerated. In addition, governance should be reformed, and conditions should be created for the socioeconomic recovery of the affected areas, including the northern development zone. The interests of all the people in the country, especially those in its northern territories, must be taken into account.

The security situation remains extremely difficult. Extremists continue to terrorize the local population and attack the Malian armed forces, United Nations peacekeepers and contingents of other international forces. The Malian armed forces and the Blue Helmets continue to suffer casualties. Unfortunately, despite all mediation efforts, intercommunal clashes in the central part of the country continue unabated and are mainly provoked by the activities of extremists.

The situation in the border territories of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, where a terrible terrorist attack against civilians was recently perpetrated, is deeply disturbing. Russia expresses its sympathy to the Governments and peoples of the countries of the region, whose citizens are dying at the hands of terrorists. We trust that both the Malian authorities and the authorities of neighbouring States will take increasingly decisive measures to eradicate terrorism from their soil.

The humanitarian situation is of great concern. The numbers of people in need of food assistance and of internally displaced persons have increased dramatically, which requires a commensurate response by the relevant humanitarian agencies. We must recognize that the situation in Mali is critical for the security of the region. We trust that the Malian armed forces will continue to fully participate in the operations of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and that the decisions by the West African countries made in 2020 and 2021 to step up the fight against terrorism will be translated into action. The African Standby Force in the Sahel region — which was a concept promoted by the African Union Commission — deserves to be considered in detail.

Continued close cooperation and coordination between Bamako and MINUSMA is imperative. We welcome the assistance provided by the Mission to the G-5 Joint Force and stand ready to consider modalities for its expansion. We also support plans for adapting MINUSMA. It is clear that its priority tasks remain to help restore constitutional order, facilitate the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and strengthen the security of the country. In that regard, the presence of MINUSMA remains critical for ensuring further stabilization. At the same time, we believe that the Malians themselves should take the lead in overcoming the current challenges.

Concerning the peace process in Mali, our position has always rested on the premise that African problems should be solved by African solutions. In that context, we support the mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. We believe that despite the existing divergence of views, it would be irresponsible in the current situation to leave the country to fend for itself, including by reducing military or economic assistance. The stakes for the security of Mali and the region are too high.

We reiterate our willingness to work closely with all international actors to stabilize the situation in Mali and in the region as a whole.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General El-Ghassim Wane and Ms. Maiga for their perspectives and insights.

First, like many of my Council colleagues, I am deeply concerned about the recent coup in Mali and its consequences for the return to constitutional order, the stability of Mali and the wider region, and the ability of State institutions to uphold the rule of law. I join others in regretting the attack on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) yesterday.

The United Kingdom therefore calls on the new transitional authorities to meet the conditions set by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in particular to prepare for elections without delay, ensure the unconditional release of those who remain detained and make certain that the rest of the transition period is based on dialogue, consultation and compromise.

As the Secretary-General sets out in his report (S/2021/519), the former Government has taken a number of steps in the right direction to make the political process more inclusive and the needs and aspirations of Malians will be met through inclusive representation within Government and the active, meaningful participation of all sectors of society, including women.

Secondly, we urge the new transitional authorities to uphold the commitments made by the former transitional Government with respect to tackling impunity for violations and abuses of human rights. We welcome the trial and conviction of those responsible

for killing a United Nations peacekeeper, but many more Malians continue to wait for justice. We therefore urge the transitional authorities to make progress on trials and prosecutions, carry out a full and transparent investigation into the assassination of the President of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and renew efforts to protect civilians.

Thirdly, we urge the transitional authorities to renew their commitment to the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Progress depends on full ownership by all signatory parties and their involvement in political and decision-making processes. We support the call of the Secretary-General for an impact-oriented and people-centred strategy for the central part of the country — a strategy that brings together security, governance and development responses under a clear overarching vision. That strategy needs to be owned by the Government, with MINUSMA present to support its implementation.

The meeting that we hosted with France, Norway and Mali last month on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in Mali demonstrated the real impact and value of increasing women's participation in the peace process.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom condemns the coup and stands ready to support the efforts of ECOWAS and the United Nations to ensure compliance with ECOWAS conditions, make progress towards elections and help ensure that human rights are protected and promoted and that the rule of law is upheld.

**Mr. Kakanur** (India): Allow me to begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, and Ms. Fatima Maiga, independent consultant, founding member and President of the Coalition des Femmes Leaders Nord, Sud et Centre du Mali, for their briefings on the recent developments in Mali. We would also like to recognize the presence of the Permanent Representative of Mali, Mr. Issa Konfourou, at today's meeting.

The unfortunate developments in Mali last month have provided a reality check for the Security Council with regard to the implementation of the transitional road map. The repeated interventions by the Malian military in the transition process have created challenges for the way forward. Differences over the appointment of members in the transitional Government resulting in

the arrest of its President and Prime Minister on 24 May by the military clearly reflect the tenuous relations among Malian stakeholders. The impact that those developments may have on the time-bound transition is a matter of serious concern.

We welcome the timely actions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), which have helped to partly redeem the deteriorating political situation. We have also taken note of the commitments expressed by the new President with regard to the transition process, as well as the appointment of the Prime Minister. The Malian authorities need to quickly resume the implementation of the transition road map and convene legislative and presidential elections as scheduled in early 2022.

The implementation of key provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali remains fundamental to lasting peace in Mali. In that regard, we take note of the second meeting of the Monitoring Committee in Kayes on 29 March, and welcome the formation of a security and political coalition between the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups. The parties need to agree, without further delay, on the deployment and operationalization of the reconstituted army units; the launch of next phase of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration; the creation of territorial police and the reorganization of territories. These are the priority areas that will help in addressing the security situation.

The precarious security situation, particularly in central and northern Mali, remains a matter of serious concern. The absence of State authority has contributed to the worsening of the situation. The attacks carried out by Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara against civilians and international forces have increased. It is indeed worrisome that terrorist activities in central Mali continue unabated.

MINUSMA is playing an important role in stabilizing the security situation in Mali through its political and military support for the peace process. We welcome the Mission's confidence-building measures, particularly the local peace accords in central Mali that have helped reduce intercommunal violence and promote reconciliation. We commend the efforts of MINUSMA peacekeepers, who are functioning under complex and challenging circumstances. We also take

note of the progress in the implementation of the mobile task force concept to strengthen the unity of effort and command across the area of operations and of the support extended to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). We reiterate the need for more robust support from the Security Council and the international community to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

Against the backdrop of the attack on the MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok on 2 April, we reiterate our call to MINUSMA to further enhance measures to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. This recent incident again underscores the urgent need to upgrade the security infrastructure of camps of United Nations peacekeepers. We also call on the Government of Mali to bring to justice perpetrators of attacks against United Nations peacekeepers. We take positive note of the recent conviction for the killing of a MINUSMA peacekeeper in 2015.

The primary responsibility to fight terrorists and extremist armed groups lies with the Malian Defence and Security Forces. MINUSMA peacekeepers are there to support the implementation of the peace agreement and its provisions. The tendency of burdening peacekeepers with responsibilities that ought to fall primarily to the host State or other relevant international organizations must come to an end.

It is a matter of concern that MINUSMA peacekeepers continue to face threats from improvised explosive devices. The Mission should enhance resources to counter that threat. We hope that this will be adequately addressed during the discussion on the MINUSMA mandate renewal later this month.

Mali is currently facing serious political and security challenges. This delicate phase requires the renewed commitment of all stakeholders in Mali to the peace agreement and its implementation, as well as ownership of the transition road map. The continued support of bilateral and international partners to Mali, including the United Nations, the AU and ECOWAS, is much-needed in these challenging times. India remains committed to supporting Mali to overcome the present political and security crisis.

**Mr. Dang** (Viet Nam): I would like to thank Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his comprehensive briefing. I also thank Ms. Fatima Maiga for sharing her view.

We welcome Ambassador Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative of Mali, to today's meeting.

Viet Nam is following closely the situation in Mali, and we express our concerns about recent developments that threaten the transition, further destabilize the country and hamper the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali. We call on all stakeholders to exercise restraint and resolve differences through dialogue and consultation. We stress the need to ensure the full implementation of the transition, which serves the long-term interests of the Malian people. Nobody should shirk their commitments and obligations under the peace agreement. We support regional efforts, especially those led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), to help stabilize the situation and advance the transitional process in Mali.

With regard to security, we are gravely concerned about the continued deteriorating situation, especially in central and northern Mali. Terrorist attacks, violent extremists and deadly intercommunal conflicts have resulted in a rising death toll and threatened the livelihoods of millions of Malian people. The limited presence of State authority outside the central regions is still worrisome. In order to address those security challenges, we call for redoubled efforts towards national reconciliation, the extension of State authority and State services and improved security in the north and centre of Mali.

On the humanitarian front, the country is facing tremendous challenges, including food insecurity, the adverse impacts of climate change, the coronavirus disease pandemic and the spread of violent extremism and terrorism. At least 5.9 million people are in need of assistance, while nearly 350,000 others, including women and children, have been displaced. It is estimated that more than 1.3 million people will face food insecurity in 2021 — an increase of 36 per cent as compared to November 2020. We therefore emphasize the need to provide a safe and smooth passageway for humanitarian aid in Mali and ensure access to basic services for those in need. The transitional Government and other stakeholders must comply with obligations under international humanitarian law and protect civilians, especially women and children.

MINUSMA has proved to be an essential instrument in the maintenance of peace and security in the country. The Mission has also provided significant

logistical support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in order to combat terrorism in the Sahel. Nevertheless, MINUSMA is being deployed in a complex and dangerous environment. The loss of peacekeepers in recent months due to attacks shows the urgency of taking further measures to ensure the safety of peacekeepers.

We join other Member States in condemning the attacks against civilians, security forces and United Nations peacekeepers, and in expressing condolences for those lost in recent attacks. Such attacks are unacceptable, and their perpetrators must be brought to justice. It is also crucial for MINUSMA to have adequate equipment and resources to fulfil its mandate. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's recommendation of a one-year extension of MINUSMA's mandate, with its current authorized troops and police ceiling.

Last but not least, we call for a holistic approach to security, humanitarian and socio-development challenges in Mali, including measures to address the impacts of climate change.

We commend the tireless efforts of Special Representative Wane and his team in their commitments to peace and stability in the country. We reiterate our support for the assistance of the United Nations and the international community, especially ECOWAS, in promoting the implementation of the transition and stability in Mali. We also reaffirm our support for the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Mali.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Estonia.

I would like to thank our briefers for their comprehensive overviews and the insights they have provided on the most recent developments in Mali. I would also like to express Estonia's full support for the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the upcoming mandate renewal.

The political upheaval in Mali is extremely concerning. Estonia condemns the forcible resignation of the civilian President and the Prime Minister of the transition. We take note that the new civilian Prime Minister formed a Government over the weekend, and we call on the country's leadership to turn its full attention to the fragile security situation. This

past weekend, yet another attack in the northern part of the country left two soldiers dead. The civilian-led transition has to continue in accordance with the transition road map so that elections can take place in February 2022. We welcome the engagement of regional organizations, in particular the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, in supporting the political transition in Mali.

The Algiers Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on Mali remains the basis of the peace process in Mali. While we note positively that the Agreement Monitoring Committee has regularly met, we strongly encourage the parties to commit to taking concrete steps forward in the very slow implementation of the Agreement. More progress is needed in the redeployment and effective use of reconstituted units of the army and in securing the State presence and services in the north of Mali. It is also important to note that all those obstructing the peace process need to be held accountable.

It is of utmost importance to prepare for the elections in an inclusive manner through a clear and transparent process. In this regard, we underline the importance of strengthening the role of women in all political processes. The briefing by Ms. Maiga, whom we are glad to welcome in the Council, has strongly made the case for this. We welcome the increased representation of women on the Agreement Monitoring Committee and call on the parties to the Peace Agreement to increase the representation of women on its subcommittees and in other Agreement implementation mechanisms.

In order to bring relief to the continually dire security situation, especially in the centre of the country, a clear and comprehensive strategic approach is needed from the Malian Government. The regional and international efforts to bring stability to Mali are vital, but, in the end, their role is to support the Government's efforts. We therefore need to see stronger ownership by Malian authorities in restoring the State presence all over the country, including judicial and police presences. That will enable taking desperately needed control over armed groups and extremist elements and will assist in addressing the root causes of the instability.

Estonia remains concerned about the deteriorating situation of the civilian population and the rapid growth in human rights violations and abuses. Deliberate targeting of civilians as well as the national and international security presence by terrorists and localized armed groups is unacceptable. Every effort

needs to be made to stop this violence from spreading any further.

An essential part in addressing the human rights violations and abuses is the fight against impunity. The conviction of an individual connected to two attacks against MINUSMA personnel in 2015 is encouraging. However, the mass violations and abuses in central and northern Mali continue and unfortunately keep growing, with the most vulnerable among the civilian population, including women and children, paying the highest price. We strongly urge the Malian authorities to follow through with all announced investigations. The only way forward to a lasting peace is to take concrete action in breaking the cycle of impunity and ensuring that all perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses as well as violators of international humanitarian law are brought to justice.

In conclusion, Estonia remains concerned about the humanitarian situation in Mali. It is essential that access to schools and other essential State services will be granted in a safe manner. Moreover, taking into account the adverse effects of climate change is an important element of addressing the root causes of the instability in Mali as well as in the wider Sahel region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative Mali.

**Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by extending Mali's warm congratulations to the President on the second Estonian presidency of the Security Council and by expressing our great appreciation to the Chinese delegation for the remarkable work it accomplished last month. Allow me also to reiterate the deep gratitude of the people and the Transitional Authorities of Mali to the Security Council, as well as to Secretary-General António Guterres for the invaluable and tireless efforts he has made in favour of peace and stability in Mali and the Sahel.

The Government of Mali takes note of the report of the Secretary-General under review (S/2021/519), and I would like to thank Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mali, for his faithful briefing and for his update on the latest developments in the country since the publication of the report. I also thank my sister Ms. Fatima Maiga for her excellent and relevant briefing.

I acknowledge the observations that have just been made about Mali. I can assure the members of the Council that my country has already implemented some of their requests and that efforts will continue to be made to address many that remain. On behalf of the Government of Mali, I would now like to make a few comments on the report of the Secretary-General. As the report so aptly sets forth, the period under review was marked by sociopolitical tensions that led to the events of 24 May 2021, and most significantly to the resignation of the transitional president and prime minister.

Following these developments, the Constitutional Court of Mali, in a ruling dated 28 May 2021, declared the presidency vacant and appointed Colonel Assimi Goïta as Transitional President and Head of State. Immediately after this proclamation, the Transitional President began consultations with all the active forces of the Malian nation, in particular the political class, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, and the signatories of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, in order to carry out an uncompromising assessment of the current situation in the country and to identify the ways and means for a rapid return to constitutional order.

On 7 June 2021, before the Supreme Court of Mali, Colonel Assimi Goïta was sworn in as Transitional President. On the same day, he appointed a civilian prime minister, Mr. Choguel Kokalla Maïga, who formed a broad-based Government, in which representatives of the signatory movements of the Agreement were represented, including six women — or 22 per cent of the 30 per cent required by our national legislation — to conduct the priority actions of the transition.

Among these priorities, the Government will focus on improving security, particularly with a view to bringing State administration back to the areas of the country most affected by the crisis, implementing the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement as well as political and institutional reforms, organizing transparent and credible elections, and overseeing an end to impunity.

I would like to thank the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States for their constant support for Mali and its people. Let me also not forget to acknowledge the African Union and all our country's bilateral and multilateral partners as I reaffirm in this Chamber that the transitional authorities are determined to honour all

of Mali's international commitments. In this respect, I would like to stress the assurances given by the Transitional President at his meeting with the signatory movements in which he expressed his determination to continue implementing the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, resulting from the Algiers process. Moreover, our partners and the Council will have noticed that despite the sociopolitical challenges mentioned previously, our accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process had, by 30 April 2021, recorded the integration of 422 ex-combatants into the ranks of the reconstituted Malian Defence and Security Forces.

In the same vein, the Transitional President is committed to holding credible, fair and transparent elections within the set time frame, with a view to returning to the constitutional order. With regard to the human rights situation, I would like to stress that respect for human rights is one of the Government's priorities. The Malian State is aware of its primary responsibility to protect people and their property. Accordingly, the Government is resolutely committed to bringing to justice those responsible for human rights violations. We will also continue to work for a significant improvement in the security and humanitarian situation in the northern and central regions of Mali. The necessity of appointing a Minister in charge of refugees and internally displaced persons has not escaped the attention of the new Government.

The success of the transition is the main responsibility of the Malian people. I have just given the Council a pledge of the commitment by the transitional authorities to carrying out the agreed priority actions within the planned time frame. However, I must also forcefully say that the success of the transition in Mali requires greater international solidarity. The crisis in Mali is complex and deep; the very foundations of the State are threatened. I would therefore like to draw the attention of the international community to the consequences of certain measures taken in the wake of the events of 24 May 2021 that carry the risk of annihilating the fragile gains made so far, in the conditions Council members know, not only in the implementation of the Agreement, but also in the fight against terrorism. However, calling into question this hard-won progress could dangerously exacerbate instability in Mali and the Sahel region as a whole.

Mali therefore needs the support and solidarity of its bilateral and multilateral partners. We would

have preferred to avoid sanctions under the current circumstances. That is why I would like to appeal here in the Chamber for the understanding of our partners and the lifting of the sanctions, which are impacting a country already weakened by several years of political, security, economic and health crises.

At the regional level, indiscriminate and criminal terrorist attacks of a particularly lethal nature have, unfortunately, become a daily affliction for our civilian population and for national and international forces alike. The most recent mass killing in Burkina Faso on 4 June is a reminder of the urgent need to enhance the coordination of our collective efforts in the fight against terrorism and the growing insecurity in our region.

This is what drives our engagement within the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). It is also what underpins our call to the Security Council for a robust and adapted mandate, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as for predictable and sustainable funding for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, including through the United Nations. It is furthermore the basis for our request for the creation of a United Nations support office for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

As the Council prepares to consider extending the MINUSMA mandate, I would like to inform it that

MINUSMA continues to play a very important role in protecting civilians, supporting the transition and helping restore State authority throughout our national territory, including through the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Mali therefore strongly supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of MINUSMA for another year.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay heartfelt tribute to the personnel of MINUSMA for their inestimable support for the efforts of the Government in the stabilization of Mali under extremely difficult and often perilous conditions. I would also like to pay heartfelt tribute to all the victims — civilian and military, foreign and Malian — who have lost their lives in our country's crisis.

In conclusion, I reiterate the gratitude of the Government and the people of Mali to the French Operation Barkhane, the MINUSMA troop-contributing countries and all multilateral and bilateral partners for their unwavering support for the achievement of a definitive and lasting resolution of the Malian crisis.

**The President:** I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion in closed consultations.

*The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.*