



Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council

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16. The situation in Mali

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council included “The situation in Mali” as a new item on its agenda. The Security Council held twelve meetings and adopted four resolutions and two presidential statements in connection with this new item, which was formally included in the agenda of the Council by virtue of a note by the President of the Security Council.¹ In its note the Council agreed that issues pertaining to Mali would be considered under the new item and that earlier consideration by the Council of those issues under the item entitled “Peace and security in Africa” would be subsumed under the new item.²

The Council followed closely the unfolding of the crisis in Mali since its outbreak at the beginning of 2012. Its decisions and actions culminated in the authorization first of the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) followed by the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on 25 April 2013 and the transfer of responsibilities from AFISMA to MINUSMA on 1 July 2013. The Council also followed closely the developments of the political process, including the holding of presidential and legislative elections in the country and the implementation of the 18 June 2013 agreement signed in Ouagadougou between the Government of Mali and the armed groups in the northern regions.

The table at the end of the section lists the meetings at which this item was considered, and gives information on, inter alia, invitees, speakers and decisions adopted.

¹ [S/2012/961](#). For more information see part II, sect. II, with regard to the agenda of the Security Council.

² See sect. 14 of the present part, with regard to peace and security in Africa.

First stages of the crisis in Mali

Against the backdrop of the Tuareg-led rebellion in the northern part of the country and the forcible seizure of power from the democratically elected Government of Mali by some elements of the Malian armed forces, the Council held a meeting on 26 March 2012.³ At that meeting, the Council issued a presidential statement expressing serious concern about the insecurity and rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Sahel region. The Council strongly condemned the seizure of power by elements of the Malian armed forces and called for the restoration of constitutional order, and the holding of elections as previously scheduled. The Council also condemned the attacks carried out by rebel groups against forces of the Malian Government and called on the rebels to cease all violence and to seek a peaceful solution.⁴

On 4 April 2012, the Council held a meeting in the context of which it issued a new presidential statement, calling on the mutineers to ensure the safety and security of all Malian officials and demanding the immediate release of those detained.⁵ At the meeting, the representative of Mali recounted that northern Mali was occupied by Tuareg rebels and Salafists with hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons living in unimaginable conditions. He commended the Council for the adoption of the presidential statement and asked for help to find a way out of the crisis. He further questioned the decision of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to impose sanctions on Mali at a time when the country required help to find a way forward. He informed the Council that the military officers who had undertaken the coup had asked to engage in discussions in order to seek a national consensus to emerge from the crisis.⁶

On 5 July 2012, in adopting resolution [2056 \(2012\)](#), the Council determined that the situation in Mali constituted a threat to international peace and security and expressed its full support to the efforts of ECOWAS and the African Union for the restoration of constitutional

³ [S/PV.6741](#).

⁴ [S/PRST/2012/7](#).

⁵ [S/PRST/2012/9](#).

⁶ [S/PV.6745](#), p. 3.

order, as well as to the transitional authorities in Mali. The Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, demanded the cessation of hostilities by rebel groups in the north of Mali and requested the Secretary-General to provide support to ongoing mediation efforts including through the good offices of his Special Representative for West Africa.

Speaking after the adoption of the resolution, the representative of ECOWAS stated that resolution [2056 \(2012\)](#) represented an important first phase in the political involvement of the international community in support of the efforts of ECOWAS. He also reiterated the request from ECOWAS to the Security Council to accelerate the process of adopting a new resolution that would support the deployment of an operational force of ECOWAS in Mali in order to secure the transition, restore the country's unity and fight terrorism in the region.⁷

Deterioration of the situation in Mali

On 8 August 2012, in his briefing to the Council, the Secretary-General stated that the situation posed a growing threat to international peace and security and confirmed the limited progress with respect to restoring constitutional order. While noting that the military junta was having a harmful effect due to its strong influence over the transitional process, he highlighted, as a positive development, the return of the President of Mali to Bamako and commended the steps that he was taking to ensure the formation of a Government of national unity.

Regarding the situation in the north, the Secretary-General confirmed that the situation remained volatile and unpredictable. He mentioned that Ansar Dine and the Movement for Unity and Jihad, with reported links to Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, had taken control over the north after pushing out the national Movement for the Liberation of Azawad and had imposed Sharia law on the residents. He also reported on the mediation efforts by ECOWAS, the establishment of a national commission for negotiations by the President of Mali, the good offices of his Special Representative for West Africa and the consultations between the Department of Political Affairs and the Member States of ECOWAS. He also made reference to the dire humanitarian situation and to the reports on serious human rights violations by armed groups in the north. He encouraged the Council to give serious consideration to the imposition of targeted sanctions against individuals engaged in terrorist and other criminal activities. In

⁷ [S/PV.6798](#), p. 3.

closing, the Secretary-General affirmed that the resolution of the crisis in Mali required a holistic and comprehensive approach given its complexity and multidimensional nature, and encouraged the Government of Mali to develop an overarching political strategy to return the country to constitutional order and re-establish State authority in the north.⁸

All speakers underlined that while the humanitarian and security situation remained dire, there were encouraging signs of normalization such as the return of the President to Bamako. The representative of ECOWAS recalled that the strategy of ECOWAS in Mali was aimed at intensifying mediation efforts with all stakeholders while undertaking a phased deployment process of an ECOWAS stabilization force.⁹ The representative of the African Union underlined the need to encourage Malians to speed up the process of forming a Government of national unity in order to lift the suspension of Mali's participation in African Union activities, imposed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union further to the coup in March.¹⁰ Lastly, the representative of Mali reported on transitional measures and on the security and humanitarian situation in the north. He emphasized that improving the living conditions of those affected by the crisis in the north and addressing the food insecurity were priorities of the Malian Government and appealed to the international community for support.¹¹

On 12 October 2012, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2071 \(2012\)](#), in which it welcomed the appointment of a Government of national unity and urged the transitional authorities of Mali to present a detailed road map for transition. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council also took note of the adoption by ECOWAS of targeted sanctions and expressed its readiness to consider appropriate measures as necessary. It called upon the Malian rebel groups to cut off all ties to terrorist organizations. The Council expressed its readiness to respond to the request of Mali to authorize the deployment of an international military force to assist the Malian armed forces in recovering occupied regions in the north upon pending receipt of a report of the Secretary-General with recommendations, means and modalities for such force. Finally, the Council welcomed the appointment of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel.

⁸ [S/PV.6820](#), pp. 2-3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

At the meeting, the representative of Mali underscored the importance and urgency of deploying an international military force under Chapter VII of the Charter to support the defence and security forces of Mali in restoring territorial integrity, fighting terrorism and transnational organized crime, and restoring human rights in the northern regions.¹² The representative of Côte d'Ivoire, on behalf of ECOWAS and his own Government, noted that while pressing for the deployment of troops, ECOWAS and the African Union believed that priority should be devoted to negotiations and political solutions.¹³

On 5 December 2012, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs explained to the Council that since the adoption of resolution [2071 \(2012\)](#), the United Nations system had intensified and accelerated its efforts in Mali along two main tracks; the first to give impetus to the Malian political process and the second to support ECOWAS and the African Union in planning for an international force to support the Malian authorities in restoring the territorial integrity of the country. He also mentioned that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel had been active on the broader Sahel issues emphasizing that it was vital to address Sahel issues as part of the solution to the crisis in Mali. With regard to the deployment of an international force, he confirmed that the United Nations had worked with ECOWAS and the African Union, in close consultations with the Malian authorities, in developing a strategy for the proposed African-led international support mission in Mali. He noted that the very existence of the military option could provide useful and complementary leverage to the political process but it should be well planned, coordinated and implemented. He added that both the international support mission in Mali and the Malian forces would need the requisite capacities for carrying out operations against terrorist and affiliated groups in northern Mali.¹⁴

The representative of Mali reiterated that the situation in his country required an international force in support of the Government forces. He also gave assurances that the support of such force was not aimed at fighting ethnic minorities or destabilizing neighbouring

¹² [S/PV.6846](#), p. 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴ [S/PV.6879](#), pp. 3-4.

countries but at ensuring security in the country and reaffirmed his Government's commitment to dialogue.¹⁵

The President of the Commission of ECOWAS expressed the view of his organization that the political dialogue had to be combined with the military option in order to help Mali regain its territorial integrity, and asked the Council for a robust resolution authorizing the deployment of the African-led international support mission.¹⁶

The representative of the African Union expressed the hope that the Security Council would authorize the deployment of the African-led international support mission in Mali without delay. He reiterated the call of the African Union to establish a United Nations support package financed from assessed contributions to ensure the sustainability of the mission. In closing, he called also on the Council to establish a trust fund to support the Malian defence and security forces.¹⁷

Authorization of deployment of an African-led international armed force in Mali

On 20 December 2012, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2085 \(2012\)](#) and decided to authorize the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) for an initial period of one year.¹⁸ In this regard, the Council called upon Member States, including from the Sahel region, to contribute troops to AFISMA, and called upon the transitional authorities of Mali and all other parties to cooperate fully with the deployment and operations of AFISMA. The Council further requested the Secretary-General to establish a multidisciplinary United Nations presence in Mali in order to provide support to the political and the security processes.

Further to the vote by the Council, the representative of Mali welcomed resolution [2085 \(2012\)](#) as a reflection of the commitment of the international community to stand by Mali in combating terrorism and transnational organized crime.¹⁹ The representative of Côte d'Ivoire, on behalf of ECOWAS, pointed out that resolution [2085 \(2012\)](#) was a message of hope and

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 6.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹⁸ For more information on the mandate of AFISMA, see part VIII, sect. III, with regard to Regional Peacekeeping operations.

¹⁹ [S/PV.6898](#), p. 2.

solidarity and set out a political strategy that provided every opportunity for peace.²⁰ Lastly, the representative of the African Union also commended the wisdom and political will shown by the members of the Security Council to support the requests of ECOWAS and the African Union to authorize the deployment of AFISMA.²¹

Deployment of French forces in Mali

Against the backdrop of the deployment of French forces in January 2013 and further to the request of the transitional authorities of Mali to support military operations to repel the advance of extremist groups in the northern part of the country, the Council was briefed, on 22 January 2013, by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who said that the crisis was at a potential turning point. The military struggle over northern Mali had been engaged and the Secretary-General had applauded the decision of France to halt the push of extremist groups southward. He reported that AFISMA was facing critical gaps in various logistical areas, questioning their capacity for self-sustainment. This notwithstanding, he noted that the Secretary-General was firmly committed to using the tools of the United Nations to help address the crisis in Mali and to promote the implementation of resolution [2085 \(2012\)](#). He said that the Malian Government agreed on the need for the military and the political processes to evolve jointly and urged that reliance on an exclusively military option would not allow for the building of a lasting solution for Mali.²²

The representative of Mali commended the Council on its support for the action of France in Mali. He appealed, however, to the international community to help mobilizing the financial resources necessary for the prompt deployment of AFISMA. He expressed certainty that military intervention in Mali to combat terrorist and rebel groups would promote the political process leading to normalization.²³ The rest of the speakers commended the French decision to intervene in Mali. The representative of Senegal noted that while the French intervention had already allowed retaking certain towns, the deployment of African troops would decidedly

²⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

²¹ Ibid., p. 4.

²² [S/PV.6905](#), p. 2.

²³ Ibid., pp. 5-7.

contribute to stepping up the pace of the operation for retaking northern Mali.²⁴ Each of the speakers briefed the Council on their respective actions taken pursuant to the implementation of resolution [2085 \(2012\)](#). Most speakers also made reference to the donors' conference of 29 January 2013 for the mobilization of financial, logistical and material resources for the deployment of AFISMA. The representative of the European Union expressed hope that the Security Council would be able to quickly decide on authorizing a solid system for the financing of AFISMA.²⁵

Options for deployment of a United Nations mission in Mali

On 3 April 2013, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs updated the Council on the most important political and security developments in the country. He underlined the adoption in January of a road map for the transition, including the restoration of the territorial integrity and the organization of free and fair elections. He mentioned that while the humanitarian access had improved in some parts of the country, the situation remained highly volatile. He added that the United Nations was monitoring the human rights situation and noted that the Human Rights Council had appointed a special rapporteur on Mali. He also advised that in the interplay between political and security priorities, it was of critical importance to ensure that the security imperative did not detract from the primacy of politics in Mali. With respect to the security challenges, he mentioned that a key question was the extent to which the United Nations could or should assume responsibility for security and stabilization, bearing in mind the concerns of the humanitarian actors regarding the need to retain a clear distinction between the humanitarian and political/security agendas. Against this background, he described options for United Nations engagement in Mali.²⁶

The representative of Mali reported that outbreaks of violence constituted obstacles to the re-establishment of State authority and to the return of internally displaced persons and refugees living in neighbouring countries, as well as to the organization of free, transparent and credible elections throughout the territory. In this context, he expressed his Government's preference for

²⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁶ [S/PV.6944](#), p. 2-5.

the deployment of a multidimensional, integrated United Nations stabilization mission under Chapter VII of the Charter.²⁷

Lastly, the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, on behalf of ECOWAS, confirmed that the situation in Mali had enjoyed positive developments since the launching of the French Operation Serval. He noted, however, the continuation of the military activity in the north and the efforts to launch offensives against the jihadist havens. He said that ECOWAS recommended the transformation of AFISMA into a United Nations stabilization operation equipped with a robust mandate together with the presence of a parallel force equipped with the capacity necessary to rapidly dislodge the groups of terrorists and insurgents.²⁸

Establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

On 25 April 2013, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2100 \(2013\)](#), establishing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).²⁹ It also requested the Secretary-General to subsume UNOM into MINUSMA. The Council authorized MINUSMA to use all necessary means, within the limits of its capacities and areas of deployment, to carry out its mandate. The Council authorized in parallel French troops, within the limits of their capacities and areas of deployment, to use all necessary means to intervene in support of elements of MINUSMA when under imminent and serious threat upon request of the Secretary-General.

Speaking after the adoption of the resolution, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed his Government's concern related to the growing shift towards the military aspects of United Nations peacekeeping as well as his Government's belief that the mandate of MINUSMA excluded offensive or counter-terrorism operations. In closing, he stated that the activity of MINUSMA should be backed by tangible and palpable political processes, which would include political dialogue between the main Malian sides.³⁰

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

²⁹ For more information on the mandate of MINUSMA, see part X, sect. I, with regard to peacekeeping operations.

³⁰ [S/PV.6952](#), p. 2.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali stated that his delegation was particularly pleased by the adoption of the resolution and recalled that despite significant progress in the security area, certain terrorist cells remained, and that he therefore welcomed the commitment of the international community to deter and prevent the return of armed rebel groups.³¹ The representative of the African Union advocated in favour of ECOWAS and the African Union maintaining a strong presence in Bamako to pursue the political commitment in Mali, the continuation of consultations of all joint actions on Mali and the strong coordination between AFISMA, the French force and the Malian army.³²

On 25 June 2013, the Security Council held a meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.³³ The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali addressed the Council via videoconference from Bamako. He gave an overview of the situation on the ground, highlighting that the security situation had gradually improved, but remained complex and fragile. On the political process, he added that on 18 June the transitional Government of Mali and the armed groups in the northern regions had signed in Ouagadougou a preliminary agreement on the presidential elections and inclusive negotiations. Concerning the preparations for the elections, he informed the Council that presidential polls had been scheduled for 28 July 2013, with MINUSMA having a supporting role. On the humanitarian front he expressed concern and noted that humanitarian activities were being carried out in the northern regions in spite of the security challenges and the upcoming rainy season. Finally, he confirmed that the human rights situation remained precarious, with violations committed by all parties.³⁴

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations reported that since its establishment on 25 April, MINUSMA had begun to implement its mandate of political good offices, electoral support, human rights and support for the restoration of the State authority. He explained that the majority of the staff would be in the north, maintaining a military presence in key population centres. In spite of the progress, he mentioned that significant challenges

³¹ Ibid., p. 3.

³² Ibid., p. 4.

³³ [S/2013/338](#).

³⁴ [S/PV.6985](#), p. 2-4.

remained, including the harsh climate and the vast size of the geographic area of responsibility.³⁵ The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support mentioned that MINUSMA was engaged in two complex endeavors, namely, the preparations for the presidential elections and the follow up of the interim agreement signed in Ouagadougou on 18 June, and explained the major challenges posed to MINUSMA because of the security, climatic and logistical conditions in the country. She highlighted the use of technology as a means of reducing the environmental footprint of the Mission and speeding up the process for the Mission to become operational.³⁶

Finally, the representative of Mali informed the Council that the security conditions were favourable to a transfer of competence from AFISMA to MINUSMA. On the agreement signed in Ouagadougou, he added that it represented a decisive step towards the re-establishment of the territorial integrity of Mali and that it created conditions conducive to the holding of the presidential elections throughout the national territory.³⁷

On 16 October 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali presented the second report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali³⁸ and offered an overview of the political and security situation in Mali to the Council. He underscored two important achievements, the successful holding of presidential elections and the establishment, even if incomplete, of MINUSMA on 1 July 2013. Looking ahead, he mentioned the holding of legislative elections in November 2013. On the security front, he warned that the recent security incidents registered in Mali were an important wake up call. However, he assured the Council that the overall improvement of the security situation in Mali had also opened up new prospects for the country's recovery and longer-term perspective. He raised the shortfalls affecting MINUSMA and called on the Council and troop contributing countries to promote the rapid deployment of additional enablers that would allow MINUSMA to discharge its mandate speedily and effectively.³⁹

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali informed the Council of the presidential elections in which a new president had been elected. He also

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 6-8.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 8-10.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

³⁸ [S/2013/582](#).

³⁹ [S/PV.7043](#), pp. 2-4.

enumerated a series of actions by the Government in furtherance of the 18 June 2013 agreement, including negotiations with the armed groups, the establishment of sensitization forums, the establishment of the National Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation as well as upcoming activities concerning decentralization and the accelerated development of the northern regions. He asserted that while the deployment of the Malian defence and security forces, MINUSMA and Operation Serval had helped significantly in improving the security situation in the major cities of northern Mali, the situation remained volatile and sustained attention of the international community was necessary.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

Meetings: the situation in Mali

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.6741 26 March 2012						S/PRST/2012/7
S/PV.6745 4 April 2012			Mali		Mali	S/PRST/2012/9
S/PV.6798 5 July 2012		Draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Morocco, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom, United States (S/2012/512)		President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	President of the Commission of ECOWAS	Resolution 2056 (2012) 15-0-0
S/PV.6820 8 August 2012			Mali	Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of ECOWAS, Permanent Observer of the African Union	Secretary-General and all invitees	
S/PV.6846 12 October 2012		Draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, India, Morocco, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom (S/2012/761)	Côte d'Ivoire (also on behalf of ECOWAS), Mali		All invitees	Resolution 2071 (2012) 15-0-0
S/PV.6879 5 December 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2012/894)		Mali	Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, President of the Commission of ECOWAS, Permanent Observer of the African Union	All invitees	

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.6898 20 December 2012	Letter dated 13 December 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/926)	Draft resolution submitted by 10 Member States ^a (S/2012/946)	Mali (Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation), Côte d'Ivoire (on behalf of ECOWAS)	Permanent Observer of the African Union	All invitees	Resolution 2085 (2012) 15-0-0
S/PV.6905 22 January 2013			Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire (on behalf of ECOWAS), Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal	Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Permanent Observer of the African Union, Head of the Delegation of the European Union	All invitees	
S/PV.6944 3 April 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2013/189)		Côte d'Ivoire (on behalf of ECOWAS), Mali	Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs	All invitees	
S/PV.6952 25 April 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2013/189)	Draft resolution submitted by Australia, France, Luxembourg, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Togo, United Kingdom, United States (S/2013/242)	Mali (Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation)	Permanent Observer of the African Union	All invitees	Resolution 2100 (2013) 15-0-0
S/PV.6985 25 June 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2013/338)		Mali (Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation)	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping	All invitees	

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.7043 16 October 2013	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2013/582)		Mali (Minister for Reconciliation and Development of the North of the Republic of Mali)	Operations, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali	All invitees	

^a Colombia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Morocco, Portugal, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom, Northern Ireland and United States