



Speech by H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve,
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to the United Nations Security Council

Mali Briefing

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Mr President,

Allow me to start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Annadif, for his briefing. We are all aware of your tireless commitment to peace, reconciliation and stability in Mali.

I would also like to welcome the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mali, Mr Tiébilé Dramé. Mr Minister, thank you for coming here to brief the Council.

Mr President,

Since our last debate on the situation in Mali, in March, more peacekeepers have lost their lives and the country has experienced further shocking violence against civilians. I would like to pay tribute to their memory.

Mr President,

The Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation has not been implemented as quickly as we had all hoped. Belgium is deeply concerned by the delays in its implementation. These delays strengthen the enemies of peace, who are quick to denounce the path of dialogue and compromise as a dead end, advocating violence as an alternative.

The violence has now spread to central Mali and even beyond the country's borders.

Belgium obviously welcomes the recent progress. Regarding the constitutional reform process, we are measuring the extent to which it is crucial, yet delicate.

My country is aware that sometimes, to reach compromises that are satisfactory to all parties and the appropriate level of ownership, including by women and young people, it is better to invest time in the process in order to focus on a solid result, rather than impose arbitrary deadlines. The "Inclusive political dialogue" is essential for Mali, but at the same time it cannot delay the implementation of the Agreement.

These efforts and this courage are vital for completing the reform of the State, but they must also be extended to the other main provisions of the Agreement. I would like to stress the fact that this responsibility lies with the three signatory parties and I urge them to make this their urgent priority.

Furthermore, these measures only make sense if they are maintained over the long term and are given the resources they need to be sustainable.

Lastly, the Council has specific instruments that can be used against those who are an obstacle to peace. Targeted sanctions have already been imposed and this Council should be prepared to impose more if necessary.

Mr President,

It is clear that the situation in central Mali is constantly deteriorating.

Terrorist acts are now combined with inter-community violence that is leading to an alarming downward spiral. Atrocities on this scale are unusual in a country like Mali, a historic land of diversity and peaceful cohabitation between communities.

Terrorists and aggressive militias cannot be allowed to take root. I encourage the Government to exercise its sovereign authority by guaranteeing the safety of its population, immediately disarming the armed militias and ending impunity for all criminals. Enquiries must be opened, and once the Government has announced this, the perpetrators must be brought before the courts and sentenced as soon as possible.

More generally, as this Council regularly points out, the solution cannot be only security-based, although this dimension is essential.

The aspirations expressed regarding governance, justice, basic services and the fight against corruption must be heard. Living together and refusing to stigmatise a specific ethnic group, local mediation and the fight against impunity are essential parameters for the return of State authority and legitimacy throughout the country.

In this respect, Belgium welcomes the creation of the Political Framework for Crisis Approach in Central Mali, as a solution can only be found through a real Malian political process. This process must be as inclusive as possible and take account of every dimension of the conflict. In this regard, Belgium considers that the future mandate of MINUSMA should support this intra-Malian dialogue in the Central region, and also pay greater attention to the protection of civilians, in support of the primary responsibility of the authorities.

Only Malians have the key, and the United Nations must support them in these efforts.

Thank you.