

Intervention of H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve,  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

At the United Nations Security Council

**Mali Briefing**  
New York, 16 January 2019

**Check against delivery**

Mr President,

Allow me first of all to thank Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her statement. It is particularly appreciated as it is backed up by her recent trip to Mali.

I would also like to welcome for the first time Ms Kamissa Camara, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

Mr President,

The situation in Mali remains marked by suffering; I would therefore like to pay tribute to the memory of the civilians, soldiers, Malians and foreigners who have lost their lives, whether they were innocent victims or died performing their duty.

Distinguished Members of the Council,

The implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, signed in Bamako in May and June 2015, is the cornerstone for a sustainable way out of the crisis in Mali. This commitment, made by Malians and supported by the international community, must be reflected in the transposition of the various provisions of the Agreement, in good faith and in their entirety.

Belgium is deeply concerned by the delays in its implementation. These delays undermine peace, stability, development and reconciliation in Mali. Worse still, they allow violence to spread, whether in central Mali or in the sub-region, for example in Burkina Faso.

In accordance with their own commitment in the Roadmap last March, I solemnly call on the three Malian Parties to the Agreement - as well as on any protagonist who has the means to do so - to intensify their efforts and be more courageous to ensure that the provisions of the Agreement become a reality, despite difficulties and obstacles which - I am aware - are sometimes significant.

At the same time, I would like to welcome all the progress made since 2015, including the most recent developments such as the establishment of the accelerated DDR process and the redeployment of part of the territorial administration to the North of the country. I also welcome the creation of a working group on women's participation in the peace process, under the authority of MINUSMA, as a step towards the more inclusive implementation of the Agreement. It is also essential to ensure that these measures, taken to implement the Peace Agreement, are long-term and therefore receive the resources required to make them sustainable.

Finally, given the key role of the Peace Agreement, which I have mentioned, I would like to stress that Belgium welcomes the sanctions imposed on those who impede it. Belgium will not oppose new sanctions in the future when this proves necessary.

Mr President,

Let me stress two essential conditions for the return of lasting peace, namely respect for human rights and, more specifically, the fight against impunity.

In central Mali, part of the Mopti and Ségou regions remain affected by violence that is not diminishing. In addition to terrorist acts, inter-community violence appears to be on the rise. This phenomenon is worrying in a country like Mali, a historical land of diversity and peaceful coexistence.

Terrorists and aggressive militias cannot be allowed to take root. I therefore encourage the Government to exercise its sovereign authority by guaranteeing the security of its population, with the strictest respect for human rights, as Mali undertook to do in January 2018 during its universal periodic review before the Human Rights Council.

With a courage and responsibility that deserve respect, the Malian authorities publicly acknowledged on 19 June 2018 "the existence of mass graves implicating certain [Malian armed forces] personnel" and announced "the opening of a judicial inquiry". We call on Mali to continue its efforts to open and complete each inquiry.

I also welcome the fact that the International Commission of Inquiry has begun its work, and encourage all parties involved to cooperate fully.

I also hope that MINUSMA - within the limits of its mandate - will support the authorities and also protect civilians from this violence.

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

The aspirations expressed regarding governance and social services deserve to be heard. Living together and refusing to stigmatise a specific ethnic

group, local mediation and the fight against impunity must all support the security response.

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

Mr President,

Belgium welcomes the development of an Integrated Strategic Framework by MINUSMA and the United Nations country team and calls for it to be finalised as soon as possible. It is essential that the resources available to the United Nations as a whole in Mali be used to the full, with efficiency and integration where possible.

Similarly, Belgium remains attentive to the integrated nature of MINUSMA and encourages all pillars to work closely together.

Finally, allow me to commend the efforts of all Mission personnel, in particular Special Representative Annadif.

Thank you.