



## **JOINT CO-CHAIRS STATEMENT**

### **JOINT FIELD MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE EUROPEAN UNION POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMMITTEE TO MALI, 10 - 14 FEBRUARY 2015**

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the European Union Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) undertook a Joint Field Mission to Mali from 11 to 13 February 2015. It was their first Joint Field Mission in accordance with the agreement reached at their 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Consultative Meeting held in Brussels in May 2014. The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission took place within the broad context of the Political Dialogue under the Africa-EU Joint Strategy, in which peace and security is a key pillar. With this Mission, the AUPSC/EUPSC wished to underline their joint engagement in support of Mali in its efforts to overcome its problems in the field of peace, security and development and to reaffirm their commitment to the full restoration of peace, security and development in Mali. The Mission was co-led by Madam Anne Namakau Mutelo, Ambassador of Namibia to Ethiopia and Sudan, Permanent Representative to the AU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Member of the AUPSC, and Ambassador Walter Stevens, Permanent Chair of the EU PSC.

The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission met with the President of the Republic of Mali, H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, the Prime Minister, Mr. Modibo Keita, and other relevant Ministers, as well as representatives of key political parties, parliamentarians and civil society organizations. The Mission also undertook a field visit to Gao, where it held meetings with representatives of local community, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and Barkhane. It also exchanged views with MISAHÉL, EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali.

The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission took place at a time when the security situation in northern Mali remains very tense and the 5<sup>th</sup> round of peace talks in Algiers is taking place. The Mission enabled both PSCs to gather first-hand information on the efforts being made to promote peace and reconciliation in Mali and to express the EU and AU's joint support for these efforts.

The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission expressed their deep concern about the persisting violence in northern Mali. It is a threat to the security, stability, territorial integrity and development of the country and the wider Sahel region, and continues to cause massive human suffering. The Mission called on all parties to respect the cease-fire agreement of 23 May 2014 and the Declaration of Cessation of Hostilities of 24 July 2014. It is essential that all armed groups refrain from any kind of violence.

The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission reaffirmed that the substantive disagreement between Malian parties can only be settled by peaceful and constructive dialogue in the context of the talks in Algiers. The Mission urged all parties to seize this unique opportunity for dialogue and reconciliation, to attend at a suitably high level, and to show the necessary political will and flexibility to reach an inclusive and durable political solution as swiftly as possible. Without it, all parties, and particularly the ordinary people of Mali, will continue to suffer.



The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission emphasized the need for enhanced coordination among regional and international actors in the implementation of their respective strategies for the Sahel. The Mission acknowledged the efforts to enhance security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahelo- Saharan region, including the Declaration adopted by the Summit held on 18 December 2014, in Nouakchott, Mauritania.

The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission reiterated their full support to MINUSMA in the implementation of its mandate and its efforts to protect civilians. The Mission strongly condemned the attacks on the UN peacekeepers and civilians and urged all parties involved to refrain from violence and respect their commitments for a peaceful resolution of their differences. Concerning the events of 27 January 2015 in Gao that caused the loss of lives of civilians, the Mission welcomed the opening of an enquiry. Furthermore, the Mission noted the readiness expressed by African Troop Contributing Countries to contribute to efforts aiming at enhancing the capacity of MINUSMA to execute its mandate.

The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission also served to take stock of progress and synergies achieved by MINUSMA, MISAHEL and the EU CSDP missions (EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali).

The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission, the first of its kind, was welcomed by members of both PSCs as a most useful ways to further enhance political dialogue and cooperation between both bodies.

The AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Field Mission expressed their gratitude to the Government and people of Mali for the warm welcome extended to them and for the excellent arrangements made to ensure the smooth conduct of its visit. The Mission expressed its deep gratitude to H.E. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of Mali, to whom it paid a courtesy call and exchanged views on the situation in Mali and the efforts to address the current challenges and threats. The Mission also expressed its gratitude to the representatives of the political parties, parliamentarians, civil society organizations and other stakeholders for exchanging their views with and manifesting their aspirations to the Mission on the situation in Mali.