



# Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

**8892**<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Friday, 29 October 2021, 11 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Kimani . . . . . (Kenya)

*Members:*

China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Jürgenson
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
India . . . . .	Mr. Raguttahalli
Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
Mexico . . . . .	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
Niger . . . . .	Mr. Maman Sani
Norway . . . . .	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation . . . . .	Ms. Evstigneeva
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. King
Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ben Lagha
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Mills
Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Pham

## Agenda

### Security Council mission

Briefing by the Security Council mission to Mali and the Niger (22 to 26 October 2021)

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*The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.*

### Adoption of the agenda

*The agenda was adopted.*

### Security Council mission

#### **Briefing by Security Council mission to Mali and Niger (22 to 26 October 2021)**

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

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by the co-leads of the Security Council mission to Mali and the Niger from 22 to 26 October, namely, the representatives of France, Kenya and the Niger.

I now call on the representative of France.

**Mr. De Rivière (France)** (*spoke in French*): It was an honour to lead the Security Council mission to Mali and the Niger alongside you, Mr. President, and the Permanent Representative of the Niger. The visit allowed the members of the Security Council to get a clear picture of the situation through direct and in-depth discussions with the local authorities, whom we thank for their welcome. We were able to hold discussions with representatives of civil society, the signatory groups of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, representatives of the United Nations and of the international mediation. Those discussions were very instructive.

The visit to Mali was an opportunity to affirm the Security Council's steadfast commitment to supporting that country, but we also saw that the situation there was serious. Insecurity is on the rise and the Malian State is retreating in the face of the terrorist threat, particularly in the centre. The prospects for bringing the political transition to an end are uncertain. Colonel Goïta and the Prime Minister took time to dialogue with the Security Council, but did not give any assurances about their willingness to present an electoral timeline that would meet the demands of the international community. France reiterates its call for the presidential election to be held on 27 February 2022, as the transitional authorities themselves have committed to.

France is also concerned by the fact that the authorities announced, the day after our visit, that the representative of the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS) had been declared *persona non grata*. We call on the transitional authorities to resume dialogue with ECOWAS, whose decisions ECOWAS of 16 September we support. Mali cannot isolate itself and must heed the warnings of the countries of the region.

Our visit was also an opportunity to commend the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and to pay tribute to the peacekeepers who have lost their lives. MINUSMA is doing essential work, in particular in implementing the peace agreement, where there are encouraging signs, and in protecting civilians. The strengthening of MINUSMA is an absolute necessity, and we wish to pursue our dialogue with the Malian authorities on that matter.

In the Niger, we were able to see that, despite the many challenges, the democratic model was working and that the authorities had a genuine strategic vision for their country. We welcomed the clear presentation of their objectives in terms of security, tackling climate change and education, especially for girls.

In that regard, we welcome the adoption a few moments ago of resolution 2601 (2021) on the protection of education, which was presented by the Niger and Norway. It reinforces the existing framework on the children and armed conflict agenda, which is dear to France, as Council members know.

In the Niger, we were also able to discuss in detail the support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), namely, with its Commander, General Bikimo, during a visit to the joint command post. Like the Niger and the other countries in the Sahel, France remains convinced of the relevance of the proposed United Nations support office for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. In his letter to the Security Council, the Secretary-General once again reiterated his support for that objective. We hope to continue to discuss that with Council members in the light of the lessons learned from our visit. It is time for the Council to assume its responsibilities on that matter.

**The President:** I thank the representative of France for his briefing,

I now call on the representative of the Niger.

**Mr. Maman Sani (Niger)** (*spoke in French*): The Niger welcomed the organization of the visit to the Sahel. It was timely and it strengthened the

efforts of the region to address challenges related to security, development and climate change, which have been compounded by the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

That is why we must support the regional efforts undertaken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as its mediation role in Mali. We therefore also encourage close cooperation between ECOWAS and Mali.

Furthermore, the visit allowed us to assess the successful efforts made by the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) with regard to security and development. The G-5 Sahel Joint Force needs support. We hope that the Security Council will overcome its disagreements on that issue.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Niger for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Kenya.

The Security Council undertook, from 22 to 26 October, a field visit to Mali and the Niger to assess the political, security, humanitarian and development efforts carried out in those countries. Kenya is proud to have facilitated the visit to the Sahel by the Security Council during its presidency.

In Mali, the members of the Security Council met with the transitional Government, including the transitional President, the Prime Minister, the signatory armed groups, representatives of civil society, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, the United Nations country team and other individuals engaged in the security situation. What the Council encountered was a Sahel region that is facing deep difficulty in managing to respond to the challenge of terrorism.

In the Niger, the members of the Security Council met with the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Force Commander of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and representatives of the United Nations country team.

The thing that struck Kenya the most in the Niger was the response of the Government of the Niger, which prioritizes democratic legitimacy as a key dimension in stabilizing the country. The Niger's strategy of embracing and protecting democracy, and of promoting

inclusivity and local level development projects that are prioritized and built by the local people, seemed to Kenya to offer a clear path for countries that are beset by the same challenge of terrorism to be able to emerge successfully.

To go back to the Mali leg of the trip, the Security Council inquired about the preparations for holding the elections within the established 18-month timeline, including presidential elections on 27 February. Kenya believes that the holding of the elections and the transition process need to be clear and transparent. The progress towards holding elections that allow the people of Mali to choose their leaders is a goal that Kenya supports fully. We urge the transitional authorities to continue on the path of compliance with their commitments to the people of Mali and to the international community.

When we left Mali, we heard of the expulsion of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Special Envoy, some of the reasons for which were transmitted to us. We understand the sovereign rights of Mali, but we very much hope that the expulsion did not reflect any hesitation in engaging with ECOWAS or compliance with ECOWAS expectations on the transition in Mali.

Overall, the field visit allowed us to better understand the challenges on the ground, the most glaring of which being the security challenges in the region. The visits by the G-5 Sahel Joint Force allowed us to understand that there must be progress made by the Security Council in how it supports African forces that are combating terrorism on the ground.

While the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is doing a commendable job in its undertaking to implement the resolution, it is clear that, ultimately, it is insufficient to the task before the Sahel and Mali. There must be support for efforts such as the G-5 Sahel Joint Force if indeed the Sahel to prevail.

We were touched to visit the memorial site for the victims of terrorism in the Niger, as we were to visit wall of heroes of MINUSMA fallen peacekeepers in Bamako. We continue to offer our condolences to all those who have lost their lives to terrorism, be they civilians or Blue Helmets in service to the international community.

I want to conclude by thanking all those involved in making the trip a success. I thank the Secretariat for ensuring that logistics and security were taken care of amid many challenges, as well as the Government of the Niger for its wonderful hospitality. I also thank my colleagues on the trip for their outstanding collaboration.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

On behalf of the Council, I should like to express appreciation to the Secretariat and all members of the Security Council that participated in the mission for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibilities.

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*