

Points for Oct 24 PSC on Mali

Thank you, Chair

We appreciate the opportunity to offer our views on next steps for dealing with the crisis in Mali.

I want to congratulate Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma for chairing the AU-organized meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group for Mali in Bamako on October 19.

We welcome UN Security Council resolution 2071. And we appreciate the hard work that the African Union has already undertaken on developing a Strategic Concept. The AU's proactive efforts to assure an African-led solution as well as the commitment to reach a consensus on the way forward takes into account the views of the AU Commission, ECOWAS, Core countries, and other partners are made clear to the UNSC.

As you know, Mr. Chairperson, the United States strongly believes that there are four, overlapping issues that must be addressed concurrently to help the government and people of Mali:

- a political crisis stemming from a military coup d'état that took place on March 21;
- a rebellion waged by armed Tuareg groups that destabilized northern Mali;
- the entrenchment and territorial advance of violent extremist and terrorist groups across northern Mali in the wake of that rebellion; and
- a humanitarian crisis in the Sahel exacerbated by the events in Mali.

Each of these challenges must be addressed simultaneously and comprehensively.

We continue to call for a clear timetable for elections by April 2013; we call for a reunification of Malian territory, both through negotiations with those Malians who support a unified and secular state and through military action against those terrorist groups who are occupying Malian territory and threatening regional stability.

We support an enduring resolution, achieved by inclusive dialogue, that addresses the historically neglected political, economic, and social needs of Tuareg groups; and we continue to address the humanitarian crisis and to find ways to build resilience so that the countries of the Sahel are no longer vulnerable to food insecurity.

While U.S. law constrains our ability to provide direct support to the transitional government until a democratically-elected government is in place, we are engaged and committed to playing an active role in the international response and resolution to the overlapping crises in Mali.

It is crucial that all of Mali's regional and international partners, in particular, ECOWAS, the AU, Algeria, and Mauritania, are working in concert to resolve the challenges that threaten the stability and security of the countries of the Sahel.

The United States welcomes the ECOWAS/AU planning conference in Bamako next week to consult on a concept of operations. If invited, we will send military observers/planners to assist.

I reiterate the many statements from my government calling for the interim Malian government to develop a timeline for elections by April 2013, and to develop key dates to achieve this goal.

Mali was advanced in its preparations for elections when the coup d'etat took place, one month before the regularly scheduled presidential election. These preparations can be built upon to hold elections by April, as called for by ECOWAS and the UN Security Council.

The United States welcomes the appointment of Special Envoy Romano Prodi, and we call for negotiations to begin in earnest.

While the political and security crisis tend to take center stage, we must not forget the humanitarian crisis facing Mali and the region. The United States government continues to provide humanitarian and food assistance to those displaced by the conflict in northern Mali and those affected by the region's food crisis. We have provided approximately \$400 million to meet the escalating humanitarian needs in the Sahel.

In closing, let me reiterate the United States' appreciation for the African Union's leadership on addressing Mali's complex and tragic situation. An African-led process is required, and this body along with the African Union Commission, have taken positive steps.

Thank you.