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TO/A: Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General Susana Malcorra, Chef de Cabinet				
FROM/DE: Jeffrey Feltman, USG, DPA <i>Jeff Feltman</i>				
Date: 23 October 2012	Ext: 3-5055	Room No. – No de bureau: NL-02060		
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SUBJECT/MESSAGE: Fortnightly update on Mali and the Sahel.

I attach, for your approval and signature, a fortnightly update on Mali and the Sahel for the period 5-22 October, inclusive.



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Fortnightly Consolidated Update on Mali and the Sahel (5-22 October 2012)

This update is limited to inputs received from the UN system by 17:00 hrs on 22 October. Any information received after the cut-off time would be included in the next reporting period.

23/10/12

United Nations

1. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2071 on 12 October 2012. Among other things, the resolution urges the Malian transitional authorities to present a detailed roadmap for the transition and to engage in a credible negotiation process with rebel groups in the north of Mali. It also requests the Secretary-General, along with other stakeholders, to (i) support the Malian political process and (ii) to provide military and security planners to assist ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) in joint planning efforts for an international military force to be deployed to Mali. A written report on the implementation of the provisions of the resolution was requested within a forty-five day timeframe.

2. On 19 October, a meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali, co-chaired by ECOWAS, the AU, and the UN, took place in Bamako. The meeting was attended by high-level representatives of the countries of the region and other international partners and provided an opportunity for the international community to renew its engagement to address the crisis in Mali. Consultations with Malian authorities were a crucial part of the meeting, particularly regarding the mobilization of efforts to restore Mali's constitutional order and territorial integrity, including through a political process and the deployment of an international military force. Participants reviewed the Draft Strategic Concept for the Resolution of the Crises in Mali, prepared by the AU in consultation with Malian authorities, ECOWAS, the UN, the European Union (EU), and other international stakeholders. The UN delegation was led by the Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) and included the newly-appointed Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (SESG) for the Sahel, Mr. Prodi, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mr. Djinnit. The DSG announced the establishment of an office in Bamako during the meeting.

3. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations deployed military planners to Abuja from 18 to 21 October to support ECOWAS planning efforts for the deployment of an international military force to Mali. The final report is in the process of being finalised.

Situation on the ground

4. During the reporting period, the situation remained relatively calm in Bamako, despite persistent divisions within the Malian society over plans for a foreign military intervention. On 11 October, the anti-putsch front composed of the *Front uni pour la sauvegarde de la Democratie et de la Republique* (FDR) and the *Collectif des ressortissants du nord* (COREN) organised a peaceful demonstration gathering thousands of people to demand the deployment of a West African-led military intervention to reclaim Mali's northern territories. On 18 October, the umbrella civil society group *Convergence Patriotique pour le Mali* (COPAM) staged another demonstration to protest against any military plans. The demonstration gathered approximately 2000 people.

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5. In northern Mali, reports surfaced that the *shura* council of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) had appointed Yayha Abou El Hammam, an Algerian national, as its Sahara *emir* on 4 October. El Hammam had reportedly been appointed as the shadow governor of Timbuktu earlier in the year and had taken part in several clashes with the Algerian and Mauritanian armies. His brigade is accused of holding a number of French hostages and El Hammam reportedly declared, following the 19 October meeting in Bamako, that those hostages' lives would be threatened if France supports a military intervention in the north of Mali.

6. The *Mouvement pour l'unicite et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest* (MUJAO) reportedly accused the Interim President of Mali and France of "crusading against Islam" during the reporting period. The group is said to have called on other Islamist groups in Mali and neighbouring countries to prepare for an imminent confrontation with France and "infidels". MUJAO was reported to have imposed an Islamic tax, *zakat*, in Gao during the reporting period. Sources also stated that the group reiterated its willingness to engage with Mali's High Islamic Council in Bamako. Additionally, the Islamist group *Ansar Dine* is reported to have destroyed three mausoleums on 18 October in a southern neighbourhood of Timbuktu.

Humanitarian situation/Resilience

7. The World Food Program (WFP) indicated during the reporting period that good crop prospects in the Sahel will improve food security for producers and that a decrease in retail prices would increase purchasing power for households. However, prospects for households rated as "poor" and "very poor", which represent 20% of the population across the Sahel and who do not depend on agricultural production for their food, are expected to remain very vulnerable. In addition, a locust threat is said to remain in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad.

8. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is planning to conduct a mission from 29 October to 2 November to discuss support for crisis prevention and to agree on a recovery comprehensive support package for the next two to three years. The mission will be led by Bruno Lemarquis, from UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and will include the participation of the Resident Coordinator and national stakeholders.

Regional developments

9. The Minister for Maghreb and African Affairs of Algeria, Abdelkader Messahel, conducted a week-long visit to countries in the Sahel during the reporting period to explore options to strengthen security within the region in support of Mali.

International reactions

10. Following the adoption of Security Council resolution 2071 (2012), the Foreign Ministers of the European Union agreed to commence the planning of a military mission in support of the Malian army.

11. During the meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali, the African Union announced plans to open an office in Mali.