

UK and international partners condemn Wagner Group's plan to deploy mercenaries in Mali



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Statement by the UK and international partners:

We, the international partners committed to supporting Mali and its people in their efforts to achieve sustainable peace and stability and combat terrorism, firmly condemn the deployment of mercenary troops on Malian territory. This deployment can only further deteriorate the security situation in West Africa, lead to an aggravation of the Human Rights situation in Mali, threaten the Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers process, and hamper the efforts of the international community to ensure the protection of civilians and to provide support to the Malian armed forces.

We deeply regret the choice of the Malian transitional authorities to use already scarce public funds to pay foreign mercenaries instead of supporting the Malian Armed Forces and public services to the benefit of the Malian people.

We are aware of the involvement of the Russian Federation government in providing material support to the deployment of the Wagner group in Mali and call on Russia to revert to a responsible and constructive behaviour in the region.

We recall ECOWAS decisions and their concern about the risk of instability for the region should private security companies deploy in Mali, (sixtieth ordinary session in Abuja, 12 December 2021). We also recall the adoption by the European Union of a set of restrictive measures against the Wagner group itself, and against 8 associated individuals and 3 entities connected to it (Foreign Affairs Council on 13

December 2021) involved in serious human rights abuses, including torture and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and killings, or in destabilizing activities in some of the countries they operate in.

We will not give up our efforts to address the needs of the Malian population. In line with the objectives of the international Coalition for the Sahel, we reaffirm our commitment to continuing efforts to protect civilians, to support the fight against terrorism in the Sahel and help build long-term stability by supporting sustainable development, respect for human rights and the deployment of public services. We will continue to closely follow and assess the situation.

We urge the Malian transitional authorities to undertake reforms and to restore constitutional order, through the timely preparation and organization of elections, as they have committed to before the Malian people, ECOWAS and the international community. We fully support recent decisions by ECOWAS in that regard.

Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

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