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Joint declaration on the fight against the terrorist threat and the support to peace and security in the Sahel and West Africa

On the eve of the European Union – African Union Summit, we, Sahelian and neighbouring countries as well as international partners, met to discuss the situation in the Sahel. We remain committed to supporting Mali and its people in their efforts to achieve sustainable peace and stability and to fight terrorist threats in the Sahel region.

We all reaffirm our strong will to continue our partnership with and commitment to the people of Mali over the long term to face all challenges posed by the activity of armed terrorist groups in the Sahel.

We observe and regret that the Malian transitional authorities have not fulfilled their commitments to ECOWAS, supported by the AU, to hold presidential and legislative elections by February 27, 2022. We urge the Malian authorities to complete the transition period and organize free, fair and credible elections. We fully support ongoing efforts of the ECOWAS and the AU for the return of Mali to constitutional order within the earliest time possible.

We strongly encourage the Malian authorities to re-engage in constructive dialogue with ECOWAS and the AU, at the highest level to find a way forward to the benefit of the stability and development of Mali and the wider region.

Due to multiple obstructions by the Malian transitional authorities, Canada and the European States operating alongside Operation Barkhane and within the Task Force Takuba deem that the political, operational and legal conditions are no longer met to effectively continue their current military engagement in the fight against terrorism in Mali and have thereof decided to commence the coordinated withdrawal of their respective military resources dedicated to these operations from Malian

territory. In close coordination with neighbouring states, they also expressed their willingness to remain committed in the region in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures.

At the request of their African partners, and based on discussions on future modalities of joint action, they agreed nonetheless to continue their joint action against terrorism in the Sahel region, including in Niger and in the Gulf of Guinea, and have begun political and military consultations with them with the aim to set out the terms for this shared action by June 2022.

We underline MINUSMA's essential contribution to the stabilization of Mali, the implementation of the peace agreement, the protection of the Malian people, including their human rights, and the creation of a secure environment for humanitarian assistance. We further acknowledge the commitment and the price in terms of human lives paid by troop and police-contributing countries.

Similarly, we recall the substantial contribution of the European Union and its missions to peace and security in the Sahel.

We reaffirm the crucial task of strengthening the means and capabilities of the security forces of countries in the region, and thus of increasing the security of local populations, if and where the necessary conditions are met.

Given the impacts of the situation on the Malian population, we all note our longstanding commitment to the people of Mali and our willingness to continue to tackle root causes of insecurity by mobilising assistance to meet the immediate and longer-term needs of the population, especially the most vulnerable people. We also reaffirm our willingness to continue engaging in dialogue with the Malian transition authorities.

In order to contain the potential geographical expansion of the actions of armed terrorist groups towards the south and west of the region, the international partners indicate their willingness to actively consider extending their support to neighbouring countries in the Gulf of Guinea and West Africa, based on their demands. These actions would support relevant regional initiatives and organisations like the AU, ECOWAS, the G5 Sahel and Accra Initiative and strengthen national strategies to improve resilience as well as living and security conditions in the most vulnerable regions.

We call on the High Representative of the Coalition for the Sahel to swiftly organize a Coalition ministerial meeting, with the

aim of assessing the roadmap adopted in March 2021 and taking these new developments into account.

*Signatories : Belgium; Benin; Canada; Chad; Ivory Coast; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; France; Germany; Italy; Ghana;
Mauritania; Niger; Portugal; Romania; Senegal; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; Togo; European Council; European Commission;
Coalition for the Sahel; African Union Commission*