

Declaration of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly on the security situation in the north of Mali

Meeting in its 27th session in Brussels, on 19 March 2012, the Parliamentary Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States reviewed the security situation in the north of Mali since mid-January 2012.

The ACP Parliamentary Assembly expressed grave concern at the deterioration in the situation in that region of Mali following deadly attacks carried out by groups claiming to be linked to the Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA), notably in the towns of Ménaka, Tessalit, Aguelhoc, Leré and Niafunké. The attacks on those towns have left scores dead and prompted the massive exodus of the civilian population to neighbouring countries. In Aguelhoc, in particular, the MNLA and its allies (AQIM and ANÇAR DINE) committed atrocities tantamount to war crimes when they summarily executed 70 Malian soldiers who had surrendered to them. The ACP Parliamentary Assembly presents its condolences to the Government of Mali and to the families of the victims.

The ACP Parliamentary Assembly believes that this crisis is a direct consequence of the Libyan conflict which has caused the movement of hundreds of heavily-armed fighters into Malian territory, and is deeply concerned that this crisis could spread to the entire Sahelo-Saharan area, and even to other regions of Africa.

Re-affirming its commitment to the principle of the intangibility of borders that existed at the time of accession to independence, as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the ACP Parliamentary Assembly is strongly opposed to any attacks on Mali's territorial integrity and national unity.

The ACP Parliamentary Assembly strongly condemns the attacks carried out by armed groups in the north of Mali and calls for the immediate and unconditional cessation of these attacks and the protection of the civilian population.

The ACP Parliamentary Assembly expresses full solidarity with the government and people of Mali and urges the international community, and the European Union and humanitarian organisations, in particular, to support the Malian Government to enable it to bring an end to the conflict, secure the integrity of its national territory, improve the living conditions of Malian refugees and organise their return to Mali as soon as possible.

Brussels, 20 March 2012