

Human Rights Council 28th Session

Interactive Dialogue with the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali

24 March 2015

Statement by Ireland

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and adds the following.

Ireland welcomes the Independent Expert and thanks him for the presentation of his report.

While Ireland welcomes the marked decrease in cases of violations of the right to life attributable to the Malian armed forces as reported by the Independent Expert, the significant increase in serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by armed groups in the north is extremely worrying.

Ireland condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the attacks on innocent civilians and peacekeepers in Mali earlier this month. Ireland is particularly concerned about the deliberate targeting of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which has a vital role to play in supporting political stabilisation in Mali, including through protection of civilians, human rights monitoring and creation of conditions to allow provision of humanitarian assistance.

Ireland welcomes recent progress in peace negotiations between the Malian Government and rebel factions and notes the importance of ensuring that any peace agreement is within a legal framework in keeping with international human rights instruments and therefore does not grant amnesty to the perpetrators of serious human rights violations.

Ireland also stresses the importance of effectively protecting human rights while countering terrorism and supports the recommendations of the Independent Expert in this regard, including the call to facilitate access by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Human Rights Division of MINUSMA to persons detained by the intelligence services.

Ireland is also deeply troubled by the findings of the Independent Expert in relation to the increasing number of rape cases involving minors

allegedly committed by members of the armed forces. Ireland calls on the Malian authorities to investigate all allegations of sexual violence and to ensure that victims of sexual violence have access to legal and medical services.

We would like to ask the Independent Expert his views on how the Malian Government could best reintegrate children previously used by armed groups as well as facilitate the release of children still in the ranks of armed groups?