

# Speech: “The human rights situation in Mali needs close attention.”

Thank you Madam President,

It's good to see His Excellency Foreign Minister Diop of Mali, join us in New York once more. We're looking forward to hearing from you, given how much is at stake in your country.

The death of a French soldier yesterday is another stark reminder of how dangerous this environment is, and I pay tribute to his sacrifice.

I also want to thank Under Secretary-General Lacroix for his very clear briefing. And also Jean-Pierre to welcome you, we are really looking forward to working with you closely in this critical job.

Madam President, we are encouraged by recent moves in Mali to implement the terms of the peace agreement, as the French Permanent Representative and others have just said, the establishment of interim authorities in three of the five northern regions is a positive step, as is the launching of some mixed patrols that include northern groups and the Malian armed forces.

It is also welcome that the National Reconciliation Conference has taken place. This reflected a healthy cross-section of civil society in Mali, including women's organisations, youth groups, NGOs, business leaders and former combatants. The United Kingdom has consistently pushed for better inclusion of women in the peace process and this, as Sweden has already pointed out, is a critical driver for success. So it's good that debate was inclusive, positive and focused on the future of the country.

But, Madam President, I think I should be as frank in public as we are in private consultations. We do remain seriously concerned at the apparent lack of political will among the signatories to really implement the Algiers Peace Accord. Progress is too slow, it's unpredictable and it's slender. Now is the opportunity to change that.

It's in that context that the human rights situation in Mali needs close attention. The Secretary General's latest report details consistent human rights violations – including summary executions and enforced disappearances – by members of the Malian defence and security forces, the Platform and the CMA. There cannot be an excuse for such actions and perpetrators of these abuses must be held accountable: addressing impunity is an essential component of reconciliation and of peace.

I also think the link here between human rights and peace and security more broadly could not be more clear or more stark, as we will be debating in this chamber next week.

On security, this continues to be a significant concern. Despite some improvements, there is a real danger of reversing previous gains. The

challenges facing the country are numerous and they are clear. The Secretary-General's latest report details the porous nature of Mali's borders, and that both violent extremist groups and organised criminal gangs continue to exploit the ungoverned space of the country.

To add to the historic presence of Al-Qaida aligned organisations in Mali, there is now a new threat from Islamic State-affiliated groups along the Mali-Niger border, spurred on by lack of a state presence. Both France and Italy have already set out the strategic context of the threat. Should it continue unchecked the impact on Mali and the wider region could be grave.

I do want to pay tribute to the on-going work of the Special Representative to Mali, Mr Annadif. Both the military and the civilian components of MINUSMA are operating in challenging circumstances. The threat to United Nations personnel from spoilers intent on disrupting the peace process continues to grow. Despite this, the staff of MINUSMA, and the French forces of Berkhane, continue to do their utmost for the people of Mali and the wider region.

As others have alluded to, this task is made harder by the continued shortfall of troop numbers and equipment. It's clear that air cover, reconnaissance capability and armoured personnel carriers in particular, are urgently required. We therefore call on potential troop contributing countries to follow-up on the offers that they have made to join the mission, and we welcome Senegal's important offer of helicopters.

As I said at the beginning, political reform is the key to halting the instability.

It's unacceptable that MINUSMA should, at great cost in human life and financial commitment, be working hard to maintain a stable environment in which peace can take root, if the parties to the accord are not taking advantage of this to deliver on their promises.

So our central message, to be absolutely clear, is that we urge the Government of Mali and opposition groups to seize the opportunities, build on recent progress, and press on with implementing the peace accords. MINUSMA is helping to create the conditions of peace, but the only people who can make that peace are the parties themselves.

Thank you.

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**[Syria: High Representative Federica Mogherini speaks to various](#)**

## interlocutors

Following the chemical weapons attack in Idlib province in Syria and the ensuing action, Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, spoke today with a large number of her counterparts in the European Union Member States as well as the Presidents of the EU institutions, and interlocutors in international institutions and partners, among them UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, US Vice-President Mike Pence, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. She also spoke to UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura and Director General of the Organisation of Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Ahmet Üzümcü.

In her calls, HRVP Mogherini presented the position of the European Union on the latest developments

(<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/04/07-hr-dec...>)

and had an exchange of views on the way ahead, emphasising the need to accelerate talks for a credible political solution for the conflict in Syria. HRVP Mogherini will continue these exchanges in the coming days with partners, including at the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of G7, taking place in Lucca in Italy early next week.

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## Statement by President Juncker following the attacks in Stockholm

Our thoughts are with the people of Sweden following the tragic events in Stockholm today. On behalf of the European Commission, I would like to send my sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to salute the courageous work of the first responders who arrived so quickly on the scene.

One of Europe's most vibrant and colourful cities appears to have been struck by those wishing it – and our very way of life – harm. We stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the people of Sweden and the Swedish authorities can count on the European Commission to support them in any which way we can.

An attack on any of our Member States is an attack on us all.

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# Mergers: Commission clears 21st Century Fox's proposed acquisition of Sky under EU merger rules\*

The proposed transaction would combine **Sky plc (Sky)**, the leading pay-TV operator in Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy and the UK and **Twenty-First Century Fox, Inc (Fox)**, one of the six major Hollywood film studios (20th Century Fox), as well as a TV channel operator (Fox, National Geographic).

Fox and Sky are mainly active in different markets in the Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy and the UK. They compete with each other only to a limited extent, mainly in the acquisition of TV content and in the wholesale supply of basic pay-TV channels.

The Commission found that the proposed transaction would lead to only a limited increase in Sky's existing share of the markets for the acquisition of **TV content** as well as in the market for the **wholesale supply of TV channels** in the relevant Member States.

Given that the merging companies are mainly active at different levels of the market, the Commission's assessment focused on whether, as a result of the proposed transaction:

- Fox would be able to prevent or significantly limit access by Sky's competitors to its films and other TV content, as well as to its TV channels. The Commission concluded that these possible concerns were not founded. This is because the parties' audience shares remain limited and pay-TV distributors would continue to have access to content from Fox's competitors and alternative channels with comparable programming and audiences in the relevant Member States.
- Sky would have the incentive to cease purchasing content from Fox's competitors. The Commission found that this was unlikely as it would reduce the quality of Sky's product offering.
- Sky could prevent competing channels from accessing its platform. The investigation found that the merged companies' ability to shut out Fox's rivals was significantly mitigated by existing regulations in the UK, Germany and Austria. In addition, competitors that could have been targeted for exclusion are either contractually protected for a sufficient period of time or are not dependent on Sky's retail platform in the relevant Member States.

Based on the results of its market investigation, the Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns.

## **UK media plurality review and Article 21 of the EU Merger Regulation**

The Commission has exclusive jurisdiction to assess the impact of the proposed transaction on competition in the various markets affected within

the European Economic Area. However, Article 21 of the [EU Merger Regulation](#) recognises that Member States may take appropriate measures, including prohibiting proposed transactions, to protect other legitimate interests, such as media plurality.

The purpose of, and legal frameworks for, competition assessments and media plurality assessments are very different. The competition rules focus broadly on whether consumers would be faced with higher prices or reduced innovation as a result of a transaction. A media plurality assessment typically looks at wider concerns about whether the number, range and variety of persons with control of media enterprises is sufficiently diverse.

The UK Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport issued a [European intervention notice on 16 March 2017](#). This notice requires the relevant UK authorities to investigate and report by 16 May 2017 on whether the proposed transaction is, or may be, against the public interest.

As the Commission's findings concern solely the competition aspects of the proposed transaction, today's clearance decision is without prejudice to the UK's ongoing media plurality review of the proposed transaction.

### **Merger control rules and procedures**

The transaction was notified to the Commission on 3 March 2017.

The Commission has the duty to assess mergers and acquisitions involving companies with a turnover above certain thresholds (see Article 1 of the [Merger Regulation](#)) and to prevent concentrations that would significantly impede effective competition in the EEA or any substantial part of it.

The vast majority of notified mergers do not pose competition problems and are cleared after a routine review. From the moment a transaction is notified, the Commission generally has a total of 25 working days to decide whether to grant approval (Phase I) or to start an in-depth investigation (Phase II).

More information will be available on the [competition](#) website, in the Commission's [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8354](#).

\* updated on 07/04/2017, 16:55 CET: amended paragraph to show correct UK Secretary of State and purpose of intervention notice.

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**[Today's figures demonstrate the failure of the Tory Government's](#)**

# industrial strategy – John McDonnell

**John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, commenting on today's manufacturing and trade figures, said:

"Today's figures demonstrate the failure of the Tory Government's industrial strategy.

"UK manufacturing output has shrunk for the second consecutive month and our trade deficit, on both goods and services, has widened for the second consecutive month, getting 2017 off to a particularly worrying start.

"It is becoming increasingly clear that the Tory Government's rhetoric on its industrial strategy isn't matched by reality.

"Only Labour, with a proper industrial strategy, and a plan for a high-investment, high-skill and high-wage economy will deliver the trade and export opportunities of the future."