

AFRICAN UNION

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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE ACTION OF THE MUTINEERS WHO ANNOUNCED THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN POWER IN MALI

Addis Ababa, 22 March 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, continues to follow with deep concern the developments in Mali, particularly the announcement by the mutineering soldiers of the suspension of the Constitution and the institutions of the Republic, as well as the establishment of a *Conseil national de Redressement de la Démocratie et de la Restauration de l'État* – CNRDR (National Council for the Rehabilitation of Democracy and Restoration of the State).

The Chairperson of the Commission strongly condemns this act of rebellion, which seriously undermines constitutional legality and constitutes a significant setback for Mali and for the ongoing democratic processes on the continent.

In conformity with the relevant provisions of the AU Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the Chairperson of the Commission reaffirms Africa's zero tolerance for any unconstitutional change of Government and its total rejection of any seizure of power by force. In this regard, he urges the mutineers immediately to put an end to their action and to submit themselves to constitutional legality. He urges the military institution to resolutely remain at the service of the democratically-elected civilian authorities.

The Chairperson of the Commission has initiated a number of consultations, including with the Chairman of the Union, President Thomas Yayi Boni of Benin, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Désiré Kadré Ouedraogo, and other actors, to enhance the effectiveness of Africa's response to the ongoing events in Mali, with a view to preserving constitutional order. He will soon present a report to the Peace and Security Council (PSC), to enable this organ pronounce itself on the present situation on the basis of the relevant AU instruments.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that the AU, in cooperation with ECOWAS and the countries of the region, and in implementation of the decisions of the ministerial meeting of the PSC held in Bamako, on 20 March 2012, will pursue efforts for a speedy resolution of the crisis triggered by the armed rebellion in the northern part of Mali, with strict respect for the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali. He reaffirms that this rebellion has no justification whatsoever, more so given the existence, in Mali, of democratic institutions which provide a framework for free expression and for addressing any legitimate claims.

