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January 25, 2022

## **Seeking the return to constitutional democracy in Mali: Appeal for caution as Economic Sanctions may deflate the intended goals**

The African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation - ITUC-Africa ( [www.ituc-africa.org](http://www.ituc-africa.org)) calls upon the Malian government, ECOWAS and other transitional authorities to resume the road to dialogue and move towards a credible timeline for elections, to implement the peace agreement as well as frame a strategy to stabilize the country for the benefit of the citizens. Key to this should be a comprehensive politically led strategy that ensures that civilians, workers, trade unions, CSOs and other major groups in Mali are consciously and genuinely mobilised and supported to participate in the national dialogue process that will bring about agreeable outcomes. Malians must be assisted to resolve this impasse. Sanctions may demobilise and be a clog in the wheel of the efforts to the resolution of the impasse.

ITUC-Africa has over the years been following the political and security developments in Mali with keen interest and great concern. It is a decade since the crisis began and Mali's insecurity is worsening, the humanitarian situation is deteriorating, with the resultant loss of livelihoods for families and deepening poverty among the Malians. This precarious situation has heightened food insecurity, in the country and increased the number of internally displaced persons, with more and more children getting out of school.

No doubt, the coup d'état in Mali has further worsened an already politically and security volatile situation. While the coup is regrettable, it is our hope that the transitional government will see to it that they transfer power to civilian rule within the shortest period possible. Unfortunately, the Malian military has chosen to do otherwise by deciding to extend the transitional period to five years.

As an organisation that believes in the rule of law and is a defender of constitutionalism and participatory plural democracy, ITUC-Africa strongly urges the Malian military government to reconsider its current stance of a five-year transition period to a shorter and would-be-genuinely managed period. We make this call on the military because we know that a protracted impasse will only consolidate the existing conflicts and worsen the already dire poverty situation in the country.

ITUC-Africa also notes the sanctions imposed on Mali in December 2021, which have been upheld with new restrictions added, following a recent extraordinary meeting held by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to assess the situation in Mali. Our experience as ITUC-Africa is that such that sanctions, no matter their best intentions, have always ended up worsening the economic fortunes of the country and punishing innocent civilians.

It is our hope therefore that such measures will be reviewed and gradually lifted with the finalization of an acceptable timetable for elections and progress towards its implementation. ECOWAs and other transnational authorities should therefore help stabilize the country and provide a window of opportunity to move forward on implementing the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

We are equally concerned with the emerging possibility of Mali turning into a battleground for the global powers. The seeming tussle by the Military Government and ECOWAS leading to the imposition of sanctions will only punish the Malian citizens. Currently, the world is replete with examples of how such a scenario has played out elsewhere such as in Syria, Afghanistan, and Libya. Mali should not join this list. Let's work together to bring stability to Mali and its people !



**Kwasi Adu-Amankwah**  
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