



Femmes Africa Solidarité

28th Session of the Human Rights Council  
**Individual Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Mali**  
Oral Statement  
24 March 2015

Thank you Mr. President,

FAS thanks the Independent Expert for his work and also commends the support provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We support the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert.

FAS deplores the repeated attacks against the civilian population, as well as the MINUSMA, and strictly condemns the violations of basic human rights committed by armed groups and military forces, as well as the acts of violent extremism. The basic needs of the population, in terms of health, food, security, are not met. We salute the efforts of the Malian authorities to combat all forms of violent extremism and we call for enhanced efforts from the part of all actors, international community, UN and the African Union to bring stability to the country.

FAS stresses that the worst affected by the conflict are women and children. We are gravely concerned by the increasing occurrence of rape, especially on minor victims, as well as sexual harassment, and intimidation for sexual favors. The perpetrators of these grave acts are not called to account and this perpetrated impunity acts as a catalyser for even more cases of rape.

FAS also draws the attention on the issue of refugees, particularly women and children. We urge the receiving countries to ensure that the rights of women refugees, particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and poor living conditions, be protected.

FAS underlines the importance of accountability of those guilty of grave violations of human rights and particularly, gender-based violence and rape. There is no end to the cycle of violence in Mali without justice, and full reconciliation cannot be reached if impunity is perpetrated.

Mr. President,

In this year when we celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN resolution 1325 and generally, women's empowerment, FAS highlights the importance of women's participation to peace processes, and post conflict reconstruction. We demand the full participation of women in the reconciliation process in Mali, and that women's rights be fully taken into consideration.

FAS has two specific questions to the Independent Expert:

- What was the involvement of women in the peace negotiations and how their full participation in the reconstruction and reconciliation process be ensured?

- What specific services are provided to women victims of rape and sexual violence? Are there any measures taken to combat their stigmatisation?

To conclude, FAS strongly urges again for accountability to allow a peaceful reconstruction of the country. Mr Independent Expert, you used an African proverb in your report: "*When elephants fight, the grass gets hurt.*" Let us see that the grass grows again in Mali.

I thank you Mr. President.