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15th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group (21 January-1 February 2013)

**Statement by H. E. Mr. Rytis Paulauskas,  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lithuania  
at the review of Mali  
22 January 2013**

Madam President,

Lithuania welcomes the esteemed delegation of Mali and thanks for the informative National Report that indicates country's openness to this procedure. We strongly appreciate the commitment of the Government representatives to the Universal Periodic Review mechanism and participation today despite the difficult situation in the country.

We note with satisfaction that since the first UPR there have been a number of positive developments in Mali, notably the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution, the *Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme* which has already taken activities in the promotion and protection of human rights. At the same time we regret that the conflict in Mali has undermined these positive trends and achievements and will have long-lasting consequences on human rights situation in the country.

Lithuania is concerned about the serious human rights violations and abuses committed by both the armed groups and the Malian army. There have been allegations of extrajudicial executions, torture, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances of soldiers involved in a counter-coup attempt. There have also been reports of widespread sexual violence against women and children, as well as of recruitment of child soldiers. We are also concerned that since the beginning of the armed conflict in the north of Mali journalists, including foreigners were targeted.

With reference to the recently issued report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Mali, Lithuania encourages the implementation of the recommendations contained therein. In this regard, we recommend the government of Mali to undertake effective and impartial investigations into all reports of extrajudicial executions, torture, other ill-treatment and violence, to bring to justice those suspected of criminal responsibility and to ensure that human rights of the whole population are being protected, especially those of most vulnerable groups, including women and children.

Lithuania expresses its hope that democracy and constitutional order will be restored in the country which itself participated in the establishment of the Community of Democracies, an intergovernmental coalition of democratic countries. Along the EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 17 January 2013 we encourage a national inclusive dialogue to this end.

I thank you.