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Onderwerp: SI in Mali with Keita for crucial elections

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SI in Mali with Keita for crucial elections

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SI delegation with Ibrahim Boubacar Keita

A Socialist International delegation is in Mali from the 8th to the 14th of August for the second round of the presidential elections that took place on Sunday the 11th. The delegation includes the SI Secretary General Luis Ayala; Emmanuel Golou, Chair of the SI Africa Committee, from PSD Benin; SI Vice-Presidents from the region Ousmane Tanor Dieng from the PS Senegal and Chantal Kambiwa from the SDF Cameroon, and Nana Cheikhna, Vice-President of the RFD of neighbouring Mauritania.

The delegation has held meetings with the interim President of the Republic of Mali, HE Dioncounda Traoré, and with the presidential candidate and now President-elect Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, leader of the RPM, a member of the Socialist International. Keita, who was Prime Minister of Mali from 1994 to 2000, and President of the National Assembly from 2002 to 2007, has been an active member of our organisation, having served as an SI Vice President, a member of the SI Global Progress Commission, and the SI

Commission on Global Financial Issues and most recently, as a member of the Electoral Commission at the last SI Congress. Further meetings in Bamako were also held with the interim president of ADEMA-PASJ, Ibrahim Ndiaye, as well as other representatives of the member parties of the SI.

The two SI member parties in Mali have been fundamental pillars of the democratic development and democratic life of the country, and the SI delegation reiterated the solidarity of the Socialist International with the efforts of the Malian people, of President Traoré, and of its member parties, in defending and upholding the democratic institutions of the country, its territorial integrity and the security of its citizens, having faced the grave challenge of armed rebel forces in the North and subsequent terrorist activity.

The SI has consistently followed closely developments in Mali, speaking out against the subversion of democracy in March 2012, one month prior to presidential elections. The SI Congress in 2012 addressed the crisis in Mali and the SI Council debated the situation in that country as an emergency item at its meeting in Cascais in February 2013; and subsequently the Socialist International convened a meeting of its Africa Committee in Niamey, Niger, to focus on the situation in Mali and the Sahel region. On all these three occasions, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita presented the situation in his country as a key-note speaker.

The SI had called for the holding of free and fair presidential elections in Mali and maintained that the success of these elections was crucial for the future of the country. The hard won democratic gains made prior to the military coup of March 2012 needed to be restored and strengthened, laying the foundations of a strong democratic state, so that the Malian people can live in peace and security.

The SI delegation present in Mali these days, noted with satisfaction the orderly and peaceful manner in which the elections were carried out. Following the opening of the first ballot boxes, Keita appeared leading the count by an overwhelming margin and on Monday night, before the official count had concluded, the opposing candidate from the URD, Soumaila Cisse, conceded defeat. The SI delegation transmitted the sentiments of the entire Socialist International family in congratulating Keita on his very significant election victory.

The SI has also looked forward to a peaceful outcome to these elections so that the hundreds of thousands of Malians who are internally displaced as a result of the rebel activity in the North, and the hundreds of thousands who are currently refugees in neighbouring countries, can finally return home. Keita has said that his first priority would be the reconciliation of the country and the restoration of Mali's dignity and honour.

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