Beat: Politics

U.S. and EU to aid French military in Mali operations

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USPA News - As the Mali conflict intensifies with France`s decision to take military action in the African country, the U.S. and the European Union (EU) on Thursday announced military aid. The United States announced that it will be sending out military transport planes to aid French armed forces in Mali.

The aircraft are expected to help move heavy equipment such as tanks and armed vehicles, as well as troops. U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, spoke after her meeting with Somali President Hassan Shekh Mohamud in Washington, saying the country will be supporting France in North Africa. "We are supporting the French operation in Mali with intelligence and airlift," she said. "We`re working with a half a dozen African countries, as we did with respect to Somalia over so many years, to help them be prepared to send in African troops." Clinton also said that U.S. trainers will be on the continent to offer pre-deployment training and sustainment packages for ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) troops. Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) announced that the Council on Thursday established a Common Security and Defense Policy mission to support the training and reorganization of the Malian Armed Forces, appointing Brigadier General François Lecointre from France as mission commander. The EU training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) is intended to help improve the military, providing training and advise for the Malian Armed Forces on command and control, logistics, human resources as well as on international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians and human rights. The EU noted, nonetheless, that the mission will not be involved in combat operations and estimated the common costs of the operation at 12.3 million euros ($16.4 million) for the 15-month mandate. The headquarters will be in Bamako while training is to take place in a dedicated location north-east of Bamako. On Wednesday, the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is based in The Hague, Netherlands, formally opened an investigation into alleged crimes committed in Mali since the conflict began, in January 2012. ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda stated that "at each stage during the conflict, different armed groups have caused havoc and human suffering through a range of alleged acts of extreme violence. I have determined that some of these deeds of brutality and destruction may constitute war crimes as defined by the Rome Statute." According to investigations conducted since 2012, the ICC said there is a reasonable basis to believe murder; mutilation, cruel treatment and torture were committed, in addition to other crimes such as the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgement by a constituted court, pillaging, and rape. Bensouda ensured a thorough, impartial investigation and justice to Malian victims

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