

Procedure

1. I was introduced to [REDACTED] and told that they are investigators with the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) of the International Criminal Court (ICC). I was introduced to A.3.2. [REDACTED] and was explained that he is an interpreter contracted by the OTP of the ICC.
2. The investigators explained what the ICC is and described its mandate. They also explained the role and authority of the OTP within the ICC.
3. The investigators explained to me details about the OTP investigation in Mali. I was told that the Government of Mali had referred the situation to the ICC in July 2012 after which the OTP had conducted a preliminary examination. Based on this, it was established that crimes under the Rome Statute may have been committed in Mali, and in January 2013 the ICC Prosecutor announced the opening of an investigation. I was further told that while the ICC has jurisdiction over the full territory of Mali, the current focus of investigation is concentrated on events in the three northern regions of Mali since January 2012. The investigators told me that they had indication that I may be in possession of information relevant to the OTP investigation especially with regards to the attack of the military camp in Aguelhok in January 2012, and that this was the reason for approaching me.
4. The investigators explained to me that I have the right to be questioned in a language that I fully understand. I speak and understand [REDACTED] While my mother tongue and first language is [REDACTED] I am confident that an interview with the OTP can be conducted [REDACTED] I have indicated that I fully understand the interpreter, and that I will point out if I have any difficulties comprehending details during the interview.

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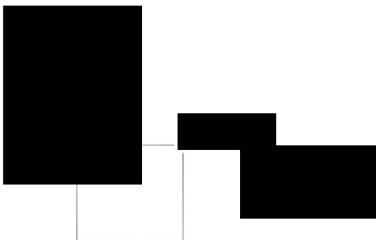


5. I was told that this interview is voluntary and that I may end the interview at any time. I understand that I should only answer questions of my own free will. I have been told by the investigators that it is important that I tell the truth at all times and that I make clear when I have experienced or seen something myself or whether I have learned about it from others.
6. I was informed that any information I give to the OTP, including my identity, might become subject to disclosure to the participants of the proceedings; in particular the Judges, the Accused, the Counsel of the Accused and the legal representatives of the victims.
7. I was informed that I might be called to testify before the Court. I am currently willing to appear as a witness in Court, if called to testify.
8. I understand that disclosure of my identity and information I have provided may take place whether or not I am called to testify.
9. I was asked if I had concerns regarding my protection and security. The security and protective measures available to me during and after the investigation and/or trial proceedings were explained to me. I was reminded of the importance of keeping confidential the contacts with the OTP.
10. Having understood all the above issues, I am willing to answer the investigators' questions.
11. The investigators explained to me how the interview was going to be conducted. I was told that at the conclusion of the interview, I would be asked to sign a written statement after having had the opportunity to review it and make any corrections.

Previous statements

12. I was asked if I have provided any statements about the events in Aguelhok or if I have spoken to anyone about what happened there. I have not. I have, however, prepared a report about the events. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Witness statement of [REDACTED]

13. The report [REDACTED] It took a lot of time to write it after our release because it was painful and difficult [REDACTED] to retrieve all these memories.
14. I then gave this report [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
15. I first met the investigators on [REDACTED]. This was an introductory meeting during which the investigators asked me some questions about Aguelhok in order to understand what I have experienced. I was then asked if I was available for an interview starting on [REDACTED]. I had not read my report in a long time I do not like remembering about the events in Aguelhok. After I met the investigators on [REDACTED], I read my report at home in order to recall what happened. On [REDACTED], I provided to the investigators a copy of my report. I did not use the report as a reference during the days of the interview.

Other documents in my possession

16. I showed the investigators some documents that I have and provided them with copies. The first document [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I used this document on a number of occasions for reference regarding soldiers' ranks or full names during my interview. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The soldiers mentioned on these pages were not all present in Aguelhok during the time of the events. As I explained, many were supposed to be deployed in Aguelhok but not all had in fact been in January 2012. The names I had ticked on the pages are of people who I know for sure were in Aguelhok in January 2012. I later saw I had not ticked the name of *Soldat 1ere Classe* Mamadou GOITA on this list but he was also in Aguelhok at the time. He died on 18 January.
17. However, I have to mention that [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] were deployed to Aguelhok but during the events were not there as they were actually on leave. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Witness statement of [REDACTED]

18. The investigators asked me to mark [REDACTED] those soldiers on the list who I know survived the events. Amongst them are also some of those who were taken hostage and later released.

19. I also provided the investigators with two other documents [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

20. [REDACTED]

21. During the interview, I used some pages of my personal notebooks. In one of my notebooks I had noted some names of people amongst the enemy who were in Aguelhok or at the bases where I was held captive. I had written this down in the past after the events in order not to forget. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] In another notebook, I wrote about [REDACTED] about whom I will talk later. I wrote this after my release from captivity [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

22. I also provided the investigators with a sketch that I drew of the camp of Aguelhok. I drew this sketch myself at in the evening of one of the days of interview. This sketch has been annexed to my statement as Annex 3.

Background

23. [REDACTED] I attended the *Ecole Fondamentale* there for seven years. I cannot remember exactly the year when I started school as I was very young. I stopped my studies in year seven. I did not like studying much and my family was poor, [REDACTED] I worked with my elder brother [REDACTED] for about a year.

24. Then, in 2006, I joined the army [REDACTED] I completed a four-month training at the training centre [REDACTED] After that, I was sent [REDACTED] I followed nine months of specialisation [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A.3.2.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Witness statement of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] they told us that *Colonel Bamoussa* and *Colonel FAGAGA* had been reintegrated [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Colonel FAGAGA was appointed deputy to the Kidal zone commander. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

35. During another roll call in Aguelhok sometime after the desertion of Bamoussa, the company commander read out another message [REDACTED] that he had received from the zone commander of Kidal. The message said that some armed men had arrived from Libya claiming to be Malian and that the authorities had welcomed them as if they were Malians. There were no other details about this. I thought it was not right: how can one welcome armed people on its territory, people should be disarmed before being welcomed.

36. One day sometime after that, we found out that out that two PM weapons have disappeared from the camp. *Soldat 2eme Classe Madou KEITA* had disappeared as well. He was a Bambara who was deployed in Kayes before. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. When KEITA disappeared, [REDACTED] ordered the company [REDACTED] to do an investigation and a search for him. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

37. Then, on 25 December 2011, a flag was put on the flag pole at the *Ecole Fondamentale* of Aguelhok. A trader called HABALLAH told the company commander about this flag [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] a mission of ten men to go and find out more about this flag. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

38. It was a white flag, with something written in Arabic on it in black colour, and the word Azawad written [REDACTED] in green colour [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I do not know what it stands for. There were no other symbols or drawings on the flag. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], who looked at it, and handed it over to the *Capitaine*. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

The area of Aguelhok

39. The investigators showed me a document bearing the reference [REDACTED] which became Annex 1 to my statement. I can see that on the document there is a town but I am not able to recognize which one it is. I asked if I could see more of the surroundings, and the investigators showed me another document bearing the reference [REDACTED], which became Annex 2 to my statement. As I could not recognise the town, the investigators indicated to me that the images were pictures of Aguelhok taken from above.
40. After looking at Annex 1 again, I recognised the military camp, which I marked with #1. I marked with #2 the main gate of the camp. When you enter the camp through the main gate, immediately to the left there was the foyer, the showers behind the foyer, and then at the corner there was position Kassabougou marked with #3. It was actually Kassabougou I because in total there were three positions called Kassabougou. Next to the gate to the right, there was a military position called *le portail*. To the right of it was the infirmary and then further to the right was position Kassabougou II, [REDACTED], marked with #4. Then further to the right along the wall there was an old vehicle which was out of service as it had been damaged. Further to the right there were the toilets. Near the left corner but along the southern wall of the camp there was position Kassabougou III marked with #5. In the back left corner of the camp there was position Badiangara marked with #6. There was another position at the back right corner of the camp marked with #7 but I cannot remember its name. Position Seven, marked with #8, was only guarded at night and was along the wall opposing the main entrance. In total there were seven positions at the camp. There was also a position at the *Sous-Prefecture*.
41. I further recognised the new camp, which I marked with #9. It was a camp that was being built for the *Gardes* but was not finished at the time. I also recognized the IFM, which I marked with #10, and the *wadi* that crosses the town. The road that passes through town goes to the south to Kidal and to the west to Tessalit. Somewhere outside the camp there was also a generator, the radio antenna and the home of the company commander, which was about 80 or 100 meters away from the camp.

Attack of 18 January 2012

42. On 17 January 2012, during the roll call, I learned that Menaka had been attacked. The company commander then asked the soldiers to go back to their military positions. [REDACTED].

of the dead soldier. The secretariat was near the northern wall of the camp. I have drawn on Annex 3 the injured people at the secretariat. During the attack, the camp infirmary had been damaged so they could not be brought in it. The infirmary was near my position at the camp.

48. There was also one person who got injured at the camp. He was a *Sergent* from the platoon of the squadron but I do not remember his name. I heard he was outside a BRDM near the Badiangara position giving orders to the BRDM driver when he got hit in his legs by a shell as long as an arm. His legs were not broken but all the flesh from his lower legs was gone. I saw him after the attack and that is how I know about his wounds.

49. During the attack [REDACTED] was not present at the camp [REDACTED] I saw the wounded again on 19 January at the secretariat but that was the last time I went there to see them. On 22 January we buried the soldier who had died in the graveyard, which was near the camp. [REDACTED]

19 January 2012

50. The day after, 19 January 2012, we received information that the attackers had entered the IFM on 18 January early in the morning while the students of the IFM were still sleeping. The attackers had taken position at the IFM during the attack. [REDACTED]

51. [REDACTED] went to the IFM. There was nobody there. [REDACTED] saw cases of bullets on the ground. [REDACTED] reported that the students were nowhere to be found in the IFM, the *Capitaine* instructed [REDACTED] to trace their steps and find them. [REDACTED] went out of the camp, following their steps. After about fifteen minutes [REDACTED] saw the students coming [REDACTED] direction. They told [REDACTED] that the attackers had taken their belongings, and had brought them to a place outside Aguelhok where there was a well. Then they had left them there. [REDACTED] returned with the students to the camp and the company commander [REDACTED] to give them clothes and food. Then the company adjutant told them to go to the house of [REDACTED] of the camp, who was in town, as the camp was not a safe place for them at the time.

[REDACTED]

A.3.2.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

24 January 2012

57. At 06:00 on 24 January 2012, combat started again. [REDACTED] put our weapon in the individual shot mode and not to shoot in bursts because we did not have enough ammunition. I was using [REDACTED] weapon on that day. There was no ammunition left [REDACTED] as it was all used up during the 18 January attack.
58. The *Capitaine* called *General* POUDIOUGOU. The *Capitaine* was going around the positions of the camp telling [REDACTED] that he was speaking to the *General*. He did it to raise the soldiers' morale. He told [REDACTED] he had asked for air reinforcement. The *General* did not believe him and replied that since the first day, Aguelhok had already been taken. The *Capitaine* ordered the soldiers to start the engine of the BRDM in order for the *General* to hear that we were still there. He also asked the men [REDACTED] to shout so that the *General* could hear them through the Thuraya. But the *General* was not convinced. The *Capitaine* was going from position to position and directed the soldiers to shoot. I felt like we had been abandoned. I thought that the authorities have sacrificed us. At that moment I lost faith in the army and I thought it was over for me.
59. At 10:00 I went to the ammunition depot in order to take some ammunition [REDACTED] and I saw that there was only one box left. We divided it amongst us.

The attackers enter the camp

60. At 11:00 the enemy managed to enter the camp from the corner of the Badiangara position. I knew the time because I had my mobile phone on me and just before this happened I had taken the phone out of my pocket to try to call my mother. I could not call her though, because the phone network was cut. I saw the first person who entered. [REDACTED]. He was standing up and there was nothing between us so it was very easy to see him. He was a black man wearing a *grand boubou* in brownish purple colour, that I call chocolate colour, and a beige turban. He was shouting "Allah Akbar". He was holding his weapon, a PKM, up in the air. I did not know this person at the time, but later on I found out from him directly that his name is Abdoul KAIYOUM. I will talk more about him later.
61. I saw one soldier [REDACTED] who had just turned his back and was trying to run, get shot down. I drew his body on Annex 3. After I saw that, I decided that I have to run and leave the camp. I stood up from the hole in which I was positioned. I saw some of my colleagues falling near me because of gun shots but I did not see who was shooting at them. I saw *Soldat 1ere Classe* Souleymane M.

TRAORE, *Soldat 2eme Classe* Setige KONARE who we called DASA, *Soldat 2eme Classe* Abdoulaye SAGARA and Abdelrhmane KABA fall inside the camp. I drew their bodies on Annex 3 too. There was only one way to escape as the attackers had surrounded the camp. They were all around the camp like the letter C and the only direction in which I could go was the southern side of the camp. All of us tried to escape by jumping over that wall as we had nothing to defend ourselves with.

Capture

62. I jumped over the wall and ran towards town. I was still carrying my gun over my shoulder but I had no ammunition left. [REDACTED] were running towards a narrow street passing through houses to the south of the camp. I have marked the way I took with a green line on Annex 2. At some point I saw [REDACTED] on the ground. He had fallen and was trying to get up. While running, some soldiers were shot down. They were not defending themselves. I remember I saw *Soldat 1ere Classe* Mamadou DOUMBIA, who had also just jumped over the wall, get shot and killed just outside the camp. The attackers had taken over the camp and were shooting from there and also from town.
63. At the other end, the narrow street reaches the main road to Kidal. [REDACTED] went a bit further along that road. [REDACTED] could not continue on that road because towards the south there were attackers' vehicles, and towards the north was the town of Aguelhok. Then from the point I marked with #14 on Annex 2, some decided to go [REDACTED]. Others, including myself, decided to go the other way, [REDACTED]. The hills there were closer [REDACTED]. I was hoping to find a place to hide there and to take rest. I knew that there, there were also many trees where we could hide.
64. [REDACTED] reached the point on the road I marked with #11 on Annex 2. Then an attackers' vehicle came out of the cover of some trees. It was a Toyota in a uniform khaki colour of the kind in which you can fit up to ten people at the back. [REDACTED]
65. The vehicle that came [REDACTED] stopped [REDACTED] and the enemies all got out. They were all armed. The driver was a tall big man with a beard, arrogant and aggressive and with white skin [REDACTED]. He was wearing a *grand boubou* with trousers that reached just under the knees. He had a PM gun. The man that was sitting next to the driver in the *chef de bord* position was a man who I later found out was called Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED. He had a big beard, light skin, a *boubou* in chocolate colour, a turban which left his face uncovered and was covering only the top and back of his head and a cartridge belt on him. He carried a PM with foldable butt. There were five or seven other

enemies at the back, all white [REDACTED] and dressed in the same clothes, though their *boubous* were in different colours. Some of them had beards while the others had their face shaven and a beard only on their chin.

66. Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED said 'This is the Malian army fighting until the last minute' [REDACTED]. He asked [REDACTED] to take the magazines out from our guns and to put our weapons down. I did so. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We did not defend ourselves. They took our phones and everything else we had in our pockets. They made us lay on the ground. We were beaten and our hands were tied up behind our backs. The attackers spoke amongst themselves [REDACTED] I could not understand what they were saying. Then we were put on the back of their vehicle. [REDACTED] at the back of the Toyota lying with his face down. The vehicle then drove further towards the west.
67. In the distance, in the direction of the hills about 500 meters away I could see another enemy vehicle. I marked in with #12 on Annex 2. We drove towards it. [REDACTED] vehicle stopped next [REDACTED] It was camouflaged with a mix of sand and water smeared on the vehicle. At the back of it I saw some enemies and three of our fellow soldiers, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. They had their hands tied up too. Then I heard Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED telling the others [REDACTED] to leave and then he said "Take them to the camp." Our vehicle left and the other one [REDACTED]
68. We took the road back and reached the main road. On our way, our vehicle arrived at another soldier, *Soldat* Fete KAMATE. He tried to defend himself and was shot down. This happened at the place I marked with #13.
69. Then, the vehicle reached up to two other soldiers, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. There was a big rock on the main road just before you enter Aguelhok. I marked it with #14. They had tried to hide under it but were spotted. They were also tied up and put on board the vehicle on which I was.

Back at the camp

70. Our vehicle drove up towards the camp. There were many vehicles circulating in the area. I could see some driving behind our. I could hear gun shots in the distance throughout all the way back. We stopped at the camp gate at a place I marked with #15 on Annex 2. The driver was facing the IFM. The other vehicle then stopped [REDACTED] Then I saw a third vehicle about 20 meters from ours. On the back of this vehicle I saw two other soldiers, Issa DOUMBIA and *Garde*

Gedjouma. They had also been captured but I did not know where this had happened. I saw them lying on their front at the back of this other vehicle. They were lying on top of some goods which were covered with a plastic sheet. Issa DOUMBIA had been wounded. Their vehicle did not stop. It just circled around and went towards the southern side of the camp. I could not see it after that. Then I heard shooting in bursts coming from the same direction and I assumed that the two must have been executed. I never saw Issa DOUMBIA and *Garde* Gedjouma again.

71. As I was at the back of the vehicle, in front of the camp on the right side of the vehicle facing the camp. I saw my colleagues lying next to each other, in a line. They were dead with a bullet in their head. They had been executed. Their heads were facing the camp. I have drawn the bodies on Annex 3. The red colour on the sketch is all the blood that had flown out of the bodies.

72. I was standing at a distance of less than two meters from them. I did not count how many of them were there. Some of the bodies were lying on their backs and some on their bellies. Amongst them I recognised one soldier who was from the Sikasso reinforcements and was called Bri. I also recognized *1er Cavalier* Yousouf KEITA, Mamadou DISA, *Sergent* Abdoulaye KOUYATE and *Soldat 2eme Classe* Mohammed ASSIBIT, who was on the side of the line closer to the gate. At the other end of the line, I saw the body of a [REDACTED] soldier. I did not have to look at their faces to recognise them. I know them and I am a hundred percent sure it was them. There were many more.

73. It is very difficult for me to talk about this. It is not that I do not remember, it is that I just cannot talk about it. I have never discussed this before with anyone because it is too hard. Today is the first time I tell all this.

74. As I was there on the vehicle, I saw a 15 or 16-year-old boy standing at the camp gate. I saw him holding the very same white flag [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. The boy was with the attackers. I could see inside the camp through the gate. I saw some bodies scattered on the ground. I drew them on Annex 3.

75. When our vehicle stopped, Cheikh AOUSSA got out and then not even three minutes later he got back on. I have no idea what he did. I was asked by the investigators if he had also seen the line of bodies I described. I am sure he did. The vehicle was next to the bodies and he was on the side of the vehicle that was facing the camp and the bodies, so he saw them. When AOUSSA got back on the vehicle, I heard him say to others [REDACTED] to go and collect the things which were left around and bring them with them and then said "Let's go!"

At the IFM

76. Then our vehicle drove off. It stopped at a place a hundred meters behind the IFM, which I marked with #16 on Annex 2. Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED got off the vehicle. The other vehicle also arrived. We, the captives, were ordered to get off the vehicles and put to kneel down in a line. Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED asked us where our *Capitaine* was and we replied that we did not know. He then asked his men to give us water. I knew that Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED was a chief because the others were doing what he said.
77. We spent some time there. The enemies had tea. In the meantime we were on our knees in a line, our hands tied. Then we were blindfolded one after the other. As this was happening, I saw Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED getting on the same vehicle as we had arrived on. He told his men to get on. All [REDACTED] who had been captured were pushed onto the vehicle on which I had arrived and we departed. We did not know where we were going.
78. We reached a place which I think was an enemy base. We were put on a different vehicle and I think Cheikh AOUSSA's vehicle stayed there at that base because I did not see him or his vehicle after that. Then we continued.
79. Then one man amongst the enemies who was in the vehicle asked us "Have you ever seen the Mujahideen hills?" and we said no. He then asked "Have you seen the hills of Tigharghar?" and we said no. Then he said that we will see them soon as we had friends waiting for us there. I later found out that this man was the Tunisian. I will talk about him later.

Arrival at Oumar's base

80. We drove until the evening. When we stopped, we were at a place which was an attackers' base. It was a cave, by which I mean that it was a place between two hills and it was all covered trees so you would not see it from a plane. I had never been there before. It was in the Tigharghar hills. I knew it was in the region of Kidal but that is all. On that night, the attackers prepared pasta but we were not able to eat. We spent the whole night under the trees with our hands tied behind our backs.
81. On the morning after we arrived, we were interrogated by a person called Oumar Ould HAMA. He was there already the night before, when we first arrived. Some other enemies also took part in our interrogation but I do not know their names. Oumar asked us if we were Malian soldiers or mercenaries. We explained several times that we were just soldiers. Oumar then brought the insignia of a uniform and asked what it was. We replied that it was the insignia of a *Capitaine*. He replied that it was our chief's. He told us that our chief had been found inside an armed vehicle

at the camp, and that when the attackers approached him he had tried to defend himself with a gun and the attackers killed him. Oumar, however, never said if he himself was in Aguelhok during the attack.

82. Oumar further asked if we had not seen the messenger that they had sent. We replied that yes, indeed, we had, so Oumar asked why we did not leave the camp then. He asked "Was it the white ram that told you that the camp would not be taken?" He added that, well, actually yes, the camp had been taken. In the camp we had a white ram that we bred. Oumar said that once they took the camp they slaughtered it for their men who had been wounded during the attack on Aguelhok. Oumar added that on the day of the attack they released the messenger they had sent to us.
83. Oumar also said that 'the brothers' had executed everybody in the camp of Aguelhok, including the wounded. [REDACTED] he used the word 'executer'. He did not give us any details.

Life in captivity

84. I was asked by the investigators if I knew why some of us were taken hostage. We were not given reasons for our captivity. We were only asked why we fought against their men as they are men of God. I do not know why I was not executed at the camp. However, Oumar only mentioned that at his base, there would not be any execution. He said that this kind of things happen in the field but not at his place. At Oumar's base, there were no punishments, but for us the simple fact of being detained was a sanction.
85. We were all tied up under a tree, all day long. If we wanted to go to the toilet, guards would accompany us. At the beginning, they would not untie our hands even to go to the toilet. Only after two months, they started to untie our hands when we went to the toilet. It is at that time that we also were asked to do work. There was no water so we dug wells.
86. We stayed in the same clothes and could not wash. A long time after our arrival, just before we left Oumar's base, some of us were given other clothes, *grand boubous*, but there was not enough for everyone. I did not get any but I did not want any either.
87. Oumar said that there were three options to release prisoners: through the option *fissabililaye*, which means grace, through an exchange of prisoners, or through the payment of a ransom. He did not say which option was going to be used for us. He said, though, that they would not negotiate with the Malian authorities as they

94. There were many other people at the base. Some of them were also preaching to us. Below, I have described the people I used to see often. There were also other people that would come to Oumar's base but I did not know their names. Sometimes people would arrive in vehicles. Then they would go and talk behind the trees with Oumar or others. I thought that they were chiefs as they did not want to be seen by us. I do not know anything about them.
95. Oumar was a chief at this base. He was the one giving orders and others would follow. I do not know if he had any chiefs. Sometimes he would mention that their own chief, the Emir, was absent, but that when he was back, they would decide on what was going to happen with us, the hostages. I never saw the Emir that Oumar was talking about.
96. The enemy [REDACTED] sometimes I could overhear conversations they had amongst them. I cannot remember what they were talking about, apart from the time when day they spoke about the attack on Tessalit. I heard they were planning to take over the camp of Tessalit and that a hundred vehicles are on their way there.

Abdoul KAIYOUM

97. One of Oumar's men was Abdoul KAIYOUM from Nigeria. He, together with another one called ABDALLAH, were Oumar's gunners. When Oumar would leave the base in his Toyota, one of them would man the 12.7 gun mounted on it. He had black skin and was slouched. His face was most of the time covered with a turban and I never saw it clearly so I do not know if he had a beard. He was usually wearing a *boubou*. He spoke only Arabic and English.
98. He was not preaching to us but he was calling us *kafirs* while he called himself, and the men like him, men of God. Initially, KAIYOUM, just like the other enemies at the base, did not speak to us. One day, sometime after our arrival at Oumar's base, Abdoul KAIYOUM introduced himself to us, the hostages, and said that he was the one who entered the camp of Aguelhok first during the attack on 24 January and who had shouted "Allah Akbar." [REDACTED]

The Tunisian

99. Every day at the base I saw the Tunisian man who told us on the day we were captured, that we were going to see the hills of Tigharghar. I never found out his name. The Tunisian usually wore *grand boubous* in different colours and shoes of the type 'kitu' with sticking scratch. He wore a scarf on his head - not a turban - and had a short beard, which was not very thick on his cheeks but thicker on the



chin. He had light skin [REDACTED]. He spoke in Arabic and French. At the base, the Tunisian was always by himself. He sometimes prayed with the other enemies but in general, he ate alone and not with his hands but with a spoon. Omar once told us that he had been arrested in Tunisia and was in prison there for seven years, but that because of God's grace, he managed to escape during an event in Tunisia.

100. The Tunisian once told us that he had participated in the attack on Aguelhok and was one of the attackers, but did not say anything more about his role. He told us once that he was a Tunisian. He came to tell us stories about the prophet, he said that he had come to fight in the path of Allah, that he and his fellow men were God's men, and that if they died, they would go to heaven.

ABDALLAH

101. ABDALLAH was from Nigeria and also belonged to Oumar's group. I saw him every day at the base but for the day when Tessalit was taken over – he was not there then. ABDALLAH [REDACTED] had black skin. His eyes were red. There was no white or brown in his eyes, just red but he seemed to see well. He told us that he once had an accident as he was fighting in Libya and that his feet were broken. He had not been treated properly so his foot was twisted. His hair was in rasta style. He spoke in French and Arabic.

102. Sometimes ABDALLAH was preaching to us. He would tell us to look for Allah, fight for him and not look for money, and said that life down here was worthless. He sometimes told us about his private life, saying in the past, in Nigeria, he used to go out and party and meet and flirt with girls but then decided that this was not the right way for him. He decided to come and fight for Allah.

The imam from Mauritania

103. There was an imam from Mauritania amongst Oumar's men. He also preached to us. Oumar told us that he was an imam and that he was from Mauritania. We saw him often. I do not know his name. He was taller [REDACTED] and had a big nose. He wore a beard but always had a shaved head and was always ready to fight, with a loaded weapon at all times. His skin was white and he was wearing *boubous* in white, pink or red color.
104. When he preached, he was telling us to look for Allah, and that we needed to go out of our houses, and to leave behind our wives and countries in order to fight for Allah. He spoke in Arabic [REDACTED]



ALMOUSTAPHA

105. ALMOUSTAPHA was also a Mujahideen from Oumar's group. [REDACTED] very quick in everything he is doing. He had a beard on his chin. He wore a turban. He spoke French, Arabic, Tamasheq, Bambara and Songhay.
106. ALMOUSTAPHA said he himself had been in the army but he did not tell us when he served. He deserted the army in Timbuktu as he said that the Malian army was not a proper one and he took another path. Sometimes he would take his motorbike in the morning and come back in the afternoon. He would go to town, buy cigarettes, and smoke in hiding from the other 'brothers'. He confessed to us that he was smoking.

Abou MOHAMMED

107. Abou MOHAMMED was also frequently at the base. He is from Nigeria. He has black skin, no beard and usually wore a turban. He spoke English and did not preach to us because of that.
108. Abou MOHAMMED was angry and was asking about us "Why give food to these dogs who fought and killed our brothers?" He wanted to shoot us with his PKM. One *Sergeant* who was detained with us spoke English translated his words for us. Oumar then intervened and said that he was one of the men who fought in Aguelhok. He said that some of his 'brothers' died in Aguelhok and others were wounded and that is why he was angry at us.

Second place of detention

109. We stayed for four months at Oumar's base. One day ALMOUSTAPHA told us that they were going to take us to a former *Commandant* of the Malian army. He did not tell us his name but he told us that his family is from Kidal. We left the base the same day. It was the month of April.
110. We then went to a place where we joined the soldiers who had been captured in Tessalit. The other base at which we were held captive was between two *wadis*, beyond which we were not allowed to go. There it was different. We had to do a lot of work there: for example, we had to carry wood, dig wells.
111. The *Commandant* was the chief at this base as he was giving orders. He was slim and tall and had a short and thin beard. He was a Tamasheq and had light skin. He was usually wearing *grand boubous*. He did not carry a weapon, but sometimes he trained his elements – mostly young men, and also some older [REDACTED] He was

running an *Ecole du Soldat* and was teaching them how to march in cadence and turn the Algerian way. The Algerian way differs from the Malian way of doing it. He would also teach his men to shoot, using targets made of sheets of paper. These trainings were taking place fifty meters from us so I could watch them. One day he told us that the Malian army had killed their ancestors. He told us: 'If I want you to leave, would you leave?' I think he was talking about revenge and meant that we should be killed. He spoke [REDACTED] to his men in Tamasheq.

112. [REDACTED] We were eating one day but [REDACTED] who was one of the Aguelhok hostages, a young soldier, had fever and was not eating. [REDACTED]

113. [REDACTED]

Announcement that we would be released

114. One day in April, the *Commandant* came and said that we would be handed over to Mahmoud DICKO from the *Haut Conseil du Centre Islamique* of Bamako. They put us in a lorry and we were taken to [REDACTED]. In [REDACTED] I heard the population and some of the enemies on vehicles chanting "Azawad." They slaughtered goats for us. We met Mahmoud DICKO who took down all our names, and said that he was not going to leave any of us behind.

115. Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED, who had captured me in Ageulhok, was present. He came to talk to us and this is when he introduced himself to us and I found out his name. He told us that we would be filmed and we had to describe how we had been treated. [REDACTED] spoke in front of the camera. When he said "the hills of Tigharghar" our capturers did not want this to appear on the recording, so they made him start again. He spoke about the time that we had spent with these people.

116. Cheikh AOUSSA ABOU MOHAMMED told us to forget everything that had taken place in Aguelhok. He said that this was life and that the Malian army would never have such brave men again as us, the ones in Aguelhok. He further explained that they had initially thought that they would take Aguelhok on the first day of the attack and he added that the one who was commanding us was an obstinate character. He admitted that the *Capitaine* was a brave man. He wished us a good trip and good luck. He told us to talk good things about him and not to reveal where they had been detained. He told us to tell our brothers not to come again to the north.

117. Madou KEITA, the soldier who I mentioned before and who deserted from the Aguelhok camp, was there too. That day he was wearing a *boubou* and a yellow turban. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] his fellow fighters and him fight the cause of Allah, and that if he died, he would go to paradise. He had stopped smoking and would just take tobacco instead. He said that when you join the fighters, you get a wife, and that Iyad Ag GHALY himself had given him a wife. He told us to greet the others on his behalf. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. I do not know why Madou KEITA joined the attackers. In the past, he was not like this and he never spoke like this. He was even drinking alcohol.

118. There were many other people there but I did not know them. The *Commandant* was also there. He told us then that he was from Ansar Dine but did not say anything more about this. Ansar Dine means in Arabic a group which helps the Islam.

The return to Bamako

119. Mahmoud DICKO said that we would go to Bamako on the next day but they could not find a vehicle to transport us. On the day after, some trucks arrived and we headed towards Bamako.

120. We reached [REDACTED] and were taken to the mosque there. There we met with Oumar who had come to see us. He said that he and his men would escort us to a place beyond [REDACTED] because there were MNLA on the way. Oumar added that if the chief - or the Malian authorities - did not stop, they would come all the way to Bamako. Then, they left us there. After fifty kilometres we met [REDACTED],

[REDACTED] A.3.2. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Witness statement of [REDACTED]

who escorted us to the big mosque of [REDACTED] Then we carried on to [REDACTED] then to [REDACTED] and finally we reached Bamako. Once at the entrance of Bamako, some authorities and people from the Islamic Center welcomed us. We went to the place of the military engineers in Bamako. We were given 25.000 CFA in order to go home.

121. That is when I was free. However, it is not over for me. I still see the scenes from Aguelhok in front of me.

Iyad Ag GHALY

122. I was asked if I knew who Iyad Ag GHALY was. I do not know anything about him. I heard he also belongs to the enemy but I have never seen him. All I know is that he gave a wife to Madou KEITA.

Armed groups

123. I was asked if I knew who the attackers of Aguelhok were. I did not know. However, I know that the people at Oumar's base were the Mujahideen, they were saying that themselves, so I thought it was the Mujahideen who attacked Aguelhok.

124. I was asked if I knew what the MNLA, which I had mentioned earlier, was. It is a movement but I do not know anything more about it. I never fought against the MNLA. I think this because in Gao Oumar said that we had to be escorted as there were MNLA posing a threat on the way.

Clarifications

125. On the day before my statement was read-back to me, the investigators indicated to me some discrepancies they had noticed between my report and the way I had described the events to them during the interview. I was asked to clarify.

126. It was brought to my attention that the report mentions a meeting between the Imam and the *Capitaine* that took place on 17 January 2012. [REDACTED] part of the group that escorted the *Capitaine* to this meeting, [REDACTED] The investigators pointed to me that the report mentions [REDACTED] after this meeting. In fact the report should read 'their return to the camp'. I noticed this error myself but did not want to change it after the report had been typed up.

127. It was also brought to my attention that the report says that the call between the *Capitaine* and *General* POUDIOUGOU took place on 22 January and not on 24 January, as I had said. It is difficult to remember such details but after thinking

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[REDACTED] A.3.2. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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about it a lot, I think, even though I am not sure, that what happened was this. On 18 January the *Capitaine* asked *General* POUDIOUGOU for reinforcement and also aerial support and the *General* said the reinforcement from Gao was on its way. I knew about the conversation because the *Capitaine* never hid anything from his men and he told [REDACTED] about this. Then on 22 January, this was after MEYDOU's unit had been defeated, we saw one Tetra plane flying at high altitude above the area. Then the *Capitaine* called the *General* again. This is when the soldiers started the BRDM engines and shouted out and the *General* said that the camp had already fallen. Then on 24 January the *Capitaine* called the *General* again. No reinforcement ever arrived.

128. I was asked when the IFM students came to the camp. This was on the day after the first attack on Aguelhok. The report says this was on or after 22 January but this is not what happened. This is because sometimes when you tell a story some things fall out of place.

129. I was asked if I knew the date when the messenger came to the camp. I think this was two days after MEYDOU's unit was defeated, so this must be 23 January. I said earlier it was on 21 January but I was confused. After MEYDOU's defeat, it was quiet for two days and we rested and after that the messenger came.

130. In the report it is said that on 24 January the enemy left the camp with equipment from the camp whereas this is something I did not mention earlier. I confirmed to the investigators that I saw this with my own eyes at the moment when I was brought to the IFM by my capturers. The attackers were taking everything from the camp: the BRDM, weapons and military material, but also personal items such as mattresses, fridges. I saw one truck loaded with stuff like this drive off from the camp towards the bush in the direction of north-east when I was made to kneel down at the IFM.

131. I also saw the same material and items again later, on the day after we arrived at Oumar's place. I saw enemies dividing these items between themselves. Amongst these items I saw also objects that belonged to me: my suitcase, my bag and two blankets. I am absolutely sure these were my things. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I did not see who my items were given to and I never saw them again.

[REDACTED]

A.3.2.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Witness statement of [REDACTED]

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Satellite image of Aguelhok marked with [REDACTED]

Annex 2: Satellite image of the larger Aguelhok area marked with [REDACTED]

Annex 3: Sketch of the Aguelhok area

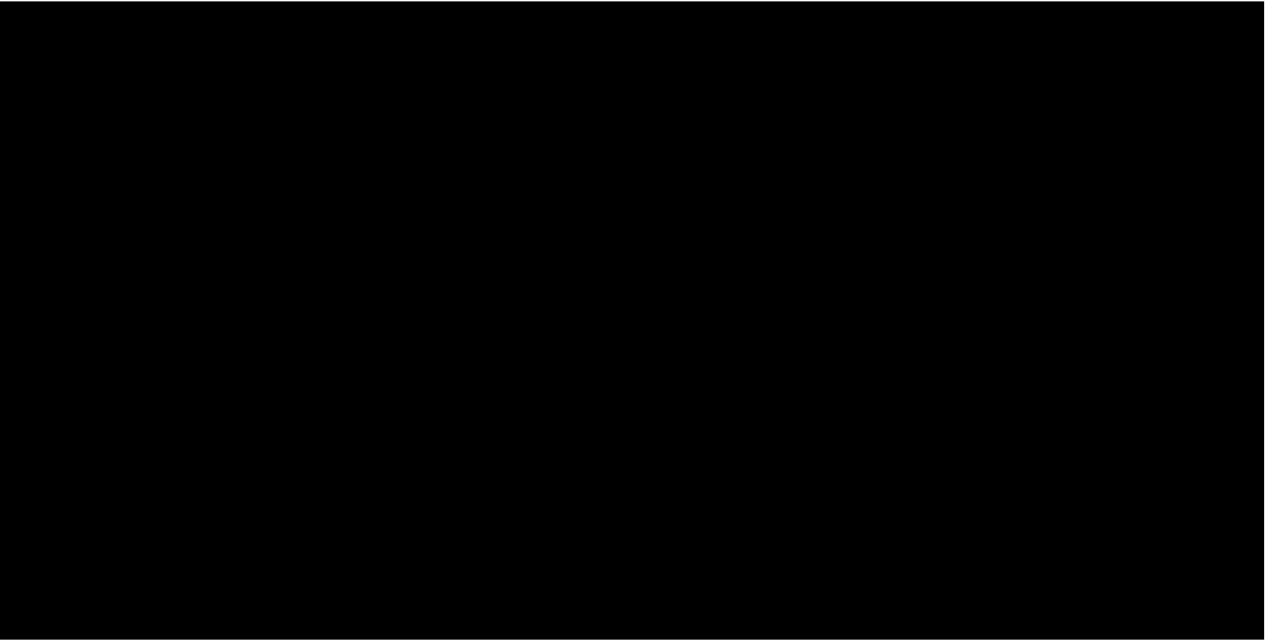
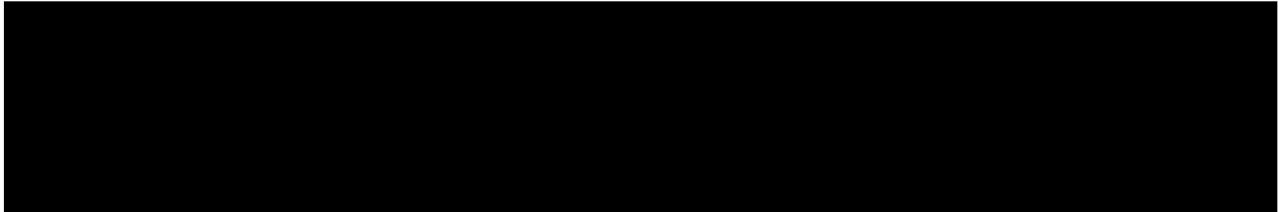
Closing Procedure

132. I have nothing to add to the above statement, nor do I have anything to clarify.

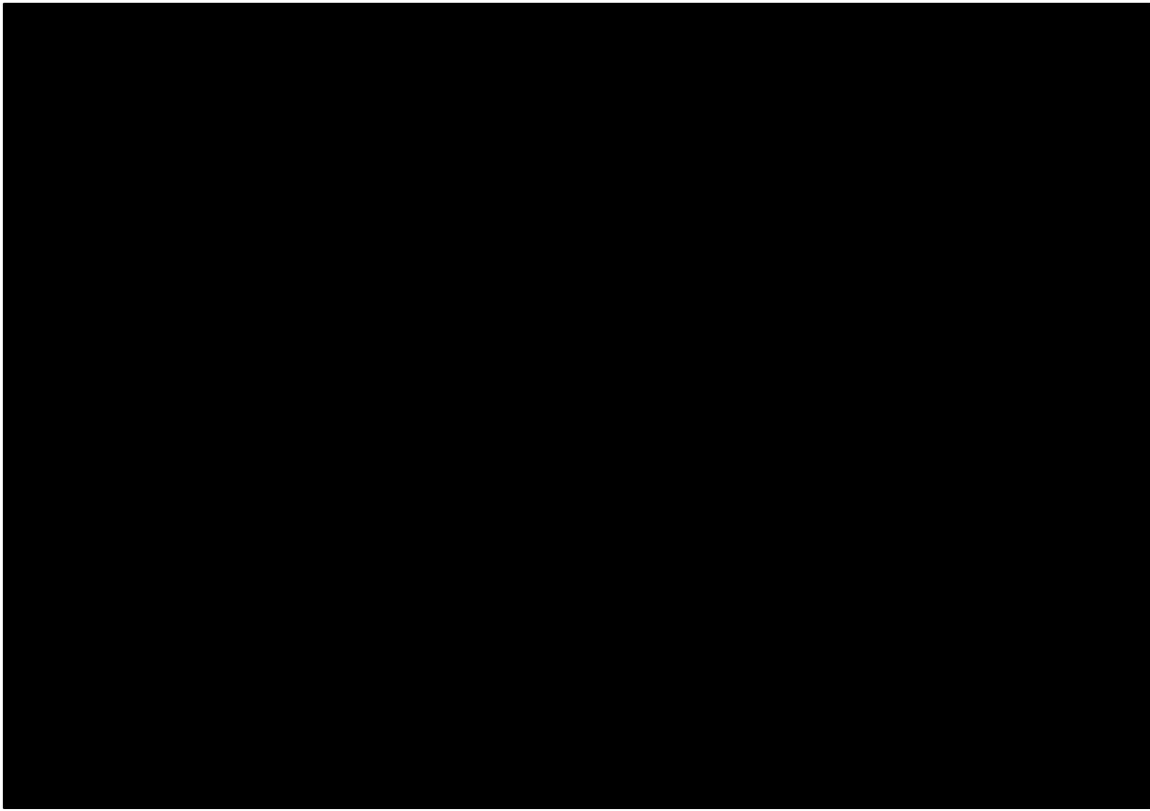
133. I have given the answers to the questions of my own free will.

134. There has been no threat, promise or inducement which has influenced my answers.

135. I have no complaints about the way I was treated during this interview.



[REDACTED] A.3.2. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]



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A.3.2.

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