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ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, April 6, 2012/African Press Organization (APO)/ — The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, strongly condemns the intrusion of armed elements into the Consulate of Algeria in Gao, and the abduction of personnel from the mission, including the Consul, who were driven to an unknown destination. He stresses the gravity of the action committed by the authors of these reprehensible acts against internationally-protected diplomatic personnel and premises, and demands the immediate release of all abductees.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the commitment of the AU, within the framework of its relevant instruments and decisions of its Peace and Security (PSC), to spare no effort in strengthening universal and intra-African cooperation, in order to prevent and combat terrorism. In addition, he reaffirms the urgency of restoring the authority of the Republic of Mali on its entire national territory, and the imperative of the return, without further delay, to constitutional order in the country.