

**English translation of Mr Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz's statement**

1. My name is Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz. I am a Malian national.
2. Last year, I was convicted for my senior role in the Islamic Police in Timbuktu. I was found to have personally flogged two individuals for drinking alcohol. I was also found to have contributed to the flogging punishments of eleven other individuals for fornication and/or adultery (zina). Through my role in the Islamic Police, I was found to have contributed to the proceedings before the Islamic Tribunal, which led to the amputation of Dedeou Maiga's hand for theft. The Chamber determined that these punishments, which had been ordered by the Islamic Tribunal, amounted to torture, and inhumane and degrading treatment, and also constituted the basis of persecution on religious grounds. Through my role in the police, I was also found to have contributed to several judgments issued by the Islamic Tribunal, which failed to satisfy due process standards. The Chamber also convicted me in connection with the public beating of an old man meted out by Aboubacar Al Chinguetti.
3. I was acquitted of all the charges concerning rape, forced marriage, gender-based persecution, and the destruction of monuments.
4. I was also acquitted of charges that concerned certain punishments meted out by the *Hesbah*, including those relating to the flogging and detention of women for disregarding the mandatory dress code.
5. After reflecting on these findings and my situation, I chose not to appeal these convictions. I did not appeal my sentence of ten years either.
6. The trial was a difficult time for me. I was trying to recover from what I experienced, at a time when the whole world was afraid. I was especially afraid for my family, and I was grieving the loss of my daughter and the son I had never seen. My religion was a source of strength for me — it gave me the courage to endure, to hope, and to reflect.

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7. When the judgment was issued, I appreciated that the judges explained that Sharia law was not on trial. It is not a crime to follow Islam. My lawyers explained to me that the crux of the convictions was the issues of choice and freedom.
8. Choice and freedom are important to me, as are my religion and my beliefs. I am a Muslim, and I always hope that my religion and my beliefs will be understood and respected.
9. During 2012, the people of Timbuktu were in need — they were scared, they were vulnerable — the women and children particularly so. There were foreigners with guns, who did not understand the values and customs of the local population, and the local population found it difficult to oppose them or their new rules.
10. Freedom of choice is a right given to us all, and it is something I value deeply. I now realize the importance of allowing individuals the space to make their own decisions about how to live, without fear of coercion or punishment. True respect for humanity means understanding that people may choose different paths, and that these choices must be honoured as long as they respect the dignity and rights of others.
11. Everyone has the right to different beliefs and to make different choices, provided they don't deprive others of their choices and liberties. Diversity and difference are what make the world so beautiful, as they allow us to learn new things from each other.
12. I have lived, learned, and seen the heavy burden that my family had to bear because of my affiliation with Ansar Dine and my work in the Islamic Police. This has been a difficult journey, but it has also been one of self-reflection and growth. Over the past year, I have taken time to deeply reflect. This reflection has taught me the value of patience. In the past, I felt a strong need to act swiftly and do everything in my power to protect my family. However, I now realize that some of my decisions caused harm.

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13. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) tells us: "Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others that which you wish for yourself." I have reflected on this hadith and I firmly oppose all forms of extremism, which fuel hatred and division.
14. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize the importance of sincerely seeking forgiveness, rather than simply saying "I'm sorry." This practice highlights the spiritual aspect of repentance, emphasizing turning to God with humility and sincerity

### Sayyidul Istighfar

*"O Allah, You are my Lord, there is no deity except You. You created me, and I am Your servant, and I abide by Your covenant and promise as best as I can. I seek refuge in You from the evil of what I have done. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins. So forgive me, for surely no one can forgive sins except You."*

15. I ask for forgiveness from all those I harmed, and from all the victims of Timbuktu during the period from May 2012 to January 2013, whose suffering was set out in the Trial Judgment and the Sentencing Decision. My apology is extended to all victims, regardless of their beliefs. Each of you deserved protection and the freedom to practice your faith without fear.
16. I believe we should all now work towards restorative and transitional justice in Mali — a justice that guarantees in particular the full rights and protection of women, children, and minorities, thus avoiding the mistakes and sins of the past. This process should always respect the inherent dignity of all. Fear and pain can never be the proper path to justice. The use of force in interrogations goes against fundamental rights and dignity. Lack of means or the fear of crime are also no excuse for placing anyone in inhumane detention conditions: these should never

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be tolerated. I pray for all persons and domestic authorities to abandon such practices.

17. As someone who wants to work in the medical field, I commit myself to training women in this field, as this would equip them with the necessary skills to assist other women, particularly in reporting cases of rape with greater effectiveness and accuracy. I also encourage others to do the same
18. I would also like to emphasize my firm opposition to forced marriages, as every individual, especially women, should have the right to choose. For me, the consent of women is not only important but also fundamental, as highlighted by Islam, which places great importance on this matter.
19. I want to express my support and advocate for the education of women and girls everywhere, as I believe that education is a powerful tool for change, and the empowerment of women through learning is vital for the progress of any society. I commit to reflecting such advocacy in my future actions and choices.
20. I want to make it clear that victims in Timbuktu have the right to both seek justice through the International Criminal Court's reparations process and choose whether to accept my personal apology or not. These are not mutually exclusive choices. Both paths can coexist and contribute to healing and reconciliation, and neither one takes away from the other.
21. I encourage the leaders and notables in Timbuktu to provide their support and assistance to the International Criminal Court's reparations process.
22. I hope that others will heed my words and learn from my experience.

Thank you.

*The Hague*

*Original version in Arabic signed and dated 09/04/2025*