

Committee: Security Council

Issue: The situation in Mali

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Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Angeliki Angelopoulou and I will have the honor to serve as the Deputy President of the Security Council in this year's ACGMUN. On a personal note, I am currently attending the 11th Grade of the German School of Athens. This will be my 11th time in a conference and my 3rd time as a Chair and I am proud to have been active in MUN as long as this.

In this study guide I will be elaborating on the situation in Mali, so as to provide you with a comprehensive view of the causes of the conflict, the dangers it entails, how it has escalated and measures that should be taken in order to confine it.

I strongly encourage you to read this document attentively, in order to be well prepared and have a fruitful debate at the conference. Note, however, that the purpose of this study guide is not to be your sole research material but rather a basis of further research on the topic so that you are able to go into more detail of UN documents (eg. treaties, conventions, etc.) as well as your country's policy.

For any questions do not hesitate to contact me via email, at: angangelop2002@gmail.com.

I wish you the best of luck and well-spent time with preparation. I am looking forward to seeing you at the conference.

Best regards,

Angeliki Angelopoulou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Mali is a country located in the western region of the African continent. Being landlocked and the eighth largest African nation, Mali borders with seven countries; more specifically with Mauritania, Algeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Senegal.

As a past French colony, the official language of the country is French, while Muslims make up 95% of the population.

The country has been adversely affected by permanent political unrest, as precarious governments have been ruling the nation ever since the early stages of its modern history. Except for that, constant and multiple clashes between Muslim rebel groups, allegedly supported by Al-Qaeda, and the authorities in the northern



Figure 1 Location of Mali

Population: 18.4 million	
Urban Population: 42.4% of total	
Size: Slightly less than 2x size of Texas	
Religions: Muslim 95%, Christian 2%, Other/ None/ Unspecified 3% (2009 est.)	
Ethnic Groups: Bambara 34%, Fulani (Peul) 15%, Sarakole 11%, Senufo 11%, Dogon 9%, Malinke 9%, Bobo 3%, Songhai 2%, Tuareg 1%, other 6% (2012-13 est.)	
Life Expectancy: 60.8 years	
Fertility Rate: 5.9 children/woman, world's 5th highest	
Literacy Rate: 33% (male 45%, female 22%) (2015 est.)	
HIV/AIDS Adult Prevalence: 1.2% (2017 est.)	
GDP Growth / Per Capita: 4.9% / \$927	
Key Imports/Import Partners: petroleum, machinery and equipment, construction materials, foodstuffs, textiles / Senegal, China, Côte d'Ivoire, France (2017)	
Key Exports/Export Partners: cotton, gold, livestock / Switzerland, UAE, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa, Bangladesh (2017)	

Figure 2 Mali's demographics

and central parts of Mali have not only caused great instability in Mali but also severely impacted the entire Western African region. Insecurity, corruption and human rights violations are getting worse day by day, even though the international community, NGOs and the United Nations are making huge efforts to improve the situation, attempting to re-establish peace, security and stability in the region.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Tuareg

Tuareg tribes are a group of nomadic people living in northern parts of Africa. They consist only 1% of the Malian population.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

The AQIM is an Islamist organisation founded in Algeria in 2007. The history of the group started however in the 90s, when the Islamic armed group (GIA) forcefully opposed to secular Algerian state. In 2000, they began collaborating with Al-Qaeda.

National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA)

The NMLA is a political and military organization which was formed by Tuareg rebels in order to obtain independence and autonomy of the Azawad region. Additionally, it actively cooperated with AQIM in the civil war in Northern Mali.

Ansar Dine

Ansar Dine is the Arabic term for “helpers of the (Islamic) religion” or “defenders of the faith”¹. It is a militant Islamist group suspected of being linked to AQIM. The head of the group is currently Iyad Ag Ghaly, a well-known leader of the Tuareg Rebellion (1990-1995). Moreover, Ansar Dine aspires to enforce strict Islamic law, called sharia, across the Republic.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The ECOWAS is a regional group consisting of fifteen nations, created in 1975. It aims to foster financial integration in every sector of monetary action, such as industry, infrastructure, farming, natural resources, trade, economic inquiries and issues related to cultural and social preservation.

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)

MINUSMA is a UN peacekeeping mission operating in Mali, formed in 2013 by UNSC Resolution 2100, in an attempt to restore security and stability in the Republic after the 2012 civil war. Moreover, it has played a vital role in the protection of civilians and the decrease of intercommunal violence of both northern and central Mali.

G5 Sahel (G5S)

G5 Sahel is an alliance comprising Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Chad and Burkina Faso. Its purpose is to reinforce the ties between economic growth, stability and

¹ “Mali: Defending the Religion or Destroying It?” *The Africa Report.com*, 30 Jan. 2013, <https://www.theafricareport.com/6114/mali-defending-the-religion-or-destroying-it/>

security, as well as combat the menace posed by jihadist groupings in West Africa, such as the AQIM.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Conflict in Northern Mali

2012 events

The Mali Civil War alludes to armed conflicts that started in the beginning of January 2012 between the southern and northern regions of Mali, when multiple insurgent armed groups violently protested against the Malian government, demanding independence of the north, specifically of Azawad. This territory opposed to the Malian government.



Figure 3 Ansar Dine Militiamen in northeastern Mali

In only four months, the NMLA, with the assistance of terrorist group Ansar Dine (which is linked with AQIM) an Algerian-led local terrorist network and U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), gained control over the region.

The president at the time, Amadou Toure, was removed with a coup, as a consequence of his inability to tackle attacks led by Tuareg terrorists. Hence, mutinous soldiers took control, suspending the Malian constitution.



Figure 4 Regions overrun by Tuareg rebels

In April, NMLA declared Azawad's independence from Mali. However, both the European and the African Union consider this invalid. Meanwhile, Dioncounda Traore gained presidential authority, but remained into power till May, when assaulted by protesters.

As a result of the political and social instability following the coup, the three biggest northern Malian cities, namely Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal, were occupied by the Tuareg rebels. At that time, they controlled a territory twice the size of France. It is then that the autonomy of northern Mali was proclaimed, being renamed to Azawad, and declared an Islamic state. While the Malian government retreated its forces from northern areas, and AQIM its local allies, turn against the NMLA, engaging in conflicts. They then take control of northern Mali targeting the implementation of sharia.

2013 events

In January, the French Armed Forces intervened, after request of the interim government, and initiated a mission known as “Operation Serval”, resulting in the immediate destabilization of the rebels.

The Malian-French forces reclaimed the lost territories in the north. In the summit of the African Union, the Malian president acknowledged French aid, making the military’s intervention legitimate. Other nations, such as the USA, joined the Malian- French troops. In April, the Chadian president Idriss Deby withdrew Chadian forces from the territory, a decision that symbolized the cease of the fight against the Islamists.



Figure 5 Tuareg separatists boycott peace deal shortly after signing it

The Malian government signed a peace deal with the Tuareg separatists in June. One month later, the UN announced a peacekeeping operation in Mali, called UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), aiming at reestablishing peace and security in the region. Simultaneously, presidential elections were held in the Republic, for which the African Union deployed an Election Observation Mission. Ibrahim Boubacar Kéïta, a veteran politician, was elected.

This bilateral agreement between the government and the rebels did not last long, as the rebels pulled out shortly after claiming that the

government had not kept its promises regarding the peace deal. Although the French mission was scheduled to withdraw from the region, conflicts still occurred.

In 2015, a ceasefire agreement, also known as peace accord, was signed in Algeria but even so, terrorist attacks continue to take place and low-level fighting between the two parties still exists.

The 2015 Peace Accord

This agreement, between the government of Mali and the Tuareg ethnic groups, commits the government to greater political decentralization, and distribution of authorities to different parts of the country, leading to northern development, in exchange for insurgent groups excluding territorial division. These armed groups also share the obligation to disarm and possibly integrate into state security military groups. The accord additionally aims to advance northern political influence in the central government, to reform the security and justice sector, and to investigate previous discrepancies.

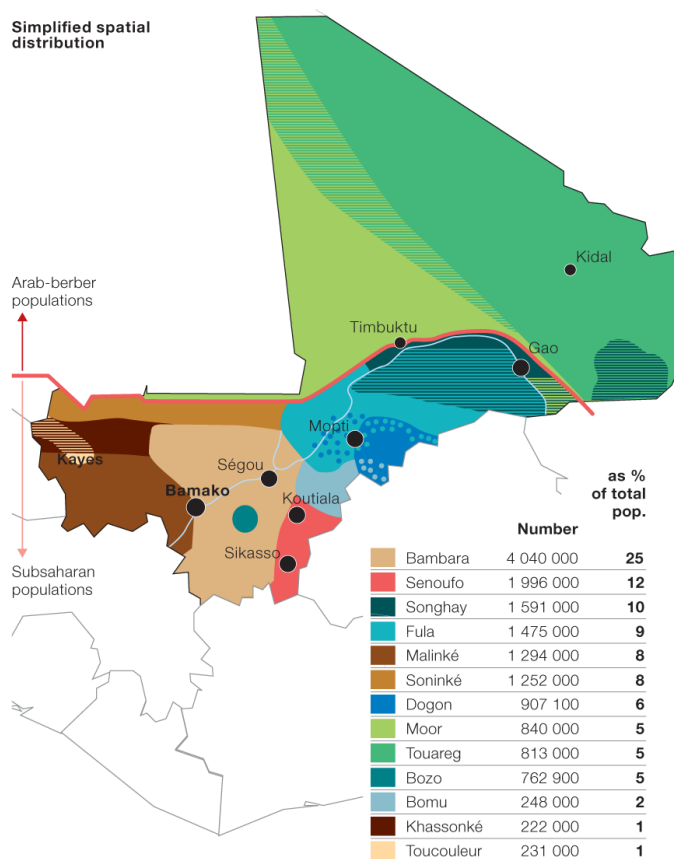


Figure 6 Mali's ethnic groups

Conflict in Central Mali

Although the peace accord was signed in 2015, the most important provisions continue to be un-implemented. In the biggest part of northern Mali, for example, signatory armed groups refuse to cease land control.

In the central Mali region of Mopti, conflict has intensified among agricultural communities such as the Dogon and the Bambara, which take a stand against the Fula

people. From a historical perspective, both sides have quarreled to ensure land and water access. Climate change has exacerbated this phenomenon since the Fula took up residence in new provinces. In order to fight against the Fula, “self-defense groups”, called militias, have been formed in the Dogon and Bambara societies. The Fula have been, consequently, blamed for collaborating with armed Islamists related to al-Qaeda. Human Rights Watch has released periodic reports² that have been manipulated and overstated due to various opportunistic reasons, while many Fula members have been integrated into Islamist groups.

The conflict has led to the establishment and development of Bambara and Dogon militias. Allegations that the Malian government is bolstering the aforementioned armed groups, under the pretense of them being allies in the war against Islamists in the conflict of northern Mali, have been raised but denied by the government. The Dogon group Dan Na Ambassagou is one such militia and was created in 2016.

Following the 2018 elections, where Kéïta once again was elected as the president, not only accusations of irregularities were made, but also violations of human rights were reported, bearing in mind the prohibition of demonstrations and the closing of local radio stations. Apart from that, in most polling stations, particularly in central Mali, voting has been interrupted or impeded due to security threats. The total amount of votes that Kéïta received has severely decreased in comparison to the 2013 election, as well as his margin of victory. His leadership has been undermined by the general public due to corruption scandals and his government’s failure to ameliorate living conditions, guarantee safety, or repossess northern state control.

Despite that, the military ran investigations concerning claims of extrajudicial killings by their troops. Humanitarian agencies have been adversely affected by numerous attacks, mainly by outlaws, reducing the ability to distribute aid.

A unilateral ceasefire was negotiated between Dan Na Ambassagou and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, in September 2018. However, the group



Figure 7 Children recruitment in Mali

² Dufka, Corinne, and Elise Keppler. “Mali.” *Human Rights Watch*, <https://www.hrw.org/africa/mali>

was accused of the 24 March 2019 slaughter of 160 Fula villagers. The militia denied involvement in the killings and refused disarmament as it said that Dogon farmers need to be protected from jihadists, whose troops mainly consist of Fulanis. It was then that the President ordered the group to dissolve.

Based on UN reports, the number of children assassinated in the first semester of 2019 conflict was twice as big as the one of 2018. The majority of these killings has been attributed to ethnic militias and attacks taking place around Mompoti. Schools are closing down as armed militias are recruiting children.

More than twenty-five Mali soldiers were killed in the first week of October 2019, when two jihadist attacks in the towns of Boulikessi and Mondoro took place near the Burkina Faso borders. However, the Malian President has now shown any concern that a coup, like the one in 2012, may occur again.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America

The stability caused by the 2015 peace accord implementation has been emphasized multiple times by USA officials. The country supports development, humanitarian aid, conflict mitigation and governance with bilateral aid. It also provides financial aid to MINUSMA, training of its military forces and supplies for its African soldiers who are ready to deploy with MINUSMA, as well as military support operations held by France and the G5 Sahel.

Although Mali has been a signatory of the State Department-led Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP), US military aid has not been offered since the coup of 2012. Other than that, the Republic is not the first receiver of aid provided by the US to the G5 Sahel. Subsequent to Mali being designated under the Child Soldier Prevention Act (2008), it has been facing legal USA security assistance limitations, which will continue, until a presidential renunciation.



Figure 8 Operation Barkhane; Six French soldiers killed by Al-Qaeda

France

Bearing in mind that Mali was a former colony of France, French concerns have been noted about the situation in the Malian state from the beginning.

France not only initiated the UN interference through the conduct of a SC resolution, but also proceeded with military intervention and provided aid to the Malian government. Furthermore, in need to combat the food crisis that dominates the region, France has offered a large amount of humanitarian assistance.

France, along with the USA, led on military matters, on the UN legislation as well as on political balance. Additionally, numerous operations in Mali were directed by a regional counter-terrorism force, known under the name “Operation Barkhane”.

African Union (AU)

The president of the AU admitted with regret, at the summit of January 2013, that he responded “slow” when the situation in Mali first arose. Influenced by French missions, the AU started to provide aid to the Malian government and simultaneously insured military assistance to Mali from each of its member states. Additionally, the Union launched missions to support the electoral processes of the state and its newly elected democratic representative.

G5 Sahel and the European Union

In 2017, armed Islamists ruined G5 Sahel headquarters and caused the retardation of its operating counter-terrorist multinational military missions. International donations have provided to the regional grouping, in the period of 2017-2018, about 500 million US dollars and the EU contributed 166 million euros. Simultaneously, the mandate of the EU Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) and the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) was extended to encompass training for the G5 Sahel troops.

MINUSMA

The supervision of presidential elections, the recruitment of troops, the training of judicial officers and attempts on reconciling the two sides were greatly supported by MINUSMA. The peacekeeping mission faced difficulties implementing the mandate on civilian protection (2016), mainly because of content attacks targeting peacekeepers and shortage of military supplies.

In June 2019, MINUSMA’s mandate was renewed, since the SC decided after the 2015 peace accord, that its “second strategic priority” would be to apply a new

strategy aiming at civilian protection, reduction of violence and reestablishment of governmental power in central Mali, accompanied by further tasks.

It is known that among other UN peacekeeping missions, MINUSMA has noted the highest mortality rate and currently faces great logistical difficulties. Furthermore, it lacks the organization that is needed in order to perform missions on countering terrorism effectively, although several petitions, directed by Mali, the G5 and the AU to be permitted to act so, have been submitted.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1945	Creation of ECOWAS
2007	Foundation of AQIM
October 2011	Establishment of NMLA
January 2012	Begin of the Malian Civil War – Tuareg Rebellion
2012	Presidential coup
April 2012	NMLA declares Azawad's independence
January 2013	The Malian president acknowledges French aid
April 2013	Withdrawal of the Chadian forces from Mali
June 2013	Peace Deal signed
July 2013	Election of Ibrahim Boubacar Kéïta
August 2013	Establishment of MINUSMA
2014	Cancellation of the Peace Deal
20 June 2015	Peace Accord signed
2015	Conflict in Central Mali between agricultural communities (Dogon and Bambara vs. Fula)
2016	Creation of the Dogon Militia Dan Na Ambassagou
2018	Reelection of Kéïta
September 2018	Dan Na Ambassagou negotiates a unilateral ceasefire with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
24 March 2019	Fula Villagers Massacre (allegedly by Dan Na Ambassagou)
October 2019	2 jihadist attacks in Boulikessi and Mondoro

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Over 14 resolutions have been adopted in order to solve this conflict not only by the Security Council but also by other UN bodies such as the Human Rights Council.

UN Security Council Resolution 2056 (2012)

UN Security Council Resolution 2071 (2012)

These documents regarding the 2012 conflict demanded military actions by the African Union and ECOWAS in northern Mali.

UN Security Council Resolution 2085 (2012)

This resolution calls for the deployment of the International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA).

UN Human Rights Council Resolution, Assistance to the Republic of Mali in the field of human rights (2014)

The HRC with this resolution urges the international community to extend the provision of humanitarian assistance to Mali. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of reconciliation and calls upon its government to continue its efforts to protect human rights.

Security Council resolution 2364 (2017)

This document, following the Security Council resolution 2227 (2015), calls for the extension of the mandate of the MINUSMA until June 30, 2018.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The UN, France, EU, and USA acknowledged respect for humanitarian rights in Mali explicitly in 2018 via multiple public reports condemning mistreatment by both state and non-state forces calling for accountability.

The National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH) looked into abuses, made numerous announcements and advocated on victims' behalf after visiting detention centers.

The UN Secretary-General formed the International Commission of Inquiry motivated by the 2015 peace accord to inspect severe abuses of humanitarian law since 2012-2018.

The UNSC renewed the travel prohibition and asset freeze of 2017 towards the ones who hitch the ceasefire agreement and violate human rights. State and non-state

parties both condemned rights violations, however, the SC has not succeeded in imposing sanctions.

Mali investigations have been advanced by the International Criminal Court Prosecutor's Office after issuing an arrest court order for previous Ansar Dine leader, Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud, for humanitarian and war offenses in Timbuktu between 2012 and 2013. However, no sought arrest warrants have yet been implemented.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The Council felt the need to exercise its duties and fulfill its role in maintaining and restoring international peace and security. Consequently, some possible solutions to the topic may include:

Maintenance and improvement of the peace accord

It is of great importance to assure that the ceasefire between the two parties remains.

Designated terrorist groups were not included in the negotiations. In the hope of the fulfillment of deep political changes and jihadist groups' isolation, the peace continuation is vital. The withdrawal of the signatory armed rebels has to take place, as well as the issue of decentralization and infrastructure enhancement in northern Mali has to be dealt with immediately. Furthermore, the parties had to consent to extreme decisions, which go against their culture and way of living. For example, the agreement ignored the fact that the Tuareg ethnic group follows the principles of a matriarchal society making it gender bias. Most importantly, although reconciliation is mentioned in the title as an article commissioned to help people heal, cope with trauma, be truthful and forgiving to the other side, creating this way an environment of understanding, it is completely non-existent in the agreement.

With that being said, it is the duty of the Council to tackle the flaws of the Accord. Establishing a Truth Commission, which would record complaints from both sides regarding humanitarian abuses, such as killing or violence, will reconcile the two sides. Moreover, the most effective way to reconcile the two sides in the long term is by creating a cohesive society. This can be achieved through Awareness Workshops, where the two sides directly share their experiences will be essential. Except for that, the accord should be reformed in a way respectable to the culture of both sides and provides sustainable and fair solutions so that the maintenance of the Accord can be ensured.

Protection of Mali by exclusively ECOWAS

It is of great importance that a resolution declaring the northern Malian territories under the military and administrative control of ECOWAS, rather than silently tolerating French authority, be proposed. The international community should keep on offering expertise and training via security collaboration, and civil-military missions.

Restoration of border Security

Niger-Mali borders are a high-risk spot as Jihadist groups have established a foothold there, circulating weapons and increasing intercommunal tensions. Because of this, closing borders with Niger, until those are monitored and secured by ECOWAS to conduct a census, is recommended. For the same reason, activities across the Mauritanian and Algerian land borders should be monitored.

Eradication of terrorism

UN peacekeeping forces/UN military missions should be sent to Mali to eliminate terrorism in the area and reassure the protection of the Malian population. UN organizations, such as the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), should also take action for this purpose. Foreign troops should continue the deployment to the Republic in an attempt to improve stability and counter-terrorism, but this should be monitored so that they do not take advantage of the current state of Mali.

Monitoring of developments in Mali

The formation of a monitoring group assisted by the AU and the UN for the improvement of the current situation in Mali is suggested. In this way it will be achievable to keep track of the future changes and spot any discrepancies, such governmental corruption and fraud, by establishing transparency regarding post-conflict elections.

Combating extrajudicial killings

Incidents of extrajudicial killings of protesters and civilians, especially in the central Mali region, by Malian troops have been reported several times. Although investigations have already taken place, the discontinuation of the attacks and civilian protection is not guaranteed. Therefore, the regular supervision of officials and the creation of a legal framework for the punishment of those who hold the responsibility of or tolerate the extrajudicial killings have to be suggested.

Protection of children's rights

As a consequence of the conflict thousands of children suffer from malnutrition, are killed, injured and have to flee their villages during attacks by ethnic militias. In order to reduce attacks on education, Mali carried out the Safe Schools Declaration. Though more than 735 schools are still closed and 225,000 children have no access to education due to lack of security and migration. Several teachers face threats, and schools have been damaged or come under the control of armed separatists.

UN Organizations, such as the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), should act in order to protect the children's rights in Mali, promote education and establish a safer environment for the children.

Imposition of economic sanctions

One of the main jobs of the UNSC is the placement of economic sanctions (eg. trade barriers, tariffs, embargoes, etc.) when necessary, in our case to the current government due to corruption and in case of a breach of the 2015 peace agreement.

This coercion should, by all means, conform to the International Human Rights Law thus *only* targeted sanctions to the government which will be increased or reduced depending on its comportment making them credible and flexible should be posed. This way they will not be threatening to the country's citizens and thus not violate the Human Rights Law.

Humanitarian aid

Mali faces intertwined security and governance challenges. Poverty, rapid population growth, inadequate infrastructure, environmental challenges, and war have led to extensive food insecurity in one of the world's poorest countries.

International organizations such as the Red Cross, World Food Program (WFP), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UN Development Program (UNDP) should provide Mali with a greater amount of humanitarian supplies. Moreover, an Economic Commission to estimate emergency necessities such as food, shelter, medical aid and the establishment of potable water access assisted by the G5 Sahel, is fundamental.

Improvement of Infrastructure

Organizations, such as the Emerging Africa Infrastructure Fund (EAIF), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), InfraCo Africa and UN Conference Trade and Development (UNCTAD), should help improve the infrastructure of the

country in order to ensure development, trade, economic growth and food security in the region.

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