



# Case study

## Security Sector Reform in Mali

### Mali Key data

**Location:** interior of West Africa

**Population:** 18M, 90% of whom reside in the southern region ([World Bank 2017](#))

**Capital:** Bamako, with 2.7M people ([World Bank 2017](#))

**Area:** 1,240,190 Km<sup>2</sup> ([World Bank](#))

**Mineral wealth:** gold ([72% of exports](#)), iron ore, bauxite and manganese.

**Language:** French (official), Bambara and around 12 others.

**Constitution:** The Constitution of the Republic of Mali, 12 January 1992.

**Political system:** Republic

**GDP growth rate:** 7.6% ([UN 2017](#))

**GDP per capita:** 824.5 USD ([World Bank 2017](#))

**Most productive sectors:** agriculture and mining make up 80% of Malian revenue and exports.

**Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line:** 43.6% ([World Bank 2009](#))

**Literacy rate, adult total age 15 and above:** 33% ([World Bank 2015](#))

**External debt:** 678M USD ([UN 2014](#))

**Ibrahim Index for African Governance:** 25/54 ([2017](#))

**Freedom House Index:** Partly free ([2018](#))

**Corruption Index:** 122/180 ([Transparency International 2017](#))

**Human Development Index:** 0.442 ([2016](#))



## Introduction and General Background

### *Cultural, Geographic and Economic Background*

The Republic of Mali is located in the interior of West Africa. Despite being the eighth largest country in Africa with an annual population growth of 3%, Mali's population is still relatively sparse, with a little over 18 million inhabitants (90% of whom reside in the south). Culturally, the south is predominantly composed of the Bambara ethnic group while the north is considered more ethnically diverse with the Songhais, Moors, Fula and Tuaregs communities located around the Niger River regions. Despite being composed of various ethnic groups, over 90% of Mali's population is Muslim.

Mali is among the 25 poorest countries in the world. Most of the economic activity is confined to regions irrigated by the Niger River, with both agriculture and mining making up 80% of Malian revenue and exports. Mali has a high dependency on imported goods, making it vulnerable to food price shocks and highly dependent on remittances and foreign aid.

### Political Overview

Mali gained independence in 1960. By 1968, first Malian President Moribo Keita was overthrown in a coup d'état and followed by the 23 years of military dictatorship of Moussa Traoré. Traoré was, in turn, overthrown on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1991 by Lieutenant-Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré. The new government signed the National Pact for reconciliation with the Touaregs on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1992, and presidential elections were won two weeks later on the 26<sup>th</sup> April by Alpha Oumar Konaré. After two terms, Konaré retired and Amadou Toumani Touré won the presidential elections of May 2002. In addition to the 1991 transition from dictatorship to democracy in the south, a series of northern led insurgencies took place in 1990, 1992, and 2006.

#### **i. 2012 Crisis**

In 2012, Mali underwent a series of internal and external events that ultimately destabilised the government and plunged the country into a state of crisis. Most importantly, by uniting various rebellious factions that represented the main communities in the north, the Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) sought to establish their perceived ethnic homeland – the *Azawad*. The government's perceived mismanagement of both the crisis in the north and the armed forces in general, prompted a faction of the military to stage a coup against the democratically elected President Amadou Toumani Touré.

While the MNLA initially proclaimed the independence of *Azawad*, local and external Islamic insurgent groups -including Ansar Dine, **Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb** (AQIM), and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MOJW)- went on to implement strict interpretations of Sharia law across regions in the north. Reports arose of serious human rights violations including cases of arbitrary arrests, torture, public flogging, amputations, sexual and gender-based violence, summary executions, and the use children in armed groups ([IPI, 2013](#)).

#### **ii. Interim Government and International Engagement**

The international community and Malian Civil Society Organizations (CSO) were quick to condemn the unfolding political and military events in Bamako. After the resignation of the junta in April 2012, a civilian interim government was created, led by President Dioncounda Traoré.

Soon thereafter, the interim government requested military assistance from the international community to help with the demobilisation of Islamic insurgents who had rapidly taken control of the northern region and who were moving south. A UN Security Council resolution authorised the engagement of African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) and France led a military offensive against northern extremist groups in January 2013. Within a month, French forces captured control of the northern region of Mali.

On 1 July 2013, AFISMA handed over its authority to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Under the Ouagadougou preliminary agreement of 18 June 2013, the remaining insurgent parties to the conflict agreed to allow for elections to be held in Kidal, in exchange for an inclusive dialogue following the election. Mali held its Presidential and parliamentary elections on 28 July 2013 and Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was declared the winner.

### **iii. Peace Talks**

The Algiers Peace Talks were initiated in April 2014. A peace agreement was signed on 20 June 2015, calling for a ceasefire and withdrawal of insurgent groups in opposition regions. However, major provisions of the peace agreement have still not been implemented and barely initiated. This is likewise the case for the DDR process. In addition, progress in modernizing the army and security forces has been slow and continues to struggle against the resurgence of terrorist activities in the north and increasingly in the centre of the country. With most of the State and international efforts focused on the north, the central region has been largely neglected. This has resulted in an escalating rate of armed violence throughout the region by jihadist groups.

### **iv. Countering violent extremism, crime and intercommunal violence**

Central Mali is suffering from increasing violence originating from armed bandit groups, intercommunal violence and petty criminals. In winter 2017, a newly formed coalition of the three main terrorist groups (Ansar Dine, Al-Mourabitoune, AQIM) emerged, contributing to the instability of the country. In the absence of an accountable and trustworthy state actor, some authorities and local elites are supporting the establishment of community-based self-defence militias.

In July 2017, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad, with the support of France, formed the Joint force of the G5 Sahel (FC-G5S), a mixed force whose objective is to coordinate efforts to combat terrorism, organized crime and human trafficking with a view to restoring peace and security in the Sahel region.

## **Security Sector Reform**

In 2005, the Government of Mali launched a national debate on SSR and formulated a national security policy, redefining Mali's security policy on the basis of human security, inclusiveness and prevention. Notable components to the policy were: capacity building for security forces; promoting neighbourhood policing; and implementation of shared governance of security. The Shared Governance of Security and Peace Programme (PGPSP) was established and launched in 2008 as the instrument for implementation of the National Security Policy. While the PGPSP marginally improved civil-military relations, the slow adoption by the security services and a lack of ownership of the SSR process hindered the overall process.

The 2012 coup had lasting impacts on the SSR process in Mali. Not only did the 2013 insurgency and clashes between the Malian Armed Forces and armed groups temporarily derail the PGPSP and SSR

efforts, the conflict additionally illustrated the lack of capacity and efficiency of the armed forces, the persisting problem between civilian and military institutions and chronic corruption throughout the security sector. The crisis additionally highlighted the security services' disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL).

A Multidisciplinary Focus Group on Security Sector Reform (GPRS), composed of civilian and military representatives and development partners, was created in November 2013. Recommendations put forward by the GPRS led to the creation of a National Council for Security Sector Reform (CNRSS), an advisory and decision-making body responsible for guiding and leading the SSR process. These factors, coupled with the Peace Agreements signed in 2015, allowed for the government to begin working towards further establishing strong democratic institutions and consolidating the RoL priorities already stipulated in the Government Action Programme (PAG 2013-2018).

## Governance and Oversight

### i. Security Sector Management and Oversight Bodies

- **Legislative Branch** – The National Assembly—the single chamber of the Malian Parliament—exercises powers of parliamentary oversight in which they review, supervise and oversee the operations of the security apparatus.
- **Executive Branch** – The executive exercises direct control at all levels and determines the budget, guidelines and priorities for the security sector. The President is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and chairs the National Defence Council (provides general guidance for national defence), the Committee for National Defence (provides military guidance for national defence) and the Council of Ministers.
- **Judicial Branch** – The judicial branch has constitutional and legal prerogatives over the security sector. It has the capability to monitor and prosecute security sector actors through civil or criminal proceedings for criminal offenses.
- **Civil Society** – Mali has historically maintained a flourishing civil society which has served as a means of oversight for the security sector. These include women's organisations, human rights organisations, individual citizens, the media, etc.
- **Office of the Auditor General** - In 2003, the Malian authorities created a new independent authority whose mission is to contribute to better management of public resources by fighting corruption, mismanagement and economic and financial criminality.
- **Ombudsman** –Mali's Mediator of the Republic is an independent authority, appointed for a seven year term by decree of the President. They are empowered to investigate cases, summon the agents involved in the matter, require the disclosure of any record or document relating to the case, use specialized inspections to carry out necessary checks and propose recommendations. It does not have jurisdiction over the armed forces.
- **Committee on National Defence, Security and Civil Protection** – It is composed of 12 members and its main role is to study bills or proposals for legislation. The Committee has been tasked with studying the Military Orientation and Programming Act for the years 2015-2019. The Commission is supported by UNMISMA and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

Despite having the infrastructure and constitutional backing, Mali has historically struggled with persistent corruption at all levels of the government as well as a culture of secrecy and lack of

transparency. Moreover, the parliament suffers from a lack of adequate resources and expertise. As of 2015, women remain underrepresented in many of the decision making bodies.

## Justice

### i. Justice and Prison Reform

Mali's judicial system is based on French civil law and international customary law. It is guaranteed independence under the Constitution. Freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and religion are protected under the constitution. Although the judicial system is independent, the executive branch has substantial influence over the judiciary as the President heads the Superior Judicial Council and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (responsible for appointing judges and providing court oversight).

For these reasons, the justice system plays a modest role in comparison to traditional forms of justice. Customary justice- which includes family elders, religious leaders, traditional communicators, and local government actors- is considered the predominant justice provider for 80% of the population. Customary justice is considered more accessible, comprehensive, affordable and familiar. However, this too can be problematic as customary justice providers are also subject to corruption albeit less than the state and aren't always compliant with the Malian Constitution.

Regarding the penitentiary system, the Directorate for National Penitentiary Administration is meant to investigate and monitor prison and detention centre conditions; however, it is unclear whether it is effective or even active. Prisons in Mali are overcrowded with poor access to healthcare and food.

In 2000, a Ten Year Justice Reform Programme (PRODEJ) was created as a means to improve the efficiency and credibility of the justice sector. However it has been widely criticised for its mismanagement of funds, its inability to incorporate customary justice effectively and its top-down approach.

## Police

### i. Internal Security in Mali

Internal security and public order are ensured by the National Police, the National Gendarmerie and the National Guard. In May 2015, the National Assembly adopted a Military Orientation and Programming Act (LOPM) which solidifies the power of the President of the Republic, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, to reform Mali's defence and security system. The implementation of this law is justified, among other things, by defence tool dysfunctions and insufficient manpower to cover the country's needs.

**The National Police** falls under the authority of the Ministry of Internal Security and Civil Protection (Mol). It is estimated to employ over 6,000 individuals, 700 of whom are women. The National Police's mandate focuses primarily on the protection of people and property; the ability to identify and record criminal offenses, gather evidence, find and arrest perpetrators; as well as the capacity to seek and gather intelligence to inform government decision-making.

**The Judicial Police**, an integral part of the National Police, is tasked specifically with reporting violations of criminal law, gathering evidence, tracking down suspects and supporting investigating authorities once a case is opened. While the judicial police are directed by the public prosecutor in support of specific cases, they fall hierarchically under the Mol.

**The National Gendarmerie** shares a number of security related responsibilities with the National Police and the National Guard, including maintaining public order, collecting intelligence and protecting private property. It falls under of the authority of the MoI as well as the Ministry of Armed Forces and Former Combatants (MoAF). As of 2015, it is estimated that the gendarmerie counts 4,000 individuals, 100 of whom are women.

**The National Guard** is a military-type force responsible for providing security to political and administrative institutions, as well as contributing to the maintenance of public order and the territorial defence of Mali. The National Guard falls under the MoAF for administrative affairs and the MoI for deployment. The National Guard does not carry out criminal investigations, instead only participating in policing functions such as the maintenance of law and order, and the patrol of sensitive areas. It is additionally considered one of the most widespread of all the security forces. As of 2015, it is estimated that the National Guard contains 3,000 individuals, 100 of whom are women.

The Minister of Security, General Salif Traoré, appointed in 2015, created a special anti-terrorist force (Forsat) made up of members of the gendarmerie police and the National Guard, whose aim is to intervene quickly and anywhere in the country in the event of a terrorist attack. It is widely supported by MINUSMA and the EU.

Mali's internal security apparatus has historically struggled with a lack of resources, low pay and inadequate training. Security services in the north are insufficiently established, with a low concentration of infrastructure and staff. Moreover, police officers and gendarmes have been accused of extortion and bribery at checkpoints. As a result, a survey conducted between 2011 and 2013 showed that 46% of the population viewed the police and gendarmerie as corrupt ([AB, 2015](#)).

Since the 2012 crisis, 2,026 gendarmes and police officers were deployed in the north, compared with 469 before the coup. Malian authorities also proceeded to transferring law and order responsibilities from the armed forces to law enforcement institutions. Additionally, the Malian Government, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), established a joint initiative—the Governance, Peace and Security Programme—aimed at establishing community policing in northern Mali. The establishment of a territorial police force is provided for in the 2015 Peace Agreement without the content of its powers, its relations with the national security forces and its functional attachment being clearly defined yet. As of May 2017, there had been no significant developments.

## Defence

### i. Defence Transformation

The Malian Armed Forces consist of the National Defence, composed of the Air Force, the Army and the National Guard, alongside the National Gendarmerie, all of whom fall under the authority of the Ministry of Armed Forces and Former Combatants (MoAF).

**National Defence Forces:** The President is the supreme commander of the armed forces and the Prime Minister is responsible for the implementation of the national defence policy. The Armed Forces fall under the General Staff of the Armed Forces, within the MoAF. The Malian Armed Forces consist of 13,800 personnel and are responsible for the defence of the country, the

protection of democratic practices, and the promotion of the best interests of the country. As of 2014, 7% of the army and 6% of the air force were composed of women.

There has always been tension between the civilian population and military forces because of Mali's history of authoritarian rule. This relationship has been further damaged by the recent coup and continued influence of the ex-Junta leaders on the interim government. Security forces have also been accused of attacking individuals who belong to specific ethnic groups and violating basic human rights.

In response to such challenges, in 2014, the government of Mali presented the draft defence and national security policy and the draft framework law and military programming (LOPM) 2015-2019. Additionally, as of March 2016, steps have been taken towards the implementation of DDR and SSR processes in the north. This process has however been plagued with delays ([UNSC, 2016](#)).

## Donor Relations

### 1. Donor Support and Coordination

Since the beginning of the crisis, Mali has received widespread support and funds from the international community. In addition to those listed below, notable contributors include the US, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, AU, Japan, and ECOWAS.

#### i. United Nations Support

The MINUSMA peacekeeping force was established under UN Security Council Resolution 2100 (2013). These responsibilities included stabilisation of the region; coordination assistance to the interim authority on SSR; and support to the implementation of a roadmap, protection of civilians and the promotion and protection of human rights. As of January 2017, MINUSMA stands at 13,093 personnel, 10,651 of whom are authorized military personnel and 1,262 police staff.

The MINUSMA SSR team's mandate is to provide strategic and technical advice and support to rebuild the Malian security sector and to support the overall international coordination of SSR, including: coordination with Malian and French forces on joint patrols in the north; technical assistance and capacity building for Malian police units; supporting a workshop to the National Assembly on strengthening democratic oversight of the security sector; supporting the implementation of the military programming law; supporting to the formulation of defence and security policies; supporting the revisions of the national strategy on border management; coordinating national and international efforts at border strengthening; and disseminating military documents pertaining to military training, internal control, and management/personnel management. As of May 2016, MINUSMA will support in the establishment of local advisory committees and territorial police as well as continue to support DDR and cantonment.

#### ii. European Union Support

In response to the growing challenges in the Sahel, the EU adopted a Comprehensive **Strategy** for Security and Development (2011), a Comprehensive Regional **Approach** (2013) and **Action Plan** (2015) for the Sahel region. The **Regional Action Plan 2015-2020** constitutes a framework for implementation of the EU Comprehensive Strategy. Within its four priorities include provisions on preventing and countering radicalisation; border management, the fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime. The action plan also focuses on support to the CDSP EU-Training

Mission in Mali (EUTM) and CSDP EUCAP Sahel Mali missions, both of which seek to improve the capacity and security services.

The EUTM was created in February 2013 under the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Framework. The objective is to sustainably enable the security forces to maintain security and stability within their country and to support in the structural reform of the sector. Additionally, at the request of the host nation, the EU launched the CSDP EUCAP Sahel Mission in Mali on 15 January, 2015. EUCAP Mali is mandated to provide SSR support to the internal security forces. This includes the police, gendarmerie, National Guard and well as support in border management, migration and combating criminal activity.

## **Future Considerations**

### **1. Upcoming Considerations**

The multiple dimensions encompassed in the Malian crisis are complex, with the heart of the problem historically linked to regional tensions and mistrust between the various communities. Therefore, genuine attempts at developing inclusive dialogue and reconciliation need to be prioritised at local, sub-national, and national levels. It is essential that progress on implementing peace agreements, including commitments made to northern communities such as DDR and cantonment, progress more rapidly.

Provided that most communities outside the capital rely more heavily on customary system, inclusion of customary actors will likely facilitate the SSR process. Identifying and mapping the distinctions between state and customary systems on a locality-by-locality basis, with a focus on understanding why and how several justice systems exist concurrently and how they can best be supported to work together would be a fruitful exercise for the Malian government and international donors.

Due to the various insecurities facing Mali – including violent extremism, organised crime, banditry, illicit trafficking of arms and drugs, and an absence of state services- it is essential for the international community to maintain a human security perspective that takes into account the various dimensions of insecurity.

## Acronyms

### 1. List of Acronyms

<b>AFISMA</b>	African-led International Support Mission in Mali	<b>IHL</b>	International Humanitarian Law
<b>AQIM</b>	Lands of the Islamic Maghreb	<b>MAA</b>	Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad
<b>CMFPR-II</b>	Coordination des mouvements et fronts patriotiques de résistance II	<b>MINUSMA</b>	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
<b>CPA</b>	Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad	<b>MNLA</b>	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisations	<b>MoAF</b>	Ministry of Armed Forces and Former Combatants
<b>DDR</b>	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration	<b>Mol</b>	Ministry of Internal Security and Civil Protection
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States	<b>MOJW</b>	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
<b>EUTM</b>	EU-Training Mission in Mali	<b>RoL</b>	Rule of Law
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>SSR</b>	Security Sector Reform
<b>GATIA</b>	Groupe d'autodéfense touareg Imghad et alliés	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>GPRS</b>	Multidisciplinary Focus Group on Security Sector Reform	<b>PRODEJ</b>	Ten Year Justice Reform Programme
<b>HCUA</b>	Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad		