UNSC

Background Guide

Agenda: Restoring Central Government Control and Curbing Non-State Actors in Mali

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Letters From Eexecutive Board

Greetings delegates!I

It is with great delight that we, the Executive Board, welcome you to the Committee of the United Nations Security Council at Pathways e-Model United Nations (e-MUN) 2020!

Today's agenda challenges the traditional authorities and external actors leading up to conflict and dire situations in the country of Mali. Since pre-colonial times, traditional authorities like tribal chiefs and religious leaders have performed tasks such as administration of justice and conflict mediation.

Mali has also struggled with the rise of domestic and transnational non-state actors that have sought to upend the existing political and legal order. Some even reject the authority of certain segments and compliance with the Malian government.

While the background guide will serve as a great resource for the topic, we encourage you to use other resources and research to facilitate debate. We hope to see you diplomatically advocate for your proposals and collaboratively reach your resolutions.

All the best!
Executive Board,UNSC,
Pathways e-MUN 2020.

Introduction

The UNSC is the primary forum for the consideration of security questions in the General Assembly. The UN Security Council has the primary responsibility of international peace and security. Under the Charter of the UN, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The Security Council takes responsibility in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means. It further recommends methods of adjustment or/and terms of settlement. In some cases, the UNSC can also resort to imposing sanctions and even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Role of Non-State and Foreign Actors in Mali over the last Decade

Mali has become the theatre of perpetual conflict and displacement for nearly eight years. Ever since the fall of Gaddafi in 2011, a range of conflict events were set into motion in Libya that later spread throughout the entire region. The increasing availability of weapons and the return home of foreign Tuareg fighters trained in Gadaffi's army set in motion the 2012 in northern Mali - ultimately leading to the Malian coup d'état in March the same year. Frustrated over the government's failure to quash the rebellion, soldiers in the capital city of Bamako overthrew the president.

As a mix of rebels and terrorist groups moved south toward the capital, France intervened and was subsequently joined by African Union forces. Shortly thereafter, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was launched. Together, these interventions have restored some resemblance of peace and government control, but they could not prevent the hijacking of the rebellion by a number of violent extremist organisations present in the region - or the spread of conflict dynamics to central Mali and across the border into Niger. The country's northern and central regions remain trapped in cycles of violence.

Historical Background

Mali has a long standing history of colonisation and conflicts. The French conquered the territory of present-day Mali in the late 19th century, with the first major victory coming in 1888 and the final victory over the Tuareg ethnic group in the North in 1894. The French governed Mali as part of various configurations of its West African empire via both direct and indirect rule. Throughout its colonial history, the French relied on Malian soldiers from the South to serve in its campaigns abroad---in World War I, World War II,etc.

Thus, the Malians continue to perceive this military service as a "blood debt" that France has yet to repay to Mali. The independence as a Republic of Mali from a French colony was slow and gradual. The separation from France culminated peacefully in 1960.

Apart from that, they always had ethnic tensions and tensions and division between the north and south of the country. The grievances are rooted in marginalization and disputes over land, water, and grazing rights. Militant groups have exploited these grievances and the state's weakness to spread fear and violence. Over the years, extremist groups and jihadist have taken advantage of this situation leading Mali to a state of total unrest. As the capital city Bamako came under threat in early 2013, France intervened militarily. They launched Operation Several to block the militants advance and retake control of the north. The French were then joined by a mix of regional forces under the flag of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA).

Together, French and AFISMA pushed out armed groups from key towns in the north. Operation Serval and AFISMA were followed by a string of additional security interventions like the French-led Operation Barkhane (2014-present); the UN's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (2013-present); a European Union training mission (2013-present); and the G5 Sahel Joint Force (2014-present), composed of troops from Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Chad, Niger, and Mali.

In 2015, the Malian government, the Coordination of Movements of Azawad(pro-separatist groups in northern Mali), and "the Platform" (pro-government groups in Northern Mali) signed the Agreement of Peace and Reconciliation.

A ceasefire was brokered in 2013—allowing the election of President Ibrahim Boubacar Kéïta and the beginning of peace talks. Nearly seven years later, the Malian government has not fulfilled its promises to increase development in and autonomy for the north. For their part, the armed groups that signed the accord have largely failed to disarm and demobilize. Over the last few years, intercommunal violence has broken out again to the center of the country.

Rebellions over the years

First Tuareg Rebellion (1963-1964)

From the very inception of Mali as a state, relations between the Tuareg ethnic minority, which resides in the northern part of the country, and Mali's dominant southern ethnic groups (i.e., Mandé) have pervaded Malian politics. The immediate post-colonial Mandé Malian leaders emphasized Mandé culture and history and Mande based Malian culture. From education to the arts, Malian society became Mandé society. Before their independence from France, the Malian central government promised the Tuareg their own independent state, also known as "Azawad".

Not only did Mali's independence not bring about this state, but the new government sought to transform political life in the North in order to align with the Mandé Malian vision of the state. These postcolonial Malian government policies toward the Tuareg created a tipping point that led to a civil war in 1963. Explicitly in response to grievances stemming from Mandé-focused nation building policies, the leaders of the powerful Tuareg clan confederation Kel Adagh launched the first Tuareg rebellion against the government.

Although the rebellion was brutally—and effectively--put down by the Malian military, the legacies of the rebellion, known among Tuareg as the Alfellaga, loom large in contemporary Malian history.

Second Tuareg Rebellion (1990-1996)

The Tuareg launched a second full-scale rebellion in 1990 after intermittent fighting with little progress for most of the independence period. Between the first and second rebellion, the Tuareg communities featured severe droughts that led to financial hardships. The central Malian government did little to integrate the Tuareg or to help them overcome decades of dire times. The trigger for the fighting was the return of battle-hardened Tuareg soldiers from military campaigns abroad. Instead of taking a political action, the Tuareg sought economic opportunities elsewhere. Many Tuareg soldiers went abroad to join Muammar Qaddafi's Islamic Legion.

Having gained real-life fighting in world war, these Tuareg came back in 1990 to use violence against the Malian government to secure their political goals. The rebellion culminated in a settlement in 1991 and then a National Pact in 1992, although the actual rebellion only ended in 1996. But, the government did a poor job in implementing the non-political provisions of the 1992 National Pact.

The government did not even integrate former combatants into the Malian army, making security-sector reform impossible while leaving many capable Tuareg fighters unemployed. Although these efforts seemed superficially successful since 1,500 Tuareg were given civilian or military positions on paper, very few of these were actual combatants.

Third Tuareg Rebellion (2006-2009)

Aggrieved by the partial implementation of the 1992 National Pact, the veterans from the previous rebellion started a new one in 2006.The Malian government re-iterated many of the terms of the 1992 National Pact, in anticipation to quell the fighting. This new pact was known as the Algiers Accord. The fighting ultimately lasted only from May-July 2006. However, a smaller part of the group continued fighting until 2009. By 2009, Malian government counter-insurgency efforts and integration efforts via the Algiers Accord had reduced the support for this group.

Finally, the emergence of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM) in the North forced the Malian government to decentralize power since it needed the support of Tuareg clans to secure the North and prevent AQIM from establishing a stronghold.

Fourth Tuareg Rebellion (2012-Present)

Even after their efforts, the Malian government failed to stop Tuareg separatism and the emergence of AQIM as a source of large-scale violence. Tuareg separatists launched a new rebellion against the government in January 2012. The core grievance was still the lack of inclusion and autonomy for Tuareg in the North.

In addition, four tipping points led to the escalation of violence. First, Tuareg gained new combat experience from the civil war in Libya. Second, the Tuareg formed a new liberation movement, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), which organized disparate discontent and took charge of the Tuareg rebellion. Third, Islamic Extremists in North Africa and the Sahel focused their attention on Northern Mali.

Fourth, increased government corruption and domestic dissatisfaction with the Malian government among Mande groups in the South led to a coup d'etat that substantially weakened the government and reduced its ability to fight the ongoing rebellion.

In addition, AQIM ran a series of convoys from Libya to northern Mali to protect weaponry from confiscation.

Bolstered by leadership ties and weaponry from Libya, the MNLA turned against the government and allied with Malian Islamist groups like Ansar Dine and MUJAO and AQIM to escalate the war against the government in the North in January 2012.

Tuareg-led violence had been sporadic since the end of the Third Tuareg Rebellion until this point, however, after January 2012, the MNLA-led offensive led to a drastic increase in the frequency and intensity of fighting. Although both the separatist MNLA and the extremist alliance of MUJAO, AJIM, and Ansar Dine shared the goal of ejecting the Malian government and military from the North, they disagreed over what tactics to use and how far to extend military operations. These divisions would ultimately dissolve this temporary alliance.

After a string of rebel victories, low-ranking Malian soldiers in the South, fed-up with the Tuareg uprising, overthrew the government on March 21, 2012. The coup threw Mali into internal disarray, with its military leaders struggling to maintain order. The MNLA, taking full advantage of the disorder, seized control of northern Mali. A short time thereafter, in June 2012, the Islamic extremist groups in Mali split from the MNLA and took over the same areas in the north, paying off some MNLA fighters or overwhelming others with superior war-fighting resources.

On 18 August 2020, elements of the Malian Armed Forces began a mutiny. Soldiers on pick-up trucks stormed the Soundiata military base in the town of Kati, where gunfire was exchanged before weapons were distributed from the armory and senior officers arrested. Tanks and armoured vehicles were seen on the town's streets, as well as military trucks heading for the capital, Bamako. The soldiers detained several government officials including the President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta who resigned and dissolved the government. This is the country's second coup in less than 10 years, following the 2012 coup d'état.

On 12 September 2020, the National Committee for the Salvation of the People agreed to an 18-month political transition to civilian rule.

On 21 September 2020 Bah Ndaw was named interim president by a group of 17 electors, with Goïta being appointed vice president. The government is supposed to preside over an interim period of 18 months. A spokesperson for political-religious leader Mahmoud Dicko praised his nomination as president. Leaders of the M5-RFP, active since the 2020 Malian protests, also signalled support. On 25 September the government was inaugurated.

External Intervention

The Islamist extremists attacked Konna, a strategically located town just north of the capital of Bamako, on January 10th, 2013. This prompted the French government to intervene in order to repel the extremist advance. The resulting mission, Operation Serval, succeeded in pushing the extremists north. In February 2013, the European Union launched a multinational military mission (EUTM) to train the Malian military. The United Nations Security Council also authorized the deployment of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation, MINUSMA, operating under a Chapter VII mandate in April 2013.

In August 2014, France replaced Operation Serval with Operation Barkhane, a transnational counter-insurgency effort. While the Islamic extremists fled north following the French military intervention, corruption, underprovision of social services, and damaged infrastructure lingered even as the government consolidated intervention gains into peace. Since the extremists attacked in Bamako on the Radisson Blu hotel on November 20th 2015 and on the EU training mission on March 21st 2016, peace remains fragile throughout the country.

Although the major Tuareg (i.e. non-jihadist extremist) armed groups signed a peace accord in June 2015, distress continues in the North. Moreover, the southerners express frequent frustration with the separatist movement(s).The Malian government continues to categorically deny the right to a separate Tuareg state. As the Malian minister for national reconciliation said on the eve of the signing of the agreement: "the people of Azawad [the Tuareg state] as an entity does not exist. This concept does not exist." The Tuareg Malians see postcolonial governance by the central Bamako government as dominated by the Mandé ethnic groups and is also often contrasted (negatively) to colonial French rule.

Mali's status does not fit into traditional peace studies paradigms. On one hand, Mali could be counted as a success of negotiated settlement. War-time deaths and displacements have decreased since 2013. On the other hand, Mali remains as dangerous as ever, especially for potential peace-builders and civilian populations.

Areas of Limited Statehood in Mali

Limited statehood are those areas in which central authorities' ability to implement and enforce rules can be limited along the following four dimensions.

- **Territorial:** Part of a country's territorial space
- **Sectoral:** Certain policy areas
- **Social:** Certain parts of the population
- **Temporal:** Over certain periods of time.

Above all, the vastness of Northern Mali creates a problem for governance. The distance between the regional capitals, namely Bamako and Kidal alone is 1500km. This and the lack of substantial infrastructure add to the inefficiency in enforcing the rules of law in the North. The lack is further compounded by the tropical climate in central Mali. Leading to a lot of structural vulnerabilities for the governance. The rains average more than 600mm of total precipitation, a figure comparable to Mumbai's monsoon. This easily overwhelms the current roads and prevents the resources from being transported to the North. These issues and the ever increasing ethnolinguistic diversity of the Malian population, furtherworsens the situation in the North.

The government has had variable levels of authority over central Mali over time. Tuareg rebel groups contested the authority of the government in the first half of 2012, whereas Islamist extremist groups wrested control away from the government in the second half. Even though the French-led military intervention restored government control over Central Mali, this authority has been in contestation, since July 2015. Thus, at this stage, limited statehood is likely to be a constant for the foreseeable future in Central Mali.

These areas will continue to pose as existential risk factors. Such substantial areas of limited statehood are pervasive; however, in Mali, it is possible to identify several dimensions of limited statehood that are more acute than others. Also, it exists in substantial subnational variation with the central government being almost entirely absent in Northern Mali and contested in Central Mali. Second, the state exerts little authority over non-Mandé groups. Third, the central government does not have real authority over its military. Fourth, though the international community has increasingly focused on growing public education, evidence suggests that the Malian state incapable of providing neither public health, clean water, and food nor infrastructural access to those public goods.

Security Risks and Social Resilience

The Malian state on its own has no monopoly over the means of violence. There is little—if any—public goods provision beyond population centres in Northern Mali.Malians rely on non-state actors such as tribal leaders, clan leaders, and imams for traditional public goods such as access to clean water, food, health care, and education. To make matters worse, multiple violent non-state actors are fighting the state and amongst each other in Northern Mali. Islamic extremists fight against "secular" Tuareg armed groups for control in the area as well as the Malian state and its international allies (primarily France and the United Nations). Central Mali is perhaps the area of Mali in the greatest amount of flux. There is a certain risk of total governance breakdown but it is minimal conditional on the continued presence of international actors. After losing control of Central Mali in 2012, the Malian government has slowly restored public goods provision in both Mopti and Segou regions. Risks for governance breakdown and violent conflict can be divided along four lines:

1. **Drug trafficking**
2. **Migration/refugees/displacement**
3. **Islamic extremism**
4. **Climate Change**

Role of International Community and Response from France, EU and UN

External actors have been critical in providing Mali a mechanism of resilience. Three actors are especially important in this regard: France, the UN, and the EU.

France
After inaction from the international community and ineffective responses to the northern rebels from the Malian government and its West African allies, particularly ECOWAS, the Malian government invited France to intervene in Mali in January 2013 in response to Islamist advances to the South. Initially, they used a combination of air power and special forces and then a force of 2,500 troops to stabilize the South and restore government control over the North all under the spectre of Operation Serval. Most of the initial fighting ended by April 2013. However, the French remain in Mali, engaging in counter-terrorism operations and seeking to root out pockets of Islamist resistance remaining in hard-to-reach areas of the North. France's motivations for the intervention were officially three-fold:

- Stop the Islamist advance into the Sout
- Protect French citizens in Mali
- Restore governmental control of the territory of Mali

In its fight against Islamist militants, France relied on local allies such as the Malian government, Northern militias, as well as the MNLA.

United Nations
In response to the initial fighting between the government and the Tuareg separatist organization MNLA, Security Council Resolution 2085 established the United Nations Missions in Mali (UNOM) on December 20th 2012, meant primarily to support the African-led International Support Mission (AFISMA). After the French intervention, both UNOM and AFISMA were subsumed into the new United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), established by Security Council Resolution 2100 of April 2013. The resolution authorized a multi-dimensional peacekeeping force of 11,200 military personnel to use all necessary means to re-establish and maintain order in Mali. This mission remains in place following a set of yearly renewals.

The European Union

Outside of aid, the European Union's presence in Mali is limited primarily to the European Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), established in January 2013 (Olsen 2014). The mission's general goal is to strengthen the Malian security-sector by providing training to theMalian military (FAMA). In particular, EUTM Mali has the goal of improving the capacity and perceived legitimacy of the Malian military. In general, it has succeeded at the former (capacity) and failed at the latter (legitimacy). By improving the capacity of the military, EUTM Mali helps foster social resilience in Mali by giving the Malian state an important tool, the military, with which to maintain order and, thereby, gain output legitimacy. However, the Malian military has used its newfound capacity to settle local scores rather than maintain order.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMA)

- How does the UNSC seek to resolve the drug-trafficking situation? With most of the traffickers coming from the USA and Mexico, what are the steps these countries should take to curb the situation?

- With the majority of Malians depending on non-actors for basic necessities, how will the board handle the situation without impacting the basic necessities?

- The situation of total distress first started internally, how does one find peace and unity within the borders first?

- How can the need of external aid to deal with the inevitable catastrophic effects of climate change on the livelihoods of farmers, cattle herders, and fishermen in Mali be met?

- How can the local population, which has more trust on the legitimacy of the traditional and religious leaders than the Malian government and Malian military, be handled?

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