

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The question of Tuareg and Islamic Groups in Mali

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Introduction

The conflict started within three years of the Malian independence, with the first rebellion in 1963. This clearly demonstrated the difficulties addressing post-colonial challenges in conjunction with uniting all different Malian communities under one single political entity. The repression of the rebellion by the post-colonial government was a decision that helped sustain the conflict for the years to come.

The second rebellion in 1990-1991 were mainly led by Tuareg and Arab exiles. IN the footsteps of their elders they again fought for better living conditions and recognition of the northern political identity; they furthermore ask Tuareg be allowed to serve in the Malian national army. During this regime young military officers overthrew General Moussa Traoré in a democratic revolution ending a 30-year single-party regime. Even after this major political change the situation did not improve. The new government, however, did take steps by signing the Pacte National with neighboring countries, wherein clear measures to end the conflict were taken. Nevertheless, the government was not able to gather all North-Malian communities around its plan.

A decade of fragile peace and mutual suspicion a third rebellion broke out in 2012, wherein the rebels took advantage of the demilitarized north by the previous peace agreement. The UN passed the security council resolution 2085 allowing international intervention by France with 2.500 soldiers. However, as of now large parts of Northern Mali are out of Governmental control.

Definition of Key Terms

Franc Zone

The Franc Zone consists of parts of colonial Africa led by France where two currencies were guaranteed by the French treasury. They were called the West African CFA Franc and the Central African CFA Franc. They are separate currencies but due to the largely assumed permanent parity of the two, they are interchangeable.

Eastern Bloc

The Eastern Bloc was the group of Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, and Southeast Asia under the hegemony of the USSR during the Cold War, in opposition to the non-communist Western Bloc.

French Community

The French Community was an association of French colonies, mostly from Africa. The association did not exist very long, due to the African colonies refrained from it. Under the disguise of equality, the community tried to restrict the sovereignty of the colonies.

General Overview

Mali empire was part of the three West African empires that controlled the trans-Saharan trade in many precious goods. Its rise came conjointly with the fall of the Ghana empire. It spread its language, laws and customs throughout the whole of West-Africa.

Hereafter came the French colonial rule, where it was part of French-Sudan. Near the end of France's Fourth Republic, France started to lose control of many colonies; this, however, broke the Fourth Republic and put Charles de Gaulle back in power. He founded the Organisation Commune des Regions Shariennes (OCRS) offering limited self-rule to colonies in order to keep French sovereignty over a vast expanse of the Sahara Desert. However, many colonies chose to go for full independence, per example Algeria, which dissolved the OCRS. So, did French-Sudan unite with Senegal forming the Mali Federation. However shortly after the independence Senegal withdrew from the federation, which allowed the former French-Sudan to become the independent Republic of Mali.

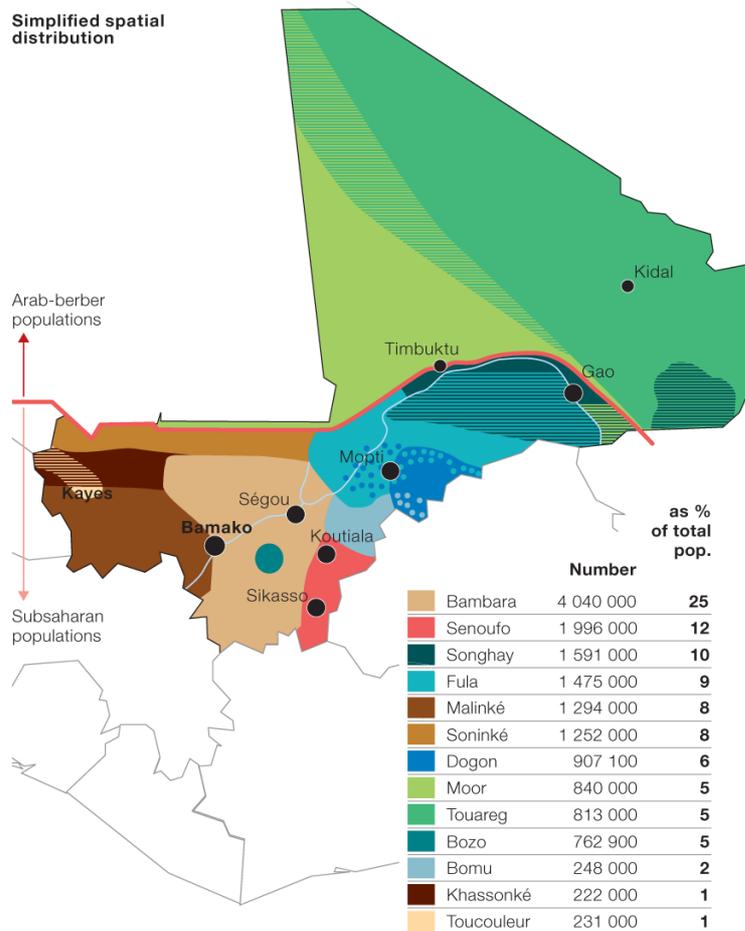


Picture 1: Map of French colonies in North-West Africa

First Rebellion

Shortly after President Modibo Keita from the Sudanese Union-African Democratic Rally was elected; he moved quickly to declare a single-party state and to pursue socialist policy with extensive nationalization. He furthermore withdrew from the French Community and had close ties to the Eastern bloc. After a long period of a deteriorating economy he decided to re-join the Franc Zone.

However, the economy was not the sole challenge faced by the Republic of Mali; due to the colonization many Malian communities were united under on political entity. This caused great unrest especially with the Tuareg, causing the First Rebellion.



Picture 2: Ethnic groups in Mali

The reaction of the government to repress these rebellions, instead of addressing the root of the problem, per example political recognition of the northern specificities and special status of the region, had an extremely negative impact on the severeness of the issue at hand. The government decided to forbid tourism, establish martial law and military administration in the northern regions.

The military regime of General Moussa Traoré after the coupe on President Modibo Keita quelled the unrest for a couple of years. However, the severe droughts in 1972-1973 and 1984-1985 created fresh unrest, seeing that these droughts had caused many members of northern tribes to flee to neighbouring countries in special Niger, where Tuareg rebel movements had also been active since the independence, and Libyan where they were received with open arms by the leader Muammar Qaddafi. He saw them as assets to further his political influence in the Sahara. He, therefore, provided them with military training and equipment, so they would be able to take part in the many proxy wars fought by Libya.

Second Rebellion

Tuareg and Arab exiles were the main participants of the Second Rebellion, in contrast with the First Rebellion many of these men were military trained by the Libyan government. The rebels fought for better living conditions and recognition of the northern political identity with Tuareg being allowed to serve in the Malian national army. In spite of this General Moussa refused to acknowledge their political motivation and named them “highway thugs”, which only further aggravated and radicalized the movement, much like his predecessor had done.

Algeria was chosen by the Malian government to mediate in this conflict, however, after the Tamanrasset peace agreement was signed on the 6th of January 1991; these were called into question, due to the coup on General Moussa by the popular revolution of democratic clandestine organizations and the army, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Amandou Toumani Toure.

It was this democratic government that initiated the Pacte National that intended to redefine national relationships between the north and south according to several main principles: a significant military withdrawal from the northern regions, a massive integration of the rebels into the Malian army, greater territorial political autonomy with the creation of elected local assemblies holding sovereign powers in the economic and the security field, and an ambitious development program. In exchange, Tuareg agreed to give up their political claims regarding the independence of Azawad. Despite this intention to address the issue at the root the Malian government was not able to gather all northern tribes around its project.

After this failed project all involved parties signed the Timbuktu peace agreement, which would end the war and initiate a new beginning. However, due to mutual distrust this agreement could not be held by the parties.

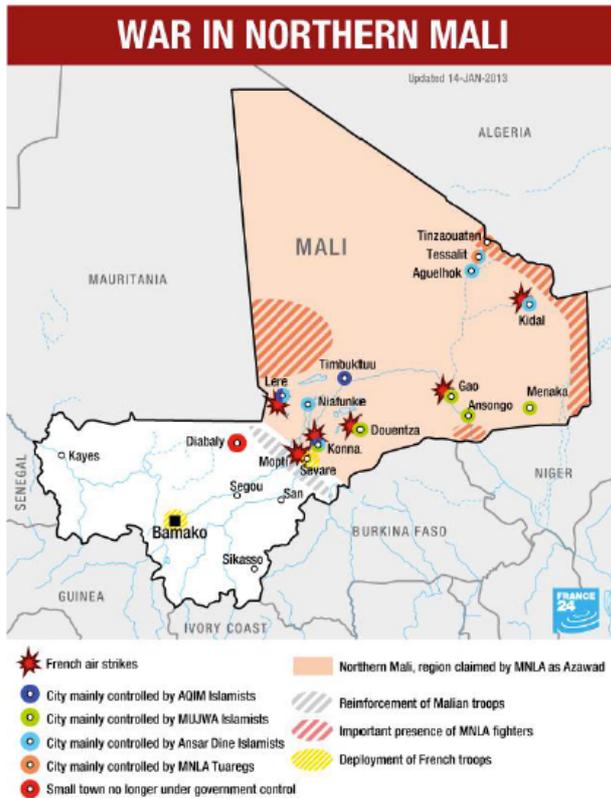
Third Rebellion

After a decade filled with mutual distrust the Third Rebellion broke out, where the rebels took advantage of the demilitarized north, due to the previous peace agreement. President Amandou opted to stop the insurgency militarily by setting up two northern militias to fight against the North Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change (ATNMC), an armed group led by Ibrahim ag Bahanga in opposition to Lyad ag Ghali’s leadership. Hereafter, the fifth peace agreement since 1991, wherein they agreed to end the fighting, was signed by Tuareg rebel, Malian and Nigerian representatives.

Due to implemented clauses from the different peace agreements decentralization in Mali began, which led to demilitarization of the north creating a ‘security vacuum’ around the cities of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. This gave terrorist groups the possibility to settle within these ‘security vacuums.’

The fall of the Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi had a great impact on the situation in northern Mali and especially on the Third Rebellion. These Tuareg had military training enabling them to completely sweep all government troops from the area in northern Mali.

France took the issue to the UN Security Council and got unanimous support in Resolution 2085 for involvement in the Mali conflict. The UN sanctioned a 3,000-strong African-led coalition to intervene in Mali and UN-peacekeepers.



Picture 3: Conflict area Mali 2013



Major Parties Involved

French-Sudan

French-Sudan was a French colonial territory from around 1880 to 1960. It was located in the North-West of Africa. It had close ties with both France and Senegal, though they later weakened. French-Sudan originally united with Senegal to become the Mali Federation, however Senegal soon withdrew itself enabling French-Sudan to establish the independent Republic of Mali.

France

France was the colonist of large parts of Africa, including French-Sudan, thus Mali. They experienced quite some struggles with their colonies, making them create several solutions, such as the OCRS. During the Third Rebellion they took the issue to the UN Security Council to call for intervention.

Libya

Following the severe droughts in the Northern parts of Mali, many fled to neighbouring Libya. Qaddafi saw them as assist and provided them with military training and equipment. This proved crucial in the Second Rebellion as the rebelling Tuareg were now military trained and better prepared to fight for their demands.

Tuareg people

The Tuareg people are a large Berber ethnic confederation. They primarily inhabited the Sahara but have spread out to other parts. Traditionally they are a nomadic group, travelling and living in the dessert. They were not politicly recognized by Mali. During the rebellions they fought for better living conditions.

Timeline of Events

22 th of September 1960	Malian independence from the French colonizer
1963	First Rebellion
1968	President Modibo Keita was overthrown, by General Moussa Traoré
1990-1991	Second Rebellion
6 th of January 1991	Tamanrasset peace agreement
26 th of March 1991	General Moussa Traoré was overthrown, in a popular revolution of democratic clandestine organizations and the army, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré
11 th of April 1992	Pacte National signed
1996	Timbuktu peace agreement
2002	Election of President Amandou Toumani Touré

May 2006	Third Rebellion
October 2009	Fifth peace agreement since 1991 signed
20 th of December 2012	Resolution 2085 was passed, allowing international intervention in Mali
2015	Agreement of Peace and Reconciliation in Mali signed
5 th of September 2017	Resolution 2374 was passed, creating a new committee and a panel of experts to examine alleged violations of the Agreement of peace and Reconciliation in Mali
8 th of August 2018	Report on the situation in Mali written by the Panel of Experts

Previous attempts to solve the issue

There have been multiple attempts to solve the issue at hand, which are all clearly explained in the general overview. The attempt has included several peace treaties and agreements, all of which did not succeed, due to various reasons, such as mutual distrust. Furthermore, the government created the Pacte National that intended to redefine national relationships between the north and south according to several main principles. This project failed seeing as the Malian government could not get all Northern tribes on board. Yet another unsuccessful attempt was the establishment of two militias by the Malian government to fight the Tuareg rebel group. The last attempt to solve the issue was the UN sanctioned of an African-led coalition and UN-peacekeepers to intervene in Mali.

Possible solutions

One solution could be to separate the wishes of Tuareg people and other restricted Northern ethnic groups. The violence is many caused by Jihadist groups, fighting to remain in control over the acquired parts of Mali. The oppressed ethnic groups however, are suffering from the violence and power of Tuareg and Islamic rebel groups. Apart from the obvious reasons, they also suffer from starvation. Separating their needs from the rebel groups could enable the establishment of a new government that will fulfil the needs of all ethnic groups, thus uniting them.

However, this solution does not prevent any of the harm caused by the Tuareg and Islamic groups in Mali. Thus, another solution is to put an end to the violence, though this is very hard to achieve. In order to do so, all parties might need to agree on a peace agreement, something which has failed several times. The UN could also support another form of intervention or call member states to intervene, to disarm the rebel groups.

Useful documents

- I. "United Nations Official Document." *United Nations*, United Nations, 5 Sept. 2017, www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=%2BS%2F2018%2F581.
- II. "United Nations Official Document." *United Nations*, United Nations, 8 Aug. 2018, www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=%2BS%2F2018%2F581.
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