# Managing Stability through Military and International Acclaim

## The Stakes of the Malian Crisis in Chad
Daniel J. Eizenga

SAHEL
research group

UF | UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

## Managing Stability through Military and International Acclaim
### The Stakes of the Malian Crisis in Chad

Daniel J. Eizenga

# Paper Series:
# The Stakes of the Malian Crisis in the Sahel

In January 2012, Tuareg separatists launched a rebellion against the government of Mali in a bid to gain independence for the northern regions of the country. They were quickly joined by groups of Islamist militants seeking to establish control of the region, and dealing significant setbacks to the Malian military in a series of engagements. Following these defeats, on 22 March 2012 frustrated junior officers in the Malian military led a coup d'état which ousted President Amadou Toumani Touré from power. Subsequently, the Islamist groups in the north were able to sideline the Tuareg separatists and take control of the provincial capitals in the northern regions of Mali—Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu. The military coup in Mali and de facto partition of the country were shocking events in a particularly fragile region, and quickly captured the attention of scholars and policy-makers around the world.

While significant interest emerged regarding the Malian crisis and the unfolding events in the country, there has been relatively little discussion of the effects of the crisis and their implications for surrounding countries in the Sahel. Recognizing the lack of information available on the reverberations of the crisis in neighboring countries, the Sahel Research Group set out to write five discussion papers on the responses and reactions of Senegal, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad to the events in Mali.

## Abstract:

The destabilization of Mali during 2012 and 2013 required the response of several countries in the region as they were each faced with different challenges and threats to their own political stability. This paper investigates the reactions and responses of Chad to the Malian crisis. The paper argues that the involvement and success of the Chadian military empowered the ruling party and solidified its position as a regional power broker at the international level, but by committing troops to the intervention in Mali the regime was exposed to domestic challenges. While the Chadian regime's strategy of sending troops to the Malian intervention appears to have succeeded in the short term, what remains at stake is the political stability of the country as domestic pressures and other regional conflicts require the closer attention of the Chadian government. This paper offers a brief overview and analysis of this situation in an effort examine the effects of the Malian crisis throughout the Sahel.

## About the Author:

Dan Eizenga is a Ph. D. Candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida. He is a research assistant for the Minerva Initiative project on Institutional reform, social change and stability in the Sahel. In the past he served as graduate assistant to the Sahel Seminar and the Islam in Africa working group. His research interests are on electoral authoritarian regimes in sub-Saharan Africa and how different institutional configurations attempt to manage pressures from civil society for political liberalization. He has focused his research in the Francophone Sahel, specifically on Burkina Faso, Chad and Senegal. His broader research interests include Islam and politics, African politics, and democratization.

Contact: deizenga@ufl.edu

**Introduction**

The 2011 civil conflict in Libya sparked a series of events that have shaken the stability of Sahelian Africa. The proliferation of arms throughout the region, the migration of Qaddafi's fighters to neighboring countries, and the expulsion of undocumented migrant workers are all effects of Qaddafi's fall that continue to threaten states throughout the region.[1] In Mali the consequences of the Libyan war combined with weak state institutions and political corruption, completely derailing what was once considered one of Africa's democratic success stories.[2] The crisis in Libya sparked a sequence of events which sent Mali spiraling into its own crisis causes some to question whether it was Africa's newest 'collapsed' state.[3] The events of the Malian crisis transformed the political context of the entire Francophone Sahel, but the effects of the crisis on Mali's neighbors lack close investigation or attention. This paper addresses this lack of attention to regional dynamics by analyzing and contextualizing the impact of the Malian crisis on the politics of Chad.

The paper begins by providing a brief overview of the political, economic and social context of Chad and elaborates on the official position of the Chadian state regarding the Malian crisis prior to and following the French military intervention in January 2013. After presenting the Chadian President, Idriss Déby Itno, and his government's position, the paper discusses the stance of the political elite in opposition to the ruling party and other domestic actors. The paper argues that the involvement and success of the Chadian military has empowered the ruling party and solidified its position as a regional power broker at the international level, but committing troops to the intervention in Mali forced the government to take a number of risks domestically. The paper documents the involvement of the Chadian military in the conflict and addresses the potential threats to the stability of the state in light of the military presence in Mali and the economic situation of the country. In particular, increasing regional instability and challenges associated with managing the growing populations of refugees in the country highlight the delicate situation of the country. In conclusion, the paper offers some speculations on the stakes of the Malian crisis for continued political stability in Chad.

**Country Background**

Chad's political development since independence from France in 1960 has been tumultuous. Social groups, especially in the northern regions, have regularly challenged the

---

[1] International Crisis Group. 2011. "L'Afrique sans Kadhafi – Le cas du Tchad." *International Crisis Group* Africa Report No 180: 1-24 (see page 6)

[2] Whitehouse, Bruce. 2012. "What went wrong in Mali?" *London Review of Books* 34: 17-18. (see page 18)

[3] Berganaschi, Isaline. 2013. "Collapsed, Failed, Criminalized? Notes on the State in Mali." *African Arguments.* http://africanarguments.org/2013/08/15/collapsed-failed-criminalized-notes-on-the-state-in-mali-by-isaline-bergamaschi/

central political authority in the capital city, N'Djamena.[4] In fact, when François Tombalbaye was appointed as the first president of Chad, the northern region of Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti remained under French military administration. In 1964 the French turned over the administration of this region to the Chadian government, but a rebel group known as *Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad* (FROLINAT) emerged and sought to remove Tombalbaye from power.[5] This sparked a civil war between the government and rebel groups that would last for several decades. During that time, Chad experienced a series of military coups and rebel takeovers which ended in 1990 when Idriss Déby, a former Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, led a rebellion force known as the *Mouvement Patriotique du Salut* (MPS) from eastern Sudan and successfully took control of the country.[6]

Déby and the MPS led a transition from the single party rule of former dictator Hissène Habré to a multi-party political system.[7] The transition culminated with presidential elections in 1996, which Déby won, and legislative elections in 1997, which gave the MPS a majority of the seats. Since the 1996 elections, Déby has continued to win presidential elections and he successfully eliminated presidential term limits from the constitution in 2005.[8] Even though there was a transition to a multi-party system and Déby has been in power for more than two decades this has not translated into political stability. Rebel and insurgency groups have continued to challenge the government creating areas of insecurity and instability throughout the country.[9] In 2008, rebel fighters were able to besiege the presidential palace in N'Djamena only to be repelled by Chadian and French forces.[10] This attack created the impetus for a United Nations and European Union peacekeeping force in southern Chad. Following the establishment of these forces, former rebel leaders joined the Chadian military and rebel activity calmed significantly.[11] Considered successful, the peacekeeping forces finished their mission at the end of 2010 and handed responsibility for security over to the Chadian government and military. While this stability persists, it is tenuous at best.

The economic situation of Chad also challenges the stability of the state and its ability to maintain peace. In 2013, the United Nations ranked Chad 184th out of 187 countries on its

---

[4] Lemarchand, R. (1986). "Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic" *African Studies Review* 29, no.1:27-41.

[5] Raja, Bhairav and Edward George. Recent History (Chad), in Europa World online. London, Routledge. University of Florida Libraries. Retrieved 05 April 2013 from http://www.europaworld.com/entry/td.hi

[6] ibid

[7] Hansen, Ketil Fred. 2011. "Chad's relations with Libya, Sudan, France and the US." *Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre* 2011(April): 1-9. (see page 1)

[8] De Waal, A. (2006). "Chad in the Firing Line" *Index Censorship* 10: 58-65 (see page 61)

[9] Van Dijk, Han. 2007. "Political Deadlock in Chad." *African Affairs* 106(425): 697-703. (see page 700)

[10] Hansen, Ketil Fred. 2011. "Military Rebels in Chad – Changes since 2008" *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center* 2011 (May). 1-7. (see page 3)

[11] Ibid see page 6

Human Development Index.[12] One of the poorest countries in the world, Chad faces a number of structural challenges to economic development including limited infrastructure, no direct access to the sea, arid and semi-arid geography, desertification and poor agricultural development. In addition to these concerns, political instability, recurring droughts, and civil conflict have forced the government to adopt economic strategies of crisis management rather than a strategy for long-term development.[13] The 2003 construction of an oil pipeline to the port of Kribi in Cameroon and a partnership between the Chadian state and the World Bank produced hope for long term economic development in the country.[14] Unfortunately, the World Bank's efforts to ensure that oil revenues were funneled toward reducing poverty failed, and the international organization relinquished its mandate over oil operations to Chad in 2008.[15] Following these developments, China established the first oil refinery in Chad and oil revenues dramatically increased. These resources enhance Déby and the MPS's ability to retain power.

Chad's social demographics are partially characterized by a division between northern and southern groups.[16] Chad's total population is relatively small—11.1 million people according to 2009 Census—in relation to its large territory. While a conceptual distinction can be drawn between northern and southern populations, this dichotomy oversimplifies the diversity among Chadians.[17] Northern inhabitants are predominantly Muslim, of a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, and strong rivalries exist between the Toubou, Gorane, and Zaghawa ethnic groups. In addition to these rivalries between groups, many internal divisions exist between the clans that comprise these groups.[18] The peoples of the southern regions have historically been sedentary farmers who largely follow animist and Christian beliefs. Often noted as the largest ethnic group of Chad, the Sara tribes in the south are in reality composed of some ten ethnic groups with related languages and cultural links.[19] This diversity of social organization and ethnic groups has often been the basis of political competition and rebel groups. This exacerbates the challenges of creating a stable political

---

[12] United Nation Human Developmen Index accessed 8 April 2013: http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi/
[13] Holligan, Victoria. Economy (Chad), in Europa World online. London, Routledge. University of Florida Libraries. Retrieved 05 April 2013 from http://www.europaworld.com/entry/td.ec
[14] Gould, John A. and Matthew S. Winters. 2012. "Petroleum Blues: The Political Economy of Resources and Conflict in Chad." In *High-Value Natural Resources and Peacebuilding*, ed. P. Lujala and S. A. Rustad. London: Earthscan. (See page 322)
[15] Winters, M. S., & Gould J. A. (2011). "Betting on Oil: The World Bank's Attempt to Promote Accountability in Chad" *Global Governance* 17: 229-245. (See page 230)
[16] Hilling, David. Physical and Social Geography (Chad), in Europa World online. London, Routledge. University of Florida Libraries. Retrieved 05 April 2013 from http://www.europaworld.com/entry/td.ge
[17] Lemarchand, R. (1984). "Chad: The Road to Partition" *Current History* 83, no. 491: 113-116.
[18] Hilling, David. Physical and Social Geography (Chad), in Europa World online. London, Routledge. University of Florida Libraries. Retrieved 05 April 2013 from http://www.europaworld.com/entry/td.ge
[19] Lemarchand, R. (1986). "Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic" *African Studies Review* 29, no.1:27-41. (see page 27)

order.[20] Considering recent political developments, the current economic situation and the complex social framework of Chad, it is intriguing that the effects of the Libyan and Malian conflicts have not been more destabilizing. In an attempt to understand why this has been the case, this paper now turns to the response of the Chadian state to the events in Mali.

## The Official Chadian Response

Chad's official position on the Malian crisis has been strategic and cautious. Chad is not a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This fact allowed Déby to overlook Mali's domestic politics prior to the military coup of March 2012. However, by August of that year, it was clear that the situation in Mali could not be ignored. Islamist militants had captured three major cities in the northern regions of Mali and a *de facto* partition of the country required a response from many of the political actors in the region. As one of the major military powers in Sahelian Africa and as a partner in regional counterterrorism efforts, Chad needed to take stance on the Malian crisis.[21] Déby responded to these events by proposing a dual approach—negotiations and compromise with the Tuareg rebels of the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) and military intervention to remove the Islamist militants.[22]

The Chadian position was first explained in August 2012, but it remained unclear even into December what the proposed military force might look like. Déby personally met with Cheick Modibo Diarra, the prime minister of Mali at the time, on multiple occasions.[23] After each meeting, Déby called for an African-led military intervention to restore the territorial integrity of Malian state. Following one such meeting in December 2012, Déby with Boni Yayi, president of Benin and then the Chairperson of the African Union met to discuss the Malian crisis. Afterward, the two presidents led a joint call on the behalf of Chad and the African Union for the United Nations Security Council to approve an international military intervention in Mali.[24] Déby then met with François Hollande, for the first time since the French president's election, to discuss the possibility of military intervention in Mali and the role the Chadian military in such an intervention.[25] Considering the quickness with

---

[20] William J. Foltz. 'Reconstructing the state of Chad' in I. William Zartman (ed.), *Collapsed States: The disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority* (Lynne Reinner, Boulder, CO, 1995), pp. 15–32.

[21] Report from AFRICOM on the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership. Retrieved 4 April 2013: http://www.africom.mil/NEWSROOM/Article/6155/trans-saharan-conference-focuses-on-expanding-part

[22] The MNLA are a Tuareg rebel group which began a rebellion for sovereignty in the northern regions of Mali in January 2012. See: Nono, Luidor. 2012. **"Crise Malienne: Ouattara accorde une audience à Idriss Déby."** *Journal du Tchad* 17.8.2012. Accessed 8 April 2013 from: http://www.journaldutchad.com/article.php?aid=3218

[23] Agence France Press. 2012. "African Union and Chad press UN over Mali Force." Accessed 8 April 2013 from: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5itwAMtweYd06ig-dhM5DMZNwhBCQ?docId=CNG.163686d46d2b4fb379ad7af0b7f48f8a.5a1

[24] ibid

[25] Radio France Internationale. 2012. « À Paris, Idriss Déby parle de 'confusion totale' au sujet du Mali » 5 December. Accessed 8 April 2013 from : http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20121205-paris-idriss-deby-evoque-crise-mali-parle-confusion-totale-francois-hollande-arche-zoe-Ibni-oumar-mahamat-saleh

which France and Chad responded and intervened in Mali following the Islamist capture of Konna during January 2013, it seems this meeting fostered an agreement between the two governments to act.

Nevertheless, the actual position of Chad and what would likely occur on the ground remained unclear until the French intervention in January 2013. For example, after meeting with Hollande in December 2012, Déby referred to the intervention effort as completely confused, citing different messages coming from within the Malian political leadership, the United Nations, the African Union, and ECOWAS at a press conference.[26] In retrospect, it seems that, due to internal disagreements concerning the intervention, one of the most challenging features was relations with Bamako—the capital city of Mali. Indeed, this disagreement in policies likely contributed to the military arrest and dismissal of Diarra from the premiership.[27]

Ultimately, the politics of military intervention were quickly swept aside when the Islamists attacked the town of Konna, a strategic location en route to Bamako. Konna's capture galvanized the political will for France to lead a rapid military intervention in Mali. Déby quickly went on record saying the Chadian military was prepared to support the French intervention however France saw fit.[28] This support from Déby set the stage for the deployment of 2000 troops of the Chadian army to Mali overland through Niger where they were joined by Nigerien soldiers. The Chadians and Nigeriens played a crucial role in dislodging the Islamist forces from the city of Gao in north eastern Mali.[29] From this point forward, the official stance on the intervention in Mali and the situation of militant Islamists in the region is perhaps best captured by the words of the minister of foreign affairs, Moussa Faki Mahamat, "*La menace sur le Mali est une menace sur le Tchad.*"[30] The Chadian military's success in the intervention and Déby's strategic positioning prior to the intervention situated Chad in a very strong political position internationally, although the contribution of troops to the intervention also stretched the military resources available to Déby at home.

---

[26] ibid

[27] Aljazeera. 2012. "Profile: Mali's Cheick Modibo Diarra" Accessed 8 April 8, 2013 from:
http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/04/2012417215625215390.html

[28] Agence France Press. 2013. "Mali-Cedeao: LE Tchad en Maitre du Sahel." Accessed 8 April 2013 from:
http://www.journaldutchad.com/article.php?aid=4096

[29] Ahamt, Djamil. 2013. "Mali: L'armée tchadienne foncera sur Gao." *Alwihda.* Accessed 8 April 2013 from:
http://www.alwihdainfo.com/Mali-L-armee-tchadienne-foncera-sur-Gao_a6400.html

[30] Author's translation: 'The threat to Mali is a threat to Chad.' Reuters. 2013."Le Tchad appellee à ne pas crier victoire trop vite au Mali." Accesed 8 April 8, 2013 from: http://tchadonline.com/index.php/le-tchad-appelle-a-ne-pas-crier-victoire-trop-vite-au-mali/

**Domestic Political Climate**

The position of the ruling party that the Malian crisis threatens the stability of the entire region was acknowledged by the political elite in Chad. The involvement and success of the Chadian military helped to solidify the country's importance in the region and most politicians were quick to use this moment by showing their support for the intervention. For example, one of the main opposition leaders and former presidential candidates, Saleh Kebzabo, offered his unequivocal support for the Chadian troops in Mali, commending their efforts to stop the threat from afar before having a chance to reach Chad. He also claimed that Chadian citizens should view the events in Mali as dangers for Chad because no Sahelian country alone could prevent the spread of terrorism in the region.[31] This kind of rhetoric demonstrates two interesting things. First, Kebzabo applauded the military despite its strong connections to Déby—his political rival. Secondly, Kebzabo situated Chad as a regional power broker highlighting the necessity of cooperation amongst the Sahelian countries. Only through regional cooperation and the subsequent military power could such a mission be possible. Adopting this stance helped Kebzabo to identify the military intervention in Mali as a Chadian success and distance it from the MPS and Déby.

Kebzabo's political maneuvers did not go unnoticed, however, and he was implicated in a purported plot by opposition party members and journalists to destabilize the country. On 1 May, 2013, fighting broke out in the streets of N'Djamena between security forces and a small group which, according to the government, conspired for more than four months to destabilize the country.[32] In response, the regime made several arrests of both civilians and soldiers believed to have been involved in the plot, but limited evidence was presented for their arrests.[33] Some sources have argued that the purpose of these arrests was simply to remove critical of Déby's power at a time when he had the political leverage to do so without criticism from the West. Indeed, four additional members of the opposition were summoned by the Chadian police for questioning regarding the destabilization. Two of them also had their homes searched as part of the investigation.[34] These government-led crackdowns on opposition leaders and the potential rivals of Déby within the military exemplify the strength of the MPS regime at this moment in Chad.

Despite these crackdowns and the continued imprisonment of opposition journalists Eric Topana and Jean Lakolé who were also arrested during these events, Chad was elected by

---

[31] Agence France Press. 2013. "Mali-Cedeao: LE Tchad en Maitre du Sahel." Accessed 8 April 2013 from: http://www.journaldutchad.com/article.php?aid=4096

[32] Le Monde. 2013. "Tchad: le régime dit avoir déjoué une tentative de destabilization ayant fait plusieurs morts." Accessed 8 May 2013 from :http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/05/02/tchad-le-regime-dit-avoir-dejoue-une-tentative-de-destabilisation-ayant-fait-plusieurs-morts_3170112_3212.html

[33]Radio France Internationale. 2013. "Tchad: beaucoup de zones d'ombre autour de la tentative de 'destabilization'." Accessed 8 May from: http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20130502-tchad-zones-ombre-tentative-destabilisation

[34] British Broadcasting Corporation. 2013. "Tchad: 4 députés convoqués par la PJ." Accessed 8 May 2013 from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/afrique/region/2013/05/130507_tchad_convocations.shtml

the United Nations General Assembly to a two year term on the UN Security Council in October 2013.[35] Similarly, the relative acceptance of the situation by France is especially notable because it highlights the debt owed to Chad for its continued participation and assistance in Mali.[36]Thus, while using military resources in Mali means there is less of a military presence in Chad, the involvement of the Chadian military in the Malian crisis does not appear to have strengthened domestic opposition to government. On the contrary, these crackdowns against those critical of the regime suggest the position of Déby and his regime may have become even stronger during the Malian crisis.

**The Role of the Military**

Chad committed two thousand troops to the intervention in Mali and deployed all of these soldiers by the end of January 2013.[37] Originally, the forces fought alongside Nigerien soldiers against the Islamists in Gao, but Chadian troops were later re-stationed to the north, in the region of Kidal.[38] During the French military intervention, the *Forces Armées Tchadiennes en Intervention au Mali* (FATIM), similar to the French troops, operated under the auspices of their own military force sanctioned by UN Security Council resolution 2085.[39] Formally, FATIM was separate from the ECOWAS force known as the *Mission international de soutien au Mali sous conduite africaine (*MISMA) which was composed of troops from ten West African states.

The contribution of Chadian security forces proved to be invaluable to the overall campaign. The MNLA—still present in Kidal—allowed Chadian forces to patrol the region in search of militant Islamists, but originally refused to allow Malian or ECOWAS forces into the territory. Déby's position has always been to negotiate with the MNLA and consequently, the presence of Chadian forces in Kidal was much as easier for the MNLA leadership to accept.[40] Many of the FATIM troop—which were later contributed to the UN peacekeeping mission MINUSMA as military and police troops—continue to patrol the region of Kidal alongside French and Malian military personnel. The speed and success of the military intervention in Mali would have suffered significantly without the presence of

---

[35] UN News Centre. 2013. "Chad, Chile, Lithuania, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia elected to serve on UN Security Council." Accessed 13 December 2013 from:
http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp/story.asp?NewsID=46277&Cr=security+council&Cr1=#.U0w76vldWPY

[36] Le Monde. 2013. "Tchad: le régime dit avoir déjoué une tentative de destabilization ayant fait plusieurs morts." Accessed 8 May 2013 from :http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/05/02/tchad-le-regime-dit-avoir-dejoue-une-tentative-de-destabilisation-ayant-fait-plusieurs-morts_3170112_3212.html

[37] Info-Tchad. 2013. "Le Tchad appellee à ne pas crier victoire trop vite au Mali." Accessed 9 April 2013 from:
http://tchadonline.com/index.php/le-tchad-appelle-a-ne-pas-crier-victoire-trop-vite-au-mali/

[38] Radio France Internationale. 2013. "Mali: 1800 soldats tchadiens à Kidal." Accessed 9 April 2013 from:
http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20130205-mali-1800-soldats-tchadiens-kidal-securiser-ville-misma-groupe-soutien

[39] United Nations Security Council. 2012. "Resolution 2085" 20 December 2012. Accessed 9 April 2013 from:
http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category,LEGAL,,,MLI,50ed391f2,0.html

[40] Radio France Internationale. 2013. "Mali: 1800 soldats tchadiens à Kidal." Accessed 9 April 2013 from:
http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20130205-mali-1800-soldats-tchadiens-kidal-securiser-ville-misma-groupe-soutien

Chadian forces because Kidal would have been impossible to monitor sufficiently otherwise.

Despite the success of the military intervention in Mali, the Chadian leadership was more cautious in statements about its outcome than their French counterparts. Leaders in the French military and French government regularly stated that the intervention in Mali was almost complete and victorious, but FATIM generals maintained that the longest part of the intervention was just beginning. French defense minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, commented that the intervention in Mali was seventy percent complete in early March 2013[41] and while Chadian Foreign Affairs minister, Moussa Faki Mahamat, did not disagree, he did note that the final thirty percent was likely to last much longer.[42] Similarly, General Mahamat Idriss Déby commented that the situation in Kidal was likely to last a long time before a negotiated settlement would be reached.[43]

These different positions taken by the French and Chadian militaries on the progress of the intervention highlight a difference in political strategies at work in each country. For France, the goal was to leave as quickly as possible, returning Mali back to its *status quo ante*. Thus, a successful intervention required speed as well. For Chad, the government could afford to keep its troops in Mali longer because it confirms the position of the country as a regional geo-political power. The presence and necessity of Chadian troops in the intervention makes it difficult for France and the United States to criticize the government on domestic issues of good governance.[44] Ultimately, the role of the Chadian military as a stabilizer in the region matters more than its level of domestic democracy. The success of FATIM produces powerful and positive sentiments amongst other African forces, which further empowers Déby and the MPS domestically and abroad.

While the overall effect of Chad's involvement in the Malian military intervention appears to have been positive, two recent events in Chad may have changed the political calculus behind the intervention force. Rebel attacks in Central African Republic (CAR) and the resultant crisis has left Déby in a particularly precarious situation. While the Chadian military was heavily involved in the Mali, a coalition of predominately Muslim rebel groups known as Seleka ousted former president of CAR, Francois Bozize. The Seleka coalition established a transitional government, but failed to keep their soldiers from violently

---

[41] Radio France International. 2013. "Le Drian declares Mali jihadis 70 per cent wiped out, heads for Ouagadougou." Accessed 9 April 2013 from: http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20130309-le-drian-declares-mali-jihadis-70-cent-wiped-out-heads-ouagadougou

[42] Info-Tchad. 2013. "Le Tchad appellee à ne pas crier victoire trop vite au Mali." Accessed 9 April 2013 from: http://tchadonline.com/index.php/le-tchad-appelle-a-ne-pas-crier-victoire-trop-vite-au-mali/

[43] Ag Emasseye, Alghatek. 2013. "A Kidal, le MNLA collabore perfaitement avec les armées françaises et tchadiennes." Accessed 9 April 2013 from: http://tchadpages.com/2013/02/06/a-kidal-le-mnla-collabore-parfaitement-avec-les-armees-francaises-et-tchadiennes/

[44] Marchal, Roland quoted in Journal du Tchad. 2013. "Mali-Cedeao: Le Tchad en maître du Sahel." Accessed 9 April 2013 from: http://www.journaldutchad.com/article.php?aid=4096.

attacking and looting predominantly Christian villages accused of supporting the former president. Ultimately, this resulted in retaliatory violence led by a Christian militia known as anti-Balaka. As attacks between Muslims and Christians intensified throughout CAR, it became clear the country was spiraling out of control and Chad offered refuge to the Seleka leadership as well as other Central African Muslim citizens who might potentially be targeted by anti-Balaka militias. The role of Chad in the Central African crisis is complicated by the close connections between Déby and Seleka leaders. Indeed, some have accused Déby of being personally invested in the demise of Bozize.[45] It seems unlikely however, that the political leadership in Chad would purposefully support destabilization in CAR as the potential for similar conflict and destabilization to spread into southern Chad is very high.

Almost simultaneously with the rebel attacks on Bangui, rebel leader, Timan Erdimi, declared that his rebel group—l'Union des Forces de la Résistance (UFR)—would resume its armed struggle against Déby and his regime.[46] Erdimi led the attacks on N'Djamena which besieged the presidential palace in 2008.[47] The actual level of threat posed by the UFR is unknown, but the combination of instability in CAR and the commitment of military forces in Mali may present an opportunity to challenge Déby and his government in N'Djamena. Whether this will affect the empowered position of the MPS and Déby as regional power brokers remains to be seen, but the aforementioned foiled plot to destabilize the country and the instability surrounding N'Djamena highlight the potential need for the military in Chad rather than in outside military interventions.

It is also possible that because the Chadian military played such a prominent role in the ousting of the Islamist militants from northern Mali, Chad may be the target of future Islamist attacks. Indeed, in May 2013 two coordinated attacks occurred in the Nigerien towns of Agadez and Arlit. These attacks were later claimed by the militant Islamist group MUJAO—the group which Chadian and Nigerien troops ousted from the city of Gao in Mali—which stated the attacks were in response to the Nigerien military's participation in the French-led military intervention.[48] Déby's strategy of committing troops to the Malian intervention appears to have paid off in the short term, but what remains at stake is the political stability of the country as domestic pressures and other regional conflicts require the closer attention of the Chadian government.

---

[45] British Broadcasting Corporation. 2013. "CAR's ousted leader Bozizé says Chad aided rebels." Accessed 9 April 2013 from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-22012772

[46] Info-Tchad. 2013. "Itno contre Itno | Une nouvelle rebellion menace le Tchad et la Centrafrique." Accessed 9 April 2013 from: http://tchadonline.com/index.php/une-nouvelle-rebellion-menace-le-tchad-et-la-centrafrique/

[47] Hansen, Ketil Fred. 2011. "Military Rebels in Chad – Changes since 2008" *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center* 2011 (May). 1-7. (see page 3)

[48] BBC. 2013. "Mokhtar Belmokhtar 'mastermined' Niger Suicide Bombs." Accessed December 13 2013 from: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22654584

**Refugee Populations**

Despite the troops committed to the Malian crisis and the increased instability of CAR, domestic security efforts must also consider two large populations of refugees and tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Chad faces domestic resource and security strains from Sudanese and CAR refugee camps, as well as IDPs who have been forced to flee their homes along these borders. During the UN peacekeeping mission in southern Chad the government worked with the UN to establish a security detachment for CAR and Sudanese refugees called le *Détachement Intégreé de Sécurité* (DIS).[49] The DIS is currently faced with significant funding issues despite being considered one of the crucial components to the safety of the refugee camps present in the country.[50] Even before the increased instability in CAR, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 75,000 CAR refugees were living in southern Chad and that approximately 280,000 Sudanese live in eastern Chad as a result of the Darfur crisis.[51] Refugee populations present a large economic challenge to the Chadian government; this challenge has been exacerbated by continued instability in CAR at a time when military commitments to the Malian intervention are sapping crucial budgetary resources. In a country already plagued by substantial structural constraints on its economy, increased refugee populations raise the potential for a humanitarian crisis.

More directly related to the Malian crisis, UNHCR estimates that roughly 150,000 of 300,000 migrant workers returned to Chad from Libya beginning with the outbreak of violence there in 2011. Many of these workers consider themselves Libyans and do not speak Chadian Arabic or French.[52] Qaddafi's policies and openness toward Saharan ethnic groups enabled the migration of northern ethnic groups into Libya for employment opportunities. Numerous reports document the arrival of people who were deported from Libya and sent by truck to Faya, the largest city in northern Chad, following the end of Qaddafi's regime.[53] In some cases these people reported being detained for months under suspicion of fighting for Qaddafi.[54] Not only do these returnees add to the number of people unemployed in Chad, it also means they will cease to send remittances to their families.[55]

---

[49] United Nations. 2013. "2013 UNHCR country operations profile – Chad." Accessed 9 April 2013 from: http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e45c226&submit=GO

[50] Ibid.

[51] United Nations. 2013. "Monthly Humanitarian Situation Report CHAD: Februrary, 28th 2013" *UNICEF*. Accessed 9 April 2013 from:
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Monthly%20Humanitarian%20Sit%20Rep%20UNICEF%20Chad%2C%20January%202013.pdf

[52] International Organization for Migration. 2013. "Stranded Chadian migrants deported from Libya receive emergency aid." Accessed 9 April 2013 from: http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2013/pbn-listing/stranded-chadian-migrants-deport.html

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] While it is difficult to know the exact amounts remittances contribute to Chadian family budgets, significant portions of work force in Chad traveled to Libya for economic opportunities created under the Qaddafi regime.

Thus, much like Mali, populations of unemployed young men in combination with a proliferation of arms may threaten the stability of the government. The role of the military and their success in the Malian intervention has so far given Chad a strong place in the geo-political framework of the Sahel region, but the potential for renewed civil conflict is looming and it remains difficult to know how likely it may be.

**Conclusion**

Political stability in Chad has been elusive at times because of economic, social and political cleavages in the country. Currently, Chad faces threats from civil conflict in nearby Libya, Sudan, CAR, and Mali. At the time of writing, Chad appears to be consolidating its position as a geo-political power by careful involvement in the international military intervention in Mali. The success of the military in Mali produced positive images of the military at the domestic level, helping to alleviate criticisms of the government from opposition parties and civil society. More importantly, the unique position of Chad as both a Sahelian country and a Central African country enables the military to provide security in the contested region of Kidal. Performing this function not only allows the Chadian military to play a large role in dismantling the Islamist stronghold, it also demonstrates to France and other actors the invaluable role of the Chadian military as a regional security force.

Despite the positive effects of the Chadian military involvement in the Malian intervention, the stability of the country remains fragile due to other political events. Large populations of refugees and migrant workers threaten to worsen the economic situation in the country, making it difficult to provide the funds necessary to maintain domestic security. Threats to stability seem even more serious in light of recent government crackdowns on the opposition. Additionally, the prominent role Chad played in the ousting of the Islamist militants and the reestablishment of security in northern Mali may cause Chad to be target of future Islamist attacks. Chad faces the threat of civil conflict from all sides of its borders and within them. Whether the success of the military in Mali will continue to be a source of stability in Chad remains to be seen and likely depends on the tact of the political leadership to respond to new domestic threats. In this regard, Déby's history as a political strategist and military leader continues to contribute to his ability to remain in power. Thanks to the strategic timing, deployment, coordination, and success of military forces loyal to Déby, the resilience of the regime in Chad remains intact.

---

Sending money home to support family members unable to travel to Libya was a highly common practice during this time.