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**A Handbook on Mali's 2012-2013 Crisis**

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## **A Handbook on Mali's 2012-2013 Crisis**

Alexander Thurston and Andrew Lebovich

### **Abstract**

This Handbook provides resources that help explain and contextualize the intersecting crises that destabilized Mali in 2012-2013. These crises included a rebellion by Tuareg separatists, a coup by junior officers, and violence carried out by Muslim militants. In addition to an overview of the crisis, the Handbook contains historical timelines, demographic information, glossaries of individuals and movements, translated documents, and maps. Interspersed throughout the text are narratives offering historical background on past rebellions in Mali, as well as information about contemporary Malian society and detailed sections analyzing the actors in the 2012-2013 crisis. For novice observers of Mali, the Handbook serves as an introduction to the country. For veteran analysts, the Handbook represents an important reference guide. At the end of the Handbook, a bibliography lists both scholarly works on Mali and resources for continued coverage of events there. By presenting Mali's past and present in their complexity, the Handbook casts doubt on reductionist narratives about the conflict and gestures toward the nuance and sophistication necessary to understanding this country and its problems.

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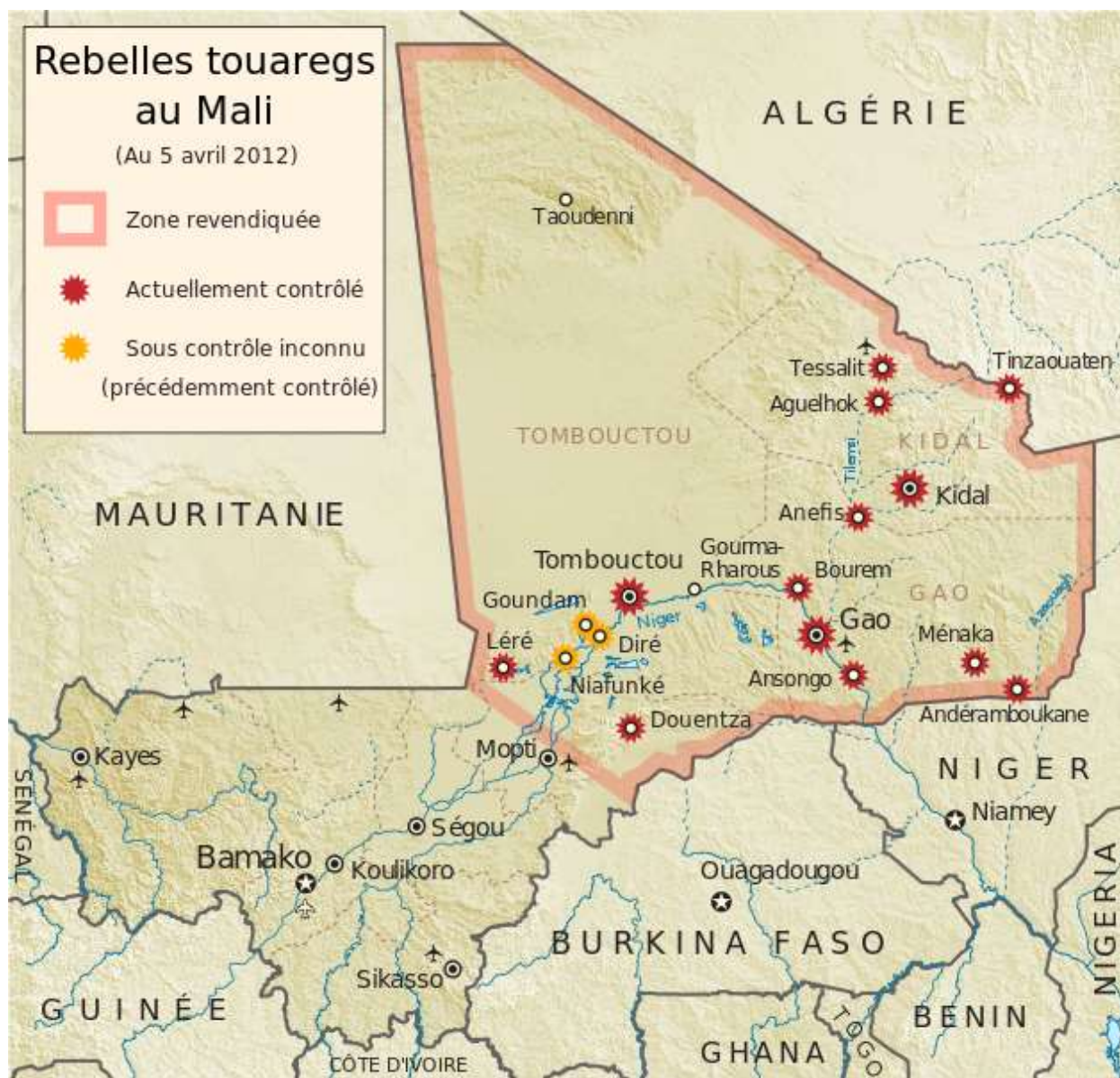
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Map 1: Political map of Mali. Based on [UN Map No. 4231](#) Rev. 3, United Nations, March 2013.



Map 2: Territory of the Azawad in April 2012. [CC image courtesy of Orionist/GeoEvan on Wikimedia Commons \(CC-BY-SA-3.0\)](#).

**Translation of map key:**

"Tuareg Rebels in Mali (on April 5, 2012)"

Pink: zone claimed

Red: currently controlled

Yellow: under unknown control (previously controlled)



## Section One: Introduction

On January 17 2012, fighters from the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (French: Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad, MNLA) attacked the towns of Ménaka, Aguelhok, and Tessalit in northern Mali. The MNLA's rebellion, like other Tuareg-led uprisings before it, reflected long-held grievances and bitter historical memories among some Tuaregs. Fighters in 2012, in some cases the same men who had fought the Malian army in 1990 and 2006, or whose fathers had fought in 1963, felt that postcolonial Mali had marginalized and victimized them. The MNLA dreamed of founding an independent state, "Azawad," comprising the northern Malian regions of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu.

Even before the rebellion broke out, a confluence of problems, ranging from longstanding communal grievances to official corruption and complicity in drug smuggling and perhaps militant activity as well, had weakened the Malian state. Despite a much-lauded democratic transition in 1992 and two decades of multiparty elections, many Malians viewed the state and the political class with apathy or disdain. In early 2012, Malian soldiers fared poorly against the MNLA. Protests occurred following the alleged slaughter of Malian soldiers at Aguelhok. Military setbacks triggered further protests by soldiers' families and a wave of unrest, culminating in a coup by junior officers on March 22.

As 2012 wore on, Mali's interlocking crises deepened. Armed Islamists took over much of the north. These Islamists included the Tuareg-led Ansar al Din (Arabic for "Defenders of the Faith"), the Al Qa'ida affiliate Al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the AQIM splinter group the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA, or MUJAO in French). Starting in spring 2012, and especially after MUJWA fighters drove the MNLA from Gao in June, the Islamist coalition sidelined the MNLA politically and militarily. Islamists attracted worldwide attention for amputating limbs and carrying out stonings in the name of Islamic law (shari'a), as well as for destroying mausolea and mosques associated with venerated Sufis from Mali's past. At the same time, soldiers and politicians shared power uneasily in the south. Although the coup leaders formally gave power to interim civilian leaders in April 2012, pro-coup demonstrators beat interim President Dioncounda Traoré in May so badly that he was flown to France for treatment, and soldiers compelled the resignation of interim Prime Minister Cheick Modibo Diarra in December.

Mali's crisis has drawn the concern of the international community, especially Mali's West African peers. Humanitarian concerns include the over 400,000 persons displaced by the conflict, which has occurred amid chronic droughts and food insecurity in the Sahel region of Africa. Political concerns include the stability of Mali and its neighbors, many of whom face political and humanitarian crises of their own. Security concerns, finally, include the presence of militant organizations such as AQIM and MUJWA in Saharan and Sahelian Africa, as well as Mali's role as a transit point in international drug and contraband trafficking.

A French-led military intervention in January 2013 drove Islamists from northern cities, effectively restoring Mali's territorial integrity. A two-round presidential election in July/August 2013, won by former Prime Minister Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, formally clarified who wields political authority in the

capital. But as Mali looks toward 2014, the country remains in crisis.



Refugees from Northern Mali wait for food aid in Bamako, February 2013.

CC image "[Patiently waiting for food aid in Bamako, Mali](#)" courtesy of UK Department for International Development on Flickr ([CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0](#))

This *Handbook* seeks to help policymakers, scholars, journalists, and members of the general public identify and contextualize key moments, people, and institutions that have interacted during Mali's crisis. For fresh observers of Mali, this *Handbook* offers an introduction to the country; for veteran analysts, it offers a reference guide. In addition to an overview section that describes the features and drivers of the crisis, the *Handbook* includes demographic information, historical timelines, glossaries of key individuals and movements, translated documents, and maps. Interspersed throughout the text are narratives on Malian history and contemporary trends in Malian society, with a particular focus on past rebellions. In keeping with the mission of Northwestern University's Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA), which sponsored the production of this *Handbook*, the *Handbook* emphasizes the importance of Islam in understanding contemporary Mali.

The *Handbook* seeks to inform and explain, rather than to diagnose and prescribe. By presenting Mali's history and present struggle in their complexity, the *Handbook* casts doubt on reductive views of Mali's crisis. In their individual capacities, each of the authors has warned against hasty analogies that depict Mali as "the next Afghanistan" or as the sequel to the African Union-led military intervention in Somalia. The authors believe that quick solutions will avail little in Mali's crisis, whose roots extend far back into



history and whose shadow may continue to loom over the country in the coming years. This *Handbook*, it is hoped, will play a small role in equipping observers and policymakers with the data they need to treat Mali's crisis with sophistication, patience, and nuance.

## Section Two: Overview of the Crisis

Mali's collapse in 2012 surprised many observers. Following its transition to civilian rule in 1991-1992, Mali experienced two decades of multiparty democracy, earning plaudits as a West African "success story." In January 2012, Mali approached its fifth presidential election since the transition and looked forward to a third peaceful transfer of power from one civilian leader to another. The overlapping crises of 2012-2013, and particularly the rapidity with which the regime of President Amadou Toumani Touré fell, raised a challenging question: How had this "model African democracy" moved so quickly into military rule, civil war, and jihadist violence?

As the Introduction suggested, the answer to this question is complex. One part of the answer lies in the *longue durée* of Mali's colonial and postcolonial history. A second part involves the weakness of the post-transition Malian state, and the ramifications this weakness had for governance in the north. And a third part concerns the specific circumstances of Mali's domestic and regional environment in 2011-2012.

In historical perspective, the grievances of Malian Tuareg and other northern Malian communities date to the colonial period. Armed resistance greeted French colonial incursions into present-day northern Mali in the 1890s. Tuareg-led revolts, partly triggered by periods of drought, challenged colonial authority in present-day Mali and Niger in the 1910s. In the transition to independence in the late 1950s, some Tuareg were disappointed not to receive their own state, particularly when France's Common Organization of the Saharan Regions (French: Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes, OCRS), a territorial unit created in 1957 and dissolved in 1963, failed to realize such aspirations. The Tuareg rebellion of 1963-1964 (see Section 4a) reflected dissatisfaction with the early postcolonial state and a desire for independence, as well as divisions within Tuareg from the Kidal region after independence. Its brutal suppression by the Malian army left anger that endured even after Mali's government opened Kidal to the outside world in the mid-1990s. The fathers of some present-day rebel commanders, such as the MNLA's Mohamed Ag Najem and Ansar al Din's Iyad Ag Ghali, died in that conflict. Drought in the 1970s and an inadequate response to it by the Malian government and the international community added to Tuaregs' grievances against the state, and helped prompt a mass movement north in search of work as herds perished. The generation that traveled to Libya, Algeria, and other countries would come to be known as the *ishumar*, a modification of the French term for an unemployed person. Further rebellions, led by *ishumar*, broke out in 1990 (see Section 4b) and 2006 (see Section 4c), reflecting continued anger. Peace accords, development programs, and decentralization initiatives failed to assuage this anger, or to improve the lives of many northern Malians.

Amid conflict between the state and its northern subjects, the state itself suffered from weakness. Corruption, including under President Amadou Toumani Touré, diminished Malians' faith in the state and fed numerous other problems, notably a growth in the smuggling of contraband, in which some state officials became complicit. The withdrawal of the Malian military from much of the north facilitated smuggling. Amid new flows of aid, tourism, and preaching, outside actors arrived, some of whom spread militant forms of Islam. Among these outside actors was the Algerian militant faction that became Al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM, see Section 4d). In the early 2000s, as Algeria's civil war drew to a close, AQIM's predecessor organization, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (known by its French acronym GSPC) moved south into the Sahara and Sahel, conducting kidnappings and raids from Mauritania to Chad. To the trade in cigarettes, weapons, people, and drugs was added a lucrative business in kidnapping for ransom. The corruption of some Malian officials, including northern military officials, appears to have abetted AQIM's involvement in this business. AQIM also attempted to embed itself in northern Malian communities through commerce, marriage, preaching, and outreach to dissidents, including former Tuareg rebels. The entry of the GSPC/AQIM followed years of outreach from local as well as transnational religious actors in Bamako and in the north, notably the Tablighi Jama'at, a Muslim missionary society that originated in the Indian subcontinent.



Malian soldier in Kidal, July 2013.

CC image "[Kidal, 27 July 2013](#)" courtesy of MINUSMA/Marco Dormino on Flickr ([CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)).

As Mali entered the present decade, domestic and regional turbulence grew. In addition to long-term trends like the increasing frequency of droughts and the intensification of AQIM activity in the Sahara and the Sahel, a host of developments destabilized politics in North and West Africa. To the north, the “Arab Spring” began in Tunisia in January 2011. Protest movements left regimes intact in Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania, but they plunged Libya into civil war. As Colonel Mu’ammur Qaddhafi fought for survival, refugees, fighters, and weapons traveled out of Libya. Analysts have debated how much weight to accord this circulation of men and arms in explaining why Mali’s 2012 rebellion occurred when it did, but at the very least the turmoil in Libya decreased Mali’s prospects for stability. The MNLA, created officially in October 2011 after meetings in Zakak, in far northern Mali, benefited from returning fighters and weapons, as well as the high-level defections of Malian soldiers, officers, and gendarmes who had previously joined or been integrated into the security forces following past peace accords.

Domestically, Mali looked in early 2012 toward a new election and a new presidency, a transition that the MNLA and others may have viewed as an opportunity to make their demands heard. These factors combined to allow a well-armed Tuareg movement to launch its rebellion at a moment of domestic uncertainty and regional turmoil. Subsequently, these factors also helped an alliance of Islamist movements to turn the rebellion in a much different direction.

The crisis of 2012-2013 unfolded in six phases.

- *Buildup* (November 1 2010-January 17 2012): The buildup to the rebellion began with the formation of the National Movement of the Azawad (French: Mouvement National de l’Azawad, MNA) in Timbuktu on November 1 2010. Other key events included the return of former rebel commander Ibrahim Ag Bahanga to northern Mali in January 2011 after two years of exile in Libya, as well as the Libyan civil war, the return of other former Tuareg rebels to Mali, and the death of Ag Bahanga on 26 August 2011. The MNLA, an alliance of the MNA and Ag Bahanga’s National Alliance of Tuareg of Mali (French: Alliance Nationale des Touareg du Mali, ANTM) issued its first communique on October 16 2011. This phase ended with the MNLA’s first attacks in northern Mali.
- *Collapse* (January 17 2012-April 6 2012): The MNLA, along with fighters belonging to the Tuareg-led Islamist group Ansar al Din drove the Malian national army out of northern Malian cities. These defeats precipitated protests by military families in southern Mali in February, as well as the soldiers’ mutiny that culminated in the “accidental coup” of March 21-22 2012 that removed President Amadou Toumani Touré from power and installed the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and Rule of Law (French: Comité nationale pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l’Etat, CNRDRE) of Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo as rulers of southern Mali. This phase ended with the MNLA’s declaration of independence for northern Mali as the “Azawad” on April 6 (see Map 2).
- *Standoff* (April 6 2012-January 8 2013): In northern Mali, the Islamist coalition, comprising the Ansar al Din, AQIM, and MUJWA, politically and militarily outmaneuvered the MNLA, taking control of northern Malian cities. This phase ended with Islamist fighters’ advance into the Mopti Region and their seizure of the town of Konna.

- *Reconquest* (January 8 2013-April 9 2013): The Islamist advance into the Mopti Region triggered France's military intervention in northern Mali, known as Operation Serval. French forces, assisted by Chadian, Malian national, and other West African soldiers, retook the major cities of northern Mali in January and then concentrated on securing the rest of the north. This phase ended with the beginning of the French withdrawal.
- *Pre-election turmoil* (April 9 2013-August 11 2013): In northern Mali, the rapid battlefield successes of the reconquest phase quickly gave way to guerrilla attacks by Islamist fighters, including the first suicide bombings in Malian history on February 8 in Gao. The pre-electoral phase has been characterized by further guerrilla attacks, ongoing but diminishing French military operations, and concern in many quarters that the elections were rushed and would lack legitimacy. However, large crowds of Malians participated in rallies and other aspects of the electoral campaign. The first round of the election, held July 28, achieved a 48% turnout. Top-scoring candidate Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, who scored 39%, and runner-up Soumaïla Cissé, who scored 19%, faced each other in the second round, held August 11. Keïta defeated Cissé, who conceded on August 12. Official results, released by the Ministry of the Interior on August 15, showed Keïta winning 77.6% of the vote to Cissé's 22.4%, with a turnout of around 46%. Turnout in 2013 greatly exceeded turnout in the 2007 presidential elections (36%) and the 2002 presidential elections (38% in the first round, and 30% in the second).
- *Post-election phase* (August 11 2013-present): Mali's presidential elections have fulfilled some Malians' and outside actors' desire that a formal, voter-certified transfer of power occur in the country. Yet President Keïta confronts challenges ranging from resettling over 400,000 displaced persons to brokering a durable peace with the MNLA to negotiating the role of Islam in public life to establishing legitimacy with all Malians. Additionally, the new Malian government faces a still-dire economic picture, the outcome of a sub-standard rainy season, and the same endemic corruption that helped erode public confidence in the country's government and institutions before the coup. This corruption may worsen with the impending injection of massive amounts of international aid money into Mali.

## Section Three: Mali's Demography

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 182 out of 186 on the United Nations Development Program's 2012 Human Development Index. According to 2011 data from UNICEF,<sup>1</sup> Malians' life expectancy at birth stands at fifty-one years. 50% of Malians live below the international poverty line of \$1.25 per day. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimates that nearly 48% of Malians are younger than fifteen. In 2012, the CIA estimated Mali's per capita gross domestic product at \$1,100, placing it 215<sup>th</sup> out of 229 countries.<sup>2</sup> Mali, Africa's third-largest gold producer, exported over 50 tons of gold in 2012, but in recent years the country has depended heavily on foreign aid, which finances

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF, "Mali: Statistics." Geneva: UNICEF, 2013. Available at: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/mali\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/mali_statistics.html); accessed August 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook: Mali* (Langley, VA: Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>; accessed August 2013.

roughly a quarter of the government's budget and acts as a significant source of economic stimulus. Much aid, however, fails to reach its intended recipients.

The Malian government's 2009 General Census of Mali's Population and Accommodation calculated the country's population at 14,528,662 inhabitants. This population occupies a landmass of 1,240,192 square kilometers, for a population density estimated in 2010 at 12.4 persons per square kilometer. Mali's population is, however, unevenly distributed: 77.5% of Malians lived in rural areas as of 2009, while 22.5% lived in urban areas.

Mali's population is also distributed unevenly among the country's capital district (Bamako) and eight regions (Gao, Kayes, Kidal, Koulikoro, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso, and Tombouctou/Timbuktu), which are subdivided into forty-nine *cercles* and 703 communes. Population densities are much higher in southern and central regions than in the three northern regions of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu. The northern regions constitute a landmass of approximately 827,000 square kilometers, or around two-thirds of Mali's territory, yet northerners' combined 2009 population was only 1,284,836, or 8.8% of the total population (though population figures may be skewed by nomadism in these areas). The northern population grew at an annual rate of 1.9% between 1960 and 2010, while the southern population grew at a rate of 3.2%. Mali's population continues to grow: as of July 2013, the CIA estimated Mali's population at 15,968,882, making it the twentieth most populous country in Africa.<sup>3</sup>



Bamako, Mali's capital. [CC image courtesy of LenDog64 on Flickr \(CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook: Mali* (Langley, VA: Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>; accessed August 2013.

Regional demographics have political importance in Mali. As noted above, some northerners have felt that the government has marginalized them, yet some southerners resent what they see as governments' lavish spending on demographically small regions and peoples.

Table 1 presents 2009 Census figures for population by region, and Table 2 presents Census figures for the cercles of the three northern regions.

Region	Population	Percentage of National Population
Bamako (District)	1,810,366	12.5
Gao	542,304	03.7
Kayes	1,993,615	13.7
Kidal	67,739	00.5
Koulikoro	2,422,108	16.7
Mopti	2,036,209	14.0
Ségou	2,338,349	16.1
Sikasso	2,643,179	18.2
Timbuktu	674,793	04.6
Mali Total	14,528,662	100

Source: Government of Mali, General Census of Population and Accommodation. Available at: [http://instat.gov.ml/documentation/Tableaux\\_Demographiques\\_VF.pdf](http://instat.gov.ml/documentation/Tableaux_Demographiques_VF.pdf), pp. 1-5; accessed July 2013.

Cercle (Region)	Population	Percentage of Regional Population
Ansongo (Gao)	131,953	24.3
Bourem (Gao)	116,360	21.5
Gao (Gao)	239,535	44.2
Menaka (Gao)	54,456	10.0
Abeibara (Kidal)	10,296	15.2
Kidal (Kidal)	33,466	49.4
Tessalit (Kidal)	15,955	23.6
Tin Essako (Kidal)	8,022	11.8
Dire (Timbuktu)	109,661	16.3
Goundam (Timbuktu)	151,329	22.4
Gourma Rharous (Timbuktu)	111,033	16.5
Niafunke (Timbuktu)	175,442	26.0
Tombouctou (Timbuktu)	127,328	18.9

Source: Government of Mali, General Census of Population and Accommodation. Available at: [http://instat.gov.ml/documentation/Tableaux\\_Demographiques\\_VF.pdf](http://instat.gov.ml/documentation/Tableaux_Demographiques_VF.pdf), pp. 1-5; accessed July 2013.





Douentza, in northern Mali. [CC image courtesy of Mary Newcombe on Flickr \(CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0\)](#).



Timbuktu. [CC image courtesy of Emilio Labrador on Flickr \(CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0\)](#).

### **3a. Tuareg Demography in Mali and Saharan Africa**

Mali is ethnically diverse. The CIA categorizes 50% of Malians as Mande (Bambara, Malinke, and Soninke), 17% as Peul (or Fulani), 12% as Voltaic, 6% as Songhai, 10% as Tuareg and Moor (i.e., Arab), and 5% as “other.” Further subdivisions of this population exist; many Malian Arabs, for example, belong either to the Berabiche or Kounta confederations.

While the Tuareg are a small minority within Mali, their rebellions have strongly affected the country’s postcolonial history. An ethnic group related to the Berber populations of North Africa, Tuareg are found

in Saharan and Sahelian regions of Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Algeria and Libya. Membership in the Tuareg community is partly defined by language – hence Tuareg generally refer to themselves as “Kel Tamasheq,” or “speakers of Tamasheq.” Estimates of the Tuareg population vary. In 2012, *Le Monde* calculated that 1.5 million Tuareg lived in the Sahara – 850,000 in Niger, 550,000 in Mali, 50,000 in Algeria, and the remaining 50,000 in Libya and Burkina Faso (the Tuareg population in Nigeria is quite small).<sup>4</sup> Other sources, such as the *Global Post*, affirm that 950,000 Tuareg live in Mali.<sup>5</sup> Of Mali’s eight regions, Tuareg form a majority only in Kidal, though some Tuareg activists hotly dispute population numbers in Timbuktu.

Tuareg have historically made their livelihood as nomadic pastoralists and traders. Cyclical droughts in the Sahel have added difficulty to this way of life. One grievance among separatist Tuareg, as well as other northern Malians, concerns the Malian state’s perceived indifference to northern starvation and suffering. Tuareg have also complained of political exclusion from the state, which is dominated by southerners; to date, there has been only one Tuareg prime minister, Ahmed Mohamed Ag Hamani, and no Tuareg head of state. However, in 2002 and 2007 a number of Tuareg leaders won election as deputies to the National Assembly, among them Alghabass Ag Intalla and Mohamed Ag Intalla of the leadership of the Kel Adagh confederation.

Tuareg society includes clans and confederations of clans. The Kel Adagh confederation of Mali’s Adrar des Ifoghas massif has played a central role in the country’s postcolonial rebellions – Iyad Ag Ghali, Alghabass Ag Intalla, and other leaders in both the Islamist coalition and the MNLA have issued from the nobility of the Kel Adagh, whose current *amenokal* or chief is Ag Intalla’s father Intalla Ag Attaher. Ifoghas Tuareg also helped lead the rebellions in 1963 and 1990, while members of the Idnan tribe, which has long challenged the Ifoghas for supremacy, provided some of the key leadership of the MNLA. Some analysts have explained the struggles between the MNLA and the Islamist coalition partly through reference to competition within the Kel Adagh – in 2011-2012, Ag Ghali bid unsuccessfully for leadership of the Kel Adagh, and allegedly formed Ansar al Din in response to his loss.

Within its confederations, Tuareg society includes a hierarchical system of free and subsidiary classes. In simplified terms, these classes include *imushagh* (noble warriors possessing charted lineages), *ineslemen* (religious specialists), *imghad* (free people without charted lineages), *inadan* (craftsmen), and *iklan* (unfree). Another important term, *bellah*, can refer to formerly enslaved peoples. Over time, ethnographers of Tuareg society have increasingly questioned and complicated such categories; this *Handbook* uses some of these terms when they have relevance to explaining intra-rebel divisions.

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<sup>4</sup> Yidir Plantade, “Dans le nord du Mali, les Touaregs du MNLA lancent un nouveau défi armé à l’Etat,” *Le Monde*, January 25, 2012. Available at: [http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2012/01/25/dans-le-nord-du-mali-les-touareg-du-mnla-lancent-un-nouveau-defi-arme-a-l-etat\\_1634378\\_3212.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2012/01/25/dans-le-nord-du-mali-les-touareg-du-mnla-lancent-un-nouveau-defi-arme-a-l-etat_1634378_3212.html).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Meldrum, “Tuaregs: Five Things You Need to Know,” *Global Post*, October 29, 2011. Available at: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/111028/tuaregs-5-things-you-need-know>.



Timbuktu. [CC image courtesy of Berat User on Flickr \(CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0\)](#).

### **3b. Ansar al Din and the MNLA**

One of the key figures in northern Mali for much of the past three decades has been Iyad Ag Ghali, an Ifoghas Tuareg from the Irayaken clan. Ag Ghali, like many young men of his generation, traveled to Libya in search of military training during the early 1980s, after Qaddafi opened his military camps and the ranks of his Islamic Legion to Tuareg. Ag Ghali fought in Lebanon with Qaddafi's forces, before returning to northern Mali in the late 1980s when Qaddafi dissolved the Islamic Legion. Ag Ghali, known at the time for his love of whiskey and women, launched the first attack on the Malian state in 1990 at the head of the Popular Movement of the Azawad (French, Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad, MPA). He was the first signatory of a peace accord with the Malian government in 1991, and some of his fighters fought alongside Malian government forces in repressing splinter rebel groups that emerged after the 1991 accords and the 1992 National Pact. This participation in military action helped cement a personal rivalry and animosity with then-rebel leader El Hajj Gamou, whose Imghad Tuareg largely belonged to the Armée Révolutionnaire de la Libération de l'Azawad (ARLA). Ag Gamou integrated his units into Mali's security forces as part of the 1996 peace agreement.

Following the peace accords, Ag Ghali became involved with the quietist Muslim missionary movement Tablighi Jama'at, which had a strong presence in the Kidal Region and particularly among the Ifoghas in the late 1990s. In 2003, after the GSPC kidnapped thirty-two European tourists in southern Algeria, Ag Ghali helped negotiate the release of some of the hostages, an indication of his growing importance as a local powerbroker. In 2006, Ag Ghali led (or quickly assumed control of, depending on the source) the May 23 attack on Malian Army garrisons in Kidal and Ménaka, before swiftly negotiating the tenuous and incomplete Algiers Accords of 2006. Ag Ghali traveled to Pakistan (the headquarters and spiritual

center of the Tablighi Jama'at) that year, and in 2007 was appointed as a Cultural Attaché in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Ag Ghali, who had grown increasingly religious since the 1990s, was expelled by Saudi authorities in 2010 for unspecified interactions with suspected extremists linked to Al Qa'ida. Upon his return, he again served as an intermediary in hostage negotiations with AQIM. After being asked by the Malian government to intercede with Tuareg returnees from Libya, Ag Ghali reportedly presented himself in late 2011 to be the next leader of the Ifoghas (though he is from a traditional warrior clan of the tribe, rather than the clan of the current ruling family) and head of the MNLA. Having purportedly failed at both pursuits, Ag Ghali created Ansar al Din at the end of 2011.

Though Ansar al Din fighters reportedly participated in most of the early military actions during the 2012 rebellion, the group publicly emerged in March 2012, releasing a video featuring a mixture of scenes of Ansar al Din fighters praying (led by Ag Ghali) and footage of Ansar al Din fighters seizing the military base at Aguelhok. In the video, longtime Kidal powerbroker and Ag Ghali associate Cheikh Ag Aoussa explained the group's goal of establishing shari'a in Mali. Ansar al Din, bolstered with Tuareg fighters loyal to AQIM commander (and Ag Ghali cousin) Hamada Ag Hama, played a key role in the fighting for the important military base at Tessalit in mid-March 2012. The following is a weblink to Ansar al Din's video debut: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20120315171453/>. While Ansar al Din and the MNLA both took Kidal on March 30, 2012, the former group swiftly assumed control over the city, the center of Ifoghas dominance, and supplanted the MNLA in Timbuktu after that city fell two days after Kidal. While Ag Ghali remained Ansar al Din's leader during the Islamist occupation of northern Mali, a split emerged between Ansar al Din's Tuareg-dominated forces in Kidal and its AQIM-dominated presence in Timbuktu. The Kidal-based Ansar al Din included longtime companions of Ag Ghali and former rebel partners, as well as Alghabass Ag Intallah, who assumed a political role with Ansar al Din after a brief time with the MNLA. In Timbuktu, on the other hand, AQIM leaders including Abou Zeid and Yahya Abou el-Hammam operated openly. Longtime AQIM members from northern Mali, including Sanda Ould Bouamana and Omar Ould Hamaha, presented themselves as Ansar al Din officials.

The relationship between Ansar al Din and the MNLA grew increasingly troubled after northern Mali fell, as the former's relationship with AQIM and strident political goals became increasingly clear. In late May, Alghabass Ag Intalla and MNLA Secretary General Bilal Ag Achérif negotiated a brief merger that almost immediately collapsed. Ansar al Din representatives engaged in peace talks mediated by the Burkinabe government in Ouagadougou and by the Algerian government in Algiers, and Ag Ghali met with Burkinabe Foreign Minister Djibril Bassolé in Kidal in August (where he endorsed the mediation efforts). Meanwhile, Ansar al Din expelled MNLA fighters from Timbuktu in April, and pushed the MNLA out of Léré, near the border with Mauritania, in November. Though Alghabass Ag Intallah and Tuareg intellectual Mohamed Ag Aharib renounced terrorism in Ouagadougou in November, Ansar al Din still refused to formally break with "terrorist groups" – meaning AQIM and MUJAO – or to renounce shari'a.

Throughout this period, Ansar al Din fighters continued to train with AQIM in the Kidal and Tombouctou regions, especially in the Adrar des Ifoghas massif. After agreeing to a "cease-fire" with the Malian government in December, Ag Ghali broke the arrangement in early January, blaming the Malian

government for not adequately engaging in negotiations. Days later, Ansar al Din, AQIM, MUJWA, and other groups began massing forces near Bambara Maoudé, before launching the assault on Konna. While some reports suggested that Ag Ghali had been killed or fled as French forces moved into Mali, more recent reports have suggested that he remains in, or has returned to, northern Mali.

The French intervention prompted a realignment of the remaining armed groups in northern Mali. AQIM, MUJWA, and some Ansar al Din elements were driven out of northern Mali's main cities. On January 24 (almost two weeks after the intervention began), Alghabass Ag Intallah, who was briefly identified as an MNLA leader before joining Ansar al Din around February 2012, announced his withdrawal from Ansar al Dine and the formation of a new group, the Islamic Movement of the Azawad (French: Mouvement Islamique de l'Azawad, or MIA). He claimed that much of Ansar al Din's fighting force as well as some members of the MNLA had joined the MIA. Notable entrants include Cheik Ag Aoussa, identified in an April *Al Jazeera* interview as an MIA military leader, and Ahmed Ag Bibi, who had represented Ansar al Din in negotiations in Algeria and belonged to the previous Tuareg rebel groups the Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad (MPA) and the May 23 Democratic Alliance for Change (French: Alliance Démocratique du 23 mai pour le Changement, ADC).

On May 2, another new group formed, the Haut Conseil de l'Azawad (HCA). Leadership in this group fell to Ifoghas *amenokal* Intalla Ag Attaher himself, and Intallah's sons Mohamed (previously an MNLA leader) and Alghabass both joined. This group was, according to Mohamed, designed as a vehicle for negotiations. It did not demand northern Mali's independence, echoing some MNLA leaders who in the fall of 2012 changed their demands from independence to autonomy for northern Mali. Soon after, Mohamed announced the creation of another group, the Haut Conseil pour l'Unité de l'Azawad (HCUA), which again would serve as an umbrella group for negotiations with Bamako. Alghabass joined this movement before talks between the HCUA, the MNLA (represented by Secretary General Bilal Ag Achérif and Vice President Mohamed Djeri Maiga) and Malian government emissary Tiébilé Dramé in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

On June 18 all sides reached a preliminary accord dealing with the quartering of troops and other arrangements related to the return of Malian security forces to Kidal, controlled since January 31 by the MNLA in increasingly uneasy cooperation with French and Chadian forces there. The agreement also stipulated that Mali's new president would have sixty days to begin negotiations for a more permanent political solution in Mali. It came after Malian forces captured Anéfis, the last major town on the road to Kidal and the traditional stronghold of the Kounta, from the MNLA in the beginning of June. Dramé sought to include the Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad (MAA) and the Songhay self-defense militia Ganda Koy (see Section 4b) in the talks, though the MNLA and HCUA refused. The MNLA, the HCUA, and the MAA agreed to form a unified political platform for negotiations in August, but the accord was quickly overshadowed by vicious fighting in the Algerian border town of Bordj Badji Mokhtar between Idnan Tuareg and Bérabiche Arabs, fighting which spilled over the border into Mali and echoed clashes in February between MNLA and MAA fighters.

Three factors stand out in examining militant groups in the 2012 rebellion. First, the MNLA's self-presentation reflects strategic engagement with the geopolitical climate. The MNLA's official



communications in French, Arabic, and English explicitly targeted a foreign (and particularly European) audience, from whom it hoped to elicit sympathy for its irredentist aims. The MNLA also presented itself as an alternative to jihadism, defined here as the ideological position that seeks to establish an Islamic state through violence. The MNLA repeatedly vowed before and during the rebellion to chase jihadist forces from northern Mali. Nevertheless, from the beginning a gulf separated the ideals espoused by the public faces of the MNLA and the fighters on the ground. The MNLA's military defeats by Ag Ghali and his jihadist allies suggest its internal fragmentation.

Second, internal Tuareg politics shaped the strategies of militant groups. Ansar al Din appears to have been largely composed of Ifoghas Tuareg, while the MNLA was a heterodox mix of Ifergoumessen and Idran political and military leadership, as well as Chamanamass and other commanders. On the surface, the MNLA and Ansar al Din's rivalry reflected schisms within the Kel Adagh, and between the Kel Adagh and other Tuareg groupings, that resembled divisions operative in the rebellions of 1990 and 2006 (we focus on Tuareg here because despite the MNLA's pronouncements of representing all "Azawadis" the non-Tuareg membership in the group appears to have been negligible.) Because of these alignments, some analysts have viewed the creation of Ansar al Din as a result of intra-Ifoghas tension and a quest by Iyad to maintain his position of primacy within the Kel Adagh.<sup>6</sup>

Third, however, to intra-Tuareg politics must be added the importance of religious changes in northern Mali as another driver of militancy in the run-up to and during the rebellion. Ag Ghali collaborated from an early stage with AQIM,<sup>7</sup> and may have drawn much of his initial manpower from Tuareg fighters serving under Ag Ghali's cousin, the AQIM commander Hamada Ag Hama. Ag Ghali never wavered from his public commitment to the enforcement of shari'a (in public interviews as well as meetings with Malian notables in different parts of the north), even while endorsing external negotiations. Religious motivations and jihadist recruitment may play an increasingly important role in future militancy in northern Mali and surrounding regions.

### **3c. Islam in Mali**

Islam arrived in present-day Mali in the ninth century, brought by merchants from North Africa. Diverse expressions of Islam have shaped the country's history as well as its contemporary society. Indeed, Mali's name derives from the name of an empire that covered parts of present-day Mali from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, during which time historic mosques and mausoleums were built in Timbuktu, Djenné, and elsewhere. Many of pre-colonial Mali's rulers, such as the famous Mansa Musa (d. ca. 1337), were Muslims. In the pre-colonial period, cities like Timbuktu became renowned centers of Islamic scholarship and wealthy trading centers. Other influential manifestations of Islam in pre-colonial Mali include reformist jihads led by Sufi leaders such as Seku Amadu (d. 1845) and Umar al Futi (El Hajj Umar Tall, d. 1864), who denounced what they saw as un-Islamic behavior in local kingdoms and sought

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<sup>6</sup> Steve Metcalf, "Iyad Ag Ghaly: Mali's Islamist Leader," BBC News, July 17, 2012. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18814291>; accessed August 2013; Boisvert, Marc-André, "Mali: What Now for the MNLA and Tuareg Community?" *Think Africa Press*, October 24, 2012. Available at: <http://thinkafricapress.com/mali/what-future-tuareg-community-post-mnla-ansar-dine>; accessed August 2013.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Security Council, "QE.A.135.13. ANSAR EDDINE," March 20, 2013. Available at: <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/NSQE13513E.shtml>; accessed August 2013.



to replace them with polities based on Islamic creed and law. The period of French colonial rule (1891-1960), despite French administrators' suspicions of Islamic activism, accelerated conversions to Islam in Mali, as migrant workers, soldiers, and merchants spread the faith into new areas. Today, nearly 95% of Malians are Muslims, while the remaining 5% follow Christianity and other traditions.<sup>8</sup>



Sankore Mosque in Timbuktu was the center of the city's flourishing Islamic scholarly community in the 16th century. [CC image courtesy of upvernoz on Flickr \(CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0\)](#).

In contemporary Mali, Islam manifests itself in diverse ways. Virtually all Malian Muslims are Sunni, rather than Shi'a, and most belong to the Maliki School of jurisprudence. Beyond these two orientations, however, Malian Muslims may choose from an array of interpretations of Islam and ways of engaging with the Islamic tradition. The opening of media and civic life since the country's political transition in 1991-1992, the growth of different kinds of Muslim schools in the country, and increasing contact with other parts of the Muslim world (including through the implantation of Islamic non-governmental organizations or NGOs in Mali) have combined to create a rich "religious marketplace" in Mali.

Among these competing interpretations of Islam, Sufism, an Islamic tradition that focuses on the cultivation and transmission of spiritual experience and insight, remains a strong mode of worship, education, social organization, and worldview. Many Sufis belong to organized orders involving hierarchies of shaykhs and disciples. Major Sufi orders in Mali include the Tijaniyya, of Northern African origin, and the Hamawiyya, a branch of the Tijaniyya associated with Shaykh Hamahullah b. Muhammad b. Umar (1883-1943), who lived in present-day Mali. Sufism has left a deep historical imprint in northern Mali, particularly in the city of Timbuktu – during the 2012 crisis, world attention was drawn to the mausolea, mosques, and libraries of Sufi scholars and "saints," as these buildings became targets for destruction by the Islamist coalition. Sufi styles of leadership and worship have also influenced Malian

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<sup>8</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook: Mali* (Langley, VA: Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>; accessed August 2013.

Muslims who do not formally claim a Sufi affiliation, such as the preacher Shaykh Chérif Ousmane Madani Haïdara, whose “Ançar Dine” movement (not to be confused with Iyad Ag Ghali’s Ansar al Din) is one of the largest Muslim communities in Mali. Sufism in Mali and in West Africa more broadly is often stereotyped as a “peaceful and tolerant” tradition of Islam, but the complexity of Sufism – including, for example, the Sufi affiliations of many pre-colonial West African jihad leaders – merits acknowledgment.

Another important, though minoritarian, manifestation of Islam in contemporary Mali is the cluster of worldviews often labeled “Wahhabism,” “reformism,” or “Salafism.” The first of these labels derives from Shaykh Muhammad b. ‘Abd al Wahhab (1703-1792), a reformer who attempted to purify understandings of monotheism and applications of Islamic law in present-day Saudi Arabia. In West Africa, “Wahhabi” has functioned since the colonial period as a pejorative term that non-reformists, including both West African Muslims and non-African policymakers, journalists, and scholars have applied to various Muslim activists, whether or not those activists possess direct connections with the ideas of ‘Abd al Wahhab. “Reformist,” a more neutral term, refers to those Muslim activists who have challenged existing social hierarchies, worship practices, and pedagogical methods. Reformist platforms, which have sometimes included denunciations of Sufi acts and worldviews, have circulated in Mali since at least the 1930s, for example among West African graduates of Egypt’s Al Azhar University who returned to colonial Mali in the 1940s and began creating new kinds of Islamic schools. “Salafi,” finally, refers to Muslims who attempt to re-instantiate the example of the early Muslim community, based on literalist readings of Islamic scriptures that emphasize legalism and de-emphasize esotericism. Salafis often oppose aspects of Sufi worship and creed, particularly what Salafis regard as “polytheistic” devotion to shaykhs. Salafism in Mali includes both non-violent manifestations and what some analysts call the “Salafi-Jihadism” of groups like AQIM, MUJWA, and Ansar al Din. Finally, it is worth iterating that many Malian Muslims consider themselves neither Sufis nor Salafis.<sup>9</sup>

Many Malian Muslims reject attempts to impose particular understandings of Islam through violence, and organized Islamist parties that seek to create an Islamic state in Mali have little influence in the country’s electoral politics. Yet Muslim actors have engaged in Malian public life through mass movements, media, and demonstrations. After the National Assembly passed a new “Family Code” in 2009, for example, various Muslim associations objected to provisions in the Code that in their view contradicted Islamic values, such as requirements concerning the age of marriage. Protests by these Muslim activists forced the withdrawal of the Code and an eventual compromise that took activists’ objections into account. During the crisis of 2012-2013, Muslim activists have publicly debated and discussed the role of Islam in the country’s future, and the 2012 transitional government for the first time created a Minister of Religious Affairs. The Muslim coalition SABATI 2012, which drew support from the Salafi-leaning President Mahmoud Dicko, the President of the High Islamic Council of Mali as well as from the head of the Hamawiyya Sufi order, released a manifesto during the 2013 presidential campaign

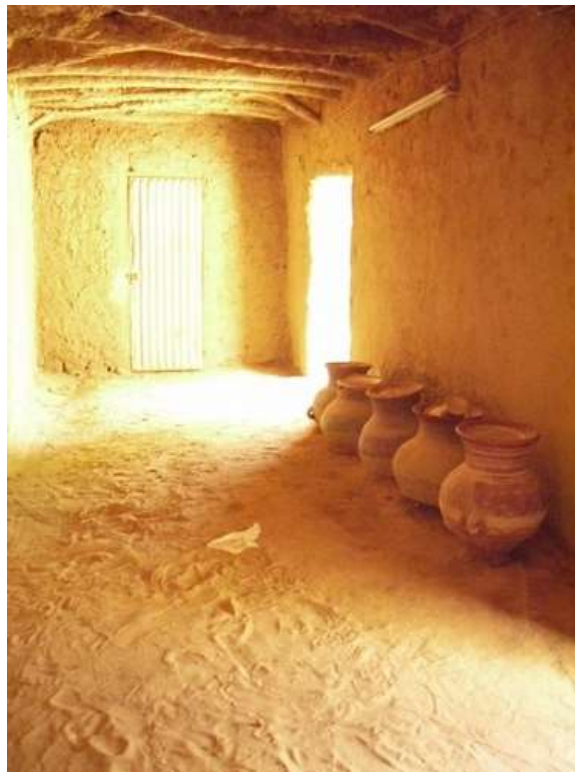
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<sup>9</sup> For more information on Islam in Mali, see the works by Soares (2005), Brenner (2001), Kaba (1974), and Schulz (2012) listed in the “Further Reading” section at the end of this report. For a general introduction to Sufism, see Martin Lings, *What Is Sufism?*, Second Edition (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1988). For a general introduction to Salafism, see Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

that contained advice for candidates concerning the government's future relations with Islam. Non-violent political engagement by Malian Muslims may play a substantial role in the country's politics in coming years.



Interior of Djingareyber Mosque, Timbuktu, built c. 1325. Two of the mosque's mausolea were destroyed in July 2012 during the Islamist occupation of the city. Image courtesy of Kristine Barker.



The Tomb of the Askia in Gao is believed to be the burial place of Askia Mohamed I, Emperor of Songhay. The structure dates to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. CC image "[Tombeau des Askia](#)" courtesy of LenaQuer on Flickr ([CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)).

## Section Four: Broad Timeline, 1883-2010

This timeline sketches Malian history from the colonial period to 2010. It includes major military events and political transitions.

1883 – French forces conquer Bamako

1891 – France creates the colony of Soudan Français

1894 – French forces conquer Timbuktu

1895 – France creates the colonial unit Afrique Occidentale Française (French West Africa)

1898 – France completes its conquest of Soudan Français

1916 – Tuareg-led rebellions against the French colonial state, including fighting in present-day northern Mali by the Tuareg leader Firhun Ag Elinsar of the Ouillimeden Kel Ataram

1917 – Rebellion against the French colonial state in present-day Niger by the Tuareg leader Kaocen ag Kedda of the Kel Air and his allies

1946 – Elections for three seats allocated to Soudan Français in the National Assembly (November)

1946 – General Council elections (November)

1951 – National Assembly elections (June)

1952 – Territorial Assembly (formerly General Council) elections (March)

1954 – Execution of Alla ag Albachir, a Tuareg bandit who resisted French colonial rule and whose son Elledi ag Alla was a key leader in the 1963 rebellion

1956 – National Assembly elections (January)

1957 – French parliament votes to create the Common Organization of the Saharan Regions (French, Organisation commune des regions sahariennes, OCRS), a political unit covering parts of Algeria, Mali, Niger, and Chad (January)

1957 – US-RDA wins Territorial Assembly elections (March 31)

1958 – Malians vote “yes” to continued union with France in a constitutional referendum (September 28)

1959 – US-RDA wins Legislative Assembly elections (March 8)

1960 – Mali achieves independence from France and, together with Senegal, forms the Federation of Mali (June)

1960 – Senegal withdraws from the Federation of Mali (August); US-RDA proclaims independent Republic of Mali and Modibo Keita becomes the first president (September)

1963 – First post-colonial Tuareg rebellion breaks out in Kidal, led by Zeid Ag Attaher (see Section 4a)

1963 – OCRS dissolved

1964 – US-RDA, the sole legal party, wins National Assembly elections (June 12)

1968 – Moussa Traoré overthrows Modibo Keita in a coup

1974 – Constitutional referendum passes, confirming the military government's power and establishing five-year presidential terms (June 2)

1976 – Moussa Traoré establishes the UDPM, which becomes Mali's sole political party

1977 – Modibo Keita dies in prison (May), triggering protests

1979 – Moussa Traoré elected president, UDPM wins National Assembly elections (June 19)

1982 – UDPM wins National Assembly elections (June 13)

1985 – Moussa Traoré re-elected president (June 9)

1988 – UDPM wins National Assembly elections (June 26)

1990 – Second post-colonial Tuareg uprising begins (see Section 4b)

1990 – Demonstrations by activists, unions, students, and political opposition members call for multiparty democracy (August-December)

1991 – Rioting in Bamako after police ban anti-government demonstrations (January 21-22)

1991 – Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Touré overthrows Moussa Traoré in a coup (March 27)

1991 – National Conference on Mali's political future (August)

1992 – Constitutional referendum passes, establishing multiparty system (January 12)

1992 – Municipal elections held (January 19)

1992 – National Assembly elections (first part: February 23; second part: March 8)

April 11 – National pact signed between Malian government and Unified Movements and Fronts of the Azawad (French: Mouvements et Fronts Unifiés de l'Azawad, MFUA)

1992 – Presidential elections, won by Alpha Oumar Konaré (first round: April 12; second round: April 26)

1993 – Coup attempt led by Lieutenant Colonel Oumar Diallo (December)

1994 – Devaluation of the CFA (January)

1997 – National Assembly elections (initially held April 13, but annulled by the Constitutional court on April 25 and re-run in two parts, the first on July 30 and the second on August 3)

1997 – Alpha Oumar Konaré wins presidential elections, boycotted by several opposition parties (May 11)

1999 – Local elections (May 2)

2002 – Presidential elections (first round: April 28; second round: May 12), won by Amadou Toumani Touré

2002 – Legislative elections (first part: July 14; second part: July 28)

2003 – GSPC fighters kidnap thirty-two European tourists in Algeria (see Section 4d)

2004 – Local elections (May 30)

2005 – The Malian government announces the creation of the Agency for the Development of the North (French, Agence de Développement du Nord Mali) (April)

2006 – Alliance Démocratique pour le Changement (ADC) attacks Kidal and Ménaka, starting the third postcolonial Tuareg rebellion (May 23 – see Section 4c)

2007 – Amadou Toumani Touré re-elected in first round of presidential elections (April 29)

2007 – National Assembly elections (first part: July 1; second part: July 22)

2009 – Peace ceremony in Kidal to mark Tuareg rebels' surrender of weapons, Ibrahim Ag Bahanga refuses to accede to peace agreement ([February 17](#))

2009 – Local elections (April 26)

2009 – Mali's National Assembly passes a new Family Code that triggers sustained protests by Muslim organizations, prompting the Code's withdrawal ([August 3](#))

2009 – Malian and Nigerien governments and Tuareg rebel groups sign peace accord in Sabha, Libya (October 6)

2009 – Wreckage of "Air Cocaine" airplane discovered in the desert near Tarkint ([November 2](#))

2010 – Young Tuareg leaders form the MNA in Timbuktu ([October 1](#))



#### **4a. The Early Postcolonial Malian State's Conflict with Tuareg Rebels, 1963-1964**

At the time of Mali's independence, the state had a difficult relationship with its Tuareg populations. Some groups (notably those belonging to the Kel Intessar tribe) had relatively greater access to formal education and state jobs and administrative postings, while many Kel Adagh maintained an aloof posture that matched the state's own ambivalence and mistrust of the Tuareg. Many Kel Adagh wanted independence from the Malian state, while others had sought inclusion within Maghreb states. On the other side of the spectrum, though the postcolonial Malian state maintained the basic governance and tribal systems codified under colonial rule (including the use of local administrators and camel-mounted troops drawn from local populations known as *goumiers*), it also sought to put southern Malians in leadership positions, alter traditional Tuareg pastoralist and livestock-based economies, and promote southern Malian cultural ideas and history in Tuareg areas. Both sides often held prejudiced and stereotypical views of the other, which further strained interactions and inhibited greater integration or accommodation in Tuareg areas of northern Mali, notably in and around the Adrar des Ifoghas.

At the same time, a split formed within the Ifoghas tribe, who dominated the Adrar under both the French and the new Malian state. When the *amenokal* Attaher Ag Illi died in late 1962 or early 1963, succession could have passed to either of his two sons, Zeid or Intallah. Zeid, who favored independence from Mali, drew the support of many Kel Adagh, and he was appointed *amenokal* by the confederation's council. However, the state appointed Intallah, who favored working within the state and garnered the approval of both France and the post-independence Malian state for his attitude. The appointment appeared to many Tuareg as a slight against traditional governance mechanisms, and a further sign of Malian government interference in Tuareg affairs.

Zeid, known for his activism and opposition to the Malian state, made trips to Algeria in 1961 in order to meet with Algerian and French officials in the hopes of generating support for his cause. With the support of Mohamed Ali Ag Attaher Insar, a Kel Intessar leader living in exile in Morocco, Zeid and others prepared for rebellion. The proximate cause for the rebellion, known as *Alfellaga* after the Arabic term for rebellion, came on May 15, 1963, when Elledi Ag Alla disarmed a *goumier*, taking his weapon, clothes, and camel. Elledi, the son of famous anti-French rebel Alla Ag Albachir (executed by authorities in 1954), termed his act one of vengeance for his father. He quickly joined Zeid in Algeria, and the rebellion began in earnest.

The rebellion, which largely involved raids on *goumiers* and ambushes of Malian troops whose tactics and equipment were unsuited to the terrain in the Adrar des Ifoghas, never mobilized more than a few hundred men. Yet the Malian government responded harshly. Malian troops poisoned wells, slaughtered the livestock so crucial to a pastoralist existence, forced civilians into work camps, and executed civilians (including family members of Tuareg combatants as well as Tuareg and Arab notables and religious leaders).

By late 1963 and early 1964, the Malian government chased Tuareg rebels and families far into Algeria, where many had previously sought safe haven. The entire Adrar was declared a "forbidden zone" in September 1963. Zeid Ag Attaher was arrested in September 1963 after being expelled from Algeria, and

Moroccan authorities arrested and deported Mohamed Ali Ag Attaher Insar in March 1964. On March 9, 1964 the authorities arrested Elledi Ag Alla, torturing him into revealing information about the rebellion. On August 15, 1964 Mali's government officially declared the rebellion finished. Memories of the fighting and of abuses against Tuareg fighters, civilians, and herds became important historical markers in the years before the 1990 rebellion.

#### **4b. Tuareg Rebellion, 1990-1996**

The 1970s and 1980s were difficult times for northern Mali. Though the late 1960s saw plentiful rain and grazing lands, the balance swung viciously in 1973 and 1984. Crippling drought drove many into refugee camps or far afield in search of grazing land. International aid failed to stem these crises, and money often disappeared into markets or the pockets of corrupt officials. Young Tuareg and Arab *ishumar* sought work in West Africa, the Maghreb, and Europe: some worked as laborers, drawn by the booming oil-driven economies of Algeria and Libya; others joined the trade in smuggled food and petrol, and eventually cigarettes and weapons, that flowed across porous Saharan borders; others heeded calls from Libyan leader Col. Mu'ammad Qaddafi to come to Libya to receive military training and offers of Libyan citizenship that often proved illusory.

Of the approximately 500 Tuareg who sought military training in Libya (largely Kel Adagh), 200 eventually remained and joined Qaddafi's forces fighting in Lebanon in 1982, while others fought in Chad. Many of these joined the *tanekra* movement, a plan for "uprising" in Mali that developed after a 1974 meeting in Algeria involving some of the leaders of the 1963 rebellion. By the early 1980s plans were in place for an eventual rebellion whose stated political goal was an independent state in the Sahara, one that would encompass parts of Mali and Niger. This marked a far more concrete political goal than that laid out in the 1963-1964 rebellion, and reflected the growing political acumen of a generation of Tuareg men who developed new ideas about themselves and their societies in the training camps of Libya as well as European universities. However, the unity between Nigerien Tuareg and Arabs failed to last, due to differences within the nascent rebellion, driven by questions of tribal and ethnic inclusion in the rebellion, differing goals between Tuareg and Arabs from Niger and Mali, and the interference of security services and governments. Scattered attacks in Mali and Niger occurred in 1982 and 1985, but it was not until the late 1980s that true preparations for rebellion began, led in part by the *ishumar* and Lebanon veteran Iyad Ag Ghali.

The Malian rebels, originally divided into units for Kidal, Gao, and the town of Ménaka, originally planned to begin the rebellion in 1992 or 1993; however, a series of arrests accelerated their plans, and Ag Ghali, though from Kidal, led the Ménaka battalion's assault on June 28 against a Malian prison and barracks in Ménaka, seizing weapons and materiel in the process. Further attacks over the next six months helped the mobile rebels, who used a combination of technical trucks and foot-mounted assaults, to build momentum and seize weapons and supplies. A September 4, 1990 attack on a Malian base at the wells of Toximine marked the high point for rebel victories. During this period, the Malian army followed tactics similar to those it used in 1963-1964, arbitrarily executing hundreds and possibly thousands of civilians and forcibly displacing others. By the end of 1990, both sides were exhausted. After entreaties from Tuareg notables opposed to the rebellion (including Intallah Ag Attaher), a preliminary accord was reached in January 1991 at the southern Algerian city of Tamanrasset (see 8a)

between the Malian government and the rebels, represented by Iyad Ag Ghali and appearing under the banner of the Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad (MPA) and the Front Islamique de l'Azawad (FIAA).

The agreement, even though it was a preliminary engagement toward a more durable peace, provoked immediate discord among the rebels. Some hardliners felt that the MPA had ceded the movement's territorial demands. Some non-Kel Adagh felt they had been excluded, especially since the agreement created a new territorial region in Kidal, which came into being in August 1991.

Attacks began quickly after the Tamanrasset agreement under the auspices of the Front Populaire pour la Libération de l'Azawad (FPLA), which largely represented the Kel Intessar, Chamanamass, and other non-Kel Adagh groupings. The rebellion expanded its geographical reach in early 1991. Meanwhile, student protests against Malian dictator Moussa Traoré spread in Bamako and elsewhere. After several days of riots, paratrooper commander Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Touré deposed Traoré on March 26 1991, setting up the National Conference that would eventually lead to the 1992 National Pact.

In late 1991 the Tuareg rebellion fractured further. The MPA split into two factions, one containing Ifoghas Tuareg (which remained the MPA) and one composed of non-Ifoghas Kel Adagh (including Idnan Tuareg as well as the previously subservient Imghad groups), which called itself the Armée Révolutionnaire de la Libération de l'Azawad (ARLA). This split reflected persistent divisions within Tuareg and *ishumar* over issues of tribe and ideology, including disputes over the role of traditional social structures and hierarchies. Negotiations began in southern Algeria in December 1991 between the Malian government and the rebels, who at Algeria's urging formed an umbrella political group, the Unified Movements and Fronts of the Azawad (French: Mouvements et Fronts Unifiés de l'Azawad, MFUA). After meetings in Algiers between January and March 1992, the parties reached the agreement known as the National Pact (see 8b), which was signed on April 11, 1992. The Pact contained six major planks: a special administrative status for northern Mali, tax exemptions for a period of 10 years in the north, the creation of reconstruction funds for the north, the redeployment of Malian armed forces to Mali's main towns and away from outlying areas, the creation of structures to promote the return of refugees, and the integration of rebels into Mali's security forces and administration.

The National Pact brought temporary respite from violence in northern Mali. But the government of Alpha Oumar Konaré (elected April 26, 1992) failed to implement many of the accord's provisions, which left the long-term concerns or causes of rebellion unaddressed and angered elements of the army and northern Mali's sedentary populations, notably Songhai and former Tuareg slaves known as Bella. In 1993, an internecine conflict between the ARLA and MPA broke out, involved the kidnapping of notable figures – including Intalla Ag Attaher – and the killings of others. That conflict only ended in December 1994, with a victory of Ifoghas primacy over the largely Idnan and Imghad ARLA. Meanwhile, in May of 1994, Tuareg thieves killed 11 in a hospital in Gao in an attempt to free captured accomplices. This incident sparked the creation of the largely Songhai militia the Ganda Koy, or "Masters of the land" in Songhai.

The Ganda Koy were funded by wealthy Songhai merchants, including Ali Bady Maiga (later accused by many Malians of supporting MUJWA) and mostly Songhai defectors from the Malian army, including the

militia's leader, Captain Abdoulaye Mahamahada Maiga. The Ganda Koy reflected concern among sedentary populations that security in the areas along the Niger River had worsened as a result of the rebellion and the associated agreements. Their language and literature reflected a strong racial animus toward Tuareg and the presence of "white" populations along the Niger Bend. The Ganda Koy, operating with the complicity or possibly assistance of the Malian army, conducted mass killings of Tuareg and Arab civilians, prompting the FIAA leader Zahabi Ould Sidi Mohamed and FPLA leader Zeidane Ag Sidi Alamine to withdraw from integrated Malian units. Fighting between Tuareg factions and the Ganda Koy contributed to a cycle of violence that involved repeated attacks on civilians and nomad encampments as well as sedentary villages. The killing of Kel Essouk (Tuareg religious scholars) in October 1994 and a retaliatory attack on Gao forced both sides to step back from the spiraling destruction, and in November village chiefs in Bourem brokered a peace agreement between the Ganda Koy and Tuareg notables. This agreement paved the way for international efforts to reduce violence and rebuild security in northern Mali. The conflict ended with the symbolic burning of weapons in Timbuktu on March 26, 1996, an event known as the Flame of Peace (*Flamme de la Paix*).

#### **4c. Tuareg Rebellion, 2006-2009**

The rebellion that emerged in 2006 in northern Mali at first appeared to be a limited affair. Yet it underscored shifts in Malian governance in the north that bore the hallmarks of the country's future collapse. The 2006 rebellion also revealed domestic divisions and geopolitical realities that would mark the current crisis.

The rebellion began on May 23, 2006 when two former MPA members and integrated army officers, Lt. Col. Hassan Ag Fagaga (who had deserted with his fighters in March) and Ibrahim Ag Bahanga attacked army posts at Ménaka and Kidal before withdrawing to the Tigharghar Mountains in the Adrar des Ifoghas. They were joined there by other Tuareg notables and former rebels, including Iyad Ag Ghali and Ahmed Ag Bibi. The group, which called itself the May 23 Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC in French) demanded the maintenance of promises made during the rebellion of the 1990s.

Under Algerian auspices, the ADC and the Malian government signed an accord on July 4, 2006. The "Algiers Accord" (see 8c) promised to renew some provisions from the National Pact, notably the creation of local security units in the north, to be known as the Saharan Security Units. This rebellion was driven largely by the Kel Adagh and the Ifoghas, although Ag Fagaga and Ag Bahanga are Ifergoummessen, a different part of the Ifoghas confederation, and Idnan were also present in the ADC. Nevertheless, Kidal-based Ifoghas benefitted disproportionately from the Algiers Accord.

As the implementation stalled, Ag Fagaga and Ag Bahanga in early 2007 again defected and began attacks. The conflict escalated and the rebels fragmented. Breakaway ADC factions captured Malian soldiers and laid siege to key Malian bases. Bahanga formed yet another movement, the Niger-Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change (French: Alliance Touareg Niger-Mali pour le Changement, ATNMC). The name change was part of Bahanga's stated goal of merging with Niger's Tuareg, who were in revolt across the border. The Nigerien Movement for Justice (French: Mouvement Nigerien pour la Justice, MNJ) refused Bahanga's overtures, forcing him to change the name to the Northern Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change, maintaining the ATNMC acronym.

After the failure of another Algerian-negotiated ceasefire in 2008 and Bahanga's return from his safe haven in Libya, fighting resumed on a wider geographical basis. Bahanga's fighters struck the Mopti and Segou regions. In December 2008 he attacked an army base at Nampala, around 500 km north of Bamako near the border with Mauritania, killing as many as 20 soldiers. During this period government-allied Tilemsi Arab and Imghad Tuareg militias (led by army officers Abderrahmane Ould Meydou and El Hajj Ag Gamou, respectively) recruited northern Malian fighters and attacked Tuareg units. The army and the militias damaged ADC and ATNMC units heavily. In January 2009 the Malian army destroyed Bahanga's base east of Tessalit, and Fagaga returned to cantonment with his men. Bahanga fled to Libya, hoping for Libyan mediation in the conflict.

This conflict was more geographically and ideologically restricted than the conflict of 1990-1996. Yet it demonstrated that rebellions could touch the rest of Mali, as highly mobile columns attacked targets far from their bases. Such attacks killed dozens of soldiers, and involved the use of anti-personnel mines in northern Mali, as in Niger.

This rebellion also took place in an altered geopolitical situation. While smuggling had previously played an important role in northern Mali's economy, the introduction of the cocaine trade to the region in the early 2000s as well as the trade in weapons, cigarettes, and other narcotics gave an added impetus to the need to control these routes. Simultaneously, the region became a site of concern for the United States amid its "War on Terror," as both a site of GSPC and then AQIM activity (see Section 4d). Attempting to attract U.S. favor, or to secure trafficking routes, or both, ADC units engaged in firefights with GSPC and AQIM convoys. US forces, who had been training Mali's security forces since 2002 under the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) were affected by the conflict. An American C-130 transport plane was damaged by ground fire in 2007 during a mission to re-supply besieged Malian soldiers at Tinzawatene, near the border with Algeria.

The smuggling trade and the rise of the GSPC and AQIM in northern Mali contributed to and coincided with disintegrating security in the north, as well as dramatic shifts in tribal politics. Following the integration of rebels into the armed forces after the 1996 *Flamme de la Paix*, rebels from a spectrum of groups, comprising a number of different clans, tribes, and confederations, were integrated into Mali's armed forces. Through the early 2000s, competition grew between formerly "dominant" and "subsidiary" clans and tribes. The growth in smuggling fueled this competition – even as the expanding cocaine trade empowered some groups, it also deepened strife between rival communities. While it is important to avoid reducing such competitions to "tribal" politics, Ifoghas and Kounta figures generally sided with each other against Bérabiche and Tilemsi Arabs and Imghad Tuareg. Tribal rivalries may have contributed to the rebellion when, in 2005, Ag Fagaga was passed over for promotion in favor of El Hajj Gamou, another former rebel and Imghad leader. President Amadou Toumani Touré's policy for managing northern Mali consisted in part of empowering formerly subordinate ethnic and tribal groups, even while working with other northern Malian notables such as Iyad Ag Ghali and Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh to resolve northern crises.

Finally, the 2006 rebellion was a key moment in deciding the trajectory of Iyad Ag Ghali, one of northern Mali's most powerful and influential figures. In 2007, the Malian government rewarded Ag Ghali for his

role in maneuvering the ADC toward a political solution and for his past work in managing crises in the north with an appointment to the Malian consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. While he remained in close contact with people and events in northern Mali during his time in Saudi Arabia, he purportedly made new contacts while in the Persian Gulf, contacts that reportedly led to his expulsion from the country. Only a few years later, he would found Ansar al Din.

#### **4d. GSPC/AQIM and MUJWA Activities in the Sahel, 2003-2011**

Al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its offshoot the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) have been key players in the Malian crisis of 2012-2013. As members of Ansar al Din's Islamist coalition, AQIM and MUJWA helped administer northern Mali during much of 2012, with AQIM taking a strong role in Timbuktu and MUJWA in Gao. Long before 2012, however, AQIM had established a presence in Mali and other parts of the Sahara and the Sahel through kidnappings, smuggling, and raids. AQIM leaders also married into influential local families, and conducted some preaching and humanitarian activities, helping establish local credibility and acceptance for their recruitment, training, and economic activities. MUJWA, which broke away from AQIM in December 2011, possibly out of Sahelians' frustration with AQIM's continued dominance by Algerian nationals, has also kidnapped Europeans in the region.

AQIM emerged out of Algeria's 1992-2000 civil war, and its Saharan turn after 2003 was in part a reaction to developments in Algeria, though AQIM's predecessors the Armed Islamic Group (French: GIA) and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (French: GSPC), had both previously established a limited presence in northern Mali and Niger. The GSPC, which in 2007 officially became AQIM, was a splinter group of the GIA, a participant in the Algerian civil war that developed a reputation for cruelty and brutality, particularly toward civilians. In 2006-2007, the GSPC merged with Al Qa'ida and became AQIM. The GSPC's two major operations in the Sahara prior to this merger were the kidnapping of thirty-two European tourists in southern Algeria in 2003, and raid on a Mauritanian military outpost at Lemgheitty on June 4, 2005.

Following the merger, AQIM's attacks in northern Algeria continued, but its Saharan and Sahelian activities increased, particularly in the form of kidnappings for ransom. AQIM and later MUJWA, likely with the help of local criminals, targeted European tourists and aid workers in the following incidents:

- February 28, 2008 – Austrians Wolfgang Ebner and Andrea Kloiber kidnapped in southern Tunisia, then transported to northern Mali.
- December 14, 2008 – Canadian diplomats Robert Fowler and Louis Guay kidnapped north of Niamey, Niger, and subsequently transported to northern Mali; released April 22, 2009.
- January 22, 2009 – European tourists Edwin Dyer, Marianne Petzold, Gabriella Greitner, and Werner Greiner kidnapped near Mali's border with Niger; Petzold and Greitner released April 22, 2009, Greiner released July 12, 2009.
- May 31, 2009 – AQIM executes Edwin Dyer.
- June 23, 2009 – suspected AQIM members kill Christopher Leggett in Nouakchott during an attempted kidnapping.



- November 25, 2009 – French aid worker (and alleged intelligence operative) Pierre Camatte kidnapped in Ménaka. On February 23, 2010, AQIM released Camatte as part of a prisoner exchange in which Malian authorities released four imprisoned AQIM members on February 20.
- November 29, 2009 – Spanish aid workers Albert Vilalta, Roque Pascual, and Alicia Gamez kidnapped near Nouadhibou, Mauritania; Gamez released March 10, 2010, Vilalta and Pascual released August 22, 2010.
- December 18, 2009 – Italian tourists Sergio Cicala and Philomene Kaboure kidnapped in Kobenni, Mauritania; released April 16, 2010.
- April 19, 2010 – French aid worker Michel Germaneau kidnapped in northern Niger, subsequently transported to northern Mali; AQIM announced on July 25, 2010 that it had killed Germaneau after a French and Mauritanian raid on AQIM bases in Mali.
- September 16, 2010 – 6 employees of subcontractors of French nuclear company Areva and the wife of an employee kidnapped in Arlit, Niger, subsequently transported to northern Mali.
- October 22, 2011 – Three Europeans (Italian Rosella Urru and Spanish citizens Ainhoa Fernandez Rincon and Eric Gonyalons) kidnapped in the Rabouni camp in southeastern Algeria, run by the Polisario Front. MUJWA later claimed responsibility for the kidnapping.
- November 24, 2011 – Two French citizens, Philippe Verdon and Serge Lazarevic, kidnapped by AQIM in Hombori, northern Mali. AQIM announced in March 2013 that it had killed Verdon, whose body was recovered by French forces in July 2013.
- November 25, 2011 – Three Europeans (Dual British and South African Stephen Malcolm, Swede Johan Gustafson, and Dutch Sjaak Rijke) kidnapped in Timbuktu; a German tourist was killed during the attempt.

Kidnappings, which often resulted in European governments paying ransoms in the millions of dollars to AQIM, likely generated a large war chest for AQIM by the late 2000s. Involvement in drug and contraband trafficking added to this wealth.

In addition to its profit-generating activities, AQIM has conducted or attempted several raids and assassinations in Sahelian countries:

- February 1, 2008 – AQIM gunmen attack the Israeli embassy and nearby nightclub in Nouakchott, Mauritania.
- June 11, 2009 – Lieutenant Colonel Lamana Ould Bou, a Malian counterterrorism official believed to have been deeply involved in smuggling activities, assassinated in Timbuktu by AQIM fighters.
- August 8, 2009 – AQIM suicide bombing at the French embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania.
- August 25, 2010 – AQIM attempts a suicide car bombing at a military barracks in Nema, Mauritania.
- February 2, 2011 – Mauritanian military officials announce that they have foiled an AQIM assassination plot against President Mohamed Ould 'Abd al 'Aziz, and chase AQIM fighters into rural Mauritania and northern Senegal.

Sahelian governments, often attempting to work with Algeria, attempted to halt AQIM's attacks and kidnappings. After a meeting of Algerian and Sahelian military chiefs on April 12-13, 2010, Algeria's Ministry of Defense announced on April 21 the creation of a joint counterterrorism command for Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger, based in Tamanrasset, Algeria. Mauritanian forces have also conducted several counter-raids against suspected AQIM training camps:

- [July 22, 2010](#) – French and Mauritanian forces raid an AQIM camp in northern Mali.
- [June 26, 2011](#) – Mauritanian and Malian forces raid AQIM camps in Mali's Wagadou Forest.
- [October 20, 2011](#) – Mauritania conducts airstrikes against AQIM camps in Mali's Wagadou Forest.
- [June 2011](#) – Nigerien forces stop a weapons convoy in the country's desert north, killing one AQIM member and seizing ammunition, money, and nearly 640 kg of the high explosive Semtex.

By the end of 2011, however, such counter-raids and joint defense initiatives had failed to dislodge AQIM from the Sahel in general and from Mali in particular.

## **Section Five: Detailed Timeline, 2011-August 2013**

### **2011**

[August 9](#) – Amadou Toumani Touré launches his Special Program for Peace, Security, and Development in Northern Mali (French: Programme spécial pour la paix, la sécurité et le développement au Nord-Mali, PSPSDN)

[August 26](#) – Ibrahim Ag Bahanga dies in a car crash

October 16 – Announcement of the formation of the MNLA out of the National Movement of Azawad (MNA) and the National Alliance of Tuaregs of Mali (ANTM)

[October 19](#) – AFP reports that three senior Tuareg officers – Colonel Assalath Ag Khabi, Lieutenant-Colonel Mbarek Ag Akly, and Commandant Hassan Habré – deserted the Malian army to join the MNLA

Fall/Winter – Several attacks occur against military bases set up as part of the PSPSDN

December 12 – MUJWA releases a video statement announcing its creation

[December 20](#) – Mauritanian news agency ANI reports the creation in northern Mali of Iyad Ag Ghali's Ansar al Din

### **2012**

January 17 – The MNLA attacks Ménaka

[January 30](#) – Military families begin protests in Kati

[February 2](#) – Protesters surround the residence of President Touré

February 8 – The MNLA captures Tinzawaten

March 22 – Soldiers led by Captain Amadou Sanogo take power in a coup

[March 30](#) – The MNLA captures Kidal

March 31 – The MNLA captures Gao

April 1 – The MNLA captures Timbuktu

April 4 – Ansar al Din and AQIM fighters move into Timbuktu, displacing the MNLA from part of the city

April 5 – MUJWA fighters abduct seven Algerian diplomats from their consulate in Gao.

April 6 – The MNLA declares the independence of northern Mali as the “Azawad”

April 8 – Amadou Toumani Touré resigns as president

[April 10](#) – Arab fighters announce the creation of an anti-MNLA, Arab self-defense militia, the FNLA

April 12 – Dioncounda Traoré appointed interim president

April 15 – AQIM commander Abou Zeid expels FNLA fighters from Timbuktu

April 17 – Cheick Modibo Diarra appointed interim prime minister

[April 25](#) – Cheick Modibo Diarra announces 24-member cabinet

May 26 – Announcement of alliance between MNLA and Ansar al Din. Alliance broken two days later.

[June 18](#) – Ansar al Din delegation headed by Alghabass Ag Intalla meets with President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou

[June 27](#) – Islamist coalition captures Gao from the MNLA

[June 30](#) – Ansar al Din fighters attack the mausoleum of Sidi Mahmud in Timbuktu

[July 2](#) – Ansar al Din fighters attack the Sidi Yahya mosque in Timbuktu

[July 10](#) – Ansar al Din fighters destroy two tombs at the Djingareyber mosque in Timbuktu

[July 13](#) – Protests against Ansar al Din in Goundam

July 19 – Three European hostages kidnapped in October 2011 in southeastern Algeria released in Mali. Reports indicate that a ransom of approximately \$18 million was paid, and three jihadist prisoners held in the region were released in exchange for the hostages

[July 29](#) – In Aguelhok, Islamist officials carry out a sentence of stoning against an allegedly unmarried couple

[August 5](#) – Protests against MUJWA in Gao

September 1 – MUJWA announces the execution of an Algerian diplomat, Tahar Touati

[September 8](#) – AQIM leader in the Sahara Nabil Makhoulfi (Nabil Abou Alqama) killed in a car accident in northern Mali

[September 9](#) – In Diabaly, Malian soldiers shoot sixteen preachers from Jama'a al Tabligh

[October 12](#) – UNSC adopts Resolution 2071, and “called on Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to provide, at once, military and security planners to [ECOWAS], the African Union (AU) and other partners to help frame a response to a request by Mali’s transitional authorities for such a force, and to report back within 45 days.”

[October 18](#) – Ansar al Din fighters destroy three mausolea in the Kabara neighborhood of Timbuktu

[November 6](#) – Military experts present ECOWAS with a draft plan for the reconquest of Mali

[November 11](#) – ECOWAS heads of state approve military intervention plan at a summit in Abuja, Nigeria

[November 13](#) – AU approves military intervention plan

[November 19](#) – MUJWA captures Menaka

[November 20](#) – MUJWA kidnaps French citizen in Diema, Gilberto Rodrigues Leal

[November 28](#) – Ansar al Din captures Lere

[December 11](#) – Prime Minister Cheick Modibo Diarra resigns, and President Dioncounda Traoré appoints Diango Cissoko (alternative spelling Sissoko) as prime minister

December 20 – The UNSC adopts resolution 2085 ([text](#)) authorizing the deployment of international forces to Mali

## **2013**

[January 10](#) – Ansar al Din fighters enter Konna

[January 11](#) – Operation Serval begins with French airstrikes

[January 14](#) – By this date, airstrikes have occurred in Konna, Lere, Douentza, Agharous Kayoune, and Gao

[January 16](#) – French ground operations begin

[January 18](#) – Konna recaptured (some sources say Malian troops retook the town on [January 12](#))

[January 21](#) – Diabaly recaptured (some sources also list January 18 as the date of the recapture of Diabaly)

[January 21](#) – French and Malian forces enter Douentza

[January 24](#) – Hombori captured; air raids on Ansongo

January 24 – Alghabass Ag Intalla announces the creation of the Islamic Movement of the Azawad (MIA), a breakaway faction from Ansar al Din, and its willingness to negotiate with Malian national authorities

[January 26](#) – Gao captured

[January 28](#) – Timbuktu airport captured

[January 29](#) – Timbuktu reconquered

[January 30](#) – Kidal captured

[February 8](#) – Suicide bombing in Gao

[February 10](#) – MUJWA fighters attack Gao

February 21 – Car bombing in Kidal

[February 22-23](#) – Fighting between the MNLA and Arab Movement of the Azawad in In-Khalil, Kidal Region

[February 26](#) – U.S. Department of State designates Iyad Ag Ghali as a Special Designated Global Terrorist

[April 9](#) – France withdraws its first soldiers

[April 21](#) – Fighting between the MNLA and the Arab Movement of the Azawad in Ber, Timbuktu Region

[May 4](#) – Suicide bombing in Hamakouladji, Gao Region

[May 6](#) – Mohamed Ag Intalla presides over the creation of the High Council for the Azawad in Kidal

[May 19](#) – The Islamic Movement of the Azawad joins the High Council for the Azawad, which renames itself the High Council for the Unity of the Azawad (HCUA). Intalla Ag Attaher becomes the HCUA's new president.

[June 2](#) – In Ouagadougou, the MNLA and the HCUA sign an accord rejecting Malian army deployments in Kidal during the presidential elections, alleging Malian army abuses of northern Tuaregs and Arabs, and calling for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to provide security

[July 15](#) – AQIM confirms it has killed hostage Philippe Verdon in Mali in retaliation for the French-led intervention

[July 19](#) – Ethnic clashes in Kidal

July 28 – Mali holds first round of presidential elections

[August 7](#) – Constitutional Court confirms results of the presidential elections' first round, certifying Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta's 39.79% of the vote and Soumaïla Cissé's 19.70%

August 11 – Mali holds second round of presidential elections

August 12 – Soumaïla Cissé concedes to Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta



MINUSMA Force Commander Gen. Jean Bosco Kazura salutes Chadian UN peacekeepers in Tessalit, July 27, 2013. CC image "[Kidal, 27 July 2013](#)" courtesy of MINUSMA/Marco Dormino on Flickr ([CC-BY-NC-SA-2.0](#)).

## Section Six: Key Movements, Parties, and Organizations

### 6a. Key Movements in Colonial and Post-Colonial Mali

ADC – May 23 Democratic Alliance for Change (French: Alliance Démocratique du 23 mai pour le changement). Rebel group active in 2006, led by Tuareg commanders such as Iyad Ag Ghali and Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, whose partisans later split from the ADC to form the ANTM.

[ADEMA-PASJ](#) – Alliance for Democracy in Mali – African Party for Solidarity and Justice (French: Alliance pour la Démocratie au Mali - Parti Africain pour la Solidarité et la Justice). Founded in 1990, this coalition of activists opposed to the rule of President Moussa Traoré became Mali's ruling party from 1992 to

2002. ADEMA-PASJ endorsed President Amadou Toumani Touré in the presidential elections of 2007. Its candidate in the July 28, 2013 elections, Dramane Dembele, placed third.

AI SLAM – Islamic Association for Salvation in Mali (French: Association Islamique pour le Salut au Mali). Founded in the 1980s, this southern-based Salafi organization is led by Mohamed Kimbiri.

Ancar Dine – The Defenders of the Faith. One of the largest Muslim organizations in Mali, comprising followers of Cherif Ousmane Madane Haïdara.

Ansar al Din – The Defenders of the Faith (also Ansar Dine). Founded in late 2011, this Salafi organization is led by Iyad Ag Ghali, a key commander in the 1990 and 2006 Tuareg rebellions. Ansar al Din played a central role in the Islamist coalition that controlled much of northern Mali from spring 2012 to January 2013.

ANTMC – Northern Malian Tuareg Alliance for Change (French: Alliance Touareg Nord Mali Pour Le Changement). Led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, this splinter group of the ADC rejected the 2006 and 2008 Algiers Accords and waged a rebellion between 2007 and 2009.

AQIM – Al Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (French: AQMI, Al Qaïda au Maghreb islamique; Arabic: al Qā’ida fī Bilād al Maghrib al Islāmī). This Al Qa’ida franchise emerged out of militant groups active in Algeria’s 1992-2002 civil war, particularly the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, GSPC). In addition to its attacks within Algeria, AQIM has staged numerous kidnappings and raids in Sahelian countries. AQIM was a key member of the Islamist coalition in northern Mali in 2012-2013.

CNRDRE – National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and Rule of Law (French: Comité national pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l’État). The military council formed by the leaders of the 22 March 2012 coup.

FDR – Front for Democracy and the Republic (French: Front pour la démocratie et la république/Front du Refus). This coalition of opposition parties to ADEMA-PASJ and President Amadou Toumani Touré formed in 2007 to contest that year’s presidential and parliamentary elections. The FDR opposed the coup of March 21-22, 2012.

FIAA - Arab Islamic Front of Azawad (French: Front Islamique Arabe de l’Azawad). An Arab-led rebel faction during the 1990-1996 Tuareg uprising that signed both the 1991 Tamanrasset Accords and, as part of the MFUA coalition (see below), the 1992 National Pact.

FNLA – National Liberation Front of Azawad (French: Front national de libération de l’Azawad). Formed in April 2012, this Arab-led militia opposed MNLA rule in northern Mali and sought to protect the Arab community. In late 2012, the FNLA renamed itself the Arab Movement of the Azawad (see MAA below).

FPLA – Popular Front for the Liberation of the Azawad (French: Front populaire pour la libération de l’Azawad). Rebel faction during the 1990-1996 Tuareg uprising. Opposed to the 1991 Tamanrasset Accords, the FPLA joined the MFUA coalition (see below), which signed the 1992 National Pact.

FPR – Patriotic Resistance Forces (French: Forces Patriotiques de Résistance). Founded July 21, 2012, this alliance of groups such as the Ganda Koy and Ganda Iso sought to recapture northern Malian territory and defend non-Tuareg and non-Arab northerners during the 2012 crisis.

Ganda Iso – Sons of the Land. Formed around 2008-2009 as a successor organization to the Ganda Koy, this Songhai and Fulani self-defense militia attacked Tuareg leaders during 2008-2010 and participated in anti-MNLA efforts during the 2012-2013 crisis.

Ganda Koy – Masters of the Land. Founded in 1994, this Songhai self-defense militia alleged that the Malian government had failed to protect non-Tuareg northerners from Tuareg rebel attacks. The Ganda Koy attacked Tuareg and Arab civilians between 1994 and 1996.

GIA – Armed Islamic Group (French: Groupe Islamique Armé; Arabic: al Jamā'a al Islāmiyya al Musallaḥa). This militant faction emerged in 1992 in the early stages of Algeria's civil war. The GSPC (see below), which later became AQIM, split from the GIA in 1998.

GSPC – Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (French: Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat; Arabic: al Jamā'a al Salafiyya li al Da'wa wa al Jihād). Founded in 1998 in Algeria during that country's civil war, this organization adhered to Al Qa'ida and renamed itself AQIM in 2007.

HCA – High Council of Azawad (French: Haut Conseil de l'Azawad). This movement, formed in May 2013, quickly renamed itself the HCUA (see below).

HCIM – High Islamic Council of Mali (French: Haut Conseil Islamique du Mali). Founded circa 2002, this official umbrella association for Muslim civil society organizations has played an important role in the country's politics in the 2000s and 2010s. See Dicko, Mahmoud.

HCUA – High Council for the Unity of the Azawad (French: Haut Conseil pour l'Unité de l'Azawad). Headed by the Tuareg aristocrat Intalla Ag Attaher, this movement formed in May 2013 as the High Council of the Azawad with the goals of uniting northern Malian Tuaregs and making peace with the south. After its incorporation of MIA on May 19, 2013, the Council became the High Council for the Unity of the Azawad.

Jama'a al Tabligh/Tablighi Jama'at – Society for Spreading the Islamic Message. Founded in 1926 in India, this worldwide organization seeks to promote Islamic piety. The movement proselytizes in northern Mali and neighboring areas, and has influenced Iyad Ag Ghali and other northern Malian leaders.

MAA – Arab Movement of the Azawad (French: Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad). Formerly known as the FNLA (see above), this Arab self-defense militia clashed several times with MNLA fighters in 2013.

MFUA – Unified Movements and Fronts of the Azawad (French: Mouvements et Fronts Unifiés de l'Azawad). This umbrella organization represented participants in the 1990 Tuareg uprising, such as the MPA, in negotiations with the Malian government in 1991-1992. The MFUA signed the National Pact with the Malian government on April 11, 1992.



MIA – Islamic Movement of the Azawad (French: Mouvement islamique de l'Azawad). The MIA, led by the Tuareg notable Alghabass Ag Intalla, split from Ansar al Din on 24 January 2013. The MIA disavowed AQIM and MUJWA and expressed willingness to negotiate with national Malian authorities. On 19 May 2013, the MIA was incorporated into the HCUA.

MNA – National Movement of Azawad (French: Mouvement national de l'Azawad). Created in 2010, this Tuareg-led separatist movement was a precursor organization to the MNLA.

MNJ – Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (French: Mouvement des Nigériens pour la justice). Created in 2007, this Tuareg-led rebel group demands that the government of Niger use a greater proportion of mining revenues to benefit the country, specifically its northern areas.

MNLA – National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (French: Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad). Formed in October 2011 as a separatist group with ambitions to create an independent state in northern Mali, the Tuareg-led MNLA launched a rebellion against the Malian government in January 2012. After briefly controlling northern regional capitals in early 2012, the MNLA lost control of these territories to the Islamist coalition comprising Ansar al Din, AQIM, and MUJWA. During 2012 and 2013, however, the MNLA remained a key player in negotiations over the future of northern Mali, especially the region of Kidal, where the MNLA retains a significant military presence as of August 2013.

MPA – Popular Movement of the Azawad (French: Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad). Led by Iyad ag Ghali, the MPA was an important armed group in the early phase of the 1990-1996 rebellion.

MUJWA – Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (French: MUJAO, Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest; Arabic: Jamā'a al Tawhīd wa al Jihād fī Gharb Ifrīqīyā). Founded in December 2011, this offshoot of AQIM has conducted kidnappings and bombings in Algeria, Mali, and Niger. MUJWA, along with Ansar al Din and AQIM, was a member of the Islamist coalition that controlled much of northern Mali from spring 2012 to January 2013. MUJWA fighters played a particularly strong role in Gao.

al Muwaqqi'un bi al Dima – Signers in Blood. Led by the Algerian terrorist commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar, this offshoot of AQIM emerged in December 2012. The cell claimed responsibility for the mass hostage-taking at the In Aménas gas facility in Algeria in January 2013, as well as for suicide bombings in the northern Nigerien cities of Arlit and Agadez in May 2013. These attacks, the group claimed, were motivated by the external military intervention in northern Mali.

PSPSDN - Special Program for Peace, Security, and Development in Northern Mali (French: Programme spécial pour la paix, la sécurité et le développement au Nord-Mali). Launched by President Amadou Toumani Touré in August 2011, this program aimed to promote security and economic development in northern Mali.

RPM – Rally for Mali (French: Rassemblement pour le Mali). This political party was formed by Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta in 2001 after he broke with ADEMA-PASJ. Keïta, as RPM’s candidate, finished first in the July 28, 2013 presidential elections.

SABATI 2012 – A coalition of Muslim activists, affiliated with the HCIM’s President Mahmoud Dicko and Chérif Mohamed Bouillé Haïdara of the Hamawiyya Sufi order, which outlined a set of recommendations to the new government during the 2013 presidential campaign.

UDPM – Democratic Union of the Malian People (French: Union démocratique du peuple malien). Founded in 1976, this party ruled Mali under the regime of President Moussa Traoré, existing as the sole legal party from 1979-1991.

URD – Union for the Republic and Democracy (French: Union pour la République et la Démocratie). This political party was formed by Soumaïla Cissé after he broke with ADEMA-PASJ to contest the 2002 presidential elections. Cissé, as URD’s candidate, finished second in the July 28, 2013 presidential elections.

US-RDA – Sudanese Union-African Democratic Rally (French: Union Soudanaise-Rassemblement Démocratique Africain). This party, founded in 1945, dominated elections in late colonial Mali and became Mali’s sole legal party during the presidency of Modibo Keïta (1960-1968). Banned during the rule of President Moussa Traoré, US-RDA re-emerged in the 1990s, with many of its partisans supporting ADEMA-PASJ.

## **6b. International Institutions and Initiatives**

AFISMA – African-led International Support Mission to Mali. Organized by ECOWAS to reconstitute Mali’s territorial integrity and authorized by the United Nations Security Council on 20 December 2012, this West African military force began deploying to Mali in January 2013. On July 1, AFISMA transferred its authority to MINUSMA.

[AU](#) – African Union. Launched in 2002 as a successor institution to the Organization of African Unity, the AU has played a role in facilitating peacekeeping and political transitions in Mali.

[ECOWAS](#) – Economic Community of West African States (French: CEDEAO, Communauté économique des États de l’Afrique de l’Ouest). Founded in 1975, this economic and political bloc has sought to mediate and resolve Mali’s military and political crises.

[MINUSMA](#) – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Established April 25, 2013 and deployed on July 1, 2013, this UN peacekeeping mission seeks to stabilize Mali in the aftermath of Operation Serval.

O CRS – Common Organization of Saharan Regions (French: Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes). This legal territorial unit, created by France in 1957 and dissolved in 1963, created a common de jure administrative framework for Saharan territories in present-day Algeria, Mali, Niger, and Chad. The creation of the O CRS abetted expectations for self-determination among some Saharan communities.

PSI – Pan-Sahel Initiative. Created in 2002 by the U.S. Department of the State as a Security Assistance Program, the PSI offered counterterrorism training and assistance to Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad until it was subsumed into the TSCTP in 2005.

TSCTP – Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. Launched in 2005, the TSCTP is a partnership between the U.S. Departments of State and Defense, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development. The TSCTP focuses on countering terrorism, trafficking in contraband, and youth radicalization in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia.

## **Section Seven: Key Individuals**

### **7a. National Malian Politicians**

Cissé, Soumaïla (b. 1949). Born in Timbuktu and educated in France as a software engineer, Cissé was an ADEMA-PASJ leader and senior government official (including Minister of Finances and Minister of Equipment, Management of Territory, Environment, and Urban Planning) from 1992 until 2002, when he was ADEMA-PASJ's candidate (and the second-place finisher) in the presidential elections. Cissé left ADEMA-PASJ in 2003 to found the URD. In the July 28, 2013 presidential elections (first round), he placed second, before losing to Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta in the second round, held on August 11.

Cissoko, Diango (b. ca. 1950, variant spellings Django Sissoko). Cissoko served as interim Prime Minister from 11 December 2012-present. A career civil servant and politician, he also served as Minister of Justice from 1984-1988 and Secretary-General of the Presidency from 1988-1991 and 2008-2011.

Coulibaly, Tiéman Hubert. A member of the Front for Democracy and the Republic coalition and president of the Union for Democracy and Development since 2010, Coulibaly was appointed Interim Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of the government of national unity composed in August 2012.

Diarra, Cheick Modibo (b. 1952). Diarra was Mali's Interim Prime Minister from 17 April 2012 to 11 December 2012. A career physicist and businessman, he worked as chairman of Microsoft Africa from 2006 to 2011.

Dramé, Tiébilé (b. 1955). Dramé has been the chief Malian government negotiator in talks with rebels in Burkina Faso since 2012. A career politician, he served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1991 to 1992 and as Minister of Arid and Semi-Arid Zones from approximately 1996 to 2000. A co-founder of the Party for National Renaissance (Parti pour la renaissance nationale, PARENA), Dramé won election to the National Assembly in 1997 and contested the 2002 presidential elections. In addition to his electoral political involvement, Dramé founded the newspaper *Le Républicain* and has served as a United Nations envoy to Madagascar.

Keïta, Ibrahim Boubacar (b. 1945, also known as "IBK"). A career Malian politician, Keïta was Prime Minister of Mali from 1994 to 2000 and President of the National Assembly from 2002 to 2007. After his

withdrawal from ADEMA-PASJ in 2000, he founded the RPM, which he continues to lead. The third-place finisher in the 2002 presidential elections and the second-place finisher in the 2007 presidential elections, Keïta placed first in the presidential elections on July 28, 2013 (first round) and defeated Soumaïla Cissé in the second round, held on August 11.

Keïta, Modibo (1915-1977). A socialist, Keïta served as Mali's first president from 1960 until his overthrow in the military coup of 1968. A major RDA politician in the post-World War II period, he was mayor of Bamako in the late 1950s.

Konaré, Alpha Oumar (b. 1946). Konaré, of ADEMA-PASJ, was elected president in 1992 after Mali's transition to multiparty democracy, and won a second term in 1997. His prior career experiences included posts as professor and cabinet minister. Following his presidency, he chaired the African Union Commission from 2003 to 2008.

Mariko, Oumar (b. 1959). A doctor, politician, and co-founder of African Solidarity for Democracy and Independence (Solidarité Africaine pour la Démocratie et l'Indépendance), a left-wing political party, Mariko was elected to the National Assembly in 2007. Mariko created the "March 22 People's Movement" to support the March 21-22, 2012 coup.

Sanogo, Captain Amadou Haya (b. ca. 1972). A junior officer in the Malian army, Sanogo led the coup of March 21-22, 2012 that overthrew President Amadou Toumani Touré and was Mali's head of state until April 12, 2012. After his formal withdrawal from politics, Sanogo continued to influence affairs in Bamako, for example through his alleged intimidation of transitional Prime Minister Diarra, who resigned after Sanogo's soldiers arrested him in December 2012.

Sidibé, Modibo (b. 1952). A senior police officer and security official during the 1980s and 1990s, Sidibé held senior cabinet positions (such as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1997 to 2002) under Presidents Konaré and Touré. From 2007 to 2011, he was Prime Minister.

Touré, Amadou Toumani (b. 1948, also known as "ATT"). A career soldier, Touré led the March 27, 1991 coup against President Moussa Traoré. Elected to the presidency in 2002 as an independent candidate, he won re-election in 2007 as a candidate of the Alliance for Democracy and Progress (French: Alliance pour la démocratie et le progrès, ADP) in 2007. Several months before the end of his second term, he was overthrown in the March 21-22, 2012 coup.

Traoré, Dioncounda (b. 1942). When the CNRDRE handed power to a transitional civilian administration on April 12, 2012, Traoré became Mali's Interim President. A career politician, he has served as president of ADEMA-PASJ since 2000 and as president of the National Assembly since 2007.

Traoré, Moussa (b. 1936). As a lieutenant, Traoré led a coup against President Modibo Keïta in 1968. Traoré presided over a military government until 1979, and over the single-party UDPM state until his overthrow in 1991.

## **7b. Tuareg Leaders (Non-Islamist Coalition)**

Ag Acharatoumane, Moussa – MNA and MNLA founder, Paris-based MNLA spokesman.

Ag Assarid, Moussa – Paris-based MNLA spokesman who served for a time as Minister of Communications for the “State of Azawad.”

Ag Attaher, Intallah. Hereditary leader (amenokal) of the Ifoghas clan of the Kel Adagh Tuareg. Father of Alghabass and Mohamed Ag Intallah.

Ag Attaher, Mossa (b. 1979) – Former Secretary-General of the Syndicate of Malian High School and University Students, after 2004 Ag Attaher became an educational and public health activist in northern Mali. A cofounder of the MNA and MNLA, the Belgian-educated Ag Attaher has served as one of the MNLA’s spokesmen in Europe.

Ag Bahanga, Ibrahim (d. 2011) – Ag Bahanga, who received military training in Libya in the 1980s, became a rebel commander in the 2006 uprising. After rejecting the 2006 Algiers Accords, Ag Bahanga and his ANTMC continued to clash with the Malian army through 2009, and never completely laid down arms. Following his return to northern Mali from Libya in 2011, Bahanga died in a car accident, and his ANTMC merged with the MNA to form the MNLA.

Ag Cherif, Bilal (b. 1977) – Ag Cherif, a cousin of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, was the founding Secretary-General of the MNLA. He served as president of the Transitional Council of the State of Azawad from April to July 2012; wounded in the MNLA’s clashes with MUJWA during the latter’s seizure of Gao in June 2012, Ag Cherif was evacuated to Burkina Faso.

Ag Erlaf, Mohamed – Under President Amadou Toumani Touré, Ag Erlaf served as Coordinator of the Special Program for Peace, Security, and Development in Northern Mali and, simultaneously, as Director-General of the National Agency for Investments in Territorial Collectivities.

Ag Fadil, Boubacar – Founding member of the MNA.

Ag Fagaga, Hassane – A leader within the MPA, Ag Fagaga deserted from the Malian army in 2006 to join the ADC and, later the ANTMC.

Ag Gamou, El Hadj – Colonel Ag Gamou, a Tuareg officer who remained loyal to the Malian government during the MNLA’s rebellion, fled with his troops to Niger in April 2012, but returned to Mali to participate in the reconquest and pacification of the north.

Ag Habi, Assalat – Malian colonel who defected to the MNLA in 2011.

Ag Hamani, Ahmed Mohamed (b. 1942). Prime Minister, 9 June 2002-28 April 2004. Career politician, cabinet minister, and ambassador.

Ag Intallah, Alghabass. Leader of the Islamic Movement of Azawad, former MNLA and Ansar al Din leader (February 2012-January 2013). Previously deputy to the National Assembly Deputy from Kidal.

Ag Intallah, Mohamed. Senior MNLA official, founder of the HCUA. Previously deputy to the National Assembly from Ti-N-Essako.

Ag Mohamed Assaleh, Ibrahim – MNLA spokesman, leader, and negotiator for the Movement in its talks with the Malian government in Burkina Faso. Previously deputy to the National Assembly from Bourem.

Ag Najem, Mohamed – Founding Chief of Staff and military commander of the MNLA. Former colonel in the Libyan army and fighter in the 1990 Tuareg uprising.

Ag Sidalamine, Zeïdan – Former FPLA Secretary-General.

Ag Sid’Ahmed, Hama – Father-in-law of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga and former Paris-based ATNMC spokesman.

### **7c. Islamist Coalition Commanders and Spokesmen**

Abu Abdelkarim (Le Targui, also known as Hamada Ag Hama and Abdelkrim Taleb) – Malian national, commander of AQIM’s Kabita al Ansar, reportedly a cousin of Iyad Ag Ghali.

Abu Dardar – MUJWA leader, identified in some media reports as an Ansar al Din leader.

Abu Zeid, Abdulhamid (also known as Mohamed Ghadir, 1965-2013) – Algerian national, GSPC member, and commander of AQIM’s Tariq Ibn Ziad Brigade. A prominent figure in AQIM’s kidnapping and smuggling operations circa 2009-2013, and AQIM’s senior official in Timbuktu during the 2012 crisis.

Ag Aharib, Mohamed – Former ADC leader and Ansar al Din spokesman, current MIA leader.

Ag Aoussa, Cheikh – Former Ansar al Din, MPA, and ADC leader, influential Kidal figure and longtime Iyad Ag Ghali associate. Spokesman for Ansar al Din delegation in discussions in Burkina Faso in 2012.

Ag Bibi, Ahmed – Former Ansar al Din, MPA, and ADC official. Former deputy to Malian National Assembly from Abeibara.

Ag Cherif, Moussa – Ansar al Din spokesman.

Ag Ghali, Iyad – Founder and leader of Ansar al Din. A commander in the 1990 rebellion, Ag Ghali had a complex and shifting relationship with the Malian government, serving as a hostage negotiator in 2003 and as a diplomatic representative in Saudi Arabia around 2008. Reportedly influenced by both Saudi Arabian contacts and Jama’a al Tabligh, he became more pious after 2008. This piety, along with his unsuccessful bid for leadership of the MNLA, likely inspired his decision to create Ansar al Din in late 2011; Ansar al Din became a key member of the Islamist coalition along with AQIM and MUJWA.

Ag Mohamed, Mohamed Moussa – Ansar al Din commander and head of Timbuktu’s Islamic Police, arrested in February 2013.

Ag Sidi Mohamed, Mohamed – MUJWA chief of operations, arrested in Gourma-Rharous in May 2013.

Al Chinquitti, Abdallah (also known as Mohamed Lemine Ould Hacen, 1981-2013) – Mauritanian national, educated at Nouakchott’s Higher Institute of Islamic Studies and Research, appointed commander of AQIM’s Al Furqan Brigade in November 2012.

Belmokhtar, Mokhtar (b. 1972) – Former AQIM commander and current leader of the independent Muwaqqi'un bi al Dima (Signers in Blood) Brigade, also known as al Mulathamin or “Masked Ones.” An Algeria national who fought in Afghanistan circa 1989-1993, Belmokhtar is known for smuggling activities in the Sahara during the 2000s and his role as the senior GIA and then GSPC figure in the Sahel, before Yahya Djouadi, Nabil Makhloufi, and later Yahya Abou el Hammam were appointed to fill that role. After breaking from AQIM in December 2012, his new brigade carried out the January 2013 attack at Algeria's In Amenas gas facility and claimed responsibility for attacks in northern Niger in May 2013. Belmokhtar was reported dead in March 2013, but apparently survives.

Droukdel, 'Abd al Malik (aka Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud, b. 1970) – An Algerian national, Droukdel is the Emir of AQIM. After graduating from the University of Blida with a degree in mathematics in 1996, Droukdel joined the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) as an explosive expert and later joined the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), AQIM's predecessor organization. After assuming leadership of the GSPC in 2004, Droukdel helped broker the GSPC's merger with Al Qa'ida in 2006-2007.

El Hammam, Yahya Abou (also known as Jemal Oukacha, b. ca. 1978) – Algerian national, appointed AQIM's emir in the Sahara in October 2012 to replace Nabil Makhloufi. A member of the GSPC and AQIM who has been active in the group's Saharan operations since 2004, El Hammam was formerly commander of AQIM's al Furqan Brigade.

Juleibib (Hacen Ould Khalil) – Mauritanian Islamist activist, spokesman and media coordinator for Mokhtar Belmokhtar, former AQIM member.

Khairou, Hamad Ould Mohamed (b. 1970) – Co-founder of MUJWA, Mauritanian Islamist activist and former AQIM member.

Makhloufi, Nabil (also known as Nabil Abou Alqama, d. 2012) – Algerian national and AQIM emir in the Sahara, linked to several kidnappings of European tourists and aid workers.

Ould Badi, Sultan – Malian Arab and suspected drug trafficker, former AQIM member, MUJWA cofounder. His Salah al Din Brigade reportedly swore allegiance to Iyad Ag Ghali during the 2012 crisis.

Ould Boumana, Sanda – Malian national from Timbuktu, Ansar al Din spokesman and leader in Timbuktu during 2012, arrested in Mauritania in May 2013.

Ould Hamaha, Omar (b. 1965) – Malian Arab from Ber, Timbuktu Region, and MUJWA spokesman.

Sahrawi, Adnan Abu Walid – MUJWA spokesman.

Al Tilemsi, Ahmad – Cofounder and military head of MUJWA, leader of MUJWA's Osama bin Laden Brigade, participant in AQIM and MUJWA kidnapping operations in January 2011 in Niger and October 2011 in Algeria.

## **7d. Local Politicians and Key Figures in Northern Mali**

Ag Attia, Nock – Tuareg deputy to the National Assembly for Diré.

Ag Hamatou, Bajan – Tuareg deputy to the National Assembly for Ménaka.

Cisse, Halle Ousmane – Mayor of Timbuktu.

Diallo, Sadou – Mayor of Gao.

Cissé, Seydou – Founder of Ganda Iso.

Dicko, Ibrahim – Leader of Ganda Iso.

Haidara, El Hadji Baba – Deputy to the National Assembly for Timbuktu.

Kamissoko, Colonel Adama – Governor of Kidal.

Khoulam, Hussein – Military chief of the FNLA/MAA.

Maiga, Ali Bady – President of the Council of Elders of Gao.

Ould Cheikh, Baba – Mayor of Tarkint and hostage negotiator for the Malian government with AQIM, accused of having links to narco-traffickers and AQIM.

Ould Daya, Dina – Arab businessman and city councilor in Timbuktu, as well as alleged narco-trafficker.

Ould El Hadj, Tahart – Mayor of Salam, Timbuktu Region.

Ould Idriss, Mohamed – President of the Regional Council of Gao.

Ould Mataly, Mohamed – Arab businessman, community leader in Gao, and former deputy (until 2007) to the National Assembly for Bourem, accused of having links to MUJWA.

Ould Sidati, Mohamed – Mayor of Ber, Timbuktu Region.

Sidad, Mohamed Lamine – Secretary-General of the FNLA/MAA.

Touré, Harouna – Leader of the Ganda Koy.

## **7e. Muslim Leaders Based in Southern Mali**

Dicko, Mahmoud – President of the High Islamic Council of Mali.

Haïdara, Chérif Mohamed Bouillé – Spiritual head of the Hamawiyya Sufi order.

Haïdara, Chérif Ousmane Madani (b. 1955) – Leader of the Ançar Dine movement, popular preacher.

Kimbiri, Mohamed – President of AISLAM, Secretary of the High Islamic Council of Mali, and Director of Radio Dambé.

## **7f. External Actors**

Bassolé, Djibrill (b. 1957) – Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso since 2011.



Compaoré, Blaise (b. 1951) – President of Burkina Faso since 1987.

Deby, Idriss (b. 1952) – President of Chad since 1990.

Issoufou, Mahamadou (b. 1952) – President of Niger since 2011.

Kazura, Jean Bosco – Major General in the Rwandan Army and commander of MINUSMA since July 2013.

Ould Abdelaziz, Mohamed (b. 1956) – President of Mauritania since 2009.

Ould Limam Chaffi, Moustapha – Mauritanian dissident and businessman, special counselor to Burkinabé President Blaise Compaoré

Qaddhafi, Mu’ammarr (1942-2011) – Head of state of Libya, 1969-2011.

## Section Eight: Key Documents

**8a. “Tamanrasset Accord” between the Government of Mali, the MPLA, and the FIA, signed January 6, 1991.** Available in English translation at:

<http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/peace/mal19910106.pdf>.

**8b. The “National Pact” between the Government of Mali and the MFUA, signed April 11, 1992.** Available in English translation at:

[https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site\\_media/media/accords/Mali\\_Peace\\_Accord-proof.pdf](https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site_media/media/accords/Mali_Peace_Accord-proof.pdf).

**8c. “Algiers Accord” between the Government of Mali and the ADC, signed July 4, 2006.** Available in French at:

<http://saadlounes.unblog.fr/files/2010/05/accordsdalgerjuillet2006.pdf>.

Authors’ translation:

Between:

Representatives of the Malian State

Representatives of the May 23 Democratic Alliance for Change

Restoration of Peace, Security, and Development in the Kidal Region

- Reaffirming our commitment to the Third Republic of Mali;
- Reaffirming as well our commitment to respect for territorial integrity and national unity;
- Concerned with preserving peace, stability, and security in our country and with dedicating ourselves to the tasks of socio-economic development of the Regions of the North, among them this Region of Kidal;

- Desirous of promoting a dynamic from which to reduce the underdevelopment which the Region of Kidal faces in the economic and social domains;
- Underlining the necessity of promoting the cultural diversity of Mali, taking into account the specificities of the northern Regions;
- Recalling the benefits of the National Pact of April 1992 which recognized the specificity of Northern Mali, the necessity of conducting the management of local affairs by the populations of each Region, their partnership in national governance and the institution of an economic program of assistance and development with the support of foreign partners;
- Taking account of the deprivation of the Region of Kidal, entirely desert, in view of its isolation and its flagrant lack of the infrastructure necessary to its development, and in view of the dependence of the populations of this Region on pastoralism;
- Convinced that there can be no durable development without the mobilization of all human resources and the promotion of local potentialities;
- Taking account of the interdependence between development, security, and stability;
- In view of the engagement of the government to find a durable, meaning definitive, political solution to this situation of the crisis, the measures listed below will be taken for the Region of Kidal:

Summary:

- I. For Better Participation in the Decision-Making Process
- II. Economic, Social, and Cultural Development
- III. Taking Responsibility for Immediate Security Concerns
- IV. Monitoring Mechanism
- V. Priority Measures
- VI. Final Arrangements

I. For Better Participation in the Decision-Making Process

1. Creation of a provisional regional council for coordination and monitoring
2. Its members are to be appointed in a consensual manner on the Monitoring Committee's suggestion
3. The provisional regional council for coordination and monitoring is appointed for one year, by decree of the Ministry for Territorial Management and Local Collectivities
4. At the end of its mission, its prerogatives will be carried out by the Regional Assembly
5. Its domains of authority:
  - It will be consulted by the supervising Department upon the elaboration of laws and texts affecting specific aspects of the Kidal Region.
  - It will participate in the promotion of good political governance, aiding better utilization of local and regional competences in the state apparatus.
  - It is charged with supporting the Regional Assembly in the exercise of its domains of authority, in the realm:

- Of cooperative action with sponsors in the framework of economic, social, and cultural development of the region conforming to Article 32 of the National Pact.
- Of all the aspects of the security of the region, conforming to Paragraphs C and D of Article 15 of the National Budgetary Pact for the Region, conforming to article 33 of the National Pact
- It is charged with aiding, in concert with administrative and political authorities, the preservation of a good social climate by the traditional channels of dialogue and consultation
- It will be consulted in all specific aspects of mediation and development, and will contribute to enlightening the administration regarding the preservation of harmony and social cohesion in the region

## II. Economic, Social, and Cultural Development

1. Organization of a forum in Kidal in view of creating a special investment fund for putting into operation a program of economic, social, and cultural development. This program will cover activities such as pastoralism, hydraulic power, transportation, communication, health, education, culture, crafts, and the exploitation of natural resources;
2. Acceleration of the process of transferring domains of authority to local collectivities;
3. In the domain of employment, creating small and medium enterprises, granting loans, and training recipients in domains related to management;
4. Definition and coordination of exchanges between regions in neighboring countries in a cross-border framework conforming to bilateral accords signed with these countries;
5. Establishment of a health system adapted to the way of life of nomadic populations;
6. Execution of a durable program for access to potable water throughout the region and notably the important localities;
7. In the domains of facilities and communication:
  - De-isolation of the region by paving principal highway routes: from Kidal toward Gao, Menaka, and Algeria
  - Completion of the airfield of Kidal
  - Electrification of the main places of cercles and communes
  - Telephonic communication coverage for the main places of cercles and communes
  - Establishment of a regional radio and a national television station in order to promote the cultural values of the region and render a more positive image of the populations of the region. Training of audiovisual technicians and providing for one hour of antenna [i.e., transmission] each day for the region in programs on the radio and national television
8. Encouraging programs for research and exploitation of natural resources
9. Establishing an educational system adapted to our social, cultural, and religious values, and granting foreign study grants for the most deserving Baccalaureate holders from the Kidal Region;
10. Establishing a special program for diploma holders in the Arabic language in the framework of retraining and specialization;

11. Renewal for a period of ten years of the preferential fiscal regime defined by the National Pact for the Regions of Northern Mali in view of attracting and encouraging investment.

### III. Taking Responsibility for Immediate Security Concerns

1. The establishment of a provisional regional council for coordination and monitoring
2. The pursuit of the process of relocating military barracks in urban zones, conforming to the arrangements of the National Pact
3. The return, under the aegis of the facilitator, of all the arms and munitions as well as all the other materials carried off since the attacks of 23 May 2006 at Kidal, Menaka, and Tessalit according to the modalities settled upon in the present accord

#### Special Security Units

1. Creation of special security units outside the urban zones of Kidal, linked to the command of the military zone and mainly composed of elements from nomad regions, in proportions assuring the effective execution of the missions of the Special Security Units
2. The act of creating these units will determine their number, the board for their staffing and allocation, their implantation, and their characteristics.

They will be charged especially with the following missions:

- Protection and surveillance of public buildings
- Protection of personalities
- Reconnaissance and patrol
- Assistance to the judicial police
- Intervention
- All other missions which will be defined in the act of creation.

They will act in a coordinated manner and in complementarity with the national security forces.

They will organically come under the command of the military zone.

They will be placed, for employment, under the authority of the Governor of the Region.

They will be attached to units of the National Guard.

They will be commanded by an operational leadership of the special units, whose leadership will issue from the personnel laid out in Chapter III, point 5, and whose second will come from other corps of the armed forces and the national security forces. The operational leadership of the special units will answer to the General Staff of the National Guard.

The officers, issued from the personnel laid out in Chapter III, point 5 might serve in the special units. Nevertheless, when the unit is commanded by an officer issuing from the personnel laid out in Chapter III, point 5, his second will come from other corps of the armed forces or national security forces and vice versa.

Their personnel needs will be completed by other defense and national security corps.

These units and their operational leadership will be equipped with personnel and means conforming to the board for staffing and allocation decreed by means of the duly constituted authority, proposed by the technical security group of the Monitoring Committee.

They have a specialized structure charged with social action to benefit their personnel.

At the date to be fixed by the Minister of Internal Security, proposed by the technical security group and following the recommendation of the Monitoring Committee, the personnel serving in these units will enter training in preparation for the missions assigned to these units. The training programs will be established by the duly constituted authority, proposed by the technical security group and following the recommendation of the Monitoring Committee.

The place of training will be determined by the duly constituted authority, proposed by the technical security group and following the recommendation of the Monitoring Committee. It will likewise serve as the quarters of the personnel laid out in Chapter III, points 4 and 5. It will be placed under the supervision of the technical security group.

The operation of returning the removed arms, munitions, and other materials will occur at these quarters, with the admission of the personnel laid out in Chapter III, points 4 and 5, simultaneously with the regularization of the socio-professional situation of the quartered personnel;

1. Careful management of the officers, sub-officers, and ranking men who left their units of origin during the events of 23 May 2006, if need be integrating them into the special units, harnessing the structure of their administrative, financial, and career situations, as well as their participation in peace-keeping operations.
2. Reinforcing the effective participation of cadres issued from the region in different structures of the State, conforming to the spirit of equality advocated by the National Pact.
3. Creating a fund for development and socioeconomic reintegration for civilian populations – especially youth affected by the events of 23 May 2006, without excluding all the other youth of the Region of Kidal – under the control of the provisional regional council for coordination and monitoring. Additionally, the council will be consulted greatly on the choice of the manager of this fund.
4. Taking into account the backwardness of Kidal in the elaboration and execution of the national budget.
5. Creating professional training centers, with supporting measures.

#### IV. Monitoring Mechanism

1. The following will be assured by a Committee which will ensure the implementation of the measures enumerated below. It will be composed of representatives of the Malian government, the provisional regional council for coordination and monitoring, once it has been created, and the facilitator.

2. It will be established by a decree of the Minister charged with Territorial Administration and Local Collectivities which will mention its composition, modalities of functioning, and its field of territorial authority, understanding that each one of the parties will be represented in it by three members, and that its seat will be established in Kidal.
3. The Monitoring Committee will release periodic reports on the application of the accord and will proceed to a complete evaluation of its implementation one year after its signing, and can recommend any measure toward this implementation directed at the realities on the ground.
4. The Monitoring Committee will adopt its own internal regulation and will create, internally and each time there is need, technical groups, including one for security.

#### V. Priority Measures

1. Insertion of the present accord, after its signature, into the Official Journal of the Republic of Mali
2. A Ministerial Decree concerning the creation of the Monitoring Committee after the signature of the accord
3. Upon the promulgation of the accord, the signature and handover to the Monitoring Committee of the ministerial decree concerning the composition, missions, functioning, and creation in Kidal of the provisional regional council for coordination and monitoring
4. Liberation of all persons detained following the events of 23 May 2006
5. Installation, by the Monitoring Committee, of the technical security group which will be charged, according to the arrangements concerning the creation of the Monitoring Committee, with:
  - Implementing points 2, 3, 4, and 5 of Chapter III of the accord
  - Facilitating the implementation of the return of the military and security presence deployed in the region to its level prior to 23 May 2006
  - Proposing measures appropriate for a better utilization of the competencies of the region in the security and defense institutions of Mali
  - In the framework of the plan for recruiting and training the youth of the region, elaborating a program capable of preparing them to serve, in proportions in balance with operational needs, in the special security units, the corps of the national guard, the gendarmerie, the police, customs, and waters and forests.
6. Promulgation of the law extending for ten years the preferential fiscal and incentive regime defined by the National Pact for the regions of Northern Mali
7. Establishing the funds for development and reintegration provided for by Chapter III, point 7.

#### VI. Final Arrangements

The present accord will be established in three original copies in the French language, signed by each of the two parties and by the facilitator. An original copy will be kept by each of the signatories.

The present accord will be promulgated in the Official Journal of the Republic of Mali.

Done in Algiers, 4 July 2006.

Signed:

8. For the Government of the Republic of Mali, General Kafougouna Koné, Minister of Territorial Administration and Local Collectivities
9. For the May 23 Democratic Alliance for Change, Ahmada Ag Bibi
10. For the facilitator, His Excellency Abdelkrim Gheraieb, Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

**8d. "Instructions Concerning the Islamic Jihadi Project in Azawad," from AQIM's 'Abd al Malik Droukdel to AQIM and Ansar al Din fighters in Timbuktu, discovered February 2013.** Available in English translation at:

[http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/\\_international/\\_pdfs/al-qaida-manifesto.pdf](http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/_international/_pdfs/al-qaida-manifesto.pdf).

**8e. Ahmeyede Ag Ilkamassene, "Azawad: It's Now or Never!" Published in Toumast Press, December 23, 2011.** Available at:

<http://www.toumastpress.com/autres/analyse/196-azawad-maintenant-ou-jamais.html>.

Authors' translation:

The Tamashek people have always opposed those whom they consider invaders. The long resistance to Islamization, or moreover the quasi-permanent resistance to French colonization are some examples. In Mali, a part of the Tamashek people never wanted to form part of this entity prefabricated by the colonizer. Today, all the conditions seem to be propitious for an independence of the Azawad.

The current global configuration means that the chances for creating a Tamashek state, of which Kaocene Ag Gedda, Mohamed Ali Ag Attaher, and Zeyd Ag Attaher dreamed, are more important than they have ever been. Kaocen almost succeeded with his plan to create a modern state during the First World War, but small details such as his rusted cannon during the seizure of Agadez decided otherwise. Mohamed Ali Ag Attaher could not realize his plan because, before independence, France and West African politicians fought his plan for mass modern education for Tamashek children. When he came to have children educated in Arab countries, they [the children] forgot the reasons for which Mohamed Ali Ag Attaher had fought. According to Zeid Ag Attaher, France and Algeria did not support him as they had promised him. To the contrary, Algeria even handed him over to Mali when his combatants lacked both livelihood and arms.

Today, things have changed. Unlike in the time of Kaocene Ag Gedda, the cannon will no longer be rusted and unusable. In the camps of Zakak, Tin-Assalak, and Takalote, short-range missiles, BM 21, BTR 60, surface-to-surface, surface-to-air, and other heavy armaments are located. To these arms, already present, will be added those that will be taken in Malian barracks. Let us recall that Kaocen was not the only one to enter an armed conflict with a blatant disequilibrium in armaments. When the young Alladi Ag Alla was beginning the rebellion in 1963, the sole armament he had was the two rifles that he had taken from two soldiers in TImeyawane together with his friend Tetuka Ag Alladi. When Iyad Ag Ghaly and his companions were beginning the rebellion of June 28, 1990 in Menaka, the only arms that they



had were two old rifles and some ropes. For the first time, if war or rebellion happens, the Tamashek will not launch it with an insurmountable disequilibrium in arms.

Today, the world has a larger capacity to conceive of the formation of new states. Indeed, a large number of countries have acquired their independence in the past twenty years. In Africa, this movement began with Namibia which became independent from South Africa in March 1990. Two years later, it was Eritrea that acquired its independence from Ethiopia. Several months ago, it was South Sudan which became independent from Sudan on July 9, 2011. Likewise in Europe, independences have shaken up maps with the independences of Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo between 2006 and 2008. Asia has not lagged behind with the independence of Xanana Gusmão's East Timor in 2002. In the years to come, other independences will surely see the light of day, creating a favorable global environment for the Azawadian project.

The war in Libya has launched the division of Africa and the monopolization of its resources in a world more and more lacking in raw material. Libya will not know peace and tranquility for a number of years yet. The current National Transitional Council is nothing other than the former companions of Qaddhafi who worked with him up until the beginning of the revolution of February 17 in Benghazi. The Imazighens of Libya are still considered second-class citizens in the country. After their decisive contribution in the fall of Qaddhafi, they will no longer accept this status. If it is necessary, they will take up arms against the new Libyan authorities. Islamists and former Al Qa'ida members have also played a central role in the revolution. They will want to make Libya an Islamic state where only Arab culture is accepted, and shari'a is the only source of law. Not everyone will perceive this in the same way. Also, Libya is a country made up of more than 2,000 tribes. The Qaddhafi regime was the cement that connected these tribes. We can expect every type of abuse and score-settling.

In this context, we can expect still further destabilization in the sub-region. Moreover, the West does not mean to stop here. Its next targets seem to be Syria, Iran, and Algeria. Contrary to Libya, none of these countries will be easy prey for them. They will lose still more feathers there, which will reduce their arms and capacity for action for Mali. Also, Algeria is one of Nicolas Sarkozy's targets. If he is re-elected, we can expect a war in this country. Algeria being currently one of the greatest enemies of the Azawadian project, it will have a smaller chance to hurt it. Additionally, the Kabylis in Algeria, with the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylie and the Autonomous Government of Kabylie at their head, will continue to demand their regions in that country.

The Western world is on a downward trajectory. There is the emergence of new nations like the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). There are economic and financial crises which have continued since 2008. Bernard Madoff and his misappropriations of billions of dollars have created ripples. The confidence of consumers in their institutions has never been so weak. The West is struggling to overcome the situation. Budgetary crises in many American states, in Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain are some examples, among plenty of others, of the weakening of these powers.

For the first time in the history of humanity, revolutions are appearing simultaneously in all the four corners of the earth. When Mohamed Bouaziz was setting himself ablaze in Tunisia, he was not thinking

that he would give birth to a global movement. After the Tunisian people courageously put an end to the reign of Ben Ali, the youth of Egypt took up the torch in permanently occupying Tahrir Square and likewise putting an end to the regime of Ben Ali [sic: Hosni Mubarak]. These same youths continue to demonstrate today in order to put an end to the dictatorship of the Supreme Council of the Army. The wind of revolutions has spread into Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Kuwait, Palestine, and Oman. Popular revolutions are expected in Mauritania. Alongside these popular revolutions, there are movements of outraged people everywhere in the Western world. In this alliance of peoples, sub-Saharan Africa, sooner or later will revolt. A greater audience around the world will thus be receptive to the call and the fight of the Azawadians.

An enormous opportunity presents itself today. Will the Azawadians prove capable of using it wisely? Will the Azawadians be able to combine all these factors into a system with multiple equations, resolve it, and realize the dream held by millions of Tamashek since the French penetration? Let's not let them down.

Mali understands that this current project of the Azawadians has the capacity to be a viable project that will attract the support of millions of Tamashek, to say nothing of the millions of Imazighens, Catalans, Basques, Occitans and other irredentist peoples who will not remain deaf to this call. Also, Mali for the first time knows that eventually the majority of the Tamashek of Mali will ally themselves to the Azawadian project. It is for this reason that every day that God makes, Mali will try to make this project fail, trying everything that it can get its hands on. If the leaders of this project make good decisions at the right moment, the dream of Kaocene Ag Gedda and Mohamed Ali Ag Attaher will become reality, without a doubt.

## **Section Nine: Further Reading**

### **Scholarly Publications and Long-Form Internet Resources**

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Armstrong, Hannah: <https://twitter.com/HannahHaniya>

Atallah, Rudy: <https://twitter.com/RudyAtallah>

Blakesley, Helen: <https://twitter.com/hmblakesley>

Callimachi, Rukmini: <https://twitter.com/rcallimachi>

Diarra, Abdou: [https://twitter.com/Abdou\\_diarra](https://twitter.com/Abdou_diarra)

Felix, Bate: <https://twitter.com/BateFelix>

Hicks, Celeste: <https://twitter.com/ChadCeleste>

Koepf, Tobias: <https://twitter.com/TobiasKoepf>

Konaté, Boukary: <https://twitter.com/Fasokan>

Lebovich, Andrew: <https://twitter.com/tweetsintheME>

Lewis, David: [https://twitter.com/DG\\_Lewis](https://twitter.com/DG_Lewis)

Lyammouri, Rida: <https://twitter.com/rmaghrebi>

Miles, Tommy: <https://twitter.com/tommymiles>

The Moor Next Door: <https://twitter.com/themoornextdoor>

Offner, Fabien: <https://twitter.com/fabienoff>

Paoletta, Phil: <https://twitter.com/philinthe>

Penney, Joe: <https://twitter.com/joepenney>

Sandor, Adam: [https://twitter.com/adam\\_sandor](https://twitter.com/adam_sandor)

Tinti, Peter: <https://twitter.com/petertinti>

Thurston, Alex: <https://twitter.com/sahelblog>

Wing, Susanna: <https://twitter.com/SusannaWing>