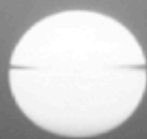


c4ads



GUIDE TO A POST-CONFLICT MALI



Executive Summaryⁱ

“The return of stability in northern Mali will depend in reality on all the local populations and their legitimate representatives. It is they who will have to implement the results of the negotiations, as they are the ones who will build confidence and social cohesion at the local level... [whoever] takes power in Mali, you have to know that the task will be very difficult. New priorities will have to be taken into account and addressed in an objective and realistic way.”

-Elmehdi Ag Muphtah, Tuareg Activist from Timbuktu

In 2012, Mali suffered its worst institutional and security crisis as an independent state. Precipitated by a renewed rebellion led by separatist Tuaregs in the north and a coup d'état in the south, the Malian administration and military were forced to retreat from all of northern Mali. Northern Mali is an area the size of France and is home to a unique combination of ethnic groups, cultures, and languages. It suffers from banditry and organized crime and is heavily dependent on foreign aid. The Tuareg separatist movement, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), allied with al-Qaeda linked militants in 2012 to take over the three major regions in the north: Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal. Shortly after the seizure of these regions, the Islamists sidelined the MNLA and imposed varying degrees of theocratic governance, including Sharia law, on local populations. Following the Islamists' progression further south, the French government decided to intervene in January 2013 with 4,000 combat troops who, along with Malian troops and a coalition of African forces, reconquered the north and dispelled the terrorists from major cities.



As Mali recovers from the conflict and stability is restored, the country faces a new set of challenges compounding upon those existing before the crisis. This guide aims to improve the understanding of the complex factors that led to the multiform crisis and to facilitate the efforts by international organizations, humanitarian and development workers, and the business community to reengage a post-conflict Mali.

The first section addresses issues that enabled and contributed to the current political and security crises. These include a weak economy; dependency on natural resource extraction; pervasive illicit activity in the north; international aid as conflict driver; and the political transition and presidential election. The second section identifies important stakeholders in the southern parts of the country and analyzes their respective roles. The following section addresses key stakeholders in the north. The fourth section contains figures that map and analyze conflict events in Mali between January 2012 and July 2013. The fifth section discusses new aid priorities that have emerged as a result of the crisis. The final section contains maps illustrating environmental conditions and humanitarian logistics capabilities in the eight regions of Mali.

ⁱ This guide was authored by Eric Wulf and Farley Mesko of c4ads, supported by a grant from Working Partners Foundation International. The opinions stated herein are those of the authors and need not represent those of c4ads, Working Partners Foundation, or their directors or associates. Finally, the authors would like to thank Grant Gill, Kim Hoffman, and Allison Schwartz for their valuable contributions.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
I. Themes	4
A. Natural Resource Dependency and Economic Resource Competition	4
Licit Economy	5
Illicit Economy	8
B. Aid as a Conflict Driver	10
Heavy Dependence on Foreign Assistance	10
Empowering Corruption	12
External Priorities	13
Allocation of Resources Fueling Ethnic Rivalries	13
C. Political Transition	15
Pushed for by International Community	15
A Disengaged Electorate	16
Influence of the Junta	16
The Power of Kidal	17
The Ramifications of a Delayed Election	18
II. The South: Key Stakeholders	20
A. An Entrenched Political Class	20
Political Squabbling and Corruption Continue in Bamako	20
Mali's New President	21
Election Map	27
B. Religious Leaders	27
C. Potential Spoiler: Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo	31
III. The North: Key Stakeholders	33
A. National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA)	33
B. High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA)	42
C. Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA)	47
D. Potential Spoiler: Major-Colonel El Hadj Ag Gamou	50
IV. Conflict Events	51
V. New Aid Priorities	57
Promoting National Unity and Reconciliation	57
Improving Governance and Accounting	58
Reintegration	58
Restoring Basic Social Services	59
Disarmament	59
VII. Logistics Planning	60

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Mali Exports by Product, 2010	4
Figure 2. Mali Gold Exports Destinations, 2010	5
Figure 3. Foreign Direct Investment Inflows among Sahel Countries	7
Figure 4. Official Development Assistance and Aid Received	10
Figure 5. Largest Bilateral Aid Flows to Mali	11
Figure 7. Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections among Sahel Countries	16
Figure 8. Mali Population by Region	17
Figure 9. Relative Voting Power by Region	18
Figure 10. Endorsements by Presidential Candidates 2013	27
Figure 11. Map of Regional Affiliations of Government Officials Joining the MNLA	40
Figure 12. MNLA Political Party Affiliations	41
Figure 13. Mali Conflict Events (569)	52
Figure 14. Conflict Events Affiliated with MNLA (113)	53
Figure 15. Conflict Events Affiliated with MAA/FNLA (11)	54
Figure 16. Conflict Events Affiliated with Ansar Dine (156)	55
Figure 17. Conflict Events Affiliated with MUJAO (101)	56
Figure 18. Kayes	60
Figure 19. Bamako and Koulikoro	61
Figure 20. Sikasso	62
Figure 21. Segou and Mopti	63
Figure 22. Timbuktu South	64
Figure 23. Gao	65
Figure 24. Kidal	66

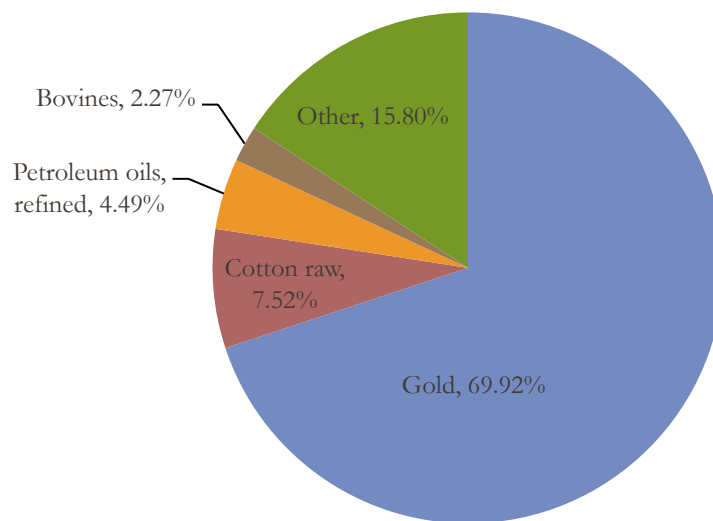
I. Themes

A. Natural Resource Dependency and Economic Resource Competition

A major conflict driver in Mali was competition over limited economic resources. With a GDP of \$10.83 billion in 2011, exports are highly concentrated in the sectors of gold and cotton. Rain-fed subsistence agriculture represents almost a quarter of GDP and is the primary source of income for the majority of inhabitants¹, yet it is hardly an engine of economic growth. Per capita income is a meager \$610 per year², and in the absence of lucrative income-generating activities in the licit economy, a robust illicit economy emerged.

Figure 1. Mali Exports by Product, 2010

Total exports equal \$2,030,171,700



Source: The Observatory of Economic Complexity data. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/>.

Instability resulting from the 2012 coup d'état and the loss of government control of the northern parts of the country augmented the challenges facing an already feeble economy. Prior to the crisis, Mali was growing at a pace consistent with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from 2.7 to 6.1 percent between 2005 and 2011.³ In 2012, Mali's economy contracted 1.5 percent, with the construction and public works sectors plunging 35 percent and tourism-related services reporting a decline of 40 percent.⁴ The northern parts of the country were particularly affected by severe price inflation. In April 2013, fodder prices had risen 167 percent and cereal prices were up to 70 percent higher than the five-year average in parts of the north.⁵ This effect is partially due to the fact that most Arabs and Tuaregs fled from the regional trade hubs of Gao and Timbuktu due to the conflict. Some fear ethnic reprisals against light-skinned populations, while conflict displaced others. Their abrupt departure disrupted the local economy, particularly because these ethnic groups are the major merchants in the region and traditionally control trade routes.

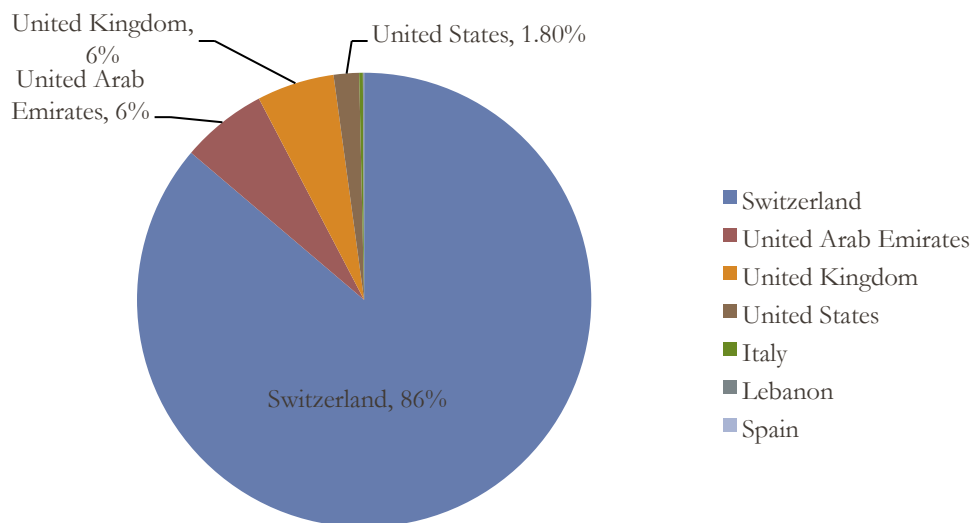
Further economic contraction in 2012 was mitigated by a 12 percent increase in agricultural production (primarily due to a good rainy season) and a 9 percent increase in gold production.⁶

Licit Economy

Mali is the third largest exporter of gold on the continent, behind South Africa and Ghana. Gold makes up the majority of exports and serves as the primary driver of overall GDP growth. It also represents 80 percent of Mali's export earnings as well as a significant share of tax revenues.⁷ Encouraging gold sector performance in 2012 led the Minister of Energy, Mines, and Water to ambitiously proclaim that gold output will double in five years to 100 tons. Unaffected by the political crises in Bamako and the conflict in the north, gold mining operations continued unabated throughout 2012.

The gold sector's resiliency in the midst of the economic malaise facing the rest of the economy can be attributed to four main factors: (1) the geographic location of major mines in the southern and southwestern parts of the country, (2) insulation from the rest of the economy, (3) minimal government influence, and (4) steadily rising gold prices. Interaction with the economy is highly localized and only local populations living in close proximity to mines enjoy the economic benefits. Spillover effects from mining to the rest of the economy at large are limited. Equipment and maintenance services are imported and the raw product is sold for export without value added from other sectors.⁸ Due to the lack of refineries and weak domestic demand, only sparse amounts of gold are available in local markets. Most of the raw mineral is exported to Switzerland.

Figure 2. Mali Gold Exports Destinations, 2010
Total equals \$1,419,439,240



Source: The Observatory of Economic Complexity data, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/>.

Gold mining operations were also relatively immune to government shuffling in 2012 since mines are majority-owned by foreign companies and are run by expatriates. Of the five largest mines, the Government

of Mali holds an interest of 20 percent or less in each.⁹ Mining companies also benefited from a steady rise in gold prices, which have gone from a yearly average of \$363.38 per ounce in 2003 to \$1668.98 in 2012.¹⁰ This rapidly increasing profitability of the gold mining sector outweighed the political instability risks associated with Mali, as evidenced by the continuation of all major companies' operations as well as the entry of several new actors into the sector in 2012-13.¹¹

Canadian mining interests in Mali are significant. Natural Resources Canada reported that at least 15 mining and exploration firms were in the country as of 2010 and had assets worth an estimated \$230 million.¹² The largest gold mining companies in Mali are Randgold (South African), AngloGold Ashanti (South African), Merrex Gold (Canadian), IAMGOLD (Canadian), Resolute Mining Ltd. (Australian), Avneel Gold (Canadian), and Avion Gold (Canadian).¹³

Unfortunately, economic growth in the sector has not been inclusive. Social impacts have been limited to locations with active mines, and increased wages are largely used for consumption and housing purposes, with little diversification of the local economy outside of service provision. As major mining companies' interests in Mali grow, the livelihoods of those working in the largely unregulated artisanal mining sector have been threatened. The government has also discouraged the practice of artisanal mining and has introduced modifications to the mining code to ban these traditional practices.¹⁴ The Malian police quickly suppressed protests led by artisanal mine workers in 2013.

Petrol is the second most important natural resource exported from Mali and made up 4.49% of total exports in 2010, with most petrol exported to the Republic of Korea. The Malian government has actively sought to attract foreign investment into the sector and in 2004 created the Authority for Petroleum Exploration in Mali to promote investment. Also in 2004, the Malian National Assembly enacted law 04-037 to encourage increased foreign investment. The law offers several benefits to outside investors and, according to the Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Water, is an "attractive incentive, and in some cases open to negotiation."¹⁵

The government has divided the country into five petrol basins, which are subdivided into 29 blocks. The basins are located in the northeastern parts of the country: Taoudeni Basin (northern Timbuktu), Gao Graben (central Gao), Iullemeden Basin (southeastern Gao, near the Niger border), Tamnesna Basin (far eastern Mali between Gao and Kidal), and Nara Trough (between Mopti and Segou). The blocks are divided among a plethora of players, and most are majority-owned by private mining companies. Some disguise their identity to hide this fact (e.g., Mali-Petroleum SA is a 95% subsidiary of the Qatari company Sphere Petroleum¹⁶).

Little petrol production has been realized to date, however, and most discussion of oil in Mali centers on speculative potential reserves. These reserves are based off of geological studies that provide analogies to other oil producing basins in Africa (such as in Algeria, Chad, and Sudan).¹⁷

Tangentially, uranium is also a strategically important sector. The Malian government cites potential uranium reserves in the country, but little prospection or exploration have been carried out to date. The carving-up in the 1990s of the northern parts of the country into prospection and exploitation blocks led to environmental concerns among nomadic Tuaregs because of their experiences with open-air uranium mines in Arlit, Niger.¹⁸ Arlit lies around 200 kilometers from the Mali border and is the location of the Somaïr mine—the largest uranium mine in the region.

The French company Areva operates the Somaïr mine and owns 63.6 percent of it (SOPAMIN, the agency that manages Niger's state mining interests, owns the rest).¹⁹ The French government owns more than 85 percent of the company. Areva, the world's second-largest uranium producer, is Niger's single biggest private investor and extracts more than a third of its uranium from country. Approximately one fifth of the raw uranium needed to power France's 58 nuclear reactors comes from Niger.²⁰

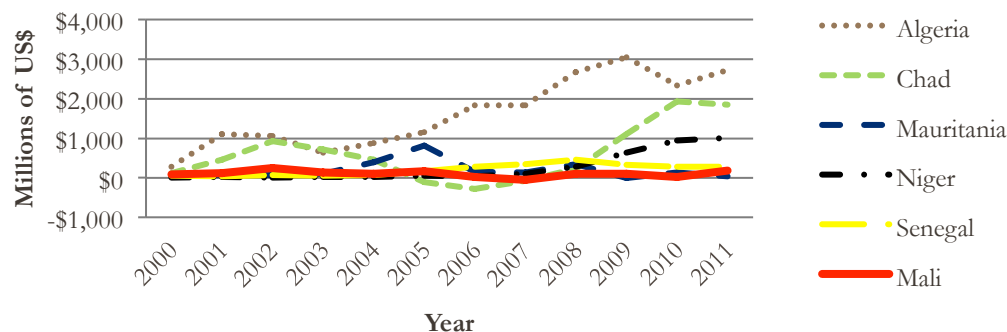
Instability in the region represents a grave threat to France's energy security. Shortly following the decision to intervene in Mali, France ordered its Special Forces to protect the uranium mines in Arlit and Imouraren (also in northern Niger and owned by Areva, it is scheduled to begin operation by September 2015²¹). Like Mali, Niger has also faced similar Tuareg rebellions and insecurity issues in the recent past.

At the time of French intervention in Mali, neo-colonialist critics speculated that a deciding factor was the desire to protect French energy interests in neighboring Niger. Porous borders and cultural similarities between the two countries increase the likelihood that instability in northern Mali can spill over the border into Niger. These fears were realized on May 23, 2013 when two Islamist suicide bombers attacked the Somaïr mine, causing severe infrastructural damage and wounding 14 civilians. Former al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar jointly planned the attack with Movement for Tawhid and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO).²² Both groups occupied parts of northern Mali in 2012.

Foreign investment outside of extractive industries remains low. The Business Anti-Corruption Portal, a project funded by the governments of several Western European countries, stated, "One of the main reasons for the lack of significant foreign investment is the high level of corruption."²³ Main risks cited include onerous contract enforcement mechanisms resulting in out-of-court settlements and bribery; facilitation payments demanded to obtain public utility services (i.e., telephone and water connections); payment of bribes to obtain import licenses; facilitation payments needed when transporting goods across control points within the country; and payment of bribes to secure government contracts. In an annual report released by risk management analysts at Alliant Emerging Markets, Mali was ranked the most dangerous country in the world for business operation in 2013, marking a 60.71 percent decrease from its 2012 country rating.²⁴

While foreign direct investment inflows are low across the region, Mali ranks among one of the lowest (slightly above Mauritania in 2011).

Figure 3. Foreign Direct Investment Inflows among Sahel Countries
(in Millions of US\$)



Source: World Bank data, <http://data.worldbank.org/>.

Illicit Economy

Northern Mali's physical environment is not conducive to the type of subsistence agriculture practiced in the southern parts of the country. Dry soil and sparse amounts of rainfall allow for little else besides pastoralism. This hostile environment necessitated the creation of a strong network of trade routes and merchant networks to facilitate the flow of goods into and through the area. Given northern Mali's geostrategic attributes and the absence of many other income-generating activities, a strong illicit economy ultimately developed. Low opportunity costs, easily permeable borders, and a weak central government allowed this illicit economy to flourish. Organized crime firmly took root in northern Mali beginning in 2006 due to a security vacuum resulting from a renewed Tuareg rebellion, the withdrawal of many Malian military forces in accordance with the Algiers Accord (2006), and increasing profits from drug smuggling. These increasing profits gave merchant networks an incentive to control routes and/or impose transit fees. The three primary illicit activities in northern Mali are smuggling of legal goods, drug trafficking, and kidnapping-for-ransom. Competition over these illicit networks, in addition to government complicity, was a major conflict driver between ethnic groups.

The smuggling of goods in northern Mali built upon the remnants that survived the collapse of long-distance caravan trading in the late 19th century. Arab merchants primarily controlled these routes. Traders and custom officials often made informal arrangements as these goods flowed through the Sahara. Malian Berabiche Arabs are especially important in smuggling due to their social, linguistic, and cultural ties with Arabs throughout North Africa (particularly with those from Mauritania and southern Algeria).

Smuggling of non-narcotics centers on cigarettes and Algerian oil. Subsidized Algerian oil is in high demand due to its below-market price and proximity—oil fields in southern Algeria are usually closer to rural areas in the Sahel than are distant capital cities. Cigarette smuggling also developed into a major and lucrative trade. Cigarettes are generally smuggled through Mali from West African states along the Atlantic en route to Morocco, Libya, or Algeria. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that 60% of the Libyan tobacco market (\$240 million retail) and 18% of the Algerian market (\$228 million retail) consisted of cigarettes smuggled along these routes in 2009.²⁵ As Wolfram Lacher noted in his study of organized conflict in the region, the key enablers to this illicit activity are “legal cigarette importers and distributors, who import their merchandise from free trade zones such as Dubai,” that seek “to circumvent tax regimes or break North African state monopolies on cigarette distribution.”²⁶ Smuggling of these legal goods built the networks and routes for the later smuggling of more lucrative illegal goods.

Building upon these well-established networks and relationships, many traffickers moved from trafficking legal goods to the trafficking of illegal narcotics. A former Tuareg smuggler from Timbuktu reported receiving 100,000 CFA (approximately \$200) for each cigarette shipment, whereas he was paid 1 million CFA (approximately \$2,000) for each cocaine shipment.²⁷ Every car in a convoy trafficking cocaine received 18 million CFA (approximately \$36,000), with the driver and security men being paid a fee and the “boss” keeping the rest.²⁸ As policing of previous drug trafficking routes tightened, northern Mali became a veritable trafficking hub, referred to as “Highway 10” (trafficking routes through Mali lie along the 10th parallel).

Mali is almost never the end stop for these products; rather, merchants use northern Mali as a transit point for items on their way to Europe or other parts of North Africa. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that 18 tons of cocaine, with an estimated street value of \$1.25 billion, travelled through West Africa in 2010—originating primarily from Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. This quantity represents almost 50 percent of non-US bound cocaine.²⁹

The other primary drug smuggled through northern Mali is Moroccan cannabis, destined for Europe and other North African markets. The bulk of cannabis smuggling is run by Malian Arab communities who use their cultural and linguistic ties to facilitate its trade.³⁰ While there is evidence that the conflict in Mali disrupted cocaine trade routes, cannabis routes have continued unabated and represent an important source of funding for continued operations of separatist and Islamist movements.

The local population is also intimately tied with these drug trafficking networks. An advisor from the Malian Embassy in Washington, D.C. stated that local tribal chiefs control the trade and receive up to 1.5 million CFA (approximately \$3,000) for each deal.³¹

Many northern Malians believe that criminal networks and local notables invoke Islam as a cover for control of the drug trade. A prominent Gao Arab declared, “They invoke jihad to spread terror among their enemies, claiming ‘self-defense’ against those who conspire to undermine the foundations of Muslim values. However, what really matters to them is money. Members of Ansar Dine declare their support for Sharia, but then we spot them sipping beers at the Laïco Hotel in Ouagadougou or hopping between brothels in Bamako.”³²

Kidnapping-for-ransom is another highly profitable and prevalent activity in northern Mali. While rarely utilized by separatist movements, it was the primary economic engine for AQIM and MUJAO. Although little information is known about specific ransom payments, the former US Ambassador to Mali, Vicki Huddleston, estimates that terrorist groups netted \$90 million in ransom payments.³³ Primary targets are citizens of European countries known to negotiate and pay ransoms in the event of kidnappings. MUJAO, for example, appears to still be doing well financially from the profits of its release of an Italian and two Spanish hostages in July 2012. MUJAO still holds several Algerian diplomats hostage, representing a potential economic resource in the future. The financial power accumulated through kidnapping-for-ransom activities, as well as several hostages not yet released, may have influenced Iyad Ag Ghaly’s Ansar Dine to abandon the MNLA and ally with AQIM.

Kidnapping activities have resulted in a vicious cycle in the region: increased kidnappings result in decreased tourism, which leads to increased criminal activity. As the already weak local economy is further strained by the decrease in tourism, local populations are further incentivized to participate in the illicit economy to sustain economic livelihood.

Competition over economic resources has contributed to the aggravation of communal rivalries and the formation of ethnic militias. While the Arab population has traditionally controlled trade networks in northern Mali, other groups were attracted by the profitability that control over these networks brought. Profits from these activities were often used to invest in livestock and local infrastructure, fueling tensions between communities over these resources.³⁴ As competition grew, smugglers formed ethnic militias to protect their interests. The Malian government actively supported the formation and mobilization of Arab militias, which it used to fight Tuareg rebels while turning a blind eye to their drug trafficking connections. Tuareg rebel leader Ibrahim Ag Bahanga began harassing Arab smuggling convoys in northern Mali in 2008; in response, Arab businessmen offered their support to the Malian government. The government readily accepted their offer, especially since many Malian military forces in Kidal demobilized pursuant to the Algiers Accord in 2006. In response, Ifoghas Tuareg militias allied with Kounta Arab militias to vie for control over smuggling routes against the government-supported Imghad Tuareg and Tilemsi Arab militias. A key demand of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga in 2007 was the demilitarization of Tinzaouaten, the border zone between Algeria and Mali. Tinzaouaten also happens to be one of the most important trafficking zones between West Africa and Algeria.³⁵ Government sanctioning of certain militias allowed extremist elements within them to continue

unchecked and become deeply rooted. Many members of MUJAO came from the same Tilemsi Arab militias supported by the government. Mohamed Ould Awāinet, a Timbuktu businessman and Tilemsi Arab, was briefly imprisoned for his connections to cocaine filled Boeing airplane that crashed in the desert in 2009. Shortly thereafter, President Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT) freed him for undisclosed reasons. Awāinet would later join MUJAO.³⁶ Other Arab militia financiers and businessmen involved in criminal activity who would later support MUJAO include Cherif Ould Taher, Baba Ould Cheikh, and Mohamed Ould Ahmed “Rouji”.³⁷

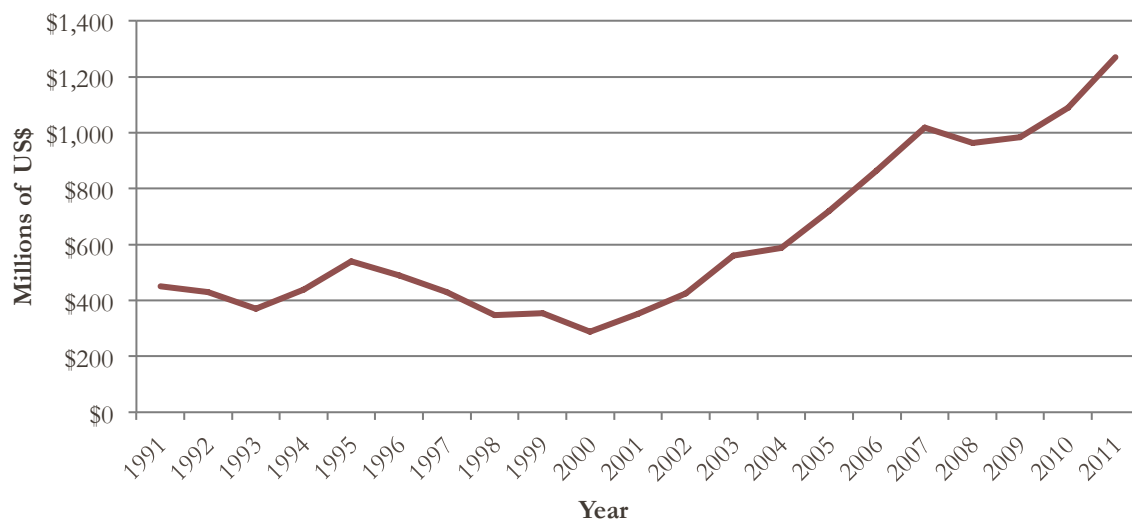
B. Aid as a Conflict Driver

Classified by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as one of 39 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries and with few engines of economic growth, international aid plays an essential part in the Malian economy. However, the distribution, use, and allocation of these resources had a destabilizing role on Malian political and communal harmony, contributing to the emergence of the current conflict. Adding to the litany of problems the country faced, the March 2012 coup d'état and takeover of the north by armed groups disrupted several vital flows of international aid and complicated the operational logistics of those humanitarian and development organizations that continued to operate in the country during the conflict.

Heavy Dependence on Foreign Assistance

Prior to the coup d'état, the Malian government was heavily reliant on international aid and support to address the most basic needs and services of the population. These funds were also vital for daily government expenses. Due to its reputation as a beacon of democracy in a region plagued by political instability, Mali had increasingly become a “donor darling” of the international community. Official development assistance sent to Mali increased almost three-fold from 1991 to 2011.

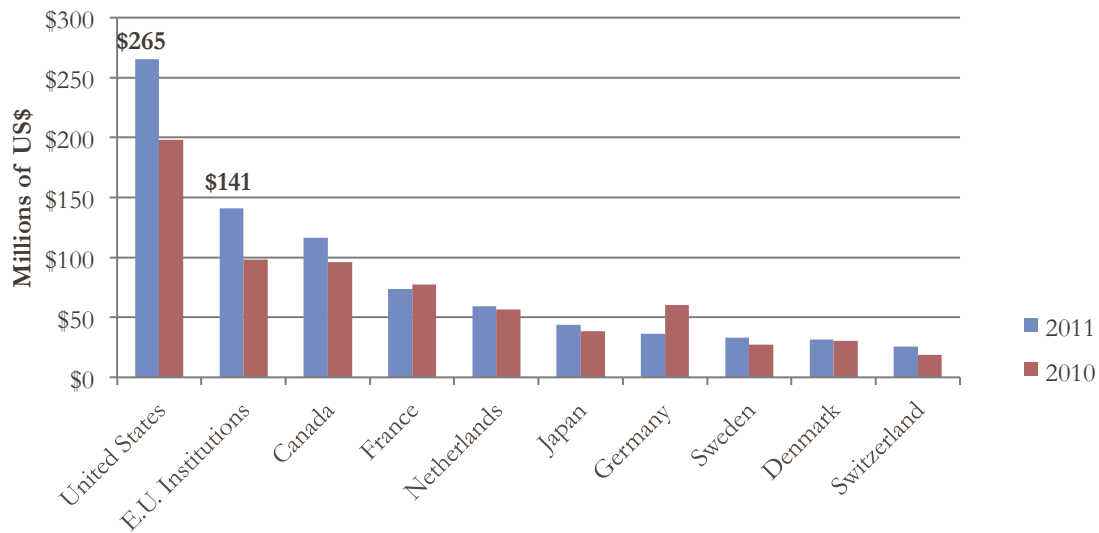
Figure 4. Official Development Assistance and Aid Received
(in Millions of US\$)



Source: World Bank data, <http://data.worldbank.org/>.

Mali was a favored recipient of development projects by organizations that deliver so-called “smart” foreign assistance, like the US agency the Millennium Challenge Corporation. These organizations require countries to achieve certain benchmarks in regards to good governance, rule of law, and economic freedom—of which Mali was touted as an example—even if donors neglected the shaky ground upon which these institutions stood. The US alone provided \$265 million to Mali in bilateral aid flows in 2011. Along with several other countries and non-governmental organizations, the US cut all aid money to the government of Mali as a result of the coup d’état except for funds dedicated to specific sectors that were not destined for government coffers (e.g., emergency humanitarian assistance and democracy assistance programming). After President ATT was deposed, the US terminated or suspended \$188 million in assistance.³⁸ The US, in addition to several other countries, is legislatively prohibited from giving aid to a military-installed government. The US consequently pressured Mali to hold democratic elections by July 2013 so that bilateral aid flows could resume.

Figure 5. Largest Bilateral Aid Flows to Mali
(in Millions of US\$)



Source: World Bank data, <http://data.worldbank.org/>.

The suspension of direct budget support (aid delivered directly to the government) by donors significantly contributed to the contraction of economic activity in 2012. The Mali Budget Tracking Group, a civil society coalition that provides oversight of national and local budgetary processes, estimated that the suspension of international aid following the coup d’état has reduced the state budget by about one-third compared with original expectations.³⁹ Budget support rose from 12 percent of official development assistance in 1999 to 42 percent by 2009.⁴⁰ Foreign aid comprised an astounding 27.6 percent of the state’s general budget between 1996 and 2005.⁴¹ Mali’s superficial attainment of democratic benchmarks invited an increased flow of foreign aid money that was directly managed by a corrupt government.

Empowering Corruption

While it is difficult to establish a causal relationship between the increased flows of foreign aid and increased corruption, corruption levels were already very high in Mali and had been for quite some time. The dramatic increase of aid, especially direct budget assistance, throughout the 2000s further empowered an already corrupt regime and tightened its grip on the country's institutions. According to measures of perceived corruption in Mali, 2012—the year of the coup d'état—represented the single largest change in corruption levels; perceptions of corruption improved by over 20 percent after the ousting of President ATT.

Figure 6. Corruption Perceptions Index Score
Scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean)

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mali	3	3.2	2.9	2.8	2.7	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.8	3.4
Worldwide Average	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.0	4.0	3	4.0	4.3

Source: Transparency International data, <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/>.

President ATT was not technically associated with any political party and ran as an independent candidate in the presidential elections of 2002 and 2007. The president governed by what was known as “consensus” politics,” a broad-based coalition of all political parties and some civil society groups. This method of governance had the effect of stifling most opposition. The political spoils offered through association with the ruling coalition undermined most opposition; would-be political opponents were easily co-opted into the ATT regime.⁴²

Despite the dizzying rise of official development assistance and aid, the pervasive corruption of the former Malian political system was no secret. Many actors within the ATT government benefited from, or were at least complicit with, drug trafficking and kidnapping-for-ransom activities in the north.⁴³ In a study of the effect of direct budget assistance in Mali, a European Commission study noted “significant weaknesses in treasury management and in public accounting.”⁴⁴ A 2011 annual report from the Malian Auditor General found that misuse of funds (fraud) and financial mismanagement resulted in over 10 billion CFA (approximately \$20 million) in financial irregularities. The Auditor General noted the gravity of the situation in his report, explaining that “the State is purely and simply stripped and robbed. The situation is all the more alarming in regards to its real victims, some of whose servants who are supposed to embody them, represent them, and who are supposed to defend their interests, are their own executioners.”⁴⁵

In 2010, after conducting an audit of its programming in Mali, the Geneva-based Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria found that more than \$300,000 of its aid grants had been confirmed as stolen by the Ministry of Health.⁴⁶ This well-publicized case received international attention and resulted in the arrests of seven workers at the Ministry, including the director of finance. Despite reports such as these, direct budget assistance continued. This evident corruption contributed to Malians' dissatisfaction with their government. There was little public support for the return of President ATT and his cronies in the streets of Bamako following the March 2012 coup d'état. Misspent aid money was part of the problem under ATT, and will continue to be so unless disbursement mechanisms are changed and better monitored.

External Priorities

Direct budget support gave donors less visibility and control over how public actors used funds, which facilitated their ability to expropriate the money. In addition, there were multiple other ways that foreign aid flows contributed to destabilization in Mali. Funds were often attached with specific conditions and targeted sectors that were not a priority for the populace. A poor understanding of societal and structural issues at play also served to aggravate the situation. In addition to long-standing grievances, the current crisis can also be attributed to extraverted development and state building.

Several sectors targeted by the international community were socially unpopular in the country. Cotton was one of them. Cotton is a highly strategic sector in Mali, providing income for 28 percent of the population.⁴⁷ The *Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Textiles* (CMDT) has a monopoly on Malian cotton production and controls 95% of cotton production in the country.⁴⁸ CMDT was previously majority state-owned, but beginning in 2000 the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began a push to privatize the company in order to make Malian cotton prices more competitive on the international market. As a result of this significant external pressure, the National Assembly approved a law in July 2008 to divest the majority of its 60 percent share in the company in a privatization plan that would divide the company into four subsidiaries and offer them for sale.⁴⁹ Some NGOs, such as Oxfam International, warned that these modifications would force cotton farmers to directly absorb the effects of downward-trending world cotton prices, thus increasing rural poverty. The plan was met by significant resistance from the local population; agriculture unions protested against it particularly vociferously. For many Malians, this externally imposed project perpetuated the idea that the government was out-of-touch with its rural, poor electorate and willingly cooperated with equally out-of-touch international agendas.

Another major point of contention was the reformation of the Family Code in 2009, which had been an objective of many Western donors since the 1990s. The most controversial reforms regarded granting more rights to women and children, such as raising the minimum age of consent to 18 years old, mandating consent of the first spouse if a man is to take more than one wife, and giving status and rights to children born outside of marriage. Nordic donors, Canadian diplomats, humanitarian organizations, and other international partners like USAID heavily advocated for the amendments.⁵⁰ With little public debate, the National Assembly adopted the legislation by an overwhelming margin. This new Family Code was deeply unpopular with Mali's Muslim population, and the influential High Islamic Council of Mali organized a mass rally against the code shortly after it was adopted. Within five days, intense public pressure forced President ATT to ask the National Assembly to redraft it.⁵¹

In education, many religious organizations and international donors have tried to support the government by focusing on providing and supporting primary education.⁵² This has been to the detriment of Mali's only public university and has resulted in a poorly trained professional class. Most of Mali's elite attended higher education institutions outside of the country, resulting in a concentrated political class made up of wealthy families—a group that is not representative of the Malian population.

Allocation of Resources Fueling Ethnic Rivalries

Several prior initiatives designed to alleviate problems in the north had the opposite effect. The result was increased discontent with the central government in Bamako and worsening inter-ethnic tensions.

One prominent example was the ill-fated UN Development Programme's "Program for the Support of Ex-Combatants in Northern Mali (PAREM)" after the 1990s rebellion. €4.2 million were intended for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, but this sum was disproportionately distributed to one ethnic group, the Ifoghas Tuaregs, and directly used to buy loyalty and consolidate power at the expense of their ethnic rivals, the Imghad Tuaregs.⁵³ The money was not distributed through the government or civil society organizations, but through the armed movements themselves. Klute and Trotha noted that the allocation of funds "reflected nearly exclusively the power relations between the various rebel groups and the state of Mali at the time of the negotiations." The Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA), mostly made up of Ifoghas Tuaregs, received the largest share (31.3 percent) and used these resources as a sort of patronage system to reward loyalty, further cement their power base, and attract other ethnic groups. Klute and Trotha commented that the Ifoghas used PAREM to "consolidate and strengthen their position of power as winners of the internal war in the Adagh [northeastern Kidal]."⁵⁴ The Revolutionary Liberation Army of Azawad (ARLA), primarily composed of Imghad Tuaregs, only received only 13.4 percent of PAREM funds. Demonstrating a lack of forethought, PAREM attempted to settle the conflict by empowering certain ethnic groups over others. These rivalries would continue to fester and exacerbate ethnic divisions.

In an effort to address the security issues and terrorist activities in the north, the international community donated a total of \$60 million to the Special Program for Peace, Security, and Development of Northern Mali (PSPDN), which sought to "reestablish a security and administrative presence of the state in eleven strategic cities."⁵⁵ The funds were supposed to be used for military security, health, education, and economic development, but the central government overwhelmingly focused on military security. Once distributed, the international community did not effectively monitor the use of the funds by the central government. The Malian government did not adequately consult the northern communities and the overemphasis on security had the effect of alienating northern populations. PSPDN aimed to improve state capacity in the north, but the government did not use the funds to address the central issues or grievances of the northern populations.⁵⁶ A leading notable and elected official from Kidal, Alghabass Ag Intalla, vehemently protested PSPDN. In 2012, Intalla would become a leading figure in the separatist rebellion.

Another major initiative implemented to resolve the issues in the north was the much-touted policy of decentralization. In an attempt to address Tuareg demands for increased autonomy and better government in the north, Kidal was created as its own administrative region in 1991 (formerly it had been a part of the Gao region), and 703 communes were created across the country, each electing their own municipal authorities. This program was heavily supported by the US Agency for International Development and was intended to give local communities more prominent voice in local affairs. However, a weak and corrupt central government only yielded weak and corrupt local governments. Decentralization ultimately became a tool used by local elites to skim the coffers of local budgets and tax collections.⁵⁷ In this way, decentralization simply resulted in the permeation of corruption from Bamako to local governments.

C. Political Transition

In early 2012, preparations were underway for a presidential election that would mark the third democratic transition of executive power in Mali. While there was little optimism among the people that the election would install a new leader from outside of Mali's traditional political class, the transition would reinforce Mali's reputation as a stable democratic system within a turbulent region. The military-mutiny turned coup d'état led by mid-ranking officer, Captain Amadou Sanogo, stymied these plans.

Shortly after the coup d'état, under pressure from the international community (notably the regional body ECOWAS), the military junta handed power over to a transitional government on April 12, 2012 and appointed an interim president, Dioncounda Traoré. The new government was tasked with reestablishing constitutional order and organizing new elections within a year.

Following French intervention in January 2013, French authorities pressured the transitional government to adopt a "roadmap for transition" with a primary objective of organizing new elections. Originally, presidential and legislative elections were scheduled to take place between April and July 2013.⁵⁸ The roadmap acknowledged that government funds could not cover all of the costs and that external support would be needed. Foreign governments and donors used this roadmap as justification for an outpouring of money and resources to support Mali. As complications arose and the feasibility of the timeline was called into question, French President François Hollande declared that he would be "inflexible" on the holding of the presidential election in July.⁵⁹ The Malian government shortly thereafter announced that the first round of the presidential election would take place July 28; if no candidate won a simple majority, a runoff would be held between the top two candidates on August 11.⁶⁰ The signing of the Preliminary Agreement to the Presidential Election and the Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali between the Malian transitional authorities and the two main Tuareg separatist groups on June 18 permitted the organization of the election in Kidal.⁶¹ The agreement also required that renewed negotiations to determine the definitive status of the region of Azawad would take place 60 days after the installation of the new government.⁶²

Pushed for by International Community

The international community strongly urged for elections to be held as soon as possible. A condition of French intervention was the adoption of the roadmap for transition. Many foreign governments and donors also wanted to see a credible commitment by the transitional authorities to return power to a democratically-elected government.

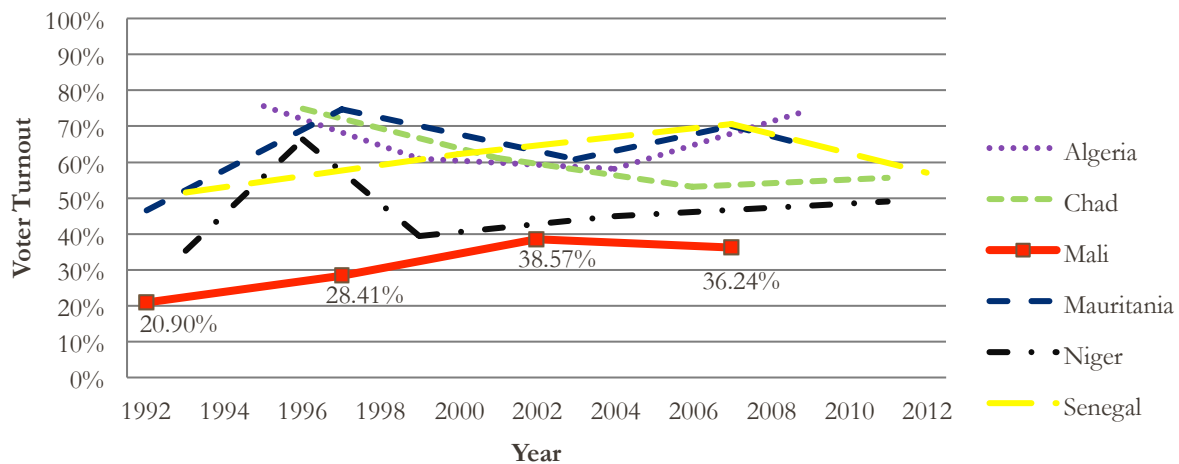
The price tag for the election was estimated at \$295 million.⁶³ The costs associated with its organization were beyond that of a financially-strained Malian government. The UN Development Programme, the European Commission, France, and several other bodies have devoted significant human and financial resources, notably through the International Donor Conference for Development in Mali that took place in Brussels May 15, 2013, which raised €3.25 billion.⁶⁴

Many Malians do not see the holding of presidential elections as the country's most urgent need when there are more pressing security, economic, education, health, and social problems as a result of the crisis. A Malian translator working for the EU Training Mission in Mali stated, "Most believe that [elections] are only being held for the outside world and not for the benefit of Mali."⁶⁵

A Disengaged Electorate

A historically disengaged and disaffected electorate also poses a serious threat to the legitimacy of any election held in Mali. Contrary to the traditional narrative of Mali as a model of democracy in West Africa, its roots and foundations were never strong. Since Mali's first democratic elections in 1992, voter turnout has never been high. Participation in presidential elections has never surpassed 40% (and participation is even lower in legislative elections). While low education levels, a rural electorate, and a short history with democracy may inhibit voter participation, these same impediments face other countries in the region. Yet, Mali has by far the lowest voter turnout among other countries in the Sahel.

Figure 7. Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections among Sahel Countries



Source: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance data, <http://www.idea.int/vt/>.

An overall lack of faith in and knowledge of the political actors and the political process may explain weak participation. From an opinion poll conducted in Bamako in February 2013, over 50 percent of respondents said they did not approve of the National Assembly.⁶⁶ 76.8 percent of respondents did not know the name of their parliamentarian and only 7.6 percent claimed to know the roadmap for transition. Frustration with political parties was also exceptionally high. 89.1 percent said that political parties are not concerned with the resolution of the crisis and 40.1 percent believed that the political parties are only pursuing selfish interests. In a separate poll from December 2012, Malians had more trust in the army than in political leaders. Over two-thirds of respondents trusted the army, whereas only 43 percent and 42 percent trusted the interim President and the National Assembly, respectively.⁶⁷

Influence of the Junta

Another factor threatening Mali is the role that leaders close to the military junta will play. Coup leader Captain Sanogo already demonstrated his ability to influence government actors when forces loyal to him arrested interim Prime Minister Cheick Modibo Diarra and forced him to resign in December 2012. According to an army spokesperson, Diarra was allegedly “not getting along” with Captain Sanogo.⁶⁸

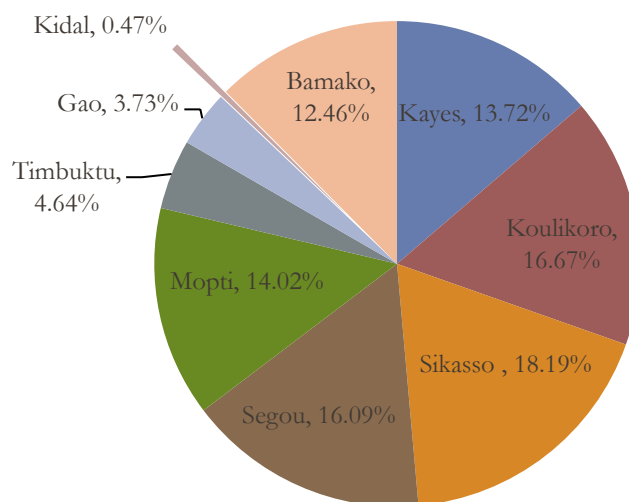
Colonel Moussa Sinko Coulibaly, a close associate of Captain Sanogo, leads the Ministry of Territorial Administration—the ministry most instrumental to the administration of elections. Captain Sanogo appointed Colonel Coulibaly as the director of his cabinet during his brief reign as president.⁶⁹ In his current role, Colonel Coulibaly appoints the governors of each of Mali's eight regions as well as the prefects of each administrative circle. He also introduced a modification to Decree 95-210, which would ease the processes of nominating military officers to local government posts.⁷⁰ These changes were criticized as an attempt to reward military friends by naming them to government positions.

The winner of the presidential election, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, is widely perceived as an ally of Captain Sanogo and a sympathizer of the coup d'état. He disassociated himself in 2012 from the anti-coup political movement, the Front for the Protection of Democracy (FDR), and began echoing the rhetoric of Captain Sanogo in his political statements. The Malian press reported that during the major Muslim holiday of Eid El Fitr, Keïta went to Captain Sanogo's house to celebrate.⁷¹

The Power of Kidal

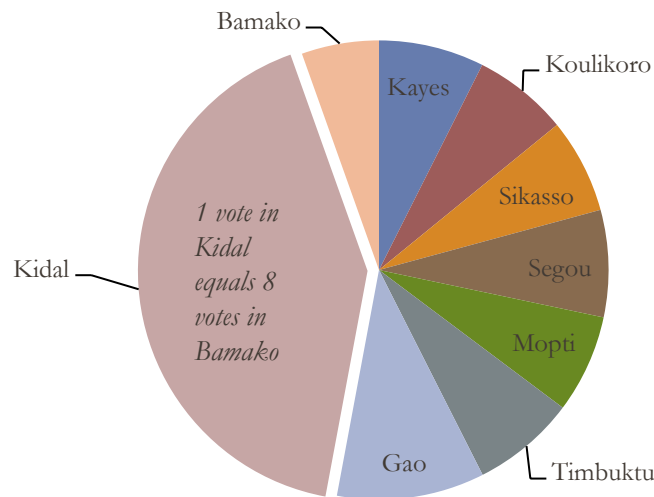
Kidal has been a troubled region for the Malian administration since the country's independence, beginning with the first Tuareg rebellion in 1963. Notwithstanding marked cultural, ethnic, and geographic differences, the region is firmly viewed as an integral piece of Malian territory by almost all Malians. Yet despite its notoriety, the population of Kidal is less than 0.5 percent of the entire Malian population. Even with such a low population, elections without participation from that region will not be considered legitimate. After years of rebellions, grievances, negotiations, and agreements, the region of Kidal has been granted significant administrative concessions and increased representation in the central government. As a result, Kidal is incredibly overrepresented in such bodies as the National Assembly. There is one representative for approximately every 17,000 residents in Kidal, which makes the Kidal representatives an influential voting bloc.⁷² In comparison, there is one representative for approximately every 130,000 residents in Bamako.

Figure 8. Mali Population by Region



Source: 2009 Census, Mali National Institute of Statistics, <http://instat.gov.ml/>.

Figure 9. Relative Voting Power by Region
Based on deputies in National Assembly vs. population size



Source: Mali Ministry of Territorial Administration and Mali National Institute of Statistics data, <http://instat.gov.ml/>.

The Ramifications of a Delayed Election

While some groups and organizations called for a postponement of the July 28 presidential vote to “allow authorities adequate time to prepare and ensure that those citizens who wish to vote can do so,”⁷³ delaying the process would have seriously contributed to further instability.

Many Malians are weary of political and economic uncertainty and are eager to move forward through the election of a new president. When asked if the population would accept the results of the July election as legitimate, a Gao native replied, “I think so. Malians are tired of the political instability and of the economic situation of the country.”⁷⁴

Following the coup d'état, foreign donors suspended or cancelled large amounts of bilateral assistance. After the adoption of the roadmap to transition, some assistance to Mali resumed, but the US—Mali's single largest bilateral donor—is legislatively prohibited from delivering most types of aid until a democratic transition occurs. Even though donors pledged €3.25 billion to Mali at a Brussels conference in May, the release of much of these funds is contingent upon a democratic transition. This external assistance and aid is necessary to rehabilitate the Malian economy and basic social services in the north.

Postponing the election also would have violated the terms of the Preliminary Agreement for the Presidential Election and for Inclusive Peace Negotiations in Mali signed in June 2013 between the Malian government and the principle Tuareg-led rebel groups; a delay may have led to increased insecurity and violence in Kidal. In the agreement, the Malian government and the two main Tuareg-led rebel groups based in Kidal—the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA)—agreed on two major points. These were (1) conditions to permit the organization of the presidential election and (2) negotiations to establish a definitive peace and determine the administrative status of Azawad. The agreement specifically stipulated that the election would take place in July and that the renewed negotiations to resolve the Azawad issue would follow 60 days after the installation of the new

government. The MNLA/HCUA agreed to disarm only after these definitive talks. Prolonging the time that the MNLA/HCUA maintains weapons may only raise tensions and contribute to further conflict in Kidal. Furthermore, a postponement may have caused the MNLA/HCUA to question the commitment of the Malian government to the agreement. An MNLA spokesperson told *France 24*, “We never said that we will lay down weapons...We are cautious...We are waiting for a legitimate president.”⁷⁵

II. The South: Key Stakeholders

A. An Entrenched Political Class

A leading justification for the 2012 coup d'état was a corrupt political class, so firmly entrenched by patronage systems and political machines that the possibility of a change in leadership through elections seemed remote. Observers also saw this as an explanation for the lack of popular mobilization for the return of President Amadou Toumani Touré; in fact, many civil society organizations firmly supported the coup.⁷⁶ Captain Sanogo often framed his reasons for conducting the coup as the only solution to save the country's democracy from predatory political elite.

Despite these grievances, the political leaders in Bamako have not changed. Captain Sanogo was quickly forced to hand over power to a transitional government made up of the same officials he rebelled against. The average Malian tends to blame the political class for the governance and corruption issues facing the country, but this political class is intimately mingled in Malian society. They are the benefactors of local NGOs, civil society organizations, villages, and businesses. Malians constantly call for new political leaders, but it is unsure from where these leaders would or should come. The current incentives remain and “wiping the slate clean” simply is not an option.⁷⁷ A 2013 presidential candidate stated, “There have never been real elections in Mali, because it is just handing over of power to friends.”⁷⁸

In regards to the 2013 presidential election, Malian university professor and political analyst Issa Ndiaye says, “Maliens can expect more of the same... there is a feeling that things are going to go back to business as usual.”⁷⁹ And the earlier elections occur, the more likely the same leaders will be put back into place. In the chaos surrounding the takeover of the north and foreign intervention, new political faces have had little time to emerge. The 2013 presidential election may have the effect of solidifying the grip of the ruling group. Although current members of the transitional government cannot present themselves as candidates for the presidential or legislative elections, their parties and the candidates they support stand to benefit.

“In Mali, the political parties are all born from the same father and the same mother. Only their first names are different,” said Kassoum Tapo, a deputy in the National Assembly from Mopti.⁸⁰ The “mother and father” referenced is the Alliance for Democracy in Mali-African Party for Solidarity and Justice (ADEMA-PASJ)—a well-established political machine, present everywhere in Mali. ADEMA-PASJ was founded in the early 1990s and brought together opponents of the dictator Moussa Traoré. Since the democratic transition, all of Mali's three previous presidents (Alpha Oumar Konaré, Amadou Toumani Touré, and Dioncounda Traoré) have been tied in one way or another to this party.⁸¹ Currently, ADEMA-PASJ holds the plurality of seats in the National Assembly. In addition, the three top finishers in the 2013 presidential election are also connected to the party. Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta (often called IBK) was president of the ADEMA-PASJ until 2001. He was overlooked as the presidential candidate for the party in the 2002 election so he broke off and formed Rally for Mali (RPM).⁸² Soumaïla Cissé was a co-founder of ADEMA-PASJ and he was the candidate chosen over IBK in the 2002 race.⁸³ After losing, he founded his own Union for the Republic and Democracy (URD) party. The third place candidate, Dramane Dembélé, was selected to represent ADEMA-PASJ in the current presidential race.

Political Squabbling and Corruption Continue in Bamako

According to a French diplomat, “The discourse of the Malian political class is pathetic! Not a man stands out... An advisor of Blaise Compaoré was telling me: ‘Mali can collapse and, provided that Bamako remains,

they will all quarrel for the scraps of power in Bamako.’ It’s exactly what you see. Two-thirds of the territory has slipped from the sovereignty of the Malian state and we have a political class who still quarrels to be in government.”⁸⁴

Bickering and squabbling among the political class has continued unabated since the coup d’état. Most of these disputes consist of petty rivalries or competition over government contracts and resources. Recent incidents are mostly linked to Prime Minister Django Cissoko, who was appointed in December 2012. Following the visit from the French Foreign Affairs Minister, Laurent Fabius, in April, there were reports from Malian media that Mr. Cissoko resigned, allegedly due to a “lack of respect”⁸⁵ from Malian Foreign Affairs Minister, Tiéman H. Coulibaly. A Malian embassy official confided that this “lack of respect” alluded to Mr. Coulibaly dismissing Mr. Cissoko from a meeting with Mr. Fabius.⁸⁶ His pride wounded, a brash Mr. Cissoko telephoned President Dioncounda Traoré to declare his resignation. It was only after much mollification that President Traoré was able to persuade Mr. Cissoko to remain in government.

In an unexpected move, Prime Minister Cissoko announced a cabinet reshuffling on June 22, 2013. While five ministers were reassigned, the move was principally viewed as a sanction against Minister of Economy, Finance, and Budget Tiéna Coulibaly, who was reassigned to the less strategically important post of Minister of Commerce and Industry. Several reasons were posited, but the reshuffling appears to be due to Minister Tiéna Coulibaly’s reluctance to follow Prime Minister Cissoko’s agenda. In early April, the Prime Minister circumvented the Minister of Economy’s authority and bought 55 vehicles for the offices of the Prime Minister and the President—even though the Prime Minister had previously denied a request by the Minister of Economy to obtain 200 new vehicles for the poorly equipped Malian military.⁸⁷ A leaked note attributed to the International Monetary Fund provided more insight into the cabinet reshuffle. The note said the reshuffle was due to the Minister of Economy’s refusal to quickly push through a series of dubious financial transactions (several of which were with Chinese companies).⁸⁸ The Minister of Economy also questioned the authority of the transitional government to negotiate these deals, noting that the current government’s mandate was limited. Tiéna Coulibaly was replaced by Abdel Kader Konaté—a member of the Prime Minister’s party, ADEMA-PASJ. Konaté is perceived to be more susceptible to political pressure.

Despite the international spotlight, a limited mandate, and incredibly fragile institutions, incidences of squabbling and corruption among the political elite continue. This does not bode well for a future government, especially considering that the leading presidential candidates are all part of this traditional class. A Malian working for the EU Training Mission said, “The current government is a continuance of the governments who preceded it. Corruption is constantly growing and injustice is frequent; the population does not believe in a just and competent government to direct the country as is necessary.”⁸⁹

Mali’s New President

After winning a plurality, but failing to win an overall majority in the first round of the presidential election on July 28, 2013, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta faced off against Soumaïla Cissé in a runoff election on August 11. Early results overwhelmingly favored Mr. Keïta. The following day, Mr. Cissé visited Mr. Keïta at his home in Bamako and conceded the race.⁹⁰



Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta

("IBK," "Ladjî Bourama")
Rally for Mali (RPM)

Biography⁹¹

- Born January 25, 1945 in Koutiala, Sikasso.

Education^{92, 93, 94}

- Earned scholarship to Lycée Janson de Sailly, Paris, 1958; also attended Lycée Askia Mohamed, Bamako
- Two advanced degrees in Political Science (1978) and History of Contemporary International Relations (1979) from Université de Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne, Paris.

Employment/Political Activity^{95, 96, 97, 98, 99}

- Activist in Association of African Students in France.
- Head of Research, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)
- Taught classes on Third World Political Systems at Université Paris Tolbiac.
- 1986: Principal technical advisor for European Development Fund (EDF) in Mali.
- Director of West Africa Programs, Terre des Hommes (an NGO).
- From 1986 onwards, participated in pro-democracy demonstrations ultimately contributing to ouster of General Moussa Traoré in 1991.
- May 1991: Elected Secretary of International and African Relations for ADEMA-PASJ.
- 1992: Assistant Director of Alpha Oumar Konaré's presidential campaign.
- June 1992: Appointed Spokesperson and Advisor to the President.
- November 1992: Appointed Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Mali to Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Niger, and Burkina Faso.
- November 1993: Appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malians Abroad, and African Integration.
- September 1994: Elected President of Executive Committee of ADEMA-PASJ at party's first ordinary Congress.
- February 1994-February 2000: Prime Minister of Mali.
- 1999: Re-elected President of Executive Committee of ADEMA-PASJ; became Vice President of Socialist International.
- 2000: Left ADEMA-PASJ with a group of supporters due to factionalization and "disagreements within the party."
- June 2001: Established RPM.
- 2002: Ran as RPM presidential candidate in elections; third runner-up behind Amadou Toumani Touré and Soumaila Cissé with 21% of votes in first round.
 - Established Hope 2002 coalition of activists from RPM, CNID, and MPR among others to help him in election.
 - Decried alleged election fraud but ultimately agreed to abide by Constitutional Court ruling that election results were acceptable.
- September 2002-2007: President of National Assembly, elected with 115/138 votes.
- 2002 and 2007: Elected Deputy of Commune IV in Bamako and president of National Assembly.
- 2007: Established the Front for Democracy and the Republic (FDR) opposition coalition to support his bid against Amadou Toumani Touré in 2007 presidential elections.
 - Won 18.59% of vote, lost by landslide to Touré.
- 2009-2010: Member of National Assembly Commission on Foreign Affairs, Malians Abroad, and African Integration.

Political Positions^{100, 101, 102}

- Strongly supports national unity; "Mali must remain one and indivisible." He says he is willing to talk with "anyone who is sincere" about reconciliation, but that Tuareg separatists are "not the Indians of Mali, and Iyad Ag Ghaly is not Geronimo."
- Stated that the 2012 coup happened due to state weakness and arms influx from Libya; proposed the organizing of national meetings/conferences in the North to facilitate understanding of people's needs and desires and promote greater administrative

inclusion. Also said that if elected, he would propose a military planning law to ensure that Malian armed forces can restore security and state authority against entities such as AQIM.

- Said the French intervention is the reason Mali still exists; hopes that French will “have enough time to do what’s necessary for everything to be set back in order” before leaving. Not keen on UN intervention as “the blue helmets have not left good memories in Africa.”
- Wants to see ECOWAS and African Union troops deploy with French army against jihadists.
- Additional priorities: improving food security through better stock management and irrigation systems; increasing access to mosquito netting for all families; making school obligatory until the age of 16, providing each student with a computer, and encouraging the establishment of a university in every region of Mali; creating 350,000 jobs in five years; improving communications technologies to boost tourism in Mali.
- Platforms as detailed in pre-coup 2012 campaign:
 - **Economy:** Stabilize rate of economic growth above 5% for five years to attain a double-digit growth rate by 2017.
 - **Agriculture:** Re-evaluate agriculture laws to take into account financial requirements of agricultural investment; increase by 20% each year for the next five years the availability of arable land in the Niger zone; develop an economic diagnostic of “Rice Initiative” project to lay groundwork for more sustainable/efficient alternative to rice production; develop agro-business by coordinating through one body all agro-business projects and procedures; promote joint investment ventures in agricultural sector focusing on technical and financial support; strengthen investment in micro-dams for regions with high rainfall and establish a new cotton policy with development partners to boost cotton sector development; encourage investment in livestock farming equipment to increase value added to exported Malian meat.
 - **Infrastructure Development:** Implement “Great Investments of Mali (GIM)” project in first half of mandate to execute infrastructure development projects including the Bamako-Conakry and Bamako-Nouadhibou railroads, a fourth bridge in Bamako, etc.; continue investment in road infrastructure; create an environment propitious to the development of small and midsize manufacturing initiatives (preferably joint ventures with other industrial units in emerging countries like China and India); increase national energy production potential through implementing solar power projects to provide electricity to rural populations; create a national investment bank to encourage capital investment; establish a free zone between Bamako and Fana with appealing investment conditions; objectively re-evaluate all mining and energy contracts between investors and the State to ensure the partnership is win-win.
 - **Education:** Increase enrollment of girls in schools; establish coherent investment policy taking into account current levels of under-equipment and increasing headcount of enrolled students; assist community schools in the transitory phase of state resource transfers to regional authorities; improve science education through creating a public science high school in each region; establish a modern university institute of technology in partnership with countries such as India who are well-advanced in the scientific domain; double the budget allocated to secondary education and scientific research as well as qualified human resources; establish an independent commission in charge of evaluating the quality of private education by developing new licensing procedures, codifying responsibilities, and creating a code of ethics; implement within one year a plan to strengthen teaching capacities following a rigorous assessment of the effectiveness of current programs and human resources; encourage the use of information and communications technologies through tax incentives in educational programs, including distance learning for some courses.
 - **Healthcare:** Reduce infant mortality to a level satisfying 75% of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); improve maternal health by hiring a women’s

doctor/obstetric nurse in each public health clinic; fix and re-equip ambulance fleets; conduct an audit of all public health centers to develop a sustainable administrative policies; modernize equipment at national hospitals and university hospitals/medical schools to decrease health evacuations abroad; strengthen the fight against AIDS, malaria, etc. through establishing a competent oversight board and stringent quality control of resource management.

- **Job Creation:** Create 350,000 jobs in five years: 50,000 public/semi-public sector jobs (education/health: 30K, other: 20K), 300,000 private sector jobs (200K in agriculture sector, 100K in others).
- **Housing Policy:** Accelerate the restructuring of the Malian Housing Bank through granting it appropriate financial resources to facilitate its work in financing housing; promote through fiscal measures the implementation of a long-term bonus credit system for first homes; execute large-scale land reform by implementing a new land survey system and facilitating access to full land tenure procedures.
- **Institutional Measures and Governance:** Reinforce territorial unity and state authority through administrative legality; increase transparency of elections through the distribution of electoral cards and biometric national identity cards; strengthen administrative efficiency through implementing strategic planning in human resource departments; create a special bureau dedicated to public and private development initiatives to increase their efficiency and synchronize their approaches; guarantee the independence of the judiciary and reform the promotion system by linking promotions to quality of judicial decisions; create a general inspection of judicial services to ensure proper judicial administration.
- **Peace and Security Policy:** Develop a new military planning law in accordance with current security requirements; return the State to its role as principal national security authority; review the Algiers agreement provisions concerning the restrictions on army presence in Northern Mali; lead and encourage development initiatives in Northern Mali; strengthen trans-Saharan anti-terrorism and anti-trafficking cooperation; establish a permanent framework for technical and strategic surveillance of the Sahelo-Saharan area; reinforce capacities of security forces in urban areas; create a municipal police force in main urban municipalities.

Allies and Opponents^{103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110}

- Leaders who have explicitly endorsed IBK or are seen as sympathizers: Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou; Interim Malian President Dioncounda Traoré; Captain Amadou Sanogo; President of High Islamic Council of Mali Mahmoud Dicko and other Muslim authorities.
- Friends with Oumar Ibrahima Touré of the Alliance pour la république (APR); guest of honor at APR's installation of Touré as its President. Some sources imply that IBK may be in talks with APR to secure its support in elections.
- IBK is no longer a member of FDR coalition; FDR banding together to block him from acceding to Presidency allegedly due to support of military junta and religious leaders for IBK.
- Endorsed by influential religious organization Sabati-2012.

Notes^{111, 112, 113, 114}

- IBK denied support of January 2013 protests against interim President Dioncounda Traoré, though sources report seeing RPM political secretary Nancoma Keïta, organizing secretary Mamadou Diarrassouba, communication secretary Boubacar Touré, and IBK-Mali-2012 campaign spokesman Amadou Soulale at rally calling for Traoré's resignation.
- June 2013 poll by La Société Malienne des Sondages (SMS—Malian Poll Society): 10.3% of respondents said they would vote for IBK; 81% thought IBK was "the ex-junta's candidate."



Soumaïla Cissé

("Soumi")

Union for the Republic and Democracy (URD)

Biography¹¹⁵

- Born December 20, 1949 in Niafunké, Timbuktu.

Education¹¹⁶

- Bachelor's Degree in Scientific Studies from Université de Dakar, 1972.
- Master's Degree in Management-Applicable Computer Science Techniques (Méthode Informatiques Appliquées à la gestion (MIAGE)).
- Class Valedictorian, l'Institut des Sciences Informatiques de Montpellier, Université de Montpellier, 1977.
- Business Administration Certificate (certificate d'aptitude) from l'Institut d'Administration des Entreprises de Paris, 1981.

Employment/Political Activity^{117,118, 119,120,121,122,123,}

- IBM-France.
- Groupe Pechiney-France.
- Groupe Thomson-France.
- Air Inter-France, Analyst and IT Project Manager.
- 1984-1992: Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement de Textile (CMDT).
 - Began as Project Coordinator for Southern Mali.
 - Later became Director of Programs and Management Control.
 - Interim Director General, 1991.
- 1991: Co-founded the Alliance for Democracy in Mali-African Party for Solidarity and Justice (ADEMA-PASJ).
- 1992: Nominated Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic of Mali.
- 1992: Appointed by transitional authorities to be Director of Real Estate Transfer Agency, a mixed-economy company founded by the Malian government to facilitate access to housing.
- 1993-2000: Finance Minister.
 - 1994-1997: In charge of commerce management/regulation as well.
- 2000-2002: Minister of Equipment and Management of Territory, Environment, and Urban Planning.
- 2000: Elected Third Vice President of ADEMA at party's first extraordinary congress.
- 2002: ADEMA selected Cissé as President Alpha Oumar Konaré's successor.
 - Cissé won 21.31% of the popular vote in the first round of elections, received 35.65% in second round but lost to Amadou Toumani Touré.
- 2003: Founded Union for the Republic and Democracy (URD).
 - Allegedly felt abandoned by President Alpha Oumar Konaré, so left ADEMA with his own loyalists to found URD.
- 2003: Nominated Commissioner of Mali to the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA).
- 2004-2011: President of UEMOA.
- Supported incumbent Amadou Toumani Touré in 2007 presidential elections; URD representatives granted three ministerial posts in government after Touré's re-election.

Political Positions^{124,125,126,127,128, 129, 130, 131,132, 133, 134}

- Political platform based on three key components: 1) knowledge and quality human resources, 2) application of innovation and technology to adapt agricultural and other practices to scientific and technical progress, and 3) implementation of good political and economic governance.
 - "African development depends on confident elites who can take universal business management strategies and adapt them to an African context where sociocultural values are prioritized over policies of profit-making and efficiency."
 - Says he understands Malian agricultural needs due to his years at CMDT: "One can't lead this country without understanding its agricultural potential. That is a handicap for the other contenders."

- Supports territorial integrity and national unity in Mali; urges dialogue between warring parties within Constitutional framework.
- Decried the 2012 coup as the worst affront to democracy in Mali in the last 20 years; reiterated that it is the Malian people who choose their leaders and that such coups have no place in the development and preservation of democracy.
- Disapproves of French rapprochement with MNLA.
- Considers “greatest innovation” to be his commitment to engaging youth in UEMOA programs through funding centers of excellence, recruiting junior staff to UEMOA Commission, implementing the UEMOA soccer tournament, and establishing the “World Talents” program to encourage entrepreneurship and private sector development among youth.
 - During campaigns for 2012 elections, promised to create 500,000 jobs and engage youth in agriculture sector reform. Youth raised hundreds of thousands of FCFA for URD campaign.
 - President Younoussi Touré of URD: “We want to take power and use it in the interest of the youth population.”

Allies and Opponents^{135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150}

- URD has attracted some activists and defectors from:
 - Solidarité africaine pour la démocratie et l’indépendance (SADI).
 - Rassemblement pour le Mali (RPM).
 - Alliance pour la démocratie au Mali-Parti africain pour la solidarité et la justice (ADEMA-PASJ).
 - Congrès national d’initiative démocratique (CNID).
 - Parti pour le développement économique et la solidarité (PDES).
 - Mouvement patriotique pour le renouveau (MPR).
 - Le Collectif des ressortissants du nord du Mali (COREN).
 - Force citoyenne et démocratique (FCD) led by Djibril Tangara.
- Defectors from SADI and RPM allegedly said that the reason they switched to supporting URD was because it was one of the few parties to keep its distance from the military in the wake of the coup.
- Cissé is part of the Front pour la sauvegarde de la démocratie et de la république (FDR) alliance along with 20 other parties (including ADEMA-PASJ, PDES, and UMAM).
- Soumaïla Cissé is good friends with Amadou Toumani Touré. URD signed a special alliance with Jeamille Bittar of UMAM in April 2013 stipulating that both parties would automatically support whichever candidate of theirs reached the second round of voting should either of them be a contender at that point.
- Mali tour operator/former gold industry employee Sandy Cissé (no relation with Soumaïla) established over 40 “Sandy Clubs” in Timbuktu, Youwarou, Bandiagara, Siby, Ségou, Sabalibougou, Niamakoro, Kalaban, and elsewhere to advocate for URD and Soumaïla Cissé in 2013 elections.
 - Sandy says he supports Soumaïla Cissé because he is the candidate who best understands Mali’s economic situation and how to remedy it.

Notes^{151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156}

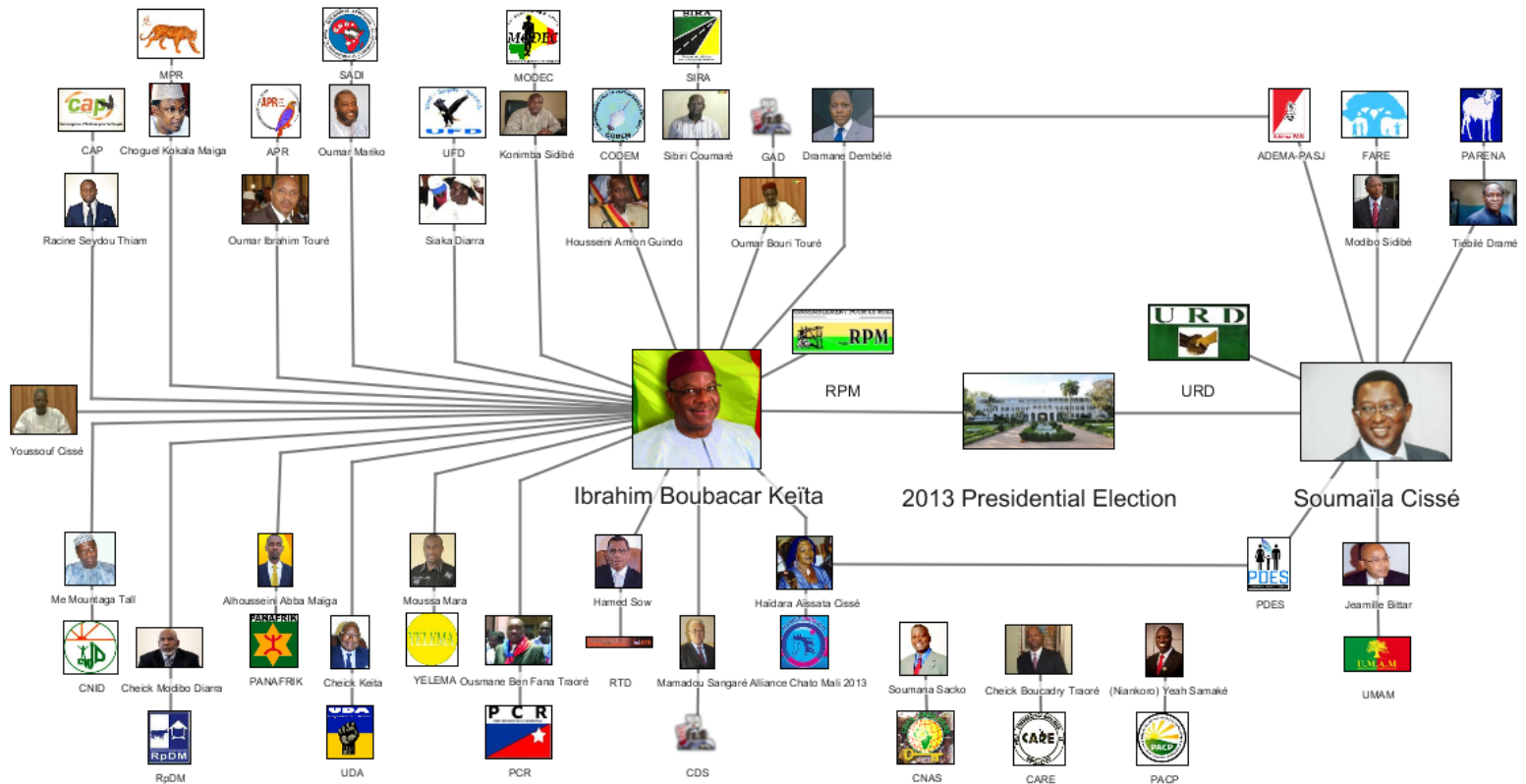
- In 2002 elections, Western observers were suspicious of some northern precincts allegedly voting 100% for Soumaïla Cissé; opposition forces claim Interior Ministry was biased in its actions because Cissé’s campaign manager was Interior Minister Ousmane Sy’s wife.
- Cissé implicated by some in affair involving 5 billion FCFA from Agence française de développement (AFD) earmarked for hydraulic projects in Senegal that were supposedly never executed as outlined. AFD agents reportedly observed that some wells, pipes, etc. never got any water and that Cissé was not providing any information. Other reports say AFD agents confirm that the projects are being completed satisfactorily.
- In 2010, during Cissé’s tenure as UEMOA President, the Société d’exploitation de sable et de gravier (SESG) allegedly used fake documents to secure a government contract to

develop 2174 hectares of land in Touraba. SESG's President Director General Abidine Yattara was an acquaintance of Cissé, leading some to accuse Cissé of being implicated in the scandal.

Election Map

In the runoff election on August 11, 20 candidates who lost in the first round endorsed Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and 3 candidates endorsed Soumaila Cissé (Soumana Sacko, Yeah Samaké, and Cheick Boucadry Traoré did not endorse any candidate). In previous Malian presidential elections, these endorsements and coalitions have been indicators of cabinet members and ministers in the winning candidate's new government.

Figure 10. Endorsements by Presidential Candidates 2013



B. Religious Leaders

Despite the fact that nearly 95%¹⁵⁷ of its population practices Islam, Mali is a primarily secular state. The roots of Mali's secularism can be traced back to the French, who instituted a policy of *laïcité* during the early days of Malian colonial rule that articulated a clear distinction between state and religion. However, this meaning may have changed somewhat over time as 69% of Malians surveyed understood *laïcité* to mean "the state reserves the same treatment for all religions."¹⁵⁸ Most Muslims in Mali practice Sufi rather than Salafi Islam. Sufi Islam is associated with repetitive prayer, music, and mysticism as opposed to the more literal and strict approach of Salafism. In addition to Islam, around 2.4% of Malians are Christian and another 2% follow more traditional religions.¹⁵⁹

While in essence a secular state, research indicates that religion has grown more important to Malians. A period of liberalization during the 1990s in Mali opened the door for the formation of numerous civil society groups and led to a proliferation of religious-based organizations. One of the most important of the new religious organizations is the High Islamic Council of Mali (HCIM). Created in 2002, the HCIM acts as a liaison between the government and local Muslim associations. The HCIM's role in managing the ongoing conflict has been much appreciated as 78% of Malians view HCIM's contributions as either positive or very positive.¹⁶⁰ Notably, the secretary general of the HCIM, Dr. Mamadou Diamoutani, is now president of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI). CENI is one of the government bodies tasked with implementing and overseeing the 2013 elections. Public opinion pertaining to Diamoutani's role in CENI is mixed, with only 37% judging it as positive.¹⁶¹



Following the March 2012 coup, the Malian government created the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Worship as an official ministry for religious authorities, which the HCIM had long desired. The current head of the ministry, Dr. Yacouba Traoré, is also a member of the HCIM. More than 60% of Malians approve of the role of the Minister of Religious Affairs and Worship in facilitating the cohabitation of religions (primarily Islam and Christianity) in Mali.¹⁶²

After intensive pressure from international donors, President Amadou Toumani Touré and the National Assembly adopted the highly unpopular reformation to the Family Code in July 2009. The most contested modifications were aimed at balancing gender relations and improving women's rights. Specific measures included raising the minimum age of consent for marriage to 18 years old, giving status and rights to children born outside of marriage, and obligating consent from a man's first spouse if he is to take more than one wife.¹⁶³ Many Muslims in Mali met these changes with significant resistance, and Imam Mahmoud Dicko gathered as many as 50,000 supporters in Bamako at the Modibo Keita Stadium to oppose it.¹⁶⁴ The president eventually abdicated and retracted the new version of the Family Code. During this process, many religious leaders were able to consolidate power and came to represent defenders of the people against foreign influence and detached politicians.

Although there are many religious leaders, the most notable and powerful are Imam Chérif Ousmane Madani Haïdara and Imam Mahmoud Dicko. Haïdara is vice president of the HCIM and leader of the Sufi religious group Ansar Dine, which allegedly has 2.6 million members nationally (not to be confused with the Islamist armed movement Ansar Dine in northern Mali led by Iyad Ag Ghaly).¹⁶⁵ Haïdara has anti-French sentiments, claiming that the Malian people have never truly experienced liberty independent of French influence.¹⁶⁶ Imam Mahmoud Dicko is the president of HCIM and leader of a large mosque in Bamako. Dicko has endorsed French intervention and denounced Islamic extremists.¹⁶⁷ These leading members of the HCIM, Dicko and Haïdara, have at times been at odds. Haïdara criticized the leader of the council for not

immediately condemning the destruction of Sufi saints' tombs in Timbuktu by Islamists, protesting that "he didn't react at all, because he's a Wahhabi and they don't condemn things like that."¹⁶⁸ Eventually Dicko held a press conference to officially denounce the tombs' destruction.

Originating from Saudi Arabia, Wahhabi Islam is the term many Malians use to refer to reformist or Salafi practices.¹⁶⁹ Beginning in the 1980s, Saudi Arabian missionaries began proselytizing in northeast Mali and were able to convert many villages to this more conservative and strict interpretation of Islam. This conversion was especially pronounced in the region of Gao.¹⁷⁰ It is from these villages that MUJAO recruited heavily. In April 2013, the Malian government dismantled the first MUJAO "sleeping cell" in Bamako. All detainees came from villages around Gao where Wahhabi Islam is practiced and all had the last name Diallo, indicating that they are members of the Fulani ethnic group.¹⁷¹

Increasingly, Malians have turned to religious institutions as an alternative to the Western democratic model, which has not brought the immediate local empowerment and development many expected. It is also indicative of the growing role of religion in the Malian state. Dicko and Haïdara have become important representatives to those Malians who embrace the influence of moderate religion on the government. Bruce Hall, assistant professor of African studies at Duke University, notes that "This idea of a secular state is very particular to a group of Malians who constitute the state, and are the product of the French-language educational system. But I don't think this is representative of Malians as a whole, especially the rather large number of Malians educated in the Arabic schools."¹⁷² If Mali becomes a more inclusive and participatory democracy, increased religious influence on political life may be an outcome.



**Chérif Ousmane Madani
Haïdara**

*Spiritual Guide of Ansar Dine
HCIM Vice-President*

Chérif Ousmane Madani Haïdara is potentially the most influential and popular leader in all of Mali. His Muslim organization Ansar Dine is alleged to have 2.6 million followers, his face is plastered on bumper stickers all over Bamako, his events regularly gather up to 50,000 people, and recordings of his sermons and speeches are widely distributed.¹⁷³ Though he is most associated with Sufi Islam, he does not adhere to any particular branch, yet he distinctly distances himself from Salafist or reformist practices. He is popular in Mali due to his charisma, advocacy for democratic openness, consistent criticism of government corruption, and message of tolerance and peace. His teachings are also easily accessible to the majority of Malians who speak Bambara. He holds the somewhat controversial belief that African Muslims may pray in languages other than Arabic and often leads prayers in Bambara—to the annoyance of many of his Islamic colleagues.

In 1989, Moussa Traoré's government attempted to silence Haïdara by banning him from preaching in public. His followers responded by founding Ansar Dine. Ansar Dine's informal network expanded and Haïdara came to represent the *vox populi*. Despite transition to democracy in 1991, his criticism of political corruption has been unwavering. In a meeting with the US Embassy in June 2008, he referred to the political leaders as "thieves who are stealing the wealth of the country" and he noted that despite improvements brought by democracy, "things still are not working well." His popularity and tolerant message have led the US government to seek him as an ally.

Haïdara immediately condemned the Islamist movements that took over northern Mali in 2012 as well as their imposition of a strict version of Sharia law. He said, "the Sharia applied by the jihadists in northern Mali is not the method recommended by Islam. It is rather a Sharia tailored to their own interests."¹⁷⁴ Such denunciations led to death threats by northern Islamists in December 2012.¹⁷⁵ He also has deep ideological divisions with his superior in the HCIM, Imam Mahmoud Dicko, who Haïdara openly calls a Wahhabist

(indicating a Salafist or reformist Muslim) and publicly denounced him for not immediately condemning the destruction of Sufi shrines in Timbuktu. Ideological differences with Dicko and ambivalence towards government institutions may have been the impetus for

Haïdara remains an important political figure with the ability to mobilize massive groups of people and influence the direction of the country. Consequently, his endorsements are often sought by politicians. While he refused to endorse a specific candidate in this year's election, he left the door open for future political activity, affirming that "I will not exchange my title for any political post, but we will not let just anyone guide Mali."¹⁷⁷



Imam Mahmoud Dicko
HCIM President

Imam Mahmoud Dicko is Mali's top religious leader, leads a large mosque in Bamako, and is often described as a Wahhabi Muslim, representing the increasing reformist and conservative currents of Islam in Mali.¹⁷⁸ He has deeply implicated himself in the resolution of both the political and security crises and he has engaged with leaders of the armed Islamist movements that occupied northern Mali.

Born in Timbuktu around 1954, Dicko attended Islamic schools in Mauritania and Saudi Arabia (where Wahhabism originates) and served as an official within the government-sponsored Malian Association for the Unity and Progress of Islam in the 1980s.¹⁷⁹ In 2009, as president of the HCIM, he led the opposition against the adoption of the revision to the Family Code, which he interpreted as a foreign imposition on Mali that was in conflict with many tenets of Islam. He also rejects the traditional definition of *laïcité* and instead proposes an "intelligent *laïcité*" where "the rights of each are respected."¹⁸⁰ For Dicko, strict separation of church and state is not the appropriate path for Mali; he explains that "they have spoken of marriage as being a secular act. We have said it is too much for a country like Mali where everyone is a believer. There are no non-believers in Mali. In one manner or another, people believe...To say in this country that marriage is a secular act and to make it a law, it is not a good thing, it truly insults Mali."¹⁸¹

He was one of the few government figures to engage with the leaders of the armed Islamist movements occupying northern Mali. Dicko helped negotiate the release of 160 Malian soldiers held captive by rebel groups in April 2012.¹⁸² He attempted to meet with Ansar Dine leader Iyad Ag Ghaly in Gao in July 2012, but last minute changes only allowed him to meet with other Islamist leaders from MUJAO and Ansar Dine.¹⁸³ He has called Iyad Ag Ghaly a longtime friend with whom he shares a lot of ideological values, despite disapproving of his methods of achieving them.¹⁸⁴

Dicko is also very politically active. The president of the National Union of Muslim Youth in Mali has accused Dicko of "transforming our religious places into political platforms to play into the hands of certain politicians" because Dicko installed political committees in some of the largest mosques in Mali.¹⁸⁵ While not giving an official endorsement, he allegedly supported popular RPM presidential candidate Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta.¹⁸⁶

C. Potential Spoiler: Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo



Captain Amadou H. Sanogo

*March 21, 2012 Coup d'Etat Leader
President of Military Committee for Monitoring
the Reform of the Defense and Security Forces
(CMSRFDS)*

Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo is the mid-ranking military officer who led the March 21, 2012 military mutiny turned coup d'état. He is currently the president of the Military Committee for Monitoring the Reform of the Defense and Security Forces (CMSRFDS). He was born in 1972 in Ségou, Mali and was an English professor at the military barracks in Kati (15 kilometers outside Bamako) before the coup.¹⁸⁷

Prior to March 21, 2012, Captain Sanogo benefited from significant US military training. He studied English at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, participated in an intelligence course at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, participated in infantry officer basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and also spent time with the US Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia.¹⁸⁸ His American trainers “never marked him out as future leadership material.”¹⁸⁹ Captain Sanogo's US training experience exemplifies the previous emphasis of US military training in Mali that focused on training individuals. The EU learned from this failed policy and currently focuses on training battalions and instilling an *esprit de corps* instead.

After toppling President Amadou Toumani Touré, Captain Sanogo appointed himself president of the National Committee for Recovering Democracy and Restoring the State (CNRDRE) and became the *de facto* head of state. The impetus for the coup primarily derived from President Amadou Toumani Touré and his government's mismanagement of the Malian military and its handling of the escalating conflict in the north. The military junta was quickly supported by a small but vocal anti-globalization movement. One of the more notable groups was the socialist political party African Solidarity for Democracy and Independence (SADI), whose president Dr. Oumar Mariko agreed to form a government with the junta and launched the March 22 Popular Movement (MP22) dedicated to supporting the military junta and resisting any attempts at foreign intervention.¹⁹⁰ Yet less than two weeks after the coup, rebels had taken the major northern cities of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu.

Strong domestic pressure by groups such as the *Front de Refus* (FDR, later renamed Front for the Protection of Democracy) and steady international pressure (especially from ECOWAS), isolated the junta and forced them to cede power to a transitional government that would organize elections.¹⁹¹

Despite handing over power to a civilian government, the potential influence of Captain Sanogo—and those loyal to him—remains a threat. In the months following the coup, Human Rights Watch accused forces loyal to Sanogo of stifling dissent, perpetrating the forced disappearances of at least 20 soldiers, and committing torture and abuse against dozens of others who opposed the junta.¹⁹² On December 11, 2012, Captain Sanogo ordered the arrest of acting Prime Minister Cheick Modibo Diarra because of his divergences with the junta and the influential High Islamic Council of Mali (HCIM) regarding the need for foreign intervention.¹⁹³ On March 6, 2013 the editor of a major Malian newspaper, *Le Républicain*, was arrested without charges after publishing an open letter critical of Captain Sanogo, his salary, and his position in government.¹⁹⁴ The editor was detained for 27 days and eventually charged with “incitement to disobedience” and “publication of false news” (the charges were eventually dropped in a Malian court).^{195, 196} The Ministers of Defense, Territorial Administration, and Domestic Security (led by Major-Colonel Yamoussa Camara, Colonel Moussa Sinko Coulibaly, and General Tiéféng Konaté, respectively) were all appointed by the junta and are close to Captain Sanogo.¹⁹⁷ These three ministries are crucial to the administration of Malian elections. Captain Sanogo also named the current chiefs of staff of the Malian army and the chiefs of intelligence services.¹⁹⁸

Captain Sanogo has not indicated a desire to remove himself from Malian political life. He rejected an offer of political asylum from the government of Benin in May 2013.¹⁹⁹ The Beninese foreign affairs minister who offered asylum noted, “Canada and the United States

are not reassured by the presence of Captain Sanogo in the country after his multiple interventions in the electoral process.”²⁰⁰

However, some of Captain Sanogo’s personal power may be waning. In an effort to remove him from the political sphere and at the strong urging of France, Captain Sanogo was appointed president of the CMSRFDS on February 13, 2013.²⁰¹ This appointment may be an effort by the transitional government and international community to marginalize him. Though the CMSRFDS is tasked with the reorganization of the Malian army, its role and actual power is not clearly defined. Reorganization and training of the Malian army is a major priority for Mali’s international partners and a principle objective of the EU Training Mission—which is not allowed to have any contact with Captain Sanogo or his committee.²⁰² In addition, former supporters, like the president of the pro-junta Coordination of Patriotic Organizations of Mali (COPAM), have publicly denounced Captain Sanogo and his behavior.²⁰³ Poor management of the conflict and foreign intervention have decreased the junta’s monopoly of power over the military as well as their perception by many former supporters in Malian society.

III. The North: Key Stakeholders

A. National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA)

Background

The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) was officially established in October 2011 after the unification of several Tuareg separatist factions. The renewed rebellion was precipitated by the arrival of several thousand armed Tuaregs previously employed by Colonel Muammar Gadhafi; heightened ethnic tensions as a result of competition over smuggling and trafficking routes; frustrations with the central government due to perceptions of neglect and unfulfilled peace accords; and increasing lawlessness, banditry, and illicit activity.

The MNLA declared they were fighting for the liberation of Azawad—a Tuareg word originally referring to the complete Tuareg ethnic homeland (encompassing areas of Mali, Burkina Faso, Algeria, and Libya), but today narrowed to the northern regions of Mali (Kidal, Timbuktu, Gao, and parts of Mopti). Tuaregs are an ethnic minority in Mali, comprising approximately 10 percent of the total population. In northern Mali, however, Tuaregs make up around 50 percent of the population and share the space with multiple other ethnic groups (including Arabs, Songhaï, Fulani, and Dogon).

The roots of the MNLA run far deeper than October 2011. Since Mali's independence, there have been periodic rebellions led by Tuaregs (primarily from the Kel Adagh confederation located in the Kidal region) in the 1960s, the 1990s, and the mid-2000s. These uprisings gained significant momentum by capitalizing on instability and periods of transition in the capital. The most recent Tuareg rebellion exploited the confusion and political uncertainty following the March 22, 2012 coup d'état.

The MNLA was born from the National Movement of Azawad (MNA), founded on November 1, 2010. The MNA described itself as a “national political organization that defends and enhances peaceful policies in order to achieve legitimate objectives and to recover all the historic dispossessed rights of the people of Azawad in its diversity.”²⁰⁴ What differentiated the MNA from previous Tuareg independence movements was the incorporation of an “active and engaged ‘intellectual’ dimension” along with a coordinated public relations strategy.²⁰⁵ Soon after its announcement, the MNA utilized social media, set up a functioning and well-maintained website (www.mnlamov.net), and created an online newspaper (Toumast Press) to spread its message. After the Libyan revolution, the MNA united with returning Tuareg mercenaries, Bilal Ag Acherif, and Mohamed Ag Najim to form the MNLA. According to its spokesperson, Mossa Ag Attaher, the new movement regrouped “old rebels from the uprisings of the 1990s (MFUA—Movements of the United Fronts of Azawad), of 2006 (MTNM—the Tuareg Movement of Northern Mali, led by the late Ibrahim Ag Bahanga), fighters who returned from Libya,” and “both soldiers and officers who deserted the Malian army.”²⁰⁶

Beginning in mid-January 2012, the MNLA and its allies launched offenses on strategic towns and military bases in Ménaka, Aguelhoc, and Tessalit. Following the coup d'état and the retreat of Malian security forces from the north, the MNLA and its allies captured the regional capitals of Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal. On April 6, 2012, the MNLA declared an independent state of Azawad.²⁰⁷

Prior to his downfall, Muammar Gadhafi had openly welcomed Tuaregs into Libya and actively recruited them into his army. Between 2,000 and 4,000 armed Tuareg soldiers returned to Mali after his regime began

to crumble during the Libyan revolution.²⁰⁸ Much of the MNLA's weapons and equipment came from either the Libyan arsenal or from stocks at captured Malian army bases. Yet while Gadhafi's fall may have provided a catalyst, it did not cause the rebellion. Several analysts have noted that the Libyan revolution sped up "a process of remilitarization in northern Mali after the relative peace since 2009, but in all likelihood, political developments in Mali itself would have led to an outbreak of separatist, or potentially jihadi, violence sooner or later."²⁰⁹

Before the outbreak of hostilities, the Malian government made several diplomatic gestures to the MNLA in an effort to avoid conflict and address grievances of underrepresentation and lack of economic development. Between January 7 and January 10, 2012, President Amadou Toumani Touré sent a delegation led by former minister (and ethnic Tuareg) Mohamed Ag Erlaf to negotiate with the MNLA, Ansar Dine, and other notable Kidal figures in Abeïbara.²¹⁰ The Malian government allegedly made the following concessions:

- military promotions to all elements that wished it;
- integration of combatants into mixed security forces to occupy sensitive zones;
- a five year special operations command center based in Kidal to establish public order, security, and oversee the application of the 2006 Algiers Accords;
- an Islamic judge for each administrative circle and an imam for each large mosque (this was principally a concession to the Islamist group Ansar Dine);
- creation of administrative circles in Intadjedit and Tin-Essako (localities of the Ifoghas tribe and of rebel leader Ibrahim Ag Bahanga);
- nomination of a special advisor to the president with the rank of minister; and
- the development and cultivation of a water reserve in Temesna (desert zone with a large water table between Ménaka and Tinzaouaten).

The parties agreed to remain open to dialogue. One week later, however, the first clashes between Malian forces and MNLA combatants occurred.

Operations

The MNLA began as a separatist, secular movement fighting for the establishment of an independent state of Azawad. Despite its secularity, the MNLA allied with the Islamist group Ansar Dine to push back Malian armed and security forces and take over the regional capitals of Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal. Ansar Dine, designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the US State Department, was created after its leader, Iyad Ag Ghaly, was unsuccessful in taking over the secular MNLA as a result of his "extremist views."²¹¹ Subsequently, Ghaly made a pact with AQIM leadership.²¹² AQIM had significant financial resources and military power from kidnapping-for-ransom activities and well-established recruiting mechanisms. AQIM still holds several hostages, which may present a future economic resource.

The MNLA has tried to portray itself as a legitimate political entity. After establishing the capital of Azawad in Gao on June 7, 2012, the MNLA set up the Transitional Council of the State of Azawad (CTEA), which operates as the political wing of the MNLA. As well as a president and vice-president, the CTEA created offices for other positions one would find in most other African states: youth and sports; education; health and social services; economy and finance; mines, energy, and water; maps and statistics; etc.²¹³

After declaring the independence of Azawad, the MNLA briefly codified its relationship with Ansar Dine on May 26, 2012 in a memorandum of understanding in which the two parties would cooperate to “establish and construct an Islamic state in Azawad which [would] apply Islamic law to all aspects of life; based on the Coran and Suna.”²¹⁴ This marked a monumental shift in ideology for a traditionally secular society. Shortly thereafter though, disagreements among leadership led the MNLA to reject the partnership and return to its secular principles. The MNLA issued a statement on June 1, 2013 declaring that “Ansar Dine wants to absolutely apply Sharia, and we are a secular movement.”²¹⁵ Following this schism, the MNLA’s precarious control over its occupied territories began to slip.

Clashes erupted in all major northern cities between MNLA forces and the Islamist groups Ansar Dine, MUJAO, and AQIM. The largest battle occurred between MNLA and MUJAO combatants in Gao on June 26, 2012. After heavy fighting, MUJAO forced the MNLA from the city. MNLA Secretary General Bilal Ag Acherif was wounded in the process and evacuated to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso for treatment.²¹⁶ The MNLA was also forced to retreat from Timbuktu and Kidal after battles with Ansar Dine and AQIM. The movement remained marginalized and sought refuge in remote cities such as Tinzaouaten in far northeastern Kidal. French intervention in January 2013 dislodged these Islamist groups and allowed the MNLA to retake control of Kidal.

The MNLA was deeply unpopular among inhabitants of Gao and Timbuktu. Allegations of rape, looting, and banditry committed by MNLA soldiers quickly surfaced. An Amnesty International report cited 83 documented cases of the rape of women and young girls—primarily committed by the MNLA—in Gao and Ménaka during the occupation of the north between March 2012 and January 2013.²¹⁷

Ethnic tensions were also a major contributing factor to local disdain for the MNLA. MNLA membership primarily derives from the Kel Adagh confederation of Tuaregs centered in the areas of Kidal and the Adrar des Ifoghas mountains. Other Tuareg confederations and sub-Saharan black populations that comprise the majority in the cities of Timbuktu and Gao resented MNLA dominion.²¹⁸ Relations between Kel Adagh Tuaregs and other ethnic groups have long posed problems in the region.²¹⁹ Continued clashes with the MAA (majority Berabiche and Kounta Arabs), MUJAO (which includes many Tilemsi Arabs, Songhaï, and Fulani), and accusations of arrests and killings of Arab civilians have further heightened Tuareg-Arab tensions.^{220,221,222} The MNLA has denounced what it labels a “smear campaign” perpetrated by political actors to fabricate ethnic tensions and decrease MNLA influence in negotiations with the Malian government.²²³

As the conflict continues, ethnic tensions have further escalated. The MNLA has been accused of exactions against black populations in Kidal. From June 1 to June 2, 2013, the MNLA was accused of arresting many blacks in Kidal and then expelling them towards Gao. A black resident of Kidal explained that “the MNLA read a communiqué on the radio in Kidal informing us that all blacks that are not known as having been long-term residents of Kidal will be expelled in the direction of Mali, meaning towards Gao, to the south of Mali.”²²⁴ MNLA fighters told a truck driver passing through the town, “You blacks, Kidal is not for you. It is for us. ...If you’re not with us, we’re going to make you leave our town.”²²⁵ The French foreign ministry confirmed the ethnic nature of these arrests, stating “We are getting reports of arrests and violence in the Kidal area, notably concerning the Songhaï, Peul, and Bella communities, because of the color of their skin.”²²⁶ A communiqué from MNLA spokesperson Mossa Ag Attaher admitted to arresting 180 people, but accused them of being agents and officers of the Malian secret service.²²⁷

Intra-Tuareg rivalries have also emerged. Many Imghad Tuaregs from the Kel Adagh confederation remained loyal to the Malian state throughout the conflict. Within the Kel Adagh, the Imghads are the traditional vassals to noble clans like the Idnan and Ifoghas. These noble clans make up the majority of the MNLA's membership. Major-Colonel El Hadj Ag Gamou rallied many of his fellow Imghad Tuaregs to the side of the Malian government to fight against the MNLA. In addition, the Tuareg civil society group *Plateforme des Cadres et Leaders Kel Tamasheq* was announced from Bamako on April 13, 2013 and seeks to disassociate Tuaregs from the MNLA. The primary objectives of the *Plateforme* are to reaffirm the Tuareg community's attachment to the Republic of Mali, promote the secular form of the state, and require the disarmament of all armed groups.²²⁸ Its president, Bajan Ag Hamatou, is a Deputy from Ménaka in the National Assembly and also a Tuareg from the Iwellemmedan confederation—historical rivals of Kel Adagh Tuaregs. While every Tuareg rebellion since the 1960s has originated from the Kel Adagh, the Iwellemmedan by contrast have never participated in any rebellions against the Malian state.²²⁹ The membership of the *Plateforme* includes several Malian notables, such as former prime minister Ahmed Mohamed Ag Hamani, who believes that the separatists have “dirtyed the name and reputation of Tuaregs.”²³⁰ The political positions of the MNLA have made it very unpopular among other Tuareg confederations in Mali. This may contribute to the return of older confederations (such as the Iwellemmedan) to prominent positions within Tuareg society.²³¹

Significance

The MNLA is just the most recent incarnation of previous Tuareg rebellions originating from the Adrar des Ifoghas Mountains and the areas surrounding Kidal. Objectives, membership, and grievances expressed remain largely unchanged from those of Tuareg rebellions in the 1990s and 2000s. In contrast to previous Tuareg uprisings though, the MNLA has been more successful due to temporary alliances with other powerful actors in the region (Ansar Dine, MIA, HCUA); an organized public relations campaign that has lent the movement legitimacy among the international community; and an influx of weapons, trained soldiers, and military officers from the fallout of the Libyan revolution.

The MNLA is attempting to reassert territorial control and dominance of noble clans within the Kel Adagh confederation over ethnic rivals. Beginning in the 2000s, the Malian state implemented a policy of using ethnic militias to combat unrest by Tuaregs in the Kidal region. Ifoghas Tuareg and rebel leader Ibrahim Ag Bahanga primarily led these uprisings. Militias from the Tilemsi Arab and Imghad Tuareg communities were employed by the Malian state as proxy forces. The government's favoritism of these groups altered the traditional balance of power structures in the area. These militias empowered and enriched themselves through controlling smuggling activities in the region and used the revenues to buy further influence in the Malian government. The Ifoghas clan allied with their Arab counterparts, the Kountas, to contest this influence. The Kounta and Ifoghas have been the traditional leaders of the Arab and Tuareg communities during the last century. Culturally, the Tilemsi and Imghad communities are under the leadership of these noble groups. Part of the current friction arises from efforts by these “inferior” communities to alter the traditional balance of power.

Despite efforts to control Kidal, the MNLA cannot effectively govern by itself. Shortly after the beginning of the rebellion, the MNLA was sidelined and pushed into small towns in border areas by more powerful and better-organized Islamist forces. The MNLA was only able to reenter its “stronghold” of Kidal after French intervention and did so jointly with French troops. Even then, it was an amalgamation of MNLA, French, Chadian, and other Tuareg troops patrolling the area. Reports of terrorist attacks further

underscore the weak control the MNLA exercises in the area.^{232,233,234} Attempts to resume administration in the city have also witnessed mixed results. Though the MNLA began regulating and taxing commerce in the area, allegations of extortion and abuse towards ethnically black merchants have surfaced.²³⁵ In an effort to bypass the Malian government and reassert administrative control, the MNLA named its own governor of Kidal. But according to a Kidal resident, the governor does little: “He is only there for procedure. He administers nothing at all. It’s difficult to even to get new vehicles registered.”²³⁶ Struggling to even feed or shelter fighters captured from Islamist movements,²³⁷ it is doubtful that the MNLA has sufficient resources to govern the area alone.

The MNLA includes established political actors and influential authorities from the region. Some of the MNLA’s claims of popular support were based on the high number of defections from the Malian military and political class who declared allegiance to the MNLA.²³⁸ Most of these elected officials were associated with national political parties (above all ADEMA-PASJ and URD) and held posts within the national government. These connections may represent potential nodes of engagement for the Malian state and may facilitate their reincorporation into the Malian political landscape. Previous political experience will also be valuable if the MNLA agrees to participate in national elections and represents itself as a political party as French diplomats urge.²³⁹ Support of influential traditional authorities such as Intalla Ag Attaher and Baba Ould Sidi Elmoctar also lend the movement credibility.^{240,241}

MNLA membership also includes many new figures accustomed to an ongoing struggle for independence. The latest uprising may also be an attempt by a new generation of disaffected Tuaregs to gain the same benefits as their predecessors. Previous rebellions ended with a series of favorable agreements and concessions made between rebel leaders and the Malian government.²⁴² In interviews, many respondents in Gao voiced the opinion that Tuaregs conduct uprisings every few years just to gain concessions from the Malian government—a result seen as unfair by northern inhabitants who remain loyal to the state.²⁴³

Loyalist Tuaregs have struggled to differentiate themselves from the MNLA. “The MNLA does not actually represent the Tuareg communities in the north of Mali, and these communities already have groups and legitimate elected leaders who represent them,” according to one anti-MNLA Tuareg activist. “The MNLA has never had a legitimate mandate from the Tuareg populations to speak, act, or advocate on their behalf... Considering all this, it has disqualified itself and must be removed from society.”²⁴⁴ Yet, many Tuaregs are fighting stereotypes and racist attitudes held by many within Mali’s black ethnic groups. The emergence of pro-government groups like the *Plateforme des Cadres et Leaders Kel Tamasbeq* and the Collective of Northern Nationals (COREN) are attempts by civil society actors to distinguish northern populations from rebel groups.

Important Leaders**Bilal Ag Acherif***Secretary General
CTEA President*

As Secretary General of the MNLA and President of the CTEA, Bilal Ag Acherif is one of the most important rebel leaders in northern Mali. The 36-year-old Tuareg is from the Kel Adagh confederation and is a member of the Ifoghas clan. Acherif is the cousin of 1990s and 2000s Tuareg rebel leader Ibrahim Ag Bahanga and was designated Ibrahim's successor to the rebel movement after his sudden death in a car accident in August 2011.²⁴⁵ While age and seniority are highly respected in traditional Tuareg society, Acherif's youth worked to his advantage when he outmaneuvered his uncle, Ansar Dine leader Iyad Ag Ghaly, for the post of MNLA Secretary General. In October 2011, during early MNLA meetings in Zakak in northeast Kidal, Acherif effectively sidelined Ghaly, criticizing him for capitulating to the Malian government after the signing of the National Pact (1992) and making the argument for new faces and fresh leadership to head the revived Tuareg rebellion.²⁴⁶

Acherif has close ties with authorities in several countries implicated in the crisis. He has been received in Paris by French diplomats and in Burkina Faso by president Blaise Compaoré. He was evacuated by Burkinabé soldiers to Ouagadougou after suffering an injury during fighting in Gao.²⁴⁷ He claims that Algerian officials have requested informal meetings with him.²⁴⁸

Acherif's political ambitions and clannish affiliation can be construed as an effort to reassure Ifoghas superiority within the Kel Adagh. But, he does not seem to be as unyielding as his predecessor, Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, to a diplomatic solution. This would indicate that a protracted rebel movement led by Acherif is not likely. His recent, more conciliatory, *communiqués*^{249,250} are indicative of a desire to position himself as a legitimate player within the political dialogue regarding northern Mali and to establish a leadership role within a regional and international framework.

**Mahamadou Djeri Maïga***CTEA Vice President*

As a Songhaï, Mahamadou Djeri Maïga is the only member from his ethnic group to assume such a high leadership position within the MNLA. He was a relatively unknown figure in Mali and even in his hometown of Gao prior to his current position. Holding no previous political positions or leadership roles, he was a second-cycle teacher (the American equivalent to a middle school instructor) in Gao before joining the rebellion.²⁵¹ There is no evidence of any expression of support for the MNLA until May 2012—after MNLA troops already conquered Gao.

When the MNLA retreated from Gao, Maïga sought exile in Niger, then in Burkina Faso. In December 2012, he was the head of an MNLA delegation that met with Burkinabé president Blaise Compaoré, Malian foreign minister Tiéman Coulibaly, and special advisor for the north to the Malian president Tiébilé Dramé.²⁵² Maïga led the MNLA delegation during negotiations with the Malian government from June 8 to June 10, 2013 in Ouagadougou.²⁵³

With Maïga in a senior leadership position, the MNLA is able to pay at least a token tribute to the movement's claim of representing all of the communities of northern Mali. His position has allowed the MNLA to associate a "black" face and name to what otherwise is an overwhelmingly Kel Adagh Tuareg movement. Thus, the MNLA has not hesitated to use him for media relations—he was sent on an official visit to France in April 2013 to give press conferences and media interviews.²⁵⁴ With little previous political or influential connections, Maïga has rapidly risen on to the national and international scene.



Mohamed Ag Najim
Chief of Staff
 CTEA Head of National Defense

Mohamed Ag Najim serves as the highest military officer in the MNLA. Born in the Adrar des Ifoghas at the end of the 1950s, he is a Tuareg from the Kel Adagh confederation and a member of the Idnane clan (like his cousin Ibrahim Ag Bahanga).²⁵⁵ His familial ties to Tuareg rebellions have deep roots. The Malian army killed his father in 1963 during the first Tuareg rebellion when Najim was a young boy.²⁵⁶ At the age of 20, he emigrated from Mali to Libya to join the Libyan army, eventually taking Libyan citizenship. Mohamed fought for Colonel Muammar Gadhafi's forces in support of Islamist movements in Lebanon and Chad before he returned to Mali to participate in the second Tuareg rebellion led by Iyad Ag Ghaly in the 1990s. Unsatisfied with the subsequent peace agreement signed by Ghaly, Najim returned to the Libyan army in 1992 where he rose to the rank of colonel and became commander of Sebha, an elite desert counterterrorism force operating in southern Libya.²⁵⁷

During the disintegration of the Gadhafi regime, Najim returned to Mali in July 2011 where he established military camps in Zakak, Tin Assalak, and Takalote, northeast of Kidal in the Tegharghar mountains.²⁵⁸ There, he united various Tuareg rebel factions including followers of the late Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, Malian army deserters, and his own forces from Libya. A seasoned military strategist, Najim was the mastermind behind early MNLA victories in Ménaka, Aguelhok, and Tessalit in January 2012. Tribal rivalries and religious differences between Najim and Iyad Ag Ghaly have proved to be major obstacles in uniting Tuareg factions during consultations mediated by ECOWAS in Gao.²⁵⁹ Najim insists that before any kind of agreement is made with Ansar Dine, all ties between Ghaly's Islamist movement and AQIM must be cut.

With over 25 defected Malian military officers at Najim's disposal²⁶⁰ as well as his personal experience in commanding desert combat operations in Libya, the MNLA has the military leadership capacities to present a significant challenge to the Malian government. If the government is unable to appease or co-opt Najim into any sort of resolution, a potential implication may be a protracted war against an experienced military commander. The government would then face a high degree of difficulty in securing the remote regions in Kidal.



Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh
CTEA Head of Foreign Affairs
 Deputy in National Assembly

Much of the MNLA's legitimacy comes from the fact that within its ranks are many former Malian government officials. Of these government officials, Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh plays the most active role and is one of the most politically well connected. A Tuareg from the Idnane clan, Ibrahim was an elected deputy in the Malian National Assembly representing the circle of Bourem (region of Gao) since 2007.

Assaleh, Baba Ould Cheikh (mayor of Tarkint, a town within the circle of Bourem), and Iyad Ag Ghaly have played the role of intermediaries in the release of hostages held by AQIM since 2008. While there is no hard evidence, it is assumed that these intermediaries took a cut of ransom money.²⁶¹

In 2009, Assaleh was one of the initiators of the *Réseau de Plaidoyer*—a political association formally focused on security and development issues, but functioning as a manifestation of the political alliance between Ifoghas Tuaregs and Kounta Arabs in response to growing rivalries over drug smuggling routes with Imghad Tuaregs and Tilemsi Arabs. He became the network's vice president and worked alongside the president Alghabass Ag Intalla (currently a member in the HCUA). The network was supported by the Swiss Development

Agency.²⁶²

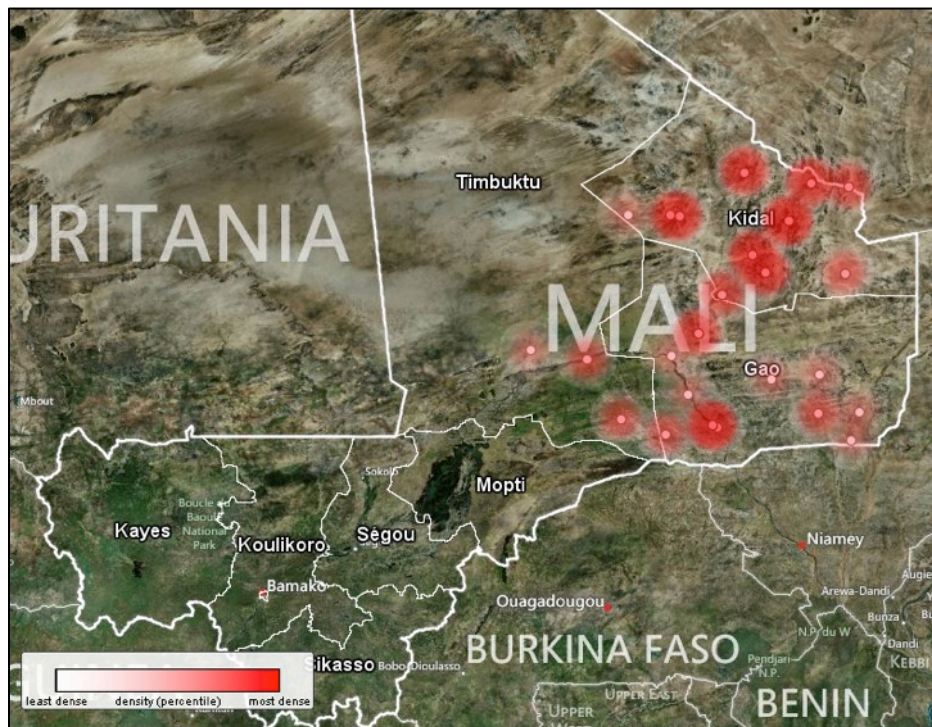
Assaleh personifies the strained relations between currents within the MNLA and the Tilemsi Arab ethnic group. In 2009, he threatened to lead all Idnane Tuaregs to “war” against Tilemsi Arabs over an election dispute unless the court of Mopti fully enforced electoral laws. The dispute concerned the influence of Tilemsi Arab militias, led by Malian Major-Colonel Mohamed Abderahmane Ould Meydou, over election day voting in Tarkint (part of Assaleh’s constituency). Assaleh went so far as to telephone Ibrahim Ag Bahanga and some of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga’s allies to garner their support lest the court ruling did not go his way.

As head of foreign affairs for the MNLA, Assaleh has led and participated in delegations meeting with Burkinabé president Blaisé Compaoré and Burkinabé foreign minister Djibril Bassolé. With funding from the Swiss government, Assaleh headed a delegation of MNLA leaders in a negotiation techniques training course held in Italy in May 2013.²⁶³

Assaleh’s political connections and personal ties with influential players make him a valuable asset to the MNLA. He is a familiar face to the Malian government, which makes him suitable for negotiations. His rise to prominence within the MNLA has brought his political career to the international stage. Assaleh’s democratically elected mandate in the National Assembly is also a highly valuable asset for the MNLA, which claims to enjoy popular support among the northern regions.

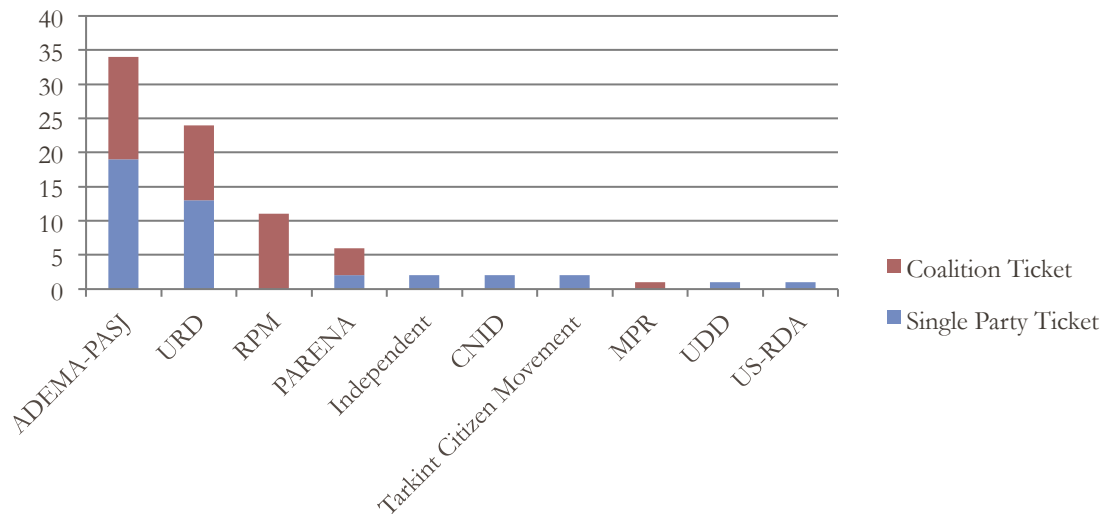
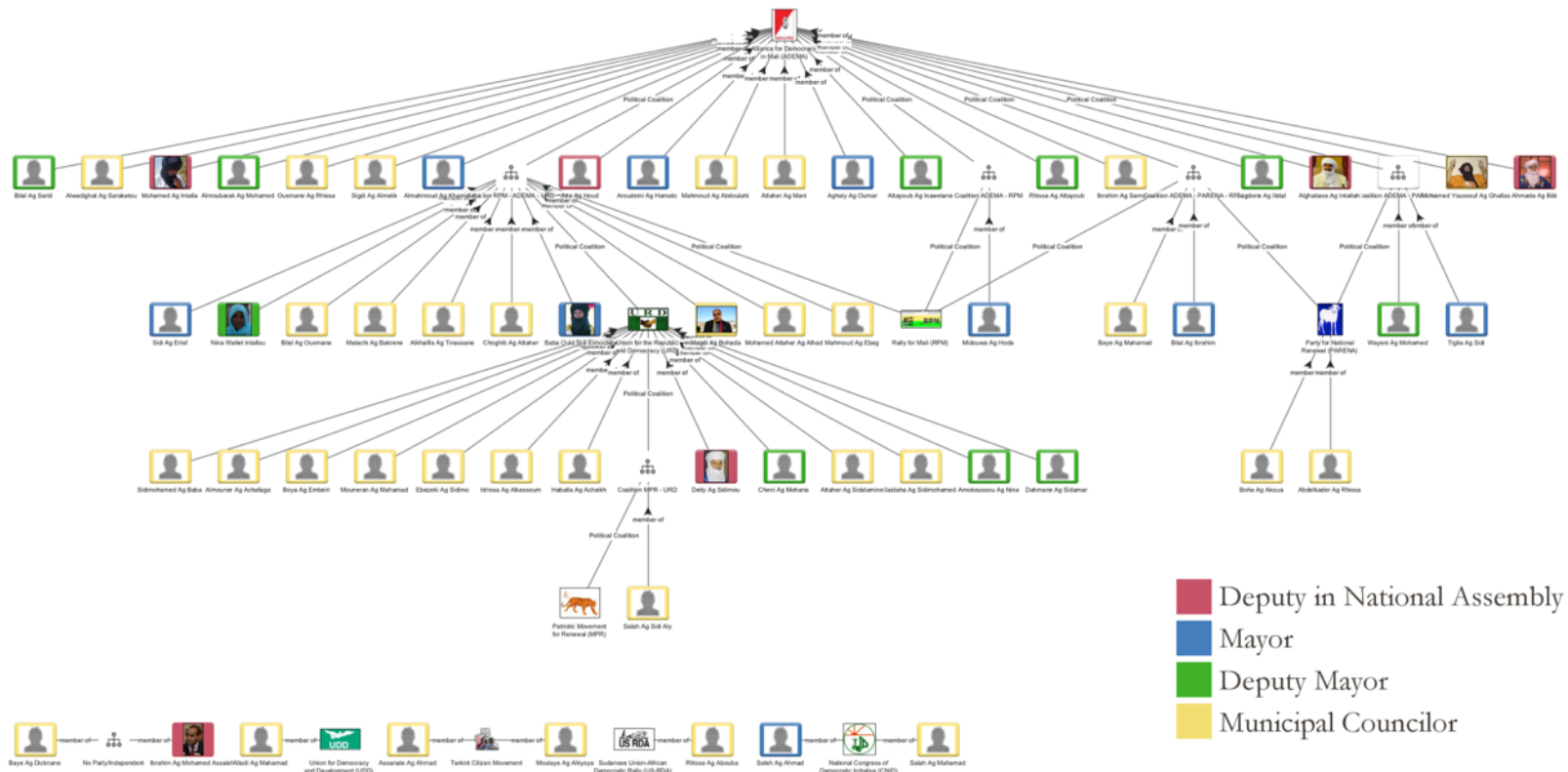
MNLA Affiliations

Figure 11. Map of Regional Affiliations of Government Officials Joining the MNLA



Source: MNLA List of Elected and Officials

Figure 12.MNLA Political Party Affiliations



Source: Mali Ministry of Territorial Administration.

B. High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA)

Background

The High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA) was announced on May 2, 2013 after a general assembly that included several Tuareg tribal chiefs and notables from Kidal.²⁶⁴ Mohamed Ag Intalla led the initiative. He is the son of the powerful and important Ifoghas traditional chief, Intalla Ag Attaher. Attaher co-presided the general assembly with the Kounta Arab traditional chief Baba Ould Sidi Elmoctar, (Elmoctar is also the mayor of Anéfis—a hotly contested town between Gao and Kidal).^{265,266} The HCUA is not an armed movement, but a political group that immediately tried to distinguish itself from other armed movements by declaring its pacific objectives. According to Mohamed Ag Intalla, the initiative arose from the “urgent necessity to unite all the sons of Azawad within a common body capable of carrying the aspirations of their common struggle.” Its goal is to “support all efforts with a view to attain through dialogue a political negotiated solution to the crisis that crosses Azawad.”²⁶⁷ Intalla claims the HCUA is a peaceful movement that does not claim independence for any part of northern Mali and opposes any partitioning of the country. He also rejected all acts of terrorism in his effort to unite Tuaregs in pursuit of peace with the south.

In a subsequent meeting on May 19, 2013, Intalla Ag Attaher was named the president while Mohamed Ag Intalla was named the secretary general.²⁶⁸ During this meeting, Alghabass Ag Intalla (another son of Intalla Ag Attaher) declared his allegiance to the movement and the dissolution of his armed rebel movement the Islamic Movement of Azawad (MIA)—a splinter group of Ansar Dine.

Despite its inclusive and unifying rhetoric, the HCUA appears to be composed on ethnic lines and includes many combatants from Ansar Dine and the MIA. Its membership primarily derives from the Ifoghas Tuareg and Kounta Arab tribes who have long allied with each other against rival tribes from their respective ethnic groups.²⁶⁹ In 2011, Alghabass Ag Intalla was appointed “chief executive” of the Ifoghas and many of his fellow tribesmen followed him when he defected from the MNLA to join Ansar Dine, and continued to follow him when he broke off to form the MIA in January 2013.²⁷⁰ Among the ranks of the HCUA is Cheikh Ag Aoussa—a veteran of Gadhafi’s army and subsequent member of Ansar Dine and the MIA who led the assault at Aguelhoc in January 2012. Up to 125 Malian soldiers were massacred in this attack.²⁷¹ Another figure associated with the HCUA is Ahmada Ag Bibi, a former deputy in the Malian National Assembly from Abeïbara who was a leader in Ansar Dine and the MIA and enjoys close relations with Algeria.²⁷² Mohamed Ag Aharib, former Ansar Dine and MIA spokesman, also leads HCUA delegations and speaks on behalf of the group.²⁷³

Operations

Given that it is not an overtly armed movement, HCUA actions thus far have been limited to releasing statements, convening general assemblies, and participating in meetings and negotiations with regional actors. After its creation, the HCUA claimed to have made “first contact” with the Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission and urged all other armed movements to unite through the HCUA.²⁷⁴ The MIA subsequently disbanded in favor of the HCUA, but the relationship between the HCUA and the MNLA has been more complex.²⁷⁵

Mohamed Ag Intalla and Intalla Ag Attaher both formally resigned from the MNLA after the creation of the HCUA.²⁷⁶ Days after their resignations, the MNLA issued a communiqué calling the HCUA “only a local

independent structure” whereas the MNLA was “a national movement going beyond the local level of Kidal.”²⁷⁷ The statement added that in no case would the MNLA dissolve itself into a local organization. At the same time, the MNLA agreed to the general principles of the HCUA and to cooperate with the group. After lengthy discussions in Ouagadougou in preparation for negotiations with the Malian government, the MNLA and HCUA ultimately signed a memorandum of understanding, agreeing to form a commission and speak with one voice during negotiations. The commission included 33 members, 23 from the MNLA and 10 from the HCUA. The two parties agreed to unite their efforts to promote security and to fight against narco-terrorism in the north. They also agreed to the organization of presidential elections in July, contingent upon the retreat of the Malian army from Azawad.²⁷⁸ Following clashes with the Malian army and the retreat of MNLA forces from Anéfis, the spokesperson for the MNLA, speaking for both the MNLA and the HCUA, renounced the cease-fire with Mali and reserved the right to engage in military actions.²⁷⁹ This was the first time the MNLA issued a communiqué in the name of both groups and marked a step towards cooperation between the two.

Significance

The HCUA may represent a means for certain Tuareg leaders to disassociate themselves from their former Islamist allies. Membership in the HCUA is primarily composed of Ifoghas Tuaregs who were formerly members of the Islamist movements Ansar Dine and the MIA. But rather than dealing directly with these groups that openly rebelled against the Malian government and fought for an Islamic state, it is more politically palatable for the government and the international community to negotiate through the HCUA. A West African diplomat explained, “The French do not want to discuss with a group stemming from Ansar Dine.”²⁸⁰ A Kidal elected official confided, “Nothing has changed. They've just given themselves a new name. They have just put on a different hat.”²⁸¹ Similarly, this point has not gone unnoticed by other members of the Tuareg population. A Tuareg from the Imghad tribe (traditional vassals to the Ifoghas) denounced the HCUA as “nothing more than a way for people of Ansar Dine and MIA, to rebuild their virginity.”²⁸² A pro-government organization of Tuareg leaders, the *Plateforme des Cadres et Leaders Kel Tamasheq*, labeled the HCUA merely a “porte de sortie” for the members of the MNLA and MIA.²⁸³

Traditional authorities are maintaining their power within the Kel Adagh Tuareg confederation by uniting in the HCUA. As a political solution to the conflict becomes increasingly likely, traditional Ifoghas authorities are aligning themselves in such a way that they are best positioned to negotiate with Malian authorities. HCUA Secretary General Mohamed Ag Intalla defined the movement as a “tool in the service of dialogue between all Malians,” and added that the HCUA “is the only voice to regain peace and stability.”²⁸⁴ The top three leaders in the HCUA all come from the Intalla family and are members of the noble Ifoghas clan. Statements like these in addition to calls urging other armed movements to unite through the HCUA demonstrate an implicit superiority over other movements. An Imghad Tuareg said, “The Ifoghas are the problem of the north. They do not understand democracy. For them, it is unthinkable that another group governs them.”²⁸⁵ The powerful Intalla family has split from the MNLA and is effectively isolating them. Following the Intalla family from the MNLA were many other notable personalities, including army officers who deserted in 2012.²⁸⁶ By sidelining other movements and assuming top leadership positions within the HCUA, the Ifoghas traditional authorities are taking the necessary precautions to ensure that their interests are protected in a negotiated solution.

Important Leaders



Intalla Ag Attaher
President
Traditional Leader of Ifoghas

Few figures have played such a central role in northern Mali after independence as Intalla Ag Attaher. He embodies almost all of the overarching concerns in northern Mali: the protection of traditional cultures, the rising role of Islam in Malian society, rebellion against government authority, competition among ethnic rivals, and jostling for political superiority. Currently, Attaher is the president and figurehead of the HCUA. He is a Tuareg from the Kel Adagh confederation and belongs to the Ifoghas clan. Within the Ifoghas, he is a member of the Kel Affella sub-clan—the most noble and highly respected within the region and the Kel Adagh.²⁸⁷ He is also the current amenokal (traditional leader) of the Ifoghas, the most dominant clan in the Kel Adagh. He is the *de facto* leader of Tuaregs in Kidal and, as one Malian media outlet observed, “is respected by all the Tuaregs from the region of Kidal, where nothing can be done without his consent.”²⁸⁸

Over 90 years old and paralyzed by a car accident in 2005,²⁸⁹ Attaher maintains his leadership role. A hereditary position, Attaher became amenokal in 1963 after the death of his father.²⁹⁰ The Malian state has often used his role as chief to serve as an intermediary between the state and society. During the first Tuareg rebellion in 1963, Attaher remained loyal to the Malian government and was influential in convincing Tuareg rebels from the Ifoghas clan to surrender to Malian authorities in 1964.²⁹¹ At the outbreak of the second Tuareg rebellion in the 1990s, he again worked with the Malian state to search for rebels and to dissuade youth from joining the rebellion. He then allied with the Malian military as he led his own personal ethnic militia to attack rival movements, primarily composed of members of the Imghad clan—traditional vassals to the Ifoghas. He used this mutually beneficial alliance between the government and his clan to “start a campaign to re-establish Ifoghas and chief dominancy within the Tamasheq political landscape of movements, civilians, and tribal leaders.”²⁹² His subsequent efforts would effectively evict Imghad and Idnan clans from the center of Kel Adagh power structures. Attaher’s cooperation with Mali has always neatly coincided with the personal interests of his clan and cementing Ifoghas supremacy within the Tuareg community.

Attaher’s more recent actions show that Islam plays an increasingly important role in Tuareg society. Ifoghas claim *shorfa* status (descendents of the prophet Muhammed) and they use this religious status as the basis for their grip on traditional power.²⁹³ More recently, Attaher has insistently presented himself as amir al-mu’minin (“leader of the believers”) and fully embraced the orthodox Tablighi Jamaat Islamic teachings that arrived in Kidal in the late 1990s when South Asian missionaries began proselytizing there.²⁹⁴ Attaher even sent two of his sons to complete a ten-day Tablighi Jamaat course in Bamako.²⁹⁵ One of these sons, Alghabass Ag Intalla, would later become the number two leader in the Islamist armed movement Ansar Dine before splitting to create his own Islamist group, the MIA, in January 2013. Attaher would distance himself from his son’s radicalism somewhat in April 2012 when he publicly declared support for the secular MNLA and repudiated Islamist groups like Ansar Dine, who “kidnap foreigners in Azawad and terrorize the local population.”²⁹⁶

Attaher’s original support for the MNLA led to his son Mohamed Ag Intalla’s appointment as Head of Social Cohesion and National Reconciliation in the political wing of the MNLA.²⁹⁷ Attaher also participated in and presided over several MNLA meetings.^{298, 299} But by May 2013, he renounced his earlier independence claims when he resigned from the MNLA to join his son Mohamed’s initiative, the HCUA. In a written statement, Mohamed declared that “my father is now going to head the HCA [former acronym of HCUA]. My father wants to unite everyone. It is with the High Council of Azawad that we are going to

make peace.”³⁰⁰

Although he has never held a political position, historians note that Attaher has “made it his policy throughout his long career to side with the political party in power.”³⁰¹ This means that since the early 1990s, he has regularly supported the ADEMA-PASJ party in the region of Kidal. Since participating in Mali’s first democratic legislative election in 1992, ADEMA-PASJ candidates have won the plurality or majority of national legislature seats in all but one election (in 2002 RPM controlled 46 seats and ADEMA-PASJ controlled 45).³⁰² All of Attaher’s three sons are active in Kidal politics on both the local and national level and are members of ADEMA-PASJ.

Throughout his long rule, Attaher has consistently engaged in mutually beneficial partnerships to further his own familial or clannish interests. Breaking from his usual pattern of cooperating with the Malian state during previous Tuareg rebellions, Attaher’s defection was a response to the Malian government’s policies beginning in the mid-2000s of actively supporting and empowering Imghad Tuareg and Tilemsi Arab militias (ethnic rivals to the Ifoghas). The government financed these militias as a counterweight to the growing influence of Ifoghas and Idnan Tuaregs.³⁰³ Attaher’s strategy during the current rebellion has been one of diversification. While he remained traditional leader of the Kel Adagh, one son (Mohamed) sided with the MNLA, another son (Alghabass) with the Islamist movements, while a third (Attayoub) remained relatively out of the fray (though Attayoub did receive a large shipment of humanitarian aid in June 2012³⁰⁴). Currently, Attaher and his sons Mohamed and Alghabass have declared support for the HCUA, making it one of the most powerful bodies in northern Mali. Attaher has a history of coming out on top.

While his age, the Malian government’s empowerment of Imghad Tuaregs, and the political blunders of his son Alghabass may have loosened the grip of Ifoghas dominion, Attaher still remains a crucial figure in the region. As long as he is alive, it will be difficult for any agreement between the Malian government and the organs representing the northern populations of Kidal to have any credibility if he does not give his consent.



Mohamed Ag Intalla
Secretary General
Deputy in National Assembly

Mohamed Ag Intalla is the oldest son of Intalla Ag Attaher.³⁰⁵ Like his father, he is a Tuareg from the Kel Adagh confederation and a member of the noble Kel Affella sub-clan within the Ifoghas. In May 2013, he was the principle founder of the HCUA and assumed the senior leadership position of Secretary General.³⁰⁶

Before the rebellion, Mohamed was a deputy in the National Assembly as part of the ADEMA-PASJ political party. From the early 1990s until 2002, he represented the circle of Kidal in the National Assembly before ceding that position to his brother, Alghabass Ag Intalla. Mohamed was then elected deputy in the National Assembly representing the circle of Tin-Essako.^{307,308} His elections in Tin-Essako have not been without controversy. In the 2007 legislative election, he received 100% of the vote—he was also the only candidate on the list. The powerful Intalla family allegedly discouraged potential rivals from running against him. In addition, historical ethnic tensions surfaced when Mohamed’s occupation of the deputy seat was listed as a cause for the third Tuareg rebellion in 2006. On the Kidal website, Kidal.info, former rebel leader Zeidane Ag Sidi Alamine listed that the 2006 rebellion was a “wish for autonomy from the side of the Iforgoumousen [rival of the Kel Affella within the Ifoghas] in Tin-Essako from the authoritarian power exercised by

ADEMA-PASJ representative Mohamed Ag Intalla.”³⁰⁹

His strategy in the current rebellion is one of shifting alliances. Early in the rebellion, Mohamed sided with the MNLA while his younger brother Alhabass joined Ansar Dine. Mohamed’s former membership in the National Assembly and his familial legacy entitled him to a leadership position in the MNLA, and he was appointed the Head of Social Cohesion and National Reconciliation.³¹⁰ He remained a member of the MNLA until announcing his own political movement, the HCUA, on May 2, 2013.³¹¹

Mohamed’s political legitimacy in his district may be somewhat contested, but he is still highly respected within Tuareg society as the son of the amenokal. His name and personal ties alone are powerful enough to rally many local notables and leaders to the HCUA. He is also a diplomatic figure who is highly familiar to Mali’s current interim government and the members of the National Assembly. It is likely that the Malian government will accept him as a legitimate representative and will include him in a negotiated solution to the status of northern Mali.



Alhabass Ag Intalla
Deputy in National Assembly
Chief Executive of the Ifoghas

The youngest of Intalla Ag Attaher’s three sons, Alhabass Ag Intalla is considered the heir apparent to replace his elderly father as the traditional leader of the Ifoghas. Standing at 6’4”, Alhabass is described as an imposing yet contemplative figure.

Alhabass has long been a primary actor in Kidal politics. In 1999, he was elected mayor of Kidal as a member of the ADEMA-PASJ party. In 2002, he was elected deputy in the National Assembly representing the circle of Kidal.³¹² The post of mayor would later be filled by his brother, Attayoub. Like that of his oldest brother Mohamed, Alhabass’s election was marked by irregularities. In the 2007 election, the campaign registration documents of the other leading candidate were mysteriously lost hours before the filing deadline. The Intalla family is rumored to have bribed a local official up to \$20,000 to “lose” the documents. While serving as deputy, Alhabass lobbied national and foreign government officials to fully implement previous peace accords in northern Mali, while also making thinly veiled threats that restive Tuareg youth could capture Malian army forces “at any moment.”

In 2011, Alhabass was appointed chief executive of the Ifoghas.³¹³ This essentially designated him as the successor to his father’s position as amenokal. While the position did not replace that of the amenokal, it was understood that the traditional leadership position did not have a formal role within the Malian administration and the Malian state. The chief executive would work independently of the amenokal and would focus primarily on exterior relations. The action aimed to improve the community’s image and to strengthen ties between the Ifoghas and other ethnic groups.

However, improving inter-ethnic relations does not seem to be a priority for Alhabass. In an interview, Alhabass lashed out at France and the Bambara (the largest ethnic group in southern Mali), saying “we can always say that France left us as colonizers and handed us over to the Bambara. And now that we’re rising up a bit against the colonization of the Bambara they’re going to tell us to shut up, under Bambara colonization.”³¹⁴ In addition, a MUJAO deserter who sought refuge with Alhabass’s movement alleges that Alhabass rejected his asylum on racial grounds. Alhabass told him “all who are not Azawadians must

return to the south of Mali.”³¹⁵

Allying early in the rebellion with Iyad Ag Ghaly’s Islamist movement Ansar Dine, Alhabass was appointed as the movement’s political chief. Constantly intermingling ideology with political posturing, Alhabass said he joined Ansar Dine because it was stronger and better organized than the MNLA.³¹⁶ Religion also played a role. Alhabass told reporters in March 2012 that he was fighting for the introduction of Sharia in northern Mali.³¹⁷ He would continue to align himself with Ansar Dine until shortly after French intervention in January 2013. He then broke off from Ansar Dine to create his own movement, the MIA. Alhabass estimates that 80 percent of Ansar Dine followed him to the MIA.³¹⁸ Alhabass quickly renounced the imposition of Sharia on all communities of northern Mali and said he was willing to negotiate with Malian authorities to find a resolution. The MIA, retreated back to the areas around Kidal and entered into a formal alliance with the MNLA.³¹⁹ When his brother, Mohamed Ag Intalla, announced the creation of the HCUA, Alhabass dissolved the MIA to join this political movement.³²⁰

Perhaps even surpassing that of his oldest brother, Alhabass combines a potent combination of traditional authority, political legitimacy, and influential personal connections. Though his previous ties with Islamist movements may have tarnished his reputation during the current rebellion, he still remains a respected figure in the Ifoghas community. His familiarity with Malian authorities will also serve as an asset in negotiations for the HCUA, which will encourage his incorporation into a resolution and a continued leadership role in a post-conflict Mali.

C. Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA)

Background

The Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) is the most powerful ethnic Arab armed movement in the Malian conflict. It is composed of members from earlier Arab militias and Arab soldiers of the Malian army who deserted after the fall of Timbuktu to Islamists.³²¹ The majority of these Arabs come from the Berabiche and Kounta tribes throughout northern Mali.^{322, 323} The MAA is a secular movement that is not explicitly fighting against the Malian state, but rather fighting to defend Arab interests from the rising influence of other armed actors in the region.

The MAA originated from the National Liberation Front of Azawad (FNLA), created April 8, 2012 in the immediate aftermath of the Islamist takeover of Timbuktu.³²⁴ As the MNLA approached Timbuktu, Arab forces led by businessmen and smuggling financiers Oumar Ould Ahmed, Dina Ould Daya, and Moulay Ahmed remained to resist the MNLA. They delayed the MNLA’s takeover, but allowed AQIM to enter and take control of the city.³²⁵ After taking the city, AQIM quickly expelled these Arab forces. Malian Major-Colonel Mohamed Abderahmane Ould Meydou then united over 500 forces from the Berabiche and Kounta communities to form the FNLA.³²⁶ From the outset, the FNLA declared itself a secular and non-secessionist movement that wanted to liberate the northern populations from other armed groups.³²⁷

The FNLA was short-lived. During a meeting of Berabiche community members in June 2012 at the Mali-Mauritania border, FNLA leaders were criticized for handing over Timbuktu to AQIM. This negative association with the FNLA may be a potential reason why it was re-baptized under a new moniker, the MAA, and given slightly different leadership.³²⁸ In the following six months, reports of MAA activities were

relatively few. It was not until AQIM and Ansar Dine were dislodged by French intervention in January 2013 that the MAA renewed its military actions.

Many MAA militants come from the Arab ethnic militias that were financed by Arab businessmen like Dina Ould Daya, Moulay Ahmed, and Oumar Ould Ahmed during the mid to late 2000s.³²⁹ Prominent leaders of the Arab community were intricately involved in smuggling (mainly Moroccan cannabis) across northern Mali. Arab militias were financed and equipped by these private businessmen for a specific purpose: to free up trafficking routes in Mali between Mauritania and Algeria, which were threatened by Tuareg rebel activities. These efforts neatly aligned with the interests of the Malian government, which was eager to suppress the Tuareg rebels. Arab militias offered their services to the Malian state and President Amadou Toumani Touré engaged Arab leaders to fight the rebels. Key leaders of these militias included Arab military officers Major-Colonel Mohamed Abderahmane Ould Meydou and Colonel Lamana Ould Bdou. Colonel Ould Bdou's was allegedly deeply involved in northern Mali's smuggling trade and led a Berabiche militia stationed at In Khalil, a crucial smuggling point on the Mali-Algeria border. Many of these officers had close relations with relatives and fellow tribe members who were in AQIM. AQIM members ultimately assassinated Colonel Bdou after an unsuccessful arms deal.³³⁰

The ranks of Major-Colonel Meydou's Berabiche militias swelled just before the outbreak of hostilities. In January 2012, the Malian government struck a deal to release a wealthy northern Arab businessman, Mohamed Ould Aiwanatt (serving a prison sentence for his role in the infamous "Air Cocaine" incident), in exchange for the recruitment and training of Arab militiamen to fight Tuareg rebels.³³¹

Operations

The Secretary General of the MAA is Ahmed Ould Sidi Mohamed. Before assuming the leadership position in the MAA, he originally declared allegiance to the MNLA in March 2012, along with several other Arab notables.³³² This was not his first alliance with Tuareg rebel movements. As head of the rebel group the Arab Islamic Front of Azawad (FIAA) during the 1990s, he and Iyad Ag Ghaly's Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA) were the only two rebel parties that signed the Tamanrasset Accords (1991) in an effort to establish peace with the Malian government.³³³

After Islamist forces forced the FNLA to retreat from Timbuktu, MAA activities were limited. It was not until several months later that the group began to reassert itself. In early January 2013, two weeks after the MNLA and Ansar Dine signed a cease of hostilities agreement with the Malian government, the MAA claimed that they were in Algeria to negotiate a similar agreement.³³⁴ Shortly thereafter, the MAA began to clash with MNLA forces in areas that were under Arab influence before the conflict. Each side also accused the other of carrying out racially motivated exactions. MAA Secretary of External Relations Mohamed Mouloud Ramadan said, "We have nothing against Tuaregs, but we will hunt the MNLA wherever they are."³³⁵

On February 23, 2013, MAA forces attacked the MNLA near the Algerian border at In Khalil. These attacks were in response to MAA claims that the MNLA was stealing Arab vehicles, robbing Arab-owned stores, and raping Arab women.³³⁶ The following day, French planes reinforced MNLA forces and bombed MAA bases near the city.³³⁷ The MAA is suspected of collaborating with AQIM and MUJAO elements during this attack as well as in later attacks at Anéfis.³³⁸

Another contested area was the town of Ber, 51 kilometers east of Timbuktu, where the MAA staged a series of hit-and-run attacks. On April 21, 2013, MAA forces expelled MNLA allies who controlled the town.³³⁹ One week before, the son of Tuareg marabout Al Moustafa Ag Mohamed from Ber was kidnapped and a ransom payment of 80 million CFA demanded (approximately \$150,000). It is assumed that this occurred under the auspices of the MAA.³⁴⁰ On May 5, MAA forces returned to Ber in retaliation for renewed crimes against Arabs by the MNLA at In Khalil. Reports say the MAA stole vehicles owned by Tuaregs associated with the MNLA and pillaged houses and stores in the town.³⁴¹ Reports concerning MAA forces descending upon the town on May 11 emerged once again.³⁴²

There is indication though that MAA leadership did not order the attacks in Ber. According to a statement, these militants “were not acting under the orders of the MAA. We recalled our men to the Algerian and Mauritanian borders. The ones who stayed did not respond to our call, they wanted to retake themselves what had been stolen from them at In Khalil.”³⁴³ Yet less than two weeks later, the MAA reported that it had turned over three MNLA militants captured in Ber to the Mauritanian army.³⁴⁴

The locations of these skirmishes are significant. Mohamed Lamine Ould Sidatt, the Secretary General of the FNLA, is the Mayor of Ber and Colonel Lamana Ould Bdou was known to lead Berabiche militias stationed at In Khalil.³⁴⁵ While favoring inter-communal dialogue, respected Arab community elder Mohamed Mahmoud El Oumrany believes “there are all the ingredients for an inter-community confrontation and it is the fault of the MNLA.”^{346, 347}

Significance

Similarly to the creation of the FIAA in the 1990s, the MAA was hastily established in an effort to protect Arab interests. In the 1990s rebellion, Arabs feared they would be excluded from negotiations with the Malian authorities, despite sharing many of the same problems as their Tuareg cohabitants.³⁴⁸ They resolved this problem by creating a separate movement with its own name. A similar series of events has played out during the current rebellion. Not espousing independence goals or clear objectives, members of the Arab community have tried to protect their strategic areas of influence and strengthen their position in the region. To do this, the MAA has represented itself as an ally of French and African forces. In the aftermath of the attacks in Ber, the MAA declared, “We want to work with the French and the Africans to fight against terrorism, and drug traffickers.”³⁴⁹ Their commitment to this cause may be questionable due to several leaders’ intimate involvement in smuggling and their connections with AQIM. According to an Arab community leader, “an armed movement was necessary so that we can take care of us Arabs and so that we can participate at the negotiation table.”³⁵⁰

MAA tactics appear to be working; the Malian government and regional actors are including the MAA in a negotiated solution. The MAA was invited to discussions taking place in Burkina Faso between Tuareg armed movements and the Malian government at the end of May 2013³⁵¹ They also signed an agreement with the Malian government, endorsing the Ouagadougou agreement from June 2013. In addition, MAA allies, the powerful Major-Colonel Meydou and community elder Mohamed Mahmoud El Oumrany, were named members of the Malian government’s Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission.

D. Potential Spoiler: Major-Colonel El Hadj Ag Gamou



El Hadj Ag Gamou
Major-Colonel in Malian Army

Major-Colonel El Hadj Ag Gamou is the highest ranking Tuareg in the Malian army. Born in 1964 in the village of Tadarmène, in the circle of Ménaka, he is from the Imghad class—traditional vassals to the noble clans within Tuareg hierarchy.³⁵² Gamou is an example of one of the few “reformed” rebels from the 1990s rebellion who did not defect from the Malian army during the current conflict. He commands a battalion of 700 troops (mainly other Tuaregs from the Imghad class) who are well trained and accustomed to military operations in the harsh climate—a major asset to a Malian army primarily composed of troops from the southern parts of the country.

Gamou’s posturing in the current conflict can be understood through the lens of his class affiliation. In the 1990s, he was an officer in Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of Azawad (ARLA), an armed movement fighting for increased autonomy in the north. The ARLA was mainly composed of Imghad and other vassal clans. The creation of the ARLA was “mostly justified through their proclaimed vision on the need for change within Tamasheq [Tuareg] society.”³⁵³ The ARLA fought the other main armed rebel movement, the Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA), which was primarily composed of Tuaregs from the noble Ifoghas clan. At an acme of intra-Tuareg tensions, Gamou captured the Ifoghas traditional leader, Intalla Ag Attaher. Following the end of the 1990s rebellion, he was integrated into the Malian army and rose quickly within the ranks of the military. By 2005 he was promoted commander of the Gao region.³⁵⁴

While Gamou’s career progressed, that of his main Ifoghas rival, Hassan Ag Fagaga, stagnated. This threatened the Ifoghas’ continued authority and superiority in the region. Shortly after Gamou’s promotion, Fagaga defected from the army and joined the renewed rebellion led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga. Currently, Fagaga is a key leader in the MNLA.³⁵⁵ Gamou commands a large battalion of Imghad fighters devoted to him. The Malian state used Gamou and his Imghad militia as proxies in their fight against Ibrahim’s uprisings in the mid- to late-2000s. The Malian army equipped Gamou’s “Delta Force” militia with weapons, vehicles, and supplies.³⁵⁶ Following the destruction of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga’s main bases in 2009, Gamou was named Major-Colonel and his Imghad militia was formally integrated into the Malian army.³⁵⁷

In March 2012, Gamou rejected an invitation by the MNLA to join its independence movement. The MNLA sought to reinforce its claim to inclusivity as well as strengthen its military power with Gamou’s well-trained Imghad forces.

Gamou publicly recognizes the personal control he enjoys over his forces, as well as their ethnic makeup. After the Libyan revolution, when many Tuareg mercenaries returned to northern Mali, the Malian government sent Gamou to Kidal to discourage a renewed rebellion and to incorporate these men into the Malian military. He acknowledged that “I was not able to convince everyone. But all those who are of the Imghad tribe I am from have listened to me and followed.”³⁵⁸

Following French intervention in January 2013, Gamou and his forces accompanied the French military and were integral in the recapturing of strategic areas such as Gao. In early March 2013, he was suddenly recalled to Bamako for reasons that are not entirely clear, but which may be tied to friction between him and the French military over excessively zealous reprisals against the MNLA.³⁵⁹ By May 6, Gamou was allowed to retake control of his troops and was deployed back to the region of Gao.³⁶⁰ On June 5th, 2013, he was reportedly one of the leaders who participated in the violent retaking of Anéfis from the MNLA.³⁶¹

Gamou’s actions and strategic alliance building may be a manifestation of the real politik phase that Tuareg politics have entered. He and his fellow Imghad opted for cooperation and integration into the Malian state after the 1990s rebellion in exchange for personal career advancement and modest development.³⁶² Continued political blunders by Ifoghas

leadership during the current conflict may cement a shift in the traditional balance of power towards the Imghad.³⁶³ In response, the MNLA began a campaign aimed at demonizing and delegitimizing Gamou. On May 30, 2013, the MNLA released a communiqué detailing exactions and killings of Tuaregs by the Malian military and Malianbacked militias. Gamou was accused of collaborating with MUJAO, a jihadist terrorist organization, to present a common front against the MNLA.³⁶⁴ Leaders from the MNLA and HCUA allowed for the return of Malian troops to Kidal in the June 2013 Ouagadougou agreement under the condition that Gamou and his forces would not be allowed to enter the city.

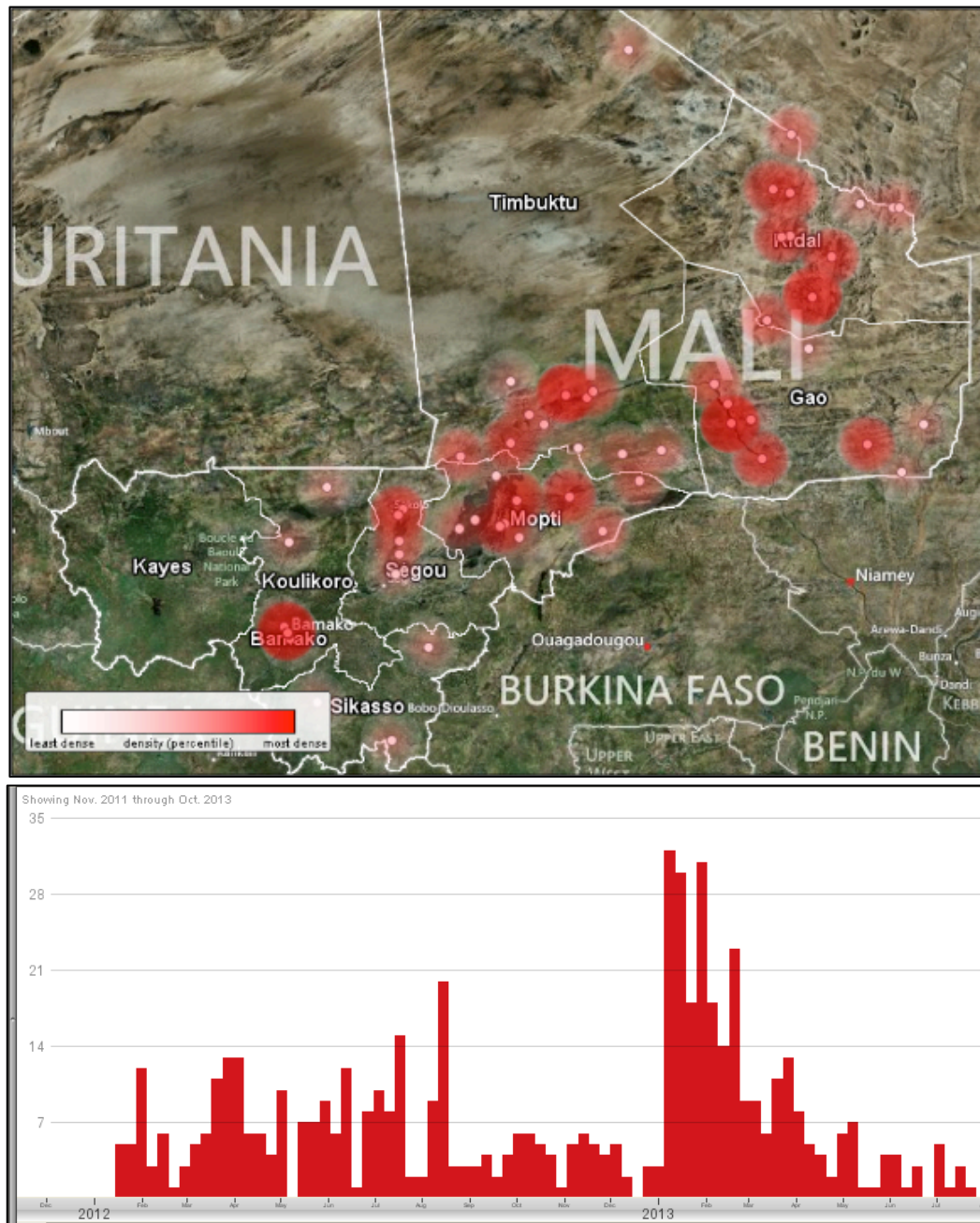
Within a poorly trained and fragmented Malian army, Gamou's forces are an important asset but also a liability. Their professionalism and familiarity with the terrain have been instrumental in military actions against the Tuareg uprisings since the 2000s. In addition, these forces have developed an important *esprit de corps* built upon ethnic homogeneity and years of operating together as a unit under a single commander. Sources who have witnessed his troops report that they are the most well trained, well equipped, and disciplined in the Malian army.³⁶⁵ Yet Gamou's potential to further ignite intra-Tuareg and inter-ethnic hostilities make him a potential threat to national reconciliation.

IV. Conflict Events

The following figures represent the location and date of conflict events in Mali between January 15, 2012 and July 31, 2013. The first figure illustrates all conflict events, and subsequent figures break down the events by their respective militant actor. These maps and timelines are useful for determining the highest conflict areas, conflict trends, and the regional superiority and affiliations of different armed movements.

Conflict events and locations are taken from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset (ACLED). ACLED “tracks the actions of opposition groups, governments, and militias across Africa, specifying the exact location and date of battle events, transfers of military control, headquarter establishment, civilian violence, and rioting.”³⁶⁶ ACLED is directed by Professor Clionadh Raleigh from Trinity College Dublin and is associated with the International Peace Research Institute.

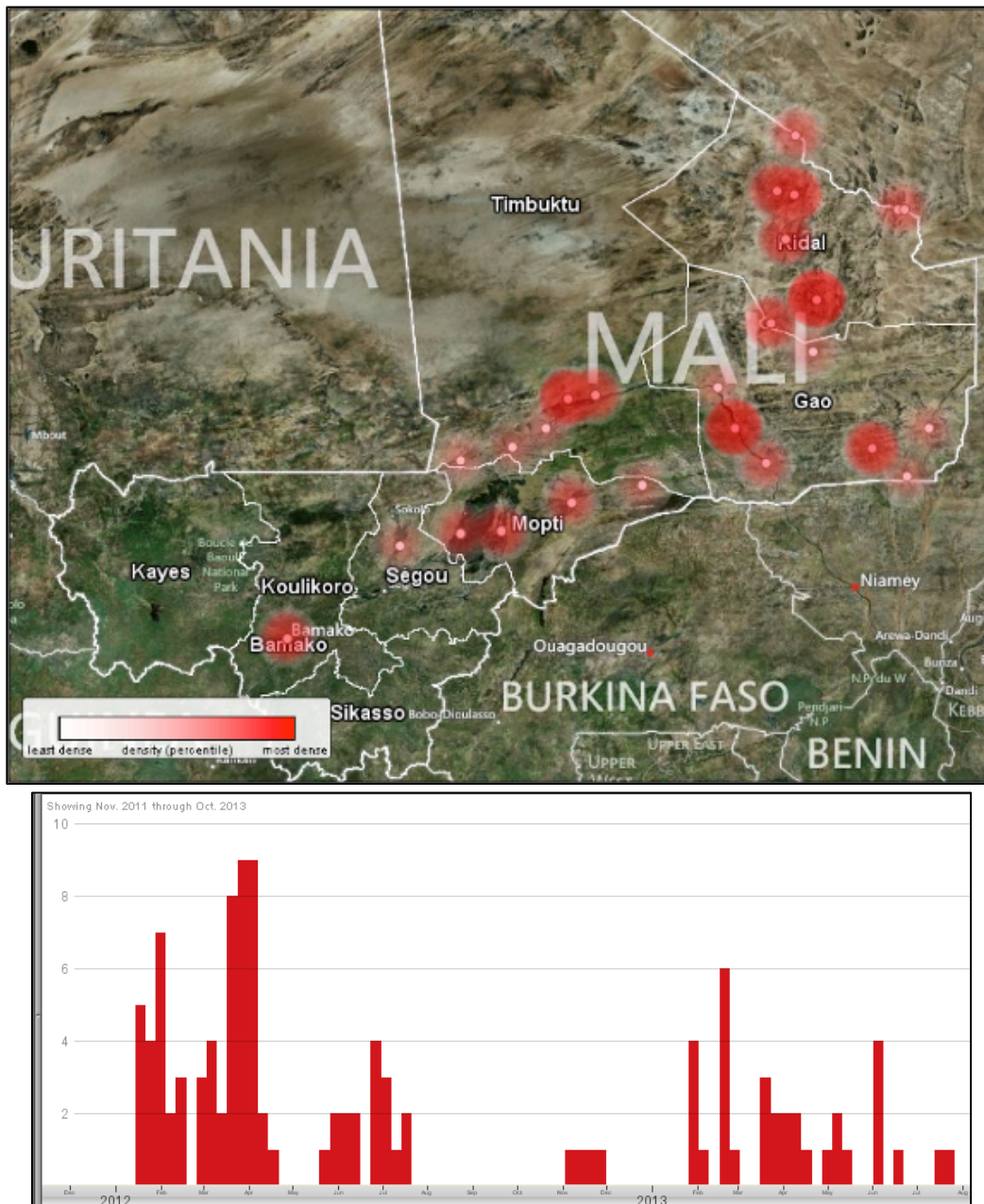
Figure 13. Mali Conflict Events (569)
January 15, 2012 – July 31, 2013



Source: Generated from ACLED data, available at <https://www.strausscenter.org/acled.html>.

Analysis: 569 conflict events took place within the borders of Mali between January 15, 2012 and July 31, 2013. In the regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu, the highest concentration of events occurred in or around regional capitals. There is also a high level of activity in central Mali in the region of Mopti, which became the *de facto* border between Azawad and Mali during most of 2012. Most events in Bamako represent Malian and foreign military activity, civilian protests, or official announcements. The highest spike in conflict activity occurs in January 2013 and coincides with French military intervention.

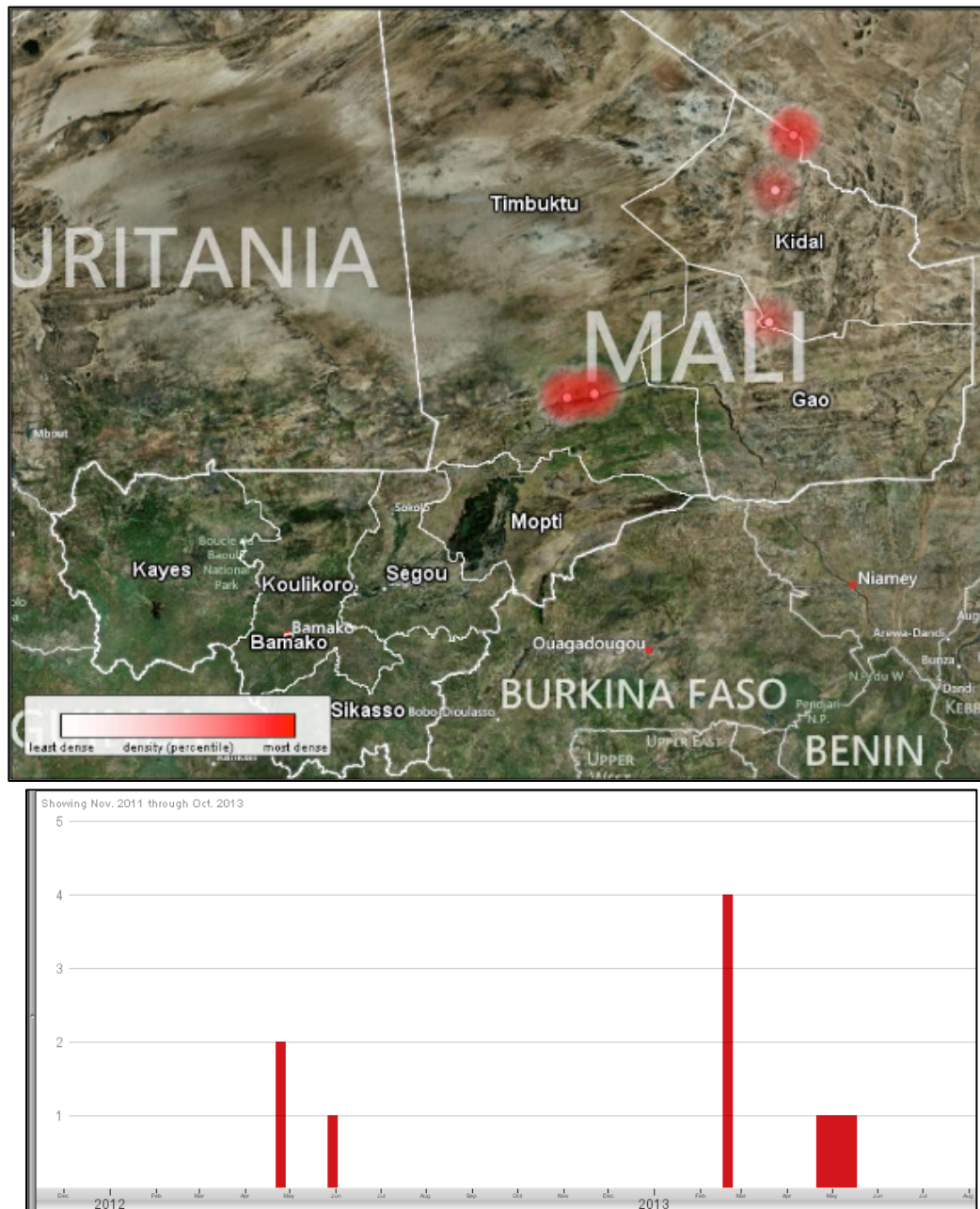
Figure 14. **Conflict Events Affiliated with MNLA (113)**
January 15, 2012 – July 31, 2013



Source: Generated from ACLED data, available at <https://www.strausscenter.org/acled.html>.

Analysis: Most MNLA-related conflict events took place in the three northern regions of Mali, with the highest number of events occurring in the cities of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu, and the circle of Tessalit (Kidal). Events in Bamako primarily represent MNLA-Malian government agreements/announcements or anti-MNLA protests by civilians. The timeline illustrates a lull in MNLA activity between July 2012 and January 2013. This time period corresponds to the sidelining of the MNLA by Islamist groups. MNLA activities pick up again in January 2013 after French military intervention, which removed the MNLA's rival militant groups.

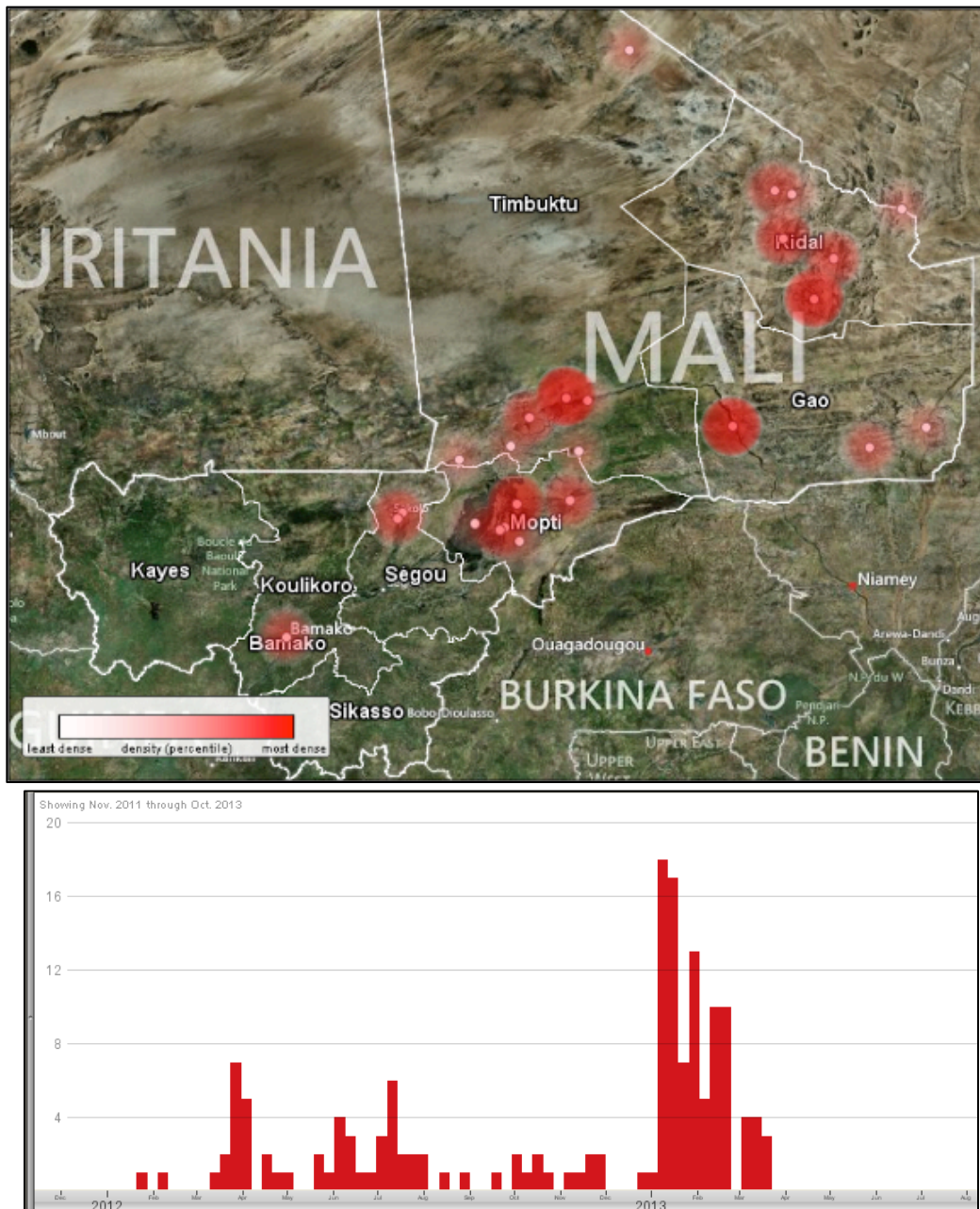
Figure 15. **Conflict Events Affiliated with MAA/FNLA (11)**
January 15, 2012 – July 31, 2013



Source: Generated from ACLED data, available at <https://www.strausscenter.org/acled.html>.

Analysis: The MAA/FNLA is affiliated with a relatively low number of conflict events, indicating potentially weak military capabilities. Conflict events correspond to two time periods: (1) April through June 2012 as the group unsuccessfully attempted to assert itself in Timbuktu and (2) the period after French military intervention as the group clashed for control over northern cities with the MNLA.

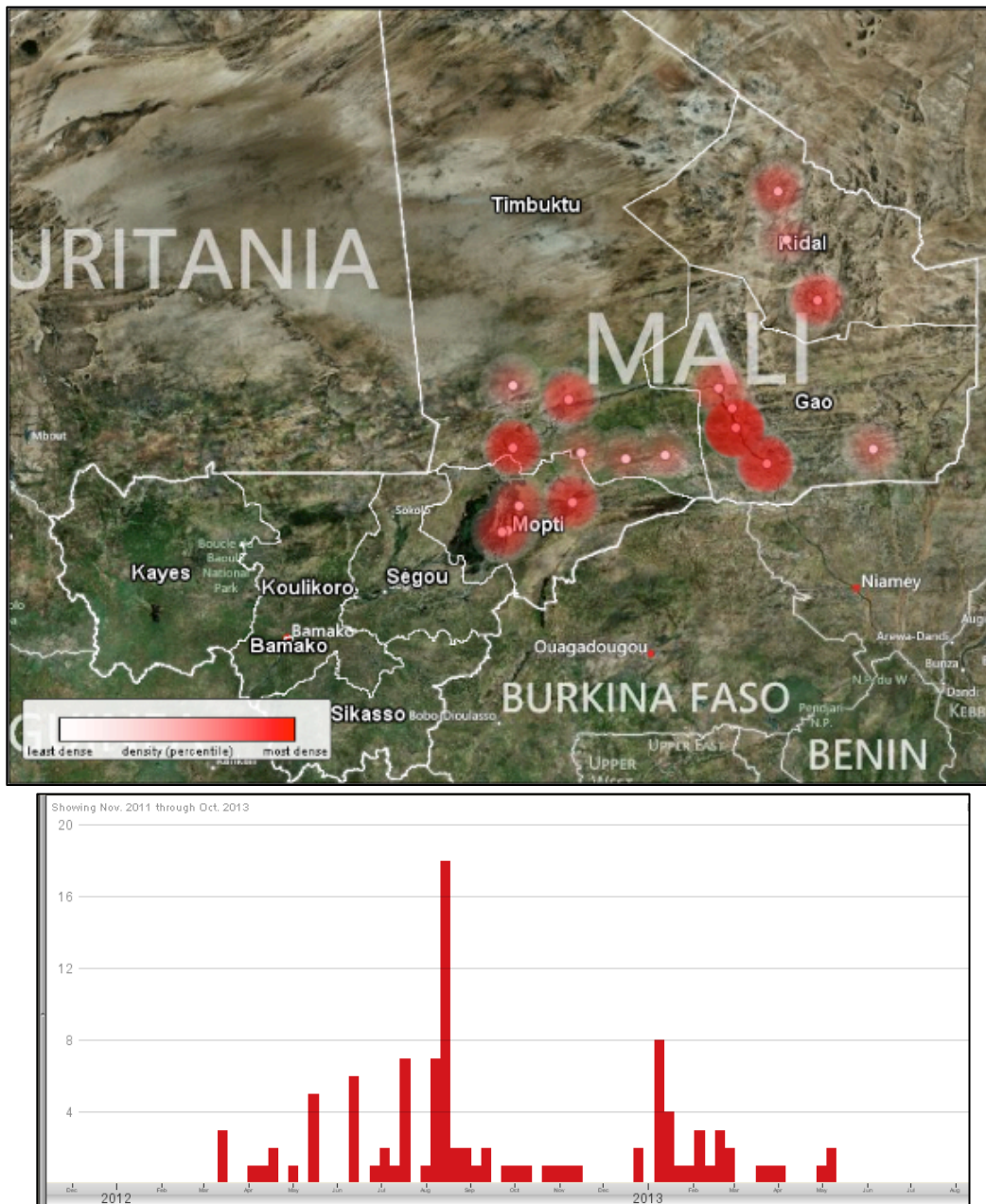
Figure 16. **Conflict Events Affiliated with Ansar Dine (156)**
January 15, 2012 – July 31, 2013



Source: Generated from ACLED data, available at <https://www.strausscenter.org/acled.html>.

Analysis: Ansar Dine is associated with more conflict events than any other militant group in Mali during the time period. The highest concentration of events occurs in the areas surrounding the cities of Timbuktu and Kidal, which were under Ansar Dine control during most of 2012. There is a dramatic spike in activity in January 2013 as Ansar Dine forces advanced southward to the cities of Konna (Mopti) and Diabali (Segou), triggering French military intervention. French intervention appears to have ousted Ansar Dine, or at least disrupted the group's activities. No conflict event is associated with Ansar Dine since March 21.

Figure 17. **Conflict Events Affiliated with MUJAO (101)**
January 15, 2012 – July 31, 2013



Source: Generated from ACLED data, available at <https://www.strausscenter.org/acled.html>.

Analysis: MUJAO's activities are highly concentrated in the region of Gao, where they controlled several cities during 2012. A significant spike in conflict events occurs during August 2012 when several anti-personnel mines planted by MUJAO kill 43 people and MUJAO forces deliver a string of punishments against civilians for violating Sharia law. Up through May 2013, MUJAO combatants have perpetrated sporadic terrorist attacks.

V. New Aid Priorities

As the country recovers from 18 months of conflict and the most serious institutional crisis since independence, many of the challenges present in the country before the conflict persist. Mali's new president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, will face the usual development challenges endemic to the region, but the political and security crises have also highlighted a new set of aid priorities.

This transition period presents Mali and its donors with the opportunity to address systemic issues that previously impeded development: ethnic tensions, poor governance, and economic disenfranchisement.

Promoting National Unity and Reconciliation

Ethnic tensions have been inflamed by the recent conflict; restoring national unity and promoting reconciliation between communities is critical.

Hundreds of thousands of northern residents have been displaced. Many Tuaregs and Arabs fled because they feared misdirected ethnic reprisals by Mali's sub-Saharan black ethnic groups. Some Bambara, Songhai and Fulani express thinly veiled disdain for light-skinned Tuaregs and make little distinction between the MNLA and Tuaregs in general. In Mopti, a government official from the Mayor's office dismissed Tuareg grievances of underdevelopment and years of central government neglect. "It is in the culture of Tuaregs to rebel once aid money runs out," he explained. "Large amounts of resources have been sent to the north, but Tuaregs do not want to work."³⁶⁷

Conversely, Tuareg and Arab populations from the north feel persecuted and marginalized by an administration controlled by ethnic groups from the south. A municipal councilor from Timbuktu remarked, "For the Malian army, if you have white skin, you are already guilty; you are already suspected [as a traitor]."³⁶⁸

Communal ties in Gao are especially frayed. As the MNLA took over Gao, there were multiple allegations of Tuareg soldiers committing crimes and terrorizing the local black populations. There is a fear that ethnic militias from the Songhai and Fulani ethnicities will respond in kind towards Tuaregs, as demonstrated in the 1990s and 2000s by the Ganda Koy and Ganda Izo militias. Reports of "race riots"³⁶⁹ in northern cities have only heightened tensions.

In an effort to address communal tensions, the interim president officially established the 30-member Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission (CDR) on March 6, 2013, led by a president and two vice-presidents.³⁷⁰ Similar commissions were created in other African countries emerging from ethnic conflicts (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Rwanda), but with varying degrees of success. Several groups have already criticized the composition of the CDR. Some claim that it is not representative of the northern populations;³⁷¹ others criticize the inclusion of divisive figures among its membership.³⁷²



Before the rebuilding and development process can begin, divided communities must re-establish trust. Donors can support this by promoting inter-communal dialogue and cooperation through community projects. Coordinated efforts to support local initiatives aimed at reducing communal tensions will be needed.

Improving Governance and Accounting

Billions of dollars of foreign aid are poised for release following Mali's successful transition to a democratically-elected president. But before donors turn on the aid spigot, they should reconsider how aid is channeled in Mali to mitigate the misappropriation of funds that exacerbated the conflict in the first place.

A 2011 European Commission study on direct budget assistance to Mali noted "significant weaknesses in treasury management and in public accounting." Improving transparency and accountability would go a long way toward improving the population's confidence in their leadership. For years, the Malian government announced major infrastructure and development projects in the north, but channeled funds through local elites who did not invest these funds in services for the population. "The government and international partners didn't work through civil society associations or local government, but with nefarious individuals based upon their personal relationships," said a Timbuktu-based community.³⁷³

Much of the funding was not transparently monitored, thereby empowering corruption and deteriorating Malians' faith in their leadership.

Reintegration

Assisting the return of the 353,455 internally displaced persons and 174,129 refugees in Mauritania, Niger, and Burkina Faso is a priority.³⁷⁴ The conflict has fueled a massive exodus from northern regions, and displaced populations are reluctant to return home until peace and security are restored. Large refugee camps have been established in neighboring countries, notably Mbera in Mauritania and Agando in Niger, but resource-strained host countries cannot accommodate them indefinitely. It is primarily the UNHCR orchestrating relief efforts for these IDPs and refugees, but they do not project to assist them all.³⁷⁵ In addition, only 32% of the UN's funding appeal for the humanitarian crisis has been met.³⁷⁶ The Mbera camp is over a year old, and relief efforts must now turn their focus from immediate emergency assistance to medium-term needs like education. For many of the displaced, they no longer have homes to return to and many fields and livestock herds—primary sources of income—have been lost. Ensuring that assistance continues and facilitating their transition back to Mali will be vital. .

Initiatives to effectively reintegrate combatants into society and rehabilitate child soldiers will also be necessary. Many MNLA soldiers previously served in Gadhafi's army in Libya and are not familiar with civilian life. Once the MNLA has disarmed, former combatants will need assistance adjusting to civilian life and developing job skills outside of the military. If combatants are not given the skills and training needed to pursue other professions, they pose a risk of contributing to banditry and crime in the region. A special challenge will be the rehabilitation of child soldiers. Accusations have been made against the MNLA and MUJAO of recruiting children to fight in their movements. In April 2013, Malian authorities and UNICEF opened a transit and orientation center in Bamako to welcome child soldiers who fought on the side of jihadists in northern Mali. But by May 10, this center only contained seven children between the ages of 12 and 15³⁷⁷—a tiny fraction of children affected by the conflict.

Restoring Basic Social Services

The restoration of basic social services must be ensured before IDPs and refugees feel comfortable returning home. Following the retreat of the Malian administration, many public buildings and services were looted or destroyed. The International Committee of the Red Cross provided fuel to power generators and water pumping stations in the northern cities of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal during 2012, but services were only maintained at a minimum level. All three regional capitals in the north lack the pre-conflict levels of potable water, electricity and medical services.

“The action of humanitarian actors in extremely difficult conditions must be praised, but more resources are necessary to relieve the suffering of the most vulnerable populations,” declared UN humanitarian coordinator Aurélien Agbénonci as he made an appeal for increased humanitarian assistance in Gao.³⁷⁸ Much of the Malian administration has yet to return to their posts in the north, and those that have do not have sufficient resources at their disposal. The return of the Malian army will also be critical in providing the confidence for displaced populations to return.

Disarmament

The influx of weapons and explosive devices is a direct result of the conflict and represents a threat to local communities. A Tuareg local government official from Kidal warned, “An unemployed person in Kidal is dangerous, very dangerous... There isn’t one person in Kidal who doesn’t have a gun.”³⁷⁹

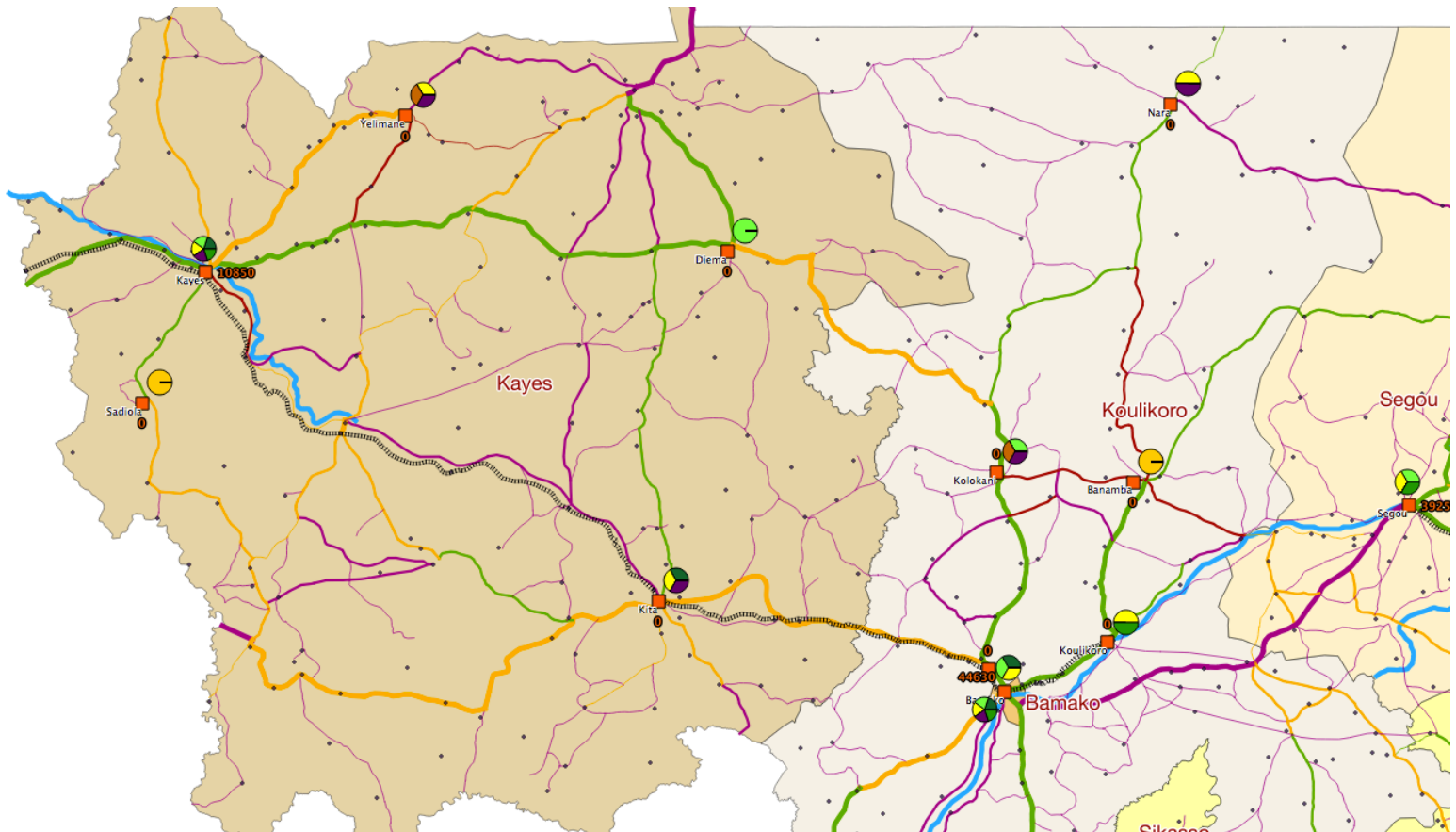
Northern populations use small arms as a means of insurance against crime and overzealous military intimidation. The influx of weapons in the region after the fall of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and the introduction of improvised explosive devices by al-Qaeda-linked militants have only compounded the problem.

The head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali, Fernando Arroyo, notes, “A new phenomenon has appeared, which is the presence of land mines. The proliferation of unexploded ordnance in some areas represents a serious problem.”³⁸⁰ In an effort to deter the Malian army and to prepare for French intervention, Ansar Dine, AQIM, and MUJAO strategically placed land mines throughout the region. These devices are difficult to recognize and represent a serious threat to security. Unidentified land mines could pose a residual risk for years to come. Awareness efforts will be required to notify the local population of such risks and how to identify them. Skilled experts will be necessary to deactivate and collect these devices.

VI. Logistics Planning

The World Food Programme is responsible for coordinating all humanitarian logistics shipments in Mali through the Logistics Cluster. The following maps illustrate the environmental conditions and humanitarian logistics capabilities in Mali:

Figure 18. **Kayes**



Source: WFP, c4ads, UNOCHA Common Operational Dataset

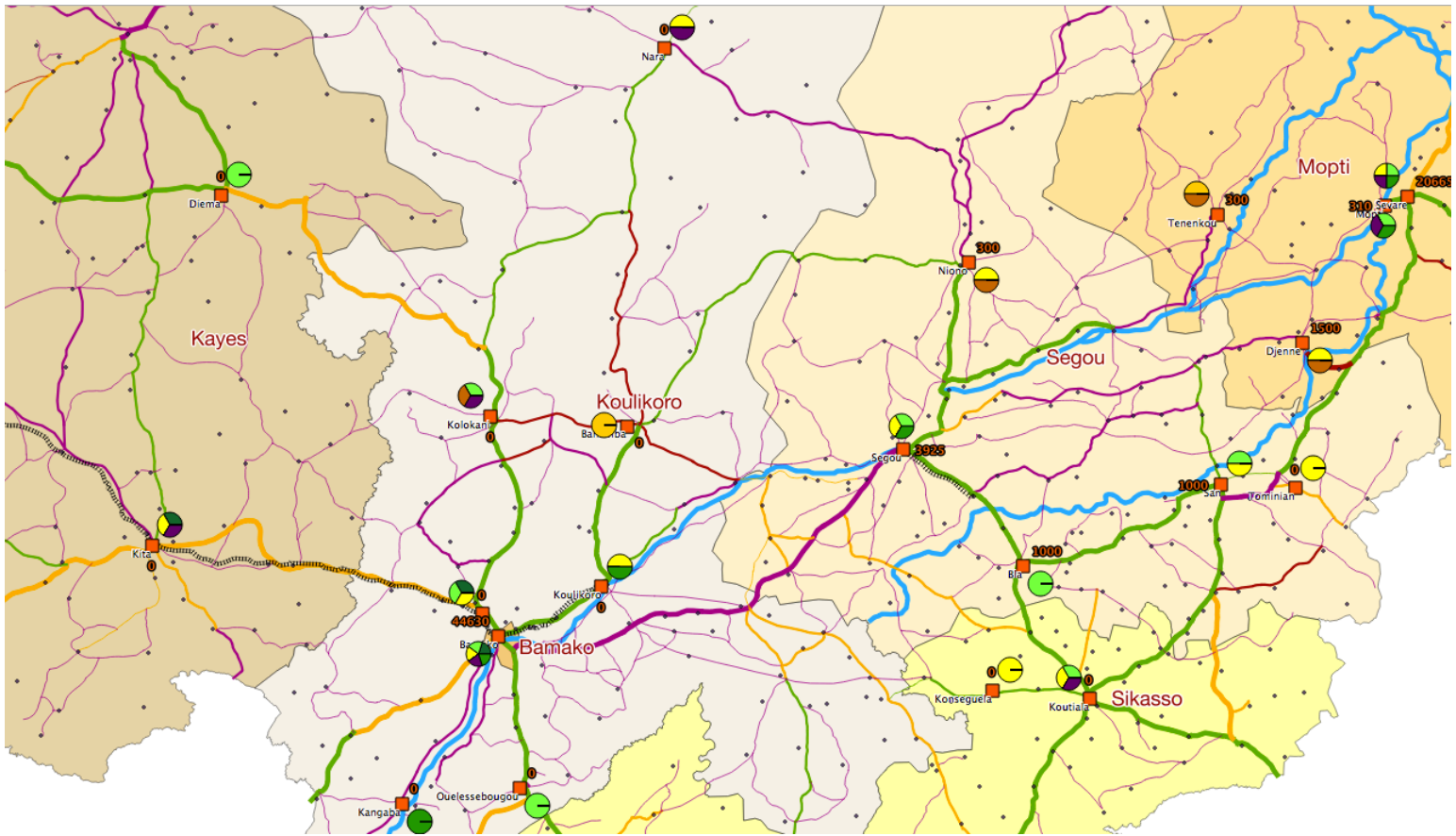
Legend

- River
- Road (Good Condition)
- Road (Fair Condition)
- Road (Poor Condition)
- Road (Unknown Condition)
- Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt/Path
- Settlement
- Railroad
- WFP Logistics Hub
- 300 Storage Capacity (in cubic meters)

Accessibility (Pie Charts)

- City accessible by Railroad
- City accessible by Primary Road
- City accessible by Secondary Road
- City accessible by desert/path
- City accessible by seasonal surface water
- City accessible by airport/airstrip
- City accessible by river (non-seasonal)

Figure 19. Bamako and Koulikoro



Source: WFP, c4ads, UNOCHA Common Operational Dataset

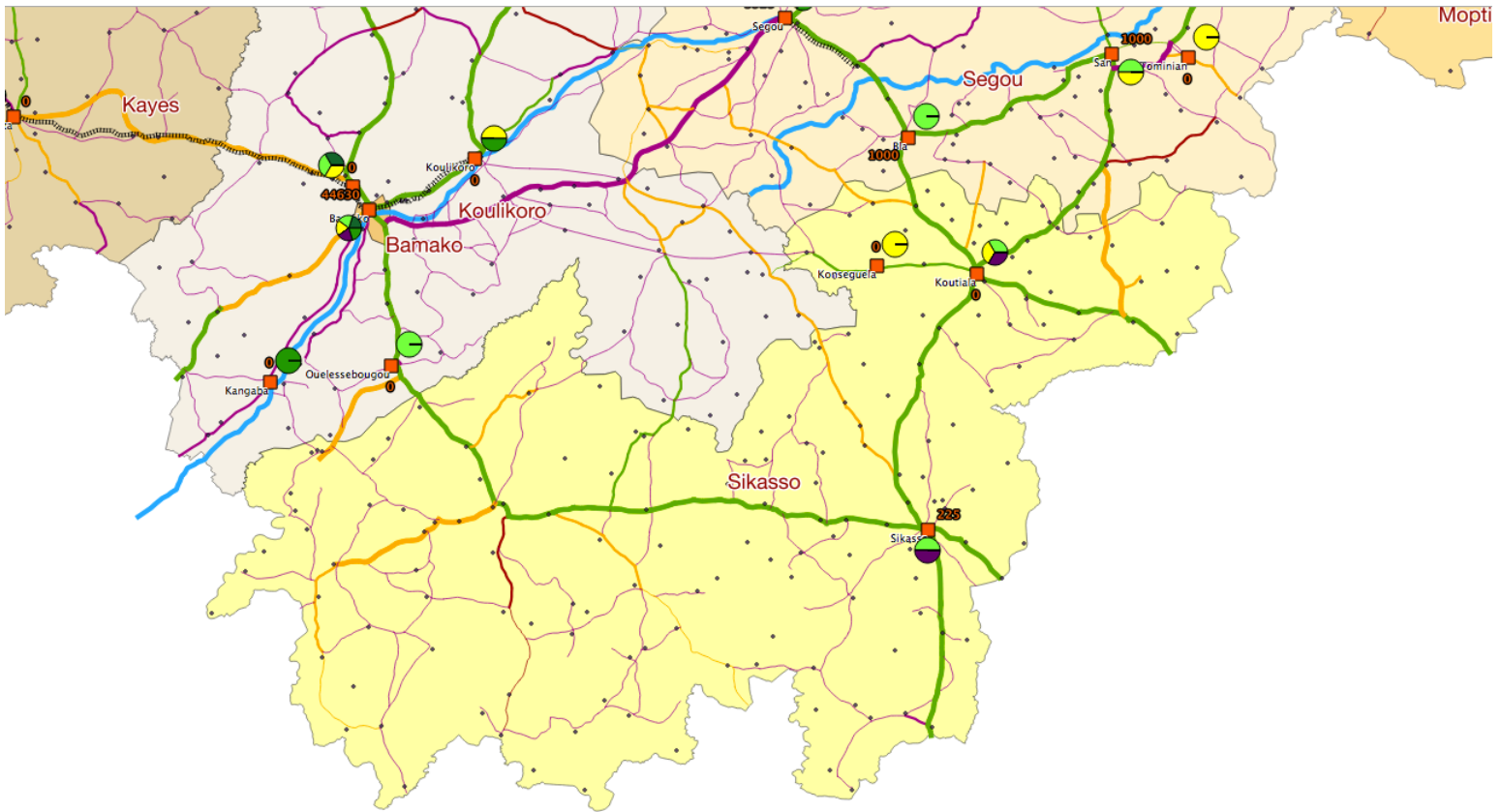
Legend

- River
- Road (Good Condition)
- Road (Fair Condition)
- Road (Poor Condition)
- Road (Unknown Condition)
- Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt/Path
- Settlement
- Railroad
- WFP Logistics Hub
- 300 Storage Capacity (in cubic meters)

Accessibility (Pie Charts)

- City accessible by Railroad
- City accessible by Primary Road
- City accessible by Secondary Road
- City accessible by desert/path
- City accessible by seasonal surface water
- City accessible by airport/airstrip
- City accessible by river (non-seasonal)

Figure 20. Sikasso



Source: WFP, c4ads, UNOCHA Common Operational Dataset

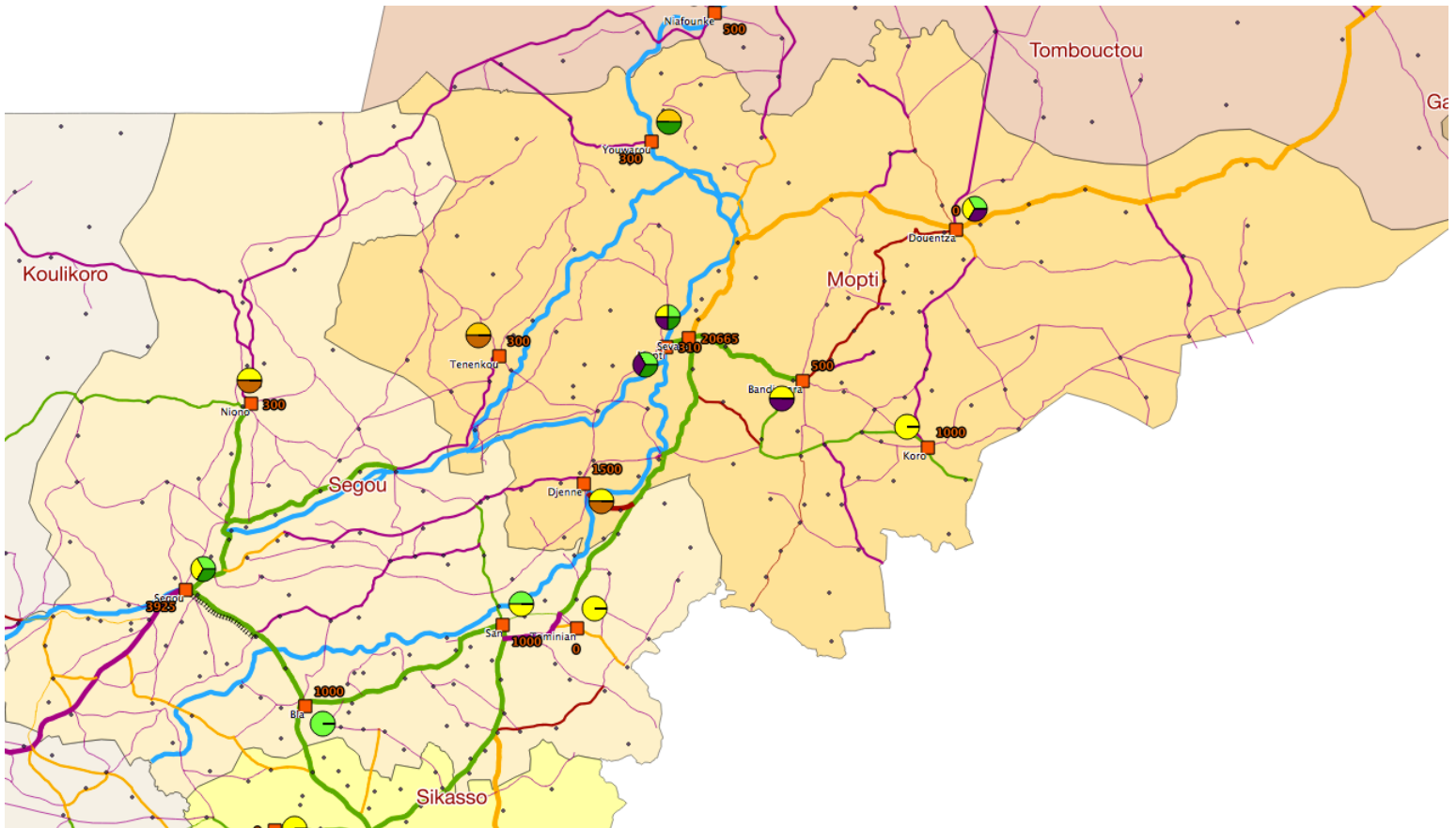
Legend

- River
- Road (Good Condition)
- Road (Fair Condition)
- Road (Poor Condition)
- Road (Unknown Condition)
- Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt/Path
- Settlement
- Railroad
- WFP Logistics Hub
- Storage Capacity (in cubic meters)

Accessibility (Pie Charts)

- City accessible by Railroad
- City accessible by Primary Road
- City accessible by Secondary Road
- City accessible by desert/path
- City accessible by seasonal surface water
- City accessible by airport/airstrip
- City accessible by river (non-seasonal)

Figure 21. Segou and Mopti



Data: WFP, c4ads, UNOCHA Common Operational Dataset

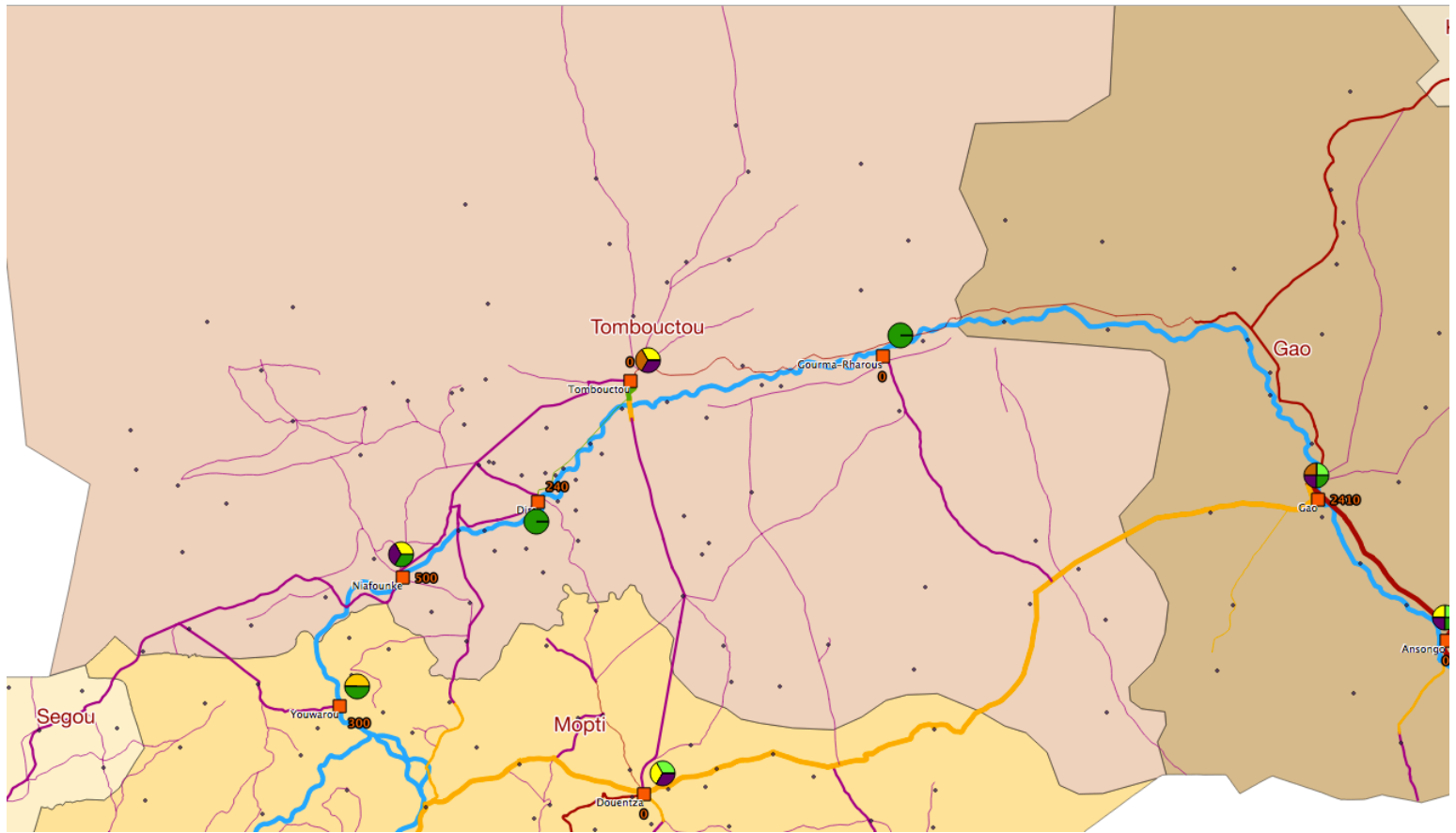
Legend

- River
- Road (Good Condition)
- Road (Fair Condition)
- Road (Poor Condition)
- Road (Unknown Condition)
- Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt/Path
- Settlement
- ==== Railroad
- WFP Logistics Hub
- Storage Capacity (in cubic meters)

Accessibility (Pie Charts)

- City accessible by Railroad
- City accessible by Primary Road
- City accessible by Secondary Road
- City accessible by desert/path
- City accessible by seasonal surface water
- City accessible by airport/airstrip
- City accessible by river (non-seasonal)

Figure 22. Timbuktu South



Data: WFP, c4ads, UNOCHA Common Operational Dataset

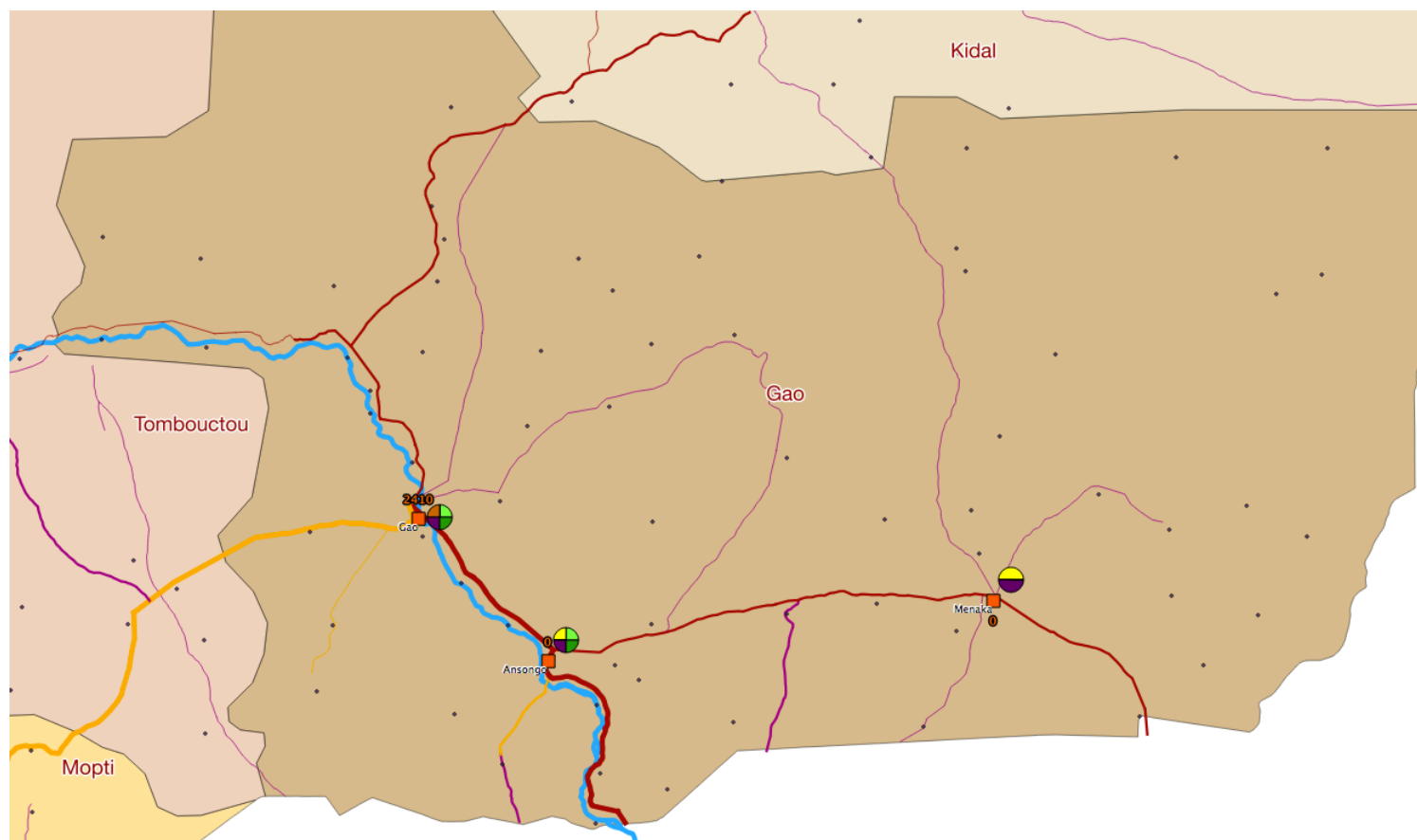
Legend

- River
- Road (Good Condition)
- Road (Fair Condition)
- Road (Poor Condition)
- Road (Unknown Condition)
- Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt/Path
- Settlement
- Railroad
- WFP Logistics Hub
- 300 Storage Capacity (in cubic meters)

Accessibility (Pie Charts)

- City accessible by Railroad
- City accessible by Primary Road
- City accessible by Secondary Road
- City accessible by desert/path
- City accessible by seasonal surface water
- City accessible by airport/airstrip
- City accessible by river (non-seasonal)

Figure 23. Gao



Data: WFP, c4ads, UNOCHA Common Operational Dataset

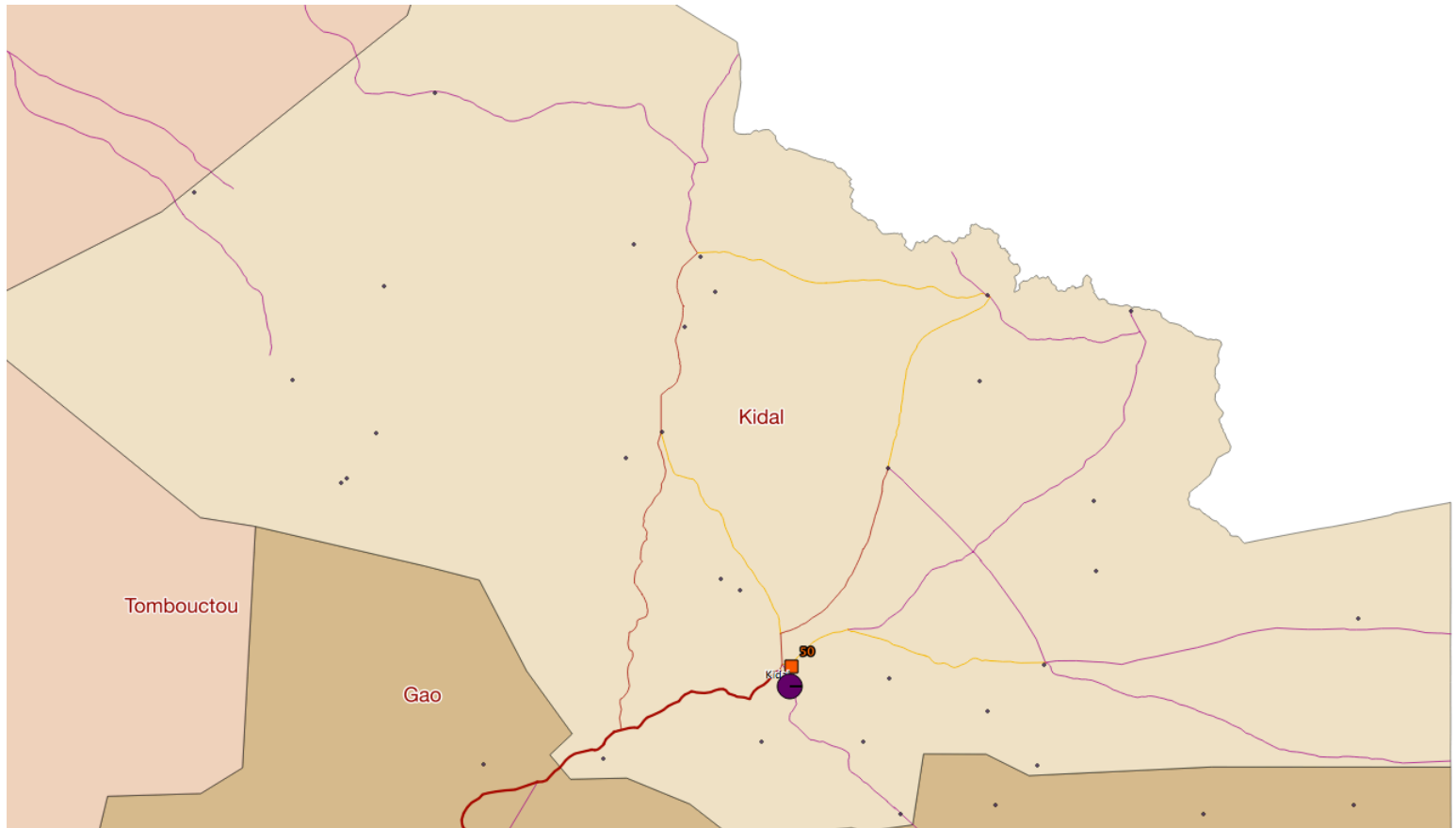
Legend

- River
- Road (Good Condition)
- Road (Fair Condition)
- Road (Poor Condition)
- Road (Unknown Condition)
- Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt/Path
- Settlement
- Railroad
- WFP Logistics Hub
- Storage Capacity (in cubic meters)

Accessibility (Pie Charts)

- City accessible by Railroad
- City accessible by Primary Road
- City accessible by Secondary Road
- City accessible by desert/path
- City accessible by seasonal surface water
- City accessible by airport/airstrip
- City accessible by river (non-seasonal)

Figure 24. Kidal



Data: WFP, c4ads, UNOCHA Common Operational Dataset

Legend

- River
- Road (Good Condition)
- Road (Fair Condition)
- Road (Poor Condition)
- Road (Unknown Condition)
- Paved
- Gravel
- Dirt/Path
- Settlement
- ==== Railroad
- WFP Logistics Hub
- Storage Capacity (in cubic meters)

Accessibility (Pie Charts)

- City accessible by Railroad
- City accessible by Primary Road
- City accessible by Secondary Road
- City accessible by desert/path
- City accessible by seasonal surface water
- City accessible by airport/airstrip
- City accessible by river (non-seasonal)

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