

Committee/Council: Security Council

Issue: The situation in Mali

Student Officer: Myrsini Karamanli

Position: President

Introduction

The Republic of Mali is a country located in Western Africa. It borders with Algeria (southwest), Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso (north) and Niger (west). The official language of the country is French while the majority of Malians are Muslims.

From the beginning of its modern history until today, the country has suffered constant political unrest. Apart from the unstable governments than have been in charge throughout the years, the region has also suffered numerous clashes because of the Muslim rebel groups.



Definition of Key-Terms

Theocracy according to civilliberty.about.com

A theocracy ("*theo-*" = God, "*-cracy*" = government) is a government operated under divine rule, or the pretense of divine rule. In practice, this term refers to a government operated by religious authorities who claim unlimited power in the name of God or other supernatural forces.

Colony according to thefreedictionary.com

A region politically controlled by a distant country; a dependency.

Coup d'état according to thefreedictionary.com

A sudden and decisive action in politics, esp. one resulting in a change of government illegally or by force .

Tuareg tribes according to calacademy.org

The Tuareg are a group of mostly nomadic people who live in northern Africa.

Franc Zone according to glossary.reuters.com

The CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine) franc zone comprises 14 African countries and the Comoros Islands in the Indian Ocean. Eight of them make up the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU): Benin, Burkina-Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Six others make up the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC): Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea.

Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) according to comm.ecowas.int

The Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional group of fifteen countries, founded in 1975. Its mission is to promote economic integration in "all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions, social and cultural matters .

Background Information

Early History

From the 11th to the 14th century the Empire of Mali had been a dominant force in the upper Niger basin. From the 15th century on, the Empire starts losing its economic power to the Songhai Empire, which takes over the gold trade of the region. During the 19th century two major events occur that will shape the political landscape in both Mali and the region as a whole. The first is the great advance that French colonies met in the region. The second are the wars between Islamic religious groups that with time lead to the creation of theocratic states. In 1898 France takes over Mali or - as it used to be called- French Sudan. Many years later, in 1959, the countries of Mali and Senegal work together, unite and form the Mali Federation. However, despite the efforts, the federation splits a year later.

Independence

In 1960 Mali gains its independence and Modibo Keita becomes the president of the socialist state and leader of its one and only party. Shortly after he comes into power, he decides for the withdrawal of Mali from the Franc zone. Eight years later, in 1968, Keita is ousted in a coup d' etat led by Lieutenant Moussa Traore. In 1977, Keita dies in prison. His death triggers intense reactions and mass protests by the Malians who considered him a national symbol . In 1979 however, elections take place and Traore is re-elected president. Less than a decade later, in 1985, Mali and the neighboring its country Burkina Faso engage in a conflict regarding their borders. In 1991 history repeats itself with Traore being removed from office in coup.

Democracy

In 1992 the shape of Mali's political sphere finally changes into a democracy as the first multiparty elections take place. Their winner and new president is Alpha Konare, who in 1995 signs a peace agreement with Tuareg tribes – a measure which results into the return of a great number of refugees. In 1999, the former President Moussa Traore faces corruption charges and is sentenced to death. After President Konare's intervention though, his sentence is changed into life imprisonment. In October of the same year some people are killed in a conflict between the Kunta tribe and an Arab community over local disputes. In 2000, Konare makes Mande Sidibe, a former International Monetary Fund official, Mali's prime minister.



Armed Tuareg islamists in northern Mali

Amadou Toure

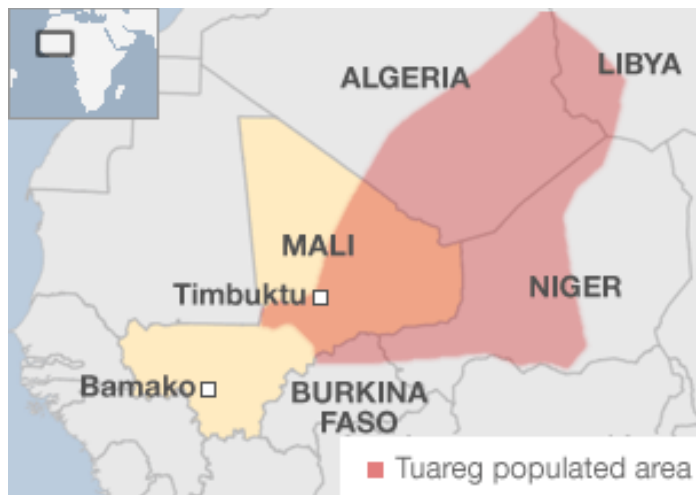
In 2002 Amadou Toumani Toure is elected president although there are several claims and accusations of fraud against him. In October though, the government resigns, without further explanation, and is replaced by a "government of national unity". In 2003 the ongoing problem of clashes between Muslim groups goes on in west Mali with at least 10 victims. In 2004 Prime Minister Mohamed Ag Amani resigns and is replaced by Ousmane Issoufi Maiga. This happens nearly at the same time, when a severe plague in the agricultural field causes a terrible damage to the economy and results in the cutting of cereal harvest by up to 45%. Due to this disaster, the World Food Programme warns in 2005 of severe food shortages. In 2007 President Toure wins in elections for the second time.

Rebel activity

From 2007 on, there has been a lot of action from the side of rebel groups in the region. Government soldiers have been abducted near the Niger and Algerian borders. These attacks have been pointed to the rebel Tuareg groups. In 2008 the same rebels attack and kill 17 soldiers in the northeast, while a few months later kill at least 20 people in northern Mali. In 2009, 700 Tuareg rebels agree to return to the peace process and surrender all weapons in a symbolic ceremony. In May of the same year, Algeria sends military equipment to Mali as part of a joint operation against al-Qaeda. In 2010, Mali, Algeria, Mauritania and Niger cooperate with each other in order to combat terrorism .

2012-2013 events

In the beginning of January, 2012, the government faces intense problems in the northern part of the country, when several insurgent groups initiate a campaign, aiming at greater autonomy or independence in the specific area, also named Azawad, which takes a stand against the Malian government. Within only four months, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) with the aid of the terrorist group Ansar Dine gains control over the territory, while President Toure is deposed in a coup shortly before the April presidential elections, as a response to his ineffective tackling of the Tuareg terrorist attacks. On the 6th of April, 2012 MNLA declares Azawad's independence from Mali. However this declaration is considered invalid by both the African Union and the European Union. Meanwhile, a civilian interim government led by President Dioncounda Traore comes into power in Mali. Traore , however, only serves until May of 2012, when he is beaten unconscious by protesters. The Tuareg rebel groups declare northern Mali to be an Islamic state. While the Malian government withdraws troops from the northern part, the MNLA and Ansar Dine group face great issues and engage in conflicts between the two.



Map of areas populated by Tuareg tribes

On the 12th of October, 2012 the United Nations Security Council unanimously passes a French resolution, which under the Chapter VII of the UN Charter approves of the establishment of an African-led force to assist Mali in re-gaining the northern part captured, after the very request of Mali and the ECOWAS. While the ECOWAS and African Union draft the plan, the United Nations Security Council authorizes the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA), with a one year activity period.

Early in January, 2013 the French Military launches a mission to Mali, under the name "Operation Serval", which includes more than 2000 troops and results in the immediate

weakening of the rebels. From the 15th to the 27th of January, the French forces along with the Malian gradually regain control of all lost areas in the northern part, while on the 29th of January the first non-Malian troops join the others, as response to the January 2013 summit of the African Union, where the president moved to thanking France for its military intervention and called upon all the governments of the member states to deploy troops to Mali within one week and try restoring their otherwise “slow” reaction to the events that occurred in Mali the past months.

The period February- April 2013 is one characterised by numerous terrorist attacks and battles, while other countries, such as the U.S aid the Malian- French forces. In April , Chadian forces withdraw from Mali, a move indicating that the fight with Islamist is now over, as Chadian president Itno comments. On the 18th of June, a peace deal between the Malian government and the Tuareg rebels is signed.

On the 1st of July, the United Nations announces the establishment of a peacekeeping mission in Mali, under the name UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which includes the forces of the former African led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) and aims at ensuring peace, stability and prosperity for the people of Mali, as the Special Representative of the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated.

On the 28th of July, presidential elections are taking place in Mali, for which the African Union deployed an Election Observation Mission, which will arrive in Mali on the 23rd of July.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

(and their expressed positions)

France

Taking into consideration that Mali used to be its colonial territory, France was very concerned about the situation in the country from the start and initiated both the UN intervention, by drafting the SC resolution, as also intervened militarily and aided the Malian government in January 2013. In addition, a large amount of humanitarian aid has been offered by France as a way to deal with the food crisis.

“The situation created by the occupation of a territory in northern Mali by terrorist groups is intolerable, inadmissible and unacceptable, not only for Mali, who is directly affected by this terrorist evil, but for all the countries of the region and, beyond, for all those who may one day be the victims of terrorism. The authorities of Mali have just brought this matter before us. So there is no time to lose. France will support all

initiatives that enable the Africans themselves to resolve this issue in accordance with international law, with a clear mandate from the Security Council. Yes, Mali must regain her territorial integrity and terrorism must be banished from the Sahel region.”

- François Hollande, President of the French Republic,

Opening debate of the 67th session of the General Assembly to the United Nations, 25 September 2012

Transformation of AFISMA to MINUSMA

“France welcomes the transformation today of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) into the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The African forces’ transition into blue helmets marks the beginning of a new phase for Mali, that of stabilization.

MINUSMA now has almost 6,000 blue helmets, who are already deployed in Mali, including in all towns in the north, as well as in Kidal. As the Security Council decided in its resolution 2100, MINUSMA will have a maximum of 11,200 soldiers, 1,440 police officers, as well as civilian experts. MINUSMA will continue to increase in strength over the next few months.

Under the authority of the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative, Mr. Bert Koenders, MINUSMA is tasked with stabilizing the country and lending support to the Malian authorities in the political transition process. In particular, it must support the implementation of the interim agreement signed in Ouagadougou on June 18 as well as the holding of the presidential elections, scheduled to take place on July 28 and August 11, and the parliamentary elections.

France lends its full support to the UN and the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative in fulfilling their mission. As authorized by the Security Council, the French forces could lend support to MINUSMA if necessary, and within the bounds of their capabilities.”

-Statement by the Spokesperson of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 1st of July 2013

Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS)

The Economic Community of West African States has also been involved in the situation in Mali from the first moment, considering that Mali is one of its member states. ECOWAS was the second party, along with which, Mali requested help from the United

Nations and the International Community in re-gaining control over the lost territory in the northern part. However, ECOWAS is not really able to provide any sort of help for the food crisis since its countries all suffer from similar problems.

“ The ECOWAS Commission deplores that despite the efforts made to find political solutions to the separatist crisis in Mali, the situation has seriously deteriorated over the past days with the attack perpetrated by rebel groups on Government positions, which resulted in the capture of Konna, when the ECOWAS Mediation invited the parties to a dialogue on 10th January 2013.

In these grave circumstances, the ECOWAS Commission reiterates the Community's commitment to support the Government and People of Mali to preserve Mali's territorial integrity and combat terrorism.

The Commission welcomes UN Security Council Press Release of 10th January 2013 authorising immediate intervention in Mali to stabilise the situation. The Commission thanks the French Government for its initiatives to support Mali.

The Commission reaffirms the previous decisions of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on Mali. In conformity to these decisions and against the backdrop of Resolution 2085 of the UN Security Council, the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, in light of the urgency of the situation, has decided to authorise the immediate deployment of ECOWAS troops within the AFISMA framework. Measures will be taken to implement this decision.

The Commission reiterates its support and encouragement to the Malian Defence and Security Forces and commits to take all necessary measures to repel this attack. It commends the efforts of the ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff in the implementation of Resolution 2085 of the UN Security Council.

The Commission thanks the African Union, United Nations, partner countries and the International Community for their support and calls on all to actively and urgently contribute to efforts aimed at stabilising the situation.

It cautions against any attitude which hampers the transition process and the decisions of the International Community, which will be liable to targeted sanctions.”

- Statement of the president of the ECOWAS Commission on the situation in Mali on the 12th of July 2013.

African Union

At the January 2013 summit of the African Union , its president expressed his regret on having reacted “slow” to the situation in Mali. Since the French military intervention, the African Union took a stronger stand and aided the Malian government, while ensuring the military support to it of all member states. The African Union also deployed a mission to help the elections and newly elected president of Mali, stating the following:

“ECOWAS with the African Union and a number of other stakeholders and international partners have come to the conclusion that let’s move ahead with the elections.”

“Because you have a situation that you want to have a legitimate partner that would be able to get Mali back to normalcy.”

United States

Up until March 2012, Mali and the U.S were considered partners in the fight against violent extremists. However the March 2012 coup against the Malian President, resulted in the U.S suspending all military relations with Mali. However during the period January- April 2013, the U.S sent forces to the Malian border, in order to provide help in the fight against the Tuareg rebels, while dispatching 100 military trainers to the countries sending forces to Mali.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
11th century	Mali becomes dominant force in the upper Niger basin
14th-15th centuries	Decline of the Empire of Mali, which loses dominance of the gold trade to the Songhai Empire
19th century	French colonial advance, and Islamic religious wars which lead to creation of theocratic states
1898	France completes conquest of Mali
1959	Mali and Senegal form the Mali Federation
1960	Mali becomes independent with Modibo Keita as president

1968	Keita ousted in coup
1977	Protests following Keita's death
1979	Traore re-elected president.
1985	Mali and Burkina Faso engage in border fighting.
1991	Traore deposed in coup.
1992	Alpha Konare becomes Mali's first democratically-elected president.
1995	Peace agreement with Tuareg tribes leads to return of thousands of refugees.
1999	Several people killed in fighting in the north between members of the Kunta tribe and an Arab community over local disputes.
2000	February - Konare appoints Mande Sidibe prime minister.
2002	April - Amadou Toumani Toure elected president. October - Government resigns, without public explanation.
2003	August - Clashes between Muslim groups in west kill at least 10 people.
2004	April - Prime Minister Mohamed Ag Amani resigns and is replaced by Ousmane Issoufi Maiga.
2005	June - World Food Programme warns of severe food shortages.

2006	June - The government signs an Algerian-brokered peace deal with Tuareg.
2007	April - President Toure wins a second five-year term in elections. August - Suspected Tuareg rebels abduct government soldiers in separate incidents near the Niger and Algerian borders.
2008	May - Tuareg rebels kill 17 soldiers.
2009	February - 700 rebels surrender their weapons in ceremony marking their return to the peace process. May - Algeria begins sending military equipment to Mali.
2010	April - Mali, Algeria, Mauritania and Niger set up joint command to tackle threat of terrorism.
March 30,2012	Tuareg rebels are in control of key cities .
April 8, 2012	President Toure resigns.
November 11, 2012	ECOWAS agrees on deploying troops.
December 20, 2012	The UNSC approves sending the force to northern Mali.
January 11, 2013	French president announces intervention in Mali.
June 18, 2013	Government signs peace deal with Tuareg nationalist rebels.

July 28, 2013	Elections take place in Mali.
----------------------	-------------------------------

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

UN Security Council Resolution 2056 (2012)

UN Security Council Resolution 2071 (2012)

The resolutions concern the Northern Mali conflict in 2012 and called for military intervention by ECOWAS and the African Union.

UN Security Council Resolution 2085 (2012)

The resolution urged the deployment of the International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA).

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The above mentioned resolutions can all be seen as a great step towards solving the issue, as they were all adopted by the Security Council unanimously.

Possible Solutions

While trying to come up with solutions to the problem, delegates should focus on two main aspects. The first one is the stabilisation of the situation in Mali, requiring the strengthening of the democratically elected government and the improvement of the relations and international stand of Mali. The second is the control and end of terrorism caused by the Muslim rebel groups. Both of these aspects should be solved both by the country of Mali and by the international community.

The first, and most important issue to deal with is the armed rebellion - either by diplomatic action or by use of force.

According to statements by the Islamists groups, diplomatic talks are only possible if and when the government of Mali accepts Sharia law. However, this is something that Mali does not accept. One must also point out, that in the case that the problem is solved by diplomatic means the government would have to cooperate with the Islamist groups. Such an action would mean that the groups would be considered legitimate, something completely undesirable.

In the case of using military force by the international community, there are two different ways to act. Countries could either intervene with their own armies – something almost- or support the Malian army (financially or by man force). However, delegates should keep in mind, that foreign intervention is not an easy measures. It requires really extreme situations, a great amount of legal procedures and it is always seen negatively by local population.

Considering the long history of the Tuareg tribes and their rebellions, a possible suggestion is that they could form their own semi-autonomous state in Northern Mali. The most common argument for this solution is that this part of the country has a little interaction with the capital, Bamako, and thus the certain solution could act beneficially for the region and its citizens. An argument against this solution is that sofar there no intentions of cooperations between the locals and the Muslim tribes. If such a step is taken in a negative and hostile atmosphere, there will be fear of possible disputes and clashes.

Apart from the above mentioned political measures, it is really important that the resolutions include suggestions to deal with the big food crisis that directly affects the lives and survival of the people of Mali.

Bibliography

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13881978>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>

<http://reliefweb.int/report/mali/statement-president-ecowas-commission-situation-mali>

<http://www.franceonu.org/france-at-the-united-nations/geographic-files/africa/mali-1202/article/mali>

<http://matsutas.wordpress.com/2012/12/18/military-intervention-brings-no-simple-solution-to-conflict-in-mali-guest-post-by-olli-teirila/>

http://climateandsecurity.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/lake_drought_in_oklahoma_e28094_flickr_-_al_jazeera_english.jpg

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17582909>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2013/01/the-conflict-in-mali/100446/>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/03/2012322111037483270.html>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/27/us-mali-rebels-crisis-idUSBRE90Q0AI20130127>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/world/mali-war-timeline/index.html>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45310#.Ue-UuI1HJ38>

<http://news.ecowas.int/presseshow.php?nb=006&lang=en&annee=2013>

<http://www.voanews.com/content/african-union-election-observers-begin-work-in-mali/1707881.html>
