



## Amnesty International Report 2016/17 - Mali

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### Republic of Mali

Head of state: **Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta**

Head of government: **Modibo Keïta**

**Internal armed conflict and instability increased. Armed groups committed abuses, including killing peacekeepers. Security forces and UN peacekeepers used excessive and lethal force, including against protesters.**

### BACKGROUND

Instability spread from the north to the centre of the country, with a growing number of armed groups carrying out attacks. In July, for example, armed groups killed 17 soldiers and wounded 35 others during an attack on an army base in central Mali. Armed groups retained control of the northern town of Kidal. The proliferation of armed groups hampered implementation of the 2015 Algiers peace agreement. In July, following several attacks, including in the north and the capital, Bamako, the state of emergency was extended until March 2017.

In June, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to June 2017. More than 10,000 peacekeepers were stationed in the country.

More than 135,000 Malians remained as refugees in neighbouring countries because of the conflict.

### ABUSES BY ARMED GROUPS

Attacks by armed groups against MINUSMA increased sharply. More than 62 attacks were committed during the year, killing 25 peacekeepers and six civilian contractors working for the UN. Landmines used by armed groups killed and maimed civilians, peacekeepers and members of the security forces.

In January, Beatrice Stockly, a Swiss missionary, was abducted in Timbuktu by al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). She had been captured and held by the same group for nine days in 2012. In December, Sophie Petronin, a French national working for a humanitarian organization, was kidnapped in Gao by AQIM.

In mid-May, the armed group Ansar Eddine killed five Chadian peacekeepers and wounded three in an ambush about 15km north of Aguelhok in the eastern Kidal region. Later that month, an attack on a MINUSMA camp in the northeastern city of Gao, claimed by AQIM, killed one Chinese peacekeeper and injured others.

## **EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE**

Security forces and UN peacekeepers used excessive force and were accused of extrajudicial executions. The UN reported a total of 24 instances of killings, summary executions and enforced disappearances in both March and May. In May, it reported that of 103 people arrested by Malian and international forces for terrorism-related charges so far in 2016, three had been summarily executed and 12 had been tortured by Malian forces.

In April, two demonstrators were shot dead and four others were wounded at Kidal Airport during a protest against arrests by international forces. MINUSMA established an inquiry.

In July, Malian forces fired live ammunition during a march in Gao organized by the Civil Resistance Movement, killing Mahamane Housseini, Seydou Douka Maiga and Abdoulaye Idrissa, and wounding more than 40 others.

## **IMPUNITY**

Despite some progress, measures taken to ensure truth, justice and reparation for victims of the conflict were limited. The UN Independent Expert on Mali highlighted the lack of progress, particularly regarding meaningful access to justice for women who had experienced violence. Insecurity and lack of logistical support for magistrates were cited as among the major impediments.

In May, 12 people charged with terrorism-related offences were sentenced to prison terms. Some of them had been released under the peace agreement.

In November, the trial began of General Haya Amadou Sanogo on charges linked to the abduction and murder in 2012 of soldiers accused of supporting the ousted President, Amadou Toumani Touré.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2014 to investigate serious human rights violations between 1960 and 2013, was still not operational at the end of 2016.

## **INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE**

In September, the International Criminal Court sentenced Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi to nine years in prison for directing attacks against religious buildings and historic monuments. A member of Ansar Eddine, he was charged for his role in destroying nine mausoleums and a mosque in the northern town of Timbuktu in 2012. He pleaded guilty.

## **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

In August, Mohamed Youssouf Bathily (known as Rath Bath), a journalist working for Maliba FM radio, was arrested and charged with undermining decency and demotivating the army. He had

called for the army's Chief of Staff to resign and criticized the army. He was released after two days under judicial supervision; his radio programme was banned.

## RIGHT TO EDUCATION

According to the UN, 296 out of 2,380 schools were closed in the regions of Gao, Kidal, Ségou and Timbuktu because of insecurity, with no alternatives provided. The CEDAW Committee noted the poor quality of education owing to the high pupil-teacher ratio and the lack of textbooks and qualified teachers. The Committee also noted rural-urban disparities in enrolment. Seven armed groups continued to occupy schools.

## RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

More than 33,000 Malians remained internally displaced because of the conflict, and some 3 million people faced food insecurity, including more than 423,000 at severe levels. Hijackings by armed groups in Gao and Ménaka regions hampered access to humanitarian assistance, including health care. In June, a warehouse in Kidal stocked with food for more than 10,000 people was looted.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In July, the CEDAW Committee voiced concern about the low level of representation of women on the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and at decision-making levels following the peace agreement. It also expressed concern at the extremely low completion rate for girls in secondary education owing to factors including early and child marriage, early pregnancy, indirect school costs, child labour and a preference for sending boys to school. The Committee urged Mali to reform legislation to eliminate discrimination against women, and to finalize the bill to prohibit female genital mutilation.

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1. Mali: Trial of former junta leader must bring justice for abductions, torture and murder ([News story](#), 28 November)

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