

Amnesty International Report 2017/18 - Mali

Publisher [Amnesty International](#)

Publication Date 22 February 2018

Cite as Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2017/18 - Mali*, 22 February 2018, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a9938b94.html> [accessed 3 January 2019]

Disclaimer This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

Republic of Mali

Head of state: **Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta**

Head of government: **Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga (replaced Abdoulaye Idrissa Maïga in December, who replaced Modibo Keïta in April)**

A bill for the protection of human rights defenders was adopted by the National Assembly in December. The government postponed the revision of the Constitution following protests. Full implementation of the 2015 Algiers peace agreement remained delayed. Joint operations between the Malian army and some armed groups began in Gao under the Operational Coordination Mechanism.

INTERNATIONAL SCRUTINY

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) raised concerns about serious security threats in the northern and central regions, which put civilians at risk and hampered their access to basic social services. During the year MINUSMA documented 252 cases of human rights violations by security forces and armed groups involving more than 650 victims. The cases included 21 instances of extrajudicial executions and deliberate and arbitrary killings, 12 cases of enforced disappearance and 31 cases of torture and other ill-treatment.

The French authorities opened an inquiry into the death of a child during the November 2016 Operation Barkhane involving French soldiers. The results had not been made public by the end of 2017. In December the spokesman for the French Army said that the internal inquiry did not reveal any individual or collective responsibility.

ABUSES BY ARMED GROUPS

Attacks in the central regions of Mopti and Ségou increased during the year. A rise in the presence of armed groups and in local recruitment aggravated tensions between different ethnic groups. In February, 20 people were killed and 18 others injured when unidentified assailants attacked members of the Fulani community. The attack followed the killing of a well-known opponent of radical influences in Ségou region.

Between January and September, MINUSMA recorded at least 155 attacks against its own peacekeeping forces, the Malian security forces and French soldiers involved in Operation Barkhane. Throughout the year, more than 30 MINUSMA-related personnel, including civilians and contractors, were killed by armed groups. Most attacks were claimed by the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims. Victims included eight children.

In June, five people were killed and 10 wounded during an attack by an armed group on a hotel on the outskirts of the capital, Bamako.

In July, armed men beat 10 women who were part of a wedding party. In August, 12 women who were not wearing a veil were flogged in Mopti.

At the end of the year at least eight people remained held hostage by armed groups following their abductions in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger over the last three years. The eight included three women – Beatrice Stockly, a Swiss missionary, Gloria Cecilia Agoti Narvaez, a Colombian missionary, and Sophie Petronin (French) – as well as Julian Ghergut (Romanian); Jeffery Woundke (US); Ken Elliott (Australian); and Malian nationals Mamadou Diawara and Soungalo.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Freedom of speech was under threat in the run-up to a referendum on amendments to the Constitution.

In June, at least eight people were injured when protesters against the constitutional changes clashed with police using tear gas and batons.

Physical and verbal threats against opponents of the referendum were reported in July. Also in July, Maliba FM radio journalist Mohamed Youssouf Bathily, known as Ras Bath, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment for "incitement to military disobedience" following criticisms of the army in 2016. In November, he was acquitted by the Bamako Court of Appeal.

DETENTION

Prisons remained overcrowded and conditions were poor. At the end of the year, the Bamako Central Prison housed 1,947 detainees despite a capacity of 400. Of those held, 581 had been convicted and 1,366 were awaiting trial. Detainees held since 2013 on terrorism charges were not permitted to leave their cramped and poorly ventilated prison cells, even for exercise.

Detainees continued to be held at an unofficial detention centre known as the "Sécurité d'Etat".

IMPUNITY

Efforts to tackle impunity faltered as several high-profile trials related to abuses committed in northern Mali during the 2012-2013 occupation failed to make significant progress. The 2015 peace agreement, which recommended the establishment of an international commission of inquiry to investigate crimes under international law including war crimes, crimes against humanity and human rights violations, had not been implemented by the end of the year.

In August, the former head of the police unit of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa, Aliou Mahamane Touré, was convicted of "violation of internal security, illegal possession of weapons of war, criminal conspiracy and aggravated assault" by the Bamako Assizes Court and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

The trial of General Amadou Haya Sanogo in relation to the abduction and murder of 21 soldiers in April 2012 had not recommenced after it was postponed in December 2016. The postponement followed a ruling that DNA tests were held inadmissible because the correct legal procedure had not been followed.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali expressed concern about the high number of schools closed due to insecurity in central and northern parts of the country, depriving more than 150,000 children of their right to education.

Throughout the year, more than 500 schools in Gao, Kidal, Ségou, Mopti and Timbuktu remained closed. Many schools, notably in Niono, Macina and Tenenkou, were threatened with attack by armed groups if they did not either close or convert to Qur'anic teaching. In May, an armed group burned down a school in Mopti, threatening further attacks against non-Qur'anic schools. Despite Article 39 of the peace agreement committing all signatories to pay particular attention to education for all, armed groups continued to occupy some schools.

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

In August, the International Criminal Court held Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi liable for €2.7 million in individual and collective reparations. He was convicted in 2016 of the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against religious and historic buildings in Timbuktu, and sentenced to nine years' imprisonment. ICC investigations into alleged war crimes committed since January 2012 in Mali were ongoing.