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# MALI: REBUILDING A COUNTRY FROM CIVIL WAR

ABSTRACT: *Not for the very first time in its history, after the military coup and the rebellion in 2012, the situation of Mali has become uncertain. The country's position on the Fragile States Index1 has gone through a major increase from the 76th place in 2011 to the 38th in 2013, and the 29th in 2016 out of a total of 178 countries. However, it was neither the coup nor the rebellion of the tribes that generated a crisis. Mali as part of the countries of the Sahel region had to face numerous challenges and these led to the outbreak of the crisis in 2012. Different peacekeeping missions of the European Union and the United Nations needed to deal with the root causes in order to stabilise the country and to bring long-term peace.*

KEYWORDS: *Mali, peacekeeping, United Nations, European Union, EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUTM Mali, MINUSMA*

## THE SAHEL REGION AND MALI

Mali is one of the central states of the Sahel region, which divides North Africa from the Sub-Saharan Africa. The Sahel region is one of the most deprived areas in the world with many risks, challenges, and conflicts. In the region, one can face all the negative effects of the climate change, water scarcity, food crises, demographic changes, radicalisation, terrorism, fragile governance and so on. As a complex region of crisis, international organisations such as the United Nations (UN) or the European Union (EU) handle the region with special care.

As part of the Sahel region Mali bears all marks of the crisis zone. The country was a French colonial territory known as French Sudan from the 19th century. Following a long fight with local tribes, mainly with the Tuaregs, France was able to extend its power. They managed to occupy the city of Timbuktu in 1893, which had always been a key to ruling the northern region of the country. Due to the centralisation of the administration and the power structure along with the harsh treatment of the tribes, the first Tuareg uprising broke out in 1911. The consequences of the French colonial era are visible even up to this date.[2]

In Mali, the permanent conflicts between the tribes and the all-time governance are only part of the problems. Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world. Regarding the GDP per capita, in 2016 Mali was the 163th country out of 189.[3]The population of Mali has been growing significantly, which, in other words, means a huge demographic challenge with the world's third highest fertility rate of 6 children per woman. But the country also has to face the problems of the health care system and the high level of child, infant and maternity

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[1]   "Fragile State Index". Fund for Peace. http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/country-data/, Accessed on 23 April 2018.

[2]   Klein, M. *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

[3]   Gregson, J. "The World's Richest and Poorest Countries". Global Finance. 13 February 2017. https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/economic-data/worlds-richest-and-poorest-countries, Accessed on 23 April 2018.

mortality rate.[4] The environmental changes, like desertification, also lead to serious dangers and an increasing number of refugees. Based on the latest data of the UN, there are more than 130,000 Malian refugees, from which more than 50,000 are internally displaced people.[5]

## COUP, REBELLION, TERRORISM

There were several factors contributing to the disintegration of the Malian State and the process in which the government and the president lost their powers. The social and economic stress and the dissatisfaction with the government led to a coup. In the meantime, the northern tribes – mainly Tuareg ones – started a rebellion. Finally, the extremist and terrorist groups became stronger in the region.

There are numerous factors which led to the coup on 22 March 2012. Since 1992, Mali has held presidential elections every 5 years. After President Alpha Oumar Konaré finishing with his presidency in 2002 under the constitutional limit of presidential terms, Amadou Toumani Touré won the election. According to the international observers' opinion, the election was fair and free, but we need to see that the voter turnout was 38 percent (2,2 million voters) in the first and 30 percent (1,7 million voters) in the second round.[6] The observers also detected serious systematic irregularities and an inadequate mechanism of transparency during the elections. Under these circumstances, the Constitutional Court annulled more than 540,000 votes in the first round, and more than 260,000 votes in the second round[7]. We also have to highlight that Konaré considered Touré to be his successor and made his best to help him to victory.

Touré's regime theoretically followed the principle of 'ruling by consensus' but practically, it seemed more like the president having an absolute power. He tried to keep peace in the northern territories by buying off the leaders of the northern tribes. The rule of law and judicial mechanisms were questionable, the court made its decisions in favour of the highest bidder. The international community's aids and the financial resources of the development funds were used ineffectively. There were territorial inequalities in the economic and infrastructural developments, thereby the regional differences kept growing. The educational system of the country was also in a terrible state.[8]

The reasons for the military coup were simple: there was dissatisfaction over the government that failed to serve the country's interests, the political leaders were considered to be netted by corruption, and democracy did not work with the politicians of the time. Following the coup, the legal force of the constitution was suspended and the National Committee for the Rectification of Democracy and the Restoration of the State (CNRDRE – Comité national pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l'État) was established. The junta and its leader Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo, were forced by the ECOWAS

4   "The World Factbook". CIA. 2018. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html, Accessed on 23 April 2018.

5   "Mali Situation". UNHCR. 2018. http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/malisituation, Accessed on 23 April 2018.

6   "Election Guide". http://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/133/, Accessed on 23 April 2018.

7   "Observing the 2002 Mali Presidential Elections: Final Report". The Carter Center. 2002. https://www.carter-center.org/documents/1107.pdf, Accessed on 23 April 2018.

8   Lecocq, B. et al. "One Hippopotamus and Eight Blind Analysts: A multivocal analysis of the 2012 political crisis in the divided Republic of Mali: Extended Editors Cut". Universiteit Leiden. http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/lecocq-mann-et-al---one-hippo-8-blind-analysts-editors-cut.pdf, Accessed on 23 April 2018.

(Economic Community of West African States) and the wider international community to transfer the power to the civilians, and to reinstate the constitution.[9]

That rebellion in 2012 was not the first one after the tribes had lost their freedom against the French colonisation in the 19th century. After an uprising in 1911, the first rebellion of the Tuaregs was between 1914 and 1917 and they wanted to gain independence for Azawad, known as the traditional home territory of Tuaregs.

After the end of the colonial ages, Mali, a newly established state, needed to solve the issue of the subsequent Tuareg rebellion. The inequalities between the northern and the southern territories of the country, the opposition of the nomad and not nomad tribes, the conflict between the Tuaregs and the government – with its socialist economic plans – were all driving the tribes into an uprising.[10] The government decided to use military solutions to end the rebellion. The violent conflict forced thousands of the Tuaregs to move to Algeria and the neighbouring countries.

In the 1970s and 1980s, mainly due to a huge drought hitting the area, migration occurred not only within the territory of Mali, but in the whole region. Many Tuaregs left their homes, moved to the cities and gave up their semi-nomadic lifestyle. The government's promises also influenced migration, and a lot of people moved back to their home country. Unfortunately, many of them came back with military experience after leaving the service of the Islamic Legion of Muammar Gaddafi.[11] The futureless crowd was just growing, while the government did not perform well either. Finally, this general discontentment resulted in another revolt at the end of the 1980s.

The rebels learnt a lot about how to fight against the army and, at that time, they also had a lot of Soviet weapons and military equipment. Despite the general dissatisfaction, the rebels could not force all the Tuaregs to take part in the fight. At the same time, many Arabs, Berbers or Moors joined the fight. Harsh military interventions did not go off well in the past, and the international community also urged a peaceful solution. The conflict ended in the so-called Tamanraset Accord (Accords de Tamanrasset) and the approval of the National Pact (Pacte National) in 1992.

The quiet times lasted until 2006, when a group of Tuaregs attacked military targets. President Amadou Toumani Toure, who played a key role in 1992 to reach peace in Mali, trying to find a peaceful resolution that time as well. Eventually, the opposing forces signed a new agreement in 2009, however, the minority who refused that agreement was defeated by military forces.

After the short summary of the history of the Tuareg rebellions, it can be stated that the conflict between the tribes and the all-time government seems to be endless and the leaders of the country made the same mistakes over and over again since the French colonisation. The peace processes and promises, the differences between the northern and southern regions, the political and societal integration of the nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes could not bring enough changes after the rebellions, for solving the discontentment of the peripheral areas.[12]

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9   Lecocq et al. "One Hippopotamus and Eight Blind Analysts…"
10  "Tuareg–Mali – 1962–1964". Global Security. http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/tuareg-mali-1962.htm, Accessed on 6 October 2016.
11  Westenfelder, F. "The Islamic Legion: Gaddafi's former Mercenaries". Soldiers of Misfortune. http://www.soldiers-of-misfortune.com/history/islamic-legion.htm, Accessed on 6 October 2016.
12  Besenyő, J. and Miletics, P. *Mali – Országismertető*. Budapest: Magyar Honvédség Geoinformációs Szolgálat, 2013.

The Arab spring and the political changes in the neighbouring countries, especially in Libya, had a major effect on the political stability of Mali. After the fall of Gaddafi, in 2011 the former Tuareg members of the Libyan army returned to the country with a notable number of weapons.[13]At the beginning of 2012, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA – Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad) started attacking and occupied the cities of Ménaka and Aguelhok. The rebels' success was indirectly assisted by the coup since it was backed up by the terrorist groups.

In the peripheral areas these terrorist groups could benefit from the weakness of the state. On the one hand, they used the social insecurity to link with the local people.[14] On the other hand, with the high corruption in the region, they could run their businesses without any difficulties. The Sahel region and Mali have been a key route of illegal trafficking for decades, which can be a major source of terrorists.

For example, AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) settled down in this region and has been running a very effective and profitable activity. AQIM was created from an originally Algerian group named GSPC (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) in 2007, when they united with Al-Qaeda. Their main activities are trafficking in illegal goods (e.g. drugs, arms, humans), kidnapping for ransom, or taxing goods of other traders. But at the same time, AQIM managed to infiltrate into local communities through trading with them, making partnerships, and members marrying local clans' women.[15]Thus, it was clearly the terrorist groups' main interest in 2012 to maintain uncertainty in the northern territories.

It is not only AQIM, which joined the Tuaregs, but Ansar Dine, or the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) need to be mentioned as well.[16] After the first results, the different objectives of the rebels and the terrorists became obvious. The Tuaregs wanted to liberate their ancient territory Azawad, which includes mainly the north of Mali. Ansar Dine wanted to rule the whole country, doing so in the name of Allah and being based on the Shari'a. AQIM wanted to keep up their businesses and to inhibit the establishment of a strong government capable of controlling the whole country.

In March 2012, the rebels only needed a few days to occupy the northern region's biggest cities of Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao. The next months, the balance of power among rebel groups changed, and the Islamist groups marginalised the MNLA. In this way the Tuaregs lost their main motivation, and as it was most expected Ansar Dine took the lead of the rebellion.[17]

## THE INTERVENTION

The international community, especially France, the USA and the UN could not reach consensus on the nature of the conflict in Mali since it was not clear whether the conflict

[13] Besenyő, J. and Marsai, V. *Líbia – Országismertető*. Székesfehérvár: MH Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság, 2012.

[14] Varga, M. "Társadalmi biztonság a terrorizmus árnyékában". *Hadtudomány* 27/1–2. 2017. 127–37. http://mhtt. eu/hadtudomany/2017/2017_1-2/HT_2017_127-137.pdf.

[15] Cooke, J. G. et al. *Militancy and the Arc of Instability: Violent Extremism in the Sahel.* Lanham, Washington: Rowman and Littlefield–Center for Streategic and International Studies, 2016. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws. com/s3fs-public/publication/160922_Sanderson_MilitancyArcInstabilitySahel_Web.pdf,

[16] Cooke et al. *Militancy and the Arc of Instability*.

[17] Marsai, V. "Külföldi katonai beavatkozás Maliban: az Opération Serval háttere és eredménye". *Nemzet és Biztonság* 6/1–2. 2013. 99–119.

is an act of terrorism, a civil war, or a state collapse issue.[18]Moreover, it was hard for the international actors to make a decision about what kind of intervention is required, which actor has to intervene and when.

The UN was in favour of some kind of African interventional force, for example a mission led by ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) which had already had missionary experience. The western countries and the EU had been under the influence of the former Libyan events. However, it was clear that ECOWAS did not have the necessary capabilities in the field of transportation, intelligence, armoured vehicles and aircraft, thus they would need help to fill these shortages.[19]The situation was hard for everyone, because after the intervention in Iraq or Afghanistan, the western countries did not want to send combat units to Mali. The EU started to work out a mission plan, but its mandate in Mali would have been simply to train and support.[20] Due to the growing strength of the terrorist groups, the attitude started to change. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius highlighted that an Islamist change in Mali would not only be a problem for Mali and Africa but would also pose a threat to Europe.[21] By this statement France defined the next steps and decided the later intervention.

On 20 December 2012, the UN implemented the Security Council Resolution 2085, wherein ECOWAS was given permission to start an operation in Mali called African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA). The mandate of AFISMA included the training of Malian troops, support for the army to retake and stabilise the northern territories, to increase security, and to defend the civilians and humanitarian organisations.[22]At the beginning of 2013, the situation varied while the terrorists started a new offensive and occupied the cities of Konna and Mopti. From such a position, they were able to attack Sevaré, an important city to reach the capital Bamako, and, more importantly, a city having one of the two most important airports where heavy aircraft are able to land. These actions changed the attitude and the opinion of the international community as AFISMA seemed to be deployable in the middle of 2013. President Traoré asked for immediate help from the UN and France.[23]

President Holland announced Operation Serval[24] on 11 January 2011. The main goals of that mission were firstly to stop the offensives of the terrorist groups and to ensure the protection of the southern country, secondly to destroy and disorganise the terrorists, thirdly to restore sovereignty and the territory of Mali and to preserve the state of Mali this way,

[18] Charbonneau, B. "Intervention in Mali: building peace between peacekeeping and counter terrorism". *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 35/4. 2017. 415–31. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02589001. 2017.1363383,

[19] Marsai. "Külföldi katonai beavatkozás Maliban…"

[20] Lindsey, D. "Germany 'Will Not Be Able to Ignore EU's Call' to Mali". *Spiegel Online*, 2012. http://www. spiegel.de/international/world/german-press-review-on-calls-for-eu-intervention-in-mali-a-863136.html, Accessed on 1 May 2018.

[21] Pham, J. P. "Mali: 'The Challenges of Mali'". AllAfrica. 2012. http://allafrica.com/stories/201212041631.html, Accessed on 1 May 2018.

[22] United Nations Security Council. "Resolution Nr. 2085". 20 December 2012. http://www.un.org/ga/search/ view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2085%20%282012%29, Accessed on 1 May 2018.

[23] "Mali asks for help from France as Islamist rebels push forward". *The Telegraph,* 2013. https://www.telegraph. co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/mali/9794871/Mali-asks-for-help-from-France-as-Islamist-rebels-push-forward.html, Accessed on 1 May 2018.

[24] "Opération Serval (dossier actualisé)". Ministre des Armées. 2013. https://www.defense.gouv.fr/air/dossiers/ operation-serval/operation-serval-dossier-actualise/presentation, Accessed on 10 May 2018.

then to prepare the deployment of international forces; and finally, of course, to rescue hostages, especially the French.[25] As we can see, Operation Serval was not the instrument of a political solution, but it meant an essential assistance until other international actors could start their activities.[26]

When the operation started, France did not have any forces in Mali, but they had them in the region, so they could easily mobilise forces to take part in the intervention. Soldiers of the foreign legion, both airborne and marine, arrived from Chad and Ivory Coast, and interventional forces came from France through Senegal. In the meantime, the bombing campaign started. France was supported in the field of logistics and transportation by the USA, Great-Britain, Germany, Canada, Italy, UAE, Spain, Belgium, Sweden and Denmark, and[27] in the field of surveillance, reconnaissance and special capabilities by Great Britain and the USA. The French intervention was very efficient and could achieve rapid success. Operation Serval ended in July 2014 and was replaced by Operation Barkhane, a counterterrorism mission.[28]

Operation Serval did not have the aim to build up a new political system, or to maintain security in Mali either, but to stop and crush the terrorists. At the same time, in order to rebuild the state of Mali, to train the Malian army, and to secure the region it was necessary for the international community to make further efforts.

## THE UNITED NATIONS

On seeing that AFISMA, led by ECOWAS, was not able to contribute to sustainable peace in Mali, the UN decided to establish the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The second step to be made towards a functioning state in Mali had to be the restoration of the political system and the reconstruction of the state itself. The UN, through Resolution 2100[29] and the establishment of MINUSMA, aimed to support the transitional authorities of Mali by all necessary means. The UN mission is also responsible to help the authorities to bring war criminals to justice and to promote and protect human rights.[30]

In 2013, the UN decided that MINUSMA should consist of 11,200 military personnel and 1,440 police personnel. Currently, more than 15,000 people are working in the mission including civilians, volunteers, experts and the military and police personnel. The mission's approved annual budget between July 2017 and June 2018 was more than USD 1 billion.[31]

[25] "Compte rendu n° 74". Commission de la Défense Nationale et des Forces Armées. 22 May 2013. http://www. assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cr-cdef/12-13/c1213074.asp#P7_246, Accessed on 10 May 2018.

[26] Charbonneau, B. "De Serval á Barkhane: Les problèmes de la guerre contre le terrorisme au Sahel". *Les Temps Modernes* 72/2. 2017. 322–40.

[27] Besenyő and Miletics. *Mali.*

[28] "Opération Barkhane". Ministre des Armées. 2017. https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/operations/ sahel/dossier-de-presentation-de-l-operation-barkhane/operation-barkhane, Accessed on 10 May 2018.

[29] United Nations Security Council. "Resolution Nr. 2100". 25 April 2013. https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/ missions/minusma/documents/mali%20_2100_E_.pdf, Accessed on 11 May 2018.

[30] United Nations Security Council. "Security Council Establishes Peacekeeping Force for Mali Effective 1 July, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2100 (2013)". 2013. https://www.un.org/press/en/2013/sc10987.doc.htm, Accessed on 11 May 2018.

[31] "MINUSMA Fact Sheet". United Nations Peacekeeping. 2013. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma, Accessed on 12 May 2018.

With these numbers, MINUSMA is one of the biggest UN Missions.[32] In addition, this is one of the most dangerous missions as well.[33]

While looking for a long-term solution, the UN emphasises the importance of a regional approach. For this reason, the organisation has created the Integrated Strategy for the Sahel[34] and they are working continuously on it to find solutions to the root causes of the regional crisis.[35]

To build a comprehensive approach does not only mean to follow a regional strategy. The UN, as it is seen from its practice specified as follows, tried to involve as many actors as possible. In Resolution 2100, the African Union, the European Union and ECOWAS are all mentioned as actors of the peace process. The UN also called upon the rebel groups to cooperate with the authorities and to cut off ties with the terrorists, especially with AQIM, MUJAO, and Ansar Dine. In 2014, the UN Secretary-General appointed a Special Envoy for the Sahel, who was responsible for coordinating the national, regional, and international cooperation.[36] In order to achieve greater efficiency, the UN merged the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel and the United Nations Office for West Africa, and also set up the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). The new office centralised the functions of the predecessors, and tightened cooperation among the states of the Sahel, West Africa and the international organisations.[37]

For building lasting peace not only in Mali but in the entire Sahel, it is crucial that the countries of the region take part in this process too. At the end of 2014, five countries (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad) of the Sahel founded G5 Sahel. This group aimed to deepen cooperation in the fields of economy, development, good governance, democracy and security. Strong cooperation might play a major role in the relations of these countries, because of the interdependency among them.[38]

## THE EUROPEAN UNION

After the risks and dangers of the region were successfully identified, the European Union created its strategy for the Sahel by 2011. The so-called Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel[39] became the main framework to the EU and the member states for supporting

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[32] Mbamalu, S. "The largest and most expensive UN Peacekeeping Missions are in Africa". This is Africa. 2017. https://thisisafrica.me/peacekeeping-missions-africa/, Accessed on 12 May 2018.

[33] Sieff, K. "The world's most dangerous U. N. mission". *The Washington Post*, 2017. http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2017/02/17/the-worlds-deadliest-u-n-peacekeeping-mission/?utm_term=.bbd69cf3a9b9, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

[34] "United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel". United Nations. 2013. https://oses.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/united_nations_integrated_strategy_for_the_sahel_s-2013-354.pdf, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

[35] "Revamped UN strategy aims to address root causes of Sahel crisis". UN. 2018. https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/03/1006191, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

[36] "Background". Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel. https://oses.unmissions.org/background, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

[37] "Background". United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. https://unowas.unmissions.org/background, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

[38] "Le G5 Sahel". Secreteriat Permanent de G5 Sahel. 2015. http://www.g5sahel.org/index.php/qui-sommes-nous/le-g5-sahel, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

[39] "Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel". European Union External Action Service. 2016. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/3947/strategy-security-and-development-sahel_en, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

security and development in the Sahel-Sahara region. In 2014, the range of the Sahel Strategy was expanded as besides Mali, Mauritania and Niger Chad and Burkina Faso also joined it.

In 2013, based on the request of Mali and UN Security Council Resolution 2085 the EU started their first mission in Mali. The EU military Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) has been operating since 2013. After the strategic reviews of the mission in 2016 and 2018, its mandate was extended by the Council until 18 May 2020.[40] EUTM Mali does not take part in combat activities as their task is to train, advice, and educate the Malian Armed Forces (MaAF). At the end of the mission, the MaAF has to be able to maintain the territorial integrity of Mali, to reduce the threat of terrorist groups, and to protect the population.[41] With the extended mandate from 2018, advice and training support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force will also be part of the mission.

After the request of Mali, on 19 March 2014 the Council of the European Union decided to establish a civil mission as well in Mali, called EUCAP Sahel Mali. The EU could build upon the similar ongoing civilian mission, EUCAP Sahel Niger. In this mission the EU is working together with Malian internal security forces (police, gendarmerie, national guards). The main objectives and tasks are to support these forces to be able to restore and maintain the constitutional and democratic order, and State authority and legitimacy in the whole country.[42]

The EU is present not only in the region with EUTM Mali, and EUCAP Sahel Mali but it is also involved in other partnerships, for example with G5 Sahel, and the African Union. It is also one of the largest contributors of humanitarian aid to the Sahel. The EU is supporting the countries of the Sahel via the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.[43]

## CONCLUSIONS

As the end of this research is being approached, it is time to look at the findings of the study and some likely further development areas.

The main conclusion that can be drawn is that the conflict in Mali is not only a problem for Mali itself, but also a threat to the neighbouring countries, therefore the region, and also to the European Union. After the interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya it became obvious, that we have to think in regional terms in every single case, because without such a regional approach, any intervention in any country will be a security threat to others. The intervention in Iraq affected Syria, or the fall of the regime in Libya influenced the security of Mali. From this point, it has been vital that the members of G5 Sahel realise the necessity of the cooperation.

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[40] "EU training mission in Mali: Council extends mission for two years with broadened mandate to include support for G5 Sahel Joint Force". Council of the European Union. 2018. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/05/14/eu-training-mission-in-mali-council-extends-mission-for-two-years-with-broadened-mandate-to-include-support-for-g5-sahel-joint-force/, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

[41] "About Us". EUTM Mali. http://eutmmali.eu/en/about-us/, Accessed on 20 May 2018.

[42] "Council Decision on the European Union CSDP mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali)". Council of the European Union. 19 March 2014. http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7465-2014-INIT/en/pdf, Accessed on 20 May 2018.

[43] "The European Union and the Sahel: factsheet". European Union External Action Service. 2017. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/4099/The%20European%20Union%20and%20the%20Sahel,%20fact%20sheet, Accessed on 20 May 2018.

We can also state that the comprehensive approach is essential to find long-term solutions to conflicts. This study largely concerns with exploring the conflict in Mali, where we show that the different actors seek to share the tasks between each other and separate the actions with clear mandates. By examining the root causes of the conflict of Mali, it is difficult to arrive to a conclusion other than the regional approach that has to be strengthened. It can be also concluded that the cross-border tribal territories and the nomadic lifestyle, the activity of the terrorist groups, and the effects of environmental changes are all influencing the countries in the region.

Another very important experience we gained in 2012 is that the response capabilities of the international community are still inefficient. Despite the failures in former crises, the different strategies of the organisations or the countries or the principles, it took nearly one year for the international actors to make decisions, to start the intervention, and to try to stop the conflict. This allows the conclusion that the UN should regulate clearly and obviously what kind of conflicts grant the rights for the international community to intervene. It would be also desirable to establish the regional organisations' (e.g. NATO, EU, African Union) interventional capabilities and the decision-making processes wherewith they can solve conflicts in a fast and efficient way.

Five years after the intervention started, we still cannot declare that there is peace in Mali, however, the government and the Tuareg tribes signed a peace agreement (Accord Pourla Paixetla Reconciliationau Mali[44]) in 2015. Nowadays, Malian forces, the UN, the EU, and the French forces are working together with Tuareg tribes. Despite the international cooperation and territorial losses, the attacks by the terrorist groups are still continuous. The terrorists are trying to stir up violent conflicts among the tribes and maintain the opposition as long as they can.[45] It seems to be a long time until real peace reaches Mali. This is no small task, and it will challenge policy makers and executive forces alike.

This study does not pretend to provide the answer to this challenge, but it hopefully provides readers with a deeper understanding of the region, so that they can better address this issue.

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"Background". United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. https://unowas.unmissions.org/background, Accessed on 19 May 2018.

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