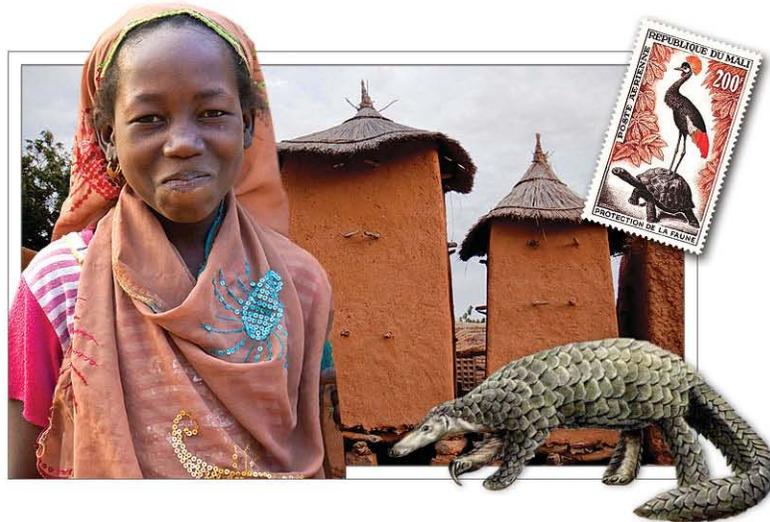


Mali in Perspective

An Orientation Guide



Technology Integration Division
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DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

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Chapter 1: Geography

Introduction

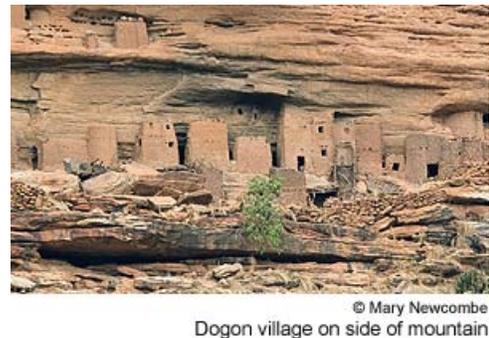
Mali is a large, relatively flat and arid country in West Africa. At about 1,240,000 sq km (479,000 sq mi), the landlocked nation is nearly twice the size of Texas, and slightly smaller than its eastern neighbor, Niger.¹ The Sahara in the north and the Niger River in the south shape the country's ecology, history, economy, and society.



Physical Terrain and Topographic Features

Farthest north and covering nearly half the country is the vast Sahara. This area includes the shifting sand dunes of Erg Chech, the salt deposits of Taoudenni, and the rocky plains of the Tanezrouft reg (a reg is a plain of sand and black, red, or white gravel). To the east and north is the Iforas Massif, a 600-m (2,000-ft) eroded sandstone plateau that extends from the Ahaggar (Hoggar) Mountains of the central Sahara (a massif is a large mountain mass or a group of connected mountains).

Near the center of the country is Hombori Tondo (1,155 m, 3,800 ft), Mali's highest point. Also in this region is the Bandiagara Plateau and Escarpment (Land of the Dogons), where humans dwell in sandstone cliffs that rise to 1,000 m (3,300 ft). From the southwest border with Guinea, the Futa Djallon Massif extends into the Mandingue Plateau. This diverse region has highlands up to 640 m (2,100 ft), and contains deep river valleys.²



The Senegal River flows from this area past the lowest point in Mali (23 m, 75 ft) to the Mauritania–Senegal border.³ Through the center of Mali, the Niger River forms a great arc. It flows northeast from its origins in Guinea to the city of Timbuktu, and then east

¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Mali," in *The World Factbook*, 25 January 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>

² Threat Assessment Department, Navy Environmental & Preventive Medicine Unit 2, "Medical Force Protection Mali," 25 June 2008, <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcp/Clinics/nepmu2/Documents/updates/MaliMFP20080625r.pdf>

³ Central Intelligence Agency, "Mali," in *The World Factbook*, 25 January 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>

and finally south to the border with Niger. The river floods the surrounding savanna in rainy seasons to create the unique Inner Niger Delta system.⁴

Climate

The yearly cycle of rainfall combines with annual temperature changes to produce three seasons. The weather is dry and hot from February to June, wet and relatively mild from June to November, and dry and cooler from November to February.

These weather patterns produce three climate zones in Mali. The northernmost Saharan zone has almost no annual rainfall with mean daily temperature highs of 48°C (119°F) and lows of 5°C (41°F). In the Sahel, the continent-spanning transitional region between the Sahara and equatorial Africa, annual rainfall averages 100–200 mm (4–8 in) with a mean daily temperature of 29°C (84°F). The third, Sudanic or Sudanian climate zone, averages 700–1,300 mm (28–51 in) of annual rainfall with a mean daily temperature of 27°C (81°F).⁵ Some scientists distinguish a fourth climate zone, the Sudano-Guinean, in southernmost Mali, where annual rainfall may exceed 1,300 mm (51 in).⁶



© Xavier Ceccaldi
Muddy trail, Mali

Rivers and Bodies of Water

Niger River

The Niger River and its inland delta system is the most important water source in Mali. After entering from the southwestern border with Guinea, the river is dammed three times in southern Mali: at Selingué, at Sotuba, and at Markala. The navigable course of the river runs some 1,600 km (1,000 mi) from Bamako's neighboring port near Koulikoro, northeast past Timbuktu, then east and south toward Gao.



© Ferdinand Reus
Niger River, Mopti

In the Macina region from Mopti to Kabara, the river's course is relatively straight. Its current is slow, and it spreads into a great system of lakes and wetlands. Lake Faguibine,

⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Niger River," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/414815/Niger-River>

⁵ Threat Assessment Department, Navy Environmental & Preventive Medicine Unit 2, "Medical Force Protection Mali," 25 June 2008, <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcp/Clinics/nepmu2/Documents/updates/MaliMFP20080625r.pdf>

⁶ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "Geography, Mali," 19 February 2010, <http://www.fao.org/forestry/country/18310/en/mli/>

once the largest of the system's lakes, nearly dried up in the 1990s.^{7, 8} About 400 km (250 mi) east of Timbuktu, the river narrows dangerously, preventing navigation during dry seasons. Turning south, the river widens upstream of Gao and may be navigated up to the rapids south of Ansongo. Near the border with Niger, the river becomes passable again.

Mali is a member of the Niger Basin Authority that was created in 1980 to cooperatively manage the water resources of the Niger River. Other members are Mali's neighbors Niger, Burkina Faso, and Cote D'Ivoire, as well as Benin, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, Chad, and Nigeria. In 2010 Nigeria contested plans for a new dam on the river at Taoussa, between Timbuktu and Gao.⁹

Senegal River

The Senegal River is the other major river, in southwestern Mali. It begins at the confluence of the Bakoye and Bafing rivers near Bafoulabé, and flows northwest past Kayes to become the border between neighboring Mauritania and Senegal. The Manantali Dam, 90 km (56 mi) upstream and southeast of Bafoulabé, forms a large reservoir from the Bafing that supplies water and hydropower.



© Dijor / flickr.com
Fishing, Senegal River

Since 1972, Senegal River resources have been cooperatively developed by Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal through the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS). Guinea joined the organization in 2006. A railway from Kayes to Dakar, Senegal, opened in 1923 and diverted traffic and commerce from the river for several decades, but the railroad has been under restoration in recent years.¹⁰

⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Lake Faguibine," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/200203/Lake-Faguibine>

⁸ UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Atlas of Our Changing Environment, "Lake Faguibine Mali," n.d., <http://unepatlas.blogspot.com/2008/06/lake-faguibine.html>

⁹ News Agency of Nigeria, "Nigeria Moves to Stop Construction of 3 Dams on Niger River," 7 September 2010, <http://ekoakete.com/2010/09/07/nigeria-moves-to-stop-construction-of-3-dams-on-river-niger/>

¹⁰ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Mali," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/360071/Mali>

Major Cities and Population

City	Census Population 2009 ¹¹
Bamako	1,809,106
Djenné	32,944
Timbuktu	54,453
Kidal	25,617
Gao	86,663
Mopti	114,296
Segou	130,690
Sikasso	225,753
Koulikoro	43,174
Kayes	127,368

¹¹ INSTAT *Institut National de la Statistique, République du Mali* (Mali National Institute of Statistics), Résultats Provisoires (Provisional Results) RGPH 2009, 10 February 2011, http://instat.gov.ml/contenu_documentation.aspx?type=23

Bamako

Bamako, the nation's capital, is on the Niger River in southern Mali. By some accounts, its name comes from the Bambara words bama-ko, "crocodile-river." Oral tradition describes Bamako as the site of Sundiata Keita's 13th-century defeat of the Ghana Empire and his rise to power as the "lion prince" of the Mali kingdom. The French declared Bamako the capital of colonial French Soudan (West Africa) in 1908. Bamako houses many government, higher education, and business organizations, as well as residential districts.



© upyerno / flickr.com
Bamako skyline

The Chinese are currently building a third bridge across the river to ease traffic in Bamako.¹² In 2007, there was no organized public transportation system in the city. There were thousands of private minibuses and taxis. Horse carts were banned in the 1990s. Bamako is the most densely populated city in Mali, 8 to 10 times denser than the largest regional capital. Crowds increase annually during the seasonal migration to the city between October and May.¹³ Bamako has an airport, train and bus stations, river ports, and major roads to Koulikoro, Segou, and Sikasso. Additional major roads are being planned.

Djenné

Djenné is the oldest known city in sub-Saharan Africa. Remains of the original trading center, Jenne-Jeno, date from 250 B.C.E. The current city, on an island at the meeting of the Niger and Bani rivers, developed in the 11th century. A key hub of the gold and salt trades, the city was conquered by the Songhai, Fulani, and Tukulor peoples, and occupied by France. This UNESCO World Heritage site is best known for its Great Mosque, the world's largest adobe building,



© Mark Abel
The Great Mosque, Djenné

¹² Tiemoko Diallo, "Hu Launches China's 'Largest Gift' to West Africa," Reuters, 13 February 2009, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2009/02/13/china-africa-idUKLD12476820090213>

¹³ Catherine Farvacque-Vitkovic et al., "Development of the Cities of Mali—Challenges and Priorities," (Africa Region Working Paper 104a, Water and Urban Development Division II (AFTU2), The World Bank, Washington, DC, September 2007), http://www.worldbank.org/afr/wps/wp104_english.pdf

which is replastered each spring in a city-wide celebration. There are river ferries between Djenné and the road from Bamako to Mopti. Visitors to Djenné may expect to pay a tourist tax at the Djenné turnoff.¹⁴

Timbuktu

Located where the Niger River meets the Sahara, Timbuktu is the Malian city most famous to the outside world. Arabs wrote of its wealth in the 14th century, and 19th-century Europeans died while exploring its environs. Tuareg tradition says timbuktu means “mother with a large navel” and refers to a disfigured woman who was left to guard a seasonal camp. Timbuktu became an important center of trade and learning by the 14th century, and is a regional capital today. The city was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988. More recently, international aid agencies have been helping to preserve thousands of ancient manuscripts.¹⁵ The region has been hard hit by drought, and shifting sands threaten to bury its ancient structures.

The Flamme de la Paix (“peace flame”) monument marks the ceremonial site where the Tuareg rebels ended their uprising in 1996. Recently, fear of kidnapping and armed conflict has resurfaced. Timbuktu has a small airport and a river port at Kabara. The road to Timbuktu is best traveled by off-road vehicle (or camel) and may be flooded during rainy seasons.

Kidal

Kidal, a small Saharan city in the northeast, is the capital of the newest administrative region of Mali.¹⁶ Long occupied by nomadic Arabic peoples, there are 12th-century cave paintings at Tadamaket.¹⁷ Armed rebels seeking increased self-governance are active in the area. It is home to desert locusts that periodically plague the region.¹⁸

¹⁴ Lonely Planet, “Introducing Djenné,” 18 February 2009, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mali/niger-river-route/djenne>

¹⁵ Joshua Hammer, “The Treasures of Timbuktu,” *Smithsonian*, December 2006, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/timbuktu.html>

Peter Gwin, “The Telltale Scribes of Timbuktu,” *National Geographic*, January 2011, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/01/timbuktu/gwin-text>

¹⁶ Timo Kivimäki, “Mali,” in *Agents, Motives and Instruments: An Atlas of African Conflicts*, eds. Timo Kivimäki and Liisa Laakso (Finland, Conflict Transformation Service, 2002).

¹⁷ Embassy of Mali, “Sights & Attractions,” n.d., http://www.maliembassy.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=212&Itemid=123

¹⁸ Famine Early Warning Systems Network, USAID, “Mali Food Security Outlook,” January 2010, http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/Mali_OL_2009_12_en.pdf

Gao

Founded in the seventh century, Gao is on the southern course of the Niger River in the east of Mali. Called Kawkaw in early Arab histories, it was the capital of the kingdom of the Songhai, the last of the ancient empires of Mali. In the 14th century, its ruler Askia Mohamed returned from Mecca and converted his people to Islam. His tomb at the great mosque of Gao is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Contemporary Gao is a regional capital. Roads link Gao to Algeria, Timbuktu, Mopti, and Bamako.

Mopti

The regional capital of Mopti lies at the confluence of the Niger and Bani rivers in the Macina region of central Mali. It is a city built on islands, sometimes called the “Venice of Mali.” It is a busy port, and a center of fishing and livestock herding. The population of Mopti is a diverse mix of peoples including Fulani, Bambara, Dogon, Songhai and Bozo, Bwa, and Tukolor. Nearby Sévaré with its airport and roads is replacing Mopti as the main transportation hub.¹⁹



© Tata Timbo
Mopti skyline

Segou

Segou lies on the Niger River halfway between Bamako and Mopti. It was an important trade center and the capital of the 18th-century Bambara kingdom. It is now a regional capital and the third-largest city in Mali. It houses the headquarters of the Office du Niger, which manages the agricultural water resources from the nearby Markala dam. Segou is noted for its Sudanese colonial architecture, pottery, and cloth markets.



© Lucile Verrot
Bwawere Region, Segou

Sikasso

Sikasso was the capital of the 19th-century Senofu kingdom of Kenedougou, and the last town to resist French colonization. Located in the southern Sudanic zone, it is green year-round. It is now the second-largest city in Mali. Agricultural trade and textile manufacturing are major activities.

¹⁹ Lonely Planet, “Mopti: Getting There and Away,” n.d., <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mali/niger-river-route/mopti/transport/getting-there-away>

Koulikoro

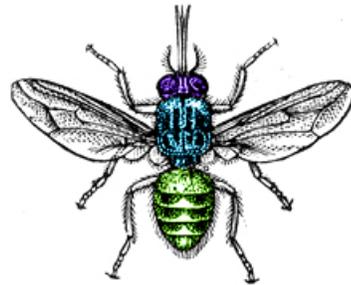
This regional capital serves as the Niger River port for Bamako. It once linked northern nomads with southern farming peoples. Today the Soninke, Bambara, and Malinke are major ethnic groups. Oil and soap production are important commercial activities.

Kayes

This regional capital was the first headquarters of colonial French Soudan in 1892. A few years earlier at nearby Medine Tukulor, the Tukulor leader 'Umar Tal staged a siege against the French. Located on the Senegal River, Kayes has a road and a station on a railway that both go to Dakar, Senegal.

Natural Hazards

Weather hazards include the hot, dust-laden harmattan winds that commonly blow south across the Sahara and into the Sahel during dry seasons. There is also the risk of flooding from the Niger and other rivers during rainy seasons. Biological hazards include periodic locust plagues, as well as diseases transmitted by insects and animals such as malaria (mosquito), African trypanosomiasis or sleeping sickness (tsetse fly), onchocerciasis or river blindness (blackfly), schistosomiasis or bilharzia (through water via freshwater snails), and rabies. The most serious hazard is prolonged drought and famine.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Drawing of a Tsetse fly

Environmental Concerns

Prolonged dry seasons and rising temperatures are contributing to the expansion of the Sahara southward into the Sahel region. Human adaptations to these climate changes, such as migration from rural to urban areas, are contributing to environmental degradation. This includes increased deforestation near population centers where firewood is the main energy source. Intensive farming has depleted and eroded soils, and overgrazing has converted Sudanic savanna vegetation into Sahelian scrub. Rivers are increasingly polluted from commercial and residential waste, and the river-fed water supply is shrinking. In addition to these problems, hunting and fishing threaten the survival of many endangered species.²⁰



© Stefan Hofstetter
Conventional faecal pit

²⁰ Biodiversity Analysis and Technical Support Team, USAID, *Mali Biodiversity and Tropical Forests 118/119 Assessment*, November 2008, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADO183.pdf

Chapter 1: Assessment

1. Mali is the smallest country on the Atlantic coast of western Africa.

False

Mali is a large, relatively flat, arid, and landlocked country in West Africa.

2. The Senegal River flows through the Sahara in Mali.

False

The Senegal River flows from the Mandingue Plateau past the lowest point in Mali (23 m, 75 ft) to the Mauritania–Senegal border.

3. The Saharan climate zone is continually hot, with average daily highs of 48°C (119°F).

False

The Sahara can be cool at night, with mean daily low temperatures of 5°C (41°F).

4. In Mali, the elephant and the hippopotamus are used to interacting with humans.

False

The hippopotamus is large, fast, and may attack without provocation. The elephant is not aggressive, but may charge if disturbed, injured, or protecting its young.

5. The Niger River is navigable along its entire course in Mali.

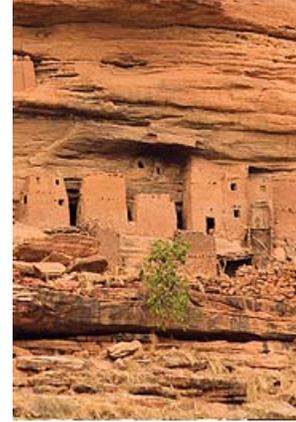
False

About 400 km (250 mi) east of Timbuktu, the river narrows dangerously, preventing navigation during dry seasons. Rapids south of Ansongo also interrupt navigability.

Chapter 2: History

Introduction

The Republic of Mali is a young nation with an ancient history. Humans have lived throughout the desert region for 7,000 years or more, and settled on the Niger River over 2,000 years ago.^{21, 22, 23} The West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai controlled much of the area in modern-day Mali and neighboring countries from the 7th to the 16th centuries. During the 17th and 18th centuries, many smaller kingdoms arose and competed for ethnic, economic, and religious dominance. In the 19th century, Europeans explored the area, and the French staked a colonial claim. After World War II ended, the country quickly returned to self-governance. Within a few years, the colonies became autonomous republics within the French community and, finally, independent nation-states. Since 1960, the Republic of Mali has experienced military and civilian rule under both single-party and multi-party governments.



© Mary Newcombe
Cliff villages along Bandiagara escarpment

²¹ E. Huysecom et al., “Ounjougou (Mali): A History of Holocene Settlement at the Southern Edge of the Sahara,” *Antiquity* 78, no. 301 (2004): 579–593, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Ounjougou+%28Mali%29%3A+a+history+of+holocene+settlement+at+the+southern...-a0123120551>

²² Pascal James Imperato, “Chronology,” in *Historical Dictionary of Mali* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), xiii.

²³ World Heritage Centre, UNESCO, “Old Towns of Djenne,” n.d., <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/116/>

Ancient Empires

Ghana Empire

The Soninke empire of Wagadu may have arisen in the fourth century C.E. and was well-established by the seventh century in the area of the upper Senegal and Niger rivers (along the present border with Mauritania).²⁴ Later historians called the kingdom Ghana, using the Soninke term for “king,” *ghāna*.²⁵ The rulers of Wagadu collected tribute from their subjects. They also taxed the production of gold in the south, and the trade of salt and other items from the north. In their capital cities, they established separate quarters for the traders, who were typically Muslims from the north.^{26, 27}



DoD Image
Location of the Ghana Empire

In the 11th century, the Almoravids, who were Saharan Muslims, fought to impose their version of Islam throughout northwest Africa and into Spain. In 1076, they attacked Kumbi, the capital of the Ghana Empire. The empire declined over the next 150 years and was finally absorbed into the Mali Empire.

²⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Ghana (historical West African empire),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232424/Ghana?anchor=ref1118>; “Mali,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/360071/Mali>

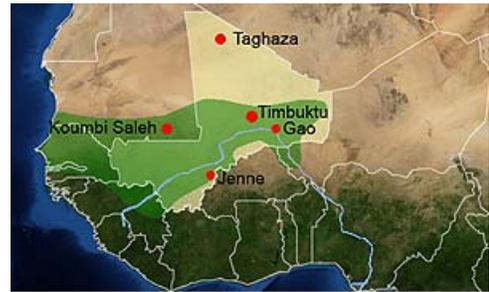
²⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Ghana (historical West African empire),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232424/Ghana?anchor=ref1118>

²⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Kumbi,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/324779/Kumbi>

²⁷ Margari Hill, “The Spread of Islam in West Africa,” Stanford University, Spring 2009, <http://iis-db.stanford.edu/docs/235/Islam.pdf>

Mali Empire

The Malinke people settled the city of Kangaba, on the upper Niger River east of the Futa Djallon massif near the Guinea border, from the ninth century.^{28, 29, 30, 31} The Malinke became traders in gold, subject to the Wagadu and Susu kings who ruled Kangaba until the 13th century. A Malinke of the Keita clan, Mari Djata, revolted against the Susu king Sumanguru, and defeated him at the battle of Kirina (near present-day Bamako) in 1235. Djata became known as Sundiata Keita, the “lion prince” or “lion king.”³² Sundiata and his successors expanded the Mali Empire to include the northern Saharan salt mines at Taghaza, the southern gold mines of Wangara, the cities of Timbuktu and Gao, as well as the lands of the Hausa and Fulani Tukolor people east and west of the Senegal River, respectively.³³



DoD Image
Location of the Mali Empire

The 14th-century *mansa* (“emperor”) Kankan Mūsā made Mali world-famous with his pilgrimage to Mecca. Reports reached Europe that Mansa Mūsā gave out so much gold in Cairo that its local value plummeted and did not recover for more than a decade.^{34, 35} Mūsā also brought to the empire foreign architects and scholars, who made Gao and Timbuktu important centers of Islamic worship and learning. In the next century, loss of control over these cities marked the decline of the empire and its eventual eclipse by the Songhai Empire.

²⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Mali (historical empire, Africa),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/685627/Mali>

²⁹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Sundiata,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/573828/Sundiata>

³⁰ National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, “Mali Empire and Djenne Figures,” 2011, <http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/resources/mali/index.htm>

³¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Mali (historical empire, Africa),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/685627/Mali>

³² *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, “Sundiata Keita,” Thomson Gale, 2005–2006, <http://www.bookrags.com/biography/sundiata-keita/>

³³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Sundiata,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/573828/Sundiata>

³⁴ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Mūsā (emperor of Mali),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/398420/Musa>

³⁵ Department of Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, “The Trans-Saharan Gold Trade (7th–14th century),” October 2000, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/gold/hd_gold.htm

Songhai Empire

The Songhai people lived at Gao, near the northeastern bend of the Niger River, from the ninth century.³⁶ Gao became capital of their kingdom in the 11th century. The kingdom grew to include Timbuktu, and for a time was part of the Mali Empire. In the 14th century, the Songhai rulers founded the Sonni dynasty. A century later, their leader Sonni Ali Ber brought the Songhai Empire to greatness during his rule from 1464 to 1492. Ali battled the Mossi and later the Tuareg at



DoD Image
Location of the Songhai Empire

Timbuktu, and the Dogon and Fulani at Bandiagara, plus he successfully laid siege to Djenné. He tolerated both traditional Songhai and Islamic religious practices in the empire. His son and successor favored the local traditions. In 1493, Muhammad Turé overthrew the Sonni ruler and established the Askia dynasty. Muhammad I Askia consolidated Songhai control over the former Mali Empire and extended his empire into present-day Nigeria. He also created an Islamic state with the help of a Moroccan Muslim adviser. In 1528, his son deposed him, and the former king died 10 years later. (His tomb at the Great Mosque of Gao became a UNESCO World Heritage property in 2004.) Internal dynastic struggles continued through the 16th century, until the Moroccan invasion in 1591.^{37, 38}

Moroccan Invasion and the Breakup of Empire

In 1591, the Moroccan Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur of the Saadi dynasty invaded the Songhai Empire in search of gold.³⁹ His army of 4,000 with guns defeated 40,000 Songhai at Tondibi, and soon took Timbuktu and Gao as well. During the next 300 years, local leaders eroded Moroccan claims to the empire and established many smaller competing kingdoms.

In the north, the control of Timbuktu was a target for a succession of leaders. The local Arma, descendants of Moroccan invaders and Sudanese wives, renounced allegiance to Morocco in 1660. In 1737, Prince Ogmor of the Tuareg, a nomadic North



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur

³⁶ BBC News, “Songhai,” in *The Story of Africa*, n.d., http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1624_story_of_africa/page83.shtml

³⁷ *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, “Askia Muhammad Ture Biography,” Thomson Gale, 2005–2006, <http://www.bookrags.com/biography/askia-muhammad-ture/>

³⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Muhammad I Askia (Songhai ruler),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/396293/Muhammad-I-Askia>

³⁹ Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, “The Sa’diyans, 1530–1603,” in *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 217.

African people who founded Timbuktu in the 11th century, defeated the Arma and regained Tuareg control of the city.^{40, 41} In 1818, Muslim Shehu Ahmadu Lobbo extended the Peul Empire of Macina to Timbuktu, and in 1861, ‘Umar Tal sacked the city while expanding his Islamic Tukulor Empire.^{42, 43, 44}

To the south, Bambara peoples rose to power. In 1712, Mamari Kulibali created a Bambara kingdom at Segou, which he ruled until 1755. His defeated rivals established a Bambara kingdom at Kaarta to the northwest around 1753.⁴⁵ Although ‘Umar Tal conquered these kingdoms in the next century, Bambara’s influence continues in present-day Mali. In Bamako and elsewhere, Bambara is a West African *lingua franca*.

In the 19th century, the Peul Macina and Tukulor empires of the Fulani peoples became powerful under ambitious Islamic leaders. From 1818 to 1844, Shehu Ahmadu Lobbo waged war throughout Macina and established a Fulani Islamic theocracy that extended to Djenné and Timbuktu.⁴⁶ From 1854 to 1864, ‘Umar Tal fought both the Bambara and the early French colonizers to expand the Islamic Tukulor Empire from Segou to Timbuktu.⁴⁷ Other leaders that battled each other and finally fell to the French were Tieba Traore, Senofu king of Kéné Dougou, and Samory Touré, a Dyula chief who was the last combatant captured in 1898.^{48, 49, 50}

⁴⁰ Hsain Ilahiane, “Timbuktu,” in *Historical Dictionary of the Berbers (Imazighen)* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 125.

⁴¹ Nehemia Levtzion, “North-West Africa: From the Maghrib to the Fringes of the Forest,” in *The Cambridge History of Africa, vol. 4, c. 1600–c. 1790*, Richard Gray, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 169.

⁴² G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville and Stuart C. Munro-Hay, “The Western Sudan in the 18th and 19th Centuries,” in *Islam: An Illustrated History* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2006), 214.

⁴³ Pascal James Imperato, “Chronology,” in *Historical Dictionary of Mali* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), xiii–xxii, 3; *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Shehu Ahmadu Lobbo (Fulani Muslim leader),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/539569/Shehu-Ahmadu-Lobbo>

⁴⁴ Stephen Cory, “Umar Tal (Al-Hajj Umar) (1797–1864),” in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Juan Eduardo Campo, ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2009), 686.

⁴⁵ Pascal James Imperato, “Chronology,” in *Historical Dictionary of Mali* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), xiii–xxii; *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Bambara States,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/51148/Bambara-states?anchor=ref232068>

⁴⁶ Pascal James Imperato, “Chronology,” in *Historical Dictionary of Mali* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), xiii–xxii; *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Shehu Ahmadu Lobbo (Fulani Muslim leader),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/539569/Shehu-Ahmadu-Lobbo>

⁴⁷ Pascal James Imperato, “Chronology,” in *Historical Dictionary of Mali* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), xiii–xxii; *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Umar Tal (Tukulor leader),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/613702/Umar-Tal>

⁴⁸ Pascal James Imperato, *Historical Dictionary of Mali*, 2nd ed. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1986), 91, 173–74, 214, 237–38, 241.

⁴⁹ Mark R. Lipschutz and R. Kent Rasmussen, eds., “Samory Touré (Samory),” in *Dictionary of African Historical Biography*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 203–204.

French Colonization: French Sudan and the Federation of French West Africa

By the end of the 18th century, European adventurers had begun to explore the interior of the area they knew as the Sudan, from the Arabic *bilād as-sūdān*, “land of the black peoples.”⁵¹ Scotsman Mungo Park traveled the Niger River through Mali before drowning in 1806 in an ambush at the Bussa rapids (present-day Nigeria). Likewise, Tuareg tribesmen killed Park’s compatriot Alexander Gordon Laing 2 days after Laing left to return to Europe from a successful journey to Timbuktu in 1826.⁵² In 1828, Frenchman René-Auguste Caillié became the first known European to visit Timbuktu and return alive.



DoD Image
René-Auguste Caillié

Not long after Caillié returned to France, the French military began to send expeditions east from their colonial port, Saint-Louis, at the mouth of the Senegal River. In the “Scramble for Africa,” the growing competition for African resources among European nations, the French met violent resistance from several peoples as they moved inland, including ‘Umar Tal and the Tukulor along the Senegal River, Tieba Traoré and the Senofu at Sikasso, and Samory Touré in the southern Wassoulou area.^{53, 54, 55, 56} In 1892, the colony of French Soudan established administrative headquarters at Kayes. Other colonies followed, and in 1895, French authorities merged these colonies to form the federation of French West Africa.

Despite a European resolution to suppress slavery in Africa at the Berlin Conference in 1884, the French exploited their African subjects in farming, mining, road and railway building, and sending them to fight in both world wars.^{57, 58, 59} Such treatment fueled

⁵⁰ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Mali,” 20 September 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2828.htm#history>

⁵¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Sudan (region, Africa),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/571396/Sudan>

⁵² *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Alexander Gordon Laing (Scottish explorer),” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/328012/Alexander-Gordon-Laing>

⁵³ Muriel E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1999).

⁵⁴ Anthony Ham, “Omar Tall,” in *West Africa* (Oakland: Lonely Planet Publications, 2009).

⁵⁵ Stephen Wooten, “The French in West Africa: Early Contact to Independence,” Ali B. Ali-Dinar, ed., African Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania, 2010, http://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French_16178.html

⁵⁶ Paul Stoller, *Embodying Colonial Memories: Spirit Possession, Power, and the Hauka in West Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995), 78–81.

⁵⁷ Saul David, “Slavery and the Scramble for Africa,” BBC, 17 Feb 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/scramble_for_africa_article_01.shtml

⁵⁸ Stephen Wooten, “The French in West Africa: Early Contact to Independence,” Ali B. Ali-Dinar, ed., African Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania, 2010, http://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French_16178.html

African resistance to colonial rule. After World War II, Africans gained citizenship and increasing autonomy in their own governmental affairs. In 1958, French Soudan became the autonomous Sudanese Republic. Like most of the former colonies of French West Africa, the leaders of the Sudanese Republic joined the French Community, primarily for mutual economic convenience (France still controlled the regional currency) and for cooperation in foreign policy, defense, and higher education.

The Mali Federation

As the former colonies were separating from France, they were also changing their relationships with each other. Competing notions of national, regional, and pan-African governance arose. In 1958, the Mali Federation was proposed with a membership of the Sudanese Republic, Upper Volta (present-day Burkina Faso), Dahomey (present-day Benin), and Senegal. Upper Volta and Dahomey dropped out before the federation became active in early 1960, and Senegal withdrew from the federation in August 1960.^{60, 61}



© Rgaudin / Wikipedia.org
Monument of Heroes, Bamako

The Republic of Mali

The Republic of Mali declared its independence on 22 September 1960. Modibo Keita had been president of the short-lived Mali Federation and kept his position in the new republic. He proclaimed Mali to be a one-party socialist state. The new nation faced problems of economic development and outright rebellion among the Tuareg in the Sahara, who did not acknowledge the authority of the new government. Keita called for the end of the French military presence in his country.⁶² He tried to nationalize industries, banking, and land tenure, an effort recognized with a Lenin Peace Prize in 1963.^{63, 64} In 1967, he launched an unpopular, Maoist-style cultural revolution, and he was deposed by Lt. Moussa Traoré in a military coup the following year.

⁵⁹ “History: French Conquest of the Western Sudan,” Mali: Ancient Crossroads of Africa, Virginia Department of Education, Prince William County Schools, 2002, http://mali.pwnet.org/history/history_french_colonialism.htm

⁶⁰ Hubert Bonin, “*Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*, vol. 1, F. Abiola Irele and Biodun Jeyifo, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 275–277.

⁶¹ Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France’s Successful Decolonization?* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2002), 179–184.

⁶² Francesca DiPiazza, *Mali in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2007), 33–34.

⁶³ J. Skinner, “Towards Better Woodland Management in Sahelian Mali,” ODI Social Forestry Network Papers 6a (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1988), <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/u9040e/U9040E11.htm>

⁶⁴ *Gale Encyclopedia of Biography*, “Modibo Keita,” 2006, <http://www.answers.com/topic/modibo-keita>

Traoré led 10 years of direct military rule. Then in 1979 and 1985, Gen. Traoré won the presidential elections unopposed. One of his government's early actions was to invite the United States Peace Corps to Mali, and the first volunteers arrived in 1971. In that same year, Mali voted with the Soviet bloc to admit the People's Republic of China to the United Nations.⁶⁵ In 1975, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, a group of countries working to end colonialism and prevent the escalation of the Cold War, Mali co-sponsored a United Nations resolution condemning the United States for holding Puerto Rico as a territory.⁶⁶



© Antonio Cruz / Wikipedia.org
Amadou Toumani Touré

Mali experienced many domestic problems during Traoré's rule. Prolonged droughts displaced tens of thousands of Malians from their homes into cities and other countries. Armed conflict with Tuareg rebels also drove hundreds of thousands of refugees from the country. In 1991, a violent confrontation between Traoré's army and protesting students caused 200 reported deaths.

Traoré was deposed in a military coup led by Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Touré. Touré organized a constitutional convention and oversaw the transition to a new government through multiparty municipal, legislative, and presidential elections.⁶⁷ This effort earned him the nickname "Soldier of Democracy." Alpha Oumar Konaré, a professor of history and archeology, won the presidency in 1992 and was reelected in 1997. During his tenure, Mali joined the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), a United States-sponsored training for a continent-wide, rapid-response peacekeeping force.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Robert Harvey, *A Short History of Communism* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004), 158.

⁶⁶ "Appendix: Terroristic Activity," in *The Cuban Connection in Puerto Rico; Castro's Hand in Puerto Rican and U.S. Terrorism, Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 94th Cong., 1st sess., pt. 6, 30 July 1975* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975), <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/terrorism/cuban-connection-pr-app.htm>

⁶⁷ Guy Martin, "Mali," in *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, 2nd ed., ed. Joel Krieger et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 519–520.

⁶⁸ Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola, *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 29–30.

Recent History

In 2002, retired Gen. Amadou Toumani Touré was elected president. He was reelected in 2007 and will reach the end of his two-term limit in 2012. During his presidency, lenders provided Mali with significant debt relief, and the government developed new industries. Mali became eligible for economic and trade benefits from the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2004.⁶⁹



© Robin Taylor
Niger river, dry season

Drought, combined with locust plagues from 2004, led to severe food shortages in the following years, and a new drought cycle may have started in 2010. A controversial update of the legislative family code was passed by the National Assembly in 2009 but remains unsigned by President Touré because of threats of violence from traditional Islamic groups if the code is enforced.^{70, 71}

The ongoing conflict between the government and Tuareg groups has become complicated by the activities of international criminals and terrorists in the Sahara.⁷² An Algerian group now known as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has kidnapped and killed foreigners.⁷³ Mali is cooperating with its neighbors Algeria, Mauritania, and Niger, as well as with European and United States advisors, to contain such groups and activities.

⁶⁹ Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola, *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 260–261.

⁷⁰ Voice of America, “Mali’s President Declines to Sign Legislation Expanding Women’s Rights,” 27 August 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-08-27-voa25-68806397.html>

⁷¹ BBC News, “Mali Imam Living in Fear after Backing Women’s Rights,” 10 May 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8672618.stm>

⁷² Neil MacFarquhar, “Mali Tackles Al Qaeda and Drug Traffic,” *New York Times*, 1 January 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/02/world/africa/02mali.html?pagewanted=1>

⁷³ Andrew Hansen and Lauren Vriens, “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM),” Council on Foreign Relations, 21 July 2009, <http://www.cfr.org/north-africa/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim/p12717>

Chapter 2: Assessment

1. The French were the first people to establish settlements in Mali, having established colonies there in the 19th century.

False

Mali has been the site of African civilizations for nearly 2,000 years.

2. The Ghana Empire was established by the Soninke people near present-day Mauritania.

True

The Ghana Empire was well-established by the seventh century in the area of the upper Senegal and Niger rivers.

3. The ancient empires of Mali were poor, like the modern Republic of Mali.

False

The ancient empires were wealthy. The rulers of the various empires collected tribute from their subjects and taxed gold and salt mines in their domains.

4. The Songhai people had no religion until Sonni Ali Ber converted to Islam.

False

Sonni Ali Ber was tolerant of both traditional Songhai and Islamic religious practices in the empire.

5. The Moroccans invaded the Songhai empire with only a few thousand men.

True

A mere 4,000 soldiers with guns defeated 40,000 poorly armed Songhai in 1591. But Morocco did not maintain control over the empire.

Chapter 3: Economy

Introduction

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world. More than 87% of the population was living in poverty in 2008.⁷⁴ While the poor in wealthy countries often have government-provided safety nets, most Malians must depend completely on informal social networks when they need economic assistance. Microfinance and migration are other poverty-reducing strategies.



© Jean-Marc Desfilhes
Farmer carting straw

The national economy depends on agricultural production and minerals extraction—activities that are sensitive to natural disasters and price fluctuations in world markets. Trade and tourism are vulnerable to security issues in neighboring countries. Banking and finance are region-wide activities that grew from a shared French colonial history. The annual fiscal deficit tends to be offset by foreign aid. Mali is in the midst of a structural adjustment program recommended by the International Monetary Fund to grow the economy and attract foreign investment.⁷⁵

Agriculture and Related Economic Activities

Subsistence farming is the most important economic activity. Farmers and fishers represent approximately 80% of the work force, and another 10% are herders. In 2007, Malians grew roughly 4 million metric tons of foodstuffs—millet, rice, sorghum, corn, and peanuts—and more than 400,000 metric tons of cotton, the major agricultural export accounting for 15% of total trade. Livestock—cows, sheep, and goats—accounted for another 4% of exports.⁷⁶ Land



© Peter Casier www.theroadtothehorizon.org
Farmer

⁷⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “MPI (Multidimensional Poverty Index): Headcount (k Greater than or Equal to 3), Population in Poverty (% of population), Human Development Index—2010 Rankings,” 2010, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/38606.html>

⁷⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, “Mali,” in *The World Factbook*, 28 February 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html> economy overview

⁷⁶ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “World Data—Mali,” 2010, <http://media-1.web.britannica.com/eb-media/48/77848-004-A6875713.pdf>

tenure is a contested issue in Mali because cash crops for export reduce the land available for subsistence farming.⁷⁷ In drought years, Mali requires food aid to feed its people.

Industry

Processing agricultural products, including food (meat and sugar), textiles, plant oils, and soaps, is the primary industrial activity. Mining has been the second-most productive economic activity. South Africa has been a major partner in mining gold.⁷⁸ Gold mining has become more difficult technically in recent years, so Mali is developing iron ore extraction.⁷⁹ Salt, phosphates, and uranium are other potential exports.⁸⁰ Mali is also planning to build vehicle assembly factories.^{81, 82} Major construction projects include a bridge over the Niger River in Bamako, roads that will connect to all adjacent countries, and a proposed dam on the Niger River at Touassa between Timbuktu and Gao.^{83, 84}

⁷⁷ Moussa Djiré, *Improving Tenure Security for the Rural Poor: Mali—Country Case Study*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2006, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/k0785e/k0785e00.htm>

⁷⁸ United Nations Merchandise Trade Statistics (UN Comtrade), “Mali,” in *Yearbook 2009*, <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/CountryPagesNew.aspx?y=2009>

⁷⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, “Mali,” in *The World Factbook*, 28 February 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html> [economy overview](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html)

⁸⁰ Franklin Allen, Isaac Otchere, and Lemma W. Senbet, “African Financial Systems: A Review,” Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, 6 March 2010, <http://fic.wharton.upenn.edu/fic/africa/africa.htm>

⁸¹ PDEXCIL Newsletter, vol. 11 (10), 28 January 2006, <http://www.pdexcil.org/news/71N0406/vol2iss10pg11.htm>

⁸² NetNewsPublisher, “South Korean Automaker Youngsang to Build Assembly Plant in Mali,” 15 January 2011, <http://www.netnewspublisher.com/south-korean-automaker-youngsang-to-build-assembly-plant-in-mali/>

⁸³ Tiemoko Diallo, “Hu Launches China’s ‘Largest Gift’ to West Africa,” Reuters, 13 February 2009, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2009/02/13/china-africa-idUKLD12476820090213>

⁸⁴ “Nigeria Moves to Stop Construction of 3 Dams on Niger River,” *News Agency of Nigeria*, 7 September 2010, <http://ekoakete.com/2010/09/07/nigeria-moves-to-stop-construction-of-3-dams-on-river-niger/>

Energy Resources

Firewood currently provides 90% of the energy consumed in Mali. The traditional use of wood for fuel is unsustainable as the population grows and the forests disappear.⁸⁵



© UN Photo / Ian Steele
Women collecting firewood

More than 75% of the population lacks electricity.⁸⁶ The Manantali Dam, a project of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River, provides Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal with hydroelectricity.⁸⁷ But the project has also reduced agricultural productivity downstream of the dam. Similar situations exist at other Niger River dams.⁸⁸

Mali belongs to the West African Power Pool, an organization of 14 countries that share power across the region in order to ensure more reliable energy supplies.⁸⁹ Mali also receives electricity from Cote D'Ivoire.⁹⁰

Because Mali has not been dependent on fossil fuels, it is a good candidate for alternative energy sources.^{91, 92, 93}

⁸⁵ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, *Country Profile: Mali*, January 2005, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf>

⁸⁶ World Health Organization, "The Energy Access Situation in Developing Countries," November 2009, http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset_id=2205620

⁸⁷ Joshua T. Newton, "Case Study of Transboundary Dispute Resolution: Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS)," Institute for Water and Watersheds, Oregon State University, 2007, http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/research/case_studies/OMVS_New.htm

⁸⁸ "Policy Brief 03—The Impact of River Management on Poverty and the Environment in the Niger River Basin in Mali," Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management, April 2005, <http://www.prem-online.org/index.php?p=publications&a=show&id=54>

⁸⁹ West African Power Pool (WAPP), 2011, http://www.ecowapp.org/english/english_new/english_home.html

⁹⁰ Itai Madamombe, "Energy Key to Africa's Prosperity," *Africa Renewal* 18, no. 4 (January 2005), 6, http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol18no4/18no4_eng.pdf

⁹¹ African Rural Energy Enterprise Development (AREED), *Mali Report*, n.d., <http://www.areed.org/country/index.htm#mali>

⁹² Developing Renewables, "Renewable Energy in Developing Countries (RECIPES)," <http://www.developingrenewables.org/energyrecipes/reports/genericData/Africa/061129%20RECIPES%20country%20info%20Mali.pdf>

⁹³ A.S. Maiga et al., "Renewable Energy Options for a Sahel Country: Mali," in *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Review* 12, no. 2 (2008): 564–574.

Trade (Exports and Imports)

Mali typically records an annual trade deficit. The World Trade Organization reported exports valued at USD 2.1 billion and imports at USD 2.6 billion for 2009.⁹⁴ Cotton, gold, and livestock make up nearly 90% of total export earnings.⁹⁵ Mali and other West African cotton producers continue to struggle in the world market.⁹⁶ Export of gold to South Africa accounts for a trade surplus within sub-Saharan Africa, where neighboring Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso are also important trade partners. Import partners such as France, China, the United States, and Canada provide machinery, equipment, and processed products such as petroleum oils, cement, chemical fertilizers, and medicines.⁹⁷



© Carsten ten Brink
Cotton auction

Since 1975, Mali has been a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which maintains a customs union and common market for the region.⁹⁸ Regional and international organizations are also working to reduce delays and bribery along trade routes.⁹⁹

Mali has a large informal economy. The barter and cash trade of traditional markets is not recorded in trade statistics.

⁹⁴ World Trade Organization, "Trade Profiles—Mali," October 2010, <http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFView.aspx?Language=E&Country=ML>

⁹⁵ United Nations Merchandise Trade Statistics (UN Comtrade), "Mali," in *Yearbook 2009*, <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/CountryPagesNew.aspx?y=2009>

⁹⁶ Claire Delpeuch, Anneleen Vandeplass, and Jo Swinnen, "Revisiting the 'Cotton Problem:' A Comparative Analysis of Cotton Reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa," (paper presented at the 84th Annual Conference of the Agricultural Economics Society, Edinburgh, 29–31 March 2010), http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/91806/2/71delpeuch_vandeplass_swinnen.pdf

⁹⁷ United Nations Merchandise Trade Statistics (UN Comtrade), "Mali," in *Yearbook 2009*, <http://comtrade.un.org/pb/CountryPagesNew.aspx?y=2009>

⁹⁸ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, *Country Profile: Mali*, January 2005, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf>

⁹⁹ Borderless, "13th IRTG Report UEMOA," 20 December 2010, <http://www.watradehub.com/sites/default/files/resourcefiles/jan11/13th-report-english-final.pdf>

Tourism

Mali's history, ecology, and cultures currently attract only the most adventurous travelers. In 2010, tourism was 4.7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).¹⁰⁰ To develop the tourist economy, better transportation and services are needed. At the same time, things that attract tourists may need protection, such as the traditional dwellings and way of life of the Dogon people at the Bandiagara plateau, or the last existing herd of elephants that migrate through Mali.^{101, 102, 103}



© Mary Newcombe
Dogon mask festival

The Festival in the Desert has become a major world music event since 2001 and inspired the Festival on the Niger. Other events with tourism potential include Dogon mask festivals and the annual cattle crossings along the Niger.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ World Travel and Tourism Council, Economic Data Search Tool [Mali; Travel & Tourism Direct Contribution to GDP; % share; 2010], 2011, http://www.wttc.org/eng/Tourism_Research/Economic_Data_Search_Tool/index.php

¹⁰¹ United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, "Cliffs of Bandiagara (Land of the Dogons), Mali," Mark McGinley, ed., in *Encyclopedia of Earth*, ed. Cutler J. Cleveland (Washington, DC: Environmental Information Coalition, National Council for Science and the Environment, 16 April 2009), http://www.eoearth.org/article/Cliffs_of_Bandiagara_%28Land_of_the_Dogons%29_Mali

¹⁰² World Heritage Centre, UNESCO, "Cliff of Bandiagara (Land of the Dogons)," 2011, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/516/>

¹⁰³ Laura Helmuth, "Saving Mali's Migratory Elephants," *Smithsonian.com*, July 2005, http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/Saving_Malis_Migratory_Elephants.html?c=y&page=1

¹⁰⁴ Robert B. Richardson, "Tourism and Food Security in Mali" (paper for USAID Mali, Office of Economic Growth, Partners Meeting, 23–24 June 2010), http://www.aec.msu.edu/fs2/promisam_2/Tourism_and_food_security_in_Mali_brief.pdf

Banking and Currency

In 2007, banking was approximately one-third of Mali's GDP.¹⁰⁵ Trade loans for large enterprises are the main banking activity. Mali is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UMOEa) that includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Guinea-Bissau. UMOEA has a common bank, the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), which manages money policy and regulates banking throughout the union.

UMOEa uses the West African Financial Community (CFA) franc, which was linked to the French franc during colonial times and now has a fixed exchange rate with the euro (1 euro = CFA francs 655.957). The CFA franc is not traded on the foreign exchange market, but its conversion to the euro is guaranteed by the French treasury. In March 2011, USD 1 bought CFA francs 463.¹⁰⁶ The West African CFA franc (XOF) is not interchangeable with the Central African CFA franc (XAF)¹⁰⁷ used in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon.¹⁰⁸



© Peter Moore
Bank in Bamako

In 2007, Mali had 13 banks holding total assets of CFA francs 1,195.8 billion (roughly USD 2.6 billion). Most of the banks were fully or partly owned by the Malian government, and foreign investors held 62.8% of the banks' total value.

For most Malians, daily life runs on a cash economy. ATMs, credit cards, and personal banking are not widely used.

¹⁰⁵ Jennifer Akpapuna, Armel Kouassi, and Henok Soedjede, "Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, and Togo," in *Africa's Financial System*, Financial Institutions Center, Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania,

<http://fic.wharton.upenn.edu/fic/africa/Benin%20Cotedivoire%20Mali%20Senegal%20Togo.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Figured using the Universal Currency Converter™ at XE.com, 24 March 2011, <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

¹⁰⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Mali," in *The World Factbook*, 28 February 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html> [economy overview](#)

¹⁰⁸ XE, "XAF, Central African CFA Franc BEAC," <http://www.xe.com/currency/xaf-central-african-cfa-franc-beac>

Investment and Finance

As in resource management, trade, and banking, Mali participates in a regional West African stock exchange. The *Bourse Regionale des Valeurs Mobilières* (BRVM) serves members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. Mali has bonds listed on the exchange but no equities.¹⁰⁹



© Romel Jacinto
Cattle market

In general, the law treats domestic and foreign investment equally. Current trade and tax regulations favor agricultural and mining businesses. France, Germany, and China have invested in manufacturing and food processing, and Japanese, Australian, Canadian, and South African companies have invested in mining.¹¹⁰

Mali's government and international partners want foreign investment to replace foreign aid. Suggested actions include privatization in state-controlled sectors such as energy, textiles, and banking, and diversification of exports, especially handicrafts and other labor-intensive businesses. External donors fund microfinance projects that assist the poor.¹¹¹

Malians often perceive corruption in their government and in relations with foreign entities.¹¹² Foreign investors sometimes report problems with tax collection, customs clearance, and contract enforcement.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Bourse Regionale des Valeurs Mobilières, "Listings: Bonds: Overviews," 2011, <http://www.brvm.org/Soci%C3%A9t%C3%A9sCot%C3%A9s/Listedesobligations/Global/tabid/96/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹¹⁰ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2010 Investment Climate Statement—Mali," March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2010/138108.htm>

¹¹¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, "BTI 2010: Mali Country Report," 2009, http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten_BTI2010/WCA/Mali.pdf

¹¹² Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2010," 2010, http://www.transparency.org/content/download/55725/890310/CPI_report_ForWeb.pdf

¹¹³ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2010 Investment Climate Statement—Mali," March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2010/138108.htm>

Transportation

For most Malians, travel is by river in the south or camel in the north. The colonial-era railroad and more recent air and road networks were built and are maintained with foreign funding and expertise.^{114, 115} Outside of the capital Bamako, people rarely own cars or motorbikes.¹¹⁶



© Gabs Welttour
Ferry, Djenné

Transportation security can be an economic problem. Being landlocked, Mali relies on access to international ocean ports in Cote D’Ivoire and Senegal. Thus, Mali is vulnerable to problems along trade routes in those countries.¹¹⁷ Travel in the roadless Sahara can also be problematic.

Standard of Living

Mali was one of the least-developed countries (160 out of 169) on the 2010 United Nations Human Development Report Index. Income distribution is highly unequal and most people live on less than USD 1.25 per day.¹¹⁸ Death comes early—nearly 20% of children die before reaching 5 years of age, and the average life expectancy is 49 years. Adults are likely to have had less than 2 years of schooling, and girls receive less schooling than boys do.¹¹⁹



© Mary Newcombe
Family, Mopti

Malians help one another to survive through a traditional gift economy called *dama*. In *dama*, giving comes from *maaya*, “being human.” A person gives help without expecting

¹¹⁴ Reuters Africa, “US to Finance New, Chinese-built Airport in Mali,” 30 June 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/maliNews/idAFLDE65T12820100630>; Embassy of the United States, Bamako, Mali, “Bilateral Assistance Fact Sheet,” 28 February 2011, <http://mali.usembassy.gov/embassy-news/cooperation-fact.html>

¹¹⁵ Reuters Africa, “Mali Wins \$210 mln Infrastructure Loan from China,” 31 December 2010, <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE6BU06Y20101231>

¹¹⁶ S.D. Ellis, “The Provision of Conventional Rural Transport Services Case Study: Rural Transport Services in Mali,” The World Bank, 2001, http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/ssatp/Resources/HTML/rural_transport/knowledge_base/English/Module%204%5C4_2b%20Case%20Study%20-%20RTS%20Mali.pdf

¹¹⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, “Mali,” in *The World Factbook*, 28 February 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html> economy overview

¹¹⁸ World Bank, “Data Mali,” 14 March 2011, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/mali>

¹¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme, “Human Development Index—2010 Rankings,” 2010, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

anything specific in return, and a gift helps not only the receiver, but the community. Some Malians are using the idea of *dama* to talk about social welfare for their country and internationally.^{120, 121}

Employment Trends

Unemployment was estimated at 30% in 2008 and, because of the composition of the workforce and current agricultural conditions, is likely to be much higher.¹²² Over the centuries, drought and war have made emigration a common survival strategy.¹²³ In 2009, over 1 million Malians sent home USD 405 million in worker remittances.¹²⁴



© Gabs Welttour
Hair dresser

Slavery has a long history in Mali, and forced labor continues with some Tuareg indentures of black Tamachek and Songhai peoples in the northeast.¹²⁵ Half of Mali's children aged 7 to 14 work.¹²⁶ Many are forced to labor as field hands, miners, servants, beggars, or prostitutes, often far from home and frequently in neighboring countries.¹²⁷

Public vs. Private Sector

Since the nationalization program of the 1960s, large parts of Mali's economy are controlled by the government. The state owns several banks and utilities, and controls production of rice, vegetables, and cotton. In 2007, the annual report of Mali's

¹²⁰ Genevieve Vaughan, "Gift Economy," in *Encyclopedia of Motherhood*, ed. Andrea O'Reilly (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2010), 1:452–453.

¹²¹ Coumba Touré, "The Link to Humanity: Giving as a Way of Life," *National Catholic Reporter*, 2 December 2009, <http://ncronline.org/news/women/link-humanity-giving-way-life>

¹²² EconomyWatch, "Mali Economy," 2011, http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/mali/#

¹²³ Sally E. Findley, "Mali: Seeking Opportunity Abroad," Migration Information Source, September 2004, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=247>

¹²⁴ Dilip Ratha, Sanket Mohapatra, and Ani Silwal, "Mali," Migration and Remittances Unit, The World Bank, 2010, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/Mali.pdf>

¹²⁵ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "2009 Human Rights Report: Mali," 11 March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/af/135964.htm>

¹²⁶ World Bank, "Economically Active Children, Total (% of Children Ages 7–14), World Development Indicators 2010," 2010, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.0714.ZS>

¹²⁷ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "2009 Human Rights Report: Mali," 11 March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/af/135964.htm>

independent Auditor General described losses of about USD 218 million to financial mismanagement, corruption, and fraud.¹²⁸

Because private companies have lower operating costs than public enterprises, foreign aid donors have encouraged Mali to privatize state holdings.¹²⁹ Some bank and telecommunications holdings have been privatized successfully.¹³⁰

Outlook

The short-term prediction for Mali's economy is modest growth, as long as the agriculture, construction, and mining sectors continue to operate without problems.¹³¹ Profits from growth are consumed by a national deficit that is financed with foreign aid. Corruption is a serious problem that eats into the funds targeted for development, and may reduce the future amount of aid offered.¹³²



© oxfamnovib / flickr.com
School children

In the long term, Mali needs a healthy and educated workforce to create new businesses that can meet local needs and compete successfully in world markets.

¹²⁸ Annie Barbara Chikwanha, "Issue Paper—Mali's Criminal Justice System," African Human Security Initiative, *Africa Review*, November 2008, www.africanreview.org/docs/mali/maliissuenov08.pdf

¹²⁹ Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "2010 Investment Climate Statement—Mali," March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2010/138108.htm>

¹³⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung, "BTI 2010: Mali Country Report," 2009, http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten_BTI2010/WCA/Mali.pdf

¹³¹ *Economist* Intelligence Unit, "Mali," February 2011, <http://country.eiu.com/Mali>

¹³² CBC News, "Corruption Charges Dog Canada Aid Fund in Mali," 24 January 2011, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2011/01/24/canada-mali-charity-corruption.html?ref=rss>

Chapter 3: Assessment

1. Mining is the most important economic activity in Mali.

False

Although gold mining has produced the highest percentage of export revenue in recent years, subsistence farming is the key economic activity.

2. Mali is self-sufficient—its people produce all the food, energy, and goods they need.

False

In drought years, Mali requires food aid. Mali imports electricity from Côte D'Ivoire. Mali imports machinery, equipment, and processed products from Europe, China, and North America.

3. Petroleum products—oil and gas—are the primary energy sources for Mali.

False

Firewood supplies 90% of Mali's energy. Hydropower provides some electricity.

4. Mali's currency is guaranteed by the French government.

True

Although the CFA franc is not traded on foreign exchange markets, its conversion to the euro is guaranteed by the French treasury.

5. Corruption is a problem in many sectors of the economy.

True

Maliens perceive corruption in their government's relations with foreign entities. Corruption is a serious problem that steals some of the funds targeted for development.

Chapter 4: Society

Introduction

Maliens take pride in the peaceful coexistence of dozens of ethnic and language groups in their country. Although there are distinctions between the desert peoples of the northeast and those of the verdant southwest, their social practices are deeply rooted in extended family relationships and kin groups. In the ancient empires, kin and clan became caste and class memberships that still define occupational specialization, social rank, and sometimes ethnic tensions. Ancient spiritual beliefs and rituals shaped the branches of Islam that dominate the country and the region. French colonization and Christian missionaries introduced new ideas and institutions that still influence traditional attitudes about family and gender, healthcare, education, and work. Mali is known worldwide for its many cultures' artistic products—music, dance, puppetry, ceramic, wood and iron work, jewelry and textiles, and adobe architecture.



© Mary Newcombe
Marketplace

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Mali is home to a dozen or more major ethnic groups and over 50 languages. Most Malians live in multilingual environments and speak more than one language.^{133, 134} Ethnic identity is a flexible combination of birthplace, surname, native language(s), and even traditional occupation or social class.^{135, 136}

The greatest variety of ethnic groups live in the population centers of the south and west. These darker-skinned peoples include the descendants of Mali's ancient empires. They often live near historical centers of power, or in areas that support an occupation (such as farming or fishing) traditionally associated with their group. In the desert north are lighter-skinned peoples whose ancestors traveled the Maghreb (from Arabic, "west")—the area of northwestern Africa between the Atlas Mountains and the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts—and brought Islam to the region.



© Ferdinand Reus
Fulani girl

Mande Peoples

About half of Mali's population is Mande. These peoples speak related languages and live mostly in the southwest. The Bambara are the largest subgroup, making up the majority in the capital, Bamako. Descendants of the Bambara and Kaarta kingdoms of earlier centuries, they are traditionally farmers and craftspeople. Bambara is the first or second language of 80% of Malians, and a *lingua franca* throughout West Africa.¹³⁷ Other Mande peoples include the Malinke and the Soninke, now known as traders and

¹³³ Rosa DeJorio, "Mali—Linguistic Affiliation," in *Countries and Their Cultures* (Detroit: Gale Publications, 2001), <http://www.everyculture.com/Ja-Ma/Mali.html>

¹³⁴ Adama Ouane, "My Journey to and through a Multilingual Landscape," in *Language and Power: The Implications of Language for Peace and Development*, eds. Birgit Brock-Utne and Gunnar Garbo (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Mkuki Na Nyota Publishers, 2009), 164–171.

¹³⁵ Rachel A. Jones, "You Eat Beans! Kin-based Joking Relationships, Obligations, and Identity in Urban Mali," (honors project, Macalester College, 2007), http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/anth_honors/2/;

Eric Bertrand, "First Steps in Mali—Sanankuya," *Intercultures Magazine* 5, no. 2, 5 August 2009, <http://www.international.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/magazine/v05n02/1-4-eng.asp>

¹³⁶ Raphaël Ndiaye, "Non-Violence Education, Sinankunya, or Joking Kinship as a Means of Solving Conflicts," UNESCO, 8 November 2002, http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6911&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹³⁷ Ingrid Skattum, "The Integration of National Languages into the Educational System of Mali," (paper presented at NETREED Conference, Gausdal, Norway, 7–9 January 2002), www.netreed.uio.no/conferences/Skattum-paper.doc

migrant workers.¹³⁸ The Bozo, possibly descendants of Soninke who migrated out of the Ghana Empire, are traditionally fishermen.¹³⁹ Occupational castes recognized by Mande peoples include leatherworkers, blacksmiths, and potters.¹⁴⁰

Fulani Peoples

Descendants of the historical Peul, Macina, and Tukolor kingdoms, the Fulani peoples are about 15% of the population. They speak Maasina Fulfulde. Cattle herding is their traditional way of life, and many of them have settled throughout the grazing range extending north and south from the Niger River. Their annual cattle-crossing festivals may include initiations, matchmakings, and other social events.¹⁴¹

Senufo Peoples

Senufo peoples, who are about 12% of the population, include the Mamara Senufo-speaking Minyanka and the Bomu. They live mostly along the border with Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire where their ancestors ruled the historical kingdom of Kenedougou. They are farmers and retain strong traditional religious beliefs.^{142, 143}



© Peter Roan
Senufo mask

Dogon Peoples

Although they number less than 1% of the population, Western ethnographies have familiarized many with the Dogon. Dogon architecture in the Bandiagara cliffs, near the center of Mali and its ethnic traditions, has received World Heritage status from UNESCO. International collectors prize Dogon artifacts, from

¹³⁸ Gunvor Jónsson, "Migration Aspirations and Immobility in a Malian Soninke Village" (University of Oxford Working Papers 10, International Migration Institute, James Martin 21st Century School, 2008), <http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/imi-working-papers/working-paper-10-migration-aspirations-and-immobility>

¹³⁹ Pascal James Imperato, "Bozo," in *Historical Dictionary of Mali* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), 27.

¹⁴⁰ Barbara E. Frank, "Soninke *Grankéw* and Bamana-Malinke *Jeliw*," in *Status and Identity in West Africa: Nyamkalaw of Mande*, ed. David C. Conrad, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 133.

¹⁴¹ Ettagale Blauer and Jason Lauré, *Mali—Cultures of the World* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 84–85.

¹⁴² Carol Finley, *The Art of African Masks: Exploring Cultural Traditions* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1999), 28.

¹⁴³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Senufo (people)," n.d., <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/534930/Senufo>

ritual masks to granary doors. Dogon peoples speak over 40 different dialects, some so unrelated that they could be considered separate languages.^{144, 145}

Songhai Peoples

The Songhai people are 6% of the population. They live mostly in eastern Mali along the Niger River where they were originally fishers and later, farmers. The Songhai are descendants of the last ancient West African empire, the Songhai Empire, which controlled much of present-day Mali and parts of Niger.^{146, 147} When the empire declined, some Songhai became slaves of the Tuareg.¹⁴⁸

Tuareg and Maure peoples

In Mali's northern desert are the Tuareg and Maure peoples, who together make up an estimated 5% to 10% of the population.^{149, 150} They are traditionally nomadic peoples who span several countries. To the east and into Niger, Algeria, and Libya are the Tuareg, the "blue men of the desert," who call themselves *Kel Tamashek*, "speakers of Tamashek." Tamashek is a Berber language, distinct from other languages spoken in Mali. Since losing their camel herds to the French rulers, Tuareg groups have rebelled periodically against state authority. To the west and into Mauritania are the Maure, also known as Moors. These Muslim peoples of Berber-Arabic descent call themselves *Amazigh* in the Semitic language Hassanya Arabic, which is also the official language of neighboring Mauritania.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ M. Paul Lewis, ed., "Languages of Mali (map)," in *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), http://www.ethnologue.com/show_map.asp?name=ML&seq=10

¹⁴⁵ Ettagale Blauer and Jason Lauré, *Mali—Cultures of the World* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 101.

¹⁴⁶ BBC News, "The Story of Africa—Songhay," n.d., http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1624_story_of_africa/page83.shtml

¹⁴⁷ David C. Conrad, "The Songhay People," in *Empires of Medieval West Africa: Ghana, Mali, and Songhay* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2005), 97–99.

¹⁴⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Mali," 11 March 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100492.htm>

¹⁴⁹ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Mali," 20 September 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2828.htm#profile>

¹⁵⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Mali," in *The World Factbook*, 25 January 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>

¹⁵¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Berber," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/61465/Berber>

Languages

French is the official language of the Republic of Mali, the written language of government and business. French speakers are a small part of the population, concentrated in urban areas where families can afford formal education. Mali has designated 13 national languages to be used in education.¹⁵²

The oldest writing system in Mali may be Tifinagh, an ancient Berber script used among Tamashek speakers for private communication.¹⁵³ Arabic script has been used to transcribe African languages since the arrival of Islam. Colonizers and missionaries brought the Latin alphabet to African languages in the 19th century. The current government has mandated use of an extended Latin script to write the national languages.¹⁵⁴ Many languages in Mali do not yet have well-established writing systems, which makes formal education a challenge.¹⁵⁵



© Martha de Jong-Lantink
Men talking

¹⁵² The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, “Toponymic Fact File Mali,” 2010, <http://www.pcn.org.uk/Toponymic%20Factfile-Mali-July%202010.pdf>

¹⁵³ Simon Ager, “Tifinagh,” *Omniglot*, 1998–2011, <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/tifinagh.htm>; Adama Ouane, “Language Standardization in Mali,” in *Standardization of National Languages*, eds. Utta von Gleich and Ekkehard Wolff (Hamburg: Symposium on Language Standardization, 2–3 February 1991), 3, http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/35_57.pdf

¹⁵⁴ Unicode Afrique, “Base Extended-Latin Characters and Combinations for Languages of Mali,” n.d., <http://www.bisharat.net/A12N/MALI-table.htm>

¹⁵⁵ Ingrid Skattum, “The Integration of National Languages into the Educational System of Mali,” (paper presented at NETREED Conference, Gausdal, Norway, 7–9 January 2002), www.netreed.uio.no/conferences/Skattum-paper.doc

Religion

Approximately 90% of Malians are Muslim, roughly 10% hold a variety of traditional beliefs, and anywhere from 1% to 8% are Christian.^{156, 157, 158} These numbers mask the blending of traditional beliefs and practices with Islam or Christianity that is common to most Malians. A recent survey found that almost 60% of Malians who identified as Muslim simultaneously hold non-Islamic spiritual beliefs and engage in non-Islamic rituals.¹⁵⁹

The traditional religions of Mali's many peoples recognize spiritual power that animates the universe and all things. Special spiritual abilities accrue to certain social identities such as storytellers or healers.^{160, 161} Rituals that honor and try to influence spiritual powers are an important part of these religions. Such rituals are common throughout Mali, evident in the fetish ingredients available for sale at town markets.

Traditional religious beliefs may contribute to the subservient status of girls and women and to the practices of male and female circumcision, even though these practices are more often attributed to Islam.^{162, 163}

In other ways, today's Malians appear to practice a more liberal Islam compared to their African neighbors. Malian women do not veil their faces. Alcohol and pork are served,



© Ferdinand Reus
Islamic men

¹⁵⁶ J. Gordon Melton, "Mali," in *Religions of the World*, 2nd ed., eds. J. Gordon Melton and Martin Baumann (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO eBook, 21 September 2010), 1790–1793, http://ebooks.abc-clio.com/reader.aspx?isbn=9781598842043&id=REW2C_26221&q=mali

¹⁵⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Mali," in *The World Factbook*, 25 January 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>

¹⁵⁸ Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Pew Research Center, "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa," 15 April 2010, <http://pewforum.org/executive-summary-islam-and-christianity-in-sub-saharan-africa.aspx>

¹⁵⁹ Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Pew Research Center, "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa," 15 April 2010, <http://pewforum.org/executive-summary-islam-and-christianity-in-sub-saharan-africa.aspx>

¹⁶⁰ Lydia Clemmons and Yaya Coulibaly, "Cultural Resources and Maternal Health in Mali," in *IK Notes* 12 (September 1999), The World Bank, www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/iknt12.pdf

¹⁶¹ Susan J. Rasmussen, "Friends of the Kel Essuf: Perspectives on Shamanism in Tuareg Mediumistic Healing," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2003), <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/mali/friends-kel-essuf-perspectives-shamanism-tuareg-medium>

¹⁶² Benson A. Mulemi, "Circumcision," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*, vol. 1, eds. F. Abiola Irele and Biodun Jeyifo (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 237–239.

¹⁶³ Elizabeth Doggett and Margot Fahnestock, *Policy and Advocacy Initiatives to Support Elimination of Female Genital Cutting in Mali* (Washington, DC: Futures Group, USAID Health Policy Initiative, 2010), 3,9, http://www.healthpolicyinitiative.com/Publications/Documents/1233_1_Mali_FGC_Final_Report_Final_FINAL_acc.pdf

where consumers can afford them. Recent surveys found that only 5% of Muslims in Mali follow Wahabism, a fundamentalist form of Islam, and 55% do not identify with any branch of Islam (e.g., Sufi, Sunni, Shi'a).^{164, 165}

Historically, religion and politics are inseparable in Mali. Traditional religions gave leaders the divine right to rule. Ancient kings first tolerated and then adopted Islam. Many of their successors explained their empire building as holy wars to spread “true” Islam among their subjects.^{166, 167} The French established government control over Muslim institutions such as Ramadan and the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, even as they implemented the separation of church and state.¹⁶⁸ Mali’s current constitution declares the republic to be a secular state. Yet religious opposition has delayed the enforcement of legislation that updates the family code.^{169, 170} Some Malians favor shari’a law for their country.¹⁷¹

Cuisine

Cooked grains—traditionally millet, corn, sorghum, or more recently rice—are the staple of the Malian diet. The grain may be prepared as a porridge or a doughy pancake. It is typically served with a sauce made from plants, such as leaves, onions, or okra, or with a protein such as peanuts or fish that is dried, then smoked or



© Martha de Jong-Lantink
Woman cooking

¹⁶⁴ Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Pew Research Center, “Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa,” 15 April 2010, 21, <http://pewforum.org/executive-summary-islam-and-christianity-in-sub-saharan-africa.aspx>

¹⁶⁵ Matthias Basedau, “Le Grand Consensus Séculaire? Islam, Party Politics and Democracy in Mali,” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 31 August–1 September 2007).

¹⁶⁶ Mary R. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 6.

¹⁶⁷ David Robinson, “Umar Tal,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Detroit: Gale Group, 2001–2006), <http://www.bookrags.com/research/umar-tl-eorl-14/>

¹⁶⁸ Julia Leininger, “The Diverse Role of Muslim Actors in Mali’s Democratic Consolidation: Fostering Plurality to Inhibiting Strong State Institutions” (paper presented at the Conference Democratization in Africa: Retrospective and Future Prospects, Leeds, Great Britain, 4–5 December 2009), 6, [http://www.yimd.org/documents/T/the diverse role of muslim actors in mali s democratic consolidation - fostering plurality to inhibiting strong state institutions.pdf](http://www.yimd.org/documents/T/the%20diverse%20role%20of%20muslim%20actors%20in%20mali%20s%20democratic%20consolidation%20-%20fostering%20plurality%20to%20inhibiting%20strong%20state%20institutions.pdf)

¹⁶⁹ “Demography (Mali),” in Sentinel Security Assessment—North Africa, *Jane’s*, 6 May 2010, <http://www.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-North-Africa/Demography-Mali.html>

¹⁷⁰ Voice of America, “Mali’s President Declines to Sign Legislation Expanding Women’s Rights,” 27 August 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-08-27-voa25-68806397.html>

¹⁷¹ Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Pew Research Center, “Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa,” 15 April 2010, <http://pewforum.org/executive-summary-islam-and-christianity-in-sub-saharan-africa.aspx>

fermented.¹⁷² Vegetables and fruits include squash, baobab, yam or sweet potato, melon, and mango. Milks and cheeses from goats, camels, or cows are important products, especially for herding peoples. Meats are rarely affordable, but sometimes fish, poultry, goat, or sheep are eaten. Drinks include teas such as hibiscus or lemon grass and watered fruit juices such as guava or tamarind. In Bamako and other city settings, a wider variety of dishes is common, including fried fast foods, such as fish, potatoes, beef, and pork.¹⁷³
¹⁷⁴ Muslims, especially Maure in the northwest, may observe dietary restrictions against alcohol and pork.¹⁷⁵

Traditional Dress

Men may wear a *boubou*, a loose, full-length tunic. Women wear a long *pagne* (wraparound skirt), blouse, and matching headdress, or a *m'boubou*, a lady's style *boubou*.¹⁷⁶ The boubou may have Arabic origins. It appears everywhere in Mali. Colorful textiles are traditional throughout Mali, from the *bogolan* (mud cloth) of the Bamana to the indigo robes and turbans of the Tuareg.¹⁷⁷ Muslim women might cover their heads, but not their faces. Tuareg men veil their faces at puberty.^{178, 179} Islam is often cited to explain modesty, though there are many different interpretations. Foreign women are advised to cover shoulders and knees, particularly away from cities.^{180, 181}



© Mary Newcombe
Family, Boni

¹⁷² Kofi Manso Essuman, *Fermented Fish in Africa: A Study on Processing, Marketing, and Consumption* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1992),

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/t0685e/T0685E09.htm>

¹⁷³ “Food Wranglers: From Here to Timbuktu,” *Monterey County Herald*, 2 June 2010,

http://www.montereyherald.com/foodwranglers/ci_15209305?nclick_check=1

¹⁷⁴ Oxfam, “Cool Planet—On the Line—Mali Virtual Journey—Food,” 2002,

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/ontheline/explore/journey/mali/food.htm>

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, “FY 2001 Country Commercial Guide: Mauritania,” 34,

http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/com_guides/2001/africa/mauritania_ccg2001.pdf

¹⁷⁶ Francesca Davis DiPiazza, *Mali in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2007), 42.

¹⁷⁷ Elsje S. Toerien, “Mud Cloth from Mali: Its Making and Use,” *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences* 31 (2003), <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jfec/article/viewFile/52840/41441>

¹⁷⁸ Fadma El Guindi, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1999), 111, 124–126.

¹⁷⁹ BBC, “Religions—Islam: Hijab, Men Who Veil,” 3 September 2009,

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/hijab_1.shtml

¹⁸⁰ Peace Corps, “The Peace Corps Welcomes You to Mali” (Washington, DC, January 2008),

www.peacecorps.gov/welcomebooks/mlwb688.pdf

¹⁸¹ Ross Velton, *Mali* (Chalfont St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides, 2009).

Social and Gender Issues

Mali is a hierarchical society in which people are treated differently according to their social class or caste, age, and sex. These traditions of social inequality exacerbate the unequal distribution of quality healthcare, access to education, and material wealth in Mali. The rural majority, especially in the north, are worse off than the urban minority concentrated in the south.



© Ferdinand Reus
Young girls, Mopti

Class and Caste

Most of Mali's ethnic groups recognize at least three traditional social classes: an elite nobility, a large working class, and an underclass of slaves.^{182, 183, 184} Many people further divide the intermediate class into ranked occupational specializations or castes: farmers and traders are considered superior to artisans such as blacksmiths, leather workers, woodcarvers, weavers, or musicians. These traditional classes continue to shape social relationships in present-day Mali, even where positions of rank have disappeared (the nobility of fallen kingdoms) or occupations have been transformed (nomadic herders have settled into farming villages).^{185, 186}

Social-leveling mechanisms sometimes bridge class and caste differences, such as the traditional joking relationships of *sanankuya*, or the “National Complaints Day,” begun in 1994. Malians may complain to the government once a year without fear of reprisal.^{187, 188}

¹⁸² Ettagale Blauer and Jason Lauré, *Mali—Cultures of the World* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 70.

¹⁸³ Abdoulaye Tamboura, “The Tuareg Crises in North Mali” (seminar, “Tuareg Crises in Niger and Mali,” IFRI Sub-Saharan Africa Program, Paris, 27 November 2007), http://www.ifri.org/files/Afrique/Sem_Tuaregcrises_EN.pdf

¹⁸⁴ David Levinson, “Mauritania,” in *Ethnic Groups Worldwide: A Ready Reference Handbook* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1998), 150–151.

¹⁸⁵ M.E. de Bruijn, “The Pastoral Poor: Hazard, Crisis and Insecurity in Fulbe Society in Central Mali,” in *Pastoralists under Pressure? Fulbe Societies Confronting Change in West Africa*, eds. V. Azarya, et al. (Leiden, Holland: Brill, 1999), 285–312.

¹⁸⁶ Ettagale Blauer and Jason Lauré, *Mali—Cultures of the World* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 70.

¹⁸⁷ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Mali—Cultural Life,” 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/360071/Mali>

¹⁸⁸ Tim Whewell, “Mali’s National Complaints Day,” BBC News, 18 February 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/648263.stm>

Age and Gender

In Mali, age brings power and respect. Elders tend to preserve traditional inequalities and slow the pace of change, especially in local settings.^{189, 190} In cities, elders may find their authority challenged by the new, post-colonial elite.¹⁹¹ At the other end of the age spectrum, children may be forced out of school and into work or early marriage.^{192, 193} Children who are forced into labor lose opportunities for education that could afford them better employment and a better life.¹⁹⁴

Ibn Battuta, the 14th-century Arab Muslim writer, observed that women of the ancient Mali Empire were immodest in dress and independent in behavior.¹⁹⁵ Though one might make similar observations today—for example, Muslim Malian women do not veil—their fathers, husbands, and a patriarchal society control Malian girls and women.¹⁹⁶ By civil and Islamic law as well as local custom, men take multiple wives and arrange marriages for their young daughters.¹⁹⁷ They may limit their wives' medical care and their daughters' education.¹⁹⁸ Men control the traditional and Islamic religious spheres, and women are a minority in



© dadie13 / flickr.com
Grandmother and child

¹⁸⁹ Susanna D. Wing, *Constructing Democracy in Transitioning Societies of Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 98.

¹⁹⁰ Assitan Diallo et al., "Mali: The Position of Women and a Dual Commitment-Political Democracy vs. Tradition," Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, January 2001, <http://www.nai.uu.se/publications/news/archives/011diallo/>

¹⁹¹ International Monetary Fund, "Mali: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper," 2003, 29.

¹⁹² International Trade Union Confederation, "Internationally Recognized Core Labour Standards in Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali," 4 and 6 December 2010, http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/BBFM_revised_final.pdf

¹⁹³ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Mali 2007," 11 March 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100492.htm>

¹⁹⁴ Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Project, UNICEF, "The Twin Challenges of Eliminating Child Labour and Achieving EFA: Evidence and Policy Options from Mali and Zambia," (Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Programme Working Paper, April 2009), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1777106>

¹⁹⁵ Craig Lockard, "Mali and Songhai: Islam and Regional Power," in *Societies, Networks and Transitions: A Global History: Volume 1: to 1500* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2011), 301.

¹⁹⁶ OECD SIGI (Social Institutions & Gender Index), "Mali," March 2009, <http://genderindex.org/country/mali>

¹⁹⁷ Ettagale Blauer and Jason Lauré, *Mali—Cultures of the World* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 82–83.

¹⁹⁸ Elizabeth Doggett and Britt Herstad, *Men Matter: Scaling Up Approaches to Promote Constructive Men's Engagement in Reproductive Health and Gender Equity* (Washington, DC: USAID Health Policy Initiative, 2008), 2, <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/Men+Matter+USAID+Mali.pdf>

politics and business.¹⁹⁹ Elder women, traditionally of the *numu* (blacksmiths and potters) caste, perform female genital cutting on 85% of girls, often leaving them with long-term health issues.^{200, 201, 202}

Health

Medical care is limited and concentrated in urban areas. Even in regional capitals, hospitals lack equipment.²⁰³ A lack of safe drinking water and sanitation contribute to the high percentage of deaths from communicable diseases.²⁰⁴

Traditional healers including male and female herbalists, diviners, and shamans are found throughout the country. Their local knowledge of treatment with medicinal plants often helps their clients.²⁰⁵



© Josh Hough
Rural clinic, Blendio

Education

Equal educational opportunities for all are a challenge for Mali. The national education budget has fallen since 2007 due to decreasing international aid. Public funds go disproportionately to secondary and higher education, which is concentrated in Bamako.²⁰⁶



© noLosabias / flickr.com
Village school children

¹⁹⁹ Susanna D. Wing, “Challenges to Inclusion: Constitutionalism and the Rights of Women,” in *Constructing Democracy in Transitioning Societies of Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 101–124.

²⁰⁰ Claudie Gosselin, “Handing over the Knife: *Numu* Women and the Campaign against Excision in Mali,” in *Female “Circumcision” in Africa: Culture, Controversy, and Change*, eds. Bettina Shell-Duncan and Ylva Hernlund (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 193–214.

²⁰¹ UN Population Fund, “Global Consultation on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting,” 2008, 2, 12, 50, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ae6ac93ba.html>

²⁰² Elizabeth Doggett and Margot Fahnestock, *Policy and Advocacy Initiatives to Support Elimination of Female Genital Cutting in Mali* (Washington, DC: Futures Group, USAID Health Policy Initiative, 2010), 2, http://www.healthpolicyinitiative.com/Publications/Documents/1233_1_Mali_FGC_Final_Report_Final_FINAL_acc.pdf

²⁰³ Culturegrams 2011, “Republic of Mali” (Brigham Young University, 2011), 5.

²⁰⁴ WHO, “Mali Health Profile,” 13 August 2010, <http://www.who.int/gho/countries/mli.pdf>

²⁰⁵ Tom Erik Grønhaug et al., “Ethnopharmacological Survey of Six Medicinal Plants from Mali, West-Africa,” *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine* 4, no. 26 (27 December 2008): <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2633328/?tool=pubmed#B1>

²⁰⁶ Mailan Chiche, “Country Desk Study: Mali” (discussion draft for the Mid-Term Evaluation of the EFA (Education for All) Fast Track Initiative, 29 June 2009),

Continuing challenges include training teachers and producing textbooks in Mali's 13 national languages, and providing better wages and working conditions for teachers. Basic facilities also improve educational access—where a village has a well, children (and women) do not need to haul water from long distances, and school attendance increases 20%.²⁰⁷

Arts

Mali's many peoples produce an array of performance and plastic arts. These productions have traditional meanings and purposes, often celebrating events such as birth, marriage, or death or telling stories of creation and nature. As living arts, they are also moving into the modern tourism economy—for example, some Dogon villages give ritual performances just for visitors, removing any secret sacred actions of the tribe.^{208, 209, 210}



© Melody Nelson
Griot, Bamako

Griots or Djeli

The West African griot, also known as a *djeli* in Mali, is traditionally a storyteller like a medieval bard or a Shakespearean fool. He praises, criticizes, and remembers the actions and events of the community. As with the joking relationship *sanankuya*, Malians point to *djelis* as important mediators of conflict in their society, and sources of a Malian or African version of democracy.²¹¹

<http://www.educationfasttrack.org/newsroom/focus-on/mid-term-evaluation-of-the-efa-fast-track-initiative/#country%20case%20studies>

²⁰⁷ Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Project, UNICEF, "The Twin Challenges of Eliminating Child Labour and Achieving EFA: Evidence and Policy Options from Mali and Zambia" (Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Programme Working Paper, April 2009), 37, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1777106>

²⁰⁸ United Nations Radio, "Plundering of Mali's Art a Major Problem," 28 March 2011, <http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/detail/117523.html>

²⁰⁹ Joshua Hammer, "Looting Mali's History," *Smithsonian Magazine Online* (November 2009), <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/Looting-Mali.html>

²¹⁰ Michael Brent, "Faking African Art," *Archaeology* 54, no. 1 (January/February 2001), <http://www.archaeology.org/0101/abstracts/africa.html>

²¹¹ Lydia Clemmons and Yaya Coulibaly, "Cultural Resources and Maternal Health in Mali," in *IK Notes* 12 (September 1999), The World Bank, www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/iknt12.pdf

Music and Dance

Traditional music, song, dance, and drama are on radio and television and at frequent festivals. Performers may wear huge masks or operate large puppets, or play traditional instruments like the *balafon*, a type of gourd xylophone; stringed gourd instruments such as the *kora* and *dossongoni*; drums, and reed flutes.²¹² Mali's national dance troupe tours internationally. Musicians of world renown include Oumou Sangaré, Sali Sidibi, Ali Farka Touré, Amadou Bagayoko and Mariam Doumbia (who perform together as Amadou and Mariam), and Salif Keita, kin to Sundiata Keita, the "lion prince" of ancient Mali.



© Mary Newcombe
Young girls dancing at festival

Architecture

Traditional Malian architecture is preserved at Djenné, Bandiagara, Timbuktu, and Gao, all UNESCO World Heritage sites. The adobe bricks require seasonal renovation that is often accompanied by festivals or fairs.



© Romel Jacinto
Djenné mosque

²¹² eDiplomat, "Mali—Arts, Science and Education," 16 August 2004, http://www.ediplomat.com/np/post_reports/pr_ml.htm

Sports and Recreation

Football (soccer) is the most popular sport. Mali hosted the 2002 Africa Cup of Nations. The country has produced players and officials of international caliber. One such player is (another) Salif Keita, the first recipient of African Player of the Year Award. Women's basketball teams are regionally competitive. Wrestling is a popular traditional sport with religious and cultural connotations throughout West Africa, and Malian wrestlers were once feared for their sharp shell bracelets.^{213, 214} In the north, the Tuareg have camel races and other traditional sports that one can view at the desert festivals.²¹⁵



© Melody Nelson
Men playing football

²¹³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "Traditional African Sports," 2011,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/561041/sports/253548/Traditional-African-sports>

²¹⁴ Thomas A. Green, ed., *Martial Arts of the World: An Encyclopedia: Volume 1: A–L* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001), 6.

²¹⁵ "Tuareg Festival Draws Musicians; Tourists Wary of Security," *EarthTimes*, 12 January 2010, <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/news/303203.tuareg-festival-draws-musicians-tourists-wary-of-security-feature.html>

Chapter 4: Assessment

1. Most Malians live in the Maghreb, the north of the country.

False

The greatest variety of ethnic groups live in the population centers of the south and west.

2. The Tuareg people are the most numerous herders in Mali.

False

The Fulani peoples, about 15% of the population, are traditionally cattle herders. The Tuareg and the Maure are traditionally nomadic peoples.

3. Most Malians speak the official language of the republic.

False

French is the official language of the Republic of Mali, the written language of government and business. French speakers are a small part of the population, concentrated in urban areas where families can afford formal education.

4. Many Malians do not know how to write their native language.

True

Many languages in Mali do not yet have well-established writing systems, which makes formal education a challenge.

5. Most Malians strictly follow the Sunni form of Islam.

False

Almost 60% of Malians who identified themselves as Muslim simultaneously hold non-Islamic beliefs and engage in non-Islamic rituals.

Chapter 5: Security

Introduction

Mali is a model for developing democracies. It maintains diplomatic and economic relationships with its regional neighbors and continental friends. Likewise, it maintains amicable relations with its former colonizer France and the European Union. It retains connections with its Cold War-era mentors Russia and China. It has also forged new links with its current partners in global counterterrorism, including the United States. It was able to accept international arbitration to resolve a border dispute with its neighbor Burkina Faso, and it has attempted to remain neutral about conflicts in neighboring countries. Among its diverse ethnolinguistic groups, only the Tuareg have repeatedly resisted government authority with violence. Extremist movements, Islamic and otherwise, have failed to become deeply rooted in Malian society.²¹⁶ Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) operates in the northern Sahara, but incidents there have had minimal impact on activities in the rest of the country.²¹⁷ Mali's extreme poverty, expanding desert, and shrinking water supply have not yet created a critical mass of dissatisfied citizens. As the population grows, the environment deteriorates, and neighbors on all sides have armed conflicts, dissatisfaction may develop.



© Oxfam Italia
Woman watering garden

United States–Republic of Mali Relations

The early Republic of Mali was a socialist state aided by the Soviet Union. Influenced by anticolonial struggles in Asia, Mali opposed France and its allies, including the United States, on several issues in the 1960s and 1970s.^{218, 219} Since Mali's emergence as a multi-party



DoD Image: Michael R. Noggle
Senegalese and Malian soldiers in training

²¹⁶ Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, *Key Strategic Issues List*, ed. Antulio J. Echevarria II, 16 July 2008, 19, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?PubID=860>

²¹⁷ Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “2010 Investment Climate Statement—Mali,” March 2010, <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2010/138108.htm>

²¹⁸ Gregory Mann, “Nationalism and Decolonization in Africa during the Cold War” (presentation, Wilson Center On Demand, Washington, DC, 8 April 2008), <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/ondemand/index.cfm?fuseaction=media.play&mediaid=E08F66D4-0E29-D450-7EAF70FB864CFC67>; see also Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

²¹⁹ Robert Harvey, *A Short History of Communism* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004), 158.

democracy and with the demise of the Soviet Union, relations with the U.S. have been improving. The aims are

“[T]o increase broad-based growth, improve health and educational facilities, promote the sustainable use of natural resources, reduce the population growth rate, counter the spread of highly infectious diseases, encourage regional stability, build peacekeeping capabilities, institutionalize respect for human rights, and strengthen democratic institutions in offering good governance.”²²⁰

Early Soviet military support has been replaced by U.S. support for continent-wide rapid response and regional antiterrorism initiatives.^{221, 222, 223} Analysts recommend that the military take a supporting role for diplomacy and economic development.

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Algeria

Civil war in Algeria between the government and Islamic rebels in the 1990s was followed by relative stability under a permanent state of emergency in the early 2000s. The 2011 situation is troubling: food riots and political protests are recurring, and North African neighbors Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt are in upheaval.²²⁴ Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) originated in the insurgent groups who fought the Algerian Civil War.²²⁵ Algeria, which is anxious for Mali to contribute to the suppression of AQIM in the northern Sahara, sent equipment in 2009 and formed the Joint Military Staff Committee with Mali, Mauritania, and Niger in 2010.^{226, 227} The United States is also



© Mark Abel
Monument commemorating Tuareg
Rebellion

²²⁰ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Mali—U.S.-Malian Relations,” 20 September 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2828.htm#relations>

²²¹ Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 75.

²²² Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola, *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 29–30.

²²³ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2009—Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview,” 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140883.htm>

²²⁴ Alexis Arieff, “Algeria: Current Issues,” Congressional Research Service, 10 February 2011, http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RS21532_20110210.pdf

²²⁵ Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), “Analysis: Fresh Approach Needed to Quell Terrorism Threat in the Sahel,” Refworld, UNHCR, 7 October 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,IRIN,COUNTRYNEWS,MLI,456d621e2,4cb3fa3ec,0.html>

²²⁶ BBC News, “Algeria and Mali Target al-Qaeda,” 6 May 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8035952.stm>

²²⁷ BBC News, “Saharan States to Open Joint Military Headquarters,” 21 April 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8633851.stm>

working to facilitate cooperation in counterterrorist activities between Algeria and pan-Sahel countries including Mali through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP).²²⁸

Mali's major internal security problem, the autonomy-seeking Tuareg, also affects Algeria. Many Tuareg do not recognize the current political borders and migrate throughout the Sahara in times of drought or war. Droughts in the 1970s and 1980s displaced tens of thousands of Tuareg to Algeria and other neighboring countries.^{229, 230} Malian Tuaregs were forced by Algeria and Libya to leave those countries when economic conditions worsened there in the late 1980s.²³¹ In the early 1990s, Algeria assisted peace negotiations between Tuareg groups and the Malian government, but the 1996 peace accord broke down within 10 years, and Tuareg separatists returned to violence.²³² Competition between Algeria and Libya for influence in northern Mali may have contributed to the 2006 resurgence of the Tuareg rebellion. AQIM may also be exploiting Tuareg unrest, and reportedly has agreements sealed by marriage and/or financial compensation with groups in northern Mali.²³³

Niger

Niger borders Mali for 821 km (510 mi) along the administrative districts of Kidal and Gao, through the Sahara on the east, and the Sahel on the southeast. The Niger River crosses the border into the town of Labezanga. The Songhai, Fulani, and Tuareg are among the ethnic groups living near the border. Leadership in Niger has caused political instability.²³⁴ After a coup in 2010, a



© Eduard Garcia
Niger river

²²⁸ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009—Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview," 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140883.htm>

²²⁹ Ettagale Blauer and Jason Lauré, *Mali—Cultures of the World* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2008), 33.

²³⁰ Stefan Sperl, "International Refugee Aid and Social Change in Northern Mali" (New Issues in Refugee Research Working Paper No. 22, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, July 2000), <http://www.unhcr.org/3ae6a0c68.html>

²³¹ Káre Lode, "Mali's Peace Process: Context, Analysis & Evaluation," Conciliation Resources, 2002, <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/public-participation/malis-peace-process.php>

²³² Pierre Engelbert, "Mali—Recent History," in *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*, 33rd ed. (London: Europa Publications, 2003), 681–682.

²³³ Alexis Arieff, "Algeria: Current Issues," Congressional Research Service, 10 February 2011, http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RS21532_20110210.pdf

²³⁴ Gregory Starace, "Disparity in Democracies: A Comparative Case Study of Mali and Niger" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, December 2010), edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/theses/2010/Dec/10Dec_Starace.pdf

new, democratically elected president took office in 2011.²³⁵

Niger and Mali have similar ecologies, histories, and economic problems. Drought affected over 7 million people in 2010. Peace accords established in 1995 between the government of Niger and Tuareg rebel groups ended by 2007 when the Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (MNJ) attacked and laid land mines in the north.²³⁶ Nigerien and Malian rebels often work together: for example, renting weapons from each other.²³⁷ Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is active in Niger. In 2011 two French aid workers kidnapped in Niger by AQIM were killed at the Mali border during a rescue attempt made by French and Nigerien forces.²³⁸ Niger is a member of the regional Joint Military Staff Committee against terrorism.²³⁹

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso borders Mali for about 1,000 km (620 mi) on its south central side. Senufo, Bobo, Fulani, Mande, and Dogon peoples live on both sides of the border. The countries have resolved a lengthy border dispute and become significant trade partners, although the main trade route from Mali's capital Bamako to Ougadougou in Burkina Faso is infamous for excessive bribery.²⁴⁰ Burkina Faso's borders and airports lack formal tracking mechanisms and are considered a security issue by the United States.²⁴¹



© Danny Boy / flickr.com
Border of Mali and Burkina Faso

Up to 160,000 Malians sought refuge in Burkina Faso during the Tuareg rebellion in the 1990s.²⁴² In 2008, hundreds of Malians again fled to Burkina Faso due to Tuareg rebels

²³⁵ "Niger: Ban Welcomes 'Landmark' Inauguration of Democratically-Elected President," *UN News Service*, 7 April 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4da3f6851e.html>

²³⁶ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Niger," 12 October 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5474.htm>

²³⁷ Kwesi Aning, "Potential New Hotspots for Extremism and Opportunities to Mitigate the Danger: The Case of the Sahel" (paper presented at the Pluscarden Programme conference "The Future of International Cooperation in Countering Violent Extremism," St. Anthony's College, Oxford University, 8–9 October 2010), www.sant.ox.ac.uk/centres/Aningpaper.pdf

²³⁸ Steven Erlanger, "2 French Hostages are Found Dead in Niger," *New York Times*, 8 January 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/world/africa/09niger.html>

²³⁹ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. State Department, "Background Note: Niger," 12 October 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5474.htm>

²⁴⁰ Borderless, "13th IRTG Report UEMOA," 20 December 2010, <http://www.watradehub.com/sites/default/files/resourcefiles/jan11/13th-report-english-final.pdf>

²⁴¹ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009—Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview," 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140883.htm>

fighting in northern Mali.²⁴³ Burkina Faso is observing the Joint Military Committee in efforts to deal with AQIM and has recently become a participant in the Trans Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TCTSP).²⁴⁴

Côte d'Ivoire

Mali's short southern border (532 km [330 mi]) with Côte d'Ivoire runs through wet, forested savanna and includes the crossing of a main trade road for trucking goods to and from the Atlantic seaport of Abidjan. Malinke, Bambara, Senufo, and Bobo peoples are among the many ethnic groups in the country.



© Stefan Meisel
UN car torched in Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire is a major trade partner, a source of electric power, and home to as many as half a million Malian migrant workers. They contribute a significant amount of Mali's remittance transfers.^{245, 246} Diamonds and arms cross the border illegally, as do trafficked humans. For example, Malian youths may be abducted to work in Ivoirian cocoa plantations.^{247, 248}

Political violence in Côte d'Ivoire often spills over into Mali. A coup attempt in 2002 sent thousands of Malians home from Côte d'Ivoire.²⁴⁹ Continued unrest has caused Mali to seek alternate international trade ports to Abidjan.²⁵⁰ In 2010–2011, Côte d'Ivoire's long-time president refused to yield power to a newly elected replacement. Some of the

²⁴² Pierre Engelbert, "Mali—Recent History," in *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*, 33rd ed. (London: Europa Publications, 2003), 682.

²⁴³ Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), "Burkina Faso-Mali—Hundreds of Tuareg Refugees Flee Escalating Violence," Refworld, UNHCR, 29 May 2008, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,...BFA,,4843fffb3de,0.html>

²⁴⁴ Alexis Arieff, "Algeria: Current Issues," Congressional Research Service, 10 February 2011, 8, http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RS21532_20110210.pdf

²⁴⁵ *Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations*, "Migration au Mali: Profil National 2009" (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2009), http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=41_42&products_id=562

²⁴⁶ World Bank, "Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011—Mali," <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/Mali.pdf>

²⁴⁷ Monica Mark, "Bad Business for Diamond Smugglers," *The Africa Report*, 7 December 2010, <http://www.theafricareport.com/archives2/business/3300883-bad-business-for-diamond-smugglers.html>

²⁴⁸ Gail Wannenburg, "Organized Crime in West Africa," *Africa Security Review* 14, no. 4 (2005): <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/14No4/F1.htm>

²⁴⁹ Amnesty International, "Côte d'Ivoire: Without Immediate International Action, the Country Will Descend into Chaos," 19 December 2002, 8, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3f15229e4.html>

²⁵⁰ Edith Hodgkinson, "Mali—Economy," in *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*, 33rd ed. (London: Europa Publications, 2003), 685.

resulting violence turned against Malian emigrants. Refugee movements across the border will continue until the situation in Côte d'Ivoire stabilizes.²⁵¹

Guinea

Guinea shares an 858 km (533 mi) border with Mali to the southwest, through Sudanic savanna. The headwaters of the Niger and the Senegal rivers enter Mali across the Guinea border. A road from Mali to Guinea was built in 2005.²⁵² Fulani and Malinke peoples make up the majority of the population in the country. Guinea was the only colony to refuse membership in the liberalized French Community in 1958. It has been largely independent of its regional neighbors. For example, Guinea does not belong to a regional monetary union nor is its currency backed by France. A coup in 2008 led to the suspension of much foreign aid, and flawed presidential elections in 2010 featured Fulani and Malinke groups fighting each other. Legislative elections scheduled for 2011 have yet to be confirmed.²⁵³



UN Photo
Refugee at a camp in Guinea

Guinea has relatively untroubled relations with Mali; however, in 2007, conflict between Guinean and Malian villagers over land rights escalated to deadly violence. The governments resumed a joint patrol along the border and encouraged peaceful negotiation to end the disputes.²⁵⁴ Guinea has accepted civil war refugees from neighbors Sierra Leone and Liberia, and sent soldiers to keep the peace in both countries.²⁵⁵ Mali also contributed forces to peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone, but withdrew most of them after the deaths of seven Malian soldiers caused a public outcry.²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *West Africa: Côte d'Ivoire Operation—Number of Refugees (as of 27 March 2011)*, 27 March 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,...GIN.,4d92f5852.0.html>

²⁵² Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Guinea—Economy," 21 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2824.htm>

²⁵³ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Guinea—History," 21 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2824.htm>

²⁵⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, "Mali," 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/360071/Mali>

²⁵⁵ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Guinea—Foreign Relations," 21 March 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2824.htm>

²⁵⁶ Pierre Engelbert, "Mali—Recent History," in *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*, 33rd ed. (London: Europa Publications, 2003), 682.

Senegal

Senegal borders Mali for 419 km (260 mi) on the west. The Senegal River crosses the border west of Kayes, and one of its tributaries forms the border between the two countries.²⁵⁷ Mali's only railway runs from Bamako to Senegal's capital Dakar. Fulani, Malinke, and Soninke groups are among the peoples who live in Senegal.



© 300td.org / flickr.com
Border crossing, Senegal

Senegal was briefly half of the Mali Federation, an attempt in 1958 to create a pan-African state among the former French colonies. Conflict between leaders Leopold Senghor and Modibo Keita soon dissolved the political federation. Senghor governed Senegal for the next 20 years, eventually ceding power to a hand-picked successor. Senegal is the only West African nation with no history of military coup.²⁵⁸

Relations between Mali and Senegal have been peaceful, perhaps motivated by shared economic interests around the Senegal River basin. Senegal is a major trade partner. Senegal and Mali have had similar issues with their neighbor Mauritania. From 1989–1991, Senegalese migrants of “Afro Mauritanian” or “black” ethnicity were expelled.²⁵⁹ Maure in Senegal were encouraged to repatriate to Mauritania. Some 8,000 refugees in Senegal are still awaiting repatriation to their homes in Mauritania; as of June 2010, only 2,500 Mauritanians have permission to return.²⁶⁰

The Senegalese government also has a longstanding problem with separatists in the Casamance region.²⁶¹ There are fears that criminal activities—drug trafficking and production—will grow in the contested region. AQIM reportedly is trying to set up transit points and facilitation networks in Senegal.²⁶²

²⁵⁷ Edmund Jan Ozmanczyk and Anthony Mango, eds., “Senegal River,” in *Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Agreements* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1680.

²⁵⁸ Donovan C. Chau, “U.S. Counterterrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding Costs, Cultures, and Conflicts,” Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2008, 27, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB821.pdf>

²⁵⁹ Alexis Arieff, “Senegal: Background and U.S. Relations,” Congressional Research Service, 25 March 2011, 12–13, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41369.pdf>

²⁶⁰ UNHCR, “2011 Regional Operations Profile—West Africa,” 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e484e66>

²⁶¹ Papa Demba Fall et al., “Senegal Country and Research Areas Report,” Eumagine, 1 October 2010, http://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/research-projects-pdfs/eumagine-pdfs/eumagine-project-paper-2-senegal-country-and-research-areas-report/at_download/file

²⁶² Alexis Arieff, “Senegal: Background and U.S. Relations,” Congressional Research Service, 25 March 2011, 8–9, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41369.pdf>

Mauritania

Mauritania shares Mali's longest border, over 2,200 km (1,400 mi). Its population is 70% Maure and 30% other peoples, including the Haalpulaar (Fulani), Soninke, and Wolof. Tensions between the North African Arabic Maure and other Mauritians of sub-Saharan origins led to the expulsion of non-Maure peoples to Senegal in 1989–1991. An estimated 5,200 remain homeless. Mauritania is distant from West Africa in other ways—for example, it does not share a common currency through the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). It withdrew from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2000.²⁶³



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Border crossing, Mauritania

In the 1990s, both Mauritians and Malians crossed the border seeking refuge from violent conflict. Mali accused Mauritania of harboring Tuareg and Maure rebels. Mauritania accused Mali of illegal armed pursuit across national boundaries. The Tuareg refugee camp in Mauritania closed in 1997 after repatriation of over 40,000 Malians.²⁶⁴ In Mali, UNHCR is still negotiating to allow 10,000 Mauritanian refugees to return home.²⁶⁵

Mauritania has been politically unstable in the 2000s. Coups occurred in 2005 and 2008 that disrupted international military cooperation and humanitarian aid. A civilian president took office in July 2009.²⁶⁶ Legislative elections are scheduled for 2011.

Mauritania, like Mali, is plagued with AQIM activity, including the attempted assassination of the president in early 2011.^{267, 268} The countries are starting to work together against AQIM, but not always with the best coordination.^{269, 270} Mauritania is a

²⁶³ ECOWAS, "Executive Secretary's Report 2000: Chapter II," 12 March 2010, <http://www.comm.ecowas.int/sec/index.php?id=es-rep2000-3-5&lang=en>

²⁶⁴ Katharine Murison, ed., *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*, 33rd ed. (London: Europa Publications, 2003), 681–682.

²⁶⁵ UNHCR, "2011 Regional Operations Profile—West Africa," 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e484e66>

²⁶⁶ Stephen Harmon, "From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and its Implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region," *Bulletin of Concerned African Scholars* 85 (Spring 2010), <http://concernedafricascholars.org/bulletin/85/harmon/>

²⁶⁷ Africa Security Brief, February 2011, http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/AfricaBriefFinal_11.pdf

²⁶⁸ Stephen Harmon, "From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and its Implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region," *Bulletin of Concerned African Scholars* 85 (Spring 2010), <http://concernedafricascholars.org/bulletin/85/harmon/>

²⁶⁹ Jamestown Foundation, "Mali–Mauritanian Joint Counterterrorist Patrols Begin in Sahara/Sahel," *Terrorism Monitor* 8, no. 41 (11 November 2010), http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,REFERENCE,THE_JF,,MLL,,4cdce7962,0.html

member of the regional Joint Military Committee and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.^{271, 272}

Libya

While not a next-door neighbor, Mali is friendly with Qadhafi-run Libya. Mali is a founding member of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, a group that Libya launched in 1997 as an alternative to other African trade blocs.^{273, 274} Many Tuareg served in Libyan armed forces in the 1990s.²⁷⁵ In 2010–2011, Mali’s president voiced support for Qadhafi as rebellion filled Libya, and went to Tripoli to broker a cease-fire.²⁷⁶



© Ammar Abd Rabbo
Libyan leader
Muammar El Qadhafi

²⁷⁰ Wolfram Lacher, “Organized Crime and Terrorism in the Sahel,” *SWP Comments* (German International and Security Affairs), January 2011, http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/products/swp-research-papers/swp-research-paper-detail/article/organized_crime_and_terrorism_in_the_sahel.html

²⁷¹ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2009—Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview,” 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140883.htm>

²⁷² Andrea Walther, “Flintlock 11 and TSS Expand Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Cooperation and Approach,” U.S. Army Special Operations Command (Release No. 110307-01), 7 March 2011, <http://www.soc.mil/UNS/Releases/2011/March/110307-01.html>

²⁷³ Joanne Maher, ed., *Europa World Year Book 2004* (London: Europa Publications, 2004), 2806.

²⁷⁴ Panapress, “CEN-SAD Celebrates 13th Anniversary,” 4 February 2011, <http://www.panapress.com/CEN-SAD-celebrates-13th-anniversary---12-756752-29-lang2-index.html>

²⁷⁵ Káre Lode, “Mali’s Peace Process: Context, Analysis & Evaluation,” Conciliation Resources 2002, <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/public-participation/malis-peace-process.php>

²⁷⁶ Sebastian Abbot and Hadeel Al-Shalchi, “Libyan Rebels Say Strikes Help Them Hold Town,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 10 April 2011, <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9MGTJ380.htm>

Military

Mali's 1992 constitution establishes the president as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Government ordinances set out a security organization that closely integrates external defense and internal order.²⁷⁷ Mali's armed forces number over 7,300 and function under the Minister of Defense and Veterans.²⁷⁸ The Army operates land forces, a small river-patrolling navy, and air defense. The Air Force is expected to become increasingly subordinate to the Army in the future.²⁷⁹ Other military units under the defense minister are the Gendarmerie and the National Guard.



DoD Image: Ken Bergmann
Malian army training

The National Guard is operated by the Ministry of Internal Security and Civil Protection. The Gendarmerie functions primarily on behalf of the ministries of Internal Security and Justice. It participates in defense but specializes in law enforcement. A civilian national police force under the Ministry of Internal Security and Civil Protection also provides internal security.²⁸⁰ Military spending has been rising steadily since 1993 (calculated in local currency units), and military expenditures total about 13% of the national budget.^{281, 282}

Mali's first president expelled French military forces in 1962, and in the 1960s and 1970s, Mali's army and air force relied primarily on the Soviet Union for materiel and training. A few Malians, notably then-officer and now-president Amadou Toumani Touré, received military training in the United States, France, or Germany. The military has generally kept a low profile since the democratic transition of 1992, focusing on

²⁷⁷ Nouhoum Sangaré, "Chapter 11: Mali," in *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa*, eds. Alan Bryden, Boubacar N'Diaye, and 'Funmi Olonisakin (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces [DCAF], June 2008), 186–187, <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Publication-Detail?lng=en&id=95081>

²⁷⁸ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2009* (London: IISS, 2009), 310; Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Mali," January 2005, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf>

²⁷⁹ Jane's, "Armed Forces (Mali)," *Sentinel Security Assessment*, October 2010, <http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-North-Africa/Armed-forces-Mali.html>

²⁸⁰ Nouhoum Sangaré, "Mali," in *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa*, eds. Alan Bryden, Boubacar N'Diaye, and 'Funmi Olonisakin (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces [DCAF], June 2008), <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Publication-Detail?lng=en&id=95081>

²⁸¹ World Bank Indicators, "Military Expenditure (current LCU), Mali," 2009, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CN/countries/1W-ML?display=graph>; World Bank Indicators, "Military Expenditure (% of central government expenditure), Mali," 2009, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.ZS/countries/1W-ML?display=graph>

²⁸² Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Mali," 20 September 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2828.htm#defense>

counterinsurgency and regional peace support. Tuareg irregular forces joined the regular military following a 1992 agreement between the government and Tuareg rebels. Their dissatisfaction has caused difficulties in the service and some returned to rebellion in 2006. President Amadou Toumani Touré, elected in 2002, is a former Army general and enjoys widespread military support.^{283, 284}

Mali contributes to regional and international peacekeeping through the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the cease-fire monitoring group ECOWAS, and the United Nations.^{285, 286} In the 1990s, Mali joined the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), a training sponsored by the United States for a continent-wide, rapid-response peacekeeping force.²⁸⁷ After the September 2001 attack, the U.S. developed the Pan-Sahel Initiative, which has provided training and equipment to Malian troops since 2003.^{288, 289} Following the PSI, Mali now participates in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, a wider regional initiative.²⁹⁰ The Joint Military Staff Committee of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, based in Tamanrasset, Algeria, formed in 2010 to coordinate efforts against the growing regional threat from al-Qaeda.²⁹¹ French forces returned in 2010 because of terrorist actions against French citizens.

²⁸³ Jane's, "Armed Forces (Mali)," *Sentinel Security Assessment*, October 2010, <http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-Sentinel-Security-Assessment-North-Africa/Armed-forces-Mali.html>

²⁸⁴ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Mali," January 2005, <http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf>

²⁸⁵ Cyril I. Obi, "Economic Community of West African States on the Ground: Comparing Peacekeeping in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Côte D'Ivoire," *African Security* 2, nos. 2 and 3 (May 2009): 119–135, <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/ftinterface~content=a917848423~fulltext=713240930~frm=section>

²⁸⁶ United Nations Peacekeeping, "UN Mission's Summary Detailed by Country," 31 March 2011, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2011/mar11_3.pdf

²⁸⁷ Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola, *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 29–30.

²⁸⁸ Francis T. Miko, "Removing Terrorist Sanctuaries: The 9/11 Commission Recommendations and U.S. Policy," CRS Report for Congress, updated 11 February 2005, 20, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL32518.pdf>

²⁸⁹ Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Mali," 20 September 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2828.htm#defense>

²⁹⁰ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009—Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview," 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140883.htm>

²⁹¹ BBC News, "Saharan States to Open Joint Military Headquarters," 21 April 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8633851.stm>

Issues Affecting Stability

Food and Water Insecurity

Struggles over productive land and sufficient water are part of most conflicts in Mali. Disagreements about how best to use land and water resources fuel local violence, and local conflicts may escalate to wide-ranging and prolonged violence.^{292, 293} Some analysts attribute the Tuareg rebellion partly to demands for pasture and water rights. Government agencies trying to manage these resources cooperatively, such as the Office du Niger or the Senegal River Basin authority, have a mixed record.²⁹⁴ Catastrophic famines brought on by drought and crops lost to insects or disease strain relationships with countries that take in refugees from these crises. Scientists predict rising temperatures and declining water levels in the western Sahel with “drastic consequences” for Mali.^{295, 296}



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Water security

Tuareg Autonomy

Tuareg loyalties are to clan before country. The “Tuareg problem” arises from the attempts of a centralized government—first French, then Malian—to impose state citizenship upon a decentralized, loosely organized group of people. To sustain peace, negotiations are best conducted at the local level.²⁹⁷ Many Tuaregs feel they have been cheated or forgotten by colonial and contemporary governments. Beginning with the French confiscation of Tuareg camel herds in World War I, governments have pressured the Tuareg to alter their traditional livelihood of nomadic herding. The post-colonial government has recognized its “economic marginalization of the North” and tried to reduce inequalities among administrative regions, but the root cause is nationwide

²⁹² BBC News, “Timeline: Mali,” n.d., http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1022844.stm

²⁹³ Claudia LaLumia, Koffi Alinon, and Ryan Roberge, *Mali Land Tenure Assessment Report* (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development, 2010), <http://usaidlandtenure.net/library/country-level-reports/mali-land-tenure-assessment-report/view>

²⁹⁴ Robert Pringle, *Democratization in Mali: Putting History to Work* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006), 49–52, <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS77398>

²⁹⁵ Sahel and West Africa Club, OECD, “Security Implications of Climate Change in the Sahel,” http://www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3746,en_38233741_38246823_43345721_1_1_1_1,00.html#studies

²⁹⁶ Serigne Tacko Kandji et al., *Climate Change and Variability in the Sahel Region: Impacts and Adaptation Strategies in the Agricultural Sector* (Nairobi: United Nations Environmental Programme, 2006), <http://www.unep.org/Themes/Freshwater/Documents/pdf/ClimateChangeSahelCombine.pdf>

²⁹⁷ R. Poulton and I. ag Youssouf, *A Peace of Timbuktu: Democratic Governance, Development and African Peacemaking* (New York: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1998), http://www.unidir.org/bdd/fiche-ouvrage.php?ref_ouvrage=92-9045-125-4-en

poverty.²⁹⁸ Young, poor, or disaffected Tuareg continue to fight for economic or ideological reasons throughout North and West Africa, most recently in the 2011 conflict in Libya.^{299, 300} Governments in Mauritania, Algeria, Libya, and Niger will have to cooperate to find a long-term solution to the Tuareg problem.

International Terrorism and Crime

Tuareg alienation and a local tradition of smuggling may have made it easy for AQIM to move into the Sahara of northern Mali in the early 2000s.³⁰¹ Mali's long, porous borders and low level of security have made it difficult to combat AQIM effectively.³⁰² Some analysts have suggested that AQIM was a convenient justification for an increased U.S. military presence in Africa.³⁰³

A few high-profile kidnappings of Europeans and North Americans have led to international disagreements about whether ransoms should be paid.³⁰⁴ Mali was criticized for releasing captured AQIM members in exchange for a French hostage.³⁰⁵ Less dramatic but more dangerous is the establishment of international criminal activities and methods in the area.³⁰⁶ Some call AQIM a "hybrid" terrorist organization that is as

²⁹⁸ Macartan Humphreys and Habaye ag Mohamed, "Senegal and Mali," in *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis—Africa*, eds. Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005), 247–302,

<http://www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/papers1/hm2005.pdf>

²⁹⁹ Káre Lode, "Mali's Peace Process: Context, Analysis & Evaluation," Conciliation Resources 2002, <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/public-participation/malis-peace-process.php>

³⁰⁰ Martin Vogl, "Tuaregs 'Join Gadaffi's Mercenaries,'" BBC News, 4 March 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-12647115>

³⁰¹ *An Overview of U.S. Policy in Africa, Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health*, 111th Cong., 24 March 2010 (testimony of Princeton N. Lyman, Adjunct Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations), 2–3, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/111/lym032410.pdf>

³⁰² Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009—Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview," 5 August 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140883.htm>

³⁰³ Stephen Harmon, "From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and its Implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region," *Bulletin of Concerned African Scholars*, no. 85 (Spring 2010), <http://concernedafricascholars.org/bulletin/85/harmon/>

³⁰⁴ Wolfram Lacher, "Organized Crime and Terrorism in the Sahel," *SWP Comments* (German International and Security Affairs), January 2011, http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/products/swp-research-papers/swp-research-paper-detail/article/organized_crime_and_terrorism_in_the_sahel.html

³⁰⁵ Martin Vogl, "Al Qaeda Exploits Saharan State Rivalries," BBC News, 27 July 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-africa-10765891>

³⁰⁶ Wolfram Lacher, "Organized Crime and Terrorism in the Sahel," *SWP Comments* (German International and Security Affairs), January 2011, http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/products/swp-research-papers/swp-research-paper-detail/article/organized_crime_and_terrorism_in_the_sahel.html

involved with contraband trafficking and ransom demands as it is with the global al-Qaeda cause.³⁰⁷

Outlook

West African attitudes toward military and law enforcement are “frosty,” so the United States may undermine its goal of supporting counterterrorism if a military approach is too heavy-handed.³⁰⁸ Many analysts argue that the best road to security is one of social and economic development. Mali is trying hard to promote its social capital—kinship, compromise, consensus—as a basis for peaceful democratic development. Investing in its social capital may be the path to securing Mali’s future.



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Africa Endeavor planning conference

³⁰⁷ Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), “Analysis: Fresh Approach Needed to Quell Terrorism Threat in the Sahel,” Refworld, UNCHR, 7 October 2010, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category/COI,IRIN,..4cb3fa3ec.0.html>

³⁰⁸ Donovan C. Chau, “U.S. Counterterrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding Costs, Cultures, and Conflicts,” Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2008, 30–31, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB821.pdf>

Chapter 5: Assessment

1. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is a Tuareg rebel group that originated in Mali.

False

AQIM descends from insurgent groups who fought the Algerian Civil War. The original groups tried to replace the secular Algerian state with an Islamic theocracy.

2. Mali is the southernmost country in North Africa.

False

Mali is considered part of West Africa. However, Mali has significant relations with North African countries Algeria and Libya.

3. Burkina Faso has no diplomatic ties with Mali because of a long-standing border dispute.

False

The countries have resolved a lengthy border dispute and become significant trade partners.

4. Migrant workers from Mali often return home from Côte d'Ivoire due to political unrest.

True

Half a million or more Malians work in Côte d'Ivoire. Civil unrest, such as the conflict over the 2010 presidential election, often provokes violence against immigrants, and thousands of Malians may flee across the border.

5. Ethnic tensions between Maure and non-Maure in Mauritania have created refugee problems for Mali.

True

In 1989 Mauritania expelled non-Maure “Afro Mauritians” to Senegal and Mali, and in the 1990s violent border conflicts created refugees in Mali and Mauritania. In Mali, thousands of Mauritanian refugees are still waiting to return home.

Final Assessment

1. Timbuktu is the capital of Mali.
2. Kidal is the newest administrative region of Mali.
3. Gao is home to a World Heritage site.
4. It is safe to swim in the Niger River.
5. The most serious natural hazard is prolonged drought and accompanying famine.
6. The French found the colonization of the interior of the Sudan to be easy.
7. Mali's first president, Modibo Keita, tried to make Mali a multiparty democratic state.
8. Moussa Traoré was elected president of Mali twice.
9. Amadou Toumani Touré has ruled Mali since he overthrew Moussa Traoré in a military coup in 1991.
10. Al-Qaeda started the Tuareg armed rebellion in the Maghreb in 2009.
11. Because Mali is a poor country, most people receive government welfare.
12. Unemployed Malians often emigrate to other countries to work and send money home.
13. Foreign aid is an important part of Mali's annual income.
14. Mali's government operates an independent economy, and avoids economic cooperation with other countries.
15. Trade and tourism are vulnerable to problems with transportation infrastructure and security.
16. The constitution of Mali mandates the separation of church and state.
17. Malians, especially the cattle-herding Fulani, eat plenty of beef.
18. In the democratic Republic of Mali, everybody is equal.
19. Polygamy is legal in Mali.
20. Children often miss school in order to work.
21. The Gendarmerie could be described as Mali's paramilitary police force.
22. The Joint Military Staff Committee is a U.S.-sponsored peacekeeping force for Africa.

23. The government, in conjunction with regional agencies, is successfully managing Mali's water and land resources.
24. Algeria, Niger, and Mauritania all share Mali's "Tuareg problem."
25. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's main danger to Mali is the religious extremism it promotes.

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