DANU Strategic Forecasting Group

PMESII: Mali

June 27th 2016
Foreword

DANU Strategic Forecasting Group

DANU SFG is a student run multinational Think Tank that seeks to forecast future developments in security and intelligence related fields. Our mission is to facilitate discussion surrounding conflicts, their current developments and their future trajectories. We aim to increase public awareness of conflicts that receive less coverage in the media, or that are generally less understood, but nevertheless pose potential risks for their region. Through the use of clear and concise conflict intelligence forecasts, easily digestible by the expert and layman alike, we see our products assisting our consumers by informing them of potential future conflict scenarios and their likelihood. By consistently and systematically producing our forecasts we strive to become one of Europe’s leading student led Think Tanks.

For more work by the DANU SFG, visit comprehensiveanalysis.com. Further analysis on Libya and Mali will be published, as well as a strategic forecast.

PMESII

The following document consists of a PMESII study on relating to Libya and Mali. PMESII is military acronym listed in several joint and service publications, which evolved from a systems perspective, and equates to the political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and information systems of states. Members of the DANU SFG research a specific areas of interest to help identify key indicators. These indicators will be used in further analysis to generate the strategic forecast for the next ten years in Libya and Mali.

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Table of Contents

Foreword....................1
Table of Contents....................2
PMESII....................6
  - Political ....................7
  - Military..................9
  - Economic and Infrastructure.................11
  - Social....................14
Resources....................26
PMESII
Executive Summary

President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta has made stabilisation in Mali his primary objective in his national security agenda; but has yet to provide a coherent strategy of how he would solidify this endeavour for the long term.

The peace deal signed between the secessionist organisation, Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA), and Malian government officials, as a result of violent uprisings in 2012, aims to coordinate and establish autonomy in the northern region of Mali, to prevent future outbreaks of violence. Since April 2013, there has been a UN presence in Mali, known as MIMUSA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), which has been pursuing efforts to help stabilise the political situation and enforce the rule of law. The political situation in Mali stabilised in 2014 after a 2013 French-led intervention restored state control. However, attacks are still being carried out by both pro and anti-government groups in the north of the country, necessitating deterioration of security in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal.

Further mutual trust must be consistent between the CMA and Malian Government for the October 2015 agreement uphold its worth, and stability to be long-lasting. Nevertheless, this peace agreement appears to be a step in the right direction, whilst also broadening possibilities for further, more in-depth, negotiations to come.

Key Points

- President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta has made stabilisation in Mali his primary objective in his national security agenda; but has yet to provide a coherent strategy of how he would solidify this endeavor for the long term.
- Violent uprisings in 2012 led to peace agreements between CMA forces and Malian Government.
- Since April 2013, UN presence within Mali – MIMUSA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) – to aid in political stabilization and enforce rule of law.
- Political situation stabilized in 2014 after a 2013 French-led intervention to restore state control.
- Attacks are still being carried out by pro and anti-government groups in northernmost part of the country.
- Peace agreement appears to be a step in the right direction.
Domestic Political Structure

The political system in Mali is a multiparty system. With no margin for singular power between parties, this system results in a unified coalition government. In accordance with constitutional law, the President of Mali is elected on a five year term basis, with the next election held in 2018. The National Assembly is comprised of a total of 160 members, also newly elected every five years. Coming out victorious by popular support in the last election held in 2013, President Keïta’s incentive for national reform is what prompted his acceptance as the new Commander-in-Chief. With the provided aid from the UN, in tandem to facilitation of current peace negotiations, the anticipation of re-election looks promising for President Keïta and his political party Rally for Mali.

Malian Government and Militia Insider

• The regionally recognized parliamentary parties in the country are aggregated into four parliamentary groups, and eight political parties.

• The presence of secular militias within the region, such as the Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA), have most recently gained political influence – through bilateral peace talks - in the conquest towards regional stability. The CMA, composed of former rebel groups, is the primary military political coalition within Mali. They possess the primary objective to gain independence in the northern part of the region.

• The dominant opposition force on the ground, Gatia, mainly consisting of an armed Tuareg group, is part of the pro-government platform that operates alongside military leaders and traditional chiefs through informal signed agreements.
• Peace talks between CMA secessionists and pro-government forces have been underway as recent as October 2015, which has led to intra and intercommunity agreements between forces. Agreements between both opposing groups have been directly correlated with cease fires and a mutual cohabitation in cities within Mali, such as Kidal.

**International Involvement**

The effort to stabilise Mali has gained support from the international community. There has been support in the form of mediation of peace agreements, the implementation of a transitional roadmap, as well as training of Malian forces, and a reform of the Malian justice system. Mali will require a continuation of such assistance and support in order to stabilise in the future.

In April 2013 the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Its’ objective is to support political processes in the country, carry out security-related tasks, support the transitional authorities, and implement the transitional roadmap. The UNSC adopted resolution 2164 in June 2014, which determined that the mission should focus on the promotion and protection of: human rights, ensuring security, supporting national political dialogue and reconciliation, the establishment of state authority, rebuilding the security sector and the stabilization and protection of civilians.

Similarly, the European Union (EU) has contributed to stabilising the situation in Mali by establishing military and civil training missions for the Malian armed forces and the internal security personnel. Additionally, the EU also co-mediated a Malian Peace Agreement and is actively participating in the follow-up process of the agreement. Furthermore, the EU’s Sahel Strategy contains Mali due to its geographical location, thus allowing it to benefit from the actions of numerous cross border instruments. The strategy aims to provide stability through regional coordination, improved governance, and state building. It specifically focuses on development, diplomacy, counter-radicalisation, and counter-terrorism.

As for the judicial sector, judges, prosecutors and police fled Mali during the armed conflict, which led to the 2014 judicial reformation under the supervision of the EU. Due to insufficient staffing and logistical constraints, hundreds of detainees were held in extended pre-trial detention in overcrowded jails. This was a violation of due process and as a result of the reform, several hundreds of individuals were released. The rehabilitation of courthouses was supported by the UN Development Programme, whilst the United States offered forensic support to the Ministry of Justice.
Forecast

Overall the political situation in Mali will continue to evolve over the next 5-10 years. In recent years international involvement has attempted to stabilise the country. If Mali continues to receive the support and assistance already offered by international organisations the situation could evolve in a positive manner. Similarly, the domestic political structure and strong leadership of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta will help towards building a stable Malian state. An improved political situation in the country would be a catalyst for other positive developments in the areas of economy, literacy, decreased violence and corruption as well as an overall improved infrastructure. These developments however are reliant on the success of the negotiations between the Malian government and the CMA. A failure of these negotiations could severely hinder the positive development of the Malian state. Subsequently resulting in an increase in violence and lacking infrastructure.
Executive Summary

Since the 2013 French intervention and the implementation of permanent anti-terrorist operations in the region, once-powerful VEOs have almost lost all conventional military capabilities in Mali. Coupled with the rising influence of the Islamic State and diminishing conventional capabilities, various VEOs in Mali will likely continue to consolidate in order to maximize their own significance and efforts. Seeing no military solutions to their cause, Azawady secular secessionist groups have together formed a political coalition in order to try and strike a final deal with the Malian government. However, secessionist forces will continue to retain a significant military presence both to maintain influence at the negotiating table and to fend off other hostile groups. Many pro-government self-defense militias, created in the 2012 secessionist offensive, have proven stubbornly opposed to laying down their arms. Since the weak Malian military is unable to fully implement authority across such a vast territory, past grievances dating generations between pro-government militias and secessionist groups is likely to escalate into violent conflict. Although the situation is more stable, with the UN and French forces being the main element in keeping all sides from escalating to further violence, sporadic communal violence still occurs.

Section 2

The Military Situation

By Radu Florescu and Elias Langvad

Actors

- Violent Extremist Organisations:
  - Al-Mourabitoun
  - AMB - Masked Men Brigade
  - Ansar Dine
  - AQIM – al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
  - MLF - Macina Liberation Movement
  - MNLA – National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
  - MUJAO – Movement for Unity and Justice in West Africa

- Secessionist Groups:
  - CMA - Movement for Coordination of the Azawad
  - CPA - People’s Coalition of Azawad
  - HCUA - High Council for Unity of Azawad

- Pro – Government Forces:
  - CM-FPR - Coordination of Patriotic Resistance Forces and Movements
  - FLN - Liberation Forces for Northern Mali
  - Ganda Iso
  - Ganda Koi
  - GATIA - Auto-defense group of Tuareg Imghad and Allies

- International Forces:
  - FAMA – Malian Army
  - MIUSMA – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
  - MAA – Arab Movement for Azawad
Violent extremist organisations

During the security vacuum that emerged after the fall of the government in Mali 2012, powerful VEOs managed to establish a significant presence in Mali. There are several VEOs operating in Mali, many originating in one form or another from AQIM. MUJAO was part of AQIM before their differentiating goals led to a friendly split and Ansar Dine has had an alliance with AQIM since early on in their operations. MLF originates from both MUJAO and Ansar Dine, and still retain close ties with the latter. Al-Mourabitoun is a merger between MUJAO and AMB, who had previously separated from AQIM, and has since 2015 sworn allegiance to AQIM.

Despite enjoying early success in their offensive in 2012, the VEOs soon lost their bases of operations due to the international military intervention led by France. The extremist groups may have different goals but they are not foreign to working together which has been the case in several attacks in Mali since 2011. After the fall of the government, Ansar Dine, MNLA and MUJAO, with support from AQIM, gained control over several key cities in Northern Mali in their 2012 offensive. MNLA was later driven out by their former allies, Ansar Dine and MUJAO due to ideological differences. Since the Malian government and its French-led allies started their military operations in 2013, the VEOs have lost their bases of operation and have resorted to isolated attacks against civilians, coalition forces and state facilities. Although many VEOs have lost their conventional military power, they retain a significant presence in Mali and maintain some of their influence through insurgent tactics, mainly using improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Due to the growing influence of the Islamic State in the region, and with French counterterrorist operations continuing, the VEOs have started to merge in order to tackle these threats more effectively. Considering that their positions are being more and more challenged, it is likely that they will continue to band together to meet these new challenges which will prove problematic for the Malian government and its allies.

Secessionist Groups

Armed secessionist groups remain to be a major political and military force throughout the country’s north, especially since their formation of a powerful coalition. The principal Tuareg dominated MNLA formerly led the 2012 rebellion against the Malian government in alliance with Ansar Dine before being driven out by the latter. Other notable secessionist groups include the MAA, leading the Arab segment of the MAA. A faction known as MAA Loyalist however, has since broken off from the group to support the government of Mali. Additionally, the HCUA - previously known as Islamic Movement of Azawad (MIA) - is constituted of former Ansar Dine militants, who joined the secular movement after rejecting Ansar Dine’s violent extremist vision.
In 2014, these secessionist groups formed a political coalition known as the Movement for Coordination of the Azawad (CMA) before signing a ceasefire and later a peace deal with the Malian government. Members of this coalition are not expected to abandon their armed presence as long as a full agreement with the government is not reached and other opposing pro-government militias are demobilised.

**Pro-government militias**

Opposing both the secessionists and Islamist VEOs are equally powerful self-defense militias, which have themselves formed a political coalition supporting the Malian government in its efforts to keep the country united. They were initially formed by filling the security void left by retreating Malian troops in the face of the 2012 rebel offensive. Heavily backed by the Malian government, they retain a very fragile peace deal with the CMA but refuse to demobilize. They have since gathered into a coalition known as “The Platform” in order to influence talks between the government and the CMA. The largest member is a coalition of black community militias known as CM-FPR, which is de facto led by Ganda Iso - formerly sympathetic to the Islamist and anti-Tuareg – but also include Ganda koi and the FLN. The CM-FPR is allied to the MAA loyalist as well as another prominent multi-ethnic pro-government militia known as GATIA, all allied to the Malian government. However, attempts at pacifying and disarming these loyalist groups will likely prove difficult, especially if tensions with the CMA escalate. Furthermore, small skirmishes between rival ethnic militias, especially between Tuareg and Songai along the Timbuktu region, have and will continue to act as a destabilizing factor.

**Government and international forces**

In coordination with all countries in the Sahel region, France counter-terrorist missions under Operation Berkhane remains in full swing, while FAMA struggles to reassert security within its own borders. Malian forces however insufficiently deploy only one officer per 2,143 people while mostly relying on unruly local militias and the UN’s largest peace keeping forces named MINUSMA. Consequently, and despite international assistance, FAMA does not hold capabilities to disarm remaining armed groups, tackle remaining extremist groups and general banditism independently, especially in the face of ethnic militia groups, which continue to grow by exploiting their position of power. Malian forces will mostly continue to suffer from relatively inefficiently, however can expect some form of improvement as long as foreign forces remain dedicated in training mission.
Outlook

Mali will remain a contested area of conflict due to the numerous military actors in the country, for a foreseeable future. Although the VEOs influence are diminishing, their deeper cooperation with each other is worrying sign for the Malian government, and it will enable the VEOs to retain their presence in Mali. One of the most important factors in determining the future of the military situation in Mali, is the ability of both the Malian government and the CMA to find a full political solution. This will enable the military, both domestic and international, to concentrate on eradicating the remaining VEOs while also reducing the potential threat from the secessionist groups. The pro-government militias have proven difficult to handle, but with a peaceful resolution with the CMA they will be more inclined to demobilize. The international forces will retain a significant presence in Mali due to the Malian military forces lacking the capability to disarm the remaining groups while also tackling the threats of the VEOs.
Mali’s weak economy, with the lack of infrastructure and political instability, has the potential for strong development, due to the country’s riches in natural resources.

Mali has a GDP per capita of $1,600 (PPP) and ranks among the 25 poorest countries in the world. In 2015, the real growth rate of the GDP was around 5 percent. Agriculture is one of the main components of the economy and constitutes nearly 40 percent of the GDP, while industry - mainly mining - constitutes 23 percent of the GDP. Out of the labour force, 80 percent works in agriculture and 20 percent works in industry and services sector. The unemployment rate is estimated to be around 30 percent in 2015, while in 2014 it was only 8.2 percent. Of the nearly 17 million inhabitants, around 44 percent live below the poverty line, according to a 2009 estimation. It is likely that with the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion, the current security crisis and the rise of unemployment, the real percentage of people living in poverty is higher.

Key Points

- Mali among the 25 poorest countries in the world.
- Agriculture is crucial for the Malian economy, as well as, the sustenance of the population.
- Mali’s riches in natural resources, including oil and gold deposits are minimally exploited.
- Climate change can severely negate Mali’s economic growth.
- Political instability, corruption and lack of infrastructure diminish Mali’s economic and sociocultural development prospects.
Many natural resources are mined in Mali, including gold, phosphates, kaolin, salt, limestone, uranium, gypsum and granite. Mali is Africa’s third largest gold producer and gold represents 95 percent of the country’s mineral production. All mines are operated by foreign mining companies, resulting in an outflow of a large part of the profits. The potential of expanding the gold mining industry is significant, as only six out of 133 potentially gold rich areas have been properly mapped. Kimberlite pipes have also been located, some of them diamondiferous, but no large scale commercial extraction has occurred to date. Considerable deposits of bauxite, iron ore, manganese, tin, and copper are known to exist in the country but they are not mined because of lack of proper transportation infrastructure.

Oil could be one of the biggest drivers for future development of the Malian economy, as a part of the oil rich Taoudeni Basin is based in Mali’s north. Recently, the government started selling permits for some potentially oil-rich areas to foreign owned companies from Australia, Italy and the United Kingdom. The specific size of the oil fields nor the feasibility of extraction is not fully known at this time.

Gold mining has been an important part of the Malian economy, as has potential to grow further. Nonetheless, gold mining, has negative pollution effects on the environment. The high mercury usage in the gold mining process is considered one of the main causes of causing chronic and acute poisoning. In Mali, the gold mining sites are located in the southern part of the country where most of water resources are. This increases the danger, as mercury is most poisonous dissolved in water. This water will be used by farmers for irrigation, to drink by the people and all other purposes, thereby affecting all sectors of society.

Agriculture is important on a large economic scale, as well as on a small sustenance scale. The major crops are cotton, cereals – such as sorghum, millet and maize – and rice. Millet and sorghum are important for food security in the country as well as poverty reduction, while rice contributes more to a household’s income and national economic growth. Cotton is one of the major export products of the country. In 2013, raw cotton constituted 60 percent of the exports of the country, which illustrates the importance of agriculture for the country.

The Malian economy has potential to develop, mainly by using the country’s natural resources, as well as by investing in agriculture. As aforementioned, the country has untapped oil fields of unknown size, nor does the country fully use its gold deposits efficiently. The agriculture can be improved by using modern irrigation techniques, and by using more weather resistant crops. The problem with both agriculture, especially cotton, and with natural resources is the fluctuating commodity prices. If a gold crash occurs and the economy strongly relies on gold for a bulk of the GDP, then the economy crashes.
Therefore, the Malian economy may want to focus on a more diverse range of investments outside of natural resources. Investment in tourism and services, or exporting refined products made of the natural resources, could help boost the economy and make it more sustainable.

Climate change is a major concern for the economic situation in Mali, as it currently is highly dependent on cotton, a crop which is water intensive and has little resistance rapid weather change or drought. As the rainy season shortens due climate change and specially to rapidly changing weather patterns in the Sahel region, the productivity of the cotton production will sharply decrease, resulting in a lower yield.

The economy suffers from other problems besides climate change, pollution and commodity price fluctuation; namely corruption, lack of efficient infrastructure and political instability. Corruption is a serious obstacle in Mali’s socioeconomic development, as it ranks 35 out of 100 on the Corruption Perceptions Index, with 0 being highly corrupt and 100 being fully clean. Corruption is a common problem in the region and is proven hard to combat, as it has become ingrained in all levels of society. This causes a problem to attract foreign investment (FDI), and might also slow down international aid, resulting in slower economic growth, than ideally possible.

Lack of efficient infrastructure in Mali greatly hinders the economic development of the country, mainly because of transportation needed for a fully functioning economy. Air transport is developing slowly because of lack of paved runways and aviation safety. Existing railways and roads are not expanded, due to economic mismanagement by the government causing improvement to be delayed or cancelled. However, railway services have been upgraded qualitatively by employing younger, well trained personnel. Mali spends about 555 million dollars per year on infrastructure, of which around 200 million is lost to inefficiencies, mainly corruption. Besides transportation infrastructural problems also occur for energy, water and sanitation, which results in power outages, lack of running water, and high prices for power and water. The electricity networks are currently being expanded, however due to the high costs few people connect to the grid.

Mali faces political instability and ongoing conflict in, predominantly, the northern part of the country where a separatist movement, as well as jihadists, are trying to take control over the territory. The security situation created by this instability causes, not only FDI and international aid reduction, but also reduces the productivity of its own internal market and production. Disruption of production facilities, unrest around mines and abandoning of farms due to the security situation is very common, creating an unproductive and inefficient economy and labour force.
As long as the country stays politically unstable and corrupt, crucial infrastructure will stay underdeveloped, thus making economic development harder to sustain. However, if the commodity prices of cotton and gold go up, economy could recuperate. This short-term boost is possible to work as a catalyst for improvement of the economy, if the extra revenue is invested in infrastructure and diversification.
The West African nation of Mali is prevalently young with 47.44% of the population under the age of 15. Islam is the dominant religion with 94.8% of the population. The official language, French, is an inheritance from the colonial period. Nonetheless, languages such as Bambara are used as lingua franca. The social caste system is deteriorating as the younger generations prefer a more open and democratic society. Mali is highly dependent on international aid, accounting for one quarter of the national budget. Suffering from low education levels, the economy lacks the ability to provide supportive employment, resulting in out-migration. The average life expectancy increased slightly in the late twentieth century, reaching 49 years. However, the health care system needs a drastic investment increase. Today, from a social point of view, Mali is still a stable country.
Demographics of Mali

The current population estimate is 16,955,536 and has a growth rate of 2.98%. Islam is the dominant religion with 94.8% of population. 47.44% of the population is under the age of fifteen years old. In short, young Muslim people predominate, implying that the country has a valuable resource for a possible future development. Nonetheless, the religious and the young population aspects could be a problem in an unstable political situation. Young people tend to be more malleable and willing to join violent extremist organizations which will certainly destabilize Mali.

Nationality is based on ius sanguinis, which requires at least one parent to be a citizen of Mali. The official language is French, however there are more than thirteen national languages spoken across the state. French, as a colonial inheritance, is spoken by the educated elite and it is the dominant language of the administration, formal education, and the media. Although Bambara is the mother tongue of only 38% of the population, Bambaran influence in social and economic spheres has led to it being spoken by over 80% of the population and progressively becoming the lingua franca. The multiethnicty aspect should not be disregarded as it can become a destabilizing factor during an internal socio-economic crisis.

A caste system is prevalent within the society. The most influential thirty families are divided in five castes: nobles (Massalen), hunters (Tontadjon), clergy (Moro), slaves (Djo), and artisans (Nyanmakala). In the past, members of different groups had the obligation of endogamy. Today, mixed marriages are common as young people are less willing to accept the detrimental division of castes. A probable future disappearance of the caste system implies a stronger social cohesion.

Civil Society Organization

Foreign aid finances over one quarter of the state budget. The country receives aid from several multilateral donors as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, African Development Bank, Arab Funds, European Union and the United Nations. Additionally, Mali receives aid through a number of NGOs and bilateral aid partnerships. The blossoming of foreign and local NGOs in recent years is the result of the implementation of structural adjustments and the privatization of the economy. Until 1990, the state was the largest employer, but due to the unstable political situation, unemployment has returned to 30%. In response to this situation, NGOs have become a major provider of employment for the many educated yet unemployed Malians. The unstable socio-political situation within the country will require a constant international aid. Therefore, due to high dependency on the aforementioned support, the country is subject to the relative conditionality of aid programmes.
Social welfare

Mali, at least on paper, provides an extensive welfare system. Unfortunately, the actual realization of the welfare program is often significantly hampered by the state’s limited resources and the unstable political situation. Furthermore, many aspects of the social welfare system, even if it were fully operational, would affect only wage workers, who constitute a minority. Most Malians work in the informal sector and rely on alternative welfare strategies, such as the development of reliable social networks among friends and family. As only a minority of the population benefits from social welfare, civil unrest and division are likely to increase.

Education

Education is free and compulsory for the first nine years, although private schools, which draw their students from the better-off strata of the population, are expanding. However, scarce employment opportunities, especially in rural areas, demotivate from investing resources and time in formal schooling. As a result, only 38.7% of the total population is literate. Due to high poverty and lack of educational opportunities, the current migration rate is -2.33 migrant(s)/1,000 population. Therefore, international aid is paramount in order to improve the educational system. Also, the low literacy rate is negatively influencing young people, as they are excluded from civic engagement and labour market. Therefore, a large portion of the population is vulnerable to an environment of illegal activities through which they can provide a living for their families.

Health

Medical facilities are insufficient, under equipped, and mostly concentrated in urban areas, especially Bamako. Generally, patients need to provide nearly all supplies for their treatment. Given both the underfunding and corruption among underpaid and under trained personnel, patients must rely on their social network for financial help. Nonetheless, the child mortality rate decreases significantly in urban areas. Average life expectancy increased slightly in the late twentieth century, reaching 49 years (however, the increasing spread of AIDS in this region will have a dramatic social impact). The health system urges an improvement, but the high level of corruption is blocking a rapid and responsive development. Therefore, the country needs to rely on international aid.
Resources
Section 1

Resources

Political:

Military:
Economy and Infrastructure:


Social and Information:


MIGA. Available from: https://www.miga.org/who-we-are [Accessed on: April 24, 2016]


http://www.afric-impact.org/AllPDF/fiches_educatives/fiches_thematiques/02589.pdf [Accessed on: April 24, 2016]

