# Finabel

# Mali:
## crisis management and military logistics

**FINABEL**
European Army Interoperability Center

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# INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, military intervention has grown consecutively and emphasized the importance of decision-making regarding logistics for any successful intervention. One cannot help but notice the link between the good management of logistics and the action. However, decisions cannot be taken as simply as it seems; there are some factors appearing on the ground while revealing the fact that makes everything hard to predict. All those unexpected situations can be such dramatic that it leads to casualties. They are perceived as extreme and going beyond the pale, it is a necessity for any military intervention to have some kind of common knowledge of the ground and ways to proceed once deployed.

One of the common knowledge to be established is the way the crisis will be managed. The situation can be caused either by natural disaster, political conflicts or even by industrial incidents. Because every crisis leads to diversion from the common setting, it is important to implement a methodology that allows getting back to the situation that prevailed before the crisis.

Once that part defined, it is also important to underline what has to be understood under the notion of "military logistic". Specifically, logistic can be purely defined as "the science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces"[1]. Writers have found the origins of this concept in the military world. One can go back to Antoine Henri Jomini, who was Napoleon's General, who wrote about logistic as one of the pillars of the art of war[2]. Therefore, military logistic encompasses; design, development, acquisition, storage, distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and disposition of materiel; transport of personnel; acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities; acquisition or furnishing of services; medical and health service support[3].

The crisis that will occupy the main place of this study is that which is still taking place in Mali since 2012.

The work is divided into four parts; in the first part, it is a general presentation of the country; secondly, it was important to set the context for the crisis; thirdly, any study would not complete without a look at the protagonists; and finally, it is right to highlight a few lines of recommendations while insisting on the fact that the success of an operation depends, among other things, on good logistical management.

## 1. Mali – General Overview

The Republic of Mali is a landlocked country located in West Africa, with an area of approximately 1,248,000 km². Former French colony, it has gained its independence in 1960 and has retained French as an official language, as well as many aspects of French governance. « Its name derives from the great Malinké kingdom of Mali which flourished from the 13th to the 16th century on the upper and middle Niger River »[4].

### 1.1. Geography

*Administrative division*

The capital city of Mali is Bamako and with it, the largest cities are Sikasso, Kalabancoro, Koutiala, and Segou with a population from 130,630 to 1.8 million[5]. It was divided into eight regions and one capital district, which is Bamako. Each one of them is named after its capitals: Gao, Kayes, Kidal, Koulikoro, Mopti, Segou, Sikasso and Tombouctou (Timbuktu). However, in December 2011, two new regions were created under the ruling of Amadou Toumani Touré; on the northern part, Taoudéni that was part of Timbuktu region, and Ménaka that was previously part of Gao region[6]. The state council voted the creation of those regions right before the fall of President Amadou Toumani Touré. The idea was to conciliate the population and the administration[7].

[1] NATO, "Logistics", last updated January 27, 2017. http://www.nato.int/cps/cn/natohq/topics_61741.htm
[2] Paché, Gilles. "LOGISTIQUE, *gestion*", *Encyclopædia Universalis* [Online], accessed May 4, 2017. http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/logistique-gestion/
[3] NATO, "Logistics", last updated January 27, 2017. http://www.nato.int/cps/cn/natohq/topics_61741.htm

[4] Stamm, Adrea L. "Mali", *ABC-Clio*, 1998, p. 27
[5] "Biggest cities in Mali" last edited November 11, 2016, http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-biggest-cities-in-mali.html
[6] Yattara, Sadou A. "Ménaka et Taoudénit Régions?", *Malilink*, January 20, 2016, accessed May 22, 2017. http://malilink.net/2016/01/menaka-et-taoudenit-regions/
[7] "Mali Les Nouvelles regions sont prêtes à relever le défi", *RFI*, January 25, 2016, accessed May 22, 2017. http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20160125-mali-nouvelles-regions-taoudeni-menaka-pretes-relever-defis

MAP 1

*Surrounding countries*

Mali is the largest country in West Africa, twice the size of France, and is bordered by seven countries: Algeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Senegal, and Mauritania (see Map 1[8]).

## 1.2. Climate

As a large country, Mali is composed of various regions, each with different landscapes. The largest part is the northwestern region of the country, which extends into the Sahara Desert: this region is almost entirely composed of an arid desert or semi-desert zone where it is hot and dry and the temperatures reach almost 50°C but can easily drop down to 5°C during the night. The central region, also known as the Sahel, follows the Niger River's annual flood cycle, with high water between August and November and daytime temperatures between 23°C and 26°C. On the other hand, in the southwestern area, rainfall and rivers are plentiful, and this region is lusher than the rest of the country[9].

## 1.3. Population

Mali is divided along the bend of the river Niger between dark-skinned, sedentary tribes, and light-skinned Arab, Tuaregs, and Berbers. According to the World Bank, Mali counts 17 599 694 inhabitants and with a population growth of 3%[10]. The country defines itself as a secular country but is predominantly populated by Muslims with a percentage of 90%. Populations living in Mali encompasses various ethnic

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[8]  "Mali Map – Africa",
    http://www.geographicguide.com/africa-maps/mali.htm

[9]   "Mali: Climate and Agriculture",
     http://www.our-africa.org/mali/climate-agriculture
[10]  "Mali: General Presentation", last edited May 2017,
     https://en.portal.santandertrade.com/analyse-markets/
     mali/general-presentation

MAP 2[11]

groups, such as; Bambara (largest single segment of the population), Songhai, Mandinka, Senoufo, Fula, Tuaregs, Moors, Peul and Dogon (renowned for their artwork).

## 2. Situation on the ground

### 2.1. Coup

In March 2012, former President Amadou Toumani Touré was overthrown by mutineering soldiers who said they were acting in the response to the lack of government's action regarding the rebellion that was taking place in northern part of Mali by the Tuaregs[12]. The spokesman of the putschists appeared on national television proclaiming the fall of an incompetent government, the dissolution of all the institutions, the suspension of the Constitution and the establishment of a curfew[13].

Many of the rebels fought next to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi before its downfall. They, then, came back to Mali, armed with weapons and scored a number of victories; taking over towns and demoralizing the country's military.

This coup didn't have any impact on the rebellion. On the contrary, rebels seized more cities, including Tim-

buktu, and gained control over much of the northern part of the country. The following days, the rebels said that they had seceded from Mali and created an independent State under the name of **Azawad**.

In April 2012, Dioncounda Traoré was sworn in as an interim President after the agreement between the Economic Community of West African State and the Malian army. Days later, members of the opposition were arrested, which suggested the junta was still clinging power[14].

### 2.2. Expansion of Islamist militants and 2015 Alger Accords

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar al-Din seized the advantage of the instability in the country to gain more and more power. Those two groups made an alliance with the Tuaregs rebels, but severed ties and declared the northern part of the country an Islamic state, by implementing a brutal Islamic Law[15].

The obvious expansion of Islamist rebels rose concerns around the idea that they might gather in the northern part of Mali while threatening large swaths of Africa. Despite several attempts to regain control of the North by the government, the militants had

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[11]  "Mali's 2 Climate Zones", last edited January 24, 2017, https://blog.climatelist.com/malis-2-climate-zones-7ea727367a49

[12]  Oberlé, Thierry. "Mali: le président renversé par un coup d'État militaire", *Le Figaro*, March 22, 2012, accessed May 29, 2017. http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2012/03/22/01003-20120322ARTFIG00511-mali-le-president-renverse-par-un-coup-d-etat-militaire.php

[13]  Ibidem

[14]  "Au Mali, Dioncounda Traoré est investi président de la transition", *Le Monde*, April 12, 2012, accessed May 29, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2012/04/12/au-mali-dioncounda-traore-est-investi-president-de-la-transition_1684481_3212.html#6t2IaBFd2B8DgDOi.99

[15]  The Associate Press. "Mali: Rebels to Impose Islamic Law", *The New York Times*, April 4, 2012, accessed June 6, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/05/world/africa/mali-rebels-to-impose-islamic-law.html

pushed into the area controlled by the regime[16]. In 2013, France sends 1,200 troops to push the militants back in the North. By the end of 2013, thanks to France's intervention, the militants were out of Gao and Timbuktu[17]. Soldiers from other African country were deployed to Mali to help in the effort and will take a more active role in both combat and training Malian troops once France withdraws from Mali[18].

Little by little, the Islamic militants expanded their influence in the neighboring countries, for instance by taking a dozen of hostages. Through the kidnapping of Westerns, the militants received around €2.5 million of ransom money for each hostage[19].

By June 2013, a ceasefire was signed between the Tuaregs and the Malian government, agreeing to cede the control of Kidal in the North[20]. The peace deal set the stage for presidential elections and the first round of the election was held in July 2013[21]. For some, the elections would have taken an end to the instability. On the other hand, for others, the elected President would lack legitimacy as he was elected after Mali went through a year of turmoil[22].

However, the elections did not change anything for the situation in the north; it remained a rebel stronghold and a tinderbox. In 2014, negotiations were launched aiming at reaching a peace accord between the government and the Islamist groups[23]. A peace deal was signed one year later between the Malian

authorities, several militias and rebel fractions[24]. The gathering took place in Alger in 2015 between Malian government's delegation and six armed groups. The goal was to put an end to hostilities by reaching a global peace agreement and, hence the cessation of fighting[25]. Ever since initiatives were taken as part of objectives that aimed at easing tensions; initiatives such as joint patrol with Malian soldiers and armed groups including Tuareg separatists[26].

## 3. Actors

### 3.1. External actors

#### 3.1.1. France

Since its independence, Mali enjoys a close relationship with France. Recently, the friendship has been strengthened mostly through bilateral visits[27]. With such relationship and as it still has economic interests in Mali; France was the first Western country to send troops.

##### 3.1.1.1. Serval

*The Operation*

The Serval Operation was launched on January 11, 2013, at the request of the Malian President Diocounda Traoré. The goal was to fight against terrorism, secure the country which is populated by thousands of French people and prevent Islamist groups from increasing their influence on Mali. Since then, the Serval Operation is completed and was considered as a success for the former French President François Hollande[28]. This Operation is considered as impor-

16  Tran, Marc. "Mali: a guide to the conflict", *The Guardian*, January 16, 2013, accessed May 22, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/16/mali-guide-to-the-conflict
17  Ibidem
18  "Mali conflict: France boots troop numbers", *BBC NEWS*, January 17, 2013, accessed May 29, 2017. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21054946
19  Tran, Marc. "Mali: a guide to the conflict", *The Guardian*, January 16, 2013, accessed May 22, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/16/mali-guide-to-the-conflict
20  Hirsch, Afua. "Mali signs controversial ceasefire deal with Tuareg separatist insurgents", *The Guardian*, June 19, 2013, accessed June 6 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/19/mali-peace-deal-tuareg-insurgents-aid
21  Nossiter, Adam, and Tinti, Peter. "Mali Holds Elections After Year Turmoil", *The New York Times*, July 28, 2013, accessed June 6, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/29/world/africa/mali-holds-elections-after-year-of-turmoil.html
22  Ibidem
23  "Mali, Chronologie temporaire", *Encyclopaedia Universalis* http://www.universalis.fr/chronologie/mali/

24  "Mali: Profile – Timeline", *BBC News* http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13881978
25  Remy, Jean-Philippe. "Le gouvernement et six groupes armés s'engagent à mettre fin aux hostilités au Mali", *Le Monde*, February 20, 2015, accessed June 15, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2015/02/20/le-gouvernement-et-six-groupes-armes-s-engagent-a-mettre-fin-aux-hostilites-au-mali_4580520_3212.html
26  Ag Anara, Souleymane. "Mali soldiers, armed groups hold first joint patrol in northern town", *Reuters*, February 23, 2017, accessed June 15, 2017. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-security-idUSKBN1621L6
27  "France and Mali", last edited September 23, 2016. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/mali/france-and-mali/
28  "Au Mali, l'opération 'Serval est 'de fait terminée'", *Le Monde*, July 15, 2014, accessed June 16, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2014/07/13/l-operation-serval-remplacee-par-une-operation-antiterroriste_4456261_3212.html#OH1k5X35Wqz4LoBB.99

tant because it has marked the beginning of the war against terrorism in the region.

France deployed no more than 8 combined armed Brigades, C2 structure for joint task force engagement and training[29]. The deployment was possible thanks to the Guepard alert System; a system of readiness that makes the troops available, ready to be deployed anywhere within 9 days[30]. In addition to this system, France has "short chain of command and a network of French bases in Africa"[31]; in Dakar, Abidjan and N'Djamena.

### Logistical support

The logistic deployed under the Operation Serval was composed of; "6 Rafale combat air crafts, 6 Mirage 2000D, 5 refueling planes and 2 reconnaissance F1-CRs, as well as 15 combat helicopters"[32]. However, France also received foreign logistic support from[33];

- **United-Kingdom** has sent two transport planes C-17 for dispatch missions from France, and surveillance apparel. However, according to the Guardian, UK's Special Forces were also sent in Mali.
- **United-States** has agreed to send support American airplanes. The US also provided Intelligence and a C-17 that was supposed to help African Countries' Forces to travel to Mali.
- **Germany** provided two C-160s for sanitary cargo as well as an Airbus A-310.
- **Belgium** sent two C-130s and a medical evacuation capacity (two helicopters Agusta 109 medical).
- **Spain** provided a C-130 for transport missions
- **Canada** provided a C-17 for inter-theater transport missions.
- **United Arab Emirates** provided two C-17.

### 3.1.1.2. Barkhane

### The Operation

Operation Serval was replaced by Operation Barkhane on August 1st, 2014, a wider counter-terrorism operation. To put in few words, as former French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said, "[t]he aim is to prevent what I call the highway of all forms of traffics to become a place of permanent passage, where jihadist groups between Libya and the Atlantic Ocean can re-build themselves, which would lead to serious consequences for our security"[34].

It rests on the idea of partnership between countries of the Sahel region[35] and the appropriation by those countries of the fight against Terrorist Armed Groups. It is integrated into a global approach of political, security and development, while bringing the military aspect[36]. The base of the operation is located in the Chadian capital N'Djamena but the activity span across several Sahelian countries[37]. French troops are backed by armed forces of neighboring countries such as Mauritania and Burkina Faso.

More than 4,000 soldiers, 5 drones, 8 fighter aircraft, 17 helicopters, 6 to 10 strategical and tactical transport aircraft, 300 support vehicles and 300 armored vehicles were deployed around focal points or temporary advanced bases[38].

### 3.1.2. The EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali)

EUTM Mali is part of the European Sahel Strategy that was drafted under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) by the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission and the

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[29] FINABEL's Internal Report; "Operation Serval: unclassified"

[30] Lt. Gen Tramond, Olivier and Lt. Col. Seigneur Philippe. "Operation Serval: another Beau geste of France in Sub-Sahara Africa?", *Military Review*, November-December 2014, pg 79, accessed June 20, 2017. http://usacac. army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/ MilitaryReview_20141231_art014.pdf

[31] Ibidem

[32] "Qui participe à l'opération Serval au Mali ?", *Le Monde*, January 29, 2013, accessed June 6, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/01/29/ qui-participe-a-l-operation-serval-au-mali_1824111_ 3212.html#16qtmSizQLiCOVdH.99

[33] Ibidem

[34] Bacchi, Umberto. "France Launches New Sahel Counter-Terrorism Operation Barkhan", *International Bussiness Times*, July 14, 2014, accessed June 16, 2017. http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/france-launches-new-sahel-counter-terrorism-operation-barkhane-1456646

[35] "Operation Barkhane", *Ministère des armées*, last edited May 5, 2014, http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/ operations/sahel/dossier-de-presentation-de-l-operation-barkhane/operation-barkhane

[36] Ibidem

[37] Bacchi, Umberto. *Op cit.*

[38] "Dossier de Presse – Opération Barkhane", *Ministère des armées*, May 2017, pg 11

EU Council[39]. The CSDP enables the EU to take the lead "in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security"[40], and integrates the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management.

The training mission was launched on 18 February 2013 at the request of the Malian governments and following international decisions on the subject. Twenty-five countries, including twenty-two EU member states, are providing military personnel[41].

Under the mission, the EU aims at supporting Malian authorities to;

"(a) Fully restore constitutional and democratic order through the implementation of the roadmap adopted on 29 January by the National Assembly;

(b) Help the Malian authorities to exercise fully their sovereignty over the whole of the country;

(c) Neutralize organized crime and terrorist threats."[42]

In March 2016, the training mission was granted a third mandate by the Council of the European Union, which will last until May 2018. With the mandate, the mission will bring to the fore-leader education, and the provision of operational advice[43].

### 3.1.3. MINUSMA – United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali

Also known as the United Nations Multidimensional

Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the mission was established by Security Council resolution 2100 of April 25, 2013. The mission's goal is to bring support to "the political process and carry out a number of security-related stabilization tasks, with a focus on major population centres and lines of communication, protecting civilians, human rights monitoring, the creation of conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced persons, the extension of State authority and the preparation of free, inclusive and peaceful elections"[44].

And in order to fulfill the mandate, the mission is entitled to use everything that is necessary to address threats to the mandate's implementation; including, for instance, the protection of civilians and the United Nations personnel from threats of physical violence. However, a priority was put on Northern part of Mali as the majority of the military, police and civilian substantive and support component operate from there[45].

## 3.2. Non-State Armed Groups

The presence of non-stated armed groups has made the prospect of achieving peace in northern Mali nearly impossible and weakened the central government. The prospect is also complicated by the fact that each armed group varies in purpose, ideology, and ethnic composition. Most of those actors were present at the 2015 Alger Accords and agreed to join either the Rebel/separatist Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) or the pro-government Platform Coalition. Nevertheless, those who devoted to jihad, groups such as AQIM and Ansar al-Din, were not included in the negotiations.

According to the Jamestown's guide[46], the armed groups can be divided into five types of movements; pro-government militias (the Platform); pro-independence or pro-federalism groups (Coordination des Mouvement de l'Azawad – CMA); dissident CMA groups that left the coalition; Salafi-Jihadist groups; and, ethnically-oriented groups.

39  Pirozzi, Nicoletta. "The EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management". *The Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)*, June 2013, accessed June 20, 2017, http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/The-EU-s-Comprehensive-Approach-to-Crisis-Management

40  "Security and Defence: CSDP" *European External Action Service*, May 3, 2017, accessed June 20, 2017, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/431/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp_en

41  "Common Security and Defence Policy, EU training mission in Mali", *European External Action Service*, December 2015, accessed June 21, 2017, http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eutm-mali/pdf/2015-december-factsheet_eutm_mali_en.pdf

42  Ibidem.

43  "Common Security and Defence Policy; EU Training Mission in Mali", *European Union External Action Service* last edited July 2016, accessed June 21, 2017. http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/csdp/missions-and-operations/eutm-mali/pdf/factsheet_eutm_mali_en.pdf

44  "MINUSMA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, accessed June 22, 2017. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusma/background.shtml

45  Ibid.

46  McGregor, Andrew "Anarchy in Azawad: A Guide to Non-State Armed Groups In Northern Mali", *The Jamestown Foundation* Vol 15:2 January 31, 2017, accessed June 22, 2017. https://jamestown.org/program/anarchy-azawad-guide-non-state-armed-groups-northern-mali/

### 3.2.1. The Platform Coalition

The Platform was formed in 2014 is rather pro-government and national unity movement, and is composed of several groups;

*1) Coordination des mouvements et fronts patriotiques de résistance – Platform (CMFPR I)*

Established in 2012, it is composed of several self-defense movements from the Songhaï and Fulani/Peul communities in the Gao and Mopti regions. Once the formal leader Harouna Toureh rallied to the Malian government, the movement has been split into two sub-groups; pro- and anti-government (CMFPR II).

*2) Groupe d'autodéfense des Touareg Imghads et allies (GATIA)*

The movement was established in August 2014 and is composed of a majority of Vassal Imghads Tuareg opposing the 'noble' Kel Ifoghas Tuareg of Kidal. Most of its constituents are veterans of the Malian and Libyan armies.

Non-signatory actor of the Alger Accords, it is, however, an important and powerful group in the Platform Coalition despite criticisms.

*3) The Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad – Bamako (MAA-B)*

Known for their prominent role in drug trafficking in northern Mali, it is based in Gao and is dominated by members of the Lamhar clan. It is an Arab group whose members are former members of the jihadist MUJAO group.

*4) The Mouvement pour la défense de la Patrie (MDP)*

Led by Hama Founé Diallo who is a former member of the rebel Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), the Fulani militia joined the peace process in June 2016 by allying itself with the Platform. The leader's goal is to teach the Funali to use arms in a defense purpose rather than a jihadist one.

*5) The Mouvement pour le Salut de l'Azawad (MSA)*

Founded by the former MNLA member Moussa Ag Acharatoumane, the chief of the Daoussak Tuareg and

Colonel Assalat Ag Habi, it separated from MNLA in September 2016 and joined the Platform after being informed that they could not remain inside the CMA. The movement is mostly centered in Ménaka in the Gao region.

### 3.2.2. "Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad" (CMA)

The CMA was launched in 2014 but has ever since lost a lot of its members.

*1) Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA)*

Founded by the fusion of the Haut Conseil de l'Azawad and the Mouvement Islamique de l'Azawad, it is led by Algabass Ag Intallah who also leads the CMA. Although it has absorbed former members of Ansar al-Din, it is suspected as keeping ties with Ansar al-Din.

*2) Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad – Dissident (MAA-D)*

It is a breakaway group and mainly consists of Bérabiche Arabs from the Timbuktu region, whose many of them are deserters of the Malian army. The movement joined the CMA in June 2014.

*3) Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad (MNLA)*

Founded in October 2010, it has played an important role in 2012 rebellion until it was sidelined by Ansar al-Din, a more powerful Islamist group. MNLA is the group that suffered the most in the "assassination war" between CMA and armed Islamist groups. Even if it is composed of deserters, the movement has performed poorly on the battlefield.

### 3.2.3. CMA Dissident Groups

The groups are composed of former members of CMA, who perceived the alliance as promoting violence rather than reconciliation.

*1) Coalition pour le Peuple de l'Azawad (CPA)*

The coalition was created in March 2014 after the split in the MNLA and was first weakened by the rivalry. Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh, the former head of external relation for the MNLA, now leads it. Seek-

ing federalism rather than independence, it claims ties with the Arab, Songhaï and Peul/Fulani communities.

## 2) Coordination des mouvements et front patriotiques de résistance (CMFPR-II)

Rebel-aligned faction of the CMFPR and led by Ibrahim Abba Kantao, it joined the CMA in June 2014 in order to take part of the negotiations. In December 2014, the leader decides to ally with the Tuareg-dominated MNLA but the gesture shocked many members of the CMFPR as many perceived the Tuareg clans as rivals for authority.

### 3.2.4. Salafi-Jihadist Groups

## 1) Alliance National pour la Sauvegarde de l'Identité Peule et la Restauration de la Justice (ANSIPRJ)

Formed in June 2016, its leader, Oumar al Janah, describes the movement as being animated by a desire to defend with arms the rights of Fulani/Peul community, rather than jihadist or separatist ideology. However, the movement remains linked to Ansar al-Din as it claimed to participate in an attack on a Malian military base in July 2016, which made 17 dead soldiers and left the base in flames.

## 2) Ansar al-Din

The group's leader is Iyad Ag Ghali and apart from being a rebel and a jihadist, he is a noted military leader. Ansar al-Din's creation results from a mix of Tuareg, Arab and Fulani members. It is also known for carrying regular attacks on French military or MINUSMA bases in northern Mali. Seen as "an enemy of peace", Ag Ghali is one the targets of the Operation Barkhane.

## 3) Ansar al-Din Sud, aka Katiba Khalid Ibn Walid

It is a sub-group whose leader, Souleymane Keïta, was arrested in March 2016 by the Malian Secret Services. Nevertheless, the group is known since June 2015 with operations near the border with Ivory Coast and terrorist operations in central Mali.

## 4) Front de Libération du Macina (FLM)

Led by the Salafi preacher Hamadoun Koufa and based in the Mopti region, it is a largely Fulani jihadist movement. In May 2016, FLM first allied with Ansar al-Din before splitting for diverging agendas and racial tensions. On July 2016, an attack on Malian military barracks, later claimed by FLM, was perpetrated in Nampala and made 17 deaths and around 30 wounded soldiers.

## 5) Islamic State – Sahara/Sahel

The foothold of the Islamic State in northern Mali was made possible by the arrival of IS fighter and commanders after the Libyan conflict. Known now as the IS' Sahara battalion, it was formed in May 2015 after Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi pledged allegiance to IS, even though it was recognized by IS in October 2016.

More recently and according to reports, FLM's member, Hamadoun Koufa, was spotted negotiating the creation of a new Fulani caliphate in the Sahel, which is perceived as a betrayal of its sponsor Ansar al-Din.

## 6) Mouvement pour l'Unité et Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO)

In 2013, the Operation Serval shattered the movement but it appears that some former members are still operating in Niger. It broke into two sections; one movement joined al-Murabitun and the other drifted into various ethnic-based militias.

## 7) Al-Murabitun

Formed in 2013, it is an AQMI breakaway movement made by a fusion of MUJAO former members and the Katiba al-Mulathameen of Mokhtar Belmokhtar. However, it has rejoined AQIM in 2015. Since then it was held accountable for the car-bomb attack in Gao of January 2017 that killed 77 members of the Malian army and CMA groups.

It is dominantly composed of Arabs and Tuaregs but Fulani and Songhaï can be found among al-Murabitun' fighters.

## 8) Al-Qa'ida fi bilad al-Maghrib al-Islami (AQIM)

As it has absorbed the Mokhtar Belmokhtar-led al-Murabitun, AQIM became more important and has since claimed several attacks in order re-affirm its presence while its status as preeminent Islamist militant group is being challenged by IS. AQIM is mostly active in the Timbuktu region and the Sahel branch is led by the Algerian Yahya al-Houmam (aka Djamel Okacha).

AQIM is composed of four sub-commands, varying in strength:

- **Katiba al-Ansar**: was led by Hamada Ag Hama before he was killed in a French operation in 2015, a relative of Iyad Ag Ghali (Ansar al-Din's leader). It operates mostly in Tessalit in northern Mali.
- **Katiba al-Furqan**: it is based in the Timbuktu region and is now led by Mohamed Lemine Ould al-Hassan since 2013.
- **Katiba Tarik Ibn Zaïd**: led by Algerian Saïd Abu Moughati since September 2013.
- **Katiba Yusuf Ibn Tachfin**: operating mostly in the mountainous Adrar Tigharghar region of Kidal. It was formed in November 2012 and is led by Abd al-Krim al-Kidali (aka Sidan Ag Hitta), a former Katiba al-Ansar member and a deserter from the Malian National Guard.

### 3.2.5. Ethnically Oriented Groups

*1) Congrès pour la Justice dans l'Azawad (CJA)*

Mostly composed of Tuaregs, the Congress has been weakened by leadership rivalries. In December 2016, former leader Hama Ag Mahmoud was released but has retained a lot of support among CJA members, as they were unhappy with the change of leadership. Nevertheless, since October 2016, the Congress has declared its alliance with the MSA, the CPA, and the CMFPR-II.

*2) Forces de Libération du Nord du Mali (FLN)*

Created in 2012 from Fulani/Peul and Songhaï militias, the group is an official ally of CMFPR-II and is opposed to the return of Malian army in northern Mali.

*3) Mouvement Populaire pour le Salut de l'Azawad (MPSA)*

Formed as a consequence of a split in the MAA, the main goal was first to distance the movement from the influence of AQIM, and secondly to claim self-determination for northern Mali despite the group's lack of influence.

*4) Mouvement pour la Justice et la Liberté (MJL)*

The creation, in September 2016 by former Arab members of the MAA in the Timbuktu region, is the result of the movement's desire to no longer support 'unjustified war adventures' of the CMA coalition. Led by Sidi Mohamed Ould Mohamed, it grew closer to the Platform as the leader was seeking the Alger Accords' implementation.

## 4. Recommendations

As any successful military intervention is linked to the good management of logistic, decisions must be taken with full knowledge of the situation and the environment. In the case of Mali, this part will be useful for future interventions either in the country or the area of Mali. The idea behind the guidelines is to settle some common ground based on the facts presented above.

One has to keep in mind that every operation that is led abroad is characterized by great distance, long lines of communications, difficult terrain, hostile climate, scarcity of basic facilities and limited host nation support. That is why it is even more important to retain challenging scenarios that may have a considerable impact on the logistic effort necessary to sustain the force and to enable it to operate effectively.

For that purpose, the recommendations will be presented according to different levels; first of all, there will be an emphasize made on the knowledge of the national and international environment of the conflict; secondly, there will be a focus on the decision-making and the mandated level of the intervention; and finally, it is important to have a look at what can be done regarding the military materials once the intervention is over.

### 4.1. Environment

What needs to be put forward, in this part, is the change in the nature of the crisis that has been seen in recent years. One used to think crises as having only potential domino effects but the reality shows that everything had changed, if not worsened[47]. Indeed, in today's globalized world, one cannot help but think in terms of interdependence, and how interdependence between activities has made the world more vulnerable; while exacerbating the domino effect. That is why, two consequences of this interdependence have emerged; first, there is a change that occurred in the ways to respond to the crisis; and secondly, those effects have created a shift from conventional conflict where the conflict is less localized and less militarized.

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[47]  Lagadec, Patrick "Gestion de crise : nouvelle donne", *Sécurité et stratégie* 2012/3 (10), p. 51

### 4.1.1. Change in the ways to respond to the crisis

The fact that we are all connected, through social media, has an impact on how the crisis is going to be managed. On one hand, this connectivity imposes an instantaneity principle that goes beyond the speed vector; there is this common understanding that the crisis should be handled "now" otherwise it will be too late.

What played an important role in for the case study was the fact that the President himself underlined the urgent need of an external armed intervention as the situation in northern Mali was getting out of hand. However, the threat of Islamist movements, the growing amount of displaced people and, the loss of control by the government over northern Mali and its failure to take actions, are factors to be also put into considerations.

And on the other hand, what used to be on the very basis of every stable society, is now a factor of instability[48]: meaning that every component can, in one way or another, worsen the situation. Indeed, one cannot help but recall the attempt by the Malian army to regain control that led the rebels to strike back. Cautions must be taken because the image of the "white savior" is more and more questioned, and can be used as an alibi for non-state armed groups to act against the intervention. Therefore, that perceptive taken into account, any intervention can either become a detonator to a crisis that is taking place in an already unstable environment or, in few cases, lead to stability.

### 4.1.2. Shifts from conventional conflicts[49]

Ever since the end of Cold War, the world has seen changes in the way the crisis is conducted. The conflict got less territorialized, less public and more virtual; characterized by cyber-warfare, fail of the state to sustain physical control over its territory, a multiplicity of types of fighting groups (both state and non-state, public and private, or some kind of mixture), violence directed against civilians, use of terror as a tactic, use of non-conventional weapons (such as nuclear, chemical, biological, or radiological), and so on. All these aspects constrain the ability of the states to intervene immediately and at relatively low cost.

One can surely recognize the significant amount of non-state armed groups – each one different from the other – and the growing threat of violence towards civilians. That being so, there is the assurance over the fact that the rebels did not use non-conventional weapons; it can mostly be explained by the lack of financial support. No one should ignore such possibility as some groups are involved in activities such as drug trafficking or kidnapping, which generate a substantial amount of money. In such scenario, one has to be prepared for any eventuality as the today's world taught us to expect the unexpected.

### 4.1.3. Lines of recommendations

That is why, according to Patrick Lagadec, these following recommendations are important in order to succeed the process of a crisis management:

- The upholding of excellence is a crucial point to keep in mind because every swerve can lead to irreversible effects.
- At the same time, every organization has to work on the leadership part regarding crisis management; one must integrate the fact that crisis mutates and it has to be taken into account for the practical operations.

However, it should not be forgotten that Mali is a country plagued by political conflicts since its independence. As a result, the question that needs to be addressed is the impact of an intervention on the return of democracy, order and social peace in the country.

### 4.2. Decision-making level

Nowadays, military logistic has been under financial pressure since the growing of external intervention and fostered countries in their logistic. Logistics can be understood as the activity aiming, for instance, at providing, at the right moment, quality of life, combat and displacing support. Throughout history, we have seen countries putting in place tremendous forces and materials in case of external intervention.

We can take the example of Pearl Harbor; in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United-States deployed no more than 836 000 ton of materials. This shows how power projection for countries is. Indeed, in some cases, the countries have to adapt to the environment and establish urgently an important and strong organization in order to pipe the deployed material.

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[48] Ibidem
[49] Kaldor, Mary. New and Old wars, *Stanford University Press*, 2007, pp 95-118

Traditionally, there is one distinction when military logistic is concerned; on one hand there is, an upstream perspective which is everything that happens and put in place before any intervention; and on the other hand, a downstream perspective which is linked to every conducted operation from departure to withdrawal.

## 4.2.1. Upstream

The upstream perspective is under the direction of the operational Military Staff which objectives is to define inter alia the mission's goal, the needs to be deployed, the deadlines and so on… However, the definition of the mandate is left to the political authorities and the latter will frame the operational Military Staff's decisions. At this point, it seems important to have a clear mandate and have structures in which decisions can be taken as quickly and efficiently as possible. That is why theses aspects need to be dealt with for the smooth running of operations.

### 4.2.1.1. Mandate

Even though mandates can vary according to the situation and the crisis, there are general understandings on what it is required to do[50]; amongst other, to prevent any outbreak or spillover of the conflict and/or, stabilize in order to create an environment that will help to reach a lasting peace. In the case of Mali, it is required for any mandate to integrate aspects such as clarity, secrecy and the creation of a structure to relocate any captured persons as part of any military intervention.

One can look at the Operation Serval as an example of a quick and efficient intervention. Clarity was not the only factor that has led to the success of Serval; the fact that France had permanent bases in Africa also contributed to the rapid deployment. The idea to defend the importance of clarity when the military intervention mandate is concerned lies behind the fact the less clear the mandate will be, the more the intervention will last, and consequently, the more costly it would be. Looking at the unstable situation in Mali and in the surrounding countries, it is important to take precautions and thus establish a clear mandate in order to avoid being involved in a never-ending and costly conflict.

On the other hand, there must be some secrecy in regards to the mandate; meaning that operations must be led without public knowledge to prevent any losses in terms of human lives or materials. Moreover, secrecy provides greater flexibility to deploy troops on safe grounds and act without notice against the enemy.

In addition to clarity and secrecy, one has to think about the case when opponents are captured and made prisoners. This question was first raised in 2013 when French troop captured several jihadist fighters[51]; mostly because those captured are terrorist and thus, the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War does not govern their transfer. At that time, an agreement was found with Malian government; the fighters were first taken in charge under French Criminal Law – and when required, under Malian Criminal Law[52] – by the policeman accompanying the military, and then all the French fighters captured would be delivered to France, while all the other, including fighters from Mauritania and Libya, would be delivered to Malian authorities.

In order to avoid administrative paper, this case must be included in the mandate; meaning that the mandate must create a structure in which those people will be held while waiting for proper judgment. It is even more important when one takes into consideration the fact that those terrorists when well positioned in the rebellious movements, can be significant actor towards long lasting peace in the country.

### 4.2.1.2. Crisis Management Process

The concept of "crisis management" has long flowed within private and public organizations. The primary purpose is to define the best practices that will be used as guidelines in case of crisis; in doing so, the decision-maker is making sure that everything was ready at the right moment to prevent any unexpected event[53].

Nevertheless, the amount of crisis is constantly growing and every crisis management operation depends

[50] "Mandate and Legal basis for peacekeeping", *The United Nations Peacekeeping,* accessed June 23, 2017. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/pkmandates.shtml

[51] Guibert, Nathalie. "Guerre au Mali : que faire des prisonniers djihadistes ?", *Le Monde*, March 8, 2013, accessed June 25, 2017. http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/03/08/guerre-au-mali-que-faire-des-prisonniers-djihadistes_1845394_3212.html

[52] "Mali: que vont devenir les prisionniers", *Europe1*, March 8, 2013, accessed June 25, 2017. http://www.europe1.fr/international/mali-que-vont-devenir-les-prisonniers-1440381

[53] Lagadec, Patrick. "Gestion de crise : nouvelle donne", *Sécurité et stratégie* 2012/3 (10), p. 50

on the nature of the conflict; which explains why the response should remain proportionate. The need here is to keep in mind that every crisis can be surprising and thus decision-makers have to make sure that crisis management procedures are updated and operative.

For that purpose, FINABEL's member states should focus on the creation of an informal commanding forum in which decisions can be taken in case of emergency; with regards to the best ways to reach interoperability on the ground. This is not only valid in the case of Mali but can also apply in other emerging conflicts. The idea is to work in collaboration with experts such as logistic experts and field experts whom they can help establish a general strategy.

### 4.2.2. Downstream

The downstream perspective brings a focus on withdrawal and possible developments in military logistics as a result of the intervention. This part will highlight what can be put in place once the conflict is contained or that the country has regained its stability.

### 4.2.2.1. Withdrawal

Withdrawal occurs for various reasons such as to prevent weakness, create time to observe, recover and plan, or delay the battle to a more favorable time. It takes several shapes, from tactical withdrawal to the chaotic and disorderly retreat of forces from the battlefield. The aspect of the military withdrawal that will occupy this part concerns the influence of the withdrawal on military logistics. In fact, this aspect is often left out when one looks or plans the intervention.

That is why, it is important to look at the "after intervention" aspect in terms of materials; meaning what use can be done with all the deployed material once the retreat is official. In addition to the training mission, there must be an opportunity to consider making this equipment available to local forces, since the deployed equipment is often specifically adapted to the region.

Besides, the costs of removing these materials should not be forgotten. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the creation of a cell studying the possibility and organization of these materials towards the local forces. Because one must not forget, especially in the case of Mali and the Sahel region, that there are several forces in action and these materials might fall into the wrong hands.

### 4.2.2.1. Logistic revolution

Armed forces from developed countries had adjusted to the new condition of intervention. They ought to change their ways of carrying equipment and their staff. Besides this, a revolution in logistics is even more necessary because logistics is a key element in any war, and therefore progress in this area is motivated by the need to provide adapted equipment during any operations. One of the major development happened, among others, on the level of logistic doctrine, on the increase of goods circulation and on the development of support logistic to civilians through civilian-military actions. Similarly, research in the field has also been guided by technological innovations, changes in the conduct of war, lessons learned at the end of a mission, and the ever-increasing role of the military.

The Americans with the collaboration of the civilian sector mostly brought the revolution in the field of logistic doctrine. The US Department of Defense launched several experiments in the fields of logistic. A group of 100 logistic experts was sent to Iraq to solve the problems of delivery of furniture to managers. The system that was put in place gave a positive strategic outcome but difficulties appeared at the level of unloading. Another example is the case of the French army sending their logisticians to University, which shows how military logistic slowly got influence by civilian methods.

Indeed, it seems important to insist that this issue does not only concern Mali but all future conflicts that will require intervention. One must not forget the predominant role of the budget in logistics; the army is experiencing budget cuts, in the form of reduced logistics equipment and personnel. These are factors at stake in maintaining the advantage over the enemy. As a result, a solution that can be envisaged is to draw inspiration from the civil organization in terms of logistical management to rehabilitate the functioning of military logistics; drawing inspiration from the idea of "doing more with less".

# CONCLUSION

In the wake of instability since 2012, the conflict in Mali seems to be dragging on because of the number of actors involved and their interests equally different from each other. All the evidence suggests that the conflict is far from being resolved, or even stabilized. The perennial nature of the conflict demonstrates, among other things, that the country has for a long time been weakened by many years of conflict, the austerity policies of the IMF, its position as part of the colonial territory of France in Africa and the many droughts. All the documents explaining the degradation, even the collapse of the country, were already in place before the outbreak in 2012.

Interest in Mali lies in the idea that the subject concerns many Finabel Member States as they take part directly or indirectly in the different missions that take place in the country. On one hand, the problem of Mali is an important issue whose consideration is essential in resolving the crisis or even towards a lasting peace within the country. And on the other hand, the Malian conflict occupies an important part and constitutes a considerable stake in stability for Africa but mainly for the Sahara-Sahel region. The aim is, therefore, to identify and define Mali, and the Sahara-Sahel more generally, as a priority area for action, and therefore only the awareness of risks and threats will allow better prevention in the future.

Similarly, addressing the concept of military logistics in a country like Mali provides a basis for further in-depth discussions on the subject. Given the current events, both in Mali and elsewhere in the world, and the importance of logistics within the armed forces, the aim of this study was to push both researches into conflict management and the efficient use of military logistics. However, it should be made clear that this is the author's point of view and that it is, therefore, the responsibility of the author; far from being wholly objective, the study reflects a particular opinion which essentially aims at opening the debate.

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Created in 1953, the Finabel committee is the oldest military organisation for cooperation between European Armies: it was conceived as a forum for reflections, exchange studies, and proposals on common interest topics for the future of its members. Finabel, the only organisation at this level, strives at:

- Promoting interoperability and cooperation of armies, while seeking to bring together concepts, doctrines and procedures;
- Contributing to a common European understanding of land defence issues. Finabel focuses on doctrines, trainings, and the joint environment.

Finabel aims to be a multinational-, independent-, and apolitical actor for the European Armies of the EU Member States. The Finabel informal forum is based on consensus and equality of member states. Finabel favours fruitful contact among member states' officers and Chiefs of Staff in a spirit of open and mutual understanding via annual meetings.

Finabel contributes to reinforce interoperability among its member states in the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the EU, and ad hoc coalition; Finabel neither competes nor duplicates NATO or EU military structures but contributes to these organisations in its unique way. Initially focused on cooperation in armament's programmes, Finabel quickly shifted to the harmonisation of land doctrines. Consequently, before hoping to reach a shared capability approach and common equipment, a shared vision of force-engagement on the terrain should be obtained.

In the current setting, Finabel allows its member states to form Expert Task Groups for situations that require short-term solutions. In addition, Finabel is also a think tank that elaborates on current events concerning the operations of the land forces and provides comments by creating "Food for Thought papers" to address the topics. Finabel studies and Food for Thoughts are recommendations freely applied by its member, whose aim is to facilitate interoperability and improve the daily tasks of preparation, training, exercises, and engagement.

**FINABEL**

Quartier Reine Elisabeth
Rue d'Evere 1
**B-1140 BRUSSELS**

Tel: +32 (0)2 441 79 38
GSM: +32 (0)483 712 193
E-mail: info@finabel.org

You will find our studies at
**www.finabel.org**