

Worsening Situation in Mali

(Translated)

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Mali is witnessing a significant escalation following a series of coordinated attacks launched by Azawadi fighters and the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) against Malian army positions—positions supported by the Russian “Africa Corps (Африканский корпус)” (formerly the Wagner Group).

The Azawadi fighters represent the Popular Front for the Liberation of Azawad, a group predominantly composed of Tuareg people—inhabitants of northern Mali, Niger, and the Sahara Desert. They are supported and allied with Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist groups; these groups fully coordinate their attacks with the Tuareg to seize control of vast areas in northern Mali.

In alliance with JNIM, the Popular Front succeeded in capturing the city of Kidal. These coordinated attacks also targeted five other strategic locations: Gao, Aguelhok, and Anéfis in the north; Sévaré in the center; and the vital Kénierouba prison complex near the capital, Bamako—which has now come within firing range. The invading forces also succeeded in killing Mali's Defense Minister after targeting his residence in Kati, an event that exposed the fragility and weakness of the Malian state.

For its part, the Malian army announced that it had repelled the attacks using drones and with the assistance of the Russian Africa Corps personnel. The army claimed to have regained control of the situation in most of the areas that came under attack and asserted that it had inflicted heavy losses on the assailants. The government of Mali—which achieved remarkable success in ousting France after a long period of colonial rule, forging alliances with Burkina Faso and Niger, and forming an active trilateral political bloc to counter French influence in Africa—now finds itself faltering in its control over its own domestic territory. It is losing most of the Azawad region, failing to unify its people, and unable to assert independence over its lands.

The balance of power appears to be shifting in favor of the opposition forces—specifically the Azawad Popular Front and its allied Islamist group. Russian forces supporting the Malian state have failed to halt the opposition's advance, and it seems the government is on the verge of permanently losing the Azawad region.

Mali's loss of Azawad and other significant territories stems from the state's lack of a unifying, ideological vision capable of bringing together its diverse ethnic groups. Furthermore, shaking off French colonialism did not grant the government a blank check from its people—especially since it has merely swapped one colonizer for another. The Russian Africa Corps is no better than the French colonialists; it is an army of murderers and mercenaries. Given this reality, how can the Malian state expect its people to accept an alliance with such a force?

Moreover, France, the United States, the United Kingdom, and their proxies in Africa have no desire to assist the “new” Mali, as it seeks to expel Western influence and replace it with a Russian presence.

Thus, Mali finds itself in a dire predicament. It is unable to assert control over its territory on its own, and Russian forces have failed to assist it in doing so; indeed, France and Western states have likely gloated over its plight, leaving it in an unenviable position.

If the current situation persists, Mali may well split into two states: one for the Tuareg and Azawad people in the north, and another for the African population in the south.

Neither Mali nor any other state will truly free itself from ethnic strife and foreign influence unless it adopts Islam as both its belief and political system; otherwise, it will remain trapped in a vicious cycle of protracted ethnic and racial conflict. Furthermore, ousting French influence will yield no real benefit as long as the country remains caught between competing nationalist and secular-statist ideologies.

The only solution for Mali is to transform into a genuine Islamic state where Malians, Tuareg, and Africans coexist, unified by Islam and the Islamic Aqeedah (doctrine). Subsequently, other African states could unify with it to form a single, powerful state in which all ethnic groups are fused together within the melting pot of Islam.