

PsychoSocial Profile

Audience Analysis

NIGER & MALI



Psychoanalysis of Conflict Participants



REGIONAL & COUNTRY CONDITIONS OF MALI

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APPENDIX A – REGIONAL & COUNTRY CONDITIONS OF MALI

The Republics of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have become failed states that are no longer recognised as being legitimately governed by the African Union, ECOWAS¹ the European Union, and NATO.² These three Central Sahelian Republics have been taken over by low ranking military officers who have deposed their elected civilian leadership, dismantled their institutions of governance and the rule of law, and suspended or invalidated their national constitutions.³ The UNSC sanctions against the illegitimate military junta in Bamako were interrupted by the Russian Federation, which used its permanent seat on the UNSC to veto the UN's continuing sanctions.⁴ Under threat from ECOWAS, the UN, AU, and the EU, the three military juntas, with advisory and training assistance from Russia and Iran, have created a mutual defence alliance against outside interference in controlling their various states as depicted in **figure 1**. This has not prevented the USA, EU, ECOWAS, and the AU from sanctioning these three military juntas and their collective leadership. The new Alliance of the Sahel States have ejected the United Nations Mission in Mali, as well as all other countries from missions under the African Union, European Union's Capacity Building Program, the Sahel G5 Counterterrorism Consortium, France's Operation Barkhane, and the US' Operation Juniper Shield.⁵ The cadres of officers and sergeants that I and my teams had been training to follow and support the rule of law and civilian constitutional governance have either gone into exile or were killed by the Russian backed Juntas.⁶ Mass



Figure 1

atrocities against civilians are being reported in each of the three states by both violent extremist organisations and by the respective militaries backed by Russian military forces. In Mali and Niger, northern tribes have refused to accept the military juntas and have formed armed resistance movements against the Russian supported military forces from Bamako and Niamey, respectively. This resistance has begun to restrict the military junta's ability to take control of the petroleum and national gas wells in Mali and the Gold and Uranium mines in Niger, access to which, has already been purchased by Moscow and Tehran. The fall of these three democratically elected governments has also resulted in a renewed offensive against the peoples of the Central Sahelian regions of northern Mali and Niger, who are now in an open civil war against these three military regimes and their Alliance of the Sahel States (AES).

§A1 Regional Conditions in the Central Sahelian States of Mali, Niger, & Burkina Faso.

The country conditions of Mali are deeply intertwined with those of Niger and Burkina Faso which requires substantial regional context to understand the factors that exacerbate the underlying conditions of violent conflicts, civil wars, and extremist religious terror. Social life in the central Sahel regions revolves around family in the largest sense of the term:

¹ ECOWAS: Economic Cooperation Organisation of West African States.

² (Clark & Sura, 2020; H.E. Ambassador Olof Skoog, 2023; News Wires Compilation, 2022; Organisational Staff, 2024)

³ Mali had two coups, in 2020 and 2021, the first of which ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. Burkina Faso had two coups as well, both in 2022, overthrowing President-elect Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, placing the country under the control of 34-year-old Captain Ibrahim Traoré. Finally, in 2023, Niger's elected president, Mohamed Bazoum, the first elected Arab president, was arrested and imprisoned by elements of Niger's army who have taken control of the country as a military dictatorship.

⁴ (H.E. Ambassador Olof Skoog, 2023)

⁵ (Diallo, 2023a; Risemberg, 2023)

⁶ There are unconfirmed reports of mass graves of military and civilian government personnel who were deemed insufficiently loyal and executed.



immediate, extended, and tribal. Family life, in turn, revolves around ethnic and social identity, complex ideas that drive all motivation of state and non-state actors. Ethnic identity means “bloodlines” and ‘language’ which together, carry historical narratives that memorialise individuals and their families.⁷ Ethnic identity in this region competes with social identity, based on religion, hereditary occupation, wealth, and political power. Most humans and their families in the central Sahel find themselves caught between their ethnic and social identities, as the rest of this subsection describes. Without comprehending this internal struggle, it is nearly impossible to understand the underlying motivations of individuals and families who chose to ‘fight’ or ‘flight’ intrusions into their once peaceful existence. Family life begins with parents establishing a home and occupation, often following hereditary lines of generational belonging. As parents become grandparents, their family normatively grows physically around them in shared, but delineated spaces. Most African families follow a similar pattern. Deviations are often signs of internal family distress caused by emic or etic aspects of life.⁸ Usually, the etic precedes the emic. For example, in mixed religious areas, the evangelization and conversion of a family member from Sufi to Salafi; or from Salafi to Christianity; or from indigenous animist to monotheism, would be an etic event that creates a violent emotional emic response within the family. Religious conversion is often an emotionally explosive event, as is ethnic defection, and both are normative reasons for deviations in the family unit, affecting physical, security, and psychosocial health. In constructed-developed countries such as Europe, public funding is allocated to study, intervene, and resolve many of the deviations in healthy family life, but in the Sahel, all of this is left up to the family – immediate, extended, tribal. This is an important aspect of this country-of-origin report because these vulnerabilities are increasingly exploited as part of a process of transforming otherwise healthy civil populations into weapons against each other and against the recognised government.⁹

§A1.1 Religious Conflict.

Bamako is one of three capital urban centres in the central Sahel, the others being Niamey Niger, and Ouagadougou Burkina Faso. These three urban centres are large collections of families-clans of the local tribes who inhabited these areas prior to colonisation by France and now house family-clan communities that represent the tribes from the remainder of the country as well as the region. The graphic in **figure 2** illustrates that these urban metropolitan capitals are all in mixed areas of religious competition between Sufi-Islam, Salafi-Islam, Christian Evangelism, and various forms of

Indigenous Animist systems of belief. These cultural identity structures of metaphysical belief have become intensely violent with Salafist and Sufi Islam in contests of apostasy, while animist and Christian systems have their own, at times, violent, contests. Islam versus Islam; indigenous versus Christian, and Christian and Islam versus pagan animist, create a complex web of extremist ideologies. The graphic in **figure 3** shows the religious and tribal affiliations and defections in the areas of Burkina Faso, which are

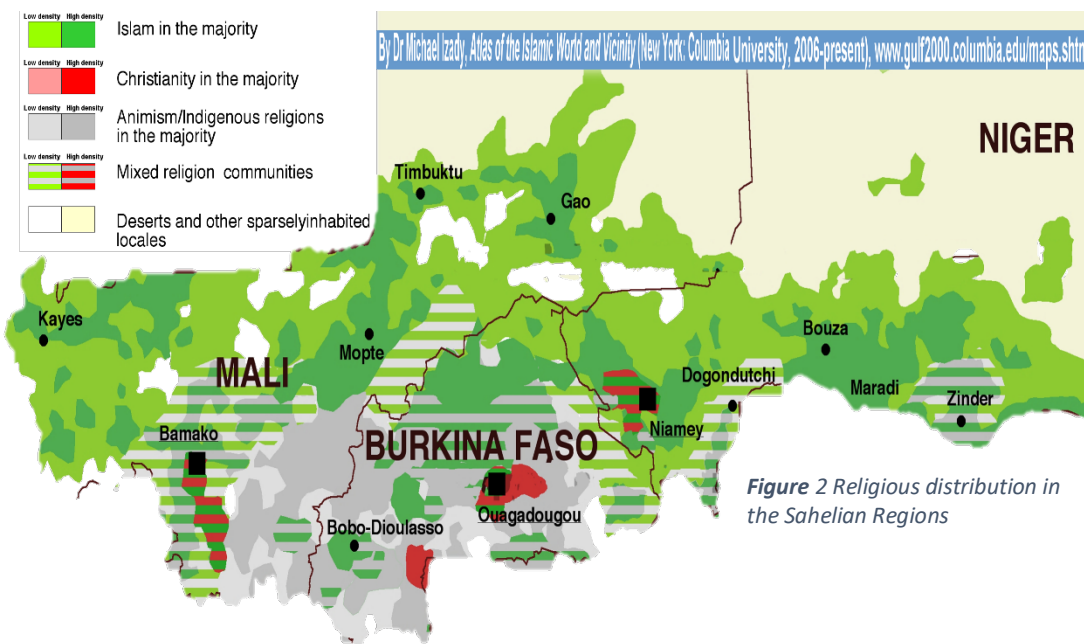


Figure 2 Religious distribution in the Sahelian Regions

⁷ (Volkan, 1986, 2001)

⁸ (Christian, 2015b)

⁹ (Christian, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2019)



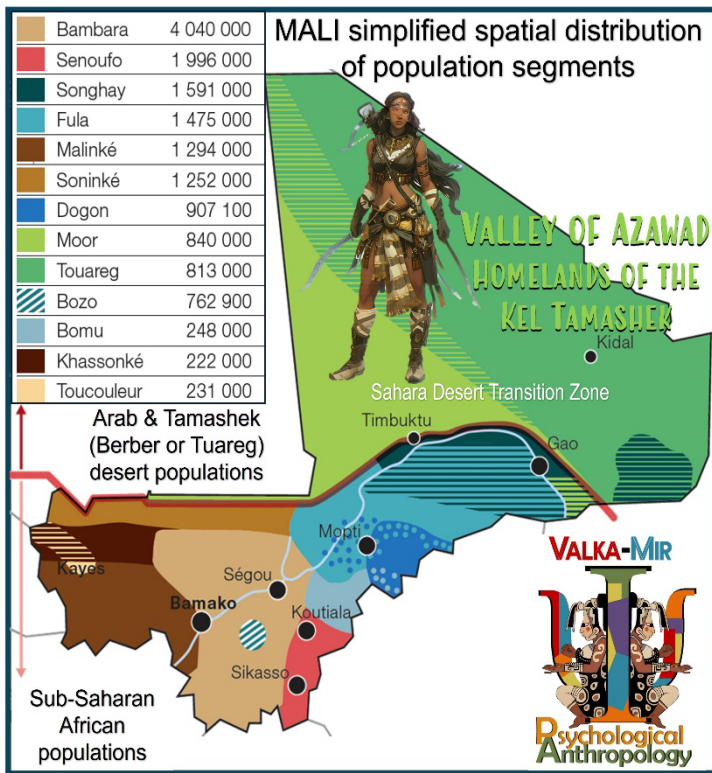
adjacent to southern Mali and Niger.¹⁰ From this depiction, you can visualise the constantly changing dynamics of religious, ethnic, tribal cultural identity that families navigate within each generation. These changing dynamics and competition for metaphysical following creates intense conflicts between and within nearly every community. These conflicts are not limited to Muslim-Christian, but Muslim versus Animist beliefs that are even more contrary than Christianity. These competing systems overlay another set of competing systems of competing structures of religious and ethnic-linguistic identity are the political boundaries of these three states. For Mali and Niger, in **figure 4**, their ethnic and linguistic populations are further subdivided into two main groupings – African versus non-African. The majority ethnic-linguistic communities in power in the greater capital regions of Bamako, Niamey, and Ouagadougou, all consider themselves to be African in terms of largest group belonging. They are also predominantly sedentary in their economic pursuits, whether that be agriculture, animal husbandry, trading, manufacturing, and so on.



§A1.2 Ethnic Conflict.

In Bamako, (**figure 4**, Mali's simplified spatial distribution of its population segments¹¹) the dominant tribe is the Bambara and Malinke whose numbers are overrepresented in government

services due to their proximity to the seat of government power. The remainder of the capital cities house families-clans that are well connected to their tribal affiliations outside of the country and serve a communal function of communications, remittances, and generally, looking after their tribal affiliations' needs and interests. At the bottom of each capital's human societies are those men, women, and children who have either a tenuous connection to their ethnic-tribal collective or have been cut off, cast out, or are from tribes that are not represented or wanted in the capital. Individuals and families' bloodlines in these three countries is central to their belonging, social-security, safety, and ultimately, their physical-psychological-social survival. The extract from the UK SOF Civil Engagement textbook in **figure 5** gives an eye-opening illustration of one of the many ethnic conflicts in Mali, this one between the Dogon Farmers-Hunters and the Fulani nomadic pastoralists in the Mopti region north of Bamako. I created this graphic novel format textbook to help UK SOF operators engage the population prior to the last coup de état of 2021. The contents are as applicable today as they were then. The conflicts in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso are about



¹⁰ Graphic in **Figure 7** reproduced from author's textbook on psychological warfare taught to UK, US, CAN, and NATO Special Operations Forces.

¹¹ Graphic in **Figure 10** reproduced from author's textbook on psychological warfare taught to UK, US, CAN, and NATO Special Operations Forces.



farmers and pastoralists. The farmers are sedentary, and the pastoralists are nomadic. Many of the Farmers tend towards Animism and or Christianity, while many of the pastoralists and nomadic families tend towards Islam. Thus, the subsistence survival of both becomes enmeshed in religious beliefs that are weaponised by external violent extremist actors, as well as internal political actors. The dialogue captured in **figure 5** is from qualitative interviews and field missions in Mali and Niger.

Figure 5 Graphic Textbook page 11, UK SOF Military Forces





§A1.3 Psychosocial Identity Conflict.

In the graphic in **figure 6**, the blue-line is the Niger River that runs between the capitals of Mali (Bamako) and Niger (Niamey), represents a profound geographical, geological, and climatological shift from arid deserts that are littered with giant massifs to water-filled lakes and estuaries. North of the line is desert pastoralism, trade, and nomadic/semi-nomadic life. South of the line is sedentary farming and animal husbandry of those species that are unable to survive in the harsh desert conditions. Population flows north and south of the border reflect ancient cooperative interactions between farmer and herder and between urban markets and northern routes to the coastal trading ports.¹² The psychosocial and politico-military conditions in the central Sahelian states of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have deteriorated over the past two decades due to failing government, ethnic unrest, and violent extremist insurgencies that have taken control over large parts of these countries.¹³ These Mali and Niger's northern regions share inter-related ethnic populations whose bloodlines and historical narratives carry and replicate generational traumas. The minority populations of Mali and Niger consider themselves to be 'non-African' Caucasian pastoralists, both fully nomadic and semi-nomadic. These communities consist of Arabs, Tuareg-Berber/Tamashek-Tamazight, and Toubou-Goran. An additional cultural ethnic group called the Fula, or Fulani, are African in cultural identity, but are nomadic pastoralists, so are a cross between the two collectives. The African 'sedentary' collectives of these three states are the majority populations of the post-colonial organisation created by France, and under democracy, control the political, economic, and security infrastructure of those states. The non-African Sahelian communities in the north hold few if any positions in government and have little voice outside of their own ethnic communities. The Tuareg/Berber peoples are the Kel (people of) Tamashek/Tamazight, the language of the people of the Sahara Desert and its Sahelian Transition Zone. They and the Toubou (aka Gorane), are the only two peoples that Colonial France was never able to subdue during their colonisation of West Africa. After post-colonial democracy devolved political power in Mali and Niger to the African majority, these two ethnic minorities have been in a nearly continuous state of rebellion for the past half century. The African based armies of Bamako and Niamey have never

been able to subdue these ethnic peoples, and often resorted to attempts at ethnic cleansing to maintain control over the northern regions of those states. And control over these Saharan and Sahelian spaces has been a powerful motivator for European, Asian, Middle Eastern, American, and African countries because these seemingly barren spaces are also blessed with massive deposits of water, oil, uranium, national gas, gold, and all manner of precious metals, minerals, and rare earths (see **figure 6**). Mining concessions throughout the Sahel are now up for renegotiation as the military coup leaders reevaluate and abrogate past agreements in favour of real-politique enrichment schemes. The ethnic cultural communities that inhabit these vast spaces are unsurprisingly unwilling to give up their



Figure 6 Characterization of the Valley of Azawad, homeland of the Tuareg/Berber of Mali and Niger

¹² (Boucek, 2009)

¹³ (Demuyne & Coleman, 2022)



homelands to their African neighbouring communities to the south at the expense of their homelands destroyed by uranium and oil leaks into the groundwater reservoirs under the desert floor.¹⁴

All three countries, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have failed governments and are now under the control of rouge military organisations that have installed violent authoritarian regimes in opposition to the United Nations, the African Union,

ECOWAS, and the international rule of law. These three regimes' linkage as a Russian Federation backed alliance gives them an ability to resist international pressure to restore human rights and cease ethnic cleansing of their northern regions known as Azawad. Over the last 24 months, it has become clear that the strategies of the international alliance have failed to achieve any of its goals in the Sahel and in Mali especially.¹⁵ The region has witnessed thousands of Malian civilian and military casualties, and more than 2.5 million people have been displaced. Throughout the past half-century, each of the governments in Mali and Niger, interacted with, negotiated with, and compromised with – their Tuareg communities in the north.¹⁶ The Tuareg communities in Niger's north are called the Kel Tamajek, while those in Mali's



Figure 7 Mali's Democratic Millennium Challenge Failure

north are called the Kel Tamashek. The Tuareg in the south of Algeria, the only state that has been able to reach a lasting peace accord with them, are called the Kel Tamahak. Each of the three have slightly different versions of their language but are united at the intersection of an imaginary land called the Valley of Azawad, situated between the Mountains of the Nobles in Mali, the Air Massif in Niger, the Hoggar Massif in Algeria, and the Caucasus Mountains in Libya. The central spaces in-between and including these four geological massifs is the historical realm of Azawad, a potential new

1990s Democracy & Peace

- First Multiparty elections & democratically-elected president.
- Peace agreement with Tuareg tribes

2000 - 2019 Tuareg Rebellion Returns, Violent Extremist Jihadist Organisations move into the Sahel

- Algeria brokered peace deal with Bamako and Tuareg - autonomy for their northern desert region.
- Tuareg rebellion against Mali Army continues despite truce.
- G5 Sahel Established to combat Al-Qaeda related Jihadist Organisations.
- 2012 Mali Army coup de Etat, Tuareg declare independent State of Azawad, Islamic Terrorist Jihadist groups overrun southern Mali, while Tuareg seize the regions of Azawad.
- After civilian government restored, France, western allies, ECOWAS and UN push back Islamic Jihad militias and regain control of southern Mali.
- Tuareg MNLA agrees to ceasefire and returns control of government army bases in the north, but relations between the African government in Bamako and the Tuareg MNLA separatists worsen throughout the two decades.
- UN Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) establishes garrisons in Bamako, Mopti, Gao, and Timbuktu. Tuareg continues to defend Kidal, Menaka, Agelhoc, Anefis and Tessalit and opens its first Azawad Embassy in Europe in the Netherlands.
- Islamic jihadist organisations grow and intensify attacks, MINUSMA, French, EUCAP-Sahel, NATO members forces under attack by violent jihadists, with increasing casualties.
- Tuareg's MNLA and Mali government forces continue to vacillate between accommodation against a common Jihadist enemy and confrontation between expectations of autonomy versus submission to government; between fighting each other to working jointly to fight Al Qaeda.
- Jihadists escalate to violent attacks in the capital city of Bamako and MINUSMA becomes deadliest UN Mission to serve in after 37 members of joint Mali army and Tuareg MNLA soldiers killed by Al Qaeda in Gao.

2020 – 2024 Mali Government falls, military dictatorship in open civil war against Jihadists and Tuareg MNLA separatists.

- 2nd coup d'état takes control of Bamako government, followed by 3rd coup d'état against the previous military junta.
- Military junta suspends civil institutions, declares martial law, contracts with Russian Federation's Wagner Group to replace US, EU, UN, AU, and French military support against growing jihadist organisations.
- US, EU, UN, AU, and French government organisations withdraw from Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.
- Mali military junta withdraws from the AU, ECOWAS, G5 Sahel, and realigns with the Russian Federation and Iran.
- Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso establish military-political alliance against attacks by ECOWAS, Islamic Jihadists, and Tuareg MNLA.

¹⁴ USAFRICOM Reports from SOC Africa Senior Military Advisor, Joint Special Operations Task Force – Trans Sahel 2014. (Mohanty, 2019)

¹⁵ (Oumarou, 2019)

¹⁶ (Ahmed, 2024; Kouyate, 2022)



geopolitical republic in the making in the central Sahel. From Timbuktu, Kidal, and Gao in Mali, to Tahoua, Menaka, Agadez, Arlit, and Iferouâne in Niger, to Tamanrasset in Algeria and Ghat in Libya, this is the new multinational civil war in the Sahel. This conflict is over a century in the making, and with the withdrawal of the UN, AU, EU, US, NATO, and the intervention of Moscow and Tehran as replacements, there is little likelihood of resolution that does not include violent protracted civil war.¹⁷

§A2 Mali's Multi-Participant Civil War.

The conflict in Mali is now a four (4) sided civil war with the civilian population caught in the middle. Residents say they are effectively stuck in a war zone as the north is cut off from the south via road, air, and river after a deadly attack on a passenger boat and the suspension of flights by Mali's only commercial airline. Civilians in both urban and rural spaces are alternately attacked by multiple combatants in a chaotic and deteriorating civil war.

§A2.1 Military Junta: Collapse of Mali's governance and the rule of law.

The **first** of these four combatants are the Malian military junta and the remnants of their army after multiple military rebellions and accompanying cleansings of military dissidents who were liquidated and buried in mass graves.¹⁸ The Malian Army, backed by Russian advisors, operates against all parts of the armed civil populations of tribal, political, or religious extremists. While the Mali army is now, mostly filled by ethnic Bambara, Malinké, and Soninké, it is not accurate to state that ethnicity is their principal motivation. Instead, the ruling military Junta is more accurately motivated by authoritarian control and political-social-economic order that benefits a select population group, mostly in the capital metropolitan areas of Bamako. These majority ethnic groups may well be the most benefited, but ethnic membership alone does not qualify for preferred treatment by the military government. In 2006, The United States Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation established a compact with the government of Mali to develop and implement a 6-year, \$460,000,000 USD investment in Mali's economic future, through the development of the Niger River, enhancing agriculture and animal farming along the lower edge of the Sahel transition zone. The populations most benefited from this program included the Dogon hunter-farmers east of Mopti, the Songhay farmers and Fula herdsmen south of Gao, and the Moors and Tuareg north of the Niger River. The graphic image in **figures 4 & 6** shows the Niger River as it traverses through Gao, Timbuktu, Mopti, and south to Segou and Bamako. The large Bambara, Senoufo, Malinké, and Soninké populations benefited from the program through a renovation of the Bamako-Sénou International Airport, gateway for regional and international trade in Mali.¹⁹ In February of 2012, the United States Ambassador to Mali, Mary Beth Leonard, held a celebration for the pending completion of the project, due to finish the following September of 2012. Ambassador Leonard described the Republic of Mali as an example of African democracy and progressive development. A month later, elements of the Mali army led by a captain named Amadou Sanogo mutinied and arrested President Amadou Toumani Touré, accusing him of being insufficiently tough on the troublesome Tuareg communities in the north. The uprising by the Kel Tamashek in 2012 caused the government to collapse, allowing Al Qaeda in the Maghreb to seize large areas of northern Mali, to include Timbuktu and Gao. After the Kel Tamashek retreated to their home areas to defend against encroaching AQIM and other violent jihadist groups, France launched Operation Barkhane in concert with the surviving Malian military to recapture the territory seized by the growing Islamist insurgencies. The French effort was supported by UK, USA, and Canadian Special Operations Forces, which this researcher commanded from 2013 to 2015. In 2013-2014, The United Nations launched a massive peacekeeping (PKO) effort which at its height, numbered more than 17,557 total personnel that included nearly 12,000 uniformed soldiers. This PKO is called MINUSMA, or the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.²⁰ The effort is one of the largest PKOs ever fielded by

¹⁷ (AFP, 2023)

¹⁸ (Daoud, 2023; Staff, 2023d)

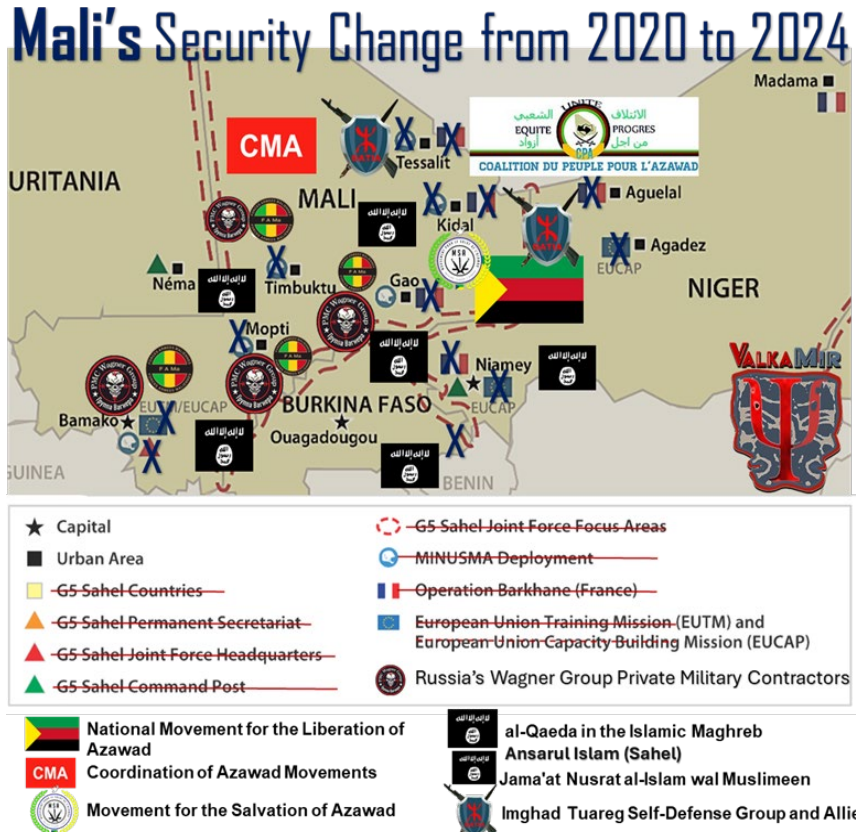
¹⁹ (Antúñez, 2022; Cooke et al., 2016)

²⁰ (Gilder, 2021)



the UN to support political processes in a conflict country and carry out security-related tasks.²¹ The Mission was asked to support the transitional authorities of Mali in the stabilization of the country and implementation of the transitional roadmap. MINUSMA was directed to ensure security, stabilization, and protection of civilians; support national political dialogue and reconciliation, assist the reestablishment of State authority, the rebuilding of the security sector, and the promotion and protection of human rights in that country. This mission began to fail almost immediately with the UN peacekeepers coming under violent and deadly attacks from different elements of the violent insurgent groups. On more than one occasion, the Kel Tamashek militias were induced to come to the aid of the UN peacekeepers when they found themselves over-matched by the Islamists extremists.²² The French Operation, meanwhile, focused on strengthening the Malian military capability under its Operation Barkhane authorities. Between 2013 and 2020, the inability of the UN, AU, ECOWAS, USA, UK, and CAN diplomats and their military contingents to build a cohesive government, eliminate this 'winner-takes-all' mentality of political alignments allowed for sufficient instability that ambitious Mali officers (trained by French and UN) turned on its civilian governance in a deadly 2020 military coup. After the UN, AU, and ECOWAS negotiated the installation of a civilian transitional government, different segments of the Mali Army again overthrew the newly installed civilian government 2021, followed by a similar military takeover in Burkina Faso, then in Niger.²³ What little progress was made in restoring state authority and services, including the judiciary and police, was destroyed and the capital of Mali remains a violent and contested capital city.²⁴ The breakdown in government, security, and accompanying political-economic isolation has pushed the capital regions of Bamako into a dangerous humanitarian situation resulting in over 422,000 internally displaced residents as of last year. The graphic in **figure 8** illustrates the dramatic changes in Mali's security situation from 2020 to 2024. The double coups by Mali officers' broke relations with its western allies, its African partners, and the United Nations in general. The decades long security support programs by France, USA, UK, Canada, NATO, and the UN's MINUSMA, withdrew from Mali altogether. Relations between the military junta in control of Bamako's capital regions and the international community deteriorated amidst mounting allegations involving summary executions, abandonment of its governing responsibilities, and ethnic cleansing. The military junta in Bamako in control of Mali's government acted to sever all interaction with the United Nations and neighbouring West African countries, consistently refusing to commit and adhere to a reliable plan for a return to democratically elected civil rule in Bamako. Instead, Mali's military junta has been employing threats, harassment, and expulsions of journalists and bloggers to create a climate of fear and self-censorship, especially regarding alleged security force abuses. The following

Figure 8 Mali's Security Change after the Military Coup de Etat



²¹ MINUSMA was established by Security Council resolution 2100 of 25 April 2013 and by resolution 2164 of 25 June 2014.

²² (Keita, 1998; Lecocq, 2005)

²³ (Christian, 2018)

²⁴ (Crisis Group Staff Report No 266 - Africa, 2018)



bullet points are a sample selection of timeline events that depict the level of persistent aggression of Mali's security forces as rogue regime to the international and regional communities and its descent into international lawlessness.

§A2.2 Russian Federation: Moscow's 'Africa Corps'

The **second** combatant is the Russian Federation's contingent of Wagner Group mercenaries who are paid millions of euros per month to replace the lost UN, French, EU, US, and other NATO allies who were asked to leave Mali. Publicly, they are aligned to the formal military under the control of the rouge junta of Colonel Goïta but have secondary missions to take



Figure 9 Russia's Wagner Group contribution to the violence. Top picture: Russian Federation's African Corps in Mali 2024 Bottom Picture: Body of Russian Wagner Group soldier in Mopti after ambush by Dogon tribesmen retaliating for attack on village

control of mining concessions lost to former European allies. The leaders of the Wagner Group have always clarified that they are in the service of the Russian Federation and its mission of resource extraction and is now part of what the Russian Defense Ministry calls the African Corps. The Russian Federation's 'African Corps' is well armed with aircraft, armoured vehicles, and state of the art weaponry, which they are employing against all population segments that are in resistance to the military junta in Bamako, regardless of whether they are armed or not. Violent attacks by extremists increased dramatically after the military coup de état in 2021, Not only did attacks by JNIM and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara intensify against both civilian and military targets in Mali, but they also escalated in both neighboring Niger and Burkina Faso, which have both also succumbed to military coups des états supported by Russian influence. The Malian Army and its Russian African Corp partners are fighting the increased violent extremists'

attacks and the growing rise of ethnic militias being fielded in the northern reaches as a result of violent attacks on the population. In the darkness of early morning on January 26, a team of Malian soldiers and Russian mercenaries rushed into the village of Welingara in the central Nara region. They arrested 25 men and boys, took them 2 kilometers outside the village and immediately executed them. "The bodies were found, piled on top of each other, some blindfolded, riddled with bullets or slit throats," according to local sources interviewed by Radio France Internationale. "Many were burned."

§A2.3 Violent Jihadist-based Extremist Organisations.

The **third** combatant is the collective of Islamic Violent Extremist Organisations (VEO) that are led by Arab Salafi-Sunni tribesmen from the Middle East and North Africa but draw many of their fighters from the tribes of the southern regions that include Dogon Hunter-Farmers, Fulani Pastoralists, and Songhai, amongst others. **Figure 11** tries to offer a sense of the chaos and confusion of Mali today.²⁵ Notice how the areas of operation by the AQIM, NJIM, MLF, Boko Haram, and the ISGS all intertwine with each other. The significance of this is that, at times, these violent extremist organisations compete, cooperate, and



Figure 10 Islamic State Fighters celebrate a successful attack in Central Mali outside of Gao in March 2023

²⁵ Figures reproduced from author's textbook on psychological warfare in the Sahel, 4th edition, Valka-Mir Human Security Foundation 2023.
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combine their effects depending on unknown criteria. As described below in greater detail, these violent extremist organisations compete with the peoples of Azawad with the Russian Federation backed military junta for control of the population and separately, for control of natural resources. These multi-participant conflicts cross national and tribal borders and merge into complex violent trauma against the population. Their recruiting grounds are often the slums of Bamako, Niamey, and Ouagadougou, especially abandoned or orphaned children who are conditioned into malformed ideas of personhood at an increasingly early age. All tribes who have young people who are otherwise unengaged with purpose and identity, are subject to having their members recruited out from under them. The Islamic Jihad VEOs have succeeded in Africa, southwest Asia, and the Middle East primarily using Psychological Warfare. This entails psychologically breaking, mentally extremising, and behaviourally radicalising individuals and families against each other and their families to create an ungovernable population. VEO leaders organise this process through sabotage and subversion of long-established inter-tribal relationships such as between the Dogon sedentary hunter-farmers and the

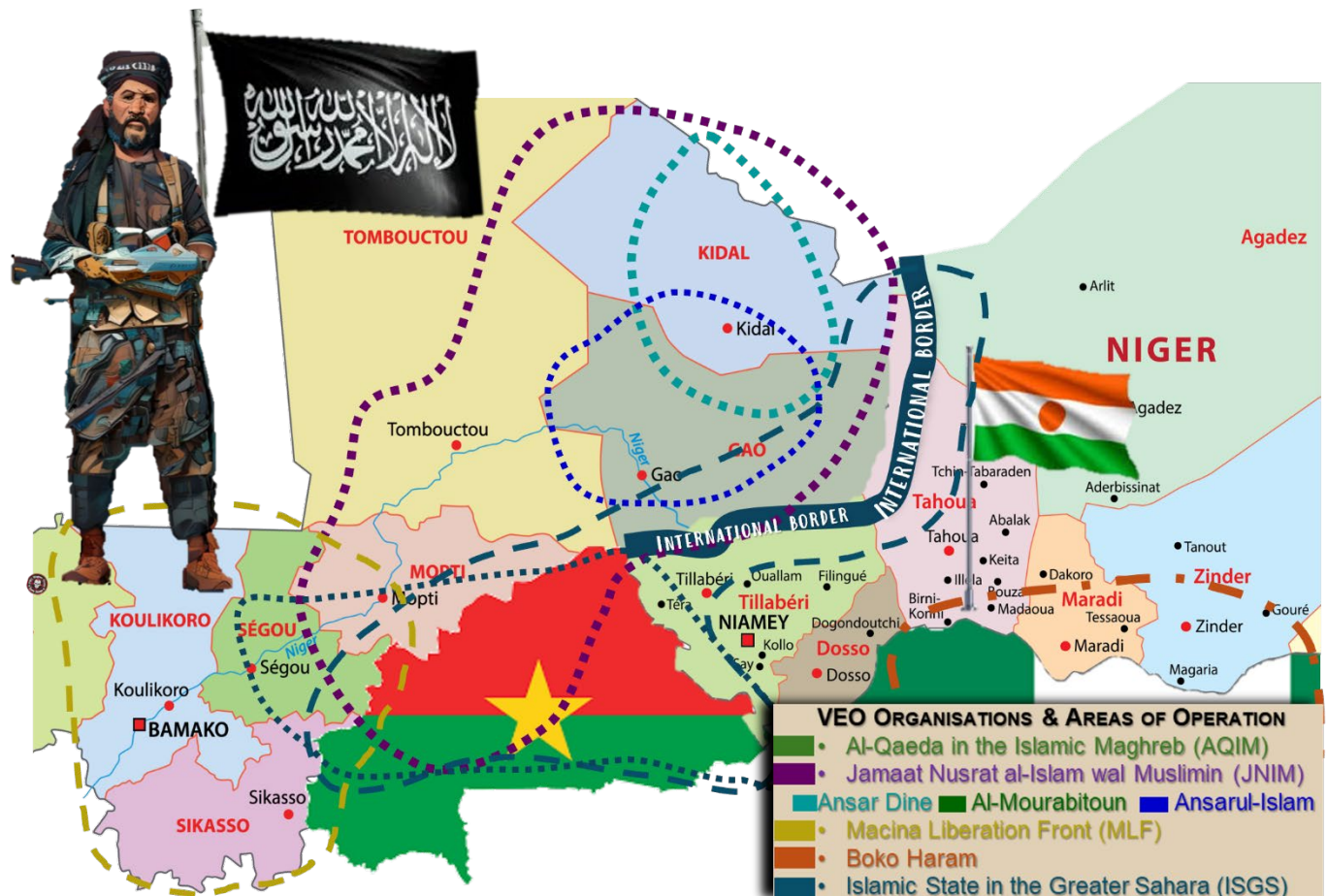


Figure 11 Propagation of Violent Extremist Organisations

Fulani seminomadic pastoralist herders. This delicate mutual relationship has fed livestock and reciprocally fertilized and ploughed fields for millennia. Now, orchestrated by VEO leaders pretending to be Imams, clashes between the ethnic communities of Fulani, nomadic herders, and Dogon traditional hunters have increased in recent months, with community-based militias -- initially formed for defence -- now launching attacks. From Bamako to Mopti, Jihadi Imams have incited the Dogon Farmers and the Fulani pastoralists into violent confrontations between farmer and herder with back-and-forth attacks and killings. Much of the conflict was activated and amplified by the VEOs as a means of recruiting converts. The jihadists would help organise attacks by one tribe against the other, then recruit the survivors who were/are laden with psychosocial-emotional trauma as part of a larger psychological warfare campaign against the civilian population. A recent example involved armed men travelling in pick-up trucks which attacked four Dogon villages, attributing the attacks to



Fulani herders. The attack left at least 30 dead, including women, children, and the elderly, while others were missing.^{34F²⁶} The Dogon counterattack against the Fulani encampments and their animal herds would not be long in coming, encouraged by the same jihadists who attacked the Dogon villages and attributed them to the Fulani.^{35F²⁷}

§A2.4 Kel Tamashek and the Struggle for the Liberation of Azawad

The **fourth** combatant are tribal alliances, organisations, political movements, and related militias that advocate separation of the northern Mali and Niger regions from their African capitals of Bamako and Niamey. Foremost in the lead for liberation of their homeland are the Tuareg or Kel Tamashek led **Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), Movement for the Salvation of Azawad, Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), Imghad Tuareg Delf-Defense Group** and allies.²⁸ The Coordination of Azawad Movements, or CMA, a coalition of Tuareg separatist groups who signed a peace agreement with the Malian government in 2015, declared itself at war with Mali in March of 2024. The countries of NATO had been working to stabilise the Central Sahel for the past quarter century, advocating for shared governance and resource distribution and the celebration of multicultural and multilingual society. This effort was aimed at limiting and resolving the historic aspirations of independence of the Kel Tamashek or Tuareg peoples. Over the past decade, our efforts were marked by (speaking as a member of the American Special Operations Forces involved) successes and failures. In Mali, we would succeed by establishing a professional army training system that emphasized rule of law and subordination of military to civilian governance. In Niger, we would merge our NATO and EU efforts at combatting violent extremists with those of their Army in the development of a combined joint base in Agadez known as Basse 201. Then, coups des états in Mali in 2012, 2020, and 2021, followed by a coup in Niger and Burkina Faso in 2022, ended all our progress. The concessions that we had convinced the various ethnic stakeholders to make to build a stable future were lost as the rouge military regimes in Bamako, Ouagadougou, and Niamey, resorted to unchecked violence and civilian massacres. An important part of our success involved building alliances between the tribal militias and the peacekeeping forces of MINUSMA. Many of these tribes were aligned with MINUSMA in the fight against violent ideological extremist insurgents prior to the 2021 military coup de état. The Immohaugh of Azawad's liberation movements have inflicted extensive losses on both the Mali Army and its Russian African Corp partner. They have slowed, and in some cases, halted, the illegal resource extraction of oil, gas, gold, and uranium from the central Sahel. The graphic map in **figure 12** illustrates the territory of the ongoing war. After the coup in 2021, the military junta and Russian forces changed tactics and strategy, abandoning the 'hearts & minds' formulae they found to be costly in terms of time and effort. Instead, they resorted to a Hammer & Nail Approach to subduing tribal conflicts.²⁹ Overall, 71% of Wagner's engagement in political violence in Mali has taken the form of attacks targeting civilians, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. The group has targeted civilians during attacks in the Mopti, Koulikoro, Segou and Timbuktu regions. Hundreds of civilians died in those attacks, which included the massacre of more than 500 people in Moura in the Mopti region in March 2022.³⁰ That attack was perpetrated by Malian troops and Russia's Wagner Group. Witnesses told Reuters that the troops and mercenaries arrived in helicopters, then fanned across the town and fired at civilians. A man named Amadou said he was captured and taken to a riverbank, where thousands of men sat with their hands tied. Over four days, they were held with little food or water and no protection from the blazing sun. Men were taken in small groups to the edge of a mass grave and shot. "It was unimaginable," Amadou told Reuters. "They came, they took 15, 20 people and lined them up. They made them kneel down and shot them."³¹ People interviewed said that the Malian armed forces committed

²⁶ Informant Youssouf Tiessogue, an elder from Gouari, one of the villages attacked.

²⁷ Christian, (2023)

²⁸ On 6 April 2012, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (French acronym: MNLA) unilaterally declared Azawad independent from the Republic of Mali in the wake of a rebellion which was preceded by a string of other Tuareg rebellions. It is called the Independent State of Azawad.

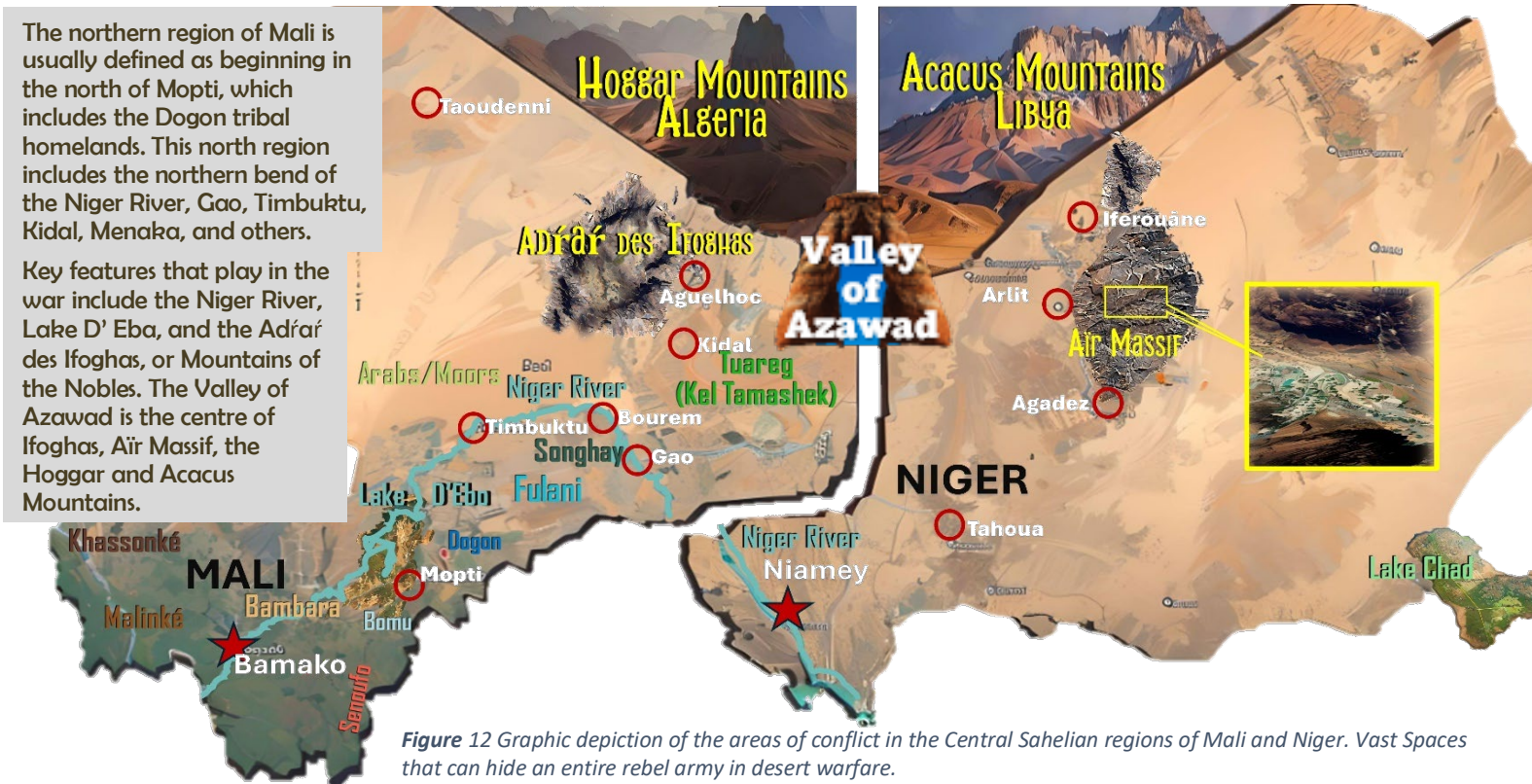
²⁹ As MINUSMA and French troops departed, the Wagner Group entered at a cost of nearly \$11 million per month to provide security and training — while also exploiting gold mining. But instead of stemming the bloodshed, the group seems to be causing it.

³⁰ (Chemam, 2023; Diallo, 2023b; Risemberg, 2023)

³¹ (Ahmed, 2023; Diallo, 2023a, 2023b; Tribouillard, 2023)



the abuses during military operations in response to the presence of Islamist armed groups in Ouenkoro, Séguéla, Sossobé, and Thioffol villages, in Mopti and Ségou regions.³² During all the operations, except the one in Thioffol, witnesses reported the involvement of foreign, non-French speaking armed men who they described as “white,” or “Russians,” or “Wagner.” These cases are a fraction of the abuses committed by the Malian armed forces and affiliated foreign fighters in Mali in the past year. “I was at the market when the shooting started [and] I saw three military helicopters flying low, one of them firing,” said a 28-year-old man who was in Ouenkoro village on March 23. “People fled in all directions ... I took my motorbike and rode as fast as I could. I saw two people falling on the ground behind me, shot from the helicopters.” A large number of “white” foreign fighters in uniform carried out a February 3 assault on the village of Séguéla, which resulted in beatings, looting, and the arrest of 17 men, of whom the bodies of eight were later found.³³ The Mali army and its Wagner Group allies are driving many of the tribes to crystallise their alliances with either the VEO jihadists or with the northern separatists, against their own government.³⁴ The non-VEO separatist forces are mostly stationed in the north, in Mopti, Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao. They build alliances with tribes that want various forms of autonomy and independence but not under an Islamic banner. The Kel Tamashek tribes possess a psychosocial-emotional construction of Suffi Islam that deeply conflicts with orthodox Sunni Islam.³⁵ Their antipathy to Salafi visions of Islam and their cultural identity markers include pre-marital sex, spirit possession ceremonies, and matriarchal aspects of social organisation; all of which drive the Islamic jihadists into rage. The leaders of the Islamic Salafi VEOs seek to reestablish an Islamic State or Caliphate, such as the one they created and lost in Syria and Iraq. The Tuareg-Berber tribes



³² (Agence France-Presse, 2023; Ahmed, 2023; Ibrahim, 2023)

³³ (Blackwell, 2023; Chemam, 2023; Diallo, 2023b; Rédaction Africanews, 2023; ReliefWeb Staff, 2023; Risemberg, 2023)

³⁴ Here in the centre of Mali’s civil war, international observers try to understand the conflict, organising tribes into one category of combatant or another. But it gets complicated because members of the tribes fighting against the VEOs have been lured into the camps of the Violent Extremist Organisations, such as Ansar Dine, led by a disgraced son of the Kel Ifoghas, who left his inner community to align (loosely) with Jamaat Nusrat. Ansar Dine will fight to prevent AQIM and ISGS from extremising and recruiting young Tamashek (Tuareg) men but will join in the fight against the government and even some tribes, but usually not their own.

³⁵ (Badi, 2010; Fischer & Kohl, 2010; Keenan, 2010; S. Rasmussen, 1992; S. J. Rasmussen, 1995; Rossi, 2010; Tiekoura, 2012)



of the Kel Tamashek (Mali), Kel Tamajek (Niger), Kel Tamahak (Algeria & Libya), and the Iwellemedan Confederation (Burkina Faso) have been fighting for national statehood since the French Colonial Period. These peoples have history of successful integration into political state, such as the Kel Tamahak in southern Algeria. The African led governments in Bamako and Niamey have routinely used the lure of self-determination in a Federalist System as a means of inducing the Tuareg to the peace negotiating table, under pressure from western allies and the African Union. The sociopolitical dynamics of the Tuareg peoples have striking parallels to those of the Kurdish peoples of Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria. Both fight an internal battle to forge national identity, while at the same time, negotiating with their respective political state masters using shades of violence and diplomacy. As was true with the Kurdish, the Tuareg are the most experienced and successful fighters, perhaps because of generations of survival based on their ability to resist domination, dispersion, and disintegration of their coherence in the face of European state-making. The Tuareg have always believed themselves to be a nation divided by four political state borders, complete with armed force structures, economic and political alliances, national tribal lands that are at times in conflict with national tribal rights.³⁶

§A3 Mali's Descent into Civil War and Ethnic Cleansing.

Throughout 2022, 2023, and into 2024, the Malian military junta led by Colonel Goïta imposed operational constraints on the conduct of securitising Mali's conflict spaces that included no-fly zones on MINUSMA peacekeeping forces. Russian backed Mali officers obstructed investigations into alleged human rights abuses by state security forces, which hindered MINUSMA's ability to fulfil its mandate and deeply strained relationships with troop-contributing countries. In July of 2022, Malian authorities arrested 49 Ivorian soldiers working for in the MINUSMA mission and then expelled the UN spokesperson for comments made about their arrests. The UN monitors working in Maji had been documenting a growing list of violent abuses by state security forces and their Russian advisors against their own civilians until they, and the remainder of the UN Mission in Mali, were summarily expelled by the military junta. Malian and their Russian private foreign security forces were implicated in hundreds of unlawful killings of suspects and civilians, mostly during large counterterrorism operations in the Mopti and Ségou regions, home of the Dogon farmers and Fulani pastoralist communities. On January 27, soldiers executed 14 Dogon civilians in Tonou village in apparent retaliation after an army vehicle hit an IED. On December 31, 2021, during an operation in Boudjiguiré in Koulikoro region, Malian soldiers detained and later executed at least 13 men. Mali and foreign soldiers allegedly raped several women during counterterrorism operations. There was little progress in investigations opened by the government into several of these incidents, and the authorities barred UN human rights investigators access to the locations of the abuses. In March 2022, Malian and Russian Wagoner Group security forces summarily executed over 300 Dogon and Fulani tribesmen who were already in custody, because of suspected involvement with the Islamist insurgency in Moura, central Mali. The incident was the worst single atrocity in Mali's decade-long armed conflict between government forces and Islamist armed groups. It's not unlikely that some small numbers of these executed tribesmen were cooperating with jihadist organisations at some level, but this execution has ensured a level of enmity between the Dogon and Fulani against the government that will not be easy to resolve. On March 3, the bodies of 35 men, many blindfolded and most with bullet wounds, were found in Danguère Wotoro hamlet, Ségou region. The men had previously been detained in the Diabaly army camp, according to witnesses. Around March 5, Malian and foreign soldiers believed to be from the Wagner Group killed 33 men, including 29 Mauritians, near Robinet El Ataye village, Ségou region. On April 19, Malian and allied foreign soldiers allegedly killed at least 50 civilians in Hombori, Mopti region, and on September 18, over 35 villagers in Gouni, Mopti region. Using Russian psychological warfare tactics taught to them by the Russian Wagoner Group, the Mali military junta is attempting to employ the intentional introduction of traumatising terror into the population to subdue their participation in violent contestation of the junta's rule over the country. Their tactics can only succeed if applied to the level of the elimination of sufficient numbers of Dogon, Fulani, Arab, and Tamashek tribesmen and, in the case of the Tamashek, tribeswomen who

³⁶ (Christian, 2015b, 2020)



are authorised to build and lead armed militias. In this context, sufficient numbers of elimination would constitute genocide on a vast scale and against a collective of desert tribes that may be small in numbers but have centuries or millennia of experience in defeating far more powerful enemies than the Goïta regime with his Russian private military contractors. This assertion that I make is derived from over a year of living, traveling, teaching, and learning from these tribes within their midst as a US Green Beret officer. What we can expect is that the Goïta regime's tactics and chosen partners operating in the north, will lead to the Dogon, Fulani, and Tuareg tribes bringing the fight home to Bamako through a rising tide of extreme asymmetrical violence. The escalation that the surviving tribes will inflict on Bamako will push ever more violent reprisals and countermeasures from Goïta's regime as a way of surviving, much as 'Russian assistance' did for



Figure 15a Torture Mutilation, Ethnic Cleansing by Malian Army and Russian African Corps against members of the Kel Tamashek near Kidal. The entire video that these pictures were taken from is available from the researcher.



Figure 15b Tuareg Azawad Liberation Army ambush of Russian Mali Army Column north of the Mountains of the Nobels Algeria border



Figure 15c Aftermath of MNLA attack on Russian column in the Valley of Azawad



Bashar Assad's regime in Syria. The Atrocities by Islamist Armed Groups in 2023 increased significantly from 2022, which in turn, increased from 2021. Over the past two years, various Islamist armed groups aligned with the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Al-Qaeda expanded their attacks into southwestern Mali and to the capital, Bamako, killing hundreds of civilians, as well as scores of UN peacekeepers and government security force members.³⁷ The incidents below are a sample of some of these attacks that are continuing and increasing into 2023. On January 16, Islamist fighters executed four ethnic Dogon men after removing them from a convoy of traders near the town of Douentza. Since March, fighters from ISGS have allegedly killed hundreds of civilians, most of them adult men, in attacks on villages in the Gao and Menaka regions, bordering Niger. Most of the victims were ethnic Daoussahak, a Tuareg sub-group. On June 18 and 19, fighters linked to Al-Qaeda allegedly killed over 120 people from Dianwali, Deguessago, and Diallassagou villages in Mopti region. At least 72 people, nearly one-third of them civilians, were killed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) allegedly planted by Islamist armed groups nationwide in 2022, mostly in Mopti region. In areas under their control, Islamist armed groups downed telecommunication towers, imposed zakat (religious tax), and implemented Sharia (Islamic) law and punishments via courts that did not adhere to fair trial standards. These groups also contributed to food insecurity by attacking those who did not conform to their vision of Islamic law, including by looting livestock and besieging villages. The French journalist Olivier Dubois, kidnapped in Gao region on April 8, 2021, was still being held hostage by Al-Qaeda-affiliated Jamaa Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) at time of writing. Much of the fighting between the tribes and the Jihadists arises from attempts to weaponize children into suicide or kamikaze fighters. The UN reported that scores of children were killed or maimed by armed groups in Mali in 2022. Armed groups also recruited and used over 300 children as child soldiers. As of October 2022, insecurity forced the closure of 1,950 schools, leaving more than 519,300 children out of school. This month, July 2024, the armed forces of the Tuareg coalesced in opposition to the ongoing massacres of its people and struck back. An armed force of as many as 1,000 tuareg Imohaugh (warriors) engaged a combined Mali Army and Russian African Corps armoured column and defeated it, killing 80 Russian soldiers and an unknown number of Malian soldiers, as well as capturing 15 Russian Army soldiers in the single largest military defeat for Russia outside of Ukraine. The Ukraine Ministry of Defense, meanwhile, acknowledged that its special operations forces have been assisting the Tuareg Imohaugh soldiers with intelligence and possibly other support. The Ukrainian's acknowledgement of their involvement links Europe's largest land war since WW2 to this ongoing conflict in Africa's Sahel regions. **Figures 15a, 15b, and 15c** offer insight into intensity of the full scale civil war now in progress. The emotionality of the attacks, the overkill of and by participants creates levels of alienation, shame, and rage, that fuels ever increasing action and reaction that can lead to conditions for genocidal conflicts.

Figure 16 Tuareg versus African Bambara Phenotypes



All of these videos and photos are available to the tribunal for review. They are quite disturbing and can cause secondary trauma in vulnerable persons. All the Tuareg officer and NCOs that I trained and mentored prior to the 2021 coup de état, and their families have disappeared, and their kin have not been allowed to access the mass graves discovered by the UN prior to their departure to determine if their loved ones were inside. To be clear, there are still many Malian soldiers that are in no way, culpable of the atrocities being committed against civilians. There is an undeniable frustration within the ruling military junta over their inability to govern, secure the safety of the population and resources, and gain the cooperation of the population. There is also a corresponding refusal on the part of the junta to accept that they and or their Russian partners are adding to the violence of the civil conflict.

³⁷ ("The Last Emir?: AQIM's Decline in the Sahel," 2020)



§A3.1 The Kel Tamashek and Revolution in Azawad.

The enmity between the ruling majority populations in southern regions around Niamey Niger, Bamako Mali, and Ouagadougou Burkina Faso are rooted in conflict relationships that long predate Europe’s involvement as colonial powers. Both Mali and Niger were constructed by colonial writ that left African peoples in control of northern non-African peoples and both states have been nearly ungovernable since. The African governments in the south cannot rule without cooperation from the Sahelian Tamashek peoples, which denies these ruling regimes access to the vast natural resources underneath the Valley of Azawad. The families The Kel Tamashek of Mali and Niger are known as the Tuareg by westerners and Africans and are genetically related to the Tamazight people of North Africa, the Saharawi of the Western Sahara, and the Toubou/Gourane of the Tibesti Mountains in northern Chad. These peoples predate the Arab invasion of the 6th Century and are the African continent’s only indigenous Caucasoid peoples. They are thought to be the original inhabitants of the Sahara Desert and its Sahelian transition zone that extends from Mauritania to western Sudan and the South Libyan Desert. As an ethnic people, we theorise that the Tuareg possess an altered genetic³⁸ makeup that allows them to survive and thrive in the geology, geography, and climate of the desert and transition zones.³⁹ The map in **figure 17** is a rough layout of the Tuareg peoples of Azawad. The internal name of the people is Kel (followers of) Tamashek in



Figure 17 Rough depiction of the Tuareg peoples of Azawad.

³⁸ Epigenetics theory is that the human body can change its composition in a single generation for survival, and pas that altered DNA to subsequent offspring.

³⁹ While theoretical, my doctoral research formulated that the Tuareg possess an enhanced geospatial orientation that allows for navigation across vast spaces and distances without dependence on artificial navigation. Other theoretical formulations include epigenetic changes to the bodies internal organs allowing them to breath air temperatures that would harm a non-desert acclimated collective.



Mali, Tamajek in Niger, and Tamahak in Algeria/Libya.⁴⁰ Tamashek is based on the root word of Amashek, which is a core concept term of honour, integrity, and ability to survive against all odds in order to prevent a condition known as Timogoutar, a psychosocial place of helplessness and hopelessness from which there is no ability to flee or fight. The feminine letter T is added to Amashek to create the name of their language, Tamashek. So, Kel Tamashek means people who follow or speak the Tamashek Language, which is the language of honour, integrity, etc. At the heart of Tuareg self-conceptualisation, this is the foundation on which all else rests on. The names of the sub-kels listed in **figure 21** are only approximate locations and are the most well-known to me as a field researcher of Tamashek psychosocial identity and motivations. Undoubtedly it is riddled with errors, but it is sufficient to illustrate their sociological structure. The Tuareg are partly a matriarchal and partly patriarchal social organisation which makes them a difficult target for patriarchal forms of mental extremization by Jihadists. The Tuareg follow a form of Islamic Sunni Sufism which incorporates many pre-Islamic traditions such as pre-marriage ceremonies and spirit possession rituals.⁴¹ Variations of Sunni Islamic thought such as these have made the Tuareg a target of Salafi VEOs over the past quarter century. Each of the sub-kels in **figure 21** have one or more hereditary leader called an Amenokal, equivalent to an Arab Sheikh or African tribal chief. The collective of this position is Amenokalen. The Kel is the basis for all social organisation and members pledge their lives to their fellow kin through a variety of lifelong rituals and storytelling that harbours their existential identity. The Tuareg of Niger and Mali have been in a chronic state of rebellion for most of the last 100 years against the French Colonial and subsequent African governments ruling the greater Azawad region of the central Sahel from capitals in Bamako and Niamey. Beginning in 1916, the Tuareg revolted against French rule for two years, after which, the colonial government crushed the rebellion with overwhelming force and extreme brutality. Follow on colonial governments learned from the stubbornness of the rebellion and granted them a degree of autonomy, which translated into 'we left them alone and they stopped revolting.'⁴² Memory of the revolt and the killings in its wake remain fresh in the minds of modern Tuareg, to whom it is seen as both part of a large anti-colonial struggle, and amongst some as part of the post-independence struggle for autonomy from the existing governments of Niger and Mali. In the 1960s and beyond, Uranium, petroleum, natural gas, gold, and silver again drove Niamey and Bamako based governments to move into the Tuareg homelands with predictable results. The first rebellion began in 1962 and lasted for almost 3 years before

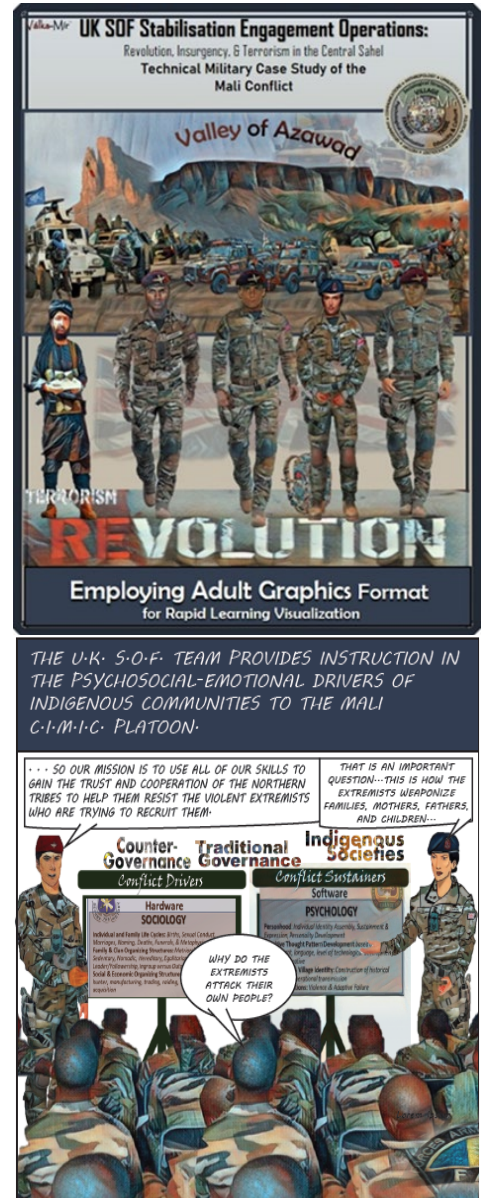


Figure 18 Graphic Adult Textbook for training western and host nation audiences.

⁴⁰ This reflects slight variations in the grammatical pronunciation of the language, see Jeffery Heath's Grammer Tamashek Grammer Textbook. (Heath, 2005)
⁴¹ (S. J. Rasmussen, 1995)
⁴² Ag Mohammed Wau Teguidda Kaocen (1880–1919) was the Tuareg leader of the rising against the French. An adherent to the militantly anti-French Sanusiya Sufi religious order, Kaocen was the Amenokal (chief) of the Ikazkazan Tuareg confederation. The revolt led by Kaocen was just one episode in a history of recurring conflict between some Tuareg confederations and the French. In 1911, a rising of Firhoun, Amenokal of Ouelimaden was crushed in Ménaka, only to reappear in northeast Mali after his escape from French custody in 1916. Many Tuareg groups had continually fought the French (and the Italians after their 1911 invasion of Libya) since their arrival in the last decade of the 19th century. Others were driven to revolt by the severe drought of the years 1911–14, by French taxation and seizure of camels to aid other conquests, and by French abolition of the slave trade, leading many previously subservient settled communities of the area to themselves revolt against traditional rule and taxation by the nomadic Tuareg.



a resource sharing agreement was reached. Breaches of Tuareg sovereignty and homelands sparked more rebellions in 1990 which lasted for around 5-years, then again in 2007 another rebellion lasted for 3 years, followed by rebellions in 2012 that have continued to the present day. Events that led up to this long string of rebellions often included military overthrow of elected governance in favour of an African tribal military junta that waged total war against Tuareg. The degree of antipathy between Tuareg and African of Mali and Niger has always been significant, despite an array of intercultural programs of tolerance and acceptance funded by USAID, EUCAP-SAHEL, and the African Union in

Universities and high schools. An important program that I implemented at the United States Africa Command's Senior OIC for Special Operations Programs was the development of Mali and Niger Army Civil Affairs Companies that worked to restore damaged intercultural relationships that were contributing to the destabilisation of the northern regions, usually driven by violent extremist organisations seeking to weaponize the civilian population against the formal governments. **Figure 5, figure 18,** and most of the **figures** below, are from a novel-type of textbook that I created for co-

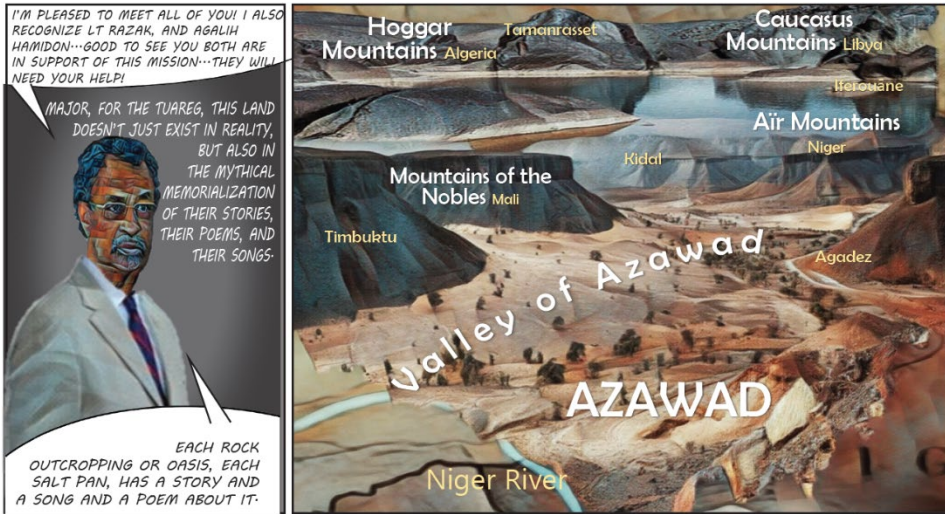


Figure 19 Graphic panels from page 10 of UK SOF Textbook.

training Mali-Niger, UK, US, and Canadian special operations forces on how to conduct non-kinetic civil military operations in both countries' northern reaches. I constructed the textbook from an in-depth research effort in the Central Sahel with the tribes of the Kel Tamashek, Dogon, and Fulani in Northern Niger and Mali. Every word and image was captured during actual civil engagements with the tribes and peoples of Mali, recorded with their permission and with the permission of the former civilian government's ministry of education prior to its fall to a rouge military force. The English version of the full 50-page textbook can be accessed in Flipbook® format at <http://online.flipbuilder.com/qhsuk/scqj/>.⁴³ Many of the intricacies of ethnic conflicts between Dogon hunter-farmers against Fulani nomadic pastoralists are explained in comic book format in French and English that the Malian and Nigeriennes found easy to understand in terms of causes and effects. With the two coups des états, most, or all those host nation soldiers whom I trained were either discharged or arrested because of their close interaction with UK, US, and Canadian SOF. Niger recently had a cultural electoral breakthrough when an Arab-Toubou from the northern territories was elected President of the Republic in 2021, only to be overthrown by an African tribal junta, defiant of allowing Arabs, Tuareg, or Toubou politicians social space in the country's capital. The relationship of the Tuareg peoples in Mali and in Niger with their respective

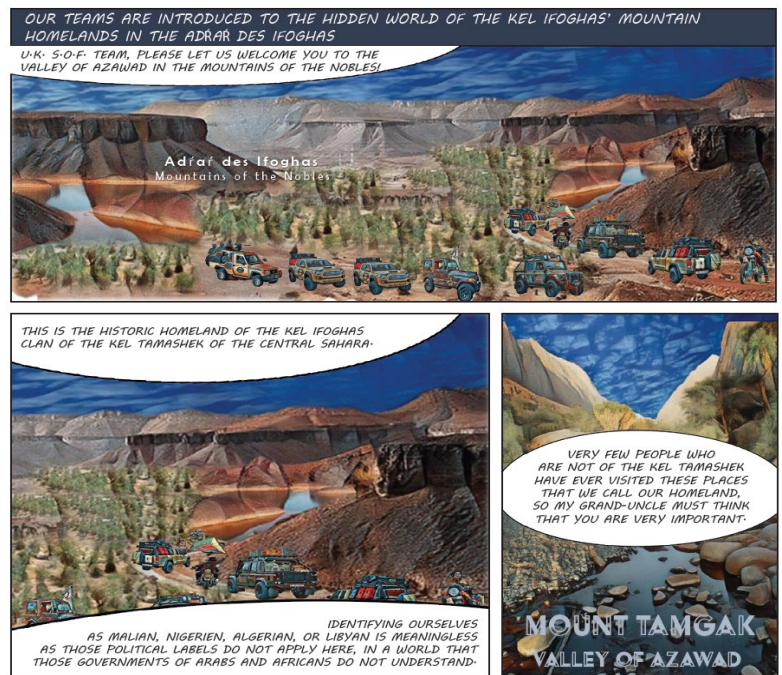


Figure 20 Graphic panels from page 32 of the UK SOF Textbook

⁴³ The original field research used to construct this case study is available at the following URL: Between Warrior and Helplessness in the Valley of Azawad - The struggle of the Kel Tamashek in the war of the Sahel https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss_dcar_etd/22/



African governments is inseparable. The military coup de état in Niger followed Mali's and Burkina Faso's. The Valley of Azawad on the other hand, is inseparable from the Tuareg of Niger (Kel Tamajek), Mali (Kel Tamashek), and Algeria/Libya (Kel Tamahak).⁴⁴ Figures 19 and 20 offer a graphic visualisation of the Tuareg homelands of Azawad that are bounded by a type of mountain called a Massif, rock protrusions that can rise a thousand meters from the surface of the desert floor and extend horizontally for kilometres. Inside are lake and stream filled crevices large enough to house an entire city and invisible to outsiders except by air. The Tuareg have used their mountain-massif hideouts to defeat all attempts at dispersing them and dissolving their grip on the Sahara and the Sahelian reaches they inhabit. The antipathy I wrote about earlier, originates within the African ethnic communities of Bambara, Hausa, and others because of historical memories over phenotype (racial black versus white), archetype (social position servant versus warrior), and social organisation (freeman versus slave). This antipathy amplifies itself in governments in Bamako and Niamey from a sense of frustration that these relatively small numbers of Tuareg can continue to defy their best attempts at subduing them, even with western assistance. And when the western assistance employs a conflict resolution-based form of countering intractable violence, parts of the host nation officer corps begin to allege that we are rewarding these population segments for their bad behaviour. Instead, they argue, the Tuareg, the Dogon, the Fulani, and any other group causing the government problems, should be punished by a kinetic army, not coddled by civil affairs. We were able to push back with the elected civilian leadership and contain this type of action, but we ultimately ran out of time.

§A3.2 The Descent into Ethnic Cleansing in Mali and Niger.

The pressures from the growing violent extremists succeeded in breaking up the social tissue faster than we could repair or shore it up. This, combined with the presence of Russian advisors suggesting that our approach was unfair to the African majority, finally erupted in first the 2020 coup, followed quickly by the 2021 overthrow of legitimate governance in Mali, followed by Burkina Faso and Niger, in quick succession. The Tuareg, meanwhile, became the target of virulent retribution once the French, American, British, and Canadian advisors were ejected from the country and Russia's new African Corps became the only advisors and military partners of the juntas. To be fair, the Dogon hunter-farmers and Fulani herdsmen who had organised self defense militias, also received vengeful treatment from the new African Mali – Russian military force as they attempted to use cauterising violence to snuff out the civilian's participation in violence against the government.⁴⁵ What this looks like in practice is described by the few survivors of a Mali Army/Russian search and destroy mission.⁴⁶ One woman from the town of Moura, near the city of Mopti, described a 5-day military operation in March 2022, that sought to quell the violence between the Dogon Farmers and the Fulani pastoralists using only kinetic actions. Malian soldiers and Russian Wagner Group mercenaries launched a five-day assault in March 2022.⁴⁷



Figure 21 Mali Army soldiers collecting trophies of human victim body parts of Tuareg civilians. Video available on TikTok.

“After days of slaughtering men, the Malian troops and Wagner fighters turned their attention to Moura’s women. Soldiers searched our house for men but found none. They returned the next evening and a white man with tattoos raped me. After that, I was injured in my genital area. When I tried to resist, the other soldier came in with my son

⁴⁴ (Heath, 2005)

⁴⁵ (AFP, 2022; RFI & AFP Staff, 2022)

⁴⁶ (Caravanserai and AFP Staff, 2022)

⁴⁷ (HRW Staff, 2024)

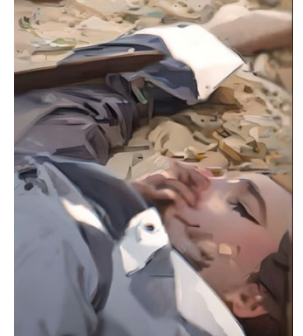


and threatened to hurt him, until I gave in. That night, at approximately 8 p.m., four soldiers brought two women to my house and raped them. The next day, soldiers made the town's women gather on a blazing hot riverbank, where four pregnant women went into labour. Only one baby survived, and I was told that 26 women were raped during the massacre."⁴⁸



Figure 22 Videos of Mali soldiers in a Tuareg village near Kidal, in the vicinity of the Mountains of the Nobles, Mali.

United Nations investigators⁴⁹ have determined that Malian soldiers and Wagner fighters are sexually assaulting Malian women to spread terror as a counterinsurgency practice. The report to the U.N. Security Council warned that the sexual violence is “systematic,” according to Reuters. In November 2022, Wagner fighters raided the village of Nia Oura, also in the Mopti region.⁵⁰ A 23-year-old woman told The Daily Beast that she was knocked unconscious by a Wagner fighter who hit her in the head with a gun after she refused to undress. When she awoke, she was lying naked on the ground beside several other women who also were undressed. “We were surrounded by white soldiers,” the woman said. “Some of them were holding phones and taking photographs of us.”⁵¹ About 12 women and girls were sexually assaulted that day, according to a man who escaped the massacre.^{52 53} The Russian and Mali soldiers, however, were just getting started on their punishment of the civilian population for opposition to the government, real or suspected.⁵⁴ The images below were taken from some of the videos that are surfacing on social media, sometimes from the perpetrators themselves on TikTok, and Instagram.⁵⁵ These videos are real, I have had to watch them to authenticate them for NATO’s investigators to whom I reported them to. This involved studying the uniforms and equipment of the perpetrators and closely comparing them against my reference photographs of equipment that the western alliance had provided to the Mali Army. Next, my Tamashek research assistants and I reviewed the geography and geology to locate the most likely area of Azawad that this had taken place; the features and clothing of the victims to ascertain their likely sub-kel that we could compare to recent attacks for positive correlation.



⁴⁸ Interview of a female survivor of the Moura massacre by the International Federation for Human Rights.

⁴⁹ The sanctions monitors include: a U.N. panel of experts, Tuareg former rebels in northern Mali, international advocacy organization Human Rights Watch, and the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

⁵⁰ (Doxsee & THompson, 2022)

⁵¹ (Jason Burke in Johannesburg and Emmanuel Akinwotu in Lagos, 2022; Turse, 2023b)

⁵² (ADF STAFF, 2023)

⁵³ (Turse, 2023a)

⁵⁴ (Doxsee & THompson, 2022)

⁵⁵ These videos, photos and reports are sent to me daily from my friends, colleagues and research assistants still in Mali and Niger. The effort to continue sorting through and analyzing these videos, photos, and reports is difficult work. Should anyone in the UK Home Office desire to review these graphic videos for themselves, I would be pleased to provide them electronically without any obligation other than they have to view them personally.



These and other attacks against the Tuareg and other northern peoples do not occur in a vacuum. Horrified families of butchered civilians and raped women and children must wash and bury the dead while dealing with the overwhelming trauma of the victims and the surviving families. The emotional energy that this alienation, shame, and rage brings to the next battle escalates the conflict into a spiral of death and destruction that have not been witnessed in Azawad in more than a century. For the governments in Bamako and Niamey, all Tuareg are members or supporters of the MNLA. Those Tuareg that still live in Niamey and Bamako do so because of their wealth and purchased mediation-intercession with the military junta. This assertion is based on my weekly and monthly video calls with my Tamashek friends and colleagues there. The remainder hide or flee to escape the impotent rage of the Russian and Mali soldiers who suffer at the hands of Tuareg militias. The Tuareg peoples in Diaspora view the current plight of their kin in Azawad as an existential crisis. Support for those seeking to flee is equalled by financial and material support that is funnelled to Tamashek families in Niger and Mali.



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