



جامعة جورجتاون
كلية الشؤون الدولية في قطر

Model United Nations

Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar

I. ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC):

Under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council also recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and the admission of new Members to the United Nations. And, together with the General Assembly, it elects the judges of the International Court of Justice.

Security Council Resolution 1674, adopted on 28 April 2006, "reaffirms the provisions of paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document regarding the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity". The resolution commits the Council to take action to protect civilians in an armed conflict. The Security Council's role in implementing the responsibility to protect is not limited to taking collective action against mass atrocities (pillar three of the responsibility to protect), but it can also make important contributions to structural and operational prevention of genocide, war, crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (pillar two of the responsibility to protect).¹

¹ "The UN Security Council and the Responsibility to Protect – Policy, Process, and Practice – 39th IPI Vienna Seminar" (PDF). Retrieved 16.05.2013.

II. THE CASE OF THE CONFLICT IN NORTHERN MALI: AN OVERVIEW

Since 16 January 2012, several insurgent groups have been fighting a campaign against the Malian government for independence or greater autonomy for northern Mali, an area known as Azawad. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), an organization fighting to make Azawad an independent homeland for the Tuareg people, had taken control of the region by April 2012.

On 22 March 2012, President Amadou Toumani Touré was ousted in a coup d'état over his handling of the crisis, a month before a presidential election was to have taken place. Mutinous soldiers, calling themselves the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State (CNRDR), took control and suspended the constitution of Mali. As a consequence of the instability following the coup, Mali's three largest northern cities were overrun by the rebels on three consecutive days.² On 5 April 2012, after the capture of Douentza, the MNLA said that it had accomplished its goals and called off its offensive. The following day, it proclaimed Azawad's independence from Mali.³

The MNLA were initially backed by the Islamist group Ansar Dine. After the Malian military was driven from Azawad, Ansar Dine and a number of smaller Islamist groups began imposing strict Sharia law. The MNLA and Islamists struggled to reconcile their conflicting visions for an intended new state. Afterwards, the MNLA began fighting against Ansar el Dine and other Islamist groups, including Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA/MUJAO), a splinter group of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. By 17 July 2012, the MNLA had lost control of most of northern Mali's cities to the Islamists.

The government of Mali asked for foreign military help to re-take the north. On 11 January 2013, the French military began operations against the Islamists. Forces from other African Union states were deployed shortly after. By 8 February, the Islamist-held territory had been re-taken by the Malian military, with help from the international coalition. Tuareg separatists have continued to fight the Islamists as well, although the MNLA has also been accused of carrying out attacks against the Malian military.

² Serge Daniel (4 April 2012). "Mali junta denounces 'rights violations' by rebels". Google. *Agence France-Presse*. Retrieved: 17.05.2013.

³ "Tuareg rebels declare the independence of Azawad, north of Mali". Al Arabiya. 6 April 2012. Retrieved: 17.05.2013.

III. FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT OF AZAWAD:

In the early 1990s Tuareg and Arab nomads formed the Mouvement Populaire de l'Azaouad/Azawad People's Movement (MPA) and declared war for independence of Azawad. Despite peace agreements with the government of Mali in 1991 and 1995 a growing dissatisfaction among the former Tuareg fighters, who had been integrated into the Military of Mali, led to new fighting in 2007. Despite historically having difficulty maintaining alliances between secular and Islamist factions the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad allied itself with the Islamist groups Ansar el Dine and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and began the 2012 Northern Mali conflict.

The MNLA was an offshoot of a political movement known as the National Movement for Azawad (MNA) prior to the insurgency. After the end of the Libyan civil war, an influx of weaponry led to the arming of the Tuareg in their demand for independence for the Azawad. The strength of this uprising and the use of heavy weapons, which were not present in the previous conflicts, were said to have "surprised" Malian officials and observers.

Though dominated by Tuaregs, the MNLA stated that they represented other ethnic groups as well, and were reportedly joined by some Arab leaders. The MNLA's leader Bilal Ag Acherif said that the onus was on Mali to either give the Saharan peoples their self-determination or they would take it themselves.

Another Tuareg-dominated group, the Islamist Ansar Dine (Defenders of Faith), initially fought alongside the MNLA against the government. Unlike the MNLA, it did not seek independence but rather the imposition of Islamic law (Sharia) across Mali. The movement's leader Iyad Ag Ghaly was part of the early 1990s rebellion and has been reported to be linked to an offshoot of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) that is led by his cousin Hamada Ag Hama^[116] as well as Algeria's Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité (DRS).

Mali was going through several crises at once that favored the rise of the conflict:

- State crisis: the establishment of a Tuareg state has been a long-term goal of the MNLA, since it began a rebellion in 1962. Thereafter, Mali has been in a constant struggle to maintain its territory.

- Food crisis: Mali's economy has an extreme dependence on outside assistance, which has led Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to blockade, to subdue the military junta.
- Political crisis: The mutiny led to the fall of the president.

IV. CURRENT SITUATION: POLITICAL AND SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS:

Mali is confronted by a profound crisis with serious political, security, socioeconomic, humanitarian and human rights consequences. At stake are the country's national unity, territorial integrity and its tradition as a multi-ethnic, secular democracy. The crisis stems from long-standing structural conditions such as weak State institutions; ineffective governance; fragile social cohesion; deep-seated feelings among communities in the north of being neglected, marginalized and unfairly treated by the central Government; a weak and externally dependent, albeit vibrant, civil society; and the effects of environmental degradation, climate change and economic shocks.

These conditions were exacerbated by more recent factors of instability. Domestically, the Malian ruling elite was perceived in many quarters as guilty of corruption, nepotism and abuse of power. Within the armed forces, especially among the rank and file, a widespread sense developed that the central Government had neglected its obligations, diverting significant resources from the counterinsurgency efforts in the north to enrich a few corrupt senior officers. The capacity of the military units deployed in the north thus became progressively weakened as a result of poor logistics, inoperable equipment and low morale.

Immediately after the coup, on 27 March, the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) appointed the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, to mediate in the crisis. They also announced the activation of a 3,000-strong ECOWAS standby force to be used if the rebels refused to accept a peaceful solution to the conflict in the north. On 6 April, the military junta and ECOWAS signed a framework agreement that led to the resignation of the then

President, Amadou Toumani Touré, on 8 April and the appointment of the Speaker of the National Assembly, Dioncounda Traoré, as interim President on 12 April. The agreement provided for the establishment of a transitional Government, headed by a prime minister with executive powers, who would be responsible for organizing the elections — initially scheduled for March 2012 — and for addressing the security and humanitarian crisis in the north. It also provided for an amnesty law to be adopted by the parliament for the members of the junta. It failed, however, to address such important issues as the timeline for the transition, the modalities for the organization of the elections and the role of the junta during the transition. On 17 April, Cheick Modibo Diarra was appointed interim Prime Minister.

Various armed groups, including terrorist and affiliated entities, continue to control northern Mali. They reportedly have some 3,000 core combatants and are recruiting more, especially among children. They are well armed, with relatively sophisticated equipment obtained from Libya and weapons captured from the Malian armed forces. Drug traffickers and other criminal elements have also established themselves in these regions and are building relationships of cooperation with the terrorist groups. The towns of Douentza, Gao, Menaka, Ansongo and Gourma are currently under the control of MUJAO, which largely comprises foreign fighters. Timbuktu and Tessalit are both under the control of AQIM, while Kidal is controlled by Ansar Dine. AQIM has destroyed a number of holy, historic and cultural sites in Timbuktu, including some listed as World Heritage sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. AQIM has established Islamic police in Dire, Goundam and Douentza and MUJAO has done so in Gao. MUJAO is supported by combatants from the terrorist group Boko Haram, which is active in Nigeria. Ansar Dine is also reported to have ties to Boko Haram. These groups have created a context in which most cultural and recreational activities are prohibited, thus rejecting and combating the cultural identities and undermining the social fabric of the communities of the north. The groups reportedly support one another's efforts to retain control of the occupied regions, as demonstrated by the assistance provided by AQIM to MUJAO in repelling the recent attempts by MNLA to retake Gao.

V. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The complex crisis requires a multifaceted and integrated response in which the political, security, humanitarian and human rights dimensions are well coordinated and mutually reinforcing. The challenges facing Mali also need to be seen in the broader context of a deeply stressed Sahel region. Some of the underlying causes of the current crisis are indigenous to Mali. Others, however, including adverse climate and ecological changes, disaffected local populations, transnational terrorism and organized crime, affect the entire region. The problems of Mali cannot be solved in a lasting manner without maintaining a sharp focus on the Sahel.

A military operation may be required as a last resort to deal with the most hardline extremist and criminal elements in the north. Before that stage is reached, however, the focus must be on initiating a broad-based and inclusive political dialogue aimed at forging national consensus around a road map for the transition and at addressing the long-standing grievances of the Tuaregs and other communities in the north.

The recent threat of military intervention, in addition to some other developments, appears to have rendered some groups in the north more amenable to dialogue. The authorities must take advantage of this window of opportunity to put in place a credible framework for negotiations with those who are willing to distance themselves from terrorism. Authorities should be called upon to address seriously the legitimate concerns of Malian citizens in the north, with a view to fostering their full participation in the national institutions of governance and the decision-making process.

The political process must focus on four core objectives: broad-based and inclusive political dialogue aimed at formulating a road map for the transition; negotiations with armed groups in the north that renounce terrorism; preparations for the holding of elections; and promoting national reconciliation. Nevertheless, divisions persist among Malians on how to achieve these objectives. While the transitional authorities and other stakeholders agree in general terms with these priorities, they differ on the details of implementation. Influential opposition groups consider that, to date, the preparations for the national dialogue have not been sufficiently inclusive or transparent and are threatening a boycott of the entire political process until their concerns are addressed. It is an impending concern that the launch of the national dialogue has been postponed owing to a lack of consensus among key political actors in Bamako on its format and composition. It is imperative that this important forum begin its work without further delay.

Should the Council authorize the support mission, it is essential that the Council play an active role in ensuring that African-led and Malian forces engaged in any military offensives in the north are held fully accountable for their actions. It is recommended that in any relevant resolution the Council request the African Union to report to it on a regular basis on the activities of the support mission. As part of this accountability process, it may be advisable for the Council to request the African Union and the Malian authorities to meet specific benchmarks for the commencement of offensive operations, including the demonstrated operational readiness of the Malian forces and the support mission; positive developments in the political process on the part of, primarily, the leadership in Bamako; and the effective training of military and police personnel of both the support mission and the Malian forces in their obligations under international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law.

Any support provided by the United Nations to the support mission or the Malian armed forces would have to be in strict compliance with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy, which is intended to contribute to the protection of civilians while enhancing the effectiveness of non-United Nations security forces that receive United Nations support. Under the policy, United Nations support cannot be provided where there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of the receiving entities committing grave violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law and where the relevant authorities fail to take the necessary corrective or mitigating measures. The United Nations would have to carry out such a risk assessment and identify relevant mitigating measures as soon as possible and, in any case, before support is provided. Such support would also need to comply with United Nations defense sector reform policy, which highlights parameters for the provision of United Nations direct or indirect assistance to defense sector institutions.⁴

⁴ Ban Ki-moon, "Report of the secretary general on the situation in Mali", United Nations Reports. Published 28.11.2012. Retrieved: 19.05.2013.

VI. FURTHER INDEPENDENT RESEARCH:

- Resolution 2085 (2012) Adopted by the Security Council at its 6898th meeting, on 20 December 2012 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N12/660/67/PDF/N1266067.pdf?OpenElement>
- United Nations Mali portfolio, providing reports, resolutions and other supplementary material: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusRel.asp?infocusID=150&Body=+Mali+&Body1=>
- Presidential speeches regarding the conflict: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/docs.asp?Topic=Mali&Type=Presidential%20statement>