

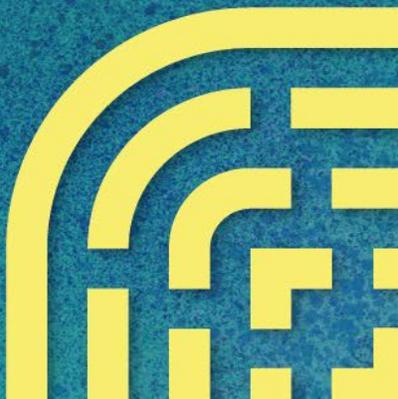
Mali Country Report

Risks from the EU's Southern
Border

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report details the unique challenges posed to the external action of the EU and its member states by Mali, a land-locked country in West Africa spanning mountainous, desert, and tropical terrains. Historical, geographic, economic, and contemporary socio-political factors have created vast areas of limited statehood (ALS) in Mali. Although non-state and international actors have partly replaced the Malian government reasonably well in some of these areas, fostering effective governance in areas of limited statehood like Mali remains a critical challenge for EU foreign policy. Figure 1 highlights Mali's location relative to the European continent—albeit removed geographically from Europe, Mali connects to Europe via land and sea routes. Moreover, Mali has struggled with the rise of domestic and transnational non-state actors that have sought to upend the existing political and legal order. Whereas some of these actors fundamentally question the legitimacy of the concept of a liberal international order with secular, democratic states, others merely reject the authority of certain segments of the Malian government. Both sources of contested orders (CO) present significant hurdles for the EU. The challenge incumbent upon EU foreign policy is to foster conditions in which contestation can occur peacefully within a liberal democratic framework that does not contribute to the breakdown of governance or violent conflict.

Figure 1: Mali (red) relative to Europe. Source: Author's own illustration.



Areas of limited statehood and contested orders in Mali are unlikely to diminish substantially in the foreseeable future. They create vulnerabilities on Europe's southern border and pose substantial risks to the internal and external security as well as economy prosperity of the EU and its member states. However, it is important to note



that these risks in and of themselves do not necessarily translate into immediate security threats for the EU and its citizens. Despite the persistence of areas of limited statehood and contested orders—perhaps *because* of it—it is critical for the EU to understand the conditions under which security threats to Europe are likely develop in Mali. The main purpose of this report is to identify tipping points that are likely to cause governance breakdowns and violent conflict in Mali.

This report advances three sets of arguments. First, the illicit drug trade flowing from South America, global migration patterns to Europe, the rise of transnational Islamic extremist organization, and the diffuse effects of climate change pose substantial risks to stability in areas of limited statehood and contested orders in Mali. Second, social resilience stemming from social trust, institutional design, and, to a lesser extent, the empirical legitimacy of governance actors is likely to help Malian society sustain good and effective governance at the local (sub-national), national, and regional level. Third, despite the presence of these sources of resilience, the identified risks are likely to affect three tipping points leading to governance breakdown and/or violent conflict in Mali: the withdrawal of international forces in Mali, military abuse of power, and droughts.

The report begins with an overview of areas of limited statehood and contested orders in Mali. It then identifies the explicit risks to the security and stability of the EU, its member states, and its citizens posed by ALS and CO in Mali. As the report documents, the risks are substantial and suggest the unique challenges that Europe faces on its southern border. Yet, as the subsequent section discusses, there are also significant sources of resilience in Mali. These are likely to mitigate somewhat the emergence of tipping points that will lead to government breakdown and violent conflict. Next, the report reviews the efforts of existing external actors in Mali focusing specifically on France, the United Nations, and the European Union. Then, the report analyses these factors in conjunction in the context of predicting eventual tipping points that can lead to governance breakdown and violent conflict in Mali. A final section concludes with a summary of the discussion and policy recommendations for external actors like the European Union.

2. AREAS OF LIMITED STATEHOOD AND CONTESTED ORDERS IN MALI

2.1 Historical Background

The French conquered the territory of present-day Mali in the late 19th century, with the first major victory coming in 1888 and the final victory over the Tuareg ethnic group in the North in 1894 (Lecocq 2010). The French governed Mali as part of various configurations of its West African empire via both direct and indirect rule. France sent colonial administrators to the southern part of the country, south of the Saharan desert, to govern the country directly. Simultaneously, the French government granted



significant autonomy to Tuareg clan confederations in the North (Lecocq 2010, Lecocq and Klute 2013). Throughout its colonial history, the French relied on Malian soldiers from the South to serve in its campaigns abroad—in World War I, World War II, Indochina, Algeria. Malians continue to perceive of this military service as a “blood debt” that France has yet to repay to Mali (Mann 2006). The transition from a French colony to an independent Republic of Mali was slow and gradual rather than quick and definitive, culminating in a peaceful separation from France in 1960 (Chafer 2002).

2.1.1 Tuareg-Mande Relations and the First Tuareg Rebellion (1963-1964)

From the very inception of Mali as a state until the present, relations between the Tuareg ethnic minority, numbering about 1.5 million primarily in the northern part of the country, and Mali's dominant southern ethnic groups (i.e., Mandé) have pervaded Malian politics. Immediate post-colonial Mandé Malian leaders emphasized Mandé culture and history, even taking the name of the new state from the legendary, pre-colonial Mandé-based Mali Empire. From education to the arts, Malian society became Mandé society (Snyder 1967, Jones 1972). Shortly before independence from France, the Malian central government promised the Tuareg their own independent state, also known as “Azawad” (Lecocq 2010). Not only did Mali's independence not bring about this state, but the new government sought to transform political life in the North in order to align with the Mandé Malian vision of the state. These postcolonial Malian government policies toward the Tuareg created a tipping point that led to a civil war in 1963. Explicitly in response to grievances stemming from Mandé-focused nationbuilding policies, the leaders of the powerful Tuareg clan confederation Kel Adagh launched the first Tuareg rebellion against the government (Lecocq 2010). Although the rebellion was brutally—and effectively—put down by Malian military, the legacies of the rebellion, known among Tuareg as the *Alfellaga*, loom large in contemporary Malian history.

2.1.2 Second Tuareg Rebellion (1990-1996) and the National Pact

After intermittent fighting with little progress for most of the independence period, the Tuareg launched a second full-scale rebellion in 1990. The trigger for the fighting was the return of battle-hardened Tuareg soldiers from military campaigns abroad. The decades between the two rebellion featured severe droughts that hit Tuareg communities, localized in arid terrain, especially hard. Politically, central Malian governments had done little to integrate the Tuareg or to help them overcome decades of financial hardship. However, the memory of the 1963-64 rebellion deterred many from taking any sort of political action (Lecocq 2010, Pezard and Shurkin 2015). Instead, Tuareg sought economic opportunities elsewhere. Many Tuareg men sought work abroad in Muammar Qaddafi's Islamic Legion. Having gained real-life fighting experience abroad, these Tuareg came back in 1990 to use violence against the Malian government to secure their political goals (Boilley 1999, Pezard and Shurkin 2015). One



of the primary leaders of the rebellion was Iyad ag-Ghaly, a Tuareg soldier with substantial experience fighting abroad who remains a key leader in the current rebellion. The rebellion culminated in the 1991 Tamanrasset settlement and the 1992 National Pact, though the fighting ended only in earnest in 1996. These accords were meant to ensure the gradual decentralization of authority over the Tuareg away from Bamako, the capital in the South, toward the Tuareg in the North. Although they did not give the Tuareg their own state, the agreements preserved the Malian state and gave substantial autonomy to the Tuareg (Wing 2008).

In general, the government succeeded in decentralizing governance—Mali increased its third-order districts (*communes*) from 19 in 1992 to 703 in 1999. Successful local elections were held in these *communes* in 1998 and 1999 (Wing and Kassibo 2014). However, the government did a poor job implementing the non-political provisions of the 1992 National Pact. Specifically, the government did not integrate former combatants into the Malian army, making security-sector reform impossible while leaving many capable Tuareg fighters unemployed and occupied. Although these efforts seemed superficially successful since 1,500 Tuareg were given civilian or military positions, very few of these were actual combatants (Wing 2013). Moreover, disarmament efforts also failed, leaving much of this population armed (Pezard and Shurkin 2015).

2.1.3 Third Tuareg Rebellion (2006-2009) and the Algiers Accord

Tuareg veterans from the rebellion in the 1990s, aggrieved by the partial implementation of the 1992 National Pact, started a new rebellion in 2006. The Malian government, eager to quell the fighting, signed the Algiers Accord in 2006, which re-iterated many of the terms of the 1992 National Pact (Wing 2013, Pezard and Shurkin 2015). The fighting ultimately lasted only from May-July 2006. However, a splinter group continued fighting until 2009. By 2009, Malian government counter-insurgency efforts and integration efforts via the Algiers Accord had reduced the support for the splinter group. Finally, the emergence of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM) in the North forced the Malian government to decentralize power since it needed the support of Tuareg clans to secure the North and prevent AQIM from establishing a stronghold (Rabasa, Gordon et al. 2011).

2.1.4 Fourth Tuareg Rebellion (2012-Present)

Ultimately, the Malian government failed to stop Tuareg separatism and the emergence of AQIM as a source of large-scale violence. In January 2012, Tuareg separatists launched a new rebellion against the government. As with the previous rebellions, the core grievance driving the rebels was lack of inclusion and autonomy for Tuareg in the North. As had been the case following the end of the conflict from 1990-1996, small and



large arms were ubiquitous in Northern Mali, following failed disarmament from previous rebellions (Pezard and Shurkin 2015).

In addition, four tipping points led to the escalation of violence. First, Tuareg gained new combat experience from the civil war in Libya. Second, the Tuareg formed a new liberation movement, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), which organized disparate discontent and took charge of the Tuareg rebellion. Third, Islamic Extremists in North Africa and the Sahel focused their attention on Northern Mali. Fourth, increased government corruption and domestic dissatisfaction with the Malian government among Mande groups in the South led to a coup d'etat that substantially weakened the government and reduced its ability to fight the ongoing rebellion.

Many Tuareg had fought in the Libyan civil war. Although analysts disagree about whether this is the primary driver of the 2012 violence, it is certainly a key tipping point. These Tuareg fighters returned from the civil war in Libya with more arms and experience (Shurkin 2014). In addition, AQIM ran a series of convoys from Libya to northern Mali to protect weaponry from confiscation (Lecocq, Mann et al. 2013). Bolstered by leadership ties and weaponry from Libya, the MNLA turned against the government and allied with Malian Islamist groups—primarily Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), a more radical organization known for using terror tactics like suicide bombings—and AQIM to escalate the war against the government in the North in January 2012. Up until this point, Tuareg-led violence had been sporadic since the end of the Third Tuareg Rebellion (Pezard and Shurkin 2015). However, after January 2012, the MNLA-led offensive led to a drastic increase in the frequency and intensity of fighting. This strategy by the MNLA leadership—to ally with the same extremists they had fought against in the later stages of the 2006-2009—counted on its ability to control extremists and that extremists would be less powerful than the Malian government. Although both the separatist MNLA and the extremist alliance of MUJAO, AJIM, and Ansar Dine shared the goal of ejecting the Malian government and military from the North, they disagreed over what tactics to use and how far to extend military operations (Lecocq, Mann et al. 2013). These divisions would ultimately dissolve this temporary alliance.



al. 2013). By the end of 2012, Mali was effectively partitioned with the government only controlling the South and the North under full rebel control (see Figure 2).

2.1.5 External Intervention

On January 10th, 2013, the Islamist extremists attacked Konna, a strategically located town just north of the capital of Bamako. The attack prompted the French government to intervene with a small military force in order to repel the extremist advance (Shurkin 2014). The resulting mission, Operation Serval, succeed in pushing the extremists north. In February 2013, the European Union launched a multinational military mission (EUTM) to train the Malian military. In April 2013, the United Nations Security Council authorized the deployment of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation, MINUSMA, operating under a Chapter VII mandate (Marchal 2013, Olsen 2014). In August 2014, France replaced Operation Serval with Operation Barkhane, a transnational counter-insurgency effort (Wing 2016). Section 5 of this report discusses the French presence as well as the UN and EU peacebuilding operations that followed it in greater detail.

Though the Islamic extremists fled north following the French military intervention , corrupt rule, underprovision of social services, and damaged infrastructure lingered as critical governance issues even as the government consolidated intervention gains into peace (Wing 2013). As the extremist attacks in Bamako on the Radisson Blu hotel on November 20th, 2015 and on the EU training mission on March 21st, 2016 demonstrate, peace remains fragile throughout the country. Although the major Tuareg (i.e. non-jihadist extremist) armed groups signed a peace accord in June 2015, fighting continues in the North and Southerners express frequent frustration with the separatist movement(s). The Malian government continues to categorically deny the right to a separate Tuareg state. As the Malian minister for national reconciliation said on the eve of the signing of the agreement: “the people of Azawad [the Tuareg state] as an entity does not exist. This concept does not exist.” By contrast, for Tuareg Malians, post-colonial governance by the central Bamako government—seen as dominated by the Mandé ethnic groups—is often contrasted (negatively) to colonial French rule.

Mali's status does not fit into traditional peace studies paradigms. On one hand, Mali could be counted as a success of negotiated settlement. War-time deaths and displacements have decreased since 2013. Extremist rebel groups---Mali's spoilers--- were excluded from an ostensibly successful national peace accord signed in 2015, the Algiers Accord. The main parties to the accord were the Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA), which is largely driven by the MNLA, the Tuareg separatist group that began the civil war, and the "Platform", a coalition of various militias and pro-government armed groups. On the other hand, Mali remains as dangerous as ever, especially for potential peace-builders and civilian populations. As this report describes

2.2 Areas of Limited Statehood in Mali

This report relies upon an *institutional* understanding of the state that conceptualizes the state as a structure of authority that sets and enforces rules and has a monopoly over the use of legitimate violence (Weber, 1978). Following from this framework, areas of limited statehood are those areas of a country

In which central authorities (national governments) lack the ability to implement and enforce central rules and decisions and/or in which they do not control the means of violence (Borzel and Risse, 2018: 9).

Central authorities' ability to implement and enforce rules as well as to control the monopoly of violence can be limited along four dimensions: 1.) territorial, that is, parts of a country's territorial space; 2) sectoral, that is, certain policy areas; 3.) social, that is, certain parts of the population; and 4.) temporal, that is, over certain periods of time.

2.2.1 Territorial

Figure 3: The 10 regions and capital district of Mali. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



The limits to Malian territorial authority can be divided according to three parts of the country: the North (Tombouctou, Kidal, Gao, Taoudénit, and Ménaka *regions*), the Centre (Mopti and Ségou *regions*), and the South (Sikasso, Koulikoro, and Kayes *regions* as well as the capital city, Bamako). Figure 3 displays a map of Mali by *regions*.

Central authorities in Mali, situated in Bamako in the South, lack the ability to uphold the rule of law in vast majorities of the North. Apart from the presence of armed groups, the

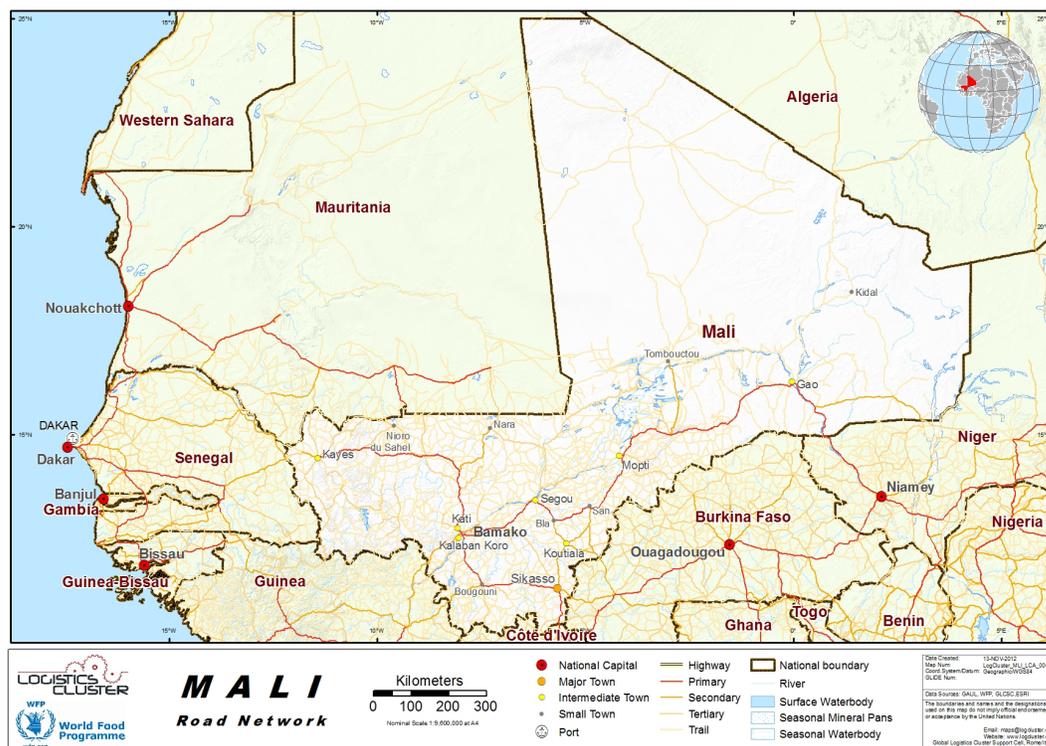


challenge for the Malian government is threefold: geographic, socio-political, and infrastructural. The Saharan desert covers Northern Mali, creating an arid climate that is almost impossible to govern. Making matters worse, substantial parts of the North, especially the Kidal region, is covered in mountainous terrain. Indeed, insurgent groups have frequently used the Adrar des Ifoghas mountains on the border with Algeria to hide out and launch attacks against the state, the French, and the UN (Lecocq and Klute 2013). Throughout Malian colonial history, the French had to rely on Tuareg clans to administer public goods and collect taxes in these areas (Imperato and Imperato 2008). The same is true of the central Malian state with the exception that they can rarely count on these clans to fulfil the tasks of service provision and tax collection (Lecocq 2010).

Moreover, vastness of Northern Mali alone creates a governance problem. The distance between Bamako and Kidal, the furthestmost regional capital, is around 1,500km, comparable to the distance between Berlin and Rome. Mali lacks any substantial infrastructure to help enforce the rule of law in the North. The lack of infrastructure is compounded by the tropical climate in and around the Niger Delta in Central Mali. A single highway—RN6—connects Bamako to the North through Mopti in Central Mali. This creates a lot of structural vulnerabilities for governance. During the height of the rainy season (August), Mopti averages more than 600mm of total precipitation, a figure comparable to Mumbai's monsoon season and greater than the average *annual* total precipitation of London. The rain very easily overwhelms existing roads, preventing any further resources from being martialled north (Berthe, Abdramane et al. 2015). As Figure 4 shows, the only roads that exist north of the city of Gao—including to Tombouctou, Taoudénit, Kidal, and Ménaka, the four other regional capitals—are small, one-lane roads governed by local-level administrators to varying degrees of effectiveness (Lecocq 2013). These issues are further compounded by the ethnolinguistic diversity of the Malian population in the North, a factor analysed in greater detail below (see section 2.2.3 on social limits to state authority).



Figure 4: Mali road network map. Source: United Nations World Food Programme.



In the South and Centre, Malian central authorities have some but limited abilities to enforce laws beyond major population centres. Even in Bamako, the single most consolidated territory in the entire country, state authority is limited. Citizens often rely on alternative sources of authority and legalization to maintain order. These include but are not limited to traditional leaders, religious leaders (imams in local mosques), and community leaders (neighbourhood elders) (Wing 2008).

Central Mali faces some of the same limitations in authority that the North faces. However, the Malian state has several advantages in governing Central Mali that it does not with the North. First, there is a smaller number of minority (non-Mandé) ethnic groups living in the Segou and Mopti regions of Mali (Diallo 2017). A critical exception is Peulh cattle herders, whom I discuss in greater detail below. Second, the climate in Central Mali is much more conducive to governance than it is in Northern Mali. Though Central Mali has tropical and sub-tropical climate that creates challenges related to heat and precipitation, it is not nearly as far away from Bamako as the north is. This makes it substantially easier for central authorities to provide resources to towns and villages in need in Central Mali. Third, there is substantially greater infrastructure in Central Mali than in the North. Moreover, the two major population centres—Mopti and Segou—are both connected to Bamako via a major highway. In 2013, the combined proximity and road infrastructure was key in allowing the Malian and French militaries to restore government control over Central Mali quickly. These factors have led to a stronger state presence in Central Mali than Northern Mali. In fact, many of the ongoing risks in Central



Mali are a result of the overextension and abuse of state authority, discussed in greater detail in Section 2.2.2. However, there are still areas of limited statehood in Central Mali, especially in rural areas far from major roads (Bleck and Michelitch 2015).

In addition to these challenges to territorial authority, it is worthwhile mentioning the Malian's government's effort to re-organize its administrative districts. In 2012, Mali passed a law to expand from eight to nineteen regions, in addition to Bamako. The new *regions* were to be created out of existing sub-national districts (*cercles*) in the Tombouctou, Kidal, and Gao *regions* in order to make Northern Mali easier to govern. However, the process has been very slow. In 2016, two new *regions*—Ménaka and Taoudénit, both in the North (see Figure 3)—were introduced. Central authorities are especially weak in these two new regions and it is unclear what, if any, state authority exists. Some sceptics have speculated that these two regions are merely delineations of where the state has conceded control of Malian territory to Tuareg armed groups and clan confederations. At the very least, there is no indication that the Malian government will make any further progress on dividing the existing *regions* (Sissoko. 2016, Bah 2018).

2.2.2 Sectoral

For the purposes of the European Union, one of the most critical policy sectors in Mali is the security sector. The Malian armed forces have five branches: Army, Air Force, Gendarmerie, Republican Guard, National Guard, and National Police. The army is by far the most powerful and potentially consequential. The military is collectively known as FAMA (Forces de défense et de sécurité du Mali), though this abbreviation is used colloquially to describe the army alone (Shurkin, Pezard et al. 2017). There are two critical challenges to Malian statehood along the security-sector dimension: (1) capacity and (2) willingness.

First, the Malian armed forces are understaffed, underresourced, underpaid, and undertrained (Shurkin, Pezard et al. 2017). This is not uncommon for a Sub-Saharan African military force. For the purposes of the Malian state, however, this has created armed forces that are incapable of enforcing the rule of law as mandated by the state. The Malian state often needs its military to do things it is not trained to do, does not have the capacity to do, or both. This has had important consequences for the resolution of the ongoing conflict in Mali. It was dissatisfaction among Malian military officers that led to the March 2012 coup. Many soldiers in the military defected to armed groups that paid better, helping to jumpstart the civil war in the beginning of that year (Lecocq, Mann et al. 2013, Wing 2013).

Second, many members of the Malian security forces have shown a reluctance in enforcing the laws of the state. This is particularly severe in areas of Northern and Central Mali where armed forces do not intervene in conflicts between members of



different ethnic groups (Nomikos 2018, Tull 2019). Recent reports from international humanitarian organisations suggest that this non-intervention is systemically biased against members of non-co-ethnic groups . It is unclear whether this is a result of that state lacking control over its armed forces or whether the central government is actively complicit in the action (or lack of action) on the part of the armed forces. A third possibility is that the central government is aware of the limitations of the armed forces and is passively complicit because there is no better option for enforcing Malian laws in Northern and Central Mali (Group 2016, Watch 2017).

Although the security sector is the most important, gaps in statehood along other policy areas and sectors carry some additional importance as well. In this report, I focus on three, given their relevance to the security of the European Union border: (1) public goods provision (2) drug trafficking, and (3) migration. The state lacks substantive programmes to deal with migrants and refugees from its own country and others as well and the capacity to deal with the burgeoning drug trade flowing through Mali. I analyse each of these in greater detail in Section 3.2.1 below and focus on public goods provision here, given its importance as an indicator for governance breakdown.

Since I discussed the challenges to Malian infrastructure in Section 2.2.1 above, I focus on state provision of food, water, education, and public health. The state in Mali is severely limited in its capacity to provide public goods. Much of this stems from a lack of resources devoted to local governments. At the time of the coup and the subsequent civil war, the central Malian government has only given local governments at the *commune*-level enough resources and capacity to provide education but failed to provide resources for water and health (Wing 2013). Critics have speculated that this is likely due to the international community's conditioning of aid on the provision of education.

Even in Southern and Central Mali, Malians suffer from lack of access to health facilities. In one field study conduct in a rural *commune* in the South, 53,000 Malians shared one "reference health center" and three community health centers (Craven-Matthews and Englebert 2018). The lack of infrastructure is a "multiplier" because dirt roads are washed out in the rainy season, making access to state-run health care impossible. In another field study of 600 villagers in 10 rural villages of Central Mali, researchers found widespread lack of statehood. The villages had no connection to an electricity grid, no access to a paved road, no piped water, and no health centres. Five of the ten villages had a school within walking distance (Bleck and Michelitch 2015).

2.2.3 Social

The authority of the central Malian state is strongest among members of the Mandé linguistic group and weakest among members of the Tuareg ethnic group. Mandé refers to a collection of smaller ethnic groups that all speak a related language: Bambara



(34.1% of the population), Sarakole/Soninke (10.8%), Malinke (8.7%), Bobo (2.9%). (CIA World Factbook 2019). In addition, the Malians from Songhai (1.6%), Dogon (8.9%), and Fulani/Peulh (14.7%) communities operate to varying degrees independently from the central state. To the extent that these communities are localized primarily in the North and Central parts of Mali, there is an overlap in territorial and social limits to the Malian state. That is, since the Malian state is limited in these areas anyways, there are limits to the degree to which it exerts control over these groups, which are primarily located in areas of limited territorial statehood. Finally, there are non-Mandé groups to the South, like the Senufo (10.5% population) that are more closely integrated with the state, primarily due to geographic location (Imperato and Imperato 2008).

Malian authority has historically been strongly associated with ethnolinguistic fractionalization within the country. Members of the central government have exclusively been members of the majority Mandé linguistic group, typically from the Bambara or Malinke ethnic groups. These officials have used intraethnic alliances with traditional leaders to govern Mali. National political leaders have also used informal cousinage networks as a way to strike political bargains with leaders across ethnic lines (Dunning and Harrison 2010).

2.2.4 Temporal

As I discussed in greater detail in section 2.1, the government's authority over the territory that is Mali has shifted over time. After independence in 1960 until the First Tuareg Rebellion in 1963, the central Malian government exercised great authority over all parts of Mali except the North. Following the crushing defeat of Tuareg separatists in 1964, the Malian government expanded its authority into the north. From 1964 until the late 1980s, Malian authority in South and Central Mali was consolidated but slowly eroded over time in the North (Jones 1972, Lecocq 2010, Craven-Matthews and Englebert 2018). In the 1990s and 2000s, this authority continued to erode under the guise of decentralization (Wing 2013, Wing and Kassibo 2014). Ultimately, the Fourth Tuareg Rebellion, the 2012 coup, and the ongoing Islamic extremist insurgency all emerged as challenges to that limited authority. Given that the limited statehood from the 2012 period is still ongoing, the remainder of the risk analysis in this report focuses on those limits as well as attempts by nonstate actors to contest that authority.

The central Malian government has had little functional authority in the Northern part of the country since January 2012, with the exception of three key population centres—Tombouctou, Kidal, and Gao. However, even this nominal authority that is mostly localized to population centres is an improvement over what the Malian government had between January 2012 and January 2013. During this time, the central government lacked any kind of authority in North Mali.



Table 1: Temporal developments of statehood in Mali 2012-present. Source: Author's own illustration.

| Time Period | Statehood |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Northern Mali</i> | |
| January 2012-January 2013 | Absent |
| February 2013-Present | Absent (except few urban areas) |
| <i>Central Mali</i> | |
| January 2012-May 2012 | Contested |
| June 2012-January 2013 | Absent |
| February 2013-June 2015 | Limited but present |
| July 2015-Present | Contested (Mopti and parts of Segou region) |
| <i>South Mali</i> | |
| January 2012-Present | Limited but present |

The government has had variable levels of authority over central Mali over time. Tuareg rebel groups contested the authority of the government in the first half of 2012. In late 2012, Islamist extremist groups wrested control away from the government. In 2013, the French-led military intervention restored government control over Central Mali. However, since July 2015, this authority has been in contestation. Thus, at this stage, limited statehood is likely to be a constant for the foreseeable future in Central Mali.

2.2.5 Summarizing Areas of Limited Statehood in Mali

Areas of limited statehood will continue to pose an existential risk factor for the foreseeable future in Mali. As with many developing states in Africa, substantial areas of limited statehood are pervasive. However, in Mali, it is possible to identify several dimensions of limited statehood that are more acute than others. First, though limited statehood is ubiquitous, there exists substantial *subnational* variation—the central government is almost entirely absent in Northern Mali and is being contested in Central Mali. Second, in Central and Northern Mali, the state exerts little authority over non-Mandé groups. Third, the central government does not have real authority over its military. Fourth, though the international community has increasingly focused on growing public education, evidence suggests that the Malian state is incapable of providing neither public health, clean water, and food nor infrastructural access to those public goods.

2.3 Contested Orders in Mali



In Section 2.1 above, I describe in detail the historical contestation of the state by various armed groups in Northern Mali. This contestation has frequently turned violent in the history of Mali (1963, 1990, 2006, and 2012) and remains a threat to state authority. Indeed, the longest period of peace in Northern Mali (from 1964 to 1990) was likely due to a lack of resources on the part of armed groups (Lecocq 2010). However, this violence has typically been localized to the North, with some exceptions in late 2012. In this section, I focus on three other types of internal contestation: (1) contestation by members of the Peulh ethnic group localized primarily in Central Mali (Segou and Mopti), (2) regime change in Mali, and (3) non-violent contestation social movements.

2.3.1 Contested Order in Central Mali

Violence in Mali has spread over the course of the past five years from northern Mali to central Mali (Mopti and Segou) regions. This violence is typically ignored in popular media accounts of the conflict in Mali but is in many ways more consequential to the security of the European Union. The stability of Central Mali is more closely related to the stability of the South and the ability of the central Malian government to enforce the rule of law in the North.

In order to document the spread of violence, I look at counts of fatalities—including battle-related deaths as well as one-sided violence against civilians—in Mali from 2012-2017 using the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED). ACLED includes reported information on violence against civilian coded by the perpetrator, date of the attack, and geographic location. In Figure 5, I aggregate the event-level data at the region-month level and plot it over time (from January 2012 to December 2017). I compare violence in the North to the Centre in the figure. The figure includes the new regions of Ménaka, which prior to 2013 was a part of the region of Gao, and Taoudénit, which prior to 2016 was a part of the *region* of Tombouctou. I include any violence in Ménaka as part of northern violence in Gao *region* and any violence in Taoudénit as part of violence in the Tombouctou *region* in order to be consistent over the course of the time of the civil war.



Figure 5: Violence in Mali 2012-2017, by region. Source: author's own illustration, ACLED.

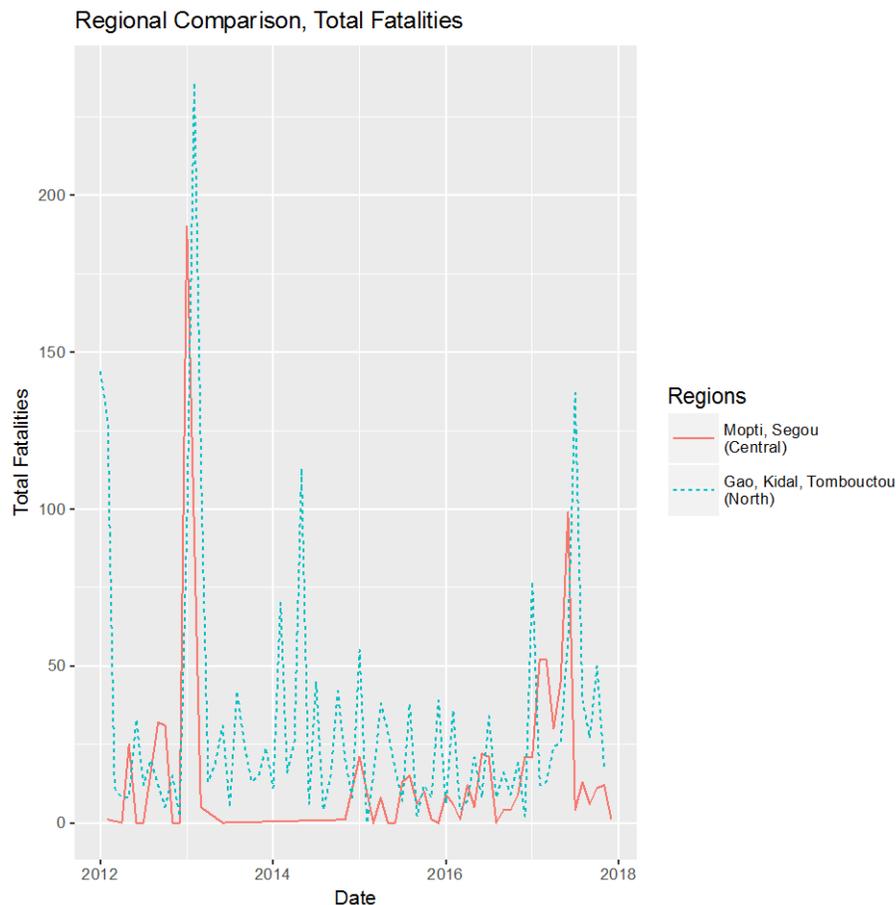
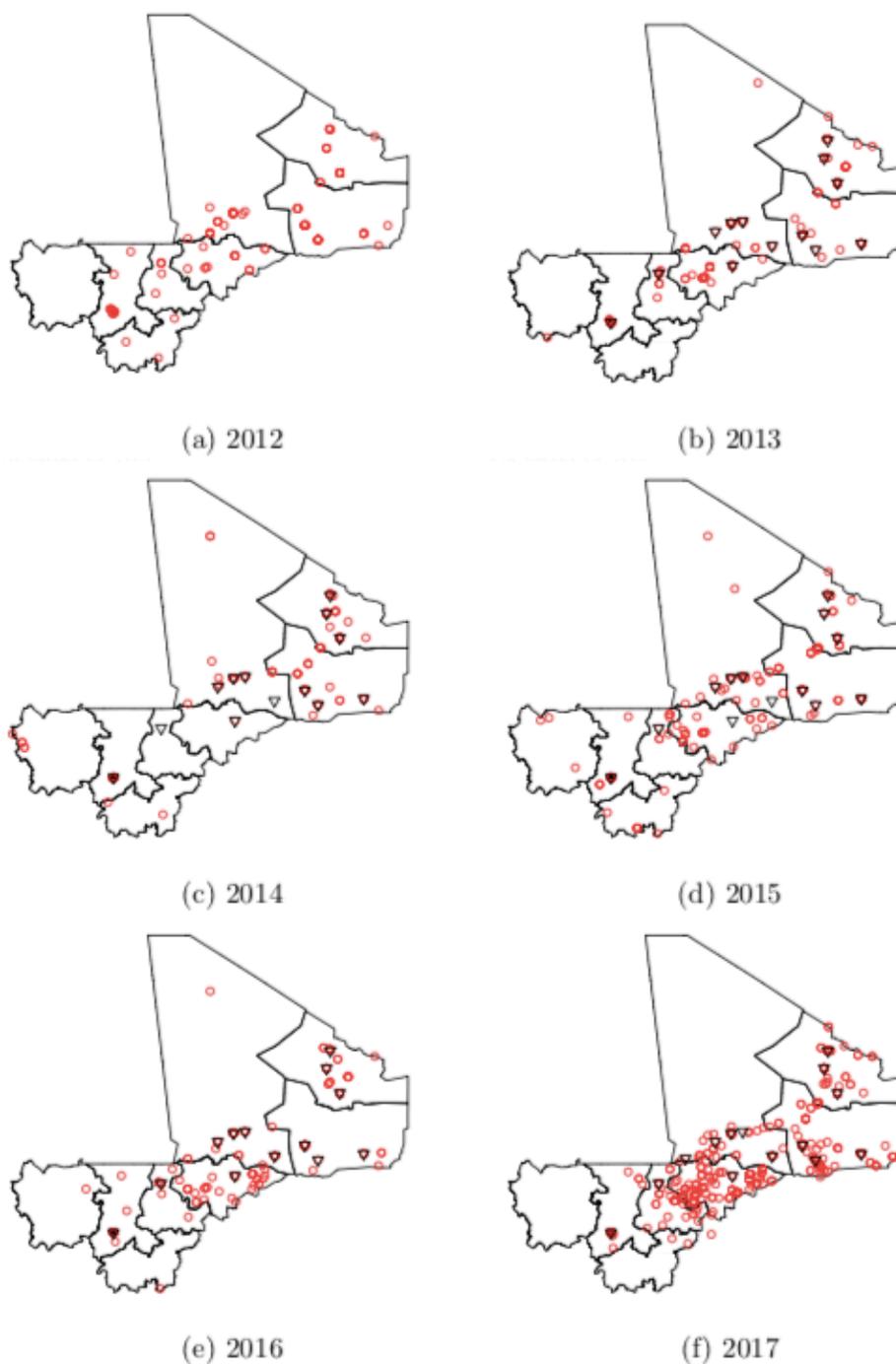


Figure 5 suggests three patterns over time. First, violence in both northern (blue dotted line) and central Mali (red solid line) spiked toward the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013. The success of the Islamist Tuareg separatist movement and the French intervention designed to counter it explain this spike in both parts of Mali. Violence from 2012 to 2013 in central Mali reflects the extremist fight against the Malian government and French intervention forces beyond the north. Second, there are no fatalities in central Mali after the 2013 spike until early 2015. After the success of the French intervention in pushing the insurgency back to the North in early 2013 and the deployment of UN peacebuilding operations in Mali, the government restored order to central Mali and removed the extremist presence from the region. Third, fatalities in central Mali start to emerge again at the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015. In 2017, the number of monthly fatalities in central Mali frequently surpassed those in northern Mali.

Figure 6: Violent events and UN base deployment in Mali. Source: author's own illustration, ACLED.



In Figure 6, I use ACLED's geo-coded event data to plot each violent event for the six years of the conflict (red circles). Beginning in 2013, I also plot the location of UN bases in Mali using original data on sub-national UN base deployments (blue triangles). Several key patterns emerge. First, central Mali was almost entirely devoid of conflict in



2014. Second, Figures 6(a)-6(c) demonstrate that the removal of the Tuareg separatist conflict from central Mali explains much of the general reduction in violence in Mali from 2013 to 2014, central Mali became virtually conflict free. While northern Mali continued to experience similar levels of violent activity in 2014 as in 2013 and 2012. The effectiveness of the French military and UN peacekeeping operations in central Mali during this period likely account for the decrease of violence in the area. Third, following a peaceful 2014, Figures 6(d)-6(f) document a clear rise in violent incidents in central Mali over the next three years. Indeed, in 2017, there were more violent events in central Mali than in any single year of the conflict in northern Mali.

As I discuss in greater detail below, the creation of an entirely new salient dimension of ethnic conflict in Mali---between Peulh and non-Peulh Malians---explain fatalities from 2014 to 2018. To be clear, many of these conflicts begin as localized disputes between individuals, families, tribes, and clans over matters such as land, the rule of law, or other parochial grievances (Group 2016). However, the disputes take on an ethnic dimension for three reasons. First, individuals organize responses to their disputes along ethnic lines. Second, many disputes are between fishermen, merchant, pastoralist, and agricultural families. Those functional divisions mirror ethnic divisions. For example, members of the Dogon ethnic group tend to be farmers while members of the Peulh ethnic group tend to be cattle herders (Imperato and Imperato 2008). Thus, when a dispute breaks out in a given village of Central Mali between farmers and herders, it is very likely to take on an ethnic dimension. Third, elite narratives from both Malian authorities and armed groups alike have increasingly framed disputes in Central Mali as ethnic in nature (Tull 2019). As I discuss in greater detail in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 below, this is an indicator of a troubling trend in Mali---the increasing “ethnic-sation” of local-level disputes.

2.3.2 Regime Change in Mali

Mali has undergone four regime changes since independence in 1960 (see Figure 7).

First, in 1968, Moussa Traoré, a lieutenant in the Malian army, led a bloodless coup of Modibo Keita, the socialist first President of Mali. Keita had been growing increasingly unpopular due to a host of economic policies that had underperformed over the 1960s (Snyder 1967). The key tipping point was a major drought in 1968 that made governance untenable. Traoré installed himself at the center of a military junta, the *Comité militaire de libération nationale* (Military Committee for National Liberation) (Jones 1972).

Second, in 1974, the junta held a referendum on a new constitution, which was approved by over 99% of the electorate. As part of the constitution, the junta would govern for another five years until legislative and presidential elections in 1979. Traoré ran for President at the head of a new political party, the Union Démocratique du Peuple Malien (UDPM) (Imperato and Imperato 2008). The UDPM was the only party allowed to

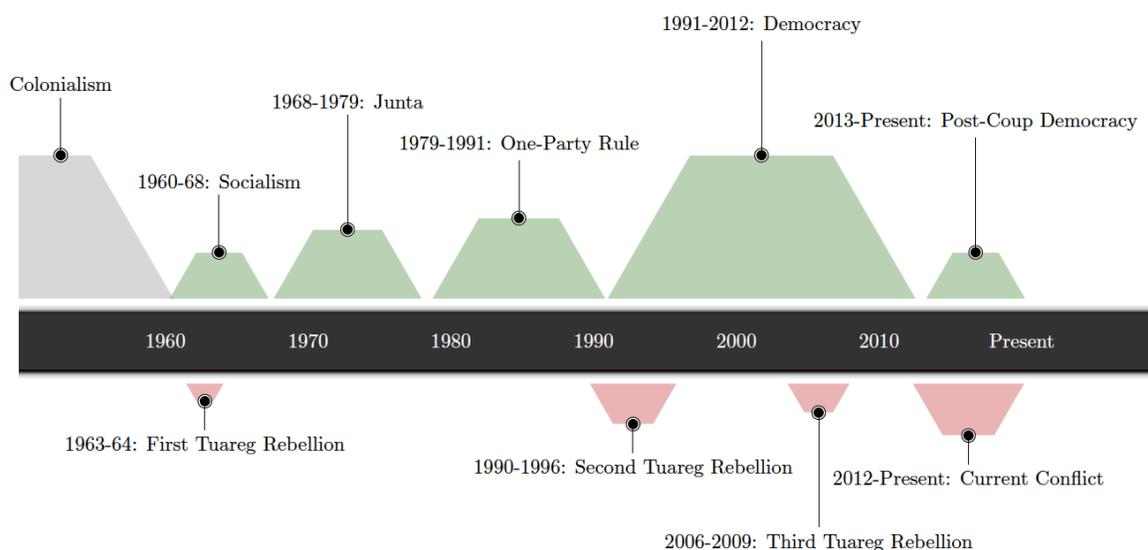


contest the elections, making Traoré the President and filling every seat in the National Assembly with UDPM party members. And so, though Mali's regime changed from a junta to one-party rule, the same key officials remained in power (Nohlen, Krennerich et al. 1999).

Third, a violent coup overthrew Traoré in 1991. Mali was hit with hard droughts in the 1970s and 1980s. Though the international community provided aid to alleviate growing food insecurity, corruption within the Traoré regime limited its effectiveness (Mann 2015). Traoré attempted to use limited democratic allowances—the referendum in 1974, elections in 1979 and 1985, and intraparty elections—to stem growing popular discontent. A major opposition group emerged at this time—*Alliance pour la Démocratie au Mali* (ADEMA), an umbrella group of pro-democratic opponents of Traore's one-party rule. Traoré's policies failed and the Traoré regime fell to a military coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré, known in Mali as ATT. After a yearlong stewardship by a transitional council chaired by ATT, Mali held successful multiparty legislative and presidential elections in 1992 and 1997. ADEMA overwhelmingly won both elections, with Alpha Oumar Konaré winning the Presidency. Following a constitutional clause preventing him for running for a third term, Konaré resigned in 2002. ATT ran—and won—as an independent (Imperato and Imperato 2008).

Fourth, a military coup overthrew ATT's government in March 2012 following nearly a decade of popular discontentment with the nature of democracy in Mali (Wing 2013). In January and February 2012, the Malian government was in the midst of a series of violent defeats by the Tuareg separatist MNLA. Popular protests in Bamako emphasized the government's consistent failure to stop the rebels. The coup was led by Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo, the officer in charge of a small group of lower-ranked soldiers who mutinied against their military superiors (Lecocq, Mann et al. 2013). Although the public was generally supportive of the coup and Sanogo, political elites and higher-ranked military officials opposed Sanogo, who was unable to consolidate control of the Malian government for months. It was during this period that rebel groups were able to take control of the northern half of the country. Sanogo restored the Malian constitution in April 2012 and elections were held in July and August 2013 (Whitehouse 2012, Lecocq, Mann et al. 2013). Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his party, *Rassemblement pour le Mali* (Rally for Mali), won the 2013 elections and the follow-up elections in 2018. Although there was some violence surrounding both elections, they were generally peaceful and considered successful by international observers (Diallo and Kontao 2018).

Figure 7: Timeline of regimes and rebellions in Malian history. Source: author's own illustration.



2.3.3 Non-Violent Order Contestation

There's a rich tradition of social movements growing and contesting existing orders in Mali. These movements have either supported militaries in their efforts to gain legitimacy for a coup or as civilian-led efforts to protest failures of governance. For example, civilians in Bamako famously held up banners that read "long live the liberating army" in support of Traoré's overthrow of Keita in 1968 (Wing 2008). In March 2012, civilian support was a key component of the coup that brought down the ATT government (Whitehouse 2012). In addition, as mentioned in Section 2.3.2 above, popular, civilian demonstrations played an important role in the end of Traoré and ATT regimes independently of the military as well (Imperato and Imperato 2008, Lecocq, Mann et al. 2013, Wing 2013).

3. SECURITY RISKS AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE IN MALI

Although the substantial areas of limited statehood and the order contestations in Northern and Central Mali lead to a great amount of instability in Mali, it is not necessarily the case that this instability will lead to active security threats for the European Union. The main goal of this report is to identify the conditions under which the areas of limited statehood and contested orders in Mali deteriorate into governance breakdown and violent conflict, which pose substantial security threats to the EU, its member states and citizens. To that end, this section proceeds in two parts. First, it identifies concrete risks from areas of limited statehood and contested orders in Mali



based upon the discussion in Section 2. Second, it highlights mechanisms of social resilience in Mali that uniquely allow Mali to mitigate some of the substantial risks present in the country. The next section brings these factors together to identify potential tipping points in Mali that can transform risks into threats for European security.

3.1 Risks: Governance Breakdown and Violent Conflict Indicators

There are pervasive indications that governance breakdown and violent conflict will occur, continue, or recur in most parts of Mali. This includes almost the entirety of Northern and Central Mali. In the North, as Section 2.2.1 outlined, there is substantial governance breakdown beyond major population centres in Northern Mali (that is, Kidal, Tombouctou, and Gao). Similarly, violent conflict is pervasive in Northern Mali. Indeed, it is more pertinent for the EU and its partners to consider strategies to mitigate existing conflict rather than to adopt strategies to prevent violent conflict from breaking out. The Malian state has no monopoly over the means of violence. There is little—if any—public goods provision beyond population centres in Northern Mali. Malians rely on non-state actors such as tribal leaders, clan leaders, and imams for traditional public goods such as access to clean water, food, health care, and education (Wing 2017). For instance, even in areas affected by conflict, Qur’anic schools are present in most, if not all, villages. In a recent survey of 600 residents of conflict-stricken villages, 80% had attended a Qur’anic school while less than 10% had attended a public school (Bleck and Michelitch 2015). To make matters worse, multiple violent non-state actors are fighting the state and amongst each other in Northern Mali. Islamic extremists fight against “secular” Tuareg armed groups for control in the area as well as the Malian state and its international allies (primarily France and the United Nations).

Central Mali is perhaps the area of Mali in the greatest amount of flux. There is a certain risk of total governance breakdown but it is minimal *conditional on the continued presence of international actors*. After losing control of Central Mali in 2012, the Malian government has slowly restored public goods provision in both Mopti and Segou *regions*. For example, in Segou, according to the most recent government data, approximately 95% of villages with populations greater than 1,000 residents have both at least a school and a health clinic of some sort. The Malian state has limited monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in Central Mali. This is particularly true in Mopti (Diallo 2017).

As I discuss in greater detail below, mitigating mechanisms of social resilience do suggest that governance breakdown and violence breakdown will not spread beyond the *region* of Segou into Southern Mali. However, for the purposes of assessing the security threat that Mali poses to the EU, this does *not* mean that the situation in Mali is stable or contained. Rather it points to the potential benefits of strengthening social resilience and thereby decrease the risk of governance breakdown and violent conflict.



As I detailed in Section 2.2 above, there are substantial areas of limited statehood in Mali. Risks for governance breakdown and violent conflict can be divided along four lines:

1. Drug trafficking
2. Migration/refugees/displacement
3. Islamic extremism
4. Climate Change

3.1.1 Drug Trafficking

The desert to the northwest has created a porous border with Mauritania, the desert to the northeast a porous border with Niger and Burkina Faso, and desert-mountainous terrain to the north a porous border with Algeria. Drug trafficking, especially cocaine trafficking from Latin America, has proliferated because of these porous borders. (Raineri and Strazzari 2015, Rousseau 2017). Armed groups in Northern and Central Mali use drug trafficking to finance their rebellions and, specifically, recruitment and weaponry costs (Group 2018). As Figure 8 shows, Mali's geography offers drug traffickers two distinct advantages. First, Mali is close to ports of entry near the 10th parallel. The sea route across the 10th parallel is the shortest distance between South America and Africa, making it an attractive choice for drug trafficking. Second, Mali's porous northern borders are in close proximity to Europe's southern borders. Given that Europe is the biggest market for illicit drugs stemming from South America, Mali allows traffickers an important transit point through which to smuggle narcotics (Rousseau 2017).

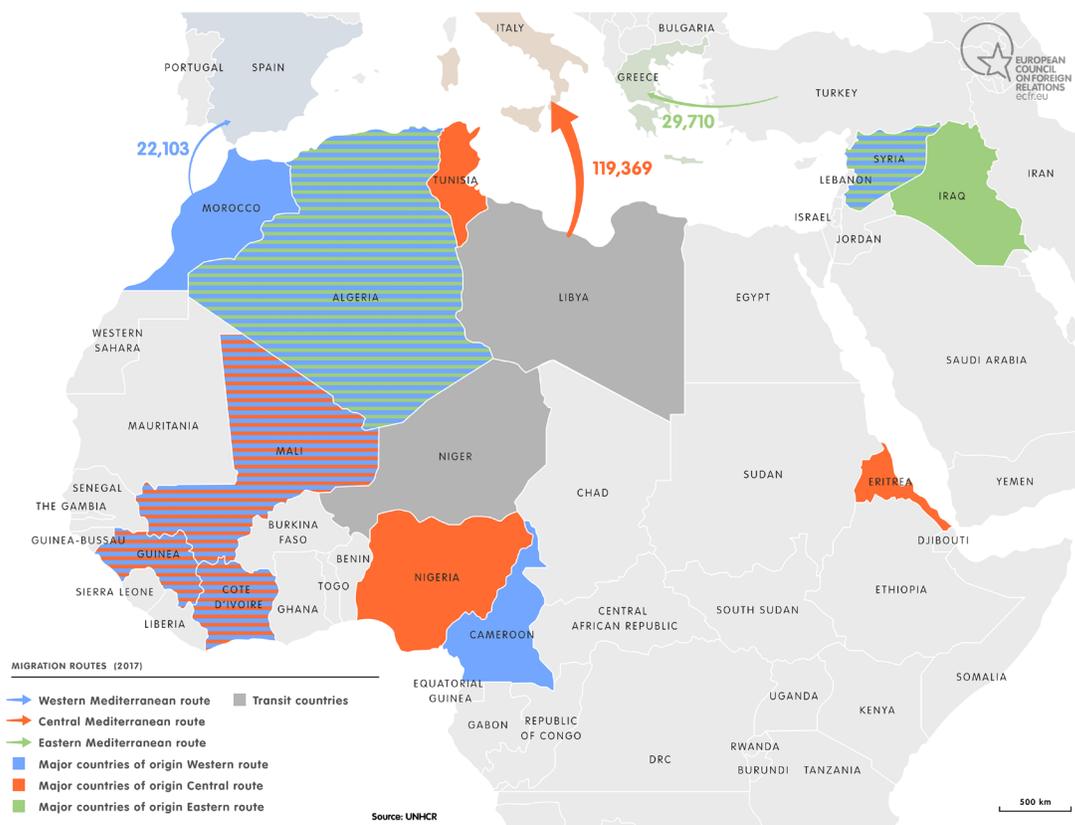
Figure 8: Drug trafficking from Latin America to Europe through Mali. Source: the Guardian.



3.1.2 Migration/Refugee Flows

Just as the porous borders to Mali's north allow drug trafficking to flourish, do they also encourage human trafficking and flows of migration out of Mali. Migrants and refugees from West Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa are also able to enter Europe through crossings along these border regions. The conflict in Mali alone has displaced over 400,000 persons, many of them internationally (Wing 2017). As these individuals abandon their homes in Northern Mali and, as violence has spread, Central Mali, the state has lost much of its capacity to resettle and reintegrate them. As a result, they've increasingly sought refuge elsewhere, including Europe (Bleck, Dembele et al. 2016). Refugees and migrants arrive in European typically through one of three routes: Eastern (through Turkey), Western (through Morocco), and Central (through Libya) (see Figure 9). Mali is unique in that it serves as a point of origin for refugees taking either the Western or Central as well as a major hub for refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa (European Council on Foreign Relations 2018; UNHCR 2019).

Figure 9: Migration patterns into Europe. Sources: UNHCR, European Council on Foreign Relations.

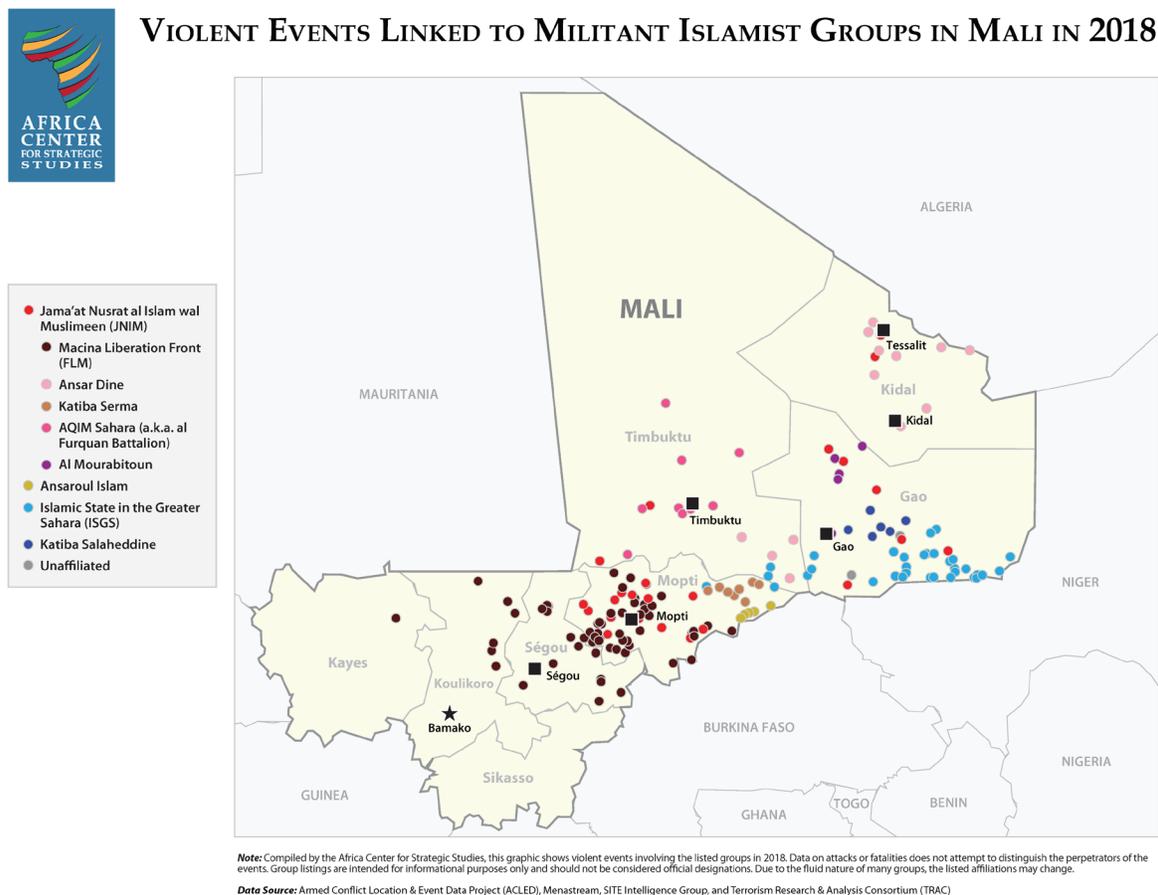


3.1.3 Islamic Extremism

Islamic extremists have had a strong presence in Northern Mali since early 2012. However, increased instability in Central Mali has allowed extremists to spread further south in three ways (see Figure 10). First, established Islamist extremist groups such as Ansar Dine have increased recruitment of Peulh in Central Mali. These Islamists would predominantly recruit among northern Tuareg. However, predatory behaviour by the Mandé (non-Peulh) government in Bamako has offered a new opportunity for recruitment among Peulh. In particular, these groups have used attacks by the Malian military (FAMA) in order to bolster resistance against the Malian government and MINUSMA. Second, new Peulh-based rebel groups have emerged. These include the Macina Liberation Front (MLF), a jihadist group associated with Ansar Dine, and, most recently, ANSIPRJ (l'Alliance nationale pour la sauvegarde de l'identité peule et la restauration de la justice). In July 2016, an attack on the aforementioned FAMA military base in Nampala (in the Segou region of central Mali) left 19 soldiers dead and 35 wounded (Human Rights Watch 2016). Both MLF and ANSIPRJ claimed responsibility. In 2017, Peulh-based (e.g., the MLF) and non-Peulh-based Islamic extremist groups (e.g., Ansar Dine) joined forces to create Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM),

one of the most potent threats to peacebuilding operations in the region (Tull 2019). Finally, the spread of Islamic extremist groups and the rise of Peulh-based groups has also inspired the creation of non-Peulh militias that fight against these Peulh rebel groups. Dozo militias, named after the Bambara word for hunter, are the most prominent among these groups (Diallo 2017).

Figure 10: Spread of Islamic Extremists. Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

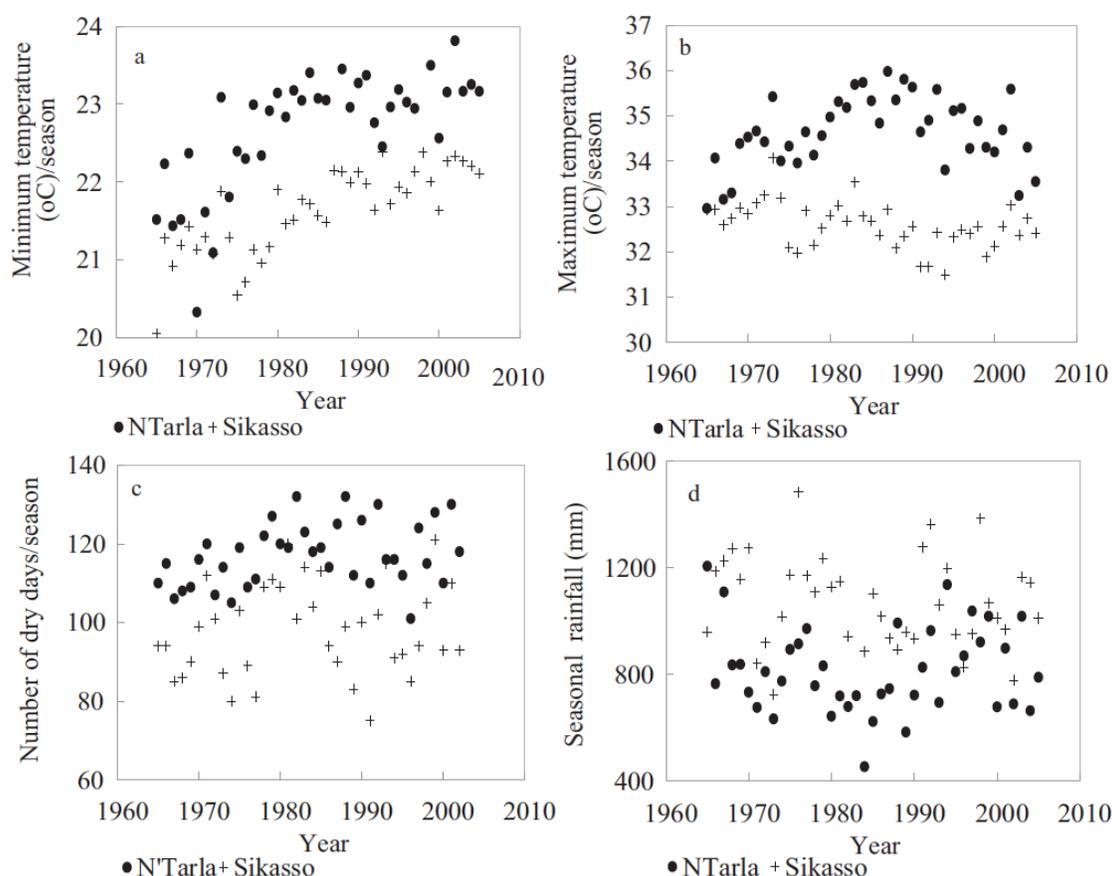


3.1.4 Climate Change

Climate change is a diffuse threat that impacts politics around the world. Because of weak institutions, lacking infrastructural capacity, and agriculture-dependent economies, developing states are likely to bear the disproportionate burden of climate change. Mali is no exception. Indeed, climate change has increased temperatures and decreased rainfall throughout Mali since 1960 (Butt, McCarl et al. 2005, Sanogo, Binam et al. 2017). Climate scientists tracked the average yearly temperature and rainfall at two climate research stations in Southern Mali—N'Tarla and Sikasso. In Figure 11, I display the

results of this study. The patterns are clear—climate change increased temperatures (panels a and b of Figure 11) and decreased rainfall (panels c and d of Figure 11). In Section 5.3, I discuss in greater detail how this can lead to a serious tipping point that causes governance breakdown and violent conflict.

Figure 11: The effects of climate change in two research stations in Mali over time. Source: Traore et al. (2013).



3.2 Social Resilience in Mali

In analysing whether these risk factors will gradually build to a tipping point that leads to governance breakdown it is important to take into account the informal and informal sources of social resilience available to a society (Börzel & Risse 2018). The 2016 EU Global strategy defines resilience as “the ability of states and societies to reform, thus withstanding and recovering from internal and external crises.” Specifically, this report outlines the sources of social resilience along three dimensions in Mali: (1) social trust, (2) empirical legitimacy, and (3) institutional design.



3.2.1 Social Trust

Following the literature on social trust, this report understands trust as “a cooperative attitude towards other people based on the optimistic expectation that others are likely to respect one’s own interests” (Börzel and Risse 2016, Draude, Hölck et al. 2018). Specifically, we can distinguish between three types of trust. First, *personalized trust*—trust among individuals living in the same community based who know each other and have a relationship. Second, *group-based trust* between members of the same group who do not know each other personally. Third, *generalized trust* between individuals who do not belong to the same social group (Börzel and Risse 2016, Draude, Hölck et al. 2018). Social trust is an important source of resilience because it can help communities band together to prevent governance breakdown in areas of limited statehood and help forestall violent conflict in contested orders. Social trust has historically been the most important source of resilience in Mali and will likely continue to play an important role. Table 2 summarizes the status of the three different types of trust in Mali.

Table 2: Social trust as a measure of social resilience. Source: Author’s own illustration.

| Social Trust Type | Status in Mali |
|--------------------|--|
| Personalized Trust | Important source of social resilience in Mali. |
| Group-based Trust | High among Tuareg clans, among joking cousins, among southern ethnic groups. |
| Generalized Trust | High between Mandé and non-Mandé Southern groups. Medium between Southern groups and Songhai/Dogon. Low between Mandé/Dogon and Peulh. Very low between Mandé and Tuareg. |

Social resilience generated through high levels of personalized trust explain how generations of communities in areas of limited statehood in Mali have prevented governance breakdown. In Mali, personalized trust has provided three concrete benefits. First, local communities have come together to provide public goods when the state has lacked the capacity to do so (Bleck and Michelitch 2015). Second, personalized trust has allowed to communities to band together to negotiate with non-governmental organizations for aid in the absence of the state (Mann 2015). Third, local communities have kept the state accountable to its promises. Indeed, bottom-up social movements have been key in keeping much of order contestation in Mali peaceful over the course of its history (Wing 2008).

Group-based trust is much more complex and variable in Mali, largely to due to the varying salience of in-group/out-group cleavages. Although conventional understandings of ethnicity-centered group-based trust explain high levels of trust within many southern groups, there also exists a high level of fractionalization *within* most ethnic groups in Mali as well. For instance, there is very little group-based trust among the Tuareg. Indeed the history of the Tuareg, including each rebellion, is rife with internecine competition among



different clan confederations and, within those clan confederations, in-fighting between different clans (Lecocq 2010, Pezard and Shurkin 2015). Similarly, an important form of group-based trust among non-Tuareg groups in Mali is informal institution of cousinage. Cousinage refers to the idea that West African families form cross-cutting ties using “joking kinship.” Joking cousins can identify each other immediately based upon surname alone. In certain cases, joking relationships can also lay the foundation for generalized trust. Such kinship is typically considered stronger than ethnicity and allows cousins to relate to each other (Jones, 2007). Different families (and Malian surnames) have different associated networks. Malian officials can rely upon their cousins to carry out and implement policies in a way they cannot through official channels.

Generalized trust is fairly limited in Mali due largely to the fact that Malian national identity is weak relative to parochial, ethnic or tribal identities. Modibo Keita, the first President of Mali, discovered this when he launched ambitious nation-building policies in the first eight years following independence (1960-1968) (Snyder 1967, Jones 1972). Successful institutional development in Mali has *always* been the result of careful local-level, bottom-up implementation strategies (Snyder 1967, Jones 1972).

Low levels of generalized trust as a whole notwithstanding, one can distinguish between different levels of generalized trust between different ethnic groups in Mali. First, there is very little trust between Mandé and Tuareg Malians, regardless of sub-ethnic identification. This is the consequence of decades of tension, violence, discrimination, and distance (Lecocq and Klute 2013). Second, there is also little trust between Mandé Malians and Dogon Malians on one hand and Peulh Malians on the other. As this report documents in greater detail in the discussion of Tipping Points below, this is due to an escalating conflict between the Malian military, Mandé militias, and Dogon militias on one hand and Peulh militias and Peulh-based Islamic Extremist groups on the other (Diallo 2017, Tull 2019, Tull 2019). Third, there is a middling level of generalized trust between Mandé groups and Dogon, localized mostly to Central Mali, and Songhai, localized mostly to Northern Mali. Both the Dogon and Songhai have worked with the Mandé-based central government to combat insurgencies from the Peulh and Tuareg respectively in recent years. However, the lack of proximity and contact precludes any substantial generalized trust from being generated between the Mandé and these groups. Fourth, there are extremely high levels of trust between Mandé Malians and other non-Mandé Malians living in the South like the Senufo. Finally, recent developments in Central Mali and, specifically, violence between Dogon and Peulh have complicated questions of generalized trust. Specifically, it is not clear what the status of Peulh-Tuareg trust is given that both are in the midst of campaigns against the Mandé-based Malian government. Similarly, Dogon and Tuareg have historically enjoyed good relations yet, if the Dogon perceive the Tuareg to be allied with the Peulh, this could complicate any generalized trust between the Dogon and the Tuareg.

In order to foster greater resilience through social trust, this report recommends three specific policies for the EU. First, to establish platforms that allow Malians to build



greater personalized trust. Much of Mali's recent instability can be traced to local-level issues that escalated because an absence of personal relationships. Second, to engage with groups at the relevant level of identification. For example, the EU should not expect to be able to build lasting networks of group-based trust across Tuareg clan confederations. Instead, a more pragmatic approach would bring together different clan leaders within a confederation to resolve local governance issues. Third, to build impartial local institutions and to guarantee equal access for all Malians to these institutions. Generalized trust is generated either through the promotion of common, joint identities or impartial institutions (Börzel and Risse 2016). Given the historical challenges in building a Malian identity, the EU should focus on the latter.

3.2.2 Empirical Legitimacy

The second potential source of social resilience in a society is legitimacy, which conventionally refers to a government's "right to rule." Existing scholarship distinguishes between three types of legitimacy: (1) *normative* legitimacy, whether a government should have the right to rule, (2) *legal* legitimacy, whether the laws of a given country offer the government the right to rule, (3) *empirical* legitimacy, a given social group's sense of obligation or willingness to accept the authority of governance actors (Risse and Stollenwerk 2018). This report focuses on the empirical legitimacy of governance actors in Mali since this conceptualization allows for the flexibility to examine non-state actors as well as state actors. In particular, this report analyses the empirical legitimacy of the state, traditional leaders, and armed groups in Mali. The next section discusses the legitimacy of international actors in Mali.

Empirical legitimacy derives from three sources. First, *output* legitimacy refers to authority derived from the actual performance of governance actors, typically public goods provision but also security, stability, and order (Schmelzle and Stollenwerk 2018). Second, *input* or *throughput* legitimacy refers to authority derived from inclusive, democratic, and fair institutions. Third, moral, traditional, or charismatic leadership can also provide a source of empirical legitimacy.

The Malian state derives little empirical legitimacy from output legitimacy. As detailed in Section 2 above, public goods provision is extremely limited throughout Mali and especially in Northern and Central Mali. Although state governance institutions generally carry relatively low levels of legitimacy in Mali, the Malian military (FAMA) has increasingly been perceived as particularly lacking legitimacy, especially in Central Mali (see Section 5.3 below). The lack of legitimacy only furthers the limits to Malian authority driven by a lack of resources (Diallo 2017). This has been exacerbated by a campaign of abuses against populations in Central Mali, described in greater detail in the tipping point section. Non-state actors have filled in the gaps in place of the state in Mali and have accrued the benefits in terms of legitimacy. Traditional groups, be they the Tuareg clans in the North or tribal leaders in Central and South Mali, have historically enjoyed high



levels of legitimacy because of their ability to provide order, stability, and key public goods. In recent years, armed groups, militias, and extremist groups have taken further advantage of the state's absence to make gains in legitimacy. Although armed groups do not offer the entire suite of public goods that the Malian state does, they have succeeded substantially in providing stability and localized dispute-resolution (Raineri and Strazzari 2015, Wing 2017).

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the Malian state derives some amount of its (limited) legitimacy from input legitimacy. This is due in part to deliberate efforts on the part of Malian elites to localize constitution-building to communities and make institution-building efforts inclusive (see Section 3.2.3 below). However, widespread corruption has plagued Mali since the beginning of the Traoré regime (1968-1991). This corruption has eroded much of Mali's input legitimacy. Corruption stems from two sources: the stealing or hoarding of international aid and generations of patronage politics in Mali (Wing 2013, Mann 2015). Moreover, as described in Section 2, successive power-sharing efforts—the National Pact in 1992 and the Algiers Accord in 2006—have been dramatic failures, largely due to a lack of willingness on the part of the central government to include non-Mandé groups in governance (Pezard and Shurkin 2015).

However, traditional and religious authorities carry a substantial amount of legitimacy throughout Mali. The ability of these leaders to use their traditional, moral, and/or charismatic authority to stabilize their communities is a significant source of resilience in Mali (Lecocq, Mann et al. 2013). Dating back to the colonial era, successful efforts to extend the state past major population centres have relied heavily on the cooperation of traditional leaders. In many areas of Southern and Central Mali, local officials are the same as a given area's chief (Imperato and Imperato 2008). In Northern Mali, the development of the Malian state has always been a function of the willingness of certain clan confederation to work with rather than against the Mandé-led government (Lecocq 2010).

The EU should have realistic expectations for boosting legitimacy in Mali as a source of resilience in Mali—empirical legitimacy is limited and unlikely to develop drastically as a stopgap in the coming years. That being said, the historical development of the legitimacy of governance actors in Mali does suggest clear elements of a strategy. First, developing the ability of the state to provide public goods and stability is key in developing output legitimacy for the state and, perhaps more importantly, preventing armed groups from gaining legitimacy. As I discuss below, some of this need is obviated in the short-term by the ability of France and the United Nations to provide public goods in place of the state. However, as these actors withdraw, the Malian state will need to provide public goods on its own. Second, Malian state actors, be they political or military elites, carry little legitimacy in Mali. The state should, obviously, stop predatory behaviour in order to gain legitimacy. The EU could augment this process by making attaching serious conditions to aid or bypassing state actors entirely. Finally, using the legitimacy traditional and religious leaders possess to bring non-state and state actors



together might be a way to foster greater legitimacy. External actors like the EU should address and include non-state actors to a greater extent if the goal is to foster resilience

3.2.3 Institutional Design

Institutions are an important source of resilience in areas of limited statehood. This report understands institutions to be “persistent and connected sets of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain (as well as enable/B&R) activity, and shape expectations” (Keohane, 1989, 161). In particular, the focus of the report is on governance institutions designed for making rules, enforcing those rules, and providing public goods.

Prior to the coup of 2012, outside observers considered Mali a fairly exceptional case of institutional development in the African continent. This is due to several factors related to the democratic foundation built from the late 1980s through 2010. First, Mali’s one-party crumbled in 1991 without a civil war due to pressure from multiple opposition groups. Second, the leader of the 1991 coup, Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT), stepped aside voluntarily to clear the way for a new constitution, a National Conference, and elections in 1992. Third, free and fair elections with multiple opposing parties at both the presidential and parliamentary level were held at regular intervals from 1992 to 2012. Fourth, the Malian constitution established an independent constitutional court that frequently ruled against the dominant political parties in the legislature and the president. Fifth, dialogue has played a central role in development of Malian institutions. For instance, nearly 2,000 individual from different civil society groups participated in the 1991 National Conference that created the constitution that would govern Mali (Wing 2008, Whitehouse 2012, Wing 2013, Wing 2017).

In addition to this suite of formal institution, Mali also possesses a strong set of informal institutions that are inextricably linked with state institutions in Mali. For example, perhaps paradoxically, Malian state officials rely upon the *informal* institution of cousinage to further the reach of *formal* institutions. The literal personification of this concept is Amadou Toumani Toure, the President of Mali from 2002 to 2012 (Dunning and Harrison 2010). ATT, as he is widely known in Mali, very frequently referred to his joking cousins *from other ethnic groups* in public appearances. ATT was able to establish and hold on to political power for a decade because the Toure family (Malinke ethnic group) is joking cousins with powerful families from the Bambara ethnic group (Coulibaly surname families), the Songhai ethnic group (Maiga surname families), the Dogon ethnic group (Guindo surname families) as well as several other powerful Malinke families (Keita surname families) (Douyon, 2006).

However, in addition to allowing interethnic governance in Mali, cousinage has had three important unintended consequences for institutional development in Mali. First,



historically successful leaders have been those that had vast cousinage networks. Second, because cousinage allows leaders to establish personalistic governance relationships based upon familial ties, Malian officials have promoted informal institutional development over formal institutional development. For instance, in addition to state institutions, political parties are unusually weak in Mali, even for a developing Sub-Saharan African country. Three, since cousinage is limited to a certain group of West African ethnolinguistic groups, the reliance on cousinage has even more heavily excluded other groups. Not coincidentally, these have been Tuareg and Arab.

Although the ongoing civil war has deteriorated public confidence in the state, the foundations of these quintessentially Malian institutions remain in place. External actors like the EU should continue to support the development of these institutions while being cognizant of the sources of corruption that led to the 2012 coup, as discussed above.

4. EXTERNAL ACTORS IN MALI

External actors have been critical in providing Mali a mechanism of resilience. Three actors are especially important in this regard: France, the UN, and the EU. This section of the report overviews how each of these actors became involved in Mali, what their ongoing role in Mali is, and how their activities bolster social resilience in Mali.

4.1 France

After inaction from the international community and ineffective responses to the northern rebels from the Malian government and its West African allies, particularly ECOWAS, the Malian government invited France to intervene in Mali in January 2013 in response to Islamist advances to the South. Initially, they used a combination of air power and special forces and then a force of 2,500 troops to stabilize the South and restore government control over the North all under the spectre of Operation Serval (Nossiter & MacCowell 2013). Most of the initial fighting ended by April 2013. However, the French remain in Mali, engaging in counter-terrorism operations and seeking to root out pockets of Islamist resistance remaining in hard-to-reach areas of the North.

France's motivations for the intervention were officially three-fold: stop the Islamist advance into the South, protect French citizens in Mali, restore governmental control of the territory of Mali. France's strategy had two components: (1) to move fast to prevent militants from scattering and to achieve strategic surprise; (2) to use ground troops for the bulk of the fighting. In its fight against Islamist militants, France relied on local allies--the Malian government, Northern militias, as well as the MNLA, though this rarely materialized on the battlefield with the exception of some French air support---regional allies, and international allies that helped provide some critical materiel, particularly airlifts for mobilization purposes (Wing 2016).

Figure 12: Timeline of Operation Serval. Source: Author's own illustration.

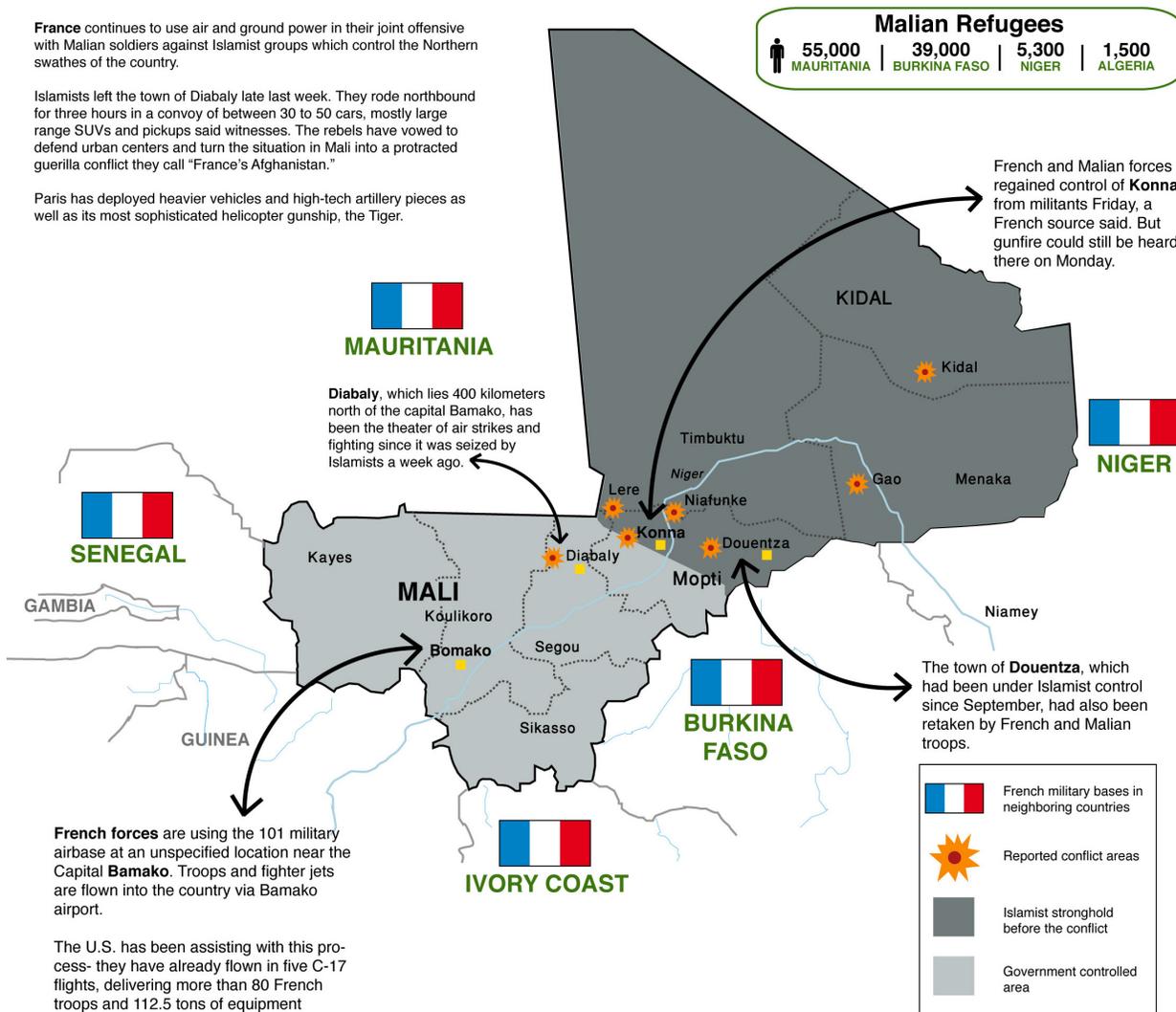


The French operation began with Special Forces units attacking advancing Islamists on January 10th (see Figure 12 outlines the entire timeline of the intervention and Figure 13 for a map of the French advance). On January 12th, France launched air strikes in Konna, a town in the Southern most portion of the North, in support of Malian government ground troops that had entered the city the night before. The first French fatality, a helicopter pilot, occurred during the air offensives on January 12th and 13th, amidst heavy casualties for both the Malian government forces and the Islamists, who were trying to expand their presence into Southern Mali. By January 15th, the French had mobilized a large enough of force to push the Islamists back out of the South. Malian forces, with heavy French air support, secured Konna on January 18th. Once the Southern city of Markala was secured, the French forces divide into two---one would proceed toward Tombouctou and the other toward Gao.

A French mechanized infantry force left the town of Niono in the South on January 18th. On January 21st, the French seized Diabaly just to the North. The Islamists had entrenched themselves in Diabaly, using the locals and their homes as human shields but dispersed relatively quickly when faced with French air strikes and impending ground invasion. Accounts from residents report no civilian deaths and only a few injuries from the French operation. Next, the force advanced on Nampala and Lere, and finally reached Tombouctou by the 27th and 28th. The other French force reached Douentza on January 21st, finding that the Islamists had retreated before they arrived. They captured Hombori by the 25th and advanced to Gao later that same day.



Figure 13: Map of targets of French intervention in Mali. Source: Al Arabiya News.



After Tombouctou and Gao, the French targeted Kidal to the North, the heart of Tuareg insurrection and the center of the most powerful Tuareg tribal confederation, the Kel Adagh. French special forces seized the Kidal airport on the night of the 29th of January. However, the French did not enter Kidal, leaving the capture of the city to Chadian allies, who arrived on the 31st, and the MNLA. After these initial successes, the French pushed into the harsh Saharan terrain of the Adrar des Ifoghas mountains in February 2013, where many of the Islamists had retreated. In this second stage of the intervention, codenamed Operation Panther, the French engaged in fighting reminiscent to French military veterans of battles in the tribal areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan, drawing the first heavy casualties of the operation for either side. This operation was considered largely a success by the French, who proclaimed it over by mid-March (Olsen 2014, Shurkin 2014).



At the same time as Panther, the French also were engaged in counter-insurgency operations localized primarily to the region of Gao. Since April 2013, French efforts have focused mostly on these types of COIN operations in Gao and rooting out Islamist strongholds and arms caches more generally in the North (Shurkin, Pezard et al. 2017). Moreover, in response to ongoing intracommunal violence, French forces, in addition to their on-going counter-insurgency efforts in the north (Operation Barkhane), have launched peacebuilding operations throughout Mali. The ACTS (*Appui à la coopération transfrontalière au Sahel*) is a French-driven peacebuilding project that looks to build community connections in order to secure civilian populations from violence arising due to armed group violence, intergroup conflict, and extremism. It was implemented in December 2013 and remains in place at the time of research. The key component of the ACTS is that French peacebuilders explicitly seek to operate at a local level in order to build community cohesion with the hope of fostering cooperation from the ground up.

The French presence in Mali affects the likelihood of governance breakdown and violent conflict in Mali. First, reduces the risk of violent conflict from Islamic extremism. Second, Operation Barkhane increases Malian social resilience by providing the Malian state opportunities to gain output legitimacy. Specifically, French forces help maintain order in areas of limited statehood. These efforts prevent non-state actors from usurping the output legitimacy of the government (Shurkin, Pezard et al. 2017). Although there is no guarantee that the Malian government will follow through and maintain order in these areas, Barkhane at least creates the possibility for the state to expand its presence. Third, ACTS works to build social resilience by promoting social trust in areas of Central Mali affected by conflict.

4.2 The United Nations

In response to the initial fighting between the government and the Tuareg separatist organization MNLA, Security Council Resolution 2085 established the United Nations Missions in Mali (UNOM) on December 20th 2012, meant primarily to support the African-led International Support Mission (AFISMA). After the French intervention, both UNOM and AFISMA were subsumed into the new United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), established by Security Council Resolution 2100 of April 2013. The resolution authorized a multi-dimensional peacekeeping force of 11,200 military personnel to use all necessary means to re-establish and maintain order in Mali. This mission remains in place following a set of yearly renewals (Tull 2019).

Although UN Security Resolution 2100 was passed in April 2013 and deployment was slated to begin on July 1st, it began in earnest in late July 2013. From the beginning, MINUSMA faced a series of challenges to complete deployment. First, absence of state infrastructure and authority to serve as a foothold for the establishment of bases of operation. In particular, this caused delays in supplying missions to the North sector. Second, extreme weather conditions in the North (i.e., heat). Third, the “re-hatting”—the



practice of absorbing AFISMA troops into MINUSMA and using the same troops as UN peacekeepers but with a new “hat”— of AFISMA troops to MINUSMA peacekeepers has been complicated, with states either undersupplying troops or failing to meet UN peacekeeping norms (e.g., Chad used child soldiers, reports of sexual violence). Fourth, there were a series of personnel-related issues. Personnel were often given short-term contracts, leading some officials to question the commitment of many peacekeepers. Additionally, many peacekeeping troops did not speak French, which presented some issues in a country where most do not speak English. Critically, many states did not train their peacekeepers to fight counter-insurgencies. And, because of the contract-issue and the language problems, additional training of peacekeepers proved challenging in the field (Bergamaschi 2013, Tull 2019).

The UN has worked to improve the resilience of Malian society in four ways. First, much like Operation Barkhane, MINUSMA has played a critical part in maintaining order in Northern and Central Mali and, in so doing, provide the state an opportunity to make gains in output legitimacy. Indeed, the primary goal of the initial UN mandate was “stabilization of key population centres and support for the reestablishment of State authority throughout the country.” (Security Council Resolution 2100). The UN has also attempted to support national reconciliation and preliminary agreements to stop large-scale fighting in Mali. Some of the non-Islamist rebel groups, including the MNLA, and the Malian government signed a preliminary agreement in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on June 18, 2013. The UN took the lead on a host of measures as part of this agreement, specifically the cantonment of rebels and their weapons in Kidal town and its surroundings. Specifically, MINUSMA provided logistical support as well as food and water to combatants at the cantonment sites. Moreover, recognizing the intercommunal issues that may arise by the increased presence of former combatants MINUSMA also established community-level initiatives to integrate the cantonment camps into their locations (Wing 2016).

Second, the UN uses two types of local-level operations to foster resilience through social trust (Nomikos 2018). First, UN police patrols help promote safe and secure interethnic interactions, encouraging the development of generalized trust (Nomikos 2019). Second, the UN has adopted local conflict mediation efforts to promote the peaceful resolution of interethnic disputes in the absence of generalized trust (Duursma 2019). Given the myriad challenges facing social trust in Mali, the ability of the UN to successfully foster resilience in these ways is critical to the ability of Mali to avoid further violent conflict.

Third, the UN has sought to increase the empirical legitimacy of the Malian state. The strengths of this approach have been its use of bottom-up dialogues to increase the input legitimacy of the Malian government and its recognition that corruption has historically undermined the legitimacy of the Malian state. The dialogue-centric approach mirrors the constitution-building approach undertaken by Malian politicians during the democratization era during the 1990s (Wing 2008, Wing 2013). For example, MINUSMA



held an open forum with more than 150 women in the Northern town Kidal to discuss their concerns about the Ouagadougou agreement and the role of women in national reconciliation (Sabrow 2017). Corruption and lack of accountability have been serious problems with governance in Mali, dating back at least to the first arrival of international NGOs during the late 1960s under the Traoré regime (see discussion Section 2). Recognizing this, MINUSMA has used the United Nations independent expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, who catalogs any human rights violations and obstacles to accountability, to directly address corruption. For example, the Malian transition government established a Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission on March 6th, 2013, shortly after major hostilities in a majority of the country ended. The purpose of the commission was to “identify the political and social forces concerned by the dialogue and reconciliation process.” The independent expert met with various Malians, both in public service and outside, to discuss the progress of the commission. In an example of the independent expert’s office at work, he reported that many of these individuals criticized the commission for operating unilaterally “without the participation of civil society or the victims of human rights violations.” Not only was the independent expert able to relay the grievances of these individual to a supranational authority but he pushed the commission to adopt a more participatory approach, an issue that he and the United Nations have continued to monitor (Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali 2013).

4.3 The European Union

Outside of aid, the European Union’s presence in Mali is limited primarily to the European Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), established in January 2013 (Olsen 2014). For this reason, this report devotes relatively less attention to the EU as an independent actor than France and the UN. The mission’s general goal is to strengthen the Malian security-sector by providing training to the Malian military (FAMA). In particular, EUTM Mali has the goal of improving the capacity and perceived legitimacy of the Malian military (Skeppström, Hull Wiklund et al. 2015). In general, it has succeeded at the former (capacity) and failed at the latter (legitimacy). By improving the capacity of the military, EUTM Mali helps foster social resilience in Mali by giving the Malian state an important tool, the military, with which to maintain order and, thereby, gain output legitimacy. However, the Malian military has used its newfound capacity to settle local scores rather than maintain order (Nomikos 2018). This has undermined the input legitimacy of the Malian state and provided opportunities for armed groups to make gains with the local population.

5. TIPPING POINTS

In Section 3.1, this report identified the illicit trade, global patterns of migration, Islamic extremism, and climate changes as risks in areas of limited statehood and contested orders in Mali. Yet these risks need not necessarily escalate to governance breakdown



and violent conflict. In Section 3.2, the report highlighted how social resilience stemming from social trust, empirical legitimacy, and institutional design can help mitigate these risks. However, even taking into these accounts, it is likely that the risks will affect tipping points that will lead to governance breakdown and violent conflict in Mali. This section analyses four such potential tipping points: (1) the withdrawal of external actors, (2) regime instability, (3) abuse of power by the Malian military, and (4) droughts.

5.1 Withdrawal of External Actors

The presence of French and UN peacebuilding operations is a critical mechanism of resilience in North and Central Mali. Public pressure within Mali, France, and many UN member states question the continued involvement in Mali (Sabrow 2017). However, if external actors were to withdraw from Mali, governance would very likely breakdown and violence would likely consume the entire country. The Malian state would no longer be able to maintain order in Mali, a critical source of legitimacy for the government or, conversely, armed groups that would take its place. Specifically, without the ongoing Operation Barkhane, the Malian governments' counter-insurgency efforts would likely fail and be overwhelmed, much as they were before the interventions. As detailed in Section 4.2, the UN has played a critical role in building generalized trust within local communities in Mali. It is not hard to imagine that armed groups will spread their control south if these two actors were to withdraw—this was the state of affairs before the French intervention in 2013—and Mali would lack the social resilience to resist them (Shurkin, Pezard et al. 2017, Nomikos 2018, Tull 2019).

5.2 Abuse by Military Forces

A second potential tipping point is the abuse of power by Malian military forces. Of special concern are command and control issues with the Malian military, which tends to abuse its power in settling local scores. The armed forces has committed a series of abuses as part of their violent campaign to re-establish order in central Mali. In particular, the military has grown to resent perceived local support of the Islamic extremist groups that occupied central Mali in late 2012 (Diallo 2017). After France and the UN pushed the extremists north, FAMA returned to central Mali and responded violently against members of the Peulh ethnic group in central Mali. In one case of note in July 2015, FAMA soldiers beat, tied up, and suspended by a pole 10 Peulh men, including a 55-year-old Peulh chief, an important authority figure in the community. Their families found the men at a military base at Nampala in the Segou region of central Mali. In another reported incident, a soldier shoved his gun into the mouth of a 60-year-old Peulh man, who lost several teeth. Abuses and violent events like this have pervaded central Mali (Human Rights Watch 2016). Violence is at this stage mostly local-level, with armed groups and militias fighting against each other. However, the tendency of order contestations to turn violent in Mali is a significant risk factor on its own. In addition, the involvement of transnational extremist groups like JNIM and attacks by



local militias on Malian military bases serve as threat multipliers that could lead to broader destabilization.

Problematically, the evidence suggests that the spread of instability to Central Mali violence is driven by the foreign support of the Malian government and its military forces (Nomikos 2018, Tull 2019). Following the French pacification of central Mali in 2013, the UN established three bases in central Mali: in Mopti, Diabaly, and Douentza. From these bases and UN peacekeeping headquarters in Bamako, the UN offered financial and logistical support to the Malian government and the Malian military (FAMA). The UN's ultimate goal was to delegate the task of securing order and peace in central Mali to the Malian government. The Malian government, in turn, relied upon FAMA to promote security in these areas. In addition, as described above, it has been an explicit goal of the European Union to provide capacity to FAMA (Olsen 2014).

The abuses and acts of violence by FAMA have led to a series of reprisals by Peulh in interethnic communities against ethnic groups perceived to support the government, the military, and/or MINUSMA. Peulh perceive FAMA as agents of the Malian government and MINUSMA. For this reason, Peulh no longer believe that they can rely upon peaceful means and official enforcement authorities to resolve disputes. Many Peulh then turn to violence as a way to resolve the disputes that arise in their communities. In July 2015, a land dispute between members of the Peulh and non-Peulh communities in a village in central Mali led to a group of Peulh men killing six non-Peulh residents of the village. An eyewitness described it as follows:

Tension was high after the Peuhl [sic] grazed their cows in a field where the grain was just breaking through the soil. The [non-Peulh] got angry and killed a few of their animals; the Peuhl said the [non-Peulh] had planted their crops in the middle of a grazing route so it was their fault.

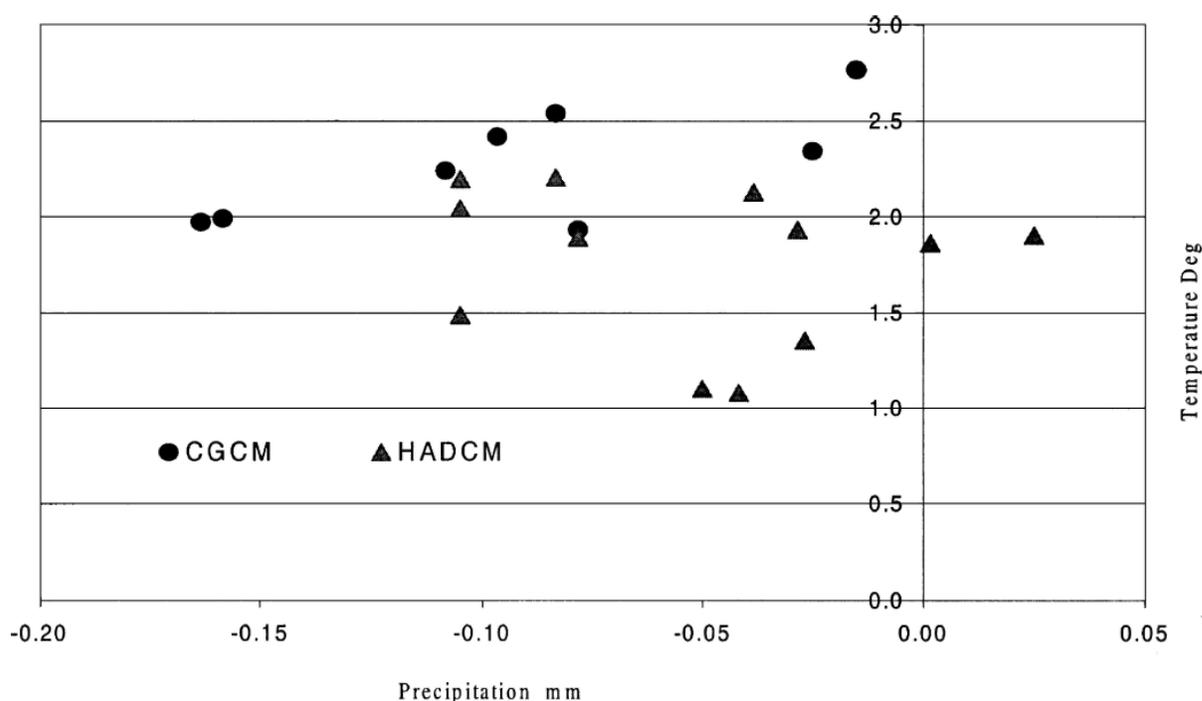
As I reached my village I saw four motorcycles with armed men, dressed in the beige boubous worn by the Niger [River] Peuhl---their turbans are tied in a distinct way. All had long guns---AKs---one had a string of bullets almost dragging in the sand. I hid, immediately, but heard them order everyone to the ground, face down, then I heard several gunshots. About 20 minutes later, I saw the armed men leaving---some carrying clothing, food they'd looted. I ran to the village. Women were crying, I saw my relative, dead, and another man lay wounded, but gravely. He died minutes later. They went on to kill four others in two nearby farms. We used to talk through these problems, but this time, it turned so violent (quoted in Human Rights Watch, 2016).

The eyewitness laments that residents solved disputes such as this through peaceful means but now they escalate quickly and uncontrollably. This reflects a more general decline in social trust as a result of the violence in Central and Northern Mali.

5.3 Droughts

Climate change has increased temperatures and decreased rainfall in Mali and will continue to do so. The most comprehensive data on this is from a study conducted in 2005. The results of this study are graphed in Figure 14. Climate scientists collected data from weather stations in Mali (each data point in the graph) from 1960-1991 and used two models to make climate change projections—the Hadley Center Coupled Model (HADCM) and the Canadian Global Coupled Model (CGCM)—for the year 2030. Both models show a clear trend toward an increase in temperature and a decrease in precipitation for the next decade (Butt, McCarl et al. 2005). Recent evidence suggests that these projections vastly underestimate the deleterious impact on the Malian climate given that climate change has become exponentially worse since 1991 (Traore, Corbeels et al. 2013, Sanogo, Binam et al. 2017).

Figure 14: Projected changes in temperature and rainfall in Mali. Source: Butt et al. (2005)



Temperature rises and rainfall decreases are very likely to lead to the occurrence of mass droughts, a critical tipping point for governance breakdown and violent conflict in Mali. Droughts—and the inability of the Malian government to deal with their effects—have directly led to the collapse of the Keita regime in 1968, the Traoré regime in 1991, and the Toure government in 2012 (see Section 2 for a detailed discussion of this). Farmers, cattle herders, and fishermen that rely upon the rainy season for their livelihood drive the Malian economy (Imperato and Imperato 2008). Droughts shorten



the rainy season, decrease the amount of rainfall during the rainy season, lengthen the dry season, and increase temperatures during the dry season (See Section 3.2.4). In turn, Malians turn elsewhere for employment. In the best case, farmers, cattle herders, and fishermen migrate in search of better land, overwhelming Malian governance instance ill-equipped to deal with influxes of additional internally displaced persons. This is likely to lead to governance breakdowns all over Mali. In the worst case, they join insurgent groups that offer promising wages in exchange for fighting personnel. This is likely to lead to an increase in violent conflict.

6. CONCLUSIONS

There are substantial risk factors that threaten governance breakdown and violent conflict in North and Central Mali. Areas of limited statehood pervade and order contestation frequently turns violent. There are four global, regional, and diffuse threats that serve as risk multipliers in significant ways that might affect the core interests of the European Union, its member states, and its citizens. First, the involvement of transnational armed groups in Mali that actively employ terror tactics has led to the increasing destabilization of Mali. As Malian ethnic groups continue to violently contest the authority of the state, they will deepen their dependence on these groups. These organisations recruit European citizens and have a propensity to strike Europe on its soil. Second, the porous borders between Mali and its neighbours has made Mali an epicentre for illicit trafficking operations. Traffickers primarily smuggle narcotics—cocaine—from Latin America to Europe. In recent years, however, they have increasingly trafficked refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East as well. Third, given the lack of stable borders, Mali has become a source as well as conduit of migrants and refugees looking to go to Europe. Malian institutions are fundamentally ill-equipped to handle these large flows. Fourth,

However, there are three key mechanisms of resilience that will mitigate these threats. First, the traditional legitimacy of tribal leaders serves as an important sources of empirical legitimacy for governance actors. This is somewhat complicated in the North where tribal elites in Tuareg clan confederations have often taken leadership positions in rebel and armed groups. However, in Central Mali—and especially among non-Tuareg groups—traditional leaders are trusted providers of public goods and stability in the region. Second, informal institutionalised forms of social trust are historically important to Malian society and will continue to be so. Most important of these is the institution of cousinage, which allows members of different ethnic groups to settle disputes peacefully. This will critical moving forward in Central Mali more so than Northern Mali because cousinage does not apply to Tuareg Malians the populate the north.

Ultimately, the risks identified in these reports are likely to overcome the sources of resilience in Mali and affect three tipping points leading to governance breakdown and/or violent conflict in Mali. First, the Malian state would be unable to resist the military power



of armed groups in Mali if international forces were to withdraw. Second, if the Malian military continues to use its power and training to settle petty, local scores rather than fight insurgents and maintain order, Malians will increasingly grow to resent and fight existing governance actors. Third, climate change is likely to lead to droughts in Mali's future. These droughts would leave impact the livelihoods of vast swaths of the Malian population, including Tuareg and Peulh cattle herders. Malian institutions are ill equipped to deal with such a blow to the Malian economy.

Over the coming years, external actors like the European Union can determine whether these tipping points will emerge and lead to governance breakdowns and violent conflict. There are three concrete sets of policies that externals can enact to this end. First, development assistance, training, and cooperation should be diverted away from national-level Malian elites within the Malian government and the Malian military and toward traditional and religious leaders that have much greater empirical legitimacy with the local population. Second, external actors should resist domestic pressure to withdraw from Mali. As this report outlines, the stability of Mali is directly linked with several issues such as illicit drug trafficking, migration flows, and extremist terrorism that affect contemporary European societies. Third, external aid should help formal Malian institutions as well as individual Malians deal with the inevitable catastrophic effects of climate change on the livelihoods of farmers, cattle herders, and fishermen in Mali.



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