



# Mali

## Mali: Introduction

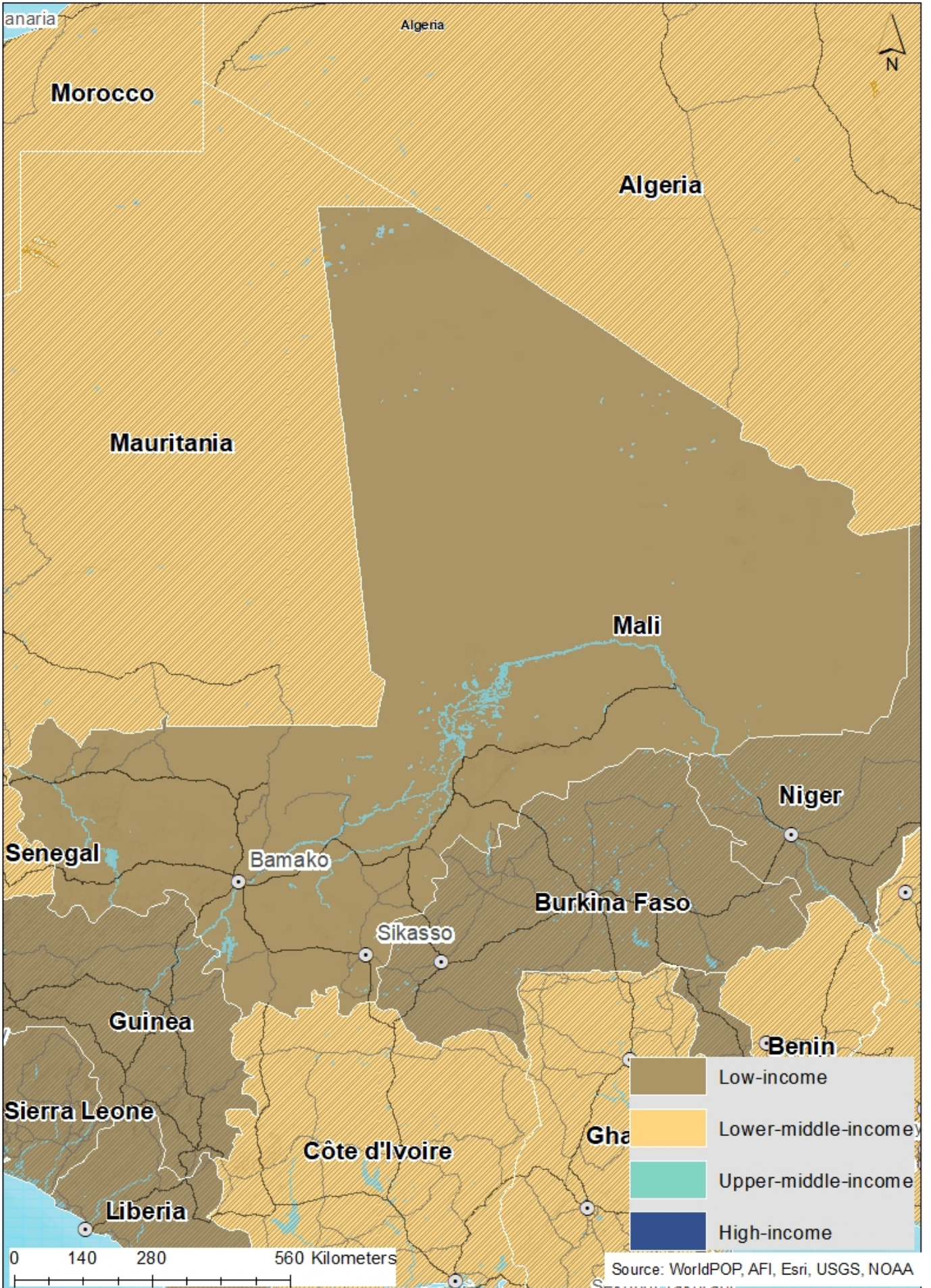
Enoch Randy Aikins

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## Mali: Introduction

Chart 1: Political map of Mali





Mali is a low-income country in north-west Africa. The country is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU, or UEMOA in French). Mali is also a member of the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN-SAD), which has had minimal activity following the turmoil in Libya, where its secretariat is based.

Mali used to be a member of the G5 Sahel, a group of five Sahelian countries that came together to create the G5 Sahel Joint Force in February 2014, with its secretariat in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The Convention on the Establishment of the G5, adopted by the heads of state of the five countries in December 2014, set out the main objectives of the G5 Sahel: 1. to guarantee conditions for development and security; 2. to offer a strategic framework for interventions to improve people's living conditions; 3. to align development with security, supported by democracy; and 4. to promote inclusive and sustainable regional development.[1] However, following a coup, Mali withdrew from the G5 Sahel alliance in May 2022.

The Sahel region has historically been highly porous. Ancient trans-Saharan trade routes facilitated cross-border trade and a transhumance lifestyle for hundreds of years, predating the French colonial period. This way of life is now under dire threat. Climate change is having a devastating impact on the Sahel countries. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes that the Sahel has 'experienced the most substantial and sustained decline in rainfall recorded anywhere in the world within the period of instrumental measurements during the 1980s.'[2]

Environmental degradation and violent conflict have displaced millions of people and will continue to worsen the environmental crisis in the area.[3] Furthermore, the Sahel countries will experience some of the most severe climate change impacts globally as early as 2030. These impacts range from increasingly variable rainfall, rising temperatures and more frequent droughts to prolonged heatwaves.[4]

Mali gained independence in 1960 with President Modibo Keita as the first president of a socialist one-party state. However, the 1968 military coup led by Lieutenant Moussa Traore truncated Keita's presidency. A new constitution in 1979 paved the way for a fresh election, which was won by President Moussa Traore and ushered the country into its second republic. A military coup in 1991 ousted the Traore administration and replaced it with a transitional committee.[5] In March 2012, close to the April 2012 presidential elections, military officers overthrew President Toure's government, citing his inability to deal with the Tuareg rebellion. In April of the same year, the military handed over power to an interim civilian government with President Dioncounda Traore as leader.[6]

A peace agreement between the government and Tuareg nationalist rebels in June 2013 paved the way for new general elections. This led to the election of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita after he defeated the leading contender, Moussa Mara. He was re-elected in June 2018 amidst rising violence and insecurity. The 2018 presidential and 2020 parliamentary elections were criticised for being poorly organised, deepening the country's political crisis. Two years later, in August 2020, President Keita was ousted in another coup after a series of protests demanding his resignation.[7]

A transitional government is now in place, with Colonel Assimi Goïta declared Head of State by the Constitutional Court in May 2021. Also, the National Transition Council replaced the National Assembly until the country returned to constitutional rule.[8] Since then, various efforts and consultations have occurred between the government, political parties and civil society organisations to return to constitutional rule. A new constitution, approved through a referendum in June 2023, paved the way for the announcement of general elections to restore constitutional rule.[9] National legislative elections were tentatively scheduled for October and November 2023, while presidential elections were scheduled for February 2024.[10] The elections were indefinitely **suspended** by the military government in September 2023, citing technical

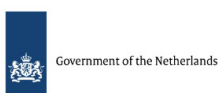
difficulties. After it was suspended by ECOWAS in response to the coup, Mali announced that it was leaving the Community and joining the Confederation of Sahel states with Niger and Burkina Faso whilst expanding the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) that was established at the end of 2023.



## Endnotes

1. European Council on Foreign Relations, [G5 Sahel – Mapping African regional cooperation](#)
2. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), [Working Group II: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability](#).
3. OCHA, [Lake Chad Basin: Crisis overview](#), 26 July 2017.
4. Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), [The IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report: What's in it for Africa?](#), 2014, 14.
5. Staff writer, [Mali profile - Timeline](#), *BBC*, 26 August 2020.
6. Staff writer, [Mali profile - Timeline](#), *BBC*, 26 August 2020.
7. Staff writer, [Mali profile - Timeline](#), *BBC*, 26 August 2020.
8. The World Bank, [The World Bank in Mali](#), 30 March 2023.
9. Staff writer, [Malians approve amendments to constitution in referendum](#), *Aljazeera*, 23 June 2023.
10. The World Bank, [The World Bank in Mali](#), 30 March 2023.

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## About the authors

Mr Enoch Randy Aikins joined the AFI in May 2021. Before that, Enoch was a research and programmes officer at the Institute for Democratic Governance in Accra. He also worked as a research assistant (economic division) with the Institute for Statistical Social and Economic Research at the University of Ghana. Enoch's interests include African politics and governance, economic development, public sector reform, poverty and inequality. He has an MPhil in economics from the University of Ghana, Legon.

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