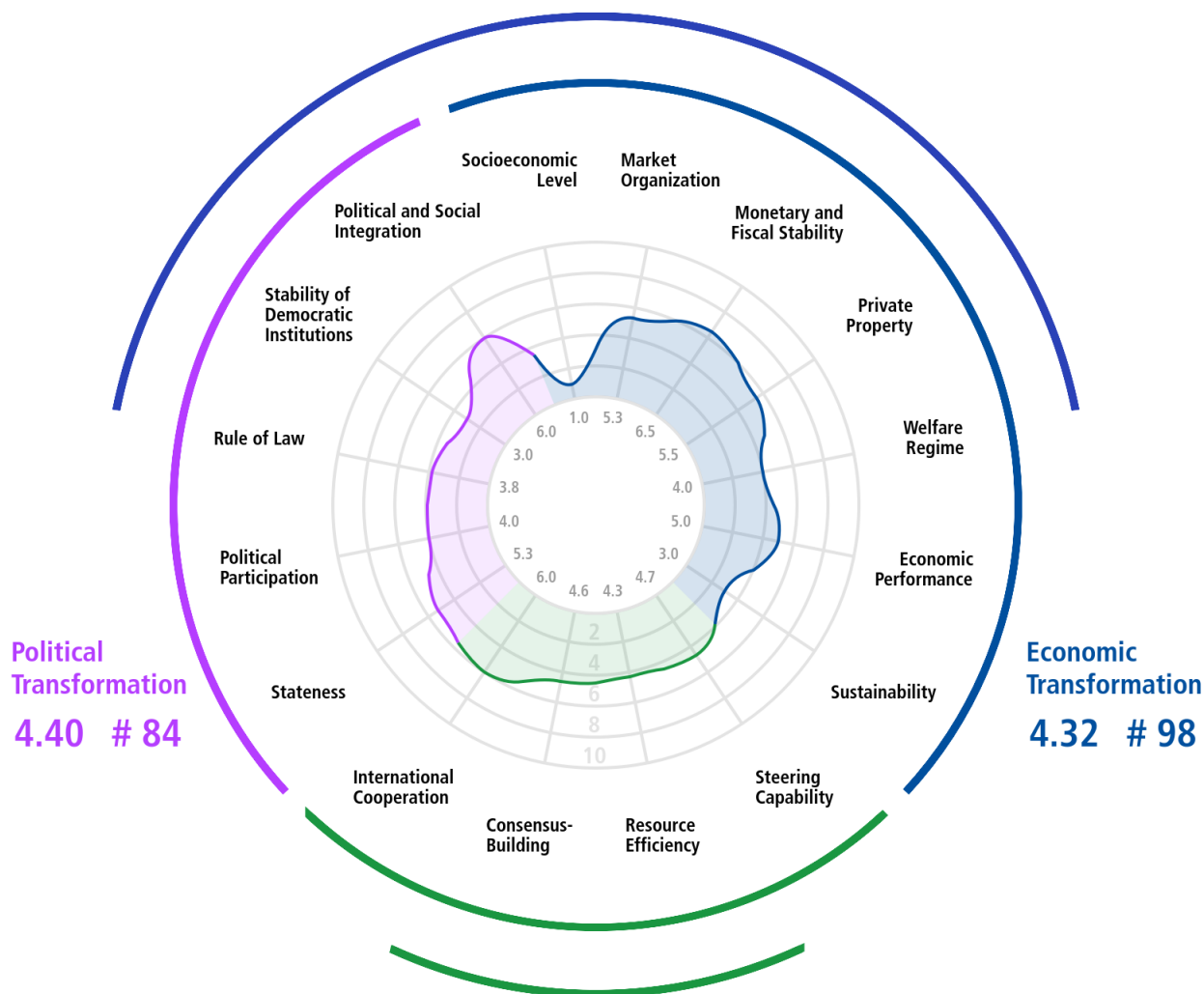


Mali

Status Index

4.36 # 97

on 1-10 scale out of 137



Political Transformation
4.40 # 84

Economic Transformation
4.32 # 98

Governance Index

4.66 # 77

on 1-10 scale out of 137

This report is part of the **Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2022**. It covers the period from February 1, 2019 to January 31, 2021. The BTI assesses the transformation toward democracy and a market economy as well as the quality of governance in 137 countries. More on the BTI at <https://www.bti-project.org>.

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Key Indicators

Population	M	20.3	HDI	0.434	GDP p.c., PPP \$	2339
Pop. growth ¹	% p.a.	3.0	HDI rank of 189	184	Gini Index	33.0
Life expectancy	years	59.3	UN Education Index	0.286	Poverty ³	% 79.8
Urban population	%	43.9	Gender inequality ²	0.671	Aid per capita \$	94.8

Sources (as of December 2021): The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2021 | UNDP, Human Development Report 2020. Footnotes: (1) Average annual growth rate. (2) Gender Inequality Index (GII). (3) Percentage of population living on less than \$3.20 a day at 2011 international prices.

Executive Summary

The democratization process in Mali is perpetually being restarted. Since August 18, 2020, the new transition underway has demonstrated the bankruptcy of the Malian democratic system. The Malian population, which had hoped to see social, economic and security improvements due to democratization, seems disappointed. The political and security reforms necessary in the country have not been implemented.

The inability of political actors to find solutions to the population's concerns has led to the deterioration of the socioeconomic situation and has dealt a blow to Mali's national unity. Today's political and security situation hardly differs from that of 2012, with two-thirds of the country's territory still outside the state's control despite the intervention of the international community since 2013.

Growing insecurity, increasingly violent attacks committed by terrorist groups present in Mali, the emergence of self-defense groups in the center and intercommunity conflicts all show that the country still needs foreign military support to face the various threats inside its territory. The G-5 Sahel anti-terrorism initiative, which was created by Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad and is supported financially and technically by France, illustrates that there is some regional will to counter this threat.

Implementation of the 2015 peace and reconciliation agreement remains difficult, especially with regard to the process of disarming rebel groups, as well as their cantonment and reintegration. The recommendations produced by the National Inclusive Dialogue, organized in December 2019, have not been implemented. The poor organization of the 2018 presidential elections and the 2020 legislative elections exacerbated the political crisis; the protests that followed helped prompt the military intervention on August 18, 2020, which put an end to the regime of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta.

This multidimensional crisis has had a negative impact on Mali's economy. The country already figures among the poorest countries in the world, according to the U.N. Human Development Index. Mali has serious socioeconomic difficulties, with a high rate of population growth and high rates of illiteracy and unemployment, especially among the youth. The government has not been able to expand education opportunities for adults, in the secondary and higher education sectors, or in vocational training circles. Non-formal education, which ought to be critical given that two-thirds of adults are illiterate, is not a priority for the government. The informal sector, which occupies a preponderant place in the national economy, alongside the remittances provided by Malians living abroad, is neither protected nor promoted. Corruption among the political elite has also slowed economic growth; none of the mechanisms and institutions created to combat the misappropriation of public funds have proved effective.

According to official numbers from the national Ministry of Health and Social Development, the outbreak of COVID-19 in Mali was not very severe. As of January 24, 2021, Mali had 7,965 positive cases, 256 deaths, and a total of 5,705 recoveries, but these figures are hardly comparable and are probably incomplete. However, the measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country (closure of borders, state of health emergency, ban on groupings, closure of schools, bars, restaurants and hotels, and curfews) worsened the economic situation. The government has reallocated funds to the health sector and supported the economy as a means of dealing with this crisis. For example, in June 2020 the government announced a program worth €900 million (equivalent to 7% of GDP) to help the economy recover from the effects of the pandemic. This includes €400 million (3% of GDP) in infrastructure investments for the coming years and an extension of tax deferrals. An estimated €200 million (1.5% of GDP) was to be provided as a subsidy for salaries, rents and electricity bills for businesses, with other funding supporting lower taxes on real-estate transactions; the provision of cash vouchers redeemable in bars, restaurants, hotels and retail stores; a reduction in fuel prices; tax refunds for workers; additional employment benefits and subsidies; and various other funds, grants and business support schemes.

History and Characteristics of Transformation

Following the National Conference of the Living Forces, Mali has been engaged since 1991 in a democratization process that has laid the foundations of a new democratic society, based on political pluralism and freedom of expression. The first democratic elections in 1992 brought to power Alpha Oumar Konaré, who remained head of state for 10 years. President Konaré was in charge of setting up the institutions of the Third Republic. In 2002, at the end of a democratic election, he was succeeded by independent candidate General Amadou Toumani Touré, former head of the 1991 transition. Touré served in office for 23 years.

During the first two decades of Malian democracy, the country enjoyed a reputation as a reform-oriented country and attracted high levels of international support. For example, it qualified for the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program in 1999 and obtained approximately \$540 million in debt relief in 2005.

From 2007 on, with the appearance of Algerian Salafist groups on Malian territory, everything changed. The situation became even more complicated after the fall of the Libyan President Muammar al-Qadhafi; the influx of fighters and armed soldiers of the former Libyan army to Mali triggered a Tuareg rebellion in January 2012. This in turn led to a mutiny within the Malian army that ended with the coup d'état of March 22, 2012. Since this coup d'état, two-thirds of the country's territory has been occupied by various armed terrorist groups. The intervention of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) forces, supported by the French Operation Serval and the Malian armed forces, made it possible to push back the rebel groups, and after the preliminary agreements in Ouagadougou, to organize elections throughout the territory with the aim of regaining republican legality. ECOWAS forces were replaced by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to support the Malian army with the support of the international community.

However, Mali is still facing the consequences of the multidimensional crisis of 2012. Despite the presence of several military forces (the French Barkhane military mission, which took over from Serval, as well as MINUSMA and the G-5 Sahel), the security situation remains fragile. The Conference of National Understanding, organized in 2017 following the Algiers Peace Agreement, was unable to adopt the Charter of National Understanding; moreover, the elaborated Law of National Understanding has been rejected by human rights organizations. The Good Offices Commission set up in 2017 by Prime Minister Abdoulaye Idrissa Maïga for the purposes of dialogue with the jihadists was dissolved by his successor, Soumeylou Boubeye Maïga, in January 2018.

It was in this difficult context that presidential elections took place in July and August 2018. These saw the re-election of President Keïta with more than 67% of the vote, as compared to 33% for his challenger, Soumaila Cissé. The latter, who was joined by a dozen candidates from the first round to form the Front for the Protection of Democracy and the Coalition of Patriotic Forces, contested the results.

The BTI combines text analysis and numerical assessments. The score for each question is provided below its respective title. The scale ranges from 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

Transformation Status

I. Political Transformation

1 | Stateness

In the 2019 – 2020 period, the military intervention led by France, in collaboration with its Malian and African partners, pushed back the rebel and jihadist groups that occupied the northern and central regions of Mali. Nonetheless, these groups gained strength during the review period. Tensions persisting in Kidal, Ménaka, in the central region of Mopti and part of the region of Ségou have prevented the Malian state from guaranteeing the integrity of the territory and kept it from having a monopoly on the use of force. Several armed groups coexist in the territory with the Mali defense forces, the Barkhane force and MINUSMA.

Despite the establishment of interim authorities, the central state has struggled to assert its authority over the region of Kidal, which remains under the control of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA). In 2019, the reconstituted Malian army symbolically returned to Kidal, but needed protection by CMA forces as well as by Barkhane forces and MINUSMA.

Since 2019, there has been an upsurge in armed attacks against the defense and security forces of Mali and international forces, which remain the prime targets of terrorist attacks. In the Badiangara region (Mopti), the situation is similar to that in Ménaka, where the army withdrew from certain areas in September 2020, leaving the populations at the mercy of the jihadists.

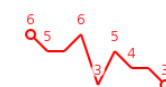
In November 2020, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for heavy attacks on Barkhane military bases in Kidal, Gao and Ménaka. The village of Farabougou in the region of Ségou has been surrounded by jihadists since November 2020; as of the time of writing, the Malian army was struggling to lift this blockade despite the organization in Niono of an intercommunal meeting and reconciliation under the aegis of the government. The High Islamic Council of Mali was mediating between the various communities in hopes of finding a solution to this conflict.

Question
Score

Monopoly on the
use of force

3

'06 '22 10



1

The attack on the military camp in Koulikoro in March 2019, some 60 kilometers from Bamako, was the closest to the capital in recent times. The security situation remains worrying in the southern regions (Koulikoro, Kayes, Koutiala, Sikasso), which are no longer free of the jihadist threat or banditry. Community clashes in the Mopti region between the Peulh and Dogon populations have multiplied. Attacks in the Dogon villages of Sobane Da and Ogossabou in 2019 are two examples. After nearly 300 victims had lost their lives, the governor of the Mopti region was fired.

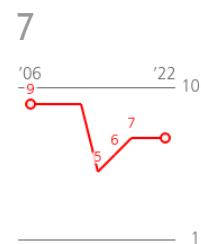
These examples illustrate the state's inability to exercise a monopoly on the use of force or to guarantee the integrity of the territory. Two-thirds of the territory is outside of the state's control. In order to regain control of the territory, the Malian government devoted, in 2019, 22% of its national budget to defense (approximately XOF 450 billion).

The success of developing a modern national identity among the people of the historical Mandé and Fulani kingdoms and the Songhai empire is evident to the majority of Malian citizens, who acknowledge the nation-state. However, persistent failures to integrate some of the remote populations (e.g., Tuareg communities in the northeast) have continued to threaten nation-building since independence.

The 2012 Tuareg uprising posed the question of the nation-state in a different way, given that the Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) had proclaimed the separation of the Azawad region from Malian territory. The peace agreement, signed in mid-2015 by the Malian government, the loyalist fighters of the Platform alliance and the Rebel Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), clearly stipulates that Azawad has only a cultural dimension in Mali and not a political one. During the inclusive national dialogue organized in December 2019, the Tuareg separatists, through their representative, raised the problem of the independence of Azawad, a topic that was ultimately rejected. However, the fact that the CMA de facto controls Kidal proves that separatist tendencies remain.

All individuals and groups enjoy the right to acquire citizenship without discrimination. No group, including northerners like the Tuaregs, is denied citizenship. Nevertheless, communitarianism is gaining momentum. Citizens regard themselves as Fulani, Dogon, Songhoi, Tuareg, Bamana and so on before considering themselves to be Malian.

State identity



According to its constitution, Mali is a secular state. Political parties with a religious orientation or based on religious foundations are prohibited by law. Islam in Mali has historically been moderate and pluralistic and has coexisted with other belief systems, such as animism and Christianity.

However, in recent years, contradictions have emerged between the moderate, tolerant and peaceful Sufi Islam majority and more radical Islamist orientations close to Salafism. Islam appears to have an increasing influence on politics and political behavior. Three religious leaders have a significant influence on Malian politicians and are able to mobilize hundreds and thousands of people: the president of the High Islamic Council, the Sufi Chérif Ousmane Madani Haïdara, spiritual leader of the Ansardine Association (not to be confused with the terrorist group Ansar Dine led by Iyad Ag Ghali); the former president of the High Islamic Council, the Wahhabi Mahmoud Dicko; and the Sufi Chérif de Nioro. These figures express political opinions and frequently remind political leaders of their capacities to influence political issues.

Debates on the role of Islam and religion in public life in Mali are ongoing. Religious leaders also participate in the peace and reconciliation process in Mali.

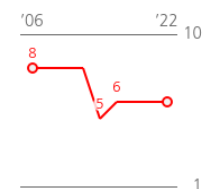
The outgoing president of the High Islamic Council (HIC), Imam Mahmoud Dicko, created his own association in 2018, the Coordination of Movements and Associations of Support to Imam Dicko (CMAS) in order to maintain his influence. This association headed the protests that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubeye Maïga in March 2019, and to the fall of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta (IBK) in August 2020.

While religious leaders do not interfere in efforts to develop the secular legal and institutional framework, they have considerable influence over laws relating to personal status and the family code. A recent example is the introduction of comprehensive sex education, and the debate over criminalization of female circumcision in January 2021.

The administrative division of Mali's territory is effective. The country has more than 703 municipalities, 55 "cercles" (second-level administrative unit) and 20 administrative regions. However, the decentralization process is struggling to function. In 2017, the 2015 Peace Agreement allowed the installation of interim authorities in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu, Taoudéni and Ménaka. The authorities are composed of elements of the CMA and the Platform, but they have been slow to deliver basic social services due to a lack of funds and continued insecurity. Interim authorities were appointed in certain municipalities in the south of the country following the cancelation of the results of the 2016 municipal elections (example: Ouenzindougou, outskirts of Bamako).

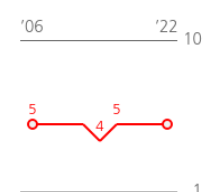
No interference of religious dogmas

6



Basic administration

5



The operationalization of regions newly created in 2012 began in June 2018 with the appointment of the governors of Bougouni, Koutiala and Dioila. In December 2020, the governors of the regions of Kita, Douentza, Nioro, Nara and Badiangara were appointed, but the administrative units within all these regions have yet to be created. Although all the institutions are now in place, they have yet to demonstrate their performance.

Administrative performance is very uneven across the country. While the central administration is relatively powerful, local administrations remain weak due to the insufficient implementation of deconcentrating and decentralization plans, the lack of effective skills transfer, and a lack of human and financial resources, which makes it difficult for local administrations to guarantee basic social services to the populations, especially in the northern regions of Mali. During the 2012 crisis, government employees fled the affected regions, further weakening the administration of those regions. The responsibility for providing basic services still rests with village chiefs today, especially in northern and central Mali. Overall, the presence of the public administration remains limited throughout the country. Access to drinking water and basic social services (health, education, and infrastructure) is also limited; 80% of Malians have access to drinking water, but the figures vary from urban to rural areas (UNICEF). A total of 6.30% of the state budget is devoted to this issue. Although the peace agreement calls for interim authorities in local communities to ensure the restoration of basic social services, plans to this effect have proven difficult to implement. Basic administration remains fragile and inconsistent in the northern and central regions, and jihadist groups have replaced the state and administration. State personnel have either fled their posts, been kidnapped or killed by the jihadists. These groups forced municipalities to close schools (before the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 crisis on March 19, 2020, more than 1,100 schools across the country were already closed, with teachers and other basic administrative staff refusing to return).

During the COVID-19 outbreak, grassroots administrations especially in rural areas, but also in large cities, lacked sufficient public health supplies and materials. Immunization services (vaccinations) have been interrupted.

2 | Political Participation

Since the coup d'état in August 2020, Mali's government and legislature have not been legitimized through elections. Ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta had been re-elected in 2018. International and domestic election observers said the election went relatively well, although a fragile security situation led to very low turnout in parts of the north and in Mali's central region.

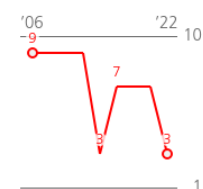
At the request of the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court postponed legislative elections that had initially been scheduled for 2018. Despite protests from political parties and civil society relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government maintained the election dates for both rounds (March 29, 2020, and April 19, 2020). The second round went as planned, despite the kidnapping of Soumaila Cissé, leader of the opposition and the URD political party, on March 25, 2020. The results of the second round proclaimed by the Constitutional Court caused great tensions in several electoral districts, because the court invalidated the provisional results proclaimed by the Ministry of Territorial Administration.

The establishment of the Office of the National Assembly, chaired by Moussa Tembiné, president of the RPM party's youth organization, was the subject of fierce disputes because the latter's seat was one of the 31 seats invalidated by the Territorial Administration but validated by the Constitutional Court. These protests were at the origin of popular movements from June to August 2020 that led to the military intervention that in turn demanded the resignation of President Keïta following the dissolution of the National Assembly and the resignation of the government on August 18, 2020.

On March 25, the government extended the state of health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gatherings of more than 50 people were banned, and social distancing of one meter at polling stations was enforced. After the second round of voting, there was a surge in COVID-19 cases. The turnout was 35.6% of registered voters, significantly lower than the 42.7% rate seen in the 2018 presidential election. According to some observers, the drop in the participation rate was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Free and fair elections

3



Since August 18, 2020, Mali has experienced an exceptional regime following a coup d'état. This was led by a group of soldiers calling themselves the National Committee for the Salvation of the People (CNSP), which overthrew President Keïta. The latter immediately announced his resignation, along with the dissolution of the National Assembly. The CNSP has committed to running the country until the next elections are held.

The timeline of the return to constitutional order demanded by ECOWAS and other national and international actors, remains uncertain for now.

The transition process has not been inclusive and consensual. The most important posts, notably the vice-presidency of the state and the key ministries, were entrusted to the military. The political class, civil society organizations and especially the M5-RFP movement that was at the base of the popular protests that put an end to the Keïta regime played no role in the management of the transition.

Before the coup d'état, Mali was governed by a democratically elected president and National Assembly.

Mali's constitution guarantees the rights of association and assembly, which are detailed in the 2005 law on the creation and management of associations. In general, association authorizations are relatively easy to obtain. Associations in Mali are generally free to manage their own activities and express their opinions.

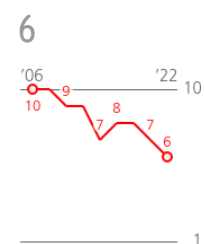
Between April and August 2020, anti-government protests were carried out in Bamako, Mopti, Kayes and Sikasso. The protest started by contesting the results of the legislative elections and later called for the resignation of then-president Keïta. According to reports by Amnesty International, the U.S. Department of State and MINUSMA, security forces repeatedly used excessive violence to disperse protests and arrested protest leaders. In May 2020, three protesters were shot by security forces in Kayes and Sikasso. In July 2020, security forces killed at least 14 protesters and injured about 100 protesters who had occupied public buildings.

As part of the measures to counter the COVID-19 pandemic, the government declared a state of health emergency, which is an exceptional measure restricting individual freedoms. Social, sporting, cultural and political gatherings of more than 50 people were thus banned, meetings of all kinds were suspended, and nightclubs and dancing bars were closed. Churches were closed on instructions from their hierarchy, but mosques remained open because the High Islamic Council did not implement the decision to close them. These measures were renewed by the government in January 2021.

Effective power to govern



Association / assembly rights



The constitution guarantees freedom of speech and of the press. Mali's media landscape has evolved over the past 20 years. Today, Mali has about 216 political parties, 400 free radio stations, 120 newspapers and several thousand associations. News websites are popular with the educated elite. However, internet access remains limited. While the southern part of Mali has a relatively open media environment, the northern part of the country experiences restrictions. Despite the variety and openness, there is almost no investigative journalism.

In December 2020, the prominent columnist Ras Bath, who had been very critical of the transitional authorities, was arrested along with other personalities on charges of trying to destabilize the government. A press release from the Minister of Territorial Administration tending to restrict press freedom was violently criticized by press organizations; in response, the ministers of Communication and Territorial Administration hosted a meeting of press organizations to clarify the content of the press release, with the aim of appeasing these organizations on the issue of press freedom.

The measures taken in the context of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic have not restricted the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press.

3 | Rule of Law

The separation of powers is enshrined in the Malian constitution. The National Assembly controls the action of the government and deliberates on bills and proposed laws. However, the newly elected National Assembly, which started to work in May 2020, was dissolved by a coup d'état in August 2020.

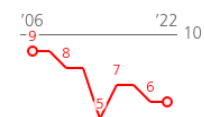
The Transition Charter adopted in September 2020 created the National Transitional Council as the legislative body for the transitional period. The vice president of the transitional government appointed the 121 members of this council. Thus, there is currently no separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of government.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020, the former government declared a state of health emergency in conformity with constitutional provisions and enacted a number of measures to protect citizens and institutions against the pandemic. In January 2021, the transitional government extended the state of health emergency and renewed the existing measures.

The judiciary is formally independent but does not engage in effective oversight of the political branches of government. This is due to the prerogatives of the executive in appointing judges, limited financial and organizational resources, and widespread corruption within the judiciary.

Freedom of expression

6



1

Separation of powers

3



1

Although the 1992 constitution guarantees the independence of the judiciary, the executive in practice exerts considerable influence over it. This is due to the structure of the Malian legal system (made up of the Supreme Court, Superior Council of the Judiciary, and Constitutional Court). For example, the Malian president heads the Superior Council of Judiciary the body that oversees judicial authorities and appoints judges. This reduces the credibility and impartiality of the judiciary, as well as its ability to resolve major internal problems.

The state spends only 1% of its overall budget on the judiciary. The justice sector remains dependent on development aid.

The legal system does not cover all of Malian territory. There are approximately 599 judges, 326 lawyers, and three courts of appeal (in Bamako, Kayes and Mopti) serving a population of 19.6 million. Most magistrates are based in Bamako, and just 4% of lawyers registered with the bar practice outside Bamako.

Non-enforcement of court decisions is frequent. The justice sector is one of the most affected by corruption, which is widespread and can be found at all levels. Corruption is a key factor contributing to citizens' lack of confidence in the judiciary. In the northern and central regions of Mali, mainly affected by insecurity, the judicial system is in fact absent. Traditional and religious authorities have replaced the judiciary by applying customary law or Shariah law.

In Mali, corruption is common and systematic. No sector is spared. This creates resentment and mistrust among the public, inflates the costs of the services provided and affects political stability. According to the 2019 Global Corruption Barometer, six out of 10 Malians believed that corruption had increased during the past 12 months, twice as many as in 2015. Corruption in public procurement is common. Abuse of public office is rarely punished, but abuses sometimes attract negative publicity.

In its 2019 report, the Central Office for the Fight against Illicit Enrichment in Mali (an independent body that can take cases directly to the courts), cited three officials for illicit enrichment: an inspector of social security services and two inspectors of finance. Their files were handed over to the prosecutor, involved a sum of between XOF 2 billion and XOF 3 billion for each of the inspectors. As part of the “clean hands” anti-corruption operation, several senior political figures have been arrested, including the mayor of the Bamako district, Adama Sangaré (a member of the Adéma-PASJ political party, which is affiliated with the ruling IBK party), for forgery and infringement of public property. About 20 more people have been arrested, with warrants issued for seven others. The president of the Permanent Assembly of the Chambers of Agriculture of Mali (APCAM) and of the Confederation of Cooperative Societies of Cotton Producers (C-SCPC) was taken into custody in 2019 as part of an investigation into the embezzlement of more than XOF 10 billion (more than €20 million).

Independent judiciary

4

'06 _____ '22 10



_____ 1

Prosecution of office abuse

4

'06 _____ '22 10



_____ 1

Investigations into the acquisition of the presidential plane and overcharges for armament contracts revealed serious breaches of financial and accounting orthodoxy, according to the Office of the Auditor-General. Mahamadou Camara, the president's director of cabinet (who held a ministerial rank at the time of the facts involved), was arrested and released on April 21, 2020, without any charge being brought against him.

Civil society created a structure in 2018 called the Platform for the Fight Against Corruption (PCC), which denounces corruption and even lodged a complaint against public officials for embezzlement. The group's president, Clément Dembélé, was arrested in April / May 2020 by state security services.

The 1992 constitution provides for civil rights, and prohibits discrimination based on sex, religion or ethnicity. However, women are in fact disadvantaged, and there is social discrimination against certain ethnic groups, whose members are treated practically like slaves. Yet these are rare cases.

The human rights situation in Mali has deteriorated. Violence and terrorist attacks have gradually spread from the north to several regions in the south and to Bamako, the capital of Mali. The human rights violations being perpetrated include killings, torture, and degrading and inhuman ill-treatment. In 2020, for the period between April 1 and June 30 alone, the U.N. mission in Mali (MINUSMA) recorded 126 human rights violations perpetrated by the Malian army. Among these violations were 94 summary, arbitrary and extrajudicial executions, for instance in Yangassadiou in the Mopti region and in Massabougou in the Ségou region.

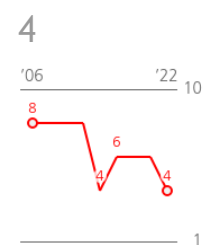
In December 2020, prominent columnist Ras Bath and four other figures, including two from the public treasury, were arrested on charges of attempting to destabilize the government. Boubou Cissé, President Keïta's last prime minister, is actively wanted on the same grounds.

The judicial system suffers from a serious delay in the processing of cases, which leads to long periods of pre-trial detention despite recent revisions to the Code of Criminal Procedure. Detainees are not always charged within the time limit set by law, and arbitrary arrests are common. The state of emergency declared in 2015 is still in effect.

As of the time of writing, recently ousted president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, who had returned from care on October 21, 2020, was under house arrest with his son Boubacar Keïta.

The state has set up a mechanism for managing the non-execution of court decisions, the Forum for Democratic Interpellation (EID), chaired by a jury of citizens and human rights defenders. Citizens can come to this entity to denounce abuses they have suffered at the hands of state officials in cases where the latter have not complied with the decisions of the courts. During the entity's 2019 session, it processed 465 files; the 2020 session was postponed to 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Civil rights



Ultimately, little effort has been made by the Malian authorities to investigate and hold those implicated in human rights violations accountable. The National Human Rights Commission, created to help citizens ensure that their rights are being respected, and which has the task of challenging the state when human rights violations are identified, has produced few results.

Under the extended health emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been restrictions on citizens' freedom of movement. Abuses by the police monitoring curfews and lockdown measures have been observed.

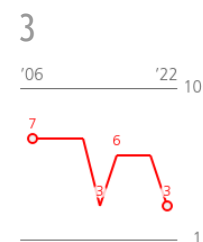
4 | Stability of Democratic Institutions

Mali's 1992 constitution calls for political pluralism and determines the institutions responsible for governing in the name and on behalf of the people. Accordingly, elections are in theory the means of gaining executive and legislative power at the national and local levels. However, since the coup d'état in August 2020, Mali's democratic institutions have not been functional. The democratically elected president was ousted and the National Assembly dissolved.

According to the Charter of the Transition, a president and vice president of the transition were appointed. The president of the transition appointed a government composed of 25 members headed by a prime minister. The 121 members of the National Transitional Council (CNT), which acts as parliament during the transition, were also appointed by the vice president of the transition, Colonel Assimi Goïta, in violation of the decree determining the conditions for appointing members of the CNT. Justice also seems to be coopted, as evidenced by the latest arrests. All of the country's institutions have been hampered in their normal functioning and are controlled by the transitional authorities.

Corruption, poor governance and the poor organization of elections are at the root of institutional and political crises in Mali, and led to the coups d'état of March 22, 2012, and August 18, 2020. For instance, the Constitutional Court reinstated 31 MPs who had lost their parliamentary seats in the 2020 legislative elections according to the provisional results. This decision was widely criticized and instigated protests that spread across the entire Malian territory, culminating in the coup d'état of August 18, 2020.

Performance of democratic institutions



In its Fundamental Act No. 001 / CNSP of August 24, 2020, the CNSP military junta declared that Mali is a democratic republic. It justified its coup d'état by referring to the ousted government's bad governance and the poor functioning of democratic institutions.

The CNSP announced the establishment of an inclusive political transition that would include sociopolitical actors and the restoration of constitutional order and said it would act without delay on the issues fueling the crisis facing the country. The junta followed the demand formulated by ECOWAS, mediator in the crisis, to appoint a civilian president to lead the transition so as to show signs of openness in accordance with its CNSP Fundamental Act.

However, the current Transitional Charter of September 12, 2021, ensures impunity for members of the junta, and provides the junta with significant power over the transitional government by creating the position of a vice president, which is occupied by the coup leader, Assimi Goïta. Thus, the transitional charter is in conflict with the 1992 constitution.

5 | Political and Social Integration

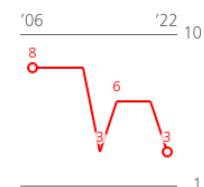
The Charter of Political Parties defines the missions assigned to political parties, which are freely created in Mali in accordance with the constitution. There are now 216 political parties in Mali. Political parties are extremely weak, because they have no sociological roots. Party agendas, rarely programmatic, are tailored to the ambitions of particular individuals. Elected officials frequently change parties between elections (“political nomadism”).

Political parties have no ideological foundation and are most often attached to the person of their founder. Internal democracy within parties hardly exists. In Mali, there is no real grassroots-funded political party system; rather, it is the party that sustains the activists. Political parties insufficiently represent the will of their voters, as there is a lot of vote-buying and political corruption during election periods.

After the 2020 coup, political parties continue to exist, but are excluded from the management of transitional bodies. Most political parties refused to join forces with the military in the management of power. While the coup does not so far appear to have caused substantial changes to the party system, this can only be fully assessed when the country returns to an electoral regime after the transitional period.

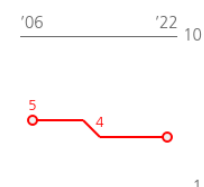
Commitment to democratic institutions

3



Party system

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Some interest groups attempt to influence national politics. These groups (unions, civil society organizations and multinationals) rely on political parties to implement their demands. There are umbrella groups that bring together multiple associations in sectoral areas ranging from trade to agriculture, as well as civil society organizations, women, youth, and even organized ethnic groups (for the Fulani, the Tabital Pulaaku group; for the Dogons, the Dan Nam Ambassagou group; Ganda Izo and Ganda Koy for nationals of the north; the CMA for the nomadic Tuareg; and the Platform for the settled populations of the north). There are also associations that bring together traditional social groups specializing in mediation, as well as unions that represent the interests of different professional groups.

A recent example of pressure groups joining forces with political parties to support popular demands is the M5RFP. This is a coalition of opposition political parties and civil society organizations, including the Coordination of Movements and Support Associations of the Imam Mahmoud Dicko (CMAS), who in June 2020 initiated a protest movement against the results of the legislative elections of 2020, leading ultimately to the military intervention that end the regime of President Keïta.

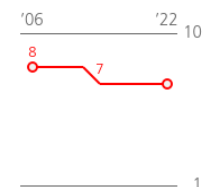
According to the Afrobarometer 2020 survey, 64% of Malians surveyed said they preferred democracy to any other political regime; 69% of those consulted rejected military rule, 76% were against one-party rule, and 87% were against one-man power. This poll shows that the majority of Malians approve of the democratic system and its standards, and would like political parties, whether majority or opposition, to improve their political practices. This survey also indicated that Malians trust traditional and religious leaders more than state institutions. That raises the question of the socialization of the state for better ownership by Malians.

Afrobarometer polls show that Mali's population disapproves of the military regime that took power after the coup d'état of August 18, 2020. They want a rapid return to normal constitutional life based on democratic principles.

The public health measures enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic have proven controversial because they restrict citizens' freedom of movement and disrupt the normal functioning of income-generating activities in a system where the majority of the population lives on the informal economy. These measures have led the population to criticize the institutions that enacted them without accompanying social measures.

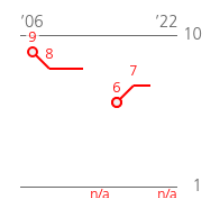
Interest groups

7



Approval of democracy

n/a



Maliens have a capacity for self-organization, particularly in rural areas (73% of the total population). Such traditions produce strong social capital. They also lead to preferential treatment of family members in the public administration (e.g., patronage and corruption). There is a need to build trust within networks and across social divides along the country's largely north-south axis. Extended family networks are the most important social structures in terms of mutual aid. Outside these extended family networks, mutual trust is lower. According to a 2019 Afrobarometer survey, 77% of Malians think that they must be very careful in dealing with people they do not know.

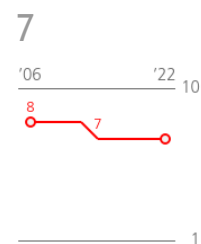
The vast network of civil society organizations across the country – often with the support of international donors – provides social protection services beyond family networks and acts as a substitute for the state, particularly in rural areas. Such groups also provide income to individuals and small groups through small businesses. High levels of self-help remain a lingering legacy of the failure to integrate rural areas into Mali's socioeconomic development. During the political crisis of 2012, and since then, many community leaders have been involved in the organization of basic public services.

In Mali, divergent interests are counterbalanced by an anchored culture of consensus based on the “joking cousin” relationships (“sinankunya” in the Bamanankan language) that crosses many ethnic groups. Consensual elements and “joking cousins” make social conflicts relatively opaque: conflicts often disappear behind a veil of consensus in the face of outsiders.

Finally, there is a culture of public protest inherited from the democratic process of the 1990s, which means that the various key actors from civil society and political parties are able to put pressure on public authorities through protests in the streets. Recent examples are protests organized by religious leaders against the criminalization of female circumcision in January 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic, with its restrictive measures decreed by the authorities, has influenced the culture of community and group life. This prevented people from organizing themselves within the framework of mutual aid and interfered with joint income-generating activities.

Social capital



II. Economic Transformation

6 | Level of Socioeconomic Development

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 184 out of 189 countries (HDI 2019). Its Human Development Index (HDI) score is low (0.434). There are significant inequalities in Mali. A total of 68.3% of the Malian population lives in multidimensional poverty; 76.1% live on less than \$3.10 per day (2019) and half of the population, or 49.7%, lives on less than \$1.90 per day (2019). Poverty is considerably more prevalent in rural than in urban areas, and the distribution of income is very unequal in these two areas. Although no recent Gini index data is available, in 2009 it was rather low at 33.0. Mali's Gender Inequality Index score of 0.671 indicates a significant marginalization of women.

Despite the security crisis, the Malian economy has remained resilient (see “Output strength”). Even though Malians face major structural obstacles, informal economic activities and the widespread practice of subsistence agriculture provide better living conditions than econometric statistics suggest.

Migration and remittances represent an important source of finance for the Malian economy. Remittances have a huge impact on migrant families, leading to increased incomes, reduced poverty, and improved health and education outcomes. They represent 11% of the country's GDP.

Economic indicators		2017	2018	2019	2020
GDP	\$ M	15365.7	17070.9	17281.8	17393.8
GDP growth	%	5.3	4.7	4.8	-1.6
Inflation (CPI)	%	1.8	0.3	-1.7	0.4
Unemployment	%	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.5
Foreign direct investment	% of GDP	3.6	2.7	2.9	-
Export growth	%	11.4	-0.1	2.3	0.3
Import growth	%	-14.2	-12.1	5.9	-3.2
Current account balance	\$ M	-1209.9	-835.8	-	-

Question
Score

Socioeconomic
barriers

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Economic indicators		2017	2018	2019	2020
Public debt	% of GDP	35.5	36.1	40.6	47.4
External debt	\$ M	4278.6	4631.3	5104.4	6081.1
Total debt service	\$ M	142.0	192.5	213.7	245.1
Net lending/borrowing	% of GDP	-1.7	-4.6	-1.6	-
Tax revenue	% of GDP	15.9	11.7	14.5	-
Government consumption	% of GDP	16.2	15.9	15.7	16.5
Public education spending	% of GDP	3.8	3.9	3.4	-
Public health spending	% of GDP	1.2	1.1	-	-
R&D expenditure	% of GDP	0.3	-	-	-
Military expenditure	% of GDP	3.0	2.8	2.7	3.3

Sources (as of December 2021): The World Bank, World Development Indicators | International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Military Expenditure Database.

7 | Organization of the Market and Competition

Since the introduction of democracy in 1991, Mali has opted for a market economy with a legal arsenal that allows for free competition. Nevertheless, Mali's institutional framework for market competition remains weak, despite the fact that the country's ranking in the 2019 World Bank Ease of Doing Business report rose to 145th place.

In the Heritage Foundation's 2020 Economic Freedom Index, Mali ranks 20th out of the 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The Heritage Foundation notes a number of improvements and "some important reforms" in terms of diversification, poverty reduction, tax administration and privatization, but stresses the need for change in other areas, such as the fight against corruption and the attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI). Conditions have improved with regard to starting a business, obtaining building permits, registering property and resolving insolvency disputes. Starting a business in Mali takes 11 days and five procedures, at a cost of 55.1% of per capita GNI. The Economic Freedom Index score for starting a business in Mali is 84.05 out of 100 (ranking 110th out of 190). However, these improvements have little impact on the large informal economy (which is responsible for 90.5% of total employment) and are focused on commercial activities. Retail and trade activities that take place in the streets and markets of many villages and towns are not reflected in official statistics. In addition, the serious security problems in the country make Mali less attractive to (foreign) investors.

Market organization

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As a part of the COVID-19 response, the outstanding debt of affected companies will be restructured, and guidance will be given to banks so that Malian companies can benefit from the concessions granted by the Central Bank of West African States (BCAO). A guarantee fund of XOF 20 billion will be applied to the financing needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and certain large enterprises affected by the pandemic. Furthermore, the Malian government has created a guarantee fund worth €350 million (2.7% of GDP) via the Malta Development Bank in order to guarantee the loans granted by commercial banks in Malta to negatively affected businesses. The amount of guaranteed loans could reach up to €780 million (6% of GDP). The government will subsidize the interest rate on these loans for two years up to 2.5%. Additionally, banks have been urged to propose a six-month moratorium on principal and interest repayments for borrowers who have been affected by COVID-19.

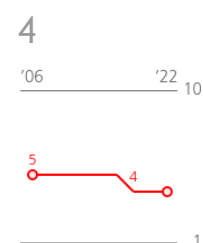
There is antitrust legislation in place in Mali; however, there is no independent body to regulate the competition sector. The National Competition Council is an advisory body in this area. The National Directorate of Trade and Competition, attached to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, supports it. The rules prohibit monopolies and oligopolies, but corruption severely hinders their implementation. Competition takes place mainly between the formal and informal sector. Prices are regulated by the market, but there are pricing oligarchies in many economic sectors, such as grain trading and rice production.

Nationals see foreign interests as enjoying impunity, especially in the privatization of some formerly nationalized industries (Transrail). The dynamism of the informal sector helps to keep retail prices competitive. In times of crisis, the state subsidizes the importation of certain products, especially foodstuffs, through exemptions. The hydrocarbon sector is also subsidized, as are agricultural inputs.

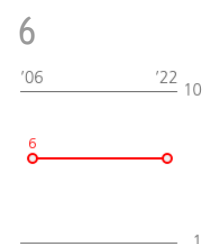
Mali is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Through the Common External Tariff (CET) of WAEMU and ECOWAS, Mali levies an average tariff of 12.1% (2017). However, Mali also uses the option given to each ECOWAS country to apply additional taxes to certain products, including spirits, livestock and mining products (even those from the WAEMU zone). Mali also imposes a special import duty on sugar from non-WAEMU states.

While Mali does not subsidize exports, enterprises that export products may enjoy tax concessions. However, government officials often extort unauthorized “fees” during cross-border transport activities, and some individual companies take part in large-scale fraud related to import licenses. To improve its export strategy, Mali is establishing an export promotion agency for domestic firms. There is no stock exchange in Mali; the only Malian enterprise listed on the Bourse Régionale des Valeurs Mobilières (BRVM), based in Abidjan, is the Bank of Africa.

Competition policy



Liberalization of foreign trade



The competitiveness of Mali's goods and services is constrained by the country's landlocked location and the high cost of inputs such as energy, water, communications, credit and transport.

Mali has been a WTO member since 1995. Along with the other countries of the "Cotton Four" (Benin, Burkina Faso, and Chad), Mali continues to seek the abolishment of subsidies for cotton exports (WTO consultative framework mechanism on cotton, 2014). Mali enjoys the privileges accorded to the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries under the Cotonou Agreement. In February 2014, West Africa (Mali belongs to this group) and the European Union concluded negotiations for a regional economic partnership agreement (EPA). Mali has signed the regional EPA.

Mali is eligible for preferential trade treatment under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and for Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) financing and insurance products.

The institutional foundations for a banking system exist but are vulnerable to extreme dependence on external factors. There are 13 commercial banks operating in Mali. Although the degree of foreign ownership of banks remains low, the Moroccan-based Attijariwafa Bank purchased Mali's second-largest bank, Banque Internationale du Mali (BIM). This is part of a strategy to develop closer trade, financial and economic ties with Morocco, but also with Egypt and Tunisia.

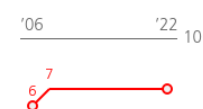
According to the World Bank, Mali's banks appear to be adequately capitalized, with an overall capital adequacy of the system (Basel I) of 12.9% in 2013, above the WAEMU average of 10.6%. One small and one mid-sized bank has failed to meet the minimum Capital Adequacy Ratio of 8% (Basel I) as of June 2014. The share of non-performing loans decreased substantially between 2005 (29.5% of total loans) and 2015 (14.5%), according to the African Development Bank. More recent data is not available.

Mali's membership of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the supervision exercised by the independent Central African Banking Commission (COBAC/BCAO) contribute to maintaining financial stability. Malian banks met the IMF's minimum capital requirements in 2014. The financial system has sufficient liquidity, but Malian banks lack resources for long-term financing. In May 2011, the government created a fund to guarantee private sector activities and offer two- to seven-year loans to enable banks to lend to small and medium-sized enterprises.

According to the World Bank's financial sector assessment in 2015 (the most recent one), weak prudential standards and lax enforcement pose potential problems for banking stability, but reforms are underway. Loan classification and provisioning regulations, capital adequacy, and risk concentration fall short of international

Banking system

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standards. The Central Bank of the West African States (BCEAO), with technical assistance from the IMF, has initiated a gradual implementation of Basel II/III standards, and has taken measures to improve credit information, adopt international accounting standards and implement consolidated supervision, which is becoming increasingly important given the increased presence of regional banking groups in Mali.

In order to buy shares in some companies, the government has created a capital-stock investment company (SICR). However, the banking sector generally contributes little to the facilitation of economic growth. Access to bank and financial services remains restricted due to a lack of sufficient loan guarantees, especially for the average person.

8 | Monetary and fiscal stability

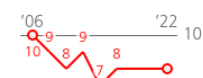
As a member of the African Financial Community (Communauté Financière d’Afrique, CFA), which is guaranteed by the French Treasury, Mali’s monetary policy decisions are made by the Banque Centrale des États de l’Afrique de L’Ouest (BCEAO), and the CFA franc is pegged to the euro. The BCEAO is fully independent but is heavily influenced by the European Central Bank’s anti-inflation policy. There is growing pressure in West Africa to create a new currency.

Notwithstanding the impact of the political crisis on the economy and, thus, inflation, a return to relative political stability since elections in 2013 has facilitated a resumption of economic growth with moderate inflation. Agricultural production, highly dependent on rain-fed crops has the greatest influence on inflation. According to estimates and projections by the World Bank, the inflation rate was -1.7% in 2019. Inflation rates have been volatile over the last decade, with a peak of 5.3% in 2012. In 2016, the inflation rate was -1.8%, rising the subsequent year to 1.8%.

The West African CFA franc has not been devalued, despite rumors to the contrary. The Central Bank for West African Countries (BCEAO) has taken steps to better meet banks’ demand for liquidity and mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on economic activity. The bank adopted a full allocation strategy at a fixed rate of 2.5% (the minimum monetary policy rate), thus allowing banks to meet their liquidity needs at a rate approximately 25 basis points lower than that before the crisis. Data on the real effective exchange rate is not available.

Monetary stability

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Mali's macroeconomic framework is founded on robust cooperation with the IMF, World Bank and other international donors. The integration of the Malian economy into the regional framework such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) helps give the country a solid macroeconomic foundation. Highly dependent on external lenders, Mali's public debt represented 40.5% of GDP in 2019. External debt in 2019 totaled \$5.2 billion. The total debt service was \$226 million in 2019. The overall fiscal balance was -1.7% of GDP in 2019, according to the IMF. For 2020, the IMF forecast a fiscal deficit of 6.2% of GDP.

The share of security spending in Mali's budgets has been increasing during the review period, making the allocation of much needed money to social services and development increasingly challenging. A year before the crisis, military spending, as a share of public expenditure was 8.4% (or 2.1% of GDP). However, by 2013 this had risen to 11.4% (or 2.9% of GDP), and by 2019, the figure was 22% of spending (450 billion FCFA).

Thanks to continued debt management under the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), Mali's risk of excess debt remains moderate according to assessments by the IMF and the World Bank in 2018.

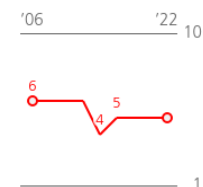
According to the IMF, Mali increased its state expenditure by \$0.4 billion in 2020, partially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The country qualified for the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, and according to the World Bank, has a moderate risk of external and overall debt distress. In April 2020, Mali received \$200.41 million of additional credit through the Rapid Credit Facility.

9 | Private Property

In principle, Malian property rights are well defined and regulated, but the absence of a nationwide land registry leads to competing claims for land. According to the World Bank's 2020 Doing Business Report, registering property in Mali requires five steps, takes 29 days and costs 11.1% of the property value. Mali scored 8.0 in the quality of land administration index (the average for sub-Saharan African countries is 8.4 and for OECD countries, 22.7). Ubiquitous corruption increases the transaction costs of seeking legal title, which is further complicated by the fact that most land in Mali is not allotted. The contrast between nomads and the settled population complicates the Malian concept of property and customary access rights, and can result in conflict, especially in rural areas. Due to unreliable data on the scope of foreign land acquisition in Mali, there is persistent and growing popular concern – fueled by accusations voiced by Malian civil society actors (e.g., Coalition des Alternatives Africaines Dette et Développement, CAD-Mali) – that the Malian government is supporting land grabs by foreign investors.

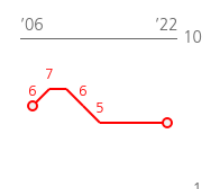
Fiscal stability

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Property rights

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The government established the Malian center for the promotion of industrial property (CEMAPI) and charged it with implementing the legal regime of property rights protection, including the WTO's agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) as the U.S. State Department writes in its Investment Climate Report 2017. There are two primary agencies tasked with the protection of intellectual property rights: the CEMAPI and the Malian office of the rights of the author (BUMDA). According to the U.S. State Department's Investment Climate Report 2020, the BUMDA covers artistic and cultural works. Mali is a member of the African Property Rights Organization (IAPO) and works with international agencies recognized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Patents, copyrights and trademarks are protected under Malian law.

In 2014, the Malian government adopted a national strategy for the development of intellectual property rights (SNDPI). In February 2015, the Supreme Court canceled an executive order on copyrights that sought to update copyright laws to include modern technology.

Private enterprises have little significance in the economic system. Most Malian private companies are small and employ few staff. In its Investment Climate Statement 2020, the U.S. Department of State indicates that Mali's legal framework guarantees equal treatment of private firms and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) with regard to financing, land access, tax burden, tax rebate and access to raw materials. SOEs do not receive any preferential treatment.

Since the 1990s, Mali has engaged in several privatization processes and has reduced government involvement in some SOEs. However, the U.S. Department of State still counts 48 state-owned or partially state-owned companies in Mali, including 12 mining companies, the national electricity company (EDM), a telecommunications entity (SOTELMA), a cotton ginning company (CMDT), a cigarette company (SONATAM), sugar companies (SUKALA and N-SUKALA) and the Bamako-Senou Airport. The government has abandoned its shares in two banks, BSIC-Mali and Coris Bank International-Mali, and reduced its shares in the Malian Development Bank (BDM) and Malian Solidarity Bank (BMS).

Privatization processes are organized through open international bidding. According to the U.S. Department of State, the process is nondiscriminatory in principle; however, there have been many allegations of corruption in public procurement.

Private enterprise

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10 | Welfare Regime

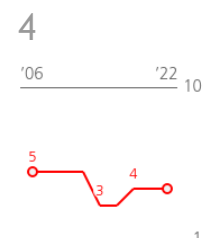
The state's weak capacity and moderate revenue limits its ability to foster economic inclusion or provide compensation for exclusion. Insufficient health care and social infrastructure affects large segments of society, with almost no effective capital-funded schemes to guarantee welfare. The Malian state is unable to systematically combat poverty on its own. The existing health insurance, l'Assurance Maladie Obligatoire (AMO), initially open to employees and civil service agents, had, by 2018, widened its product chain by including the offer of voluntary insurance to everyone. Nonetheless, coverage throughout the country remains low. Access to social security and health care insurance remains rare due to the predominance of the informal sector, where workers do not have any coverage.

Mali's allocation of 3.8% of GDP to health spending has been relatively consistent for a number of years, according to the World Bank. The 2019 Global Health Security Index ranked Mali at 147th place out of 195 countries, with a score of 29 (out of 100), placing it among the countries least prepared to face the crisis and manage an epidemic. This ranking is due to the poor capacity of the health system to treat patients and protect health workers, as well as to prevent, detect and provide notification of epidemics. Mali had one of the lowest levels of health expenditure in the world in 2017 at \$31 per capita, half of the standard of \$60 recommended by the WHO. However, to manage the COVID-19 crisis, funds have been reallocated to the health sector to support Mali's health system, which has shown weaknesses in dealing with the crisis. The government has announced a series of spending measures that are expected to cost €520 million (4% of GDP); these aim to support the health sector as well as business and household incomes. The package includes over €130 million euros (1% of GDP) in health spending; allowances to support people unable to work at home (such as families with children, people with disabilities); special unemployment benefits; wage subsidies for businesses and self-employed workers affected by the pandemic; business support to cover the costs of quarantined employees and invest in teleworking facilities; and increases in rent subsidies for the unemployed.

The government has increased its efforts to provide social housing to the population (middle class). In 2019, 3,700 social housing units were available for allocation: 25,000 people applied for these homes. But the rampant corruption limits target groups' access to the available housing.

The political crisis, its legacies, and the persistent insecurity in the north and the center of the country have weakened the country's social infrastructure. A large percentage of the Malian population relies on the mutual self-help system provided by the extended family. Malians also take advantage (particularly in rural areas) of the extensive network of civil society organizations, who are often supported by

Social safety nets



international funding. As with aspects of the informal economy that elude accurate measurement, the safety nets afforded by Malians to members of their networks (e.g., extended family and faith community) are deeply rooted and help protect many from life-threatening poverty. Indeed, this widespread solidarity mitigates otherwise acute – and violence engendering – inequality and cleavages of socioeconomic status.

Multiple barriers hamper equal opportunity in Mali. Malian women do not have the same opportunities as men.

Structural inequality between men and women is legally entrenched in the widely contested family law, a barometer of popular resistance to legal mechanisms aimed at strengthening gender equality. The gap between female and male education level – only 7.3% of adult women have completed secondary education, as compared to 16.4% of men – is an indicator of gender inequality. The unequal level of education is also reflected in the literacy rate. In 2018, 46.2% of Malian men were able to read, in comparison to 25.7% of Malian women. Inequality can also be seen in the labor-market activity rate: 61.2% of women work, as opposed to 80.6% of men. However, women’s engagement in the informal economy, mostly selling in markets, is substantial.

Women’s high level of informal engagement in the economy and civil society, as well as their presence in leadership positions in the bureaucracy, is not reflected in the areas of government administration and politics. In 2015, the government passed a law requiring 30% of candidates for election to be women. In the last government (lasting from 2010 until the coup d’état), the number of women ministers decreased; out of 32 ministers, nine were women; under the transition, there are only four women out of 25 ministers.

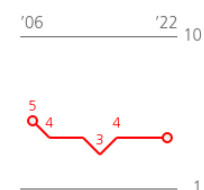
In the broader context of the Islamic resurgence in Mali, state-regulated popular Islamic schools offer limited or unequal access to opportunities in the French-speaking state. Different educational paths result in unequal opportunities. There are also disparities between rural and urban schools. Qualified teachers are deployed in urban schools, while less-skilled teachers are generally found in poor rural areas.

11 | Economic Performance

According to the African Economic Outlook, Mali’s economy has remained resilient despite the security crisis. In 2019, the country recorded 5% real GDP growth (driven by gold and cotton production), a budget deficit of 3.1% of GDP and an inflation rate of 0.4%. Public debt was 35.5% of GDP at the end of 2018. However, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis led to a recession in 2020, in which GDP shrank by 2%.

Equal opportunity

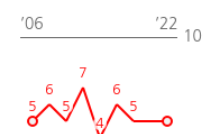
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Output strength

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Mali's economy remains hardly industrialized, and the country has struggled to develop its manufacturing industry. This leads to an enormous need for imports and to a current account deficit (5.4% of GDP in 2019). On the demand side, investment is particularly low, at 9.5% of GDP for the private sector and 8.7% for the public sector.

Mali's tax revenues amount to 14.3% of its GDP according to the African Economic Outlook. This rate is weak and is well below the ECOWAS standard of 20%. Analysis of public debt sustainability in May 2018 indicated that the risk of Mali's debt overhang was moderate. The African Development Bank assesses that Mali's debt policy, conducted through the IMF's Extended Credit Facility, is prudent. However, the maturity structure of domestic debt, with 59% of it falling due over the 2019 – 2021 period, is of great concern. Moreover, public debt was expected to increase from 40.5% of GDP in 2019 to 44.8% of GDP in 2020 in response to the health and political crises, according to the African Development Bank. Nonetheless, the risk of debt distress remains moderate.

In March 2019, Mali adopted a National Strategic Framework for Economic Revitalization and Sustainable Development 2019–23 and works to implement the Plan for Public Finance Management Reform 2017–21.

The African Economic Outlook describes the Malian economy as depending heavily on gold and cotton (86% of exports), while value chains are poorly developed (only 3% of cotton is processed domestically). With little diversification, the economy is vulnerable to the prices of raw materials on international markets. The accumulation of payment arrears for domestic debt presents a risk that economic activity will stall, hampering the private sector.

A mainly young population (67%) is growing at 3.1% a year, and high unemployment levels (7.2% in 2019) disproportionately affect young people (26.5% rate among youth). However, the majority of Malians are employed in the informal sector. Unsuitable job training further exacerbates unemployment. The number of jobs created every year (44,520, on average) cannot absorb the annual growth in the labor supply (300,000, on average). The discrepancy between the supply of training and the requirements of the labor market aggravates the workforce's poor qualifications.

12 | Sustainability

Mali's considerable environmental challenges (desertification, mining, loss of biodiversity and water pollution) stem from its vulnerability to the effects of climate change. In 2020, Mali ranked 160th out of 180 countries in the environmental performance index (EPI), a decline compared to 2018 (147/180).

Mali's institutional framework for environmental protection was created in the 1990s. The 1992 constitution establishes the right to a healthy environment and the duty of the state to provide it. In 1998, the government established a comprehensive legal framework, the national environmental-protection policy. The National Environment and Sustainable Development Agency was created, and it facilitates Mali's continued participation as a pilot country in the Green Climate Fund, which includes a program focused on scaling up renewable energy production in low-income countries (SREP). However, given the lingering impacts of the security crisis, environmental protection has fallen in urgency on the domestic political agenda.

In 2018, Mali's national environmental-protection policy was updated in order to address the multiple underfunded environmental challenges and measures. In 2019, the Malian government committed itself to implement the recommendations of a national report on the environment that covered the 2017 – 2019 period. The report recommends the implementation of major environmental projects, in particular in the areas of energy transition; forest rehabilitation and wildlife protection; the improvement of agricultural, pastoral and fisheries systems; the reduction of pollution and nuisances; the production of environmental information and education; and the provision of substantial and sustainable financing for environmental conservation. No up-to-date information is available on the implementation of these recommendations. However, the ongoing security crisis and the political instability caused by the coup d'état in August 2020 have most likely hampered the implementation.

Grassroots organizational efforts, rooted in local knowledge and cultural heritage about natural resource management, are a basis on which communities interact with national and international partners, especially on water and forestry issues. They negotiate the optimal balance of formal and informal rules and practices that shape how natural resources are owned, used and managed.

Environmental
policy

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Mali's literacy rate is 35.5%, one of the lowest such figures in the world. This means that two-thirds of the population is illiterate. These figures deteriorated during the period under review, as only 39% of young Malians (aged 15 – 24) are literate. Whereas 76% children are enrolled in elementary school, only 41% go to secondary school. The ratio of girls to boys enrolled in public and private schools was 0.9 in 2019. However, ensuring that students regularly attend school and take exams remains a major challenge. A very small percentage of students (7%) attend higher education. There are serious concerns about the quality of education. On average, there is one teacher for every 41 students. This ratio may differ from urban to rural areas. Teachers and professors regularly strike for better working conditions.

Mali obtained a score of 0.286 in the United Nations Education Index in 2019. Public expenditure in the education sector has not increased for a few years; it amounted to 3.8% of GDP in 2017, which was the same share as in 2011 and 2015. The growing popularity of state-regulated Islamic schools (partly funded by the Arab states) has greatly increased. The project to integrate Koranic schools into the national education system should lead to a further reduction in illiteracy among children and young people.

The lack of training and employment opportunities is a major obstacle to the rapid socioeconomic development of the country. Only 2% of the Malian population has a university degree. National authorities and foreign donors regard education as a high priority, but poor collection and use of data hinders the design and implementation of effective policies. The government allocates only 0.3% of the total education budget to the non-formal education sector, which is insignificant and insufficient to meet the training needs of the illiterate adults who make up two-thirds of the adult population.

The absence of significant research and development spending in Mali (0.3% of GDP in 2017) highlights important questions – beyond access, inputs and quality – with regard to the relevance of the results of education for Malian and regional labor markets and economies. Mali has just started to implement the 10-year national education program covering the period 2019 – 2029.

Education policy /
R&D

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Governance

I. Level of Difficulty

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 184th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index (2019). Several constraints hinder the effective governance of transformation in Mali. Mali is a landlocked country. Almost two-thirds of Mali is in the Sahel region, which is subject to significant climate threats (especially the threat of insufficient rainfall during the growing season). Mali's economy is highly dependent on the agricultural sector. Thus, it is vulnerable to droughts and inundations that regularly affect the northern and eastern regions of the country, impacting a large portion of the national income.

Mali has been experiencing instability and conflict since the military coup of 2012 and the occupation of the northern regions by armed groups. Security, which is critical for economic recovery and poverty reduction, remains fragile in the face of continued attacks by armed groups on U.N. peacekeepers, the Malian army and civilians, mainly in the north and central regions.

Mali has a striking rural-urban socioeconomic gap between the more prosperous urban areas and the poorer rural regions where the majority of the population lives. Socioeconomic development is limited by extreme poverty – 49.7% of the population lives on less than \$1.90 per day and 76.1% on less than \$3.20 per day. Poverty is considerably more prevalent in rural areas than in urban ones, but the income distribution is highly uneven in both. Food shortages remain one of Mali's major challenges and affected 1.3 million people during the lean season (June –August) in 2020, an increase of more than 200% compared to the same period in 2019.

According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the humanitarian situation remains precarious for the almost 6 million people in need of assistance due to the immediate multidimensional effect of conflict and violence (inter- and intracommunal conflicts, armed groups, criminality) at the beginning of 2021. The number of vulnerable people in need of assistance has increased due to pervasive poverty, the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of climate change. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an estimated 1.2 million people in the country had fled their homes (among them 502,015 internally displaced persons and refugees) as of January 2021. Additionally, 2.4 million people currently need support to protect their livelihoods.

Structural
constraints

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The population growth rate is rapid in Mali. With an estimated annual growth rate of 3.1%, the population (2019: 19.6 million) is projected to reach 27 million by 2030. Almost half of Mali's population is younger than 15. Providing education, health and employment to this growing population is a major challenge for the Malian state and economy.

Mali also suffers from a comparatively small educated labor force and formal sector. Despite considerable funding, education remains poorly managed and tangible progress is elusive.

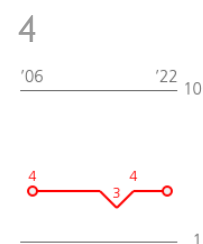
Mali's capacity for economic transformation is further limited by its very low degree of integration into the global economy. Indeed, international investors and companies dominate key sectors (e.g., gold extraction and telecommunications), and the huge profits they generate bypass the public financial systems. They contribute little to domestic development.

According to the African Economic Outlook 2020, Mali's health system is unable to tackle a widespread health crisis; ranked 147th out of 195 countries worldwide, Mali was deemed by the 2019 Global Health Security Index as being among the least well prepared worldwide to face the crisis and manage an epidemic. By the end of January 2021, Mali had registered 8,091 positive cases of COVID-19, 330 deaths and 5,945 recoveries. The closure of borders due to the pandemic has had a major impact on the national economy, which is largely dependent on foreigners. Measures banning gatherings have reduced rural populations' ability to organize themselves to work for the production of wealth.

Since the events of March 1991, which led to the establishment of political pluralism and the freedom of expression, civil society organizations have multiplied in Mali; today, there are approximately 60,000 civil society organizations. NGOs participate in public life to varying degrees and in different ways. Special interest groups such as women, students and peasants are represented by large and medium-sized organizations. They engage in advocacy on issues such as reconciliation, human rights violations, privatization and land grabbing. Service delivery NGOs tend to operate more on commercial principles and are generally apolitical. They are involved in the social sector (e.g., education and health). Many small NGOs provide social services or help to set up small businesses in order to generate income outside of family networks. These activities are important survival strategies, especially in rural areas (and in northern Mali), which are poorly integrated into the national economy.

In the eyes of the people, civil society organizations tend to be more credible and responsive to their needs than political parties. However, many NGOs have difficulties in functioning. It is estimated that around two-thirds of all registered NGOs do not receive enough funding to operate. These constraints are further aggravated by limited internal management and coordination capacities.

Civil society traditions



Mali faces a serious internal and external terrorist threat, and bloody attacks have taken place in almost all parts of the country (see “Monopoly on the use of force”). The level of violence has increased during the review period. In 2018, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) conflict database counted 1,739 battle-related deaths, and 2,845 in 2020.

Tensions between non-pastoralists (i.e., Bamanan) and nomadic groups (i.e., Fulani) have also increased since 2016, and have led to violent conflicts and killings, particularly in the region of Mopti. These conflicts have spread to other communities, especially the Dogon, and intercommunal violence today has reached a level where it is difficult to reconcile the communities. Due to the inability of the state to protect its population, some Fulani communities have allied with terrorist groups to benefit from their protection and prevent incursions by bandits who steal their cattle. Self-defense groups have been formed in the Dogon ethnic group to defend their community.

The 2015 peace agreement failed to resolve the problems Mali faces today. The G-5 Sahel initiative to fight terrorism and insecurity has had a limited impact due to a number of factors. The Malian conflict is extremely complicated and multidimensional, to such an extent that without international mediation, its resolution is almost impossible.

Versions of Islam that are more prevalent in the Middle East have gained strength and are contributing to the spread of new ideologies that are challenging the tradition of religious tolerance and Islamic syncretism cherished by the populations of southern Mali. This has added an additional dose of tension and misunderstanding to north-south relations in Mali.

The impact of COVID-19 on intercommunity conflicts is difficult to assess due to the inaccessibility of conflict zones. Notwithstanding the preventive measures against COVID-19, protest groups were able to mobilize tens of thousands of people in Bamako and in certain regional capitals to bring their demands to fruition.

Conflict intensity



II. Governance Performance

14 | Steering Capability

The transitional government resulting from the coup d'état of August 18, 2020, has given priority to strengthening security and improving governance through political and institutional reforms. The prime minister appointed by the junta indicated that the “road map” of the transition consisted of six axes, 23 objectives and 275 actions to be approved by the National Transitional Council (CNT). The six top-priority axes include the following: 1) the reestablishment and reinforcement of defense and security capabilities across the whole of the national territory, 2) the promotion of good governance, 3) the refoundation of the education system, 4) political and institutional reforms, 5) adoption of a social stability pact, and 6) the organization of general elections. The ultimate objective of the transition is to organize new elections to install legitimate authorities, as was agreed during consultations on September 12, 2020, in a conference including nearly 500 participants.

The advent of a military-led political transition, coupled with the multidimensional crisis of 2012, has profoundly affected the socioeconomic situation. The second strategic framework for economic growth and sustainable development (CREDD), which covers the 2019 – 2023 period, is being implemented. The new strategy concerns the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies for development at the national and local levels. Its main objective is to promote sustainable development, accelerate poverty reduction, reduce inequalities, increase resilience and consolidate peace across the country. The guidelines given by donors and the levels of discipline they demand remain a contentious point, regularly reported in the national press. The transitional government will have to abide by these strategic and technical frameworks.

The last few years have been marked by real government instability, with nine governments in seven years. The lack of political will to implement the political and institutional reforms essential for the country's development, as well as Mali's considerable dependence on the international community, limit the capacities of the executive to implement the political measures needed to meet major challenges.

The advent of a military-led political transition has changed the functioning of institutions and redefined public policies in Mali. The transitional government faces security challenges related to the reconquest of the territory, good governance, reconciliation and economic development that hamper the implementation of policies.

Question
Score

Prioritization

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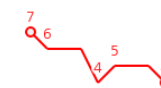


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Implementation

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The implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation resulting from the Algiers process of 2015 remains relevant for the transitional government. The priorities of this agreement, notably the disarmament and cantonment of rebel groups, along with demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programs, are beyond the capacities of the country's governments, including the transitional government. The very high number of combatants to be disarmed and confined to the eight cantonment sites provided for this purpose, only three of which are operational, poses a real problem. Even if certain elements of the CMA and the Platform have already been integrated into the new army through the operational coordination mechanism (MOC), some 200 soldiers of the newly established army returned to Kidal in May 2020, staying in their camps due to security reasons.

Successive governments have lacked foresight and have not engaged in strategic assessment of the implementation of public policies. For example, all election observation missions in 2013 recommended that the voter registration system and the procedure for organizing elections be improved. None of these recommendations have been implemented. This explains the poor organization of the 2018 presidential and 2020 legislative elections.

Governments have learned few lessons from successive rebellions and have not initiated a process of dynamic dialogue with the populations of the north. They thus failed to anticipate the multidimensional crisis that the country is experiencing today.

Significant media freedom and largely functioning markets, particularly in informal sectors, as well as the urban culture of demonstrations all provide mechanisms of feedback to the government. These allow the government to assess the impact and popularity of its policies and alter its approach if necessary.

Elites often engage in rent-seeking behavior relative to external donors and international investments in primary-sector megaprojects. This hampers the determination to fight corruption. Political leaders appear unwilling to abandon a strong, deeply internalized dependence on foreign aid in favor of greater self-reliance.

The magnitude of France's Operation Barkhane in the Sahel, as well as the need for a permanent MINUSMA presence, demonstrates the government's dependence on external support in its military policy. There is strong public pressure for the departure of French forces, which are perceived by a large part of the population as an occupying force. But this public pressure is motivated much more by a sense of national pride than by practical political analysis. Some observers believe that the departure of the Barkhane military mission could lead to a military debacle in which the Malian armed forces would be overwhelmed by the jihadists.

The appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic has not changed the strategic vision of the government, which has adopted measures enacted elsewhere.

Policy learning

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15 | Resource Efficiency

Neither human nor financial resources are effectively used by the state. There is a real problem with the management of available human resources. More than 4,000 senior civil servants receive pay despite doing no work. The state plans to create an agency to manage its human resources. There is a concentration of state personnel in the capital to the detriment of the regions, municipalities, and the second-level administrative units referred to as “cercles.” State employees at national and local levels are often absent from their offices. The work of the auditor-general is gradually gaining recognition.

According to a 2017 report from the Institutional Development Commission on the transfer of decentralized services from the state to local authorities, nearly 70% of the national budget relating to the operation of public services is used in the capital. Under these circumstances, decentralized and deconcentrated state structures struggle to provide social services. There have been attempts to link spending systems at the central and local levels, improve budget documentation, and provide up-to-date information on budget execution. However, cultivating professionalism among auditors remains a long-term challenge.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led the government to provide care centers, especially hospitals in Bamako, with additional resources to deal with the pandemic. A decree has been adopted to allocate special allowances to care staff. The only relevant structure that has not benefited from additional resources is the National Institute of Public Health, which is in charge of COVID-19 screening tests. Its staff is supposed to benefit from a rebate on screening costs, but these resources had not yet been distributed as of the time of writing, a situation that led the staff to engage in a sit-in in January 2021.

Mali’s political and security situation requires harmonization between the government priorities as defined in its program, bilateral and multilateral agreements, and the work of non-governmental organizations operating in the country. This state of affairs creates difficulties in terms of coordinating objectives and ensuring consistency between administrative services and implementing institutions.

The advent of new donors such as China and Turkey, which do not impose the conditionalities associated with the development cooperation provided by OECD countries and multilateral organizations, poses the problem of making their national political objectives consistent with those of Western donors. Competition for resources to be redistributed in patronage networks, along with redundancies and tensions between many government agencies, hampers policy coordination.

Ongoing security issues have widened the reach of relevant regional and multilateral actors in the spheres of policy formulation and implementation (e.g., G-5 Sahel, Alliance Sahel, P3S, Integrated Development Authority of the Liptako-Gourma Region (ALG), African Union, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the United Nations). This makes it difficult to align policies.

Efficient use of assets

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Policy coordination

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The growing number of NGOs engaged in international fundraising, some of which are poorly coordinated and inefficiently managed, further undermines the development of coherent policies.

As of the time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic and its management had not had visible impact on the alignment of the government's objectives. However, as elsewhere, Mali has adopted emergency measures to deal with this crisis.

It is too early to assess the extent to which policy coordination will be carried out under the transitional authorities.

Despite the existence of several public-expenditure audit structures, including the accounts section of the Supreme Court, the Office of the Auditor-General, the State Inspectorate of Public Services and the Central Office for the Fight against Illicit Enrichment, corruption remains a scourge within the Malian economy.

The Office of the Auditor-General, established in 2003 as an independent oversight service, is a key actor in the reform of public administration procedures through its recommendation of corrective measures. However, some of these have yet to be implemented. Efforts to strengthen the capacity of the auditor-general to document financial irregularities continue. The number of its collaborators (main office and regional offices) has increased in recent years. In its 2019 report, the auditor-general cited financial irregularities totaling more than XOF 300 billion, centered particularly in the areas of foreign affairs, local authorities, mines, religious affairs, finance, health, agriculture, education, energy, telecommunications, housing and communication.

However, there is little evidence that the government has any willingness to act in the fight against corruption, or to effectively enforce existing legislation and prosecution mechanisms. High levels of corruption among the political elite and Malian bureaucrats have long fueled popular discontent with the democratic regime. Thus, the fight against corruption continues to be a priority.

Public funding is provided for political parties to ensure they can carry out their public mission of information transfer, and the education and training of elected officials and activists. The annual amount allocated to parties is 0.25% of the annual budget (just over XOF 3 billion); however, it is generally used by political parties for other purposes. There is talk of revising the regulations to tighten access to public funding.

Anti-corruption
policy

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16 | Consensus-Building

Rhetorically, the main political actors in Bamako agree on democracy as a mid-term and long-term goal.

The national consultations from September 10 to September 12, 2020, organized by the military junta, sought to find a roadmap for the return to constitutional order and the reform of democratic institutions. A total of 500 participants represented different strands of Malian society. However, the fact that not all relevant political actors are included in the transition government raises doubts about the junta's commitment to leading an inclusive transition. The ousted government and its predecessors agreed on the need for institutional reform to consolidate democracy. Yet constitutional reforms intended to improve the institutional framework failed repeatedly because no consensus could be reached. These persistent conflicts contributed to the erosion of the democratic order and paved the way for two coups d'état (2012, 2020) within 10 years.

A qualified consensus on market economy principles is informed by a preference less for liberal market ideals than for economic democracy, in which the basic economic needs of all citizens are satisfied. While this does not directly challenge liberal norms, it offers a qualified convergence between reform-minded political actors and elites embedded in the social democratic tendencies of Mali's political history.

In the Malian context, there is no automatic convergence or allegiance between different anti-reform actors and tendencies (e.g., anti-democratic non-state, anti-status quo civil society, anti-neoliberal civil society, anti-democratic, anti-family law actors, Islamic and faith-based social service providers). Actors who oppose certain principles of democracy are funded by national donors and Malians living abroad.

The military junta resulting from the coup d'état of August 18, 2020, should be seen as an illegitimate, anti-democratic power.

Undemocratic actors also include a growing number of Islamic activists who, although engaged in public debate and media freedom, tend to oppose certain principles of liberal democracy, such as equal rights for women and men. In this sense, they faithfully represent the majority vision of Malian society, but their fragmentation into small, weakly organized groups limits their overall power. In this context, there has been a rise of fundamentalist views proposed by fundamentalist and Salafist groups seeking to impose conservative interpretations of Islam. In this regard, the former chairman of the High Islamic Council, Iman Mahmoud Dicko, a Wahhabi, has faced little resistance from the government or opposition politicians. In 2018, he created an organization called the Coordination of Movements and Association of Support for Iman Dicko (CMAS); with the support of the political forces of the opposition and parts of civil society, this group succeeded in challenging and overthrowing the government of Soumeylou Boubeye Maïga in 2019, and the president of the republic in 2020.

Consensus on goals

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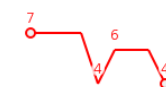


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Anti-democratic actors

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The Malian state, from independence to the present day, has avoided addressing ethnic and regionalist issues. Rather, existing cleavages have been aggravated and identified as legacies of the 2012 crisis. There has been a lack of sufficient progress in bridging the socioeconomic divide between the urban elites and the large, poor rural population. Reconstruction of the Malian state remains a pressing issue, and the worsening security situation further highlights the divisions between different ethnic groups in the central region of Mali.

Divisions exist between certain minorities, and sometimes lead to violent conflicts that endanger national unity. Intercommunity conflicts between Fulani and Bambara in central Mali turned violent in 2019 and 2020. As a response, some people have allied with jihadist groups, while other have created self-defense groups supported by the Malian army. The Malian army is also accused of conducting raids and extrajudicial killings as reprisals for terrorist attacks; this sometimes happens with the support of ethnic self-defense groups, which aggravates intercommunity tensions. For instance, MINUSMA reported that the Malian army perpetrated summary executions of at least 37 persons in June 2020 in Binedama in the Mopti region, with the help of Dogon traditional hunters.

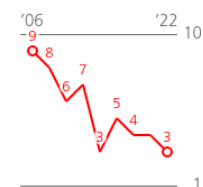
The mediation attempts by the ousted Keïta government, as well as by the military transition government, have produced only rare successes to date. In the Mopti region, different actors (the Malian government, the High Islamic Council, national and international organizations) are involved in mediation efforts at different levels, seeking to bring an end to community violence between the Fulani and Dogon ethnic groups. Some sporadic successes can be noted, for example in the peace agreements between a spokesperson for Da Na Ambassagou and a Fulani militia leader agreed in July 2019 in Baye and Ouenkoro. Since December 2020, mediation has been underway in the administrative unit of Niono, where the village of Farabougou is located, and which as of the time of writing had been surrounded since October 2020 by jihadist groups. The High Islamic Council is leading these negotiations. It is too early to judge whether these efforts under the transition will lead to real support for reconciliation.

The government often consults with civil society organizations (CSOs) in Mali, but their positions are rarely taken into account in policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. The very dynamic civil society continues to draw the attention of those in power to the need for political and military reforms, as well as to the need for greater accountability on the part of MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane in protecting the population against insecurity.

Civil society, particularly the media and religious organizations, have been asked by the public authorities to help the population understand the need to comply with measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. To this end, funds have been allocated to CSOs. Protective equipment was provided to religious communities as part of the COVID-19 awareness-raising program.

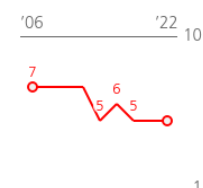
Cleavage /
conflict
management

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Civil society
participation

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Reconciliation between different groups at regional and local levels is a precondition for the restoring peace in Mali. The interrelated challenges of reconciling victims and perpetrators of injustice resulting from the rebellion, the coups, various insurgencies and the ongoing fighting between state and non-state groups are daunting and complex. However, it is important that Malian political leaders show the commitment to and capacity for reconciliation. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR) created in 2014 must establish the truth about the crimes committed in the north between 1960 and 2013 and help build lasting peace in Mali. Since 2016, around 17,800 victims and witnesses have been heard; its mandate was extended, and in 2019 and 2020, the Commission organized three public hearings.

National reconciliation is entrusted to the CVJR, which is continuing its work. It is not among the junta's top priorities during the transition period. However, the junta has identified it as a challenge to be addressed.

17 | International Cooperation

Successive governments in Mali have rarely had a clear roadmap indicating the development objectives to be achieved in the short, medium and long term in connection with the contributions of foreign partners.

Among the most aid-dependent states in sub-Saharan Africa, Mali cooperates closely with bilateral and multilateral international donors from the OECD. Based on 2012 figures from the OECD and the World Bank, Mali's level of aid dependency per capita has doubled from \$36 per person in 2000 to \$67.2 in 2016.

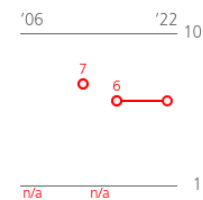
Since 2012, the effectiveness of international support has been more widely questioned, with donors now concerned about the crisis and its aftermath. Although donor evaluations show improved outcomes in specific sectors (e.g., education and health), the effectiveness of support has overall been limited. Elites' pervasive rent-seeking as well as policy implementation inconsistencies have become more evident in retrospect. The past donor practice of ignoring Mali's governance problems and rewarding elites with more financial assistance and aid has come under increasing scrutiny. Donors acknowledge that their own uncoordinated policies have limited aid effectiveness. Although policy dialogue continues to harmonize donor activities and align them with Malian government policies, less-coordinated programs such as general and sectoral budget support still work in parallel to harmonized policies.

Mali has diversified its international cooperation beyond the OECD. While Malian relations with China have progressively deepened throughout the last decade, the Arab Spring hindered further cooperation with North African regimes (such as Libya) on infrastructure and food security in the Niger delta. China's support primarily comprises unconditional concessionary loans and infrastructure aid.

Mali's partners have provided significant financing for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but information on the relative efficacy of the use of these resources is not yet available.

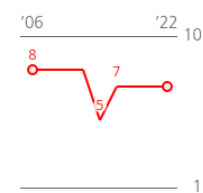
Reconciliation

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Effective use of support

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Mali's credibility was seriously challenged due to the coup d'état in August 2020. Previously, then-President Keita had lost credibility due to his inability to further the peace process and other reforms necessary to rebuild the country. With the increasing threat posed by the security situation, which saw fighting spread from northern regions to the center and even into the south, international partners supporting Mali in the fight against terrorism have become more nervous vis-à-vis Mali's government. Due to the need to implement the peace agreement, the Malian government has been engaged in a pact for peace with the UN to accelerate its implementation and to enhance coherence of international efforts in Mali.

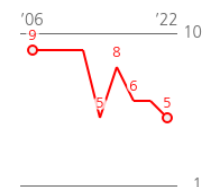
In contrast, the Malian government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has not affected its lack of credibility on the international level.

ECOWAS imposed sanctions on Mali and suspended the country's membership in the regional organization as a response to the coup d'état of August 18, 2020. The sanctions included the closure of borders and the interruption of all financial flows. ECOWAS held two extraordinary summits of the group's heads of state on August 20 and August 28, 2020, as well a mini-summit on September 15 to negotiate the return to constitutional order in Mali with the junta. ECOWAS lifted the sanctions on October 6, 2020, after the transitional president had appointed a prime minister and a government. ECOWAS also set up a commission to monitor the 18-month transition period.

The ousted president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, cooperated with regional and Mali's neighboring countries to tackle Mali's multi-faceted challenges. He actively promoted cooperation in ECOWAS. The creation of the G-5 Sahel, a new regional cooperative venture between Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, with the headquarters of the joint force in Mali, focuses mainly on security issues despite its broader mandate. G-5 Sahel member states hope to better address security issues in a coordinated manner, with sustained financial support provided under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

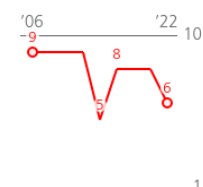
Credibility

5



Regional cooperation

6



Strategic Outlook

The highest priority for Mali is the return to democracy through the organization of free, inclusive and transparent elections. The security and political situation are very unstable and can be normalized only by legitimate authorities supported by the Malian people and the international community. Such an elected government will have to make more efforts than ever in the fight against terrorism, organized crime and the armed groups that have long undermined the state and democratic institutions. Several international forces are operating in Mali as part of the joint action against terrorism. It is necessary to ensure effective coordination between these different forces and to disarm the self-defense groups so that the state can regain its monopoly on the use of force in the country.

The Malian government, including the transition government, must create the conditions to improve governance (accountability, transparency and efficiency) at the political and administrative levels. It is important to establish a framework for constructive dialogue to allow political parties to agree on matters of national interest, including national unity, defense and reconciliation, especially at a time of political transition.

Also, Malian's civil society must monitor the junta's management of the transitional period and its compliance with the road map it has given itself. Likewise, the international community should continue to keep up the pressure to induce the junta to restore constitutional order on time.

Mali has gone through several important electoral processes that have failed to bring tangible improvements to the country and its people. It needs in-depth political change that goes beyond a renewal of high-level political actors and results instead in the introduction of political alternatives that can facilitate transformation in Mali.

The justice system requires courageous reforms. An effective anti-corruption policy must be implemented and vigorous measures must be taken in order to get the population to regain confidence in the justice system. These actions will help reduce tensions and strengthen citizens' confidence in public institutions.

With regard to peace and reconciliation, the government urgently needs to address the current obstacles to the implementation of the 2015 peace accord in an inclusive and coherent manner. Likewise, groups that have not yet signed the peace agreement should be included in the peace process in order to reduce the risk of armed conflict. Ultimately, the Malian government must strengthen the operational capacities of its defense and security forces to supplement the foreign missions on Malian territory that, instead of being support missions, seem to have become permanent missions, a situation which is increasingly resented by the Malian public and even in the countries from which these missions come. The government will have to accelerate the dialogue process with Malian jihadist groups in accordance with the recommendations of the inclusive national dialogue of December 2019.

Stable security conditions are essential for development and economic growth. The country needs to consider new ways to make technical assistance and aid flows from foreign partners more effective. These actions will contribute positively to accelerating the development of Mali. With regard to social welfare and economic growth, anti-corruption measures could help promote equity and sustainable socioeconomic development. It is imperative to recognize and treat education as a subject of national importance. The Malian government should stress the importance of education in all its forms, and in particular for young people and adults, in order to include the two-thirds of its population that remains illiterate in economic growth.

Regarding COVID-19, Mali demonstrated in the first months of the outbreak of the pandemic that it was determined to address the danger. Mali must continue to strengthen public health measures to control the spread of the disease. It must also strengthen its health structures so as to take better care of the sick. Finally, it is to be hoped that Mali can benefit from sufficient vaccinations to immunize its population.