

Mali

Ethnicity in Mali

Group selection

All sources available agree in their notion that the ethnic divisions existing in Mali are not politically relevant for the most part, i.e. there are no significant ethno-political cleavages in Malian politics (³¹⁹⁴, ³¹⁹⁵, ³¹⁹⁶, ³¹⁹⁷). The only exception has been the conflict between the Malian state and the nomadic Tuareg and Arab and Moor minorities in the north (escalating into civil war in the early 1990s). Hence, EPR codes only three ethnic/racial groups as politically relevant: the **Black majority (consisting of Mande, Peul, Voltaic, Songhai etc.)** and the “white” **Tuareg and Arabs/Moors** (³¹⁹⁸). The size of the black population is taken from the CIA World Factbook (consistent with other sources): 90%. For the Tuareg from Notholt (³¹⁹⁹): 7%. For Arabs/Moors: 10% minus 7% = 3% - which is more or less in line with absolute figures provided by the Joshua Project (³²⁰⁰).

³¹⁹⁴ [Baldwin, 2005]

³¹⁹⁵ [Humphreys & Mohamed, 2005]

³¹⁹⁶ [Smith, 2001]

³¹⁹⁷ [Villalón & Idrissa, 2005]

³¹⁹⁸ [Humphreys & Mohamed, 2005]

³¹⁹⁹ [Notholt, 2008]

³²⁰⁰ [Joshua Project]

Power relations

1960-1991: Military and one-party rule

Besides the evident economic marginalization of the northern part of Mali where the Tuareg and Arabs/Moors live, these groups were also politically marginalized. From independence up to 1990, only 4 “white” ministers were appointed, 2 Tuareg officers in the army and no “white” heads of departments. The northern region, furthermore, for a long time was under military rule with (if from the region at all) black governors appointed by the central state (³²⁰¹).

³²⁰¹ [Humphreys & Mohamed, 2005]

Discrimination, however, seems to have taken place more in the economic (e.g. issues of property rights) and cultural realms than in politics - as there have been at least some “white” ministers in Mali’s governments during this period (³²⁰²). It seems more appropriate, thus, to speak of political powerlessness than targeted discrimination. Therefore: Both Tuareg and Arabs/Moors are coded as “powerless”.

³²⁰² [Humphreys & Mohamed, 2005]

The black majority enjoyed a clear monopoly of power. The group is thus coded as having a “monopoly” status.

1992-1999

In 1990, the growing economic marginalization and the call for regional autonomy led to a revolt by the Tuareg causing a coup d'état against the long-standing president Moussa Traoré in March 1991. A transitional government, led by Amadou Toure, assigned two ministries to “white” rebels. Peace accords were signed in 1991 and 1992, which promised the participation of the rebelling Tuareg and Arab/Moor groups in the civil service and the army ⁽³²⁰³⁾. From 1992 on, the Tuareg and the Arabs/Moors are therefore coded “Junior Partner” in order to account for their inclusion in the government, while the Blacks are coded “Senior Partner”.

³²⁰³ [Humphreys & Mohamed, 2005]

Apart from including all relevant ethnic groups in national politics as a method to pacify the conflicts, the peace contracts of 1991 granted partial autonomy to the northern regions populated by the Tuareg. This decentralization was seen as a means to appease these revolting groups as well. However, the autonomy only became effective in 1999 when, for the first time, local elections were held in the northern regions ^(3204,3205). Therefore, regional autonomy for the Tuareg is only coded from 2000 on (according to the January 1st rule), and not yet during this period.

³²⁰⁴ [Keita, 1998]

³²⁰⁵ [Seely, 2001]

Even though these attempts were made to pacify the situation through including all parties in the government, interethnic violence escalated in 1994. In 1994, but already in the previous years, many northern civilians got killed in the crossfire. These extrajudicial killings were caused by all actors involved in the conflict, rather than by the Malian army only ^(3206,3207). The killing of civilians is therefore not interpreted as violence by the state, specifically targeted at members of the Tuareg or Arab ethnic group, which could result in a coding of the Tuareg people as being “discriminated”. Rather are these civilian fatalities seen as collateral damage ^(3208,3209). As mentioned above, all ethnic groups had generally been included into the government despite these developments, and the state had made efforts to calm down the rebels and pacify the situation through peace contracts. Concessions were given to the Tuareg in order to avoid a secession of the northern region. Apart from that, it should be noted that the Tuareg were strongly fragmented, with only a small part of the ethnic group being supportive of the rebel groups ^(3210,3211). The peaceful parts of these groups were included in the political system during these years.

³²⁰⁶ [US State Department, 2006–2017]

³²⁰⁷ [Croicu, 2012]

³²⁰⁸ [US State Department, 2006–2017]

³²⁰⁹ [Croicu, 2012]

³²¹⁰ [Keita, 1998]

³²¹¹ [Seely, 2001]

With the end of the civil war in 1995, the inclusion of Tuareg and Arabs/Moors in all institutions of the state was finalized and consolidated, apart from them benefiting from developmental investments ^(3212,3213, 263-4, 3214, 3215, 164).

³²¹² [Humphreys & Mohamed, 2005]

³²¹³ [Kétouré, 2009]

³²¹⁴ [Wing, 2008]

³²¹⁵ [Notholt, 2008]

Based on all these considerations, it is decided to uphold the coding of the political status of the groups as it was before the peak of (one-sided) violence in 1994, with the Blacks being “Senior Partner” and the Tuareg and the Arabs/Moors being “Junior Partner”. After 1999, the regional autonomy of the Tuareg became effective, which

requires the coding of a new period.

2000-2012

From 2000 on, as mentioned above, the decentralization with regional autonomy for the Tuareg is to a great extent implemented and the Tuareg's regional autonomy is, consequently, coded "Yes" (^{3216,3217}).

The view that ethnic divisions within Mali's black population are not politically relevant can be upheld for a large part of this period. Different sources agree in that ethnicity is not of significant political relevance, ethnic cleavages are rare, that - especially in comparison with other African countries - Mali has been relatively successful in achieving ethnic harmony and creating a national identity bridging ethnic boundaries (due on the one hand to a great political will to do so, and on the other to the legacy of the vast ancient Malian empires), and that several different groups have been integrated peacefully into this "national identity" - with the notable exception of the nomadic groups of the north (the Tuareg, and Arabs/Moors) (^{3218, 256, 268; 3219,3220}). Survey data show that Malian parties are generally ethnically representative, and ethnicity is not a crucial factor in citizens' voting choices (³²²¹). None of Mali's political parties is an ethnic party, and the party system as a whole is not ethnicized either (³²²²).

A new Tuareg rebellion erupted in 2006/2007. With reference to the not fully implemented 1991/1992 peace agreement, the rebels demanded the withdrawal of the military from the northern Tuareg zones, a higher degree of administrative autonomy, and increased economic support (³²²³). However, according to the Bertelsmann Country Report of 2010, this rebellion - in contrast to the previous ones - was guided more by economic and criminal motives than political ones, and it was essentially a "socioeconomically motivated conflict". It is true that the promised economic development in the north had not really taken place (^{3224,3225}). In the political realm, however, the northern Tuareg and Arab/Moor groups seem to have been included since the end of the civil war in the 1990s - also during the years from 2006 to 2009. According to Kétouré (^{3226, 263-4}), the Tuareg were represented in all institutions (also the government) of the state during these years, they participated in the national unity government of 2002 and, thus, were incorporated in the decision-making processes. Tuareg Ahmed Mohamed Ag Hamami was named prime minister by president Touré in 2002, for example. The Tuareg were also included in Mali's major political parties which had Tuareg candidates to maximize their election chances in the north. Also according to the U.S. State Department's Human Rights Reports from 2006 to 2009 (³²²⁷), there were always members of the "historically marginalized nomadic groups of the north" in the cabinet. And neither in the Freedom House Country Reports from 2007 to 2010 (³²²⁸) nor in the Bertelsmann Country

³²¹⁶ [Keita, 1998]

³²¹⁷ [Seely, 2001]

³²¹⁸ [Kétouré, 2009]

³²¹⁹ [Bertelsmann, 2008–2012]

³²²⁰ [Notholt, 2008]

³²²¹ [Cheeseman & Ford, 2007]

³²²² [Basedau & Stroh, 2009]

³²²³ [Bertelsmann, 2008–2012]

³²²⁴ [Bertelsmann, 2008–2012]

³²²⁵ [IRIN News, 2010]

³²²⁶ [Kétouré, 2009]

³²²⁷ [US State Department, 2006–2017]

³²²⁸ [Freedom House, 2007–2016]

Reports of 2008, 2010, and 2012 (³²²⁹) can any evidence of political exclusion of the Tuareg or the Arabs/Moors be found. Rather, it seems that there are splits within the Tuareg community between forces pro and contra president Touré. No acts of vengeance toward Tuareg people in the south were reported after the renewed rebellion, and the Malian government has abstained from generalized discrimination against Tuareg citizens in the north (³²³⁰). Overall, thus, the “white” Tuareg and Arabs/Moors groups can still be seen as “Junior Partners” in a power-sharing arrangement during this period, despite the rebellion. Consequently, the power statuses of all relevant groups are maintained as in the previous time period.

³²²⁹ [Bertelsmann, 2008–2012]

³²³⁰ [Bertelsmann, 2008–2012]

2013-2021

In 2012, the situation in Mali changed rapidly. An increased intensity of fighting between the Malian Army and MNLA (Azawad People’s Movement) rebels in the north triggered a military coup d’état on 21 March 2012. President Toure resigned shortly after, together with the the coup leader, Cpt. Sanogo. The weakening of the state allowed MNLA rebels to overrun the northern third of Mali’s territory and to declare the independence of the state of Azawad on 6 April 2012. However, power in the north was overtaken violently by the groups Ansar Dine and MUJAO (a splinter group of AQMI), causing the MNLA to cooperate with government and French forces during the Operation Serval that started on 11 January 2013. By June, a peace agreement between the MNLA and the Malian government was signed, but renounced unilaterally by the MNLA in September 2013. Acts of indiscriminate violence from the MNLA, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, and the Malian Army are reported to have occurred against fighters and civilians. Amnesty International reports that soldiers of the Malian Army extrajudicially killed two Tuaregs, 16 Mauretanians and another man, all accused to have had links with the MNLA. Moreover, in February 2012, a government air attack had led to the death of one civilian and the injury of at least 12 civilians (^{3231,3232}).

³²³¹ [Amnesty International, 2013]

³²³² [US State Department, 2006–2017]

A transitional government was formed under president Dioncounda Traoré in April 2012 and prime minister Cheick Modibo Diarra (appointed in August 2012). It consisted of members of almost all ethnic and social fractions, members of ethnic groups from the north (including Tuaregs and Arab/Moors), and 3 members appointed by the ex-junta (³²³³). Prime minister Diarra was arrested by soldiers and forced to resign on 11 December 2012. He was succeeded by Diango Sissoko. The new transitional government again contained members of most social and ethnic groups (again, including Tuaregs and Arabs/Moors), 3 ministers appointed by the ex-junta and members of ethnic groups from the north (³²³⁴).

³²³³ [Jeune Afrique, 2012]

³²³⁴ [Jeune Afrique, 2012b]

Seen from a national perspective, Arabs/Moors and Tuareg should therefore still be coded as being “Junior Partner” in the government on 1 January 2013. It can be argued that they represent the inter-

ests of their ethnic groups rather than the armed groups which had seized power of the northern regions by 1 January 2013. The latter are reported to have committed a large number of civil rights abuses against the population (³²³⁵). Although the human rights abuses conducted by members of the Malian army point towards discriminatory practices against Tuaregs and other minorities in the north, no sign was found for such practices being used permanently and against an entire ethnic group. Accordingly, under its chapter “Discrimination of Ethnic Minorities”, the US State Department Human Rights Report 2013 (³²³⁶) does only mention social discrimination of the Tuaregs, but not political discrimination. In line with the considerations in 1994-1995, again, the northern groups are not considered discriminated.

³²³⁵ [US State Department, 2006–2017]

³²³⁶ [US State Department, 2006–2017]

With regard to regional autonomy, it is concluded that the Tuaregs had lost their status by 1 January 2013. Regarding the extremist rule and associated human rights abuses, it is difficult to speak of a “meaningful and active regional executive organ” which is influenced by Tuaregs acting in the interest of their ethnic group. Regional autonomy of the Tuareg is therefore coded as absent for the year 2013.

UNHCR (³²³⁷) reports approx. 132.000 refugees from Mali at the beginning of 2013. Since the calming down of the conflict in August 2013, this number has not declined. However, data on the ethnic composition of the refugees is not (yet) available. As the North of Mali is populated by many different ethnic groups (Tuareg, Peulh, Songrai, Bozo, etc.), it cannot be assumed that all refugees are Tuaregs. Therefore, no reliable correction of the relative size of the Tuareg population can be made here.

³²³⁷ [UNHCR, 2014]

On September 5, 2013, a new prime minister, Oumar Tatam Ly, was appointed by the president. His first post-conflict cabinet consisted of members of all ethnic groups, including former Arab rebel Zahaby Ould Sidy Mohamed as well as two members of the junta that had carried out the coup a year before. Furthermore, a new ministry was built, which is responsible for the Reconciliation of the North (^{3238,3239,3240}).

³²³⁸ [France24, 2013]

³²³⁹ [US State Department, 2006–2017]

³²⁴⁰ [VOA News, 2013]

During 2014 and 2016, about 15 members of the National Assembly were representatives of ethnic minorities. Parts of them were detected being members of northern armed separatist groups (HCUA, GATIA, MAA). Nevertheless, the cabinet, although being reshuffled in April 2014 and in January 2015, continued to include pastoral and nomadic ethnic minority members, according to the US State Department Reports 2014-2017 (³²⁴¹). Furthermore, the Freedom House Human Rights Reports (2014-2016) note that no ethnic groups dominated the government or security forces during these years. This leads to the decision to extend the coding of the political statuses up to 2017, even though Mali remains in a situation of insecurity, which sets limits to the unfolding of political rights (³²⁴²). The Blacks are therefore coded “Senior Partner”, while the Tuareg and the Arabs/Moors are coded “Junior Partner”.

³²⁴¹ [US State Department, 2006–2017]

³²⁴² [Freedom House, 2007-2016]

This coding continues until 2021. In 2018 presidential elections were held, but the government remained largely unchanged with the incumbent, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, winning the presidency and Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga remaining Prime Minister ⁽³²⁴³⁾. However, in April 2019, Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga resigned after mounting criticism of his failure to halt the ethnic massacres in the Mopti region. The criticism peaked especially after the killing of 160 people in March 2019 in the Ogossagou village ⁽³²⁴⁴⁾. The newly appointed Prime Minister Boubou Cissé was tasked to form a new, “broad government”⁽³²⁴⁵⁾. Nonetheless there are no indications, which would justify a change in the current coding.

³²⁴³ [Freedom House, 2019]

³²⁴⁴ [Freedom House, 2020]

³²⁴⁵ [Al Jazeera, 2019]

Insecurity and instability remain in Mali with violence spreading across the country. In June 2015, a peace agreement was signed between the northern rebel groups and the government. In this context, the government offered giving partial autonomy back to Azawad. However, this consideration mostly happened due to international pressure, and does not seem to have been realised in practice until today ⁽³²⁴⁶⁾. Fighting persisted through 2016, and the Tuareg refrained from implementing the peace contract. They complain that nothing is done to address the root causes of the conflict, such as economic underdevelopment ⁽³²⁴⁷⁾. As a consequence of this insecure political circumstances, local elections held by the government in November 2016 were cancelled in 58 northern and central communes, most of them in the region of Timbuktu. Opposing actors and militants called for these polls to be delayed, referring to the claims that preparation had been inadequate and that the risk of electoral fraud was too high. The vote was generally considered credible in regions where it was held, despite some reports of violence and intimidation ^(3248,3249). However, as no votes were held in most of the northern areas, it cannot be assumed that regional autonomy was effectively given back to the Tuareg.

³²⁴⁶ [BBC, 2015]

³²⁴⁷ [Reuters, 2016]

³²⁴⁸ [Freedom House, 2007-2016]

³²⁴⁹ [SIPRI, 2016]

This lack of proper implementation of the 2015 peace agreement continues until 2021, with major components, like the increase of autonomy, still remaining unfulfilled ^(3250,3251; 3252). Therefore, regional autonomy is continued to be coded as absent until 2021.

³²⁵⁰ [Council on Foreign Relations, 2020]

³²⁵¹ [Van der Heide, 2019]

³²⁵² [International Crisis Group, 2020]

There have been many political changes in the year 2020. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta as well as his prime minister and other government ministers were ousted in a military coup in August 2020. After being detained by soldiers, president Keïta resigned. The coup is the consequence of widespread protests over corruption, mismanagement of the economy, and disputed legislative elections, that have targeted president Keïta since June 2020. The soldiers that instigated the coup, calling themselves the National Committee for the Salvation of the People (CNSP), stated that they do not want to stay in power, but set up a civilian transitional government and hold new elections ⁽³²⁵³⁾. Col Assimi Goita, an army colonel, has emerged as the military coup leader. Other members of the military junta include Col Malick Diaw, the deputy head of the Kati camp that is controlled by mutinying soldiers and CNSP vice-president, as

³²⁵³ [BBC, 2020a]

well as Col Wagué, the air force deputy chief of staff. The opposition in Mali, particularly the 5h of June Movement (M5), had welcomed the military coup as an opportunity to build a new, just system (3254, 3255, 3256).

In September 2020, Mali's new military leaders have agreed to an 18-month transition government, after negotiations with opposition and civil society. This decision came after the military leaders wanted to stay in power for a two to three-year transition period, but ECOWAS communicated that only a shorter transition period including a military and civilian leader is acceptable to them (3257, 3258). On 21st of September, Mali's former defence minister Bah Ndaw has been appointed interim president and coup leader Col Assimi Goita has been declared his deputy (3259). Bah Ndaw appointed a 25-member government at the beginning of October, whereby several key posts have been filled with military personnel. However, the prime minister is a civilian, Moctar Ouane. Further, the government includes civilians from the Tuareg in the North as well as the armed factions that signed the 2015 peace agreement. Only two posts were given to the opposition, the 5th of June Movement (M5), the group which led the protests against president Keïta (3260, 3261, 3262).

Although there have been many political changes throughout 2020 in Mali, the coding regarding the power relations of the politically relevant groups does not change until 2021. The transitional cabinet still includes members from the Tuareg and the Arabs/Moors, who thus continue to be coded as "Junior Partner", while the Blacks are coded as "Senior Partner".

3254 [BBC, 2020a]

3255 [BBC, 2020b]

3256 [BBC, 2020d]

3257 [BBC, 2020b]

3258 [BBC, 2020c]

3259 [BBC, 2020b]

3260 [BBC, 2020b]

3261 [Campbell, 2020]

3262 [News Wires, 2020]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Mali

From 1960 until 1991

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	MONOPOLY
Tuareg	0.07	POWERLESS
Arabs/Moors	0.03	POWERLESS



Figure 647: Political status of ethnic groups in Mali during 1960-1991.

From 1992 until 1999

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	SENIOR PARTNER
Tuareg	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Arabs/Moors	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER



Figure 648: Political status of ethnic groups in Mali during 1992-1999.

From 2000 until 2012

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	SENIOR PARTNER
Tuareg	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Arabs/Moors	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER



Figure 649: Political status of ethnic groups in Mali during 2000-2012.

From 2013 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	SENIOR PARTNER
Tuareg	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Arabs/Moors	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER



Figure 650: Political status of ethnic groups in Mali during 2013-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Mali

From 1960 until 1960

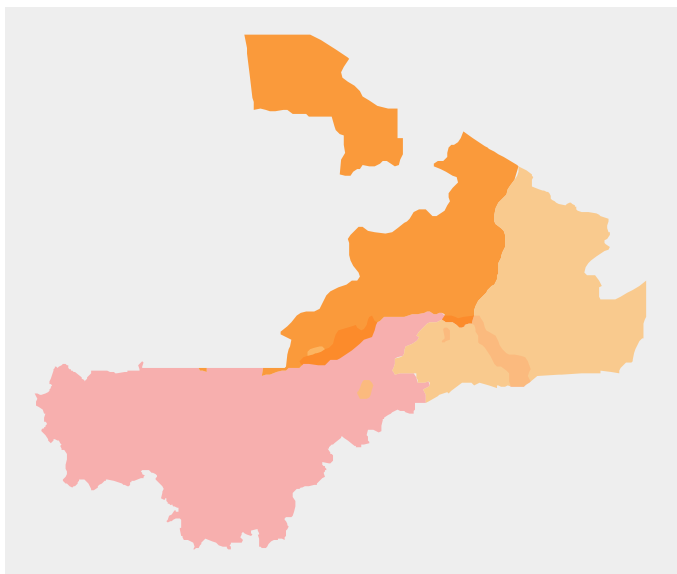


Figure 651: Map of ethnic groups in Mali during 1960-1960.

Group name		Area in km ²	Type
■	Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	470 498	Regionally based
■	Arabs/Moors	300 744	Regionally based
■	Tuareg	260 864	Regionally based

Table 240: List of ethnic groups in Mali during 1960-1960.

From 1961 until 2021

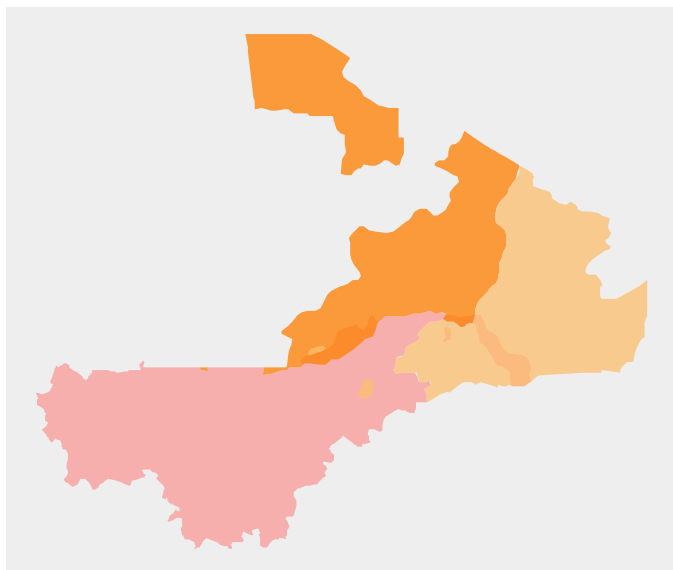


Figure 652: Map of ethnic groups in Mali during 1961-2021.

	Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■	Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	470 495	Regionally based
■	Arabs/Moors	300 744	Regionally based
■	Tuareg	260 864	Regionally based

Table 241: List of ethnic groups in Mali during 1961-2021.

Conflicts in Mali

Starting on 1985-12-24

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Burkina Faso	Government of Mali		1985-12-24			

Starting on 1990-06-27

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Mali	MPA	Tuareg	1990-06-27	Explicit	Yes	
Government of Mali	FPLA	Tuareg	1991-05-19	Explicit	Yes	
Government of Mali	FIAA	Arabs/Moors	1991-12-11	Explicit	Yes	
Government of Mali	ATNMC	Tuareg	2007-05-10	Explicit	Yes	No
Government of Mali	CMA	Tuareg	2012-01-16	Explicit	Yes	Yes

Starting on 2009-06-09

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Mali	AQIM		2009-06-09			
Government of Mali	Ansar Dine	Tuareg	2012-01-19	No	Yes	
Government of Mali	Military faction (Red Berets)		2012-04-30			
Government of Mali	MUJAO		2013-01-11			
Government of Mali	Signed-in-Blood Battalion	Tuareg	2013-02-18	No	Yes	Split
Government of Mali	al-Murabitun		2013-10-06			
Government of Mali	JNIM		2017-03-04			

Starting on 2015-01-04

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Mali	FLM	Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	2015-01-04	No	Yes, from EGIP	

Starting on 2017-02-03

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Mali	IS		2017-02-03			