

SHAWMUN

2014
UNSC



United Nations Security Council

Topic: The Conflict in Mali

Dear Delegates,

My name is Julianne de Gara and I am delighted to be your Director for UNSC at ShawMUN2014. I am a grade 11 student at Shawnigan Lake School in my second year of MUN and debate. Working alongside me are Anna Vasylyeva and Gemma Schladow, and we will all be working to ensure that your experience in the Security Council is diplomatic, well-researched, and most of all, educational for all those involved.

The topic we have chosen is the situation that plagues the Republic of Mali. Not only does the issue concern the international community, but it also deals with nearly every issue addressed by the United Nations: military violence, ethnic uprisings, territorial autonomy, the effects of imperialism and so much more. We are certain that through debate, diplomacy, and research, you, the delegates of the Security Council, will be able to resolve this conflict and further resolutions already put into effect by the United Nations. We are expecting a high level of debate and a vast understanding of your country's position, and we are very excited to welcome you in April!

If delegates have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact me at jdegara@shawnigan.ca. We are here to make this experience the best it can be for you as delegates, so please do not hesitate to ask! Good luck and happy researching!

Sincerely,
Julianne de Gara
Director of UNSC and USG of Committees

A Brief History of the Security Council

Following the end of the Second World War, the United Nations was created to ensure collective security across the world. The United Nations Security Council was one of the first bodies of the UN to be created, and is responsible for the peace and security of the international community. As stated in the United Nations Charter, the UNSC is the only UN body able to deploy and create peacekeeping missions, as well as take substantive military action; a pivotal difference between UNSC and other committees in the UN. Essentially, the UNSC exists to mitigate international disputes by any means possible.

The UNSC was founded by the Allied Powers of World War II: The United States of America, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the People's Republic of China, and France. Today, these powers are permanent members of the 15-member council, and possess veto power; meaning that any resolution put forward can immediately be voted down by any of the five nations. The other ten members of the council exist on rotation, with members sitting on the council for two year periods. These nations are chosen based on geographical location, and must be voted in by the General Assembly. The African bloc is represented by three members; the Latin America and the Caribbean, Asian, and Western European and Others blocs by two countries, respectively; and the Eastern European bloc by one nation. The current non-permanent members are as follows:

As of 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2014:

Argentina: Latin America and Caribbean
Australia: Western Europe and Other
Rwanda: Africa
Luxembourg: Western Europe and Other
Republic of Korea: Asia

As of 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015:

Lithuania: Eastern Europe
Chile: Latin America and Caribbean
Chad: Africa
Jordan: Asia
Nigeria: Africa

For the purpose of our simulation at ShawMUN 2014, we will be including the countries mentioned above.

Introduction to the Conflict:

Not unlike most African countries, Mali has faced a plethora of economic, social, and political issues since its declaration of independence from France in 1960. After a history of military coups and decades of military dictatorship, the country re-established itself as a flourishing new democracy and economic power in the late nineties and early two thousands, acting as a model for other developing nations. However, the previous stability and potential Mali once held quickly crumbled when a previously silenced minority rebelled against the government in early 2012. The root of the crisis is found in the ethnic differences between the Tuareg people and the native Malians. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, or MNLA, a group founded by the minority Tuareg people, demanded that 60% of Mali become the autonomous state of Azawad. This dispute was not a new one; the rebellion that occurred in 2012 was a continuation of insurrectionary attacks that were first initiated by the Tuaregs in 1916.

Since the attacks, the issue has evolved, becoming far more than a dispute defined by territorial autonomy and minority rights. Currently, Mali faces a variety of issues that threaten to destabilize not only the country but the surrounding area as well. The humanitarian situation, the prevalence of Islamic militants, the proliferation of small arms and accessibility to weapons, and the lack of resources in the region all contribute to the mounting concern surrounding the issues, and more importantly, the need for a comprehensive situation. It cannot be forgotten that any action in the country will have an immediate effect on the surrounding region, much in the same way conflicts in surrounding countries such as Libya have adversely affected the Malian crisis.

Other hindrances in finding a solution include the protection of Mali's sovereignty, the scope of issues the country faces, and the threat of destabilization in the area if any further action is taken. Military intervention has already been established by France's "Operation Serval", and has been viewed as a positive first step; however, without stabilization measures and an immediate response to the proliferation of terrorism, this crisis will not find a peaceful end. Another aspect of the issue to be considered is the lengths to which the international community may go; it cannot be forgotten that the crisis stems from a century-old internal territory dispute, and that all resolutions drafted must seek to solve only the issues that threaten the stability and safety of the surrounding area. Lastly, the council must recognize that the MNLA is only a portion of the minority Tuareg people—a minority within a minority, as some have called it—and that their interests do not necessarily represent the entire population.

Key players:

Several groups have to be considered as the Malian crisis progresses. Each group has different goals, motivations, and enemies; all things to be considered in finding reconciliation.

The Transitional Government/Malian Defense Forces:

On March 21st 2012, soldiers that were a part of the Malian government rebelled against their leader, Amadou Toumani Touré. This military coup d'état was brought upon by the Tuareg rebellions themselves and the lack of action taken in the conflict, and led to the implementation of a transitional government from 2012 onwards. Unanimously condemned by the international community, the countries of the United Nations reaffirmed that the conflict would be better resolved through democratic processes; however, this has not yet come about, and the transitional government remains in power. Fundamentally, the government wants the territorial autonomy that was lost when the state of Azawad was created, and to repair constitution in midst of crisis. Stabilization is considered to be a forefront concern by the international community, and this falls to the government; however, it is not only their responsibility, and relies on the reconciliation of all groups involved.

The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA):

The MNLA primary composed of the minority Tuareg people, who differ in both skin colour and lifestyle as compared to the native Malian people. The movement was founded in 2011, and instigated their first attack in January 2012. Their beliefs are founded on secular nationalism and autonomy, as seen in the foundation of the autonomous state of Azawad, which accounts for 60% of Mali's current territory. Since 1916, the Tuareg people have rebelled against the government five times, each time with similar goals: a territory for the minority, representation within government, and reconciliation of ethnic differences. However, the conflict no longer exists between the government and the MNLA; in the 2012 rebellion, the conflict extended to the Islamic extremist groups in areas surrounding Mali. Thus, this created two simultaneous conflicts, both pertaining to the MNLA.

Islamic Extremist Groups

The first inklings of Islamist views within the Malian uprisings occurred in 1990, when prominent Tuareg leader, Iyad Ag Ghali, became involved with a group of Pakistani Salafists. This caused Ghali to adopt more Islamist views, straying away from the original values of the MNLA. In 2011, Ghali attempted to gain a significant leadership position within the MNLA, but was refused, being told he was "too much of an Islamist". This led to the establishment of Ansar Dine, a radical Islamist organization founded on the principle of enforcing strict Sharia

Law across Mali. After the fall of Muammar Qaddafi in Libya, Islamic militants fled to the surrounding areas, including Mali, leading to alliances being created with Tuareg mercenaries. This created a further rift between the Tuareg people; one side is the MNLA, and on the other, Tuareg people with militant Islamic values.

The continued conflict between these three groups has caused massive instability for the Malian people, creating humanitarian crisis and of course, territorial disputes than span far past the territory of Azawad. No solution will please every group involved; however, resolutions should attempt to satisfy the most needs while still maintaining peace, sovereignty, and security for the groups involved and the Malian people. There is no one set of values involved in this conflict: religious ideologies must be considered as solutions are forged.

Other Major Concerns:

The spread of small arms throughout Africa has always been a pertinent concern of the United Nations, and in areas of conflict, this becomes even more of a forefront issue. Of the 500 million small arms in circulation across the world, 100 million are found within Africa. Small arms are the weapon of choice for the majority of extremist groups in North Mali, as well as by the MNLA. The proliferation of these arms creates an environment for civilian violence, and perpetuates the violence already plaguing the area.

As seen through the influx of Islamic militants into the country, the spread of terrorism is a major concern, particularly in the northern region of Mali. In July 2012, areas once controlled by the MNLA were taken by two Islamic organizations, AQIM and MUJAQ. Conflict is a breeding ground for terrorism; with little to no government control, as well as rampant instability, there is no better time to attempt to overtake weaker areas of the country. There is no unified force fighting against the Islamist militants, due to the separation of the native Malians and the Tuareg people.

As with any conflict, humanitarian issues have arisen amongst the violence in Mali. Without a stable government, the economy is suffering, causing citizens to turn to illegal measures to make ends meet. These measures include drug trafficking and piracy. Moreover, the Islamist groups in the north of the country are violating human rights, due to the practice of public whippings and beatings. This, alongside supply shortages (food, medical supplies, health workers) has driven Mali to a state of desperation in terms of quality of life.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS TAKEN BY COUNTRIES, UNIONS AND UN (FROM 2012)

Due to the nature of conflict, several countries have taken their part in attempting to resolve it. This should be kept in mind as you research: these are the actions that have been taken, and that your actions will be based upon. Actions taken by a country can range anywhere from providing military support to signing a UN resolution. The United Nations Security Council has also passed several resolutions regarding the issue; these resolutions will be incredibly important to you as you work in committee.

AFRICA:

ALGERIA

On 16 January, 2013 it was reported that a group of AQIM militants had crossed the border from Mali into Algeria and had captured an Algerian/ Statoil/BP-owned natural gas field, In Aménas, near the border with Libya. The militants were reported to have killed two foreign nationals and were holding 41 foreign nationals hostage, and a spokesman for the group said that the purpose of the attack was to get revenge on the countries that had intervened in Mali. The hostages reportedly included several American, Japanese, British, Romanian, and Norwegian citizens. Algeria was reportedly negotiating with the militants to try and obtain the hostages' release.[1] On 19 January 11 militants and 7 hostages were killed in a final assault to end the standoff. In addition, 16 foreign hostages were freed, including 2 Americans, 2 Germans, and 1 Portuguese.[2]

CHAD

On 29 January, 2013 the first non-Malian African troops entered North Mali. Chadian Army was also reported as moving north from Ménaka in support of the Malian Army.[5] On 2 February, 2013 Chadian troops from MISMA reached Kidal and stationed in a deserted base in the city.[6] On 14 April, 2013 Chadian president Idriss Déby Itno announced the full withdrawal of Chadian Forces in Mali (FATIM), saying that face-to-face fighting with Islamists is over, and the Chadian army does not have the skills to fight a guerrilla-style war.

NIGERIA

On 29 January, 2013 the first non-Malian African troops entered North Mali. Nigerien soldiers occupied Ansongo and Chadian troops, Ménaka. The more numerous Chadian Army was also reported as moving north from Ménaka in support of the Malian Army.[13]

AFRICAN UNION

November 13, 2012 – AU approves military intervention plan. On 27 January, 2013 the African Union held a summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Outgoing AU chairperson Thomas Boni Yayi, the president of Benin, told fellow leaders their response to conflict in Mali had been too slow, and thanked France, the country's former colonial ruler, for taking the lead in its military intervention there. After the meeting, the AU gave its member countries one week to deploy ground troops to Mali.

ECOWAS

November 11, 2012 – ECOWAS heads of state approve military intervention plan at a summit in Abuja, Nigeria. Economic Community of West African States launched AFISMA – African-led International Support Mission to Mali In order to reconstitute Mali's territorial integrity. Authorized by the United Nations Security Council on 20 December 2012, this West African military force began deploying to Mali in January 2013. On July 1, AFISMA transferred its authority to MINUSMA.

EUROPE:

BELGIUM

The Belgian government made the decision to send two C-130s along with one Medical Component Agusta A109 Medevac medical evacuation helicopter along with 80 support personnel to Mali.

DENMARK

On January 15, 2013 the Danish Parliament decided to contribute a C-130 transport plane

FRANCE

As a country, which has colonized Mali in the past, France was actively involved in the conflict. January 11, 2013 – Operation Serval begins with French airstrikes, after Islamist forces captured the strategic town of Konna, located 600 km from the capital of Mali. On 16 January, 2013 French Special Forces, along with the Malian army, began fighting small and mobile groups of jihadists inside the city of Diabaly.

GERMANY

January 16, 2013 - Meanwhile, the government of Germany authorized the contribution of two Transall C-160 transport aircraft to ferry African troops into the capital Bamako. On 20 February, 2014 Germany and France announced the shipment of elements of the Franco-German brigade to Mali to help train Mali troops. This is the first deployment of EU troops in Africa.

ITALY

January 16, 2013, the government of Italy pledged air transport-based logistical support.

SPAIN

On January 16, 2013 the government of Spain approved the dispatch of one transport aircraft to Mali for the purposes of logistical and training support.

UNITED KINGDOM

On January 12, 2013 the British government announced that it was deploying two Royal Air Force C-17 transport planes in a non-combat role to ferry primarily French but also potentially African forces into Mali.[15]

NORTH AMERICA:

UNITED STATES

On 20 January, the United States denied that they had attempted to bill the French for American support in the conflict. USAF C-17s began to fly in French troops and supplies the next day. U. S. President Obama announced on 22 February 2013 that about 100 American troops had been sent to Niger, which borders Mali, to aid the French in Mali. The most recent U. S. troops were sent to help set up a new air base, from which to conduct surveillance against Al Qaeda. 40 U. S. Air Force logistics specialists, intelligence analysts and security officers arrived in the capital of Niger on 20 February 2013, bringing the total Americans deployed in Niger to 100. February 26, 2013 – U.S. Department of State designates Iyad Ag Ghali as a Special Designated Global Terrorist Economic Community of Western African States.

CANADA

On 15 January, 2013 the Royal Canadian Air Force dispatched a C-17 transport plane to Mali in a similar role as those of the British C-17s.

International Community:

UNITED NATIONS

October 12, 2012 – UNSC adopts Resolution 2071, and “called on Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to provide, at once, military and security planners to [ECOWAS], the African Union (AU) and other partners to help frame a response to a request by Mali’s transitional authorities for such a force, and to report back within 45 days.” December 20, 2012 – The UNSC adopts resolution 2085, authorizing the deployment of international forces to Mali. MINUSMA – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Established April 25, 2013 and deployed on July 1, 2013, this UN peacekeeping mission seeks to stabilize Mali in the aftermath of Operation Serval.

Among the other involved countries on the side of Malian government are: Australia, Burundi, Czech Republic, China, Comoro, Gabon, Hungary, India, Ireland, Japan, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, Romania, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, United Arab Emirates.

It is important to mention, that European Union, as a whole, diplomatically took part in the conflict.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Decentralizing governance and security sector reform in Mali over the past two decades has made limited but real progress. This can be measured by the municipal elections and emerging leadership on northern military units who remained loyal to the state during the outbreak of the rebellion in 2012. An intervention led by the French broke the grip of radical groups on the northern territories of Mali, but the actions of armed, non-state Tuaregs is threatening most peacebuilding efforts. These groups display the lack of local authority throughout Mali. However, empowering them as partners in counterterrorism efforts or recognizing them as political leaders of the northern zones is not beneficial to long-term democratization, and may further politicize ethnic divisions and jeopardize the potential for national unity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has your country ever been an imperial power or been under an imperial power?
2. What aspect of the issue does your country find the most important: the reestablishment of autonomy, ethnic reconciliation or humanitarian aid?
3. In what ways can Mali's economy be jump-started?
4. What is your country's view on counter-terrorism efforts?
5. Was your country in support of Operation Serval or Resolution 2100?
6. Is your country prepared to deploy peacekeeping troops if needed?
7. Is your country in support of intervention, be it military, humanitarian, or otherwise?
8. Has your country ever been a part of the UNSC in the past?
9. What stance does your country take on the proliferation of small arms?
10. Should Mali adopt laws that require equal representation in government of the Tuaregs?

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