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Situation of human rights in Mali

Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, Eduardo Gonzalez*

Summary

The present report has been submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 58/30, adopted on 4 April 2025, and covers the period from 4 April to 30 November 2025. It is based on information made available to the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali, Eduardo Gonzalez, by various national and international actors and organizations working on human rights issues in Mali, including civil society organizations. Unfortunately, the Independent Expert has not always received the necessary cooperation from the Malian authorities when carrying out his duties. He regrets this lack of support from the Malian authorities but believes that it is indicative of deeper trends that are detailed in this report.

Indeed, as this report and previous ones indicate, Mali is experiencing a continuous deterioration in the human rights situation as a result of decisions taken by its authorities, including its withdrawal from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which encourages impunity, the cancellation of the process leading to democratic elections, the banning of political parties and the shrinking of civic space, which have weakened citizens' ability to propose alternative solutions to the multidimensional crisis that has been ongoing since 2012.

Although progress has been made in terms of standards aimed at protecting human rights, this has not been enough to reverse the worrying trends of insecurity, deteriorating living conditions and a lack of human rights protection. Despite the gravity of the situation, the Independent Expert is convinced that Mali, with its rich culture, resilience and creativity, is capable of finding solutions to its challenges, and he is determined to contribute to these efforts.

* Agreement was reached to publish the present document after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 58/30, adopted on 4 April 2025, in which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the Independent Expert for a period of one year with a view to assisting the Malian authorities in their efforts to promote and protect human rights. In that resolution the Council also requested the Independent Expert to submit a report at its sixty-first session.
2. This report covers the period from 4 April to 31 November 2025 and is based on information made available to the Independent Expert, Eduardo Gonzalez, by several national and international actors and organizations working on human rights and humanitarian issues in Mali, including civil society organizations.
3. With regard to methodology, the Independent Expert refers to his previous report.¹
4. Unfortunately, the Independent Expert has not always received the necessary cooperation from the Government of Mali when carrying out his duties. He regrets that letters sent to the authorities regarding various alleged human rights violations or abuses and offering assistance have not received a substantive response.² Similarly, the Independent Expert expressed interest in visiting Mali from 6 to 17 October 2025 in two successive notes verbales sent on 15 July and 27 August but received no reply. The Independent Expert sent the Government of Mali a call for input on 24 September and a draft of the present report for comments on 18 December 2025. The Government's replies were due on 24 October 2025 and 15 January 2026, respectively. The Independent Expert takes note of the replies received to his two letters dated 27 January 2026 and thanks the Government for them.

II. General situation in the country

A. The political situation

5. The political situation in Mali during the period covered by this report was marked by a democratic setback following the adoption of several draconian laws, such as: the Act of 13 May 2025 repealing the Act of 18 August 2005 establishing the Charter of Political Parties and the Act of 4 March 2015 on the status of the political opposition; the decree of 13 May 2025 dissolving political parties and political organizations in the Republic of Mali; and the Act of 8 July 2025, which granted the transitional President a five-year term of office, "renewable as many times as necessary until the pacification of the country", without elections.
6. These draconian laws betray the commitment made by the transitional President, General Assimi Goïta, at the Council of Ministers meeting on 27 November 2024, when he called on the Government to "create the conditions necessary for the organization of transparent and peaceful elections that will bring the transition to an end", a commitment that the Independent Expert had welcomed in his previous report.³
7. Following the adoption on 30 April 2025 of a bill repealing the Charter of Political Parties and the Status of the Political Opposition Act, political parties and movements organized demonstrations and public activities in Bamako on 3 and 4 May 2025. However,

¹ A/HRC/58/79, para. 3.

² <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29875>;
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30099>;
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30170>;
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30251>.

³ A/HRC/58/79, para. 8.

they alleged that individuals claiming to support the transitional authorities had violently disrupted their rallies.⁴ Some alleged members of the opposition were victims of enforced disappearance in the days following these events.⁵

8. Among the positive political developments, the Independent Expert notes the adoption of the Act of 22 August 2025 establishing the National Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, a significant effort to lay down principles aimed at ensuring peace, social cohesion and coexistence based on the outcomes of the national dialogues and in consultation with various civil society actors and the Government.

B. The security situation

9. The Independent Expert takes note of the efforts that the Malian authorities have continued to make to restore security throughout the country.

10. It also takes note of positive developments whose effective implementation could contribute to improving the security situation, including the National Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation and certain measures listed in the transitional Government's Action Plan for 2025–2026, adopted by the National Transitional Council of Mali on 19 May 2025.

11. During the period covered by the present report, the overall security situation remained a matter of grave concern, with acts of violence against civilians, including local elected officials, such as: killing and wounding, abductions and threats; conflict-related sexual violence, particularly against children; attacks with improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war; the recruitment and use of children; acts of violence or attacks against humanitarian personnel; threats made against civilians; forced or preventive displacement of populations; attacks or carjackings on roads; looting and extortion of civilian property; illicit taxation; sieges and other restrictions on movement, including those commonly referred to as “blockades”; destruction of civilian property, such as telecommunications antennas; and attacks on fuel tankers by violent extremist groups, such as Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, Islamic State – Sahel Province and other similar groups, and by unidentified armed individuals whose modus operandi is similar to that of violent extremist groups in almost all regions of Mali.

12. These groups have also carried out attacks against the Malian Defence and Security Forces, for example, on 1 July 2025, in seven different towns, namely Niono and Molodo, Ségou Region; Sandare, Gogui and Nioro du Sahel, Nioro Region; and Diboli and Kayes, Kayes Region).

13. The situation has also been marked by clashes between the Malian Defence and Security Forces – sometimes accompanied by foreign military personnel (commonly referred to as the “Wagner Group” or “Africa Corps” by many sources) and/or *dozo* traditional hunters – and non-State armed groups, including violent extremist groups and the Front de libération nationale de l’Azawad. There have also been clashes between violent extremist groups and *dozo* traditional hunters, particularly in the centre and south of the country.

14. The Independent Expert also noted the frequent use of drones by all parties, including the Malian Defence and Security Forces and armed groups (Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and Front de libération de l’Azawad), which have sometimes used suicide drones, thereby increasing the risk of civilian casualties.

⁴ See: <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/GqD8iOYXkAAweJE?format=jpg&name=medium>; and https://pbs.twimg.com/media/GqQ0bpZXYAA_3Ip?format=jpg&name=large.

⁵ See, for example, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/mali-un-experts-demand-activist-el-bachir-thiams-release-four-months-after>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/09/mali-opposition-politicians-feared-forcibly-disappeared>; <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20250513-mali-nouvel-enl%C3%A8vement-d-un-cadre-politique-par-la-s%C3%A9curit%C3%A9-d-%C3%A9tat>.

15. The situation has also been marked by a continuing geographical expansion of the presence and acts of violence of violent extremist groups (such as Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin) around the south and south-west of the country (in particular, the Regions of Kayes, Koulikoro, Nioro, Sikasso and San).

16. On 3 September 2025, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin imposed movement restrictions ("blockades") on the roads in the Regions of Kayes and Nioro. During the reporting period, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin also imposed movement restrictions ("blockades") on the roads in other regions of the country, including Koulikoro, Ségou and Sikasso, and carried out attacks on fuel convoys, including those escorted by the Malian Defence and Security Forces. These attacks have led to fuel and electricity shortages and sharp price increases in several regions of the country. In the face of this situation, some countries have advised their nationals to leave Mali immediately.

17. Kidnappings by violent extremist groups continued, spreading terror. In some cases, hostages were released, as in the following cases: the mayor of Konna, Mopti Region, kidnapped on 25 May 2025 by suspected members of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and released on 4 October 2025; four Moroccan truck drivers, kidnapped by Islamic State – Sahel Province on 18 January 2025 and released on 3 August 2025; six Senegalese truck drivers, kidnapped on 4 September 2025 in Kayes Region by suspected members of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and released on 5 September 2025; a former member of parliament from Koutiala, kidnapped on 23 April 2023 in Koutiala and released between 31 October and 1 November 2025; and two nationals of the United Arab Emirates and one Iranian, kidnapped on 23 September 2025 in Tadyanabougou, Koulikoro Region, and released during the night of 29 to 30 October in Gao (according to several sources, following the payment of a ransom of several tens of millions of euros). However, several Malian and foreign kidnapping victims remain in captivity.

18. At the regional level, the Independent Expert notes the meetings of defence ministers and chiefs of staff of the armed forces of the members of the Confederation of Sahel States, including as part of the process aimed at making the Unified Force of the Confederation operational.

19. Also at the regional level, the deterioration of the security situation in Mali and the Sahel has prompted a response from bodies such as the African Union. Thus, following its meeting on 30 September 2025, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union decided to establish a task force to support countries of the Sahel in combatting terrorism. In a communiqué issued on 9 November 2025, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission expressed "deep concern over the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Mali", urged "a robust, coordinated, and coherent international response to counter terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel" and called for "enhanced cooperation, intelligence sharing, and sustained support to affected States".

C. The ongoing challenge of the fight against impunity

20. The Independent Expert takes note of the importance that the National Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation attaches to the fight against impunity,⁶ justice,⁷ including transitional justice,⁸ reparation,⁹ holistic care for victims of gender-based violence¹⁰ and support for vulnerable populations and victims of crises and conflicts.¹¹ For example, article 47 of the Charter states that "impunity undermines trust in the judicial system, encourages recidivism, weakens deterrence, leads to disorder and disregard for civic norms, weakens institutions and affects peace, security, national reconciliation, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence".

⁶ Arts. 2, 22, 47, 48, 85, and 97.

⁷ Arts. 2, 19, 21, 24, 29, 34, 44–46 and 98.

⁸ Arts. 42 and 43.

⁹ Arts. 29, 30, 42, 43 and 85.

¹⁰ Art. 28.

¹¹ Art. 34.

21. On 9 July 2025, the Authority for the Management of Reparations for Victims of Crises presented its progress report on activities covering the period from July 2024 to June 2025. According to information shared by the Authority's Communications and Public Relations Unit, the results listed in the report included the review of 30,235 statements and the evaluation of 1,953 compensation claim forms, in accordance with the Government Action Programme of Action for the period 2025–2026 targeting 2,000 victims.

22. The Independent Expert also notes several press releases issued by the Malian army concerning the arrest of individuals described as “suspected terrorists” or “suspicious individuals”.¹² He urges the Malian authorities to ensure that these individuals are treated in accordance with relevant international standards¹³ and are held accountable for their actions in trials that comply with international human rights standards.¹⁴

23. However, the Independent Expert regrets that, according to the information received, no significant progress has been made in prosecuting the alleged perpetrators of multiple violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law attributed to violent extremist groups, militias and community-based self-defence groups, and Malian forces, mentioned in several reports.¹⁵

24. On 24 September 2025, the Independent Expert issued a call for input to the Government in which he provided a list of specific cases of alleged violations and abuses and requested information on the progress made in combating impunity in relation to these cases, including the number of people brought before a court, tried and convicted since April 2025, and the length of sentences handed down. The contributions received from the Government on 27 January 2026 did not provide the requested information concerning the specific cases mentioned above.

25. With regard to international justice, the Independent Expert regrets that, in a joint statement issued by the Confederation of Sahel States on 22 September 2025, Mali announced its immediate withdrawal from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

26. In his press release of 26 September 2025,¹⁶ the Independent Expert noted that, while the statement refers to an immediate withdrawal, it does not have any legal effect and does not protect those who have committed atrocities in Mali and that, according to article 127 of the Rome Statute, a State's withdrawal from the Rome Statute only takes effect one year after the official notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The International Criminal Court retained jurisdiction regarding alleged crimes that occurred in the territory of a State or were committed by its nationals while it was a Party to the Rome Statute. As a consequence, the Court may exercise its jurisdiction regarding crimes that occurred on the territory of Mali, or were committed by nationals of Mali, even after the country's withdrawal becomes effective as long as the investigation or prosecution relate to the crimes committed during the time Mali was a Party to the Statute. Mali also had a duty to cooperate with the Court for the duration of this investigation and any subsequent proceedings. The announcement of the withdrawal from the Court came just days after a hearing on

¹² See, for example,

https://x.com/DirpaFa/status/1929640925451768297?t=XtrUNJPEUPdxDqRXrG_NXQ&s=03;
<https://x.com/DirpaFa/status/1940310678805594334?t=WJAQcTHjYLWwLSgCLTU9ig&s=03>;
<https://x.com/DirpaFa/status/1965684260955922687?t=xVHduGMrLjlaKYj1vzcaGA&s=03>;
https://x.com/DirpaFa/status/1966146054333866395?t=TQEY_ckFC6eReB37vAdtUw&s=03.

¹³ See, for example, art. 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the applicable rules of customary international law in:

<https://www.icrc.org/sites/default/files/external/doc/en/assets/files/other/customary-international-humanitarian-law-i-icrc-eng.pdf>.

¹⁴ See, for example, art. 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and art. 7 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

¹⁵ See, for example, A/HRC/46/68, paras. 21 and 22; A/HRC/49/94, para. 22; A/HRC/52/81, para. 23; A/HRC/55/79, para. 18. and A/HRC/58/79, para. 15.

¹⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/un-expert-calls-mali-remain-international-criminal-court>.

compensation in the *Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz* case, casting doubt on the possibility of victims obtaining reparation.

27. Many human rights organizations have also expressed concerns about this decision to withdraw from the International Criminal Court.¹⁷

28. The Independent Expert recalls the statement issued by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on 23 March 2019, in which she emphasized that the situation in Mali had been referred to the Office of the Prosecutor by the Malian authorities in 2012 and indicated that the Office would continue to closely follow the events in central Mali and in other parts of the country.¹⁸

29. The Independent Expert would like to point out that crimes that may fall within the jurisdiction of the Court continue to be committed with complete impunity in Mali and that the persistence of impunity may indicate a lack of capacity or will on the part of the Malian authorities. He recalls his March 2025 report, in which he expressed concern that some authorities had suggested that legal proceedings for human rights violations could demoralize the military or weaken its fighting spirit.¹⁹

III. Situation of human rights

30. The Independent Expert takes note of positive legal developments whose effective implementation could help improve the human rights situation, including: the Act of 22 May 2025 on the status of stateless persons in Mali; the ordinance of 13 August 2025 establishing the National Directorate for the Judicial Protection of Children; the decree of 20 August 2025 establishing the organizational structure of the National Directorate for the Judicial Protection of Children; the Act of 20 August 2025 establishing the Directorate General for Prison Administration; and the relevant provisions and measures contained in the National Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation and the Transitional Government's Action Plan for 2025–2026. For example, the National Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation recognizes that, among the “conditions for lasting peace” are “the promotion of human rights” and “respect for fundamental rights and individual and collective freedoms” (art. 21) and that among the “conditions for national reconciliation” is “respect for human rights” (art. 30).

31. Other positive developments include: the official inauguration of the House of Justice in Mopti on 19 June 2025, as part of a project funded by the European Union capacity-building mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali); the organization of the National Forum on Justice, held from 25 to 30 September 2025 (regional phase in Bamako, Kayes and Mopti), and on 30 and 31 October 2025 (national phase in Bamako), which led to the adoption of 218 recommendations that, according to the Malian authorities, would serve as the basis for the 10-Year Justice Sector Development Programme for the period 2026–2035; and the submission by Mali of its midterm national report on the implementation of the recommendations accepted by Mali during the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review,²⁰ announced at the Council of Ministers meeting on 26 September 2025.

¹⁷ See, for example, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/09/burkina-faso-mali-niger-icc-withdrawal/>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/09/24/sahel-countries-icc-withdrawal-endangers-civilians>; <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/mali/sahel-states-icc-withdrawal-a-step-back-for-victims-and-justice>; <https://trialinternational.org/latest-post/sahel-states-icc-withdrawal-a-step-back-for-victims-and-justice/>.

¹⁸ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-fatou-bensouda-reported-upsurge-violence-and-mass-killings-mopti>.

¹⁹ A/HRC/58/79, para. 16.

²⁰ Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/upr/midtermreports/statesmidtermreport/s/rapport-national-a-mis-parcours-mali.pdf>.

32. However, the human rights situation remained a matter of concern during the reporting period. For example, according to available figures, between April and June 2025, 13,987 human rights violations and abuses were documented and recorded by the protection monitoring system, compared to 6,591 in the previous quarter, an increase of 112.21%.²¹

A. Civil and political rights

1. Human rights violations attributed to national authorities, including the Malian Defence and Security Forces and their foreign partners

33. The Independent Expert is aware of the multidimensional crisis and the challenges facing Mali, including in the area of counter-terrorism. However, the Independent Expert is extremely concerned by the high number and seriousness of violations of human rights or international humanitarian law attributed to the national defence forces and their foreign partners (commonly referred to as the “Wagner Group” or “Africa Corps”) in several parts of the country and, above all, by their impunity.²²

34. For example, on 2 January 2025, a humanitarian worker and seven members of his family were reportedly executed in the village of Dioura by members of the national defence forces and their Russian proxies.²³ The Independent Expert requested information from the Malian authorities regarding these allegations, but received only a brief response, in May 2025, describing the allegations as “unfounded” and stating that investigations were ongoing.

35. On 12 April 2025, around 100 men, mostly from the Fulani community, were arrested at a market in Sebabougou, Kayes Region, by the Malian Armed Forces accompanied by military and security personnel from the so-called Wagner Group. While some of those arrested were released immediately, around 60 others were reportedly taken to the military camp in Kwala, Koulikoro Region. Between 21 and 22 April 2025, dozens of decomposing bodies, believed to be those of the persons arrested in Sebabougou on 12 April 2025, were reportedly found scattered in the area around the Kwala military camp by people searching for their loved ones. Although the exact number of deaths is unclear, at least 65 people are reported to have disappeared or been declared missing after being arrested in Sebabougou. United Nations experts received a list from credible sources indicating the names of 54 alleged male victims.²⁴

36. Around 20 men were reportedly summarily executed by Malian Armed Forces soldiers, who had arrested them on 12 May 2025 at a livestock market in Diafarabé, Mopti Region, a predominantly Fulani village. The alleged victims, all men, were traders from the Fulani community (except for one, who was reportedly a member of the Tuareg community). Although the exact number of victims is unclear, the Independent Expert has received a list of 22 names from credible sources.²⁵ In a press release issued on 16 May 2025, the General Staff of the Armed Forces announced that a “gendarmerie investigation” had been opened and that “the results of the investigation [would] be shared with the public”.²⁶ At the time of finalizing the present report, the Independent Expert had no information on the results of the

²¹ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/9d41ad64-5c37-4af8-bf11-fa0418356f0b/Note%20de%20Protection%20T2%202025.pdf>.

²² See also <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/mali-un-experts-outraged-reports-summary-executions-and-enforced>; <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/mali/mali-investigation-into-executions-of-civilians-in-diafarabe-must-be>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/05/mali-executions-civilians/>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/20/mali-22-men-found-dead-after-arrest-soldiers>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/07/22/mali-army-wagner-group-disappear-execute-fulani-civilians>.

²³ <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29698>.

²⁴ See also <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/04/mali-un-experts-outraged-reports-summary-executions-and-enforced>.

²⁵ See also <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/mali/mali-investigation-into-executions-of-civilians-in-diafarabe-must-be>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/05/mali-executions-civilians/>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/20/mali-22-men-found-dead-after-arrest-soldiers>.

²⁶ <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/GrKdXdZXgAA9pZx?format=jpg&name=large>; <https://x.com/DirpaFa/status/1923773035984666832?t=cAed9cyAWv5WtkFaQoLfCw&s=03>.

above-mentioned investigation. On 19 May 2025, the National Human Rights Commission of Mali issued a statement calling on the authorities to fully investigate the allegations.²⁷

37. In some cases, violations or abuses were allegedly committed during joint operations carried out by the Malian Defence and Security Forces and *dozo* traditional hunters.

38. For example, on 2 October 2025, the Malian Armed Forces and *dozo* traditional hunters allegedly killed at least 31 civilians and burned down at least 10 houses in the village of Kamona, Ségou Region. On October 13, they killed 9 men and 1 woman in the village of Ballé, Nara Region.²⁸

39. On 23 October 2025, members of the Malian Armed Forces and *dozo* traditional hunters reportedly killed 32 civilians near Markala, Ségou Region. The majority of the victims are believed to be livestock farmers.

40. In other cases, violations or abuses were allegedly committed during joint operations carried out by elements of the Wagner Group or Africa Corps and *dozo* traditional hunters, for example, in Sofara, Mopti Region, on 6 June 2025, in Niacongo, Mopti Region, on 18 June 2025 and in Dianwely, Douentza Region.

41. The Independent Expert is also concerned about reports that civilians, including children, have been killed in air strikes (including drone strikes) carried out by the Malian Defence and Security Forces or their foreign partners.

42. For example, on the night of 29 to 30 October 2025, a drone strike by the Malian Defence and Security Forces on a wedding ceremony in the village of Baydi, Timbuktu Region, reportedly killed 19 people (2 men and 17 women and children) and injured around 40 others. On 13 November 2025, an entire family was reportedly killed by a drone strike attributed to the Malian Defence and Security Forces in the village of Tangatta, in the commune of Tin-Aïcha, Timbuktu Region. According to a list consulted by the Independent Expert, the alleged victims were the father (aged 41), the mother (aged 35) and their five children aged between 7 and 15 (3 boys and 2 girls). On 14 November 2025, 4 women and 2 infants were reportedly killed and 3 other people injured in another drone strike attributed to the Malian Defence and Security Forces against a nomadic camp in Albouhera, near Gargando, Timbuktu Region.²⁹

43. Regarding violations resulting from air strikes, including those carried out by drones, the Independent Expert wishes to recall the international legal obligations of Mali, as highlighted in his previous report.³⁰

44. In addition to the violations and abuses described in the preceding paragraphs, the Independent Expert is extremely concerned about the continued shrinking of civic space and has expressed his views on these issues in numerous press releases³¹ and letters sent to the

²⁷ <https://cndhmali.com/index.php/2025/05/19/communiqué-n0008-2025-cndh-p-relatif-aux-attaques-contre-les-populations-civiles-dans-les-regions-de-mopti-et-bandiagara/>; <https://cndhmali.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/COMMUNIQUE-19-05-2025.pdf>.

²⁸ See also <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/17/mali-army-militias-massacre-villagers-in-central-region>.

²⁹ See also <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/18/a-family-erased-in-mali>.

³⁰ A/HRC/58/79, paras. 29–32.

³¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/mali-un-experts-say-mali-should-not-hinder-or-suspend-activities-political>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/mali-dissolution-political-parties-step-wrong-direction-warn-un-experts>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/08/mali-un-experts-call-immediate-and-unconditional-release-civil-society>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/mali-un-experts-demand-activist-el-bachir-thiams-release-four-months-after>.

Malian authorities.³² Similar concerns have been expressed by several actors, including the National Human Rights Commission,³³ civil society and human rights organizations,³⁴ and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.³⁵

45. Indeed, several persons were arrested, prosecuted, tried, convicted and/or subjected to enforced disappearance simply for having made statements or taken actions that would appear to be part of the legitimate exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms protected by international³⁶ and regional³⁷ human rights law, including several instruments to which Mali is a party. The criminalization of critical and dissenting voices continued, particularly through prosecutions and convictions by the National Cybercrime Unit. The suppression of critical and dissenting voices has also taken the form of enforced or involuntary disappearances attributed to the National Agency for State Security or the gendarmerie.³⁸

46. For example, on 19 June 2025, the president of a political party was sentenced to one year in prison by the National Cybercrime Unit after being found guilty of “undermining the credibility of the State” and “spreading false news”. His conviction was reportedly linked to critical statements he made about the Malian authorities in a video. On 14 July 2025, a Malian

³² <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29875>; <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30170>; <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30251>.

³³ <https://cndhmali.com/index.php/2025/06/16/communiqué-n0012-2025-cndh-p-relatif-au-droit-de-participation-politique/>; <https://cndhmali.com/index.php/2025/05/13/communiqué-n0007-2025-cndh-p-relatif-aux-enlèvements-et-aux-disparitions-forcées/>; <https://cndhmali.com/index.php/2025/04/30/communiqué-n0006-2025-cndh-p-relatif-à-l'appel-à-l'apaisement-du-climat-politique/>; <https://cndhmali.com/index.php/2025/05/06/declaration-presentee-par-le-president-de-la-commission-nationale-des-droits-de-l'homme-du-mali-a-la-commission-africaine-des-droits-de-l'homme-et-des-peuples-lors-de-la-83e-session-ordinaire-de-la/>.

³⁴ See, for example, <https://rsf.org/en/mali-alfousseini-togo-s-detention-marks-latest-crackdown-journalists>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr37/9294/2025/en/>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/05/malis-return-to-democracy-suffers-new-blow>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/09/mali-opposition-politicians-feared-forcibly-disappeared>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/14/malis-junta-further-shutters-political-space>; <https://ifex.org/mali-tightens-grip-on-critical-speech-about-regional-juntas/>; <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/malis-military-government-outlaws-political-parties-and-suppresses-public-demonstrations/>; <https://ifex.org/former-mali-pm-arrested-over-social-media-posts/>; <https://ifex.org/jail-term-for-malian-journalist-over-critical-article/>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/10/01/mali-puts-free-speech-on-trial>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/10/mali-moussa-mara-crackdown-civil-political-rights/>; <https://www.ipsnews.net/2025/10/malis-blocked-transition-five-years-of-deepening-authoritarianism/>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/04/critic-of-malis-junta-forcibly-disappeared>.

³⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/mali-curbs-political-rights-risk-further-deepening-human-rights-concerns>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/mali-turk-deplores-indefinite-suspension-elections-deepening-crackdown-civil>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/06/hc-turk-updates-human-rights-council-we-need-strongest-possible>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/09/hc-turk-updates-human-rights-council-we-need-safeguard-eighty-years>.

³⁶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 19, 21 and 22; see also Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34 (2011), paras. 2, 3, 11, 13, 35, 38 and 42.

³⁷ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, arts. 9–11; Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, adopted in 2019 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, principles 1, 9, 10, 19 and 21–23; and Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa, adopted in 2017 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, paras. 24, 25, 28–30, 55–62, 66, 71–93 and 99–103.

³⁸ See, for example, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29875>; <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30251>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/mali-un-experts-demand-activist-el-bachir-thiams-release-four-months-after>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/04/critic-of-malis-junta-forcibly-disappeared>.

journalist was sentenced by the National Cybercrime Unit in Bamako to 12 months in prison, 6 of which were suspended, and a fine of 1 million CFA francs (approximately US\$ 1,780) after being found guilty of “publicly insulting a foreign Head of State”. This sentence was reportedly handed down following the publication on social media of a video in which the journalist allegedly criticized the Guinean authorities, in particular the President of Guinea.

47. On 28 July 2025, a Malian journalist was given an 8-month suspended prison sentence and fined 500,000 CFA francs (approximately US\$ 815) by the National Cybercrime Unit after being found guilty of “undermining the credibility of the justice system”, “breach of the peace” and “defamation” following criticism he had expressed about official statements concerning public trust in the judicial system.

48. On 1 August 2025, a former prime minister was arrested after posting a tweet on 4 July declaring his “unwavering solidarity with prisoners of conscience”.³⁹ This tweet led to his prosecution for “undermining the credibility of the State, opposing legitimate authority, inciting breach of the peace, publishing and spreading false news wrongly attributed to third parties and acting in bad faith in a manner likely to disturb the peace”.⁴⁰ On 27 October 2025, the former Prime Minister was sentenced by the National Cybercrime Unit to 2 years in prison, including 1 year suspended, a fine of 500,000 CFA francs and the payment of a symbolic franc to the State, which was a civil party.

49. The Independent Expert urges the Malian authorities to release as soon as possible all other persons who remain in detention in violation of the international human rights obligations of Mali. These individuals join a long list of persons, some of whom were mentioned in the previous report of the Independent Expert.⁴¹ Among these individuals is Clément Mamadou Dembélé, who, at the time of finalizing the present report, was still in detention despite the order issued on 17 April 2025 by the judge of the first investigations chamber of the National Cybercrime Unit, who ruled that the charges against the defendant were not sufficiently substantiated and ordered the case to be dismissed.⁴²

50. The Independent Expert also notes the potentially repressive provisions contained in the Act of 22 August 2025 establishing the National Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, including those relating to the strengthening of control over non-governmental organizations and their sources of funding (art. 21) and the regulation of the use of social media and control of the activities of influencers (art. 22).

51. There are also potentially repressive provisions in a draft law and a draft decree analysed by the Independent Expert that impose a draconian system of control over the activities of non-governmental organizations, including the imposition of a 10% levy on their resources to cover the additional administrative costs resulting from the new controls.⁴³

³⁹ Available at <https://x.com/MoussaMaraMali/status/1941061122443878612>.

⁴⁰ For more details on the case, see, for example, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/mali-turk-deplores-indefinite-suspension-elections-deepening-crackdown-civil>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/10/01/mali-puts-free-speech-on-trial>; https://x.com/mountagatall/status/1982766006247317612?t=EflWTH_ruQ5vb-rPeQObfQ&s=03; <https://x.com/mountagatall/status/1982834163423088737>; <https://x.com/mountagatall/status/1951357635636371754>.

⁴¹ A/HRC/58/79, paras. 40 and 42.

⁴² See also <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/08/mali-un-experts-call-immediate-and-unconditional-release-civil-society> and <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30170>.

⁴³ A draft bill establishing a national agency for local government investment and support for the supervision of associations and foundations and a preliminary draft decree setting out the procedures for the monitoring and supervision of the activities of associations and foundations in the Republic of Mali.

52. The Independent Expert is also concerned by the information he has received regarding conditions of detention in the country. For example, on 13 October 2025, Bamako Central Prison, built to hold 400 people, had 4,086 inmates, almost nine times its capacity. The prison in Gao, built to hold 180 people, had 241 inmates as of 15 October 2025. Furthermore, the vast majority of these individuals, namely 92.85% in Bamako and 69.70% in Gao, were in pretrial detention.

2. Human rights abuses attributed to armed groups

53. The Independent Expert condemns the acts of terrorism, human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law that continue to be committed with impunity by violent extremist groups, including Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, Islamic State – Sahel Province and other similar groups.

54. For example, on 19 August 2025, the civil society president in Ménaka, who had been kidnapped on 19 May 2025, and half a dozen civilians were reportedly executed by elements of Islamic State – Sahel Province in the Region of Ménaka.

55. On 2 October 2025, a former member of parliament was reportedly shot dead by suspected members of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin while travelling on the Ségou-Bamako road.

56. On 3 October 2025, the President of the Regional Council of Ségou and his driver were reportedly kidnapped by members of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin while travelling on the road between Ségou and Bamako. About two weeks later, a video of the captive victim was posted on social media.

57. At least 14 civilians were reportedly executed by suspected members of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin in Léré, Timbuktu Region, after being abducted in two separate attacks on 30 October (2 victims) and 3 November 2025 (12 victims). The group allegedly accused the victims of being “accomplices” of the Malian army.

58. On 7 November 2025, a social media influencer in her twenties was summarily executed in public in her hometown of Tonka, Timbuktu Region, by members of violent extremist groups, believed to belong to Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin. They accused her of collaborating with the Malian army.⁴⁴

59. In some towns and villages under their control or influence, violent extremist groups have imposed authoritarian social rules that restrict human rights, particularly those of women and girls. Failure to comply with these rules has led to punishments such as public floggings.

60. For example, on 8 April 2025, the village of Soye, Mopti Region, was reportedly raided by armed groups, who threatened 13 children (7 girls and 6 boys) with “punishment” if they continued to play together, citing Islamic law.

61. On 12 April 2025, in Tadjerert-Alata, Ménaka Region, a woman was reportedly sentenced by Islamic State – Sahel Province to pay a fine of 250,000 CFA francs (approximately US\$ 443) for not wearing a veil.

62. On 19 June 2025, six women were reportedly flogged by members of armed groups for appearing unveiled in Tonou-Na, Bandiagara Region, a region where Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin was operating.

63. On 17 October 2025, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin announced that veiling laws would be imposed and the segregation of men and women would be required for all persons travelling on roads in Mali.

64. Subsequently, on 20 October 2025, women were reportedly pulled out of vehicles and whipped by unidentified armed men for not wearing headscarves along the Kouri-Koutiala road in Koutiala Region.

⁴⁴ See also <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/11/islamist-fighters-in-mali-execute-social-media-influencer>.

65. With regard to the Front de libération de l’Azawad, the Independent Expert takes note of a press release issued on 10 May 2025, in which the group announced the dismantling of a spy ring in Bamako and the arrest of an unspecified number of individuals, adding that “those arrested [would] be brought to justice at the end of the investigation to answer for their acts of treason and collaboration with the enemy”.⁴⁵ He also takes note of a video posted by the Front de libération de l’Azawad on 11 October 2025, showing some 20 Malian soldiers presented as having been captured during fighting with the Front.⁴⁶ Regarding these two cases, the Independent Expert wishes to draw attention to the relevant international rules and standards that guarantee the right to a fair trial and require that persons hors de combat be treated humanely. These include common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the rules of customary international humanitarian law.⁴⁷

66. Furthermore, the Independent Expert is concerned about reports that the crackdown by the Front de libération de l’Azawad on civilians has led to further displacement, particularly to the town of Kidal, where approximately 1,663 displaced persons were reportedly registered between December 2024 and August 2025, according to the social development department.⁴⁸

3. Contemporary slavery

67. The Independent Expert considers that Mali has made commendable progress in combating descent-based slavery and welcomes the monitoring and advocacy role played by civil society and the National Human Rights Commission.

68. For example, on 14 June 2025, several organizations launched a petition expressing concern about the fate of thousands of children affected by descent-based slavery and calling on the relevant authorities to enact specific legislation on descent-based slavery.

69. During a meeting held on 28 October 2025, several organizations called for the institutionalization of a National Day of Solidarity for victims of descent-based slavery and similar practices and the adoption of specific legislation to provide victims with care and support and to prevent these practices in Mali.

70. However, the Independent Expert is gravely concerned about credible reports of attacks and other forms of discrimination against persons considered to be “slaves”, which continued to be committed during the reporting period.

71. For example, according to information dating from July 2025, people considered to be “slaves” were reportedly harassed, had their fields confiscated and were subjected to threats and intimidation in the village of Maréna, Kayes Region.

72. During September 2025, individuals referred to as “nobles” allegedly ordered several people considered “slaves” to leave their home village of Bagamabougou, Kayes Region. The victims are believed to be formerly internally displaced persons who had returned to their village after living in the Cité des enfants, a children’s centre in Bamako, since 2021, where they had sought refuge after fleeing violence linked to descent-based slavery in their home village. Calm has returned to the village thanks to the mediation of the public prosecutor of Diéma. Ultimately, the people under threat did not leave the area.

73. During August 2025, in the village of Guingui, Kayes Region, approximately 300 people from the same family (mostly women and children), whose members are considered “slaves”, were reportedly victims of the confiscation of their farmland by the village chief. The village chief, believing that the land that the family in question had been

⁴⁵ <https://x.com/FLAZAWAD/status/1921209746016596394?t=8G1qOlozSHvtsJsXt7cjBw&s=03>.

⁴⁶ <https://x.com/FLAZAWAD/status/1977024149764948133?t=S104VTNQ9M1Pg4BXkfW3iA&s=03>; <https://www.facebook.com/61572291212365/videos/d%C3%A9tenu-fama/24507155268980651/>.

⁴⁷ In particular, rules 100 and 87 of the study of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on customary international humanitarian law, available at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule100> and <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule87>.

⁴⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/3af848f1-5873-4a8c-a8f5-09aa1bcac11c/ml-perspectives-sur-las%C3%A9curit%C3%A9-alimentaire-2025-10-fr-1762827720.pdf>.

farming for nearly a century belonged to him, reportedly took the matter to the Diéma Magistrates' Court, which ordered the work to be stopped. Several family members were reportedly arrested and detained for "rebellion". At the time of finalizing the present report, the case was still pending before the court.

74. Furthermore, in October 2025, two organizations expressed concerns about the persecution, marginalization, systemic erasure and social exclusion suffered by black members of the Bellah or Tamashek community in Mali and throughout the Sahel because of the status of descent-based slave assigned to them.⁴⁹

75. According to the "Mali-mètre 2025" opinion poll, the results of which were published in May 2025, slavery was one of the main causes of intercommunal and intracommunal conflicts in Kayes Region, cited by more than 8 out of 10 residents of the region (88.2%).⁵⁰ Other sources confirmed that the management of land issues related to slavery remained a major concern.

76. In the light of the above, the Independent Expert is therefore concerned by reports that Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin exploits social and economic vulnerabilities in Kayes, including structural conflicts related to descent-based slavery, to amplify community divisions and facilitate local recruitment.⁵¹

B. Intercommunal and intracommunal conflict

77. The Independent Expert notes that, during the period covered by the present report, several initiatives have been taken that could help to prevent or respond to these conflicts. These developments include the adoption of the National Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation and the organization by the Government of Mali of the third National Reconciliation Week, from 15 to 21 September 2025.

78. However, the Independent Expert is deeply concerned by persistent and credible reports of attacks against civilians by community-based militias, including *dozo* traditional hunters, and the involvement of these hunters in certain operations carried out by the Malian Defence and Security Forces and/or Wagner Group or Africa Corps.⁵² The use of militias or self-defence groups such as *dozo* traditional hunters risks exacerbating intracommunal tensions and creating a perception of bias or complicity among other communities, particularly those that are victims of abuses by *dozo* traditional hunters and other community-based militias.

79. The Independent Expert also notes the intercommunal clashes between the villages of Nangalasso and Maribougou, Bougouni Region, that occurred on 30 July 2025, which reportedly caused the deaths of seven people and left several others injured.

C. Situation of women

80. The Independent Expert is extremely concerned about the situation of women and girls in Mali, despite an apparent decrease in reported cases of gender-based violence. According to the most recent figures, between April and June 2025, service providers using the gender-based violence information management system documented a total of 905 cases of gender-based violence, a decrease of 22.71% compared to the previous quarter (1,171 cases) and, between July and September 2025, they documented a total of 833 cases, a decrease of 7.95% compared to the previous quarter. However, protection actors rightly

⁴⁹ <https://unpo.org/unpo-condemns-ongoing-persecution-of-the-bellah-people-in-mali-from-colonialism-to-neocolonialism-in-the-sahel/>; <https://academy.unpo.org/from-colonialism-to-neocolonialism-the-bellah-minority-and-the-russian-reconfiguration-of-power-in-the-sahel/>.

⁵⁰ <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2025.pdf>.

⁵¹ <https://timbuktu-institute.org/index.php/toutes-l-actualites/item/1265-rapport-le-jnim-a-kayes-fragilisation-economique-et-menace-transfrontaliere>; <https://timbuktu-institute.org/media/attachments/2025/09/25/jnim-kayes1.pdf>.

⁵² See paras. 33–52 above. See also <https://acleddata.com/report/hunters-militias-militarization-dozos-mali>.

pointed out that this apparent decrease should not cause one to lose sight of the overall deterioration of the human rights situation in several already fragile areas of Mali and the fact that the actual number of incidents remained largely underestimated⁵³ and should be interpreted with caution, particularly in view of the reduction in the provision of specialized services, access constraints and the growing fear of reprisals.⁵⁴ Of the 833 cases mentioned above, 20% involved sexual violence, including rape (18%) and sexual assault (8%), and 5% involved forced marriages. In 66% of rape cases, 25% of sexual assault cases and 59% of forced marriage cases, the victims were underage girls.⁵⁵ According to the most recent data (April to June 2025), 33 pregnancies resulting from rape were reported, one of which resulted in a birth.⁵⁶

81. Access to comprehensive care services for survivors of gender-based violence is a major problem. For example, between July and September 2025, an average of 21% of people who needed medical assistance did not receive it, and 46% of those who needed legal support did not have access to the services they needed, while 66% of survivors who needed economic reintegration services and 79% of those who needed safe accommodation received no support.⁵⁷

D. Situation of children

82. The multidimensional crisis continues to have a devastating impact on children and has led to serious violations of their fundamental rights. For example, according to the protection monitoring system, in the second quarter of 2025, 3,915 children (including 1,805 girls) were affected by protection incidents, compared with 937 children (including 551 girls) in the previous quarter, representing a total increase of 317.82% and a 227.58% increase in incidents affecting girls.⁵⁸

83. Regarding the right to health, according to the most recent data, more than 1.5 million children under the age of 5 were suffering from acute malnutrition, including 314,893 from severe acute malnutrition.⁵⁹

84. Regarding the right to education, according to the most recent data (July 2025), 20% of schools in Mali (2,036 out of 10,160) were closed owing to insecurity or humanitarian crises, a situation that affected 610,800 children throughout the country.⁶⁰

⁵³ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/9d41ad64-5c37-4af8-bf11-fa0418356f0b/Note%20de%20Protection%20T2%202025.pdf>; <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/0da44be7-f9bc-4037-b32a-1a021f98eb59/Rapport%20GBVIMS%20Trimestre%202-2025-Final.pdf>.

⁵⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/aefb5374-c1f4-4b5f-a70c-02b54e4c2f94/Rapport%20GBVIMS%20Trimestre%203-2025.pdf>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-rapport-trimestriel-gbvims-juillet-septembre-2025>.

⁵⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/aefb5374-c1f4-4b5f-a70c-02b54e4c2f94/Rapport%20GBVIMS%20Trimestre%203-2025.pdf>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-rapport-trimestriel-gbvims-juillet-septembre-2025>.

⁵⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/9d41ad64-5c37-4af8-bf11-fa0418356f0b/Note%20de%20Protection%20T2%202025.pdf>; <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/0da44be7-f9bc-4037-b32a-1a021f98eb59/Rapport%20GBVIMS%20Trimestre%202-2025-Final.pdf>.

⁵⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/aefb5374-c1f4-4b5f-a70c-02b54e4c2f94/Rapport%20GBVIMS%20Trimestre%203-2025.pdf>.

⁵⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/9d41ad64-5c37-4af8-bf11-fa0418356f0b/Note%20de%20Protection%20T2%202025.pdf>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-note-de-protection-janvier-mars-2025>.

⁵⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/c634ce45-3d50-4db1-8696-7a92bd42927a/UNICEF%20Mali%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20Report%20No.%202%20%28Mid-Year%29%2C%2030%20June%202025.pdf>.

⁶⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/40456dfe-070b-4b01-a9a8-6e34c6bce998/Cluster%20Education%20Mali%20-%20Situation%20des%20Ecoles%2C%20mai%202025.pdf>.

E. Refugees and internally displaced persons

85. According to the most recent figures, between 30 April and 30 November 2025, the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Mali increased by approximately 27.51%, from 136,472 to 174,019; the number of Malian refugees in neighbouring countries increased by approximately 1.45%, from 330,215 to 335,035; and the number of internally displaced persons increased by approximately 6.29%, from 378,363 to 402,167.⁶¹

F. Economic, social and cultural rights

86. Crises and armed conflict continued to exacerbate the fragile conditions in which people live, and they undermine the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. For example, according to the most recent data, it has been estimated that: in 2025, at least 6.4 million people (approximately 26% of the population) would require humanitarian assistance; 2.9 million people would face food insecurity; between October 2025 and May 2026, conflicts would continue to have a significant impact on the food situation in the centre and north of the country; and the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance related to water supply, sanitation and hygiene would reach 3,256,054 in 2025, representing a 1.4% increase compared to 2024.⁶²

87. The enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights was also affected by the floods that hit Mali, in particular with regard to the rights to water and sanitation. Thus, by the end of September 2025, there had been 44 floods, affecting 20,296 people, including 10,367 children (5,418 of whom were girls), causing 24 deaths and damaging 636 latrines and 182 wells.⁶³

88. The Independent Expert is extremely concerned about the negative impact of budget cuts and reductions in funding from several donors. Because of these cuts and reductions, for example, the 2025 humanitarian response plan for Mali has been reduced from US\$ 771 million to US\$ 285 million, and the target population has been reduced from 4.7 million people (out of 6.5 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, 54% of whom are children) to 2.1 million people.⁶⁴

89. In the light of this situation, the fact that only 20.3% of the humanitarian response plan had been funded according to the most recent data (31 December 2025) is therefore a cause for concern.⁶⁵

⁶¹ https://reliefweb.int/attachments/db3339e4-2a7e-5bfb-a3e3-cc31f294c11a/Mali%20situation%20of%20refugees%20internally%20displaced%20persons%20and%20returnees%2030_April_2025%20english.pdf; https://reliefweb.int/attachments/e5f82ef3-0f15-5caf-aae5-7b2f62a32bbe/Mali%20situation%20of%20refugees%20internally%20displaced%20persons%20and%20returnees_30_November_2025%20english.pdf.

⁶² https://reliefweb.int/attachments/c634ce45-3d50-4db1-8696-7a92bd42927a/UNICEF_Mali%2520Humanitarian_Situation_Report_No._2%28Mid-Year%29%2C_30_June%25_202025.pdf; <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/3af848f1-5873-4a8c-a8f5-09aa1bcac11c/ml-perspectives-sur-las%C3%A9curit%C3%A9-alimentaire-2025-10-fr-1762827720.pdf>.

⁶³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/unicef-mali-humanitarian-situation-report-no-3-january-september-2025>; <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/bacc7ff0-06c2-43bb-b630-a5c12c52edac/UNICEF%20Mali%25%2020Humanitarian%20Situation%20Report%20No.%203%2C%20January%20-%20September%202025.pdf>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-mise-jour-des-messages-cles-les-besoins-dassistance-restent-eleves-dans-les-zones-dinsecurite-du-centre-et-du-nord-du-pays-septembre-2025>.

⁶⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/wfp-mali-country-brief-may-june-2025>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/unicef-mali-humanitarian-situation-report-no-2-mid-year-30-june-2025>; https://reliefweb.int/attachments/aabd336e-d210-4436-bd25-ffd6a1ab5b71/2025_OCHAMLI_PMR_Janv_Juin.pdf; <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-suivi-de-la-reponse-humanitaire-hrp-1er-semester-2025>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/wfp-mali-country-brief-may-june-2025>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/unicef-mali-humanitarian-situation-report-no-2-mid-year-30-june-2025>.

⁶⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/469c6217-8cf0-4962-99ba-c0867dd84edc/2025%20Mali%20funding%20status%20FR%20EN%20au%2031%20Decembre.pdf>.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

90. Compared to the situation described by the Independent Expert in his previous report, politically, the country has experienced an escalation of authoritarianism that makes democratic transition difficult, while the security, human rights and humanitarian situations have continued to deteriorate.

91. The Malian authorities betrayed their repeated commitments to end the transition when they dissolved political parties and unilaterally decided to extend the transitional President's term of office, while also providing for the possibility of further extensions. In doing so, they missed an opportunity to reopen civic space and engage in inclusive debate to find appropriate responses to the multidimensional crisis.

92. The escalation of serious human rights violations and abuses by all actors is largely a consequence of impunity. The decision by Mali to leave the International Criminal Court will further exacerbate this impunity and risks undermining the rights of victims who could benefit from the reparations awarded by the Court.

93. The Government has still not published the final report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, thus depriving the victims and Malian society of the right to know the truth about the human rights violations and abuses committed throughout the history of independent Mali and the measures recommended to prevent their recurrence. The non-publication of the report disappoints the expectations of the victims, who played an important role in the Commission's activities.⁶⁶

94. With regard to the right to reparation, the Independent Expert takes note of the progress report on the activities of the Authority for the Management of Reparations for Victims of Crises covering the period from July 2024 to June 2025, submitted on 9 July 2025, but he is concerned that the effective start of the reparation process for victims has been delayed. With regard to the duty of remembrance, there is no further information on the activities of the Centre for the Promotion of Peace and Unity in Mali.

95. With regard to the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, association and peaceful assembly, the Independent Expert is concerned about draconian laws on political activities, the use of the justice system for political ends, judicial and extrajudicial harassment of individuals perceived as critical of the Government and the risks to the activities of independent institutions such as non-governmental organizations.

96. Internal polarization goes hand in hand with regional and international diplomatic and geopolitical tensions surrounding the situation in Mali and the Sahel, which jeopardize the regional integration and multilateral cooperation needed to address the challenges facing the country.

B. Recommendations

97. The Independent Expert reiterates the recommendations outlined in his previous report⁶⁷ and makes the following recommendations.

98. He urges the Malian authorities to take all appropriate and specific measures to:

(a) Restore a climate of political openness, dialogue and conciliation and a path towards the end of the transition, including through a transparent, secure and participatory electoral process that complies with international human rights standards,

⁶⁶ Lawyers without Borders Canada, "Ventre affamé n'a point d'oreilles : parole à 500 victimes des crises au Mali sur leurs attentes et besoins envers les institutions succédant à la Commission vérité, justice et réconciliation", Bamako, 2025.

⁶⁷ A/HRC/58/79, paras. 78–83.

the release of persons prosecuted or convicted for exercising their rights protected under international and regional human rights law, in particular the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, the lifting of measures aimed at restricting freedom of the press, through traditional or electronic means, and the cessation of measures that hinder the work of non-governmental organizations and associations and the reopening of those that have been suspended or dissolved;

(b) Ensure that the actions of the Malian Defence and Security Forces and their foreign partners – commonly referred to as the “Wagner Group” or “Africa Corps” – in the conflict with violent extremist groups and other non-State armed groups are carried out in full compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law;

(c) Ensure that, when new technologies such as drones are used, the operational procedures are fully transparent to ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and that, if the use of these technologies causes harm to civilians, an effective investigation is conducted, upholding the right of victims to an effective remedy and avoiding impunity;⁶⁸

(d) Ensure maximum transparency regarding the involvement of foreign partners – commonly referred to as the “Wagner Group” or “Africa Corps” – who have been identified as perpetrators of multiple violations against the civilian population, and clearly identify remedies available to victims of illegal actions by these forces and the judicial mechanisms available to prevent impunity;

(e) Fight against impunity for crimes committed by any party to the conflict by investigating, prosecuting and punishing those responsible for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, by publishing lists of all alleged violations and abuses that are the subject of investigations or prosecutions, by setting clear targets for the progress of each process and by ensuring the active and safe participation of victims;

(f) Ensure that the fight against impunity also includes non-judicial measures that promote national reconciliation and conciliation, such as the publication of the 2022 final report of the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission and the brainstorming sessions carried out by the Centre for the Promotion of Peace and Unity in Mali. Non-judicial measures should also include the administrative provision of reparation to victims by the Authority for the Management of Reparations for Victims of Crises, which could strengthen its capacity in cooperation with the Trust Fund for Victims at the International Criminal Court;

(g) End the use of militias or so-called community-based self-defence groups, including *dozo* traditional hunters, in operations by the Malian Defence and Security Forces and disband them to prevent the escalation of intercommunal and intracommunal conflicts, and bring to justice members of these groups responsible for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

99. The Independent Expert also recommends that the Malian authorities take all appropriate and specific measures to:

(a) Ensure that the practice of slavery is properly criminalized by means of a specific act that also provides comprehensive protection and redress for victims;

(b) Redouble efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including gender-based violence, and protect the rights of children, displaced persons, and refugees.

100. The Independent Expert urges all non-State armed actors:

(a) To strictly respect international human rights and humanitarian law, including by immediately ceasing attacks on civilians, civilian objects and persons hors de combat;

⁶⁸ A/68/382 and A/68/382/Corr.1, paras. 108–110; and A/68/389, para. 78.

(b) To put an end to the practice of kidnapping and to release the victims unconditionally;

(c) To cease the practice of sieges and “blockades”, to allow safe, full, immediate and unhindered humanitarian access and to facilitate the free, safe and unrestricted passage of humanitarian aid in all regions.

101. The Independent Expert recommends that the international community:

(a) Prioritize constructive engagement with Mali, focusing on the well-being and equitable development of the population, to address the root causes of violent extremism;

(b) Provide solid and rapid financial support for humanitarian action in Mali;

(c) Contribute to strengthening trust between Mali and its regional neighbours, for example by supporting dialogue and coordination between the Confederation of Sahel States, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union to address security challenges, while fully respecting the sovereignty of Mali;

(d) Actively cooperate in the fight against impunity for serious human rights violations and terrorism, which continue to affect Mali, and ensure that judicial institutions are fully capable of implementing universal jurisdiction mechanisms to investigate and prosecute individuals whom the Malian judicial system has proved unable or unwilling to bring to justice.

102. The Independent Expert recommends that the International Criminal Court:

(a) Continue to conduct its investigations into crimes that would remain within its jurisdiction despite the decision by Mali to withdraw from the Rome Statute and prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes if it determines that Mali is unwilling or unable to genuinely carry out such investigations or prosecutions;

(b) Ensure the operational capacity of the Trust Fund for Victims so that it can continue to play its role in the reparation process for victims in the *Al Hassan* case.

103. Lastly, the Independent Expert recommends that the Human Rights Council:

(a) Urge the Malian authorities to actively cooperate with the special procedure mandate holder;

(b) Urge the Malian authorities to reconsider their decision to withdraw from the Rome Statute and recommend continued cooperation in the activities of the Trust Fund for Victims;

(c) Remain seized of the situation of human rights in Mali.
