



# Integrated Country Strategy

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## Mali

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Once lauded for over 20 years of democratic stability from 1992 to 2012, Mali's crises of 2012-2013 highlighted serious flaws in the country's democratic system and revealed the fragility of Mali's governmental institutions. The multidimensional crises, comprising a rebellion, a coup d'état, and the loss of the northern two-thirds of the country to violent extremist groups, left the country deeply divided and increasingly unstable. While the envisioned peace process offered opportunities to address some of these flaws, lack of political will to implement the process combined with Mali's governance deficiencies to stymie the comprehensive efforts needed for Mali to rebuild itself. Mali's paternalistic political system, rampant corruption, and a highly centralized power structure that struggles to communicate with the Malian population ensured President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's (IBK) government was grossly inept at addressing Mali's most pressing concerns. This ineffective governance rendered Mali's security forces incapable of protecting its citizenry, inhibited progress on social and economic development, and created fecund ground for violent extremist recruitment. Consequently, U.S. strategic goals in Mali are – counter-terrorism, promoting trade, and building stability.

In pursuit of these goals, U.S. priorities include promoting a stable democracy and improved governance; promoting regional security by combatting violent extremists and drug traffickers who seek to exploit ungoverned spaces in the Sahel; reducing chronic vulnerability by improving social development and increasing sustainable livelihoods; encouraging economic growth, opportunity and development by supporting sustainable development and increased U.S. economic investment.

On the security front, French counterterrorism forces and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) provide some measure of protection in the North, but Mali's persistent failure to make progress on the peace accord could cause support for these missions to wane. International and Malian troops alike have suffered significant losses at the hands of reinvigorated extremist forces. Al-Qaeda linked groups have further exploited ethnic resentments in central Mali in order to spread their influence and render new areas of the country ungovernable. Traffickers, linked to armed groups, terrorist actors, and international criminal networks, have profited from the security and governance vacuum, rendering Mali a major transshipment zone for drugs, arms, and people. Illicit activities further contribute to endemic corruption that inhibits development and erodes Malians' trust in their government. Reforming Mali's security sector to ensure its ability to protect its people and control its borders against the regional flow of trafficking victims, irregular migrants, criminal elements, narcotics, arms, and terrorists will require both a focus on the security sector itself, including the primacy of civilian control and respect for human rights, as well as a focus on the needed investments in health, education, and agriculture – the social and economic keys to Mali's future. Top government officials will continue to support the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) as a means to improve management of the justice system, the police, and the military.

A more prosperous Mali, with improved access to social services, lowered corruption, and increased employment opportunities, would provide larger opportunities for U.S. trade and investment. Although Mali has seen four consecutive years of 5 percent economic growth from 2014-2017, socio-economic indicators remain stubbornly poor. Mali is stuck at the bottom in the 2015 Human Development Index, along with many of its neighbors. Endemic malaria is the leading cause of death. Mali's infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate, though improving, are still extremely high. Combined with an extremely low literacy rate and 3 percent population growth rate, one of the world's highest, these factors contribute to chronic, persistent poverty. Reducing Mali's chronic development challenges will require a coordinated effort to target improvements in the health, education, agriculture, and justice sectors while increasing sustainable livelihoods through poverty reduction and resilience to country-wide shocks.

Supporting stable, democratic, and effective governance will require the U.S. and its partners to help Mali with sustained, adaptable international engagement. Politically, the United States must continue to press the parties to the peace accord to honor their commitments and demonstrate real improvements to the average Malian. The government must rebuild a strained social contract by enhancing good governance, transparency, and constructive engagement between the the political class and citizenry to improve service delivery and establish public trust in its leaders. Responsive governance will require the active engagement of civil society and a heretofore absent political opposition empowered to hold the government accountable and offer an alternative policy platform. Malians also must have sufficient recourse to functional informal and formal justice systems.

These mission goals are closely aligned with the Bureau of African Affairs Joint Regional Strategy and the National Security Strategy. Our strategy aims to build Mali's institutional ability to address its myriad challenges and employs a variety of reinforcement tools such as development assistance, policy dialogue, public diplomacy, military cooperation, and economic statecraft. Our target audiences will prioritize women and youth where we believe our interventions will have the greatest long-term impact.

Despite the challenges, Mali has every opportunity to turn things around. The 2018 elections provide an opportunity for Mali to demonstrate that it has returned to its democratic traditions. The country's tradition of tolerance serves as a foundation for resilience. The Malian people themselves seek normalcy and stability; concerted government outreach can build support for the peace accord, paving the way towards national reconciliation. Serious efforts to improve governance, particularly by fighting corruption, can directly improve the livelihoods of Malians. Nevertheless, the obstacles to such advances remain significant, and progress will likely be slower than desired. Post will regularly monitor and report progress on the objectives. Review and revision of sub-objectives will be key to achieving overarching goals in a continually shifting environment.

## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1: America's Security at Home and Abroad Is Enhanced By Mali's Increased Capacity to Protect its Borders, Secure its Population, Counter Violent Extremist Organizations, and Combat Trafficking Threats.**

**Mission Objective 1.1: Mali has strong and effective civilian control over its military and security forces and better control of its borders.**

**Mission Objective 1.2: Mali has strong defense and security governance institutions, enabling the security and defense forces to operate effectively, efficiently, and with transparency.**

**Mission Objective 1.3: Stabilization of Conflict-Affected Areas Reinforced. (CDCS TO1)**

**Mission Goal 2: Mali's population sees significant advances in socio-economic conditions, strides in economic development, and improvement in its business environment that expands opportunities for U.S. trade and investment.**

**Mission Objective 2.1: Adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities and households increased (CDCS DO2)**

**Mission Objective 2.2: Socio-Economic Well-Being Advanced (CDCS DO 3)**

**Mission Objective 2.3: Increase Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Livelihoods**

**Mission Goal 3: Through Promotion of U.S. Values and Cultivation of Diversified Partnerships, Mali Experiences Strengthened Democratic Institutions, Responsive Governance, and Respect for Human Rights**

**Mission Objective 3.1: Public Trust in Government Improved (CDCS DO1)**

**Mission Objective 3.2: The United States is perceived as a trusted partner in increasing the effectiveness of the Government of Mali and supporting fostering opportunities for Malian citizens, while supporting and protecting American citizens.**

**Mission Objective 3.3: Malians have more equal access to representation in civil society and government and have reliable avenues to promote fundamental rights and liberties.**

**Management Objective 1: To be appropriately funded and staffed so that the Management Section is able to provide a stable and effective administrative support services (ICASS) platform that contributes to Mission Mali to meeting its ICS objectives.**

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Mission Goal 1: America’s Security at Home and Abroad Is Enhanced by Mali’s Increased Capacity to Protect its Borders, Secure its Population, Counter Violent Extremist Organizations, and Combat Trafficking Threats.**

**Description and Linkages:** Mission Goal 1 links with Pillar 1 of the National Security Strategy, which lists defeating Jihadi terrorists and dismantling transnational criminal organizations as key priorities. Additionally, the goal links with the AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy goal of advancing mutual peace and security interests and the ensuing objectives. Post will use an interagency approach to provide training to Mali’s security forces, support USG efforts to assist the G5 Sahel, provide technical assistance to help disrupt trafficking threats, and address violent extremism at its sources by engaging in robust CVE programming. Post will prioritize assistance resources, such as Trans Sahel Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) to enhance military capabilities to respond to current and emerging terrorist threats, by supporting their capacities for border security command-and-control, communications, logistics, military intelligence, and special forces operations.

**Mission Objective 1.1: Mali has strong and effective civilian control over its military and security forces and has increased effectiveness in securing its population against external threats and violent extremists.**

**Justification:** Defense institution reform and civil control over military and security forces is essential in ensuring that the security and defense mechanisms of Mali remain accountable to the democratically-elected Malian government. Vast spaces of ungoverned territory have provided safe haven to extremists and allowed for terrorists to operate in Mali with impunity, undermining the safety of the population and the legitimacy of the government. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include increased terrorist attacks, further loss of territorial control, and a spread of cross-border terrorism that increases instability in the region.

**Mission Objective 1.2.: Mali’s Defense and Security sectors conduct institutional reform to support the professionalization of the forces, accountability of officials, and counter-corruption efforts, while developing a national strategic plan for the security and defense sectors.**

**Justification:** Mali’s defense and security sectors are rife with policy and doctrine that are dead, unapplied documents. Policy does not translate to processes, therefore, Mali defense and security sectors lack the systems, processes, and institutional infrastructure required to support and sustain personnel, training, and operational missions. The institutional deficit creates an environment which supports fraud, waste, corruption, and loss of personnel and equipment.

There are few incentives that currently support transparency and accountability, yet security and defense leaders have declared dedication to the reform initiatives. Mali has the unenviable task of reforming their military in the midst of an active war – in order to do this, they will need continued support from the international community. The path to reform begins with a clear respect for civilian authority over the military and accountability within Mali's security sector. Given the broad interest in security sector reform, the United States will need to coordinate closely with international partners on engagement within Mali's security sector. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include increased distrust of Malian security forces by the citizenry, more waste and abuse, increased recruitment into self-defense groups – all of which lead to higher instability and potential for a greater area that lacks government presence and control.

**Mission Objective 1.3: Stabilization of Conflict-Affected Areas Reinforced.**

**Justification:** Peace and security in Mali is essential for democratic governance and sustained economic development. Fostering broad-based reconciliation as well as mechanisms to mitigate and prevent armed conflict and counter violent extremism will be key in this regard. Civic engagement with government leaders to hold them accountable will help to ensure the stable return of government authority and services in insecure regions. Although Malians historically have not been receptive to extremist narratives, these narratives have gained traction in recent years mainly due to the absence of government. Vast ungoverned spaces and porous borders make Mali highly vulnerable to transnational trafficking, smuggling, and terrorism attracting vulnerable populations faced with economic hardship, particularly youth, into contact with extremists. Although the ongoing international military intervention has succeeded in wresting control of the North back from extremists, terrorism and violent extremism continue to undermine the security and stability of Mali and its neighbors. Extremist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) are attempting to recruit new members. We will provide Malians with the necessary tools and opportunities to counter-message against violent extremist ideas, protect U.S. interests, and foster the development of a democratic society capable of advancing the interests of Malians.

Activities will provide emergency food aid, health and nutrition services, psycho-social protection, water, sanitation, and hygiene, income generation and vocational training. Interventions will also mitigate tensions within and among ethnic groups and expand the inclusion of Mali's northern communities in the country's on-going democratic transition by emphasizing both women's and men's roles in the peace and reconciliation process, and addressing root causes of violent conflict and extremism. Activities will improve access to justice for citizens who were victims of human rights abuses, strengthen the capacity of Malian civil society groups to advocate for an effective government response to human rights violations committed during Mali's crisis, and work with justice sector stakeholders to develop the core technical knowledge and skills associated with litigating cases of serious human rights violations.

**Mission Goal 2: Mali's population sees significant advances in socio-economic conditions, strides in economic development, and improvement in its business environment that expands opportunities for U.S. trade and investment.**

**Description and Linkages:** Mission Goal 2 reflects the National Security Strategy's priority actions for Africa by addressing the root causes of human suffering, helping to improve the business environment, and promoting prosperity. The goal also links up with AF/AFR's Joint Regional Strategy goals to expand mutually beneficial economic growth, trade, and investment and to promote inclusive country-led development. Post will employ an interagency approach, led by USAID, to administer assistance that empowers the Malian government to serve the needs of its people and create sustainable development that in turn creates fertile ground for mutual trade and investment.

**Mission Objective 2.1: Adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities and households increased.**

**Justification:** Promoting inclusive, broad-based economic growth coupled with poverty reduction efforts will enhance the resiliency and increase the adaptive capacity of the Malian population to withstand adverse shocks from climate-change, food insecurity, and conflict. However, over 80% of Malians are currently employed in the informal sector, limiting the taxbase and stifling delivery of productive services. The vast majority of the population continues to work in the agricultural sector, which remains vulnerable to climate change. Mission programs including Global Food Security Strategy, Food for Peace, and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance will build the capacity and efficiency of key agricultural value chains (especially millet/sorghum, rice, livestock) through targeted on- and off-farm interventions, while assisting communities experiencing acute food insecurity. With the exception of the most recent problems related to population displaced by political insecurity, the majority of Mali's previous humanitarian interventions were in response to extreme climate shocks such as droughts and pests in the north and floods in the south. Humanitarian and development assistance augment the ability of local population to resist and recover from these climate-change shocks on their own. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include increased humanitarian crises and vulnerability to violent extremist recruitment.

**Mission Objective 2.2: Socio-Economic Well-Being Advanced.**

**Justification:** Embassy Bamako strives to promote prosperity and sustainable development in Mali in the sectors of health, education, and agriculture. Mali's poor health indicators are due to low access to and use of high impact health services and poor health behaviors, compounded by poorly functioning health systems. The USG agencies active in health – USAID, NIH, CDC – will work together to improve health service delivery, behavior change



communications, health systems, and public health research. The rural agricultural sector holds the greatest promise for spurring broad-based economic growth, livelihood development, and improved nutrition. USAID can address high levels of malnutrition by promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture production and processing, and delivering high-impact, evidence-based interventions focused on behavior change communication techniques that can improve child care practices and dietary diversity. Building capacity in education and research, including technical training and degree programs, can ensure that new technologies and best practices are integrated into focused value chain strengthening.

To build the much-needed human capital base of Mali, education-related investments aim to improve reading skills for students in both formal and non-formal primary education. This will be achieved in selective geographic areas by improving classroom early-grade reading instruction; building the capacity of the Malian education system and authorities to provide schools with all the requisite elements for successful reading instruction; and engaging parents, communities and private sector's involvement in support of improved early grade reading program.

**Mission Objective 2.3: Increase Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Livelihoods.**

**Justification:** Helping Mali grow its formal productive sector of the economy will provide high-value employment opportunities to Malians, and should help address concerns about the youth bulge, and provide opportunities for increased U.S. private investments. The government of Mali decided to tackle its electricity problem through increased power supply generation and source diversification, with a focus on developing hydroelectric plants and solar energy generation. Opportunities exist for U.S. manufacturers and investors in energy to develop the country's insufficient energy sector. Mali is once again an AGOA eligible country and opportunities exist for companies and cooperatives to export handicrafts and certain food products. Only 15 percent of transactions in Mali pass through the financial system limiting the Central Bank's ability to monitor economic activity and detect illegal activities such as money laundering and terrorist financing. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include increased vulnerability to allowing the flourishing of terrorist financing channels and increasing the vulnerability to violent extremist recruitment.

**Mission Goal 3: Through Promotion of U.S. Values and Cultivation of Diversified Partnerships, Mali Experiences Strengthened Democratic Institutions, Responsive Governance, and Respect for Human Rights.**

**Description and Linkages:** Mission Goal 3 reflects the National Security Strategy's priority actions for Africa by promoting effective governance, improving rule of law, and developing accountable institutions. This goal also advances the AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy goal to strengthen democracy, human rights, and good governance. Public Affairs will lead the public aspects of our work to promote American values while all Post sections will explain and

promote our values during interactions with our Malian counterparts and through our work. Consular Affairs will ensure U.S. citizens are safe. The interagency will work together to help Mali address its deep-rooted governance concerns and justice-delivery concerns.

**Mission Objective 3.1: Public Trust in Government Improved.**

**Justification:** Mali's failure to implement most key provisions of the 2015 peace accord and continued struggles to improve governance and address growing insecurity in the north and central parts of Mali has caused fading public trust in government. It is therefore imperative that as Mali strives to strengthen its democratic institutions, it does so in a deliberate fashion, seeking to build sustainable peace and reconciliation, reinforce the rule of law, and provide adequate service delivery. Embassy Bamako contends that if responsive and accountable local service delivery is increased, administration of justice in Mali is improved, and citizen participation in electoral processes is increased, then public trust in government will be improved. Malian officials must meet the requirements of its updated 2015 electoral law for at least 30% of appointed officials and candidates on party lists to be women, in order to increase women's participation in the National Assembly, the cabinet, and leadership positions in political parties. The ability of the justice sector to enforce laws, hold the government accountable, and prove that no one is above the law in Mali, is also critical to restoring faith in Mali's democratic institutions. Embassy Bamako will utilize a Regional Legal Advisor program in Bamako to enhance the effectiveness of the judicial system. Having a diverse, inclusive, and robust set of democratic institutions will be important in maintaining the stability of Mali's democracy moving forward.

**Mission Objective 3.2: The United States is perceived as a trusted partner in increasing the effectiveness of the Government of Mali and fostering opportunities for Malian citizens, while supporting and protecting American citizens.**

**Justification:** By highlighting USG work with the GOM on a number of issues that are widely supported by the population, the United States will burnish its own credentials in the country and successfully leverage Malians' already favorable perception – especially among youth – of the United States. In addition, one of the most effective ways to transfer knowledge and influence behavior is to “demonstrate by doing.” By continuing to promote exchanges and multi-sectoral training, we are empowering individual Malians with skills to address a variety of 21st century challenges. For every individual that participates in exchanges, dozens more are touched by the participants' experiences when they return. The desire for knowledge about the United States and in particular the learning of English is very strong among secondary and university students. This provides a key port of entry through which to engage a target audience – Mali's young and diverse population. Crucial in maximizing the value of this partnership is safeguarding U.S. citizens following a period of uncertainty. U.S. Mission Bamako protects and promotes the welfare and interests of U.S. citizens by assisting in the most difficult of circumstances (political unrest, disasters, incarceration, death and evacuation), coordinating

with our neighboring missions to keep U.S. citizens alerted to cross-border security and immigration issues, and contributing to the strengthening of border security by facilitating the legitimate travel of Malians to the United States. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include China and other nations' increased influence in Mali, leading to lower ability of the USG to work with Mali to make strides in respect for human rights and losing the ability for U.S. firms to access the market.

**Mission Objective 3.3: Malians have equal access to representation in civil society and government and have reliable avenues to promote fundamental rights and liberties.**

**Justification:** Civil society should play a critical role in re-establishing the social contract between the government and its citizens. Of particular concerns are human rights abuses and sporadic security crises since 2012. As Mali strives to emerge from its governance and security crisis, many historic human rights abuses remain unaddressed and enforcement of human rights laws and civil liberties is weak. The ability of civil society organizations to effectively advocate on behalf of citizens and monitor government actions is essential to Mali's ability to advance democracy and improve governance. Risks associated with not achieving this Mission Objective include increased human rights violations and higher vulnerability to violent extremist recruitment.

## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1: To improve management efficiency and emergency preparedness so that the Management Section is able to provide a nimble, stable, and effective administrative support services (ICASS) platform that contributes to Mission Mali meeting its ICS objectives, despite local operating environment constraints.**

**Justification:** Mission Mali operates in an undeveloped country that is engaged in combating an insurgency fomented by Islamic groups that have wreaked havoc on Mali's economic and social development. Mali's infrastructure, to include road, power and communication networks, is inadequate and unreliable. Mali's poorly functioning education system severely restricts our ability to recruit from a pool of qualified employees and competition from other international organizations makes recruiting difficult. To have the skilled workforce required to operate in a U. S. skills based work environment it is therefore necessary for the Management Section to develop and retain personnel who are able to provide the goods and services needed for Mission Mali to meet its ICS goals. This requires a financial commitment on Mission Mali's part not only to continually update employee skills, but to keep salaries competitive to retain them and minimize employees from leaving and taking those skills to a peer competitor.