



# Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Mali – July to December 2024

31 December 2024

## 01 July 2024

### **Opposition politician arrested and charged**

According to media reports, the Malian military government arrested several leaders of an alliance of political parties and civil society groups at a private meeting in the house of a former minister in Bamako on 20.06.24. A representative of one of the parties stated that eleven people were arrested. Most of them are leaders of political parties that are opposed to the military government. They include the heads of political parties and movements who had signed a statement published on 31.03.24 calling on the junta to return power to the civilian population. In a statement, the alliance demands the immediate release of those arrested. Almost all of Mali's political parties are represented in this opposition alliance, known as the Opposition Platform of the Declaration of 31 March (French: Plateforme d'opposition de la Déclaration du 31 mars). In April 2024, the military junta had issued a decree calling for the suspension of all political party activities on the grounds of maintaining public order.

According to a judicial source, the detainees were at the Brigade d'Investigation Judiciaire (BIJ) in Bamako and were brought before the public prosecutor on 21.06.24.

On 21.06.24, one of the detainees, Mohamed Ali Bathily, a lawyer and former minister, was released. The remaining ten were brought before a judge on 24.06.24 and charged with "conspiracy against the government" and "undermining public order", among other things, and subsequently remanded in custody.

Following the incident, human rights organisations called for the release of the detainees and expressed their concern. It is becoming increasingly dangerous to express dissatisfaction with the Malian authorities and it shows that those who speak out risk arrest, they said.<sup>1</sup>

## 08 July 2024

### **Attack on a village in central Mali causes fatalities**

According to media reports, armed men attacked the village of Djiguibombo (Mopti region) on 01.07.24. A wedding was taking place in the village at the time of the attack. At least 40 people are said to have died in the attack for which no one has claimed responsibility as yet.<sup>2</sup>

## 29 July 2024

### **Dead in attack in the central region**

Armed assailants killed at least 25 people in an attack on the village of Dembo in the central region near the Burkina Faso border on 21.07.24, as was announced by a government official. Most of the victims were working in

their fields at the time of the attack. So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack in the region, which has been affected by armed conflict for years. However, the al-Qaeda associated jihadist group JNIM is under suspicion, as it often attacks civilians in the region in a similar manner, the official stated. On 01.07.24, suspected members of the JNIM group attack the village of Djiguibombo in the centre of the country, killing at least 21 participants of from a wedding party.<sup>3</sup>

### **Military personnel accused of mutilating corpses**

Since 16.07.24, four videos have been published on social media showing members of the Malian and Burkinabe army mutilating corpses. According to media reports, the soldiers' conversation apparently indicates cannibalistic practices. The videos allegedly show members of the Malian Forced Armées Maliennes (FAMa), the Malian Paratroopers Command, the Burkinabe Eighth Battalion d'Intervention Rapide (BIR) and the paramilitary group Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie (VDP). The General Staff of the armed forces of Burkina Faso and Mali condemned the acts in the videos. Opposition members of the military governments and others, are calling on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the alleged crimes.<sup>4</sup>

## **12 August 2024**

### **Fighting in northern Mali**

According to various media reports, there were several days of fighting in the village of Tin Zaouatine in northern Mali near the border with Algeria between 25.07. and 27.07.24. Malian rebels are said to have killed over 80 Wagner mercenaries and captured several more. 47 Malian soldiers are also said to have been killed. According to reports, Malian soldiers and Wagner mercenaries were ambushed by Tuareg rebels and fighters from the jihadist group Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), which is linked to al-Qaeda. The Tuareg rebels are said to have received important information from Ukraine, as stated by the spokesperson of the Ukrainian military intelligence service. The Malian military junta announced that it was breaking off diplomatic relations with Ukraine, as it holds Ukraine partly responsible for the attack on Malian forces and accuses it of supporting international terrorism.<sup>5</sup>

## **23 September 2024**

### **Attacks in Bamako kill dozens of people**

On 17.09.24, suspected jihadists in the capital Bamako attacked both a military police training camp and the city's airport, killing over 70 people and injuring at least another 200. The media reported that they had received this information from sources within the security authorities and the diplomatic service. The Malian government has not provided any information on the number of victims. Attacks by suspected jihadists in the northern regions of the country are a regular occurrence in the conflict that has been sweltering for years. Bamako had been spared attacks since 2016.<sup>6</sup>

## **18 November 2024**

### **RFI: Wagner and Malian army suspected of killing civilians**

Radio France Internationale (RFI) reported on 13.11.24 that the Wagner Group had carried out an operation in the town of Lerneb (Timbuktu region) near to the Mauretanian border together with members of the Malian army on 10.11. and 11.11.24. Working on information gathered from a number of local sources, RFI reportedly ascertained that seven civilians were executed in the course of this operation. Their bodies were apparently discovered in a mutilated state. Tuaregs are said to have been among the victims who, according to the local sources, had no links to armed groups.

RFI reports that the Malian army has neither made any public statements or responded to RFI inquiries about the operation. A Bamako-based source from security circles has reportedly told RFI that the operation was documented internally with a death toll of six "suspicious civilians", however.<sup>7</sup>

02 December 2024

### Prime minister replaced after criticising junta

Choguel Kokalla Maïga, prime minister since Assimi Goïta assumed power on 24.05.21 (cf. BN of 31.05. and 07.06.21), was relieved of his duties on 20.11.24. Reportedly, the civilian Choguel Maïga complained at an official function about being excluded from key decisions, in particular with regard to the timetable for the return to a civilian system of government. Elections to end the transition phase with the military junta at the head of the state have been postponed several times (cf. BN of 08.04. and 27.05.24). The question now arises as to how the junta will deal with Choguel Maïga, who apparently intends to remain politically active.

A member of the military was reportedly appointed as the new prime minister on 21.11.24, in the guise of general Abdoulaye Maïga. This is seen as further consolidating the military's sphere of control. It is reported that general Maïga previously headed the ministry for territorial administration and that he is also to retain this post, whose remit includes the organisation of elections. Despite the appointment of a new prime minister, there have been no changes among the key ministerial posts.<sup>8</sup>

### TV station has licence revoked for criticising Burkina Faso

According to a report in the media, the Malian high authority for communication (HAC) has withdrawn the broadcasting licence of private news channel Joliba TV News with effect from 26.11.24, in response to a complaint by the Burkinabe Superior Council for Communication (CSC). The ban was sparked by an appearance by Issa Kaou N'Djim in which he accused the Burkinabe junta of having orchestrated the most recent alleged attempted coup. N'Djim was arrested in Bamako on 13.11.24 (cf. BN article on Burkina Faso of 18.11.24). His court hearing is said to be scheduled for 23.12.24.

Shortly after the ban on Joliba TV, on 28.11.24 Burkina Faso and the CSC duly subpoenaed the management of the Burkinabe daily newspaper L'Observateur Paalga in connection with a controversial article on the promotion of generals in Mali.<sup>9</sup>

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- 1 Africanews: Opposition activists arrested in a crackdown in Mali were moved to prisons, 27.06.24; HRW: Mali's Junta Renews Assault on Political Opposition, 25.06.24; Le Monde: Mali. Onze opposants à la junte, dont des chefs de partis, arrêtés à Bamako, 21.06.24; Reuters: Malian political parties say leaders arrested amid crackdown, 21.06.24; RFI: Mali. Les opposants arrêtés le 20 juin attendent toujours de passer devant la justice, 24.06.24.
  - 2 Aljazeera: Dozens killed in attack on village in central Mali, 03.07.24; CNN: Around 40 killed in attack on central Mali village, 03.07.24.
  - 3 Africanews: Mali. Au moins 26 morts dans une attaque près du Burkina Faso, 23.07.24; Africanews: Mali wedding attack kills 21, 04.07.24; Deutsche Welle: Mali. Armed group kills dozens at wedding celebration, 03.07.24; RFI: Mali. Une attaque jihadiste fait 25 morts à Dembo dans le centre du pays, 22.07.24.
  - 4 Le Monde Afrique: Au Sahel, des accusations de cannibalisme contre des militaires relancent les appels à la justice internationale, 25.07.24; RFI: De nouvelles vidéos de soldats cannibales au Mali et au Burkina, 24.07.24; Africa Newswire: Burkina: The army searches for alleged soldiers responsible for mutilations, 24.07.24.
  - 5 BBC: Mali cuts diplomatic ties with Ukraine over Wagner ambush claims, 05.08.24; Frankfurter Rundschau: Mali löst diplomatische Beziehungen zur Ukraine auf, 06.08.24; AfricaNews: Ukraine denies involvement in Mali attack, says cutting ties 'short-sighted', in: Africanews, 06.08.24.
  - 6 France 24: Major jihadist attack in Mali's capital killed more than 70, security source says, 19.09.24; Le Monde: Mali. Les attaques djihadistes à Bamako ont fait plus de 70 morts, 19.09.24; Reuters: Dozens killed in Mali attack by Al Qaeda affiliate, 20.09.24; UN News: UN chief strongly condemns Mali terrorist attack, 19.09.24; VOA: Attack in Mali capital killed more than 70, security sources say, 19.09.24.
  - 7 RFI: Mali. L'armée et Wagner exécutent sept civils à Lerneb, dans la région de Tombouctou, 13.11.24.

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- 8 Africanews: Mali: Civilian PM sacked after criticizing junta, cabinet dismissed, 20.11.24; BBC News: Mali junta chief Assimi Goita fires PM Choguel Kokalla Maïga and government, 21.11.24; RFI: Mali: Choguel Maïga n'est plus à la primature, mais prépare son retour à la vie politique, 21.11.24; Jeune Afrique: Mali : l'irrésistible ascension d'Abdoulaye Maïga dans l'ombre d'Assimi Goïta, 22.11.24; RFI: Mali: qu'indique la composition du nouveau gouvernement ?, 22.11.24.
- 9 Jeune Afrique: Le Mali décide de fermer Joliba TV News, 23.11.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: «L'Observateur Paalga» convoqué devant le Conseil supérieur de la communication, 28.11.24.

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