



CLIMATE-FRAGILITY RISK BRIEF

MALI

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Climate-Fragility Risk Brief: Mali

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SUMMARY

The majority of Mali's regions are currently affected by violent conflict. While attention currently focuses on violent conflict in the north and centre of the country, southern Mali also sees worrying levels of tension, which sometimes flare into violence. These dynamics are overlaid onto a reality of weak governance, corruption and extortion, vertical and horizontal inequalities, gendered power relations, social exclusion and marginalisation, entrenched poverty, food insecurity, human rights violations, inadequate basic services, and underdevelopment. These realities have exacerbated pre-existing tensions within and between communities, between generations, and between the citizen and state. They have led to a normalisation of violence, an increase in criminality and heightened insecurity, which has had differential impacts depending on age, gender, disability, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.

At the same time, Mali's climate is changing. It is already experiencing increasing temperatures, significant inter-annual and decadal rainfall variability, and extreme weather events including droughts and floods. Populations have adapted to variability, for example through migration, livelihood diversification and involvement in the illicit trade. However, resilience is uneven: those subjected to political and economic marginalisation, including women and girls, are less able to adapt to, recover from and prepare for environmental and climate shocks. Moreover, the resilience that does exist is under strain as a result of conflict insensitive and inequitable government policies, decreasing social cohesion, and increasing conflict, insecurity and violence. Future projections predict even higher temperatures and rainfall variability in the future, which will have serious impacts on poverty and inequality levels, livelihood precarity, environmental degradation, biodiversity, food insecurity, and health.

This climate security risk brief outlines the following linkages between climate change and security in Mali and their implications for peace and stability:

- Rent-seeking behaviour negatively affects environmental degradation and conflict dynamics
- Conflict insensitive climate and environmental action increases grievances
- Migration is both a resilience strategy and source of tension
- Conflicts over natural resources are likely to increase
- Climate change and conflict both undermine livelihoods and social cohesion

It also presents the following entry points to addressing these climate security risks:

- Conduct an integrated climate security assessment to build understanding of climate change and conflict dynamics in the whole country and how they vary between regions
- Build inclusiveness, accountability and responsiveness of state institutions including the defence and security forces, particularly in northern and central Mali
- Reduce gender and other inequalities among populations vulnerable to climate change in order to ensure equity and mitigate conflict risk
- Build climate security resilience in southern Mali to mitigate the spread of violence
- Build climate security more thoroughly into the UN's mandate in Mali for increased effectiveness

CONFLICT CONTEXT

Despite its history of relative peace and stability, Mali has experienced over eight years of violent conflict, leaving 4.3 million people out of the 8.2 million affected in need of assistance. The humanitarian situation, including in terms of numbers of internally displaced people, has deteriorated since 2018 and is now worse than during the peak of the conflict in northern Mali in 2012. As of 31 December 2019, 208,000 people remained internally displaced due to conflict and violence. Conflict dynamics are complex and localised. Root causes and manifestations differ even between neighbouring communities, and there are several areas about which little is known.

A history of violent conflict in Mali

In the north, against a backdrop of long-standing Tuareg resistance - first against French colonisers and then the Malian state - the Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) launched an armed campaign in January 2012 for the independence of Azawad, an area covering the regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. These events occurred in the midst of a severe drought that damaged livelihoods and highlighted northern political and economic marginalisation. The MNLA's strength and ability to gain territorial control came in the wake of arms proliferation and return of fighters from Libya following the civil war there. Jihadi presence in the area, and in the form of groups including Ansar Dine, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) added to instability. The Jihadi presence was a spill-over from the 1990s Algerian civil war.

Armed opposition groups (AOGs) drove the Malian army back to Bamako, where disgruntled soldiers launched a coup d'état. After popular protest, international condemnation and sanctions, and suspension of aid, coup leaders agreed to a transition of power and elections. In the meantime, the MNLA and jihadi groups with which it had allied captured almost all of the north and proclaimed Azawad independent from Mali.

The MNLA subsequently lost territory to its erstwhile partners due to a lack of resources and increasing unpopularity. The MNLA fostered resentment with its looting and plundering; in addition it was seen as representing only Tuareg interests rather than those of all communities living in the area. Ansar Dine, AQIM and MUJAO took control of large parts of the north. Their move southwards towards Bamako and imposition of sharia codes influenced foreign governments' opinion and led to the French Operation Serval intervening at the request of the interim government. Malian and French troops retook major northern cities in January 2013 and fighting increased. Armed groups, security actors and the government's proxy militias perpetrated serious human rights violations including intimidation, forced disappearances, and direct and indirect harm. AOG fighters kidnapped, subjected to sexual violence, and forcibly married numerous women and girls. The conflict also increased armed criminality and inter-communal tensions.

The Security Council established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in April 2013 to support political and stabilisation processes and the protection of civilians. However, in the face of AOG attacks and with the majority of its capacity focused on protecting its personnel, camps and convoys, MINUSMA has struggled to protect civilians. It is also perceived by many civilians as part of an international community whose credibility is declining. It is seen as close to a government whose officials engage in predatory behaviour and thus do not have legitimacy in the eyes of population - and which is unable to stop attacks against civilians and the escalation of violence.

Meanwhile, the northern conflict led to increased banditry, cattle theft, and arms availability in central Mali. After 2013, jihadi AOGs regrouped and new ones emerged. Insecurity spread across central Mali and its neighbours from early 2015. In Central Mali, various AOGs are blending together: they concentrate recruitment on Fulani communities and play on their grievances and feelings of marginalisation, fuelling inter-communal

tensions. These dynamics overlay local histories of contestation. Although livelihoods co-exist and overlap depending on the season and cut across communities, common narratives hold that the Fulani and Tuareg are pastoralists, Dogon and Bambara are farmers, and Bozo and Somono are those who engage in fishing and river transportation. Conflicts over natural resources within and between these groups are not new and have tended to be resolved non-violently with sporadic violent incidents.

However, tensions have been rising and manifesting in violence. Social relations within the Fulani have frayed. Marginalised groups, particularly nomadic and semi-nomadic ones, who take up arms for self-defence are challenging hierarchical aristocratic structures of power and dominance. These structures are seen as politicised and linked to an abusive and rent-seeking state. In addition, there is seasonal conflict between Fulani nomadic and settled pastoralists during the rainy season in the western area near the Mauritania border over access to natural resources. Indeed, these dynamics can be partially explained as a crisis between generations and of modernity, with older people hoarding power and wealth that younger people are barred from accessing in the context of a highly unequal society, with some people owning many heads of cattle and poorer Fulani people no longer owning any but rather herding cattle belonging to others.

As well as intra-Fulani conflict, there are heightened tensions between different pastoralist communities and between pastoralists and farmers. The impunity granted to Tuareg AOGs in peace talks that excluded AOGs linked with jihadism exacerbated the sense of abandonment and injustice - and need for self-protection - felt by some Fulani people, particularly in areas where Fulani and Tuareg pastoralists compete for natural resources. In other areas, expansion of farming onto grazing land, encroachment of cattle onto farmland, and government policies favouring agricultural over pastoralist livelihoods have led to increased clashes between farmers and pastoralists.

These dynamics have inflamed inter-communal tensions and led to the formation of community militias. Fulani people say Dogon and Bambara militias have banned them from buying and selling at markets, while the Dogon say armed Fulani men prohibit them from working in their fields. Violence by community militias and state forces, who tend to see all Fulani as linked to jihadi AOGs, has driven even more Fulani people to join community militias and jihadi AOGs that maximise these dynamics as well as cleavages between rival communities by offering protection.

Southern Mali, the country's bread basket and most populous area, is relatively stable but there is a risk that existing conflict dynamics will deepen. Events in the north and centre show how grievances can take hold and be mobilised into violence. The Sikasso region already sees land conflict due to intensified land speculation and land grabbing, which creates grievances over elite economic predation among those economically and socially marginalised. There is dissonance between local customary and formal state norms, corrupt political practices, and the absence of or disregard for shared rules of use. Local leadership institutions and custom that places control of familial land in the hands of male elders often work against the structurally excluded, for example women, young people, and migrant populations. There is also conflict between farmers due to differences of delimitation of village boundaries and farmer-pastoralist disputes when pastoralists move cattle northwards at the same time as farmers plant crops.

These conflicts lead to theft, violence and civilian casualties. In response, young men look to defend communities and form self-defence groups. Many of the underlying drivers of widespread violence in other parts of the country are present in southern Mali. If communities become further alienated from the state, people retreat into identity-based mobilisation and self-defence groups proactively mobilise, there is a risk of violence escalating and becoming entrenched.

Weak governance and human rights violations

Weak governance, mistrust and discrimination across regional, ethnic, and racial lines, and alienation, abuse, and rent-seeking by government and security officials has caused a breakdown in state-citizen relations and trust. This, in turn, has been a key factor in the normalisation of violence. Many civilians do not trust central and local authorities or local leaders to provide security, manage conflicts, provide justice, uphold the rule of law, or address poverty and lack of livelihoods. Moreover, overly militarised approaches have led to high levels of civilian harm. Human rights organisations have reported harassment, arbitrary arrests, extortion, forced disappearances, sexual violence, torture, and extrajudicial killings in counter-terrorism operations. There is widespread impunity for human rights violations as mechanisms to investigate and punish these are ineffective.

Unsurprisingly, civilian-military relations have deteriorated. In Mali and neighbouring Burkina Faso, 75 percent of villages surveyed in a 2018 study listed the defence and security forces among the entities threatening the peace and security of the communities, while 62% openly expressed the desire to form self-defence militias to protect themselves against all kinds of abuse. 50% said violent extremist groups help protect them from abuses by the security forces. In contrast, the Nigerien military is more ethnically diverse and better perceived by civilians; and the government takes more of a mediation (rather than heavy-handed security) approach. Meanwhile, the Mauritanian regime is opaque but seems to have a strong army, strict control of borders, and low tolerance for Islamist organising. Though the situation is contained at present, some observers characterise the situation as a ticking time bomb. In Mali, this dynamic has driven violence further. The most determining factor that presents a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for young people joining jihadi AOGs is real or perceived state abuse and violation.

Gender and conflict dynamics

Gender relations vary across different communities and regions. For example, nomadic power hierarchies and northern forms of Islam mean women have relative liberty and participate actively in peacebuilding compared to counterparts in central Mali. In the south too, particularly among those in urban areas, women have greater say in decisions around security and governmental relations.

Gender norms and relations affect the ways girls, women, boys and men experience conflict and violence. Men and adolescent boys are viewed with more suspicion by all conflict parties, targeted during operations, and recruited by AOGs and community militias. They are vulnerable to arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention without trial, and extrajudicial killing, particularly if they are from ethnic groups considered to have joined 'the enemy'. Meanwhile, women and girls also experience physical violence, are displaced and see their livelihoods and access to services affected. They face increased precarity due to barriers to mobility, work and income, imposition of restrictive behavioural norms, forced marriage and the risk of sexual violence.

Gender also influences involvement with AOGs. Women in the north have been more involved as combatants and at the operational level of the MNLA than their counterparts in jihadi AOGs. While engagement in direct fighting tends to be the preserve of men, women play crucial roles of gathering intelligence and serving as informants, providing supplies and goods, contributing economic services, and encouraging family members to join. Women have significant influence over (potential) fighters, with older women mobilising communities to support causes and either encouraging men to fulfil their 'masculine' role by taking up arms to avenge wrongs or dissuading them from committing violence. Women's affinity for AOGs comes from similar social exclusion dynamics as pertain to men in addition to their desire for the education that is often denied to them. AOGs offer protection, advantages and opportunities. A partner or spouse is the primary influencer for both women and men in deciding to join or leave an AOG, followed by mothers.

However, patriarchal social, customary and religious norms hinder women's participation in formal conflict management and peacebuilding. Measures to improve this situation have not led to transformative change. Yet many women in conflict-affected communities desire to become more involved in decision making despite obstacles and resistance. For example, the women of Gao in northern Mali have served as regulators in ceasefire negotiations, convinced groups to disarm, organised civilian watch groups, and reduced intra- and inter-ethnic tensions. Women's involvement in local decision making also varies across communities and is often tied to local leadership structures, some of which may be more inclusive than others.

Meanwhile, norms around masculinities contribute to driving conflict and violence. Men are socialised to think of themselves as family and community protectors, including of women and girls who are systematically subjected to violence due to conflict. Young men can feel compelled to join AOGs and community militias to protect communities from harm and seek status and power often denied to them by social hierarchies. Male combatants are viewed as manlier and more virile as they are seen as able to provide, defend and protect the community, and so men involved in combat not only gain community respect but also have better access to women and marital prospects than do some of their peers.



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Social exclusion and decreasing social cohesion

Many areas of Mali see decreasing intra- and inter-community social cohesion, partly as a result of social exclusion. The *cadets sociaux*¹ are subjected to structural discrimination. Hereditary transfer of power within a small number of families involved in clientelist networks undermines majority aspirations and opportunities and exacerbates polarisation and inter-generational tensions.

As a result, jihadi AOGs, which preach redressing injustice and ensure equitable access to land, are seen as pathways to social transformation.² Particularly for young men frustrated by rigid hierarchies, nepotism, and structural discrimination, these groups represent an opportunity to gain recognition and meet masculinity norms otherwise inaccessible to them.

Economic factors and the role of informal and illicit trade

Livelihood precarity and unemployment affects a significant number of people across Mali. There is an attendant risk of social marginalisation, particularly of young men unable to marry and thus transition to adulthood. While the desire for financial gain does not seem to be a key factor in joining AOGs or community militias (Raineri 2018), economic grievances can fuel resentment, particularly in light of governance, gender and social exclusion dynamics.

Drug trafficking and kidnapping are regarded as key in fomenting the instability that led to the events of 2012.³ Linking West Africa to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, the northern Mali historical trade, commerce and pilgrimage route transformed into a vector for informal and/or illicit trade from the 1970s onwards. The droughts of 1972-74 and 1982-85 killed over 200,000 people across the Sahel and caused unprecedented displacement and migration, including out of the country. It also affected livelihoods, particularly of nomadic pastoralists who were forced into the informal economy in urban centres, and altered the traditional, reciprocal balance between farmers and pastoralists. (Briscoe 2014) While extreme droughts and rains are to be expected in the region, coping strategies and mechanisms had been eroded due to government policies, as the section below demonstrates. In this context, informal trade provided a means of resilience and better livelihood opportunities.

In the 1990s, levels of theft and banditry increased, ethnic self-defence militias rose and intra- and inter-communal social cohesion was corroded. Embargoes imposed on Algeria and Libya in the 1990s were major drivers of the smuggling economy. The Malian state exacerbated rivalries between trafficking actors rooted in ethnic identity networks by rewarding favourites with illicit revenues. Against this backdrop, some communities started to be drawn towards jihadi groups and the influence of neighbouring Algeria and Libya.

In the years since 2012, this trade has grown. Mali has become one of the major routes through which cocaine from Latin America reaches Europe and the Middle East. Other drugs include cannabis, tramadol, diazepam and other psychotropic drugs. Increased insecurity has created a demand for protection met by availability of small arms, including those from conflicts in neighbouring Liberia, Sierra Leone, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, at cheap prices. (Assanvo et al. 2019) Seizure of gold mines in areas in which the state is weak or absent provide AOGs with new funding sources and recruitment terrain.

¹ Those whose social characteristics such as age, community and/ or gender limit social mobility, block access to economic networks and exclude them from positions of power.

² According to conflict analysts interviewed for this brief who focus on central Mali dynamics.

³ This section draws on information provided by a conflict analyst focusing on trafficking, criminality and the informal/illicit trade during an interview conducted for this brief.

Networks have become increasingly militarised due to regional arms flows, vast profits leading to high competition over control of roads, and resulting political and inter-communal tensions. Smuggling is not only a way for AOGs to gain funds, with major traffickers maintaining relations with both Malian authorities and armed groups, but also a source of conflict in and of itself. (ICG 2018) It offers the prospect of substantial financial gains, employment, social mobility and protection, particularly to young people and hierarchically subordinate clans. (International Alert 2016) People get involved in smuggling not necessarily out of desperation to escape desertification and resource scarcity but because these networks offer more profitable livelihoods than alternatives. Government actors are said to be benefiting from trafficking and so have active interest in its continuation. (according to a number of conflict analysts interviewed for this brief)

⁴ For evidence from neighbouring Niger, see: McCullough, Aoife; Leigh Mayhew and Sarah Opitz-Stapleton with Agali Abouka and Djibrilla Mohamed Botto 2019: When Rising Temperatures Don't Lead to Rising Temps: Climate and Insecurity in Niger. BRACED Working Paper. ODI, London. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12946>



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Religious radicalisation and fundamentalism

The Sahel has seen a rise in radical and fundamentalist religious discourse over the last two decades, particularly among marginalised groups such as young people, those who are landless, religious students, and those seen as formerly enslaved. A key factor is the decline in and unavailability of formal education: teachers are poorly paid, trained and motivated and most schools do not meet the needs of children of transhumance pastoralist communities. Informal religious education has filled this gap to meet communities demand for education.

Islamist discourse affords legitimacy to challenging state, local and mainstream religious authorities that fail to provide just and effective governance. Its challenge to inter-generational hierarchies, other vectors of social exclusion, and the corrupt Malian state has increased its reach among different sections of society. However, many radical and fundamentalist actors are not violent, many violent actors are not radical or fundamentalist and the link between ideology and joining violent jihadi groups is unclear. Yet government policy and narratives place jihadi AOGs and certain community militia groups under the rubric of 'terrorism', which then complicates potential mediation and negotiation efforts, particularly as most of the current violence in Mali is likely not to be perpetrated by jihadi AOGs. (according to a conflict analyst interviewed for this brief)

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A crisis of protection⁵

As described above, civilian harm and human rights violations have been committed by all parties to the conflict. Civilians are disillusioned by armed actors' lack of redress and protection. Civilian harm in central Mali is rising, particularly from intercommunal violence, abductions and killings by jihadi AOGs, and intra-community clashes. 2019 saw a number of intercommunal massacres in planned and coordinated attacks. While Mali signed the Safe Schools Declaration in February 2018, attacks against schools, threats against teachers and schools closures continue. If children live in a community that falls under control of an AOG, it is very likely that they will participate in activities that support it as this association can allow children to contribute financially to their families, help protect their communities, and garner status and respect. (Bleck, Boisvert and Sangaré 2018)

Levels of gender-based violence are high with 41 percent of women reporting having experienced physical violence and 35 percent of men reporting having used physical violence against a female partner in their lifetime. (Slegh et al. 2013) Young women and girls are trafficked for sex work and mine labour. (USAID 2015) There is some evidence that harassment and intimate partner violence is increasing and that domestic violence increases when women are displaced to live with distant relatives - and that domestic violence rose when groups in northern Mali began to lose their footing. (Gorman and Chauzal 2019) Harmful practices of female genital mutilation and early marriage were commonplace before the crisis and continue amidst the growing influence of more fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) kidnaps women as collateral to force desert communities to support them. Sexual violence in public spaces, including when collecting water and wood, washing, farming, in markets, and on public transport, increases women's levels of fear and restrict their freedom of movement. Gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation abuse, is severely underreported and service provision is limited. Strong familial and societal pressure discourages survivors from reporting perpetrators, who include AOG members, armed bandits, security agents and family members, for fear of damaging marital prospects and worsening intercommunity relations. (Gorman and Chauzal 2019)

There are many knowledge gaps regarding protection, including when it comes to people with disabilities. Indeed, the presence of the few protection actors present is patchy and not sufficiently sustained in rural areas to provide adequate services or engage in preventative work.

⁵ As well as the reports cited, this section draws on an internal analysis shared by a protection specialist.

CLIMATE CONTEXT

Mali contains significant climatic variability: from the arid Sahara Desert of the north to the semi-arid Sahel and seasonally flooded Niger delta of the centre and the humid savannahs of the south. The rainy season is three months long in the north (July - September) and lasts for six months in the south (June - October). While northern Mali sees greatest temperature variation, average rainfall increases as one moves south. The Sahelian region has experienced centuries of significant climate variability, with the edge of the Sahara moving north and south in response to fluctuations. There is lack of up-to-date, country-specific, and sub-national climate data on Mali, and much of what exists considers the Sahel as a whole. Particularly given this variability across the nation, climate data for the different climate zones would be of significant value and is a particular gap.

Repeated droughts, floods, strong winds, bush fires and climate variability have affected livelihoods, particularly in northern Mali. A cycle of good years followed by bad ones allows some households to prepare and recover. Populations have also adapted to variability, diversifying livelihoods and undertaking other strategies including involvement in illicit trade and migration. However, this resilience is under strain.

Temperatures on the African continent have increased by 0.5°C over the last 50 to 100 years. (IPCC 2014) In Mali,⁶ average annual temperatures increased by 1.2°C between 1960 and 2015. (USAID 2019) Future trajectories, though strongly dependent on human behaviour, show temperatures in the region rising faster than the global average. (IPCC 2014) Projected increases range from 1.2°C to 3.6°C by 2060, with larger increases in Kayes in the southwest, Mopti in the centre and Gao in the north, as well as longer heat waves and shorter cold spells. (USAID 2018)

Significant inter-annual and decadal rainfall variability means Mali regularly experiences droughts and floods, sometimes within the same year. Intense flooding linked to heavy rainfall during the rainy season causes loss of lives, livestock and livelihoods, destroys buildings and infrastructure, and leads to land erosion. (USAID 2012) Meanwhile, periods of lesser rainfall and drought reduce groundwater recharge rates while also increasing reliance on groundwater as surface water availability declines. (USAID 2019) Since the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, Mali has been considered ecologically fragile and highly impoverished (ICG 2020) particularly in light of socio-economic, governance and conflict factors. Times of reduced precipitation, water scarcity and droughts have also led to degradation of trees, plants and soil, altered forest areas, and reduced biodiversity. At the same time, wetting and greening conditions have been observed in the Sahel over the last three decades and, although cropland and settlement areas have increased, climate is the dominant causal factor for this widespread greening. (IPCC 2019)

This variability adversely affects livelihoods and civilians' ability to plan farming, pastoralist and fishing activities, as well as undermining food security and nutrition. According to the IPCC, desertification and climate change negatively affect livestock feed and grazing species, reducing livestock productivity and increasing livestock disease prevalence. (IPCC 2019) This predisposes pastoralists to increased poverty particularly given government policies that hamper optimal use of grazing land and enforce sedentarisation and the encroachment of farmlands onto pasture. These factors reduce resilience and adaptive capacity to extreme and variable weather conditions.

The implications of projected climate change for rainfall are unclear. While models show the total amount of precipitation in the Sahel as a whole staying largely the same,

⁶ There is a lack of credible climate data on Mali but some information is contained in USAID, 'Climate Risks in Food for Peace Geographies. Mali,' (USAID 2019); USAID, 'Climate Risk Profile: Mali,' (USAID 2018); and USAID, 'Climate Change Adaptation in Mali: Fact Sheet,' (USAID 2012). However, these briefings have limitations as they contain no sources or explanation as to methodology.

interannual variability is expected to significantly increase, leading to more frequent droughts and heavy rainfall events. (IPCC 2014) The picture for Mali is unclear, and projections disagree on whether precipitation by mid-century will increase or decrease. Drought, heavy rainfall and floods are projected to become more frequent and intense. Rainfall may also become less evenly distributed, with the start of the rainy season projected to become drier and the latter part of the season to become wetter. (USAID 2019) Moreover, higher temperatures would mean increased evapotranspiration, reducing the total water available in the region. Further climate change impacts will affect already water-stressed catchments. Indeed, other drivers of increased water demand - including population growth, urbanisation and expansion of agricultural production - will compound negative climate impacts. (IPCC 2014)

These projected changes risk aggravating food insecurity, poor health, malnutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene issues, and displacement, particularly given inadequate infrastructure, services and governance.

Climate projections: Mali



1.2°C to 3.6°C increase in temperatures by 2060



Increase in frequency and intensity of droughts and other extreme weather events



Increased rainfall variability

Key climate impacts:

Agriculture

- Reduced rainfed crop yield
- Longer and further transhumance routes
- Increased livestock mortality



Water

- Decrease in inflows and flood extent of the Inner Niger Delta
- Increase variability and quality of water supplies



Ecosystems

- Changing inundation patterns of Inner Niger Delta; shifting vegetation zones



Human Health

- Increased risk of diarrheal disease
- Increased food insecurity and malnutrition



In the **Sahara Desert** in Mali's **northern territory**, the dry season can last more than nine months. **Moving southward**, the climate transitions to the **semiarid Sahel** region - interrupted by the **seasonally flooded** alluvial plain of the **Inner Niger Delta** - then to the **Sudanian savannah**, which has a **tropical wet and dry climate**. **While northern Mali sees greatest temperature variation, average rainfall increases as one moves south.**





CLIMATE SECURITY RISKS

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report identified the Sahel as a ‘climate change hot spot’, i.e. a region where human security, including food, health and economic insecurity, is particularly threatened due to projected climate change. (IPCC 2019) Non-Sahelian regions of Mali are also subjected to increasing temperatures, rainfall variability and increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Across the country, climate variability is already affecting livelihoods in a country highly dependent on pastoralism, fishing, and subsistence agriculture, with broad ranging impacts on social and economic systems.

At the same time, violent conflict and inequality undermines resilience and increases vulnerability to climate change. Those with resources and power can better respond, adapt and prepare for future climate events and variability. But inequality within households and communities, between communities, and across the nation mean resources are unevenly distributed. Gender inequalities in particular block the resilience of women and girls. The resultant rising inequality may in itself become a source of grievance. There is already a high degree of vertical and horizontal inequality, with some having accumulated immense wealth while millions are affected by structural malnutrition. People who once perceived their poverty as the result of natural disaster are gradually shifting their focus to social injustice. (Raineri 2018)

Yet climate change does not drive violence in and of itself. Mali’s climate security risks are exacerbated by socio-economic factors including a high poverty rate, slow economic development, dependence on rain-fed agriculture, and environmental degradation. Other factors are unequal gender power relations, intra- and inter-group inequality, reduced social cohesion, a history of violence, weak governance, and ineffective, unjust conflict and natural resource management. Climate change should not be used to evade responsibility for these drivers, to justify increased securitisation in anticipation of rising climate-related insecurity, or to criminalise a generation of young people believed to be more vulnerable

to criminality, violence and AOG recruitment due to climate-impacted livelihoods. Indeed, the case of the Forest Service, discussed below, shows the adverse consequences of securitising environmental action.

Rent-seeking behaviour negatively impacts environmental and conflict dynamics

Rent-seeking and corrupt behaviour, part of the Malian political ecology, has negative impacts on livelihoods, environmental degradation and conflict. Nepotism and corruption have eroded state institutions. At the same time, legitimacy and influence of local leaders and justice mechanisms, linked to the ineffective and corrupt state and to unequal generational distribution of power, has waned.⁷ The involvement of both state and local leadership institutions in illegal trade, corruption, rent-seeking behaviour, and misuse of financial resources including international development aid fuels frustration. This behaviour is reported to have become more widespread since the early 1990s. It has meant land-use conflicts remain unresolved and unadjudicated as local officials and judges receive payment from conflicting parties to support their claims. This corruption not only means these officials gain from the perpetuation of conflict and may act accordingly but also has serious implications for the livelihoods of many poor farming, pastoralist and fishing communities. (Benjaminsen and Ba 2009)

Jowros, local Fulani leaders, have traditionally levied fees for access to grazing areas. Paying these fees was acknowledgment of the jowros' authority and was considered to enable monitoring of the area the prevention of illicit appropriation. However, the fees demanded have gotten much larger and are now far higher than the previous symbolic amount. (Ursu 2018) This rent-seeking behaviour has pushed many pastoralists to enter these areas without payment, a practice that leaders ensure leads to sanction by the gendarmerie. Not only are jowros accused of complicity with local state authorities but being brought before justice institutions in this manner is perceived as humiliating by the nomadic Fulani pastoralists and communities living in rural areas. (Ursu 2018) These leaders are also accused of conniving with state authorities to extort money, grabbing land, and using their power in other unjust ways. Impacts of environmental degradation and climate variability on livelihoods fuel grievances as there is less land that is both fertile and secure. In turn, these dynamics also are a factor in further environmental degradation as natural resources are improperly managed.

Jihadi AOGs' promise of an escape from the corrupt impunity of local leaders and state authorities is appealing. Since withdrawal of state institutions in central Mali, jowro authority has reduced and related tensions have decreased. Jihadi AOGs settle disputes, enforce judgements, punish those found guilty, and compensate victims, drawing on a history of pre-colonial local Islamic governance. In some areas, jihadi AOGs have forced jowros to significantly reduce fees charged for access to grazing lands. They have protected livestock and ensured transhumance rules are respected. Their justice is seen as more free, honest, speedy and effective by some communities, particularly those who benefit from these decisions, even if cruelty, intimidation, and summary executions are involved. (Raineri 2018)

However, there is also profound unhappiness regarding their anti-democratic actions, especially as these groups often use fear and violence to rule. In their areas of influence, women's presence in the public space is heavily restricted so women are unable to sell goods in the market, search for firewood, or go to the river to bathe and do laundry. Fighters have also killed shopkeepers and looted shops, destroyed farmland, stolen animals, money,

⁷ As stated by several conflict analysts interviewed for this brief.

goods and motorcycles, kidnapped, and killed suspected government informants. (Ursu 2018)

Nevertheless, their interventions, in addition to the desire of Fulani communities to defend land rights and pastoral livelihoods and seek protection and revenge for being targeted, have led some Fulani people in central Mali to join jihadi AOGs. (Benjaminsen and Ba 2018) In the western part of central Mali, a previously subaltern class has taken advantage of ISGS presence to challenge old elites and settle scores. Indeed, amidst greater polarisation between jihadi AOGs, ISGS is trying to make inroads into the territories of more established groups by putting forward a stronger social agenda.

Conflict insensitive and predatory climate and environmental action increases grievances

State agencies have engaged in extortion and rent-seeking in the name of environmental protection. Established to enforce conservation of natural resources and stop desertification, the paramilitary Forest Service was considerably strengthened in the 1980s, influenced by the sustainable development agenda and in response to donor priorities. The 1982 International Monetary Fund and the World Bank-mandated structural adjustment programme cut public spending, service provision and civil servants - except in forest management. Here, numbers of forest officers increased substantially from the mid 1980s. Revision of colonial law establishing the Forest Service in 1986 increased the severity of penalties, with fines set at extremely high levels compared to national incomes. These actions were justified by the importance of halting the advance of the desert southwards amidst an international desertification discourse. Yet, as mentioned above, wetting and greening conditions have been observed in the Sahel in recent decades.

The Forest Service became one of the key agencies engaging in extortion. Its armed and uniformed agents are allowed to keep a percentage of fines collected (in addition to money extorted). Agents have been heavy handed and predatory, for example in taxing, imprisoning and fining women collecting firewood and pastoralists grazing livestock. (Benjaminsen and Ba 2018) Civilians say water resources and forestry services are engaging in harassment, extortion and mistreatment particularly of disadvantaged Fulani. (Raineri 2018) All livelihood groups engage in firewood collection, but pastoralists in particular are accused of causing desertification. These accusations and predations show the strength of anti-Fulani sentiment. They are also related to the fact that some Fulani communities are located at the border between the savannah and sahara, areas where anti-desertification efforts are concentrated, and as cattle wealth is easier to access than that of livelihood groups.⁸

Many groups however express frustration with Forest Service actions, particularly as forests play vital roles in livelihoods and food security. Fuelwood, including charcoal, is the main energy source for many. Forests support livestock during the dry season by providing woody fodder high in water content. Non-wood forest products such as fruit, roots, leaves, medicinal plants and bushmeat are important for food security, particularly when agricultural production is low and dependence on forest products increases for example due to extreme weather events. (UNEP 2011) Heavy-handed approaches and rent-seeking by Forest Service agents not only hinder people's livelihoods but also reduce their capacity to adapt and cope with external shocks. Jihadi leaders have targeted these practices in their speeches and these actions have "led [the Forest Service] to be placed at the top of rural people's hate list throughout Mali." (Benjaminsen and Ba 2018) Even in southern Mali, conflict between these agents and communities that require wood for domestic purposes

⁸ According to a conflict analyst interviewed for this brief.

can lead to violence. In this way, militarised conservation efforts can create new conflict dynamics or mesh with other dynamics to inflame violence.

Meanwhile, legislation and policy aimed at supporting livelihoods can hinder adaptation if they are not sensitive to climate and resource availability, accepting of different ways of life, and aware of multiple uses of land including by agro-pastoralists. (UNEP 2011) Enforced sedentarisation policies, marginalisation of pastoralists due to agricultural expansion, and perceived embezzlement of international aid aimed at addressing impacts of drought has led to frustration and anger in both Tuareg and Fulani communities. (Watts 2012)

Moreover, development policies aimed at increasing available resources and alleviating climate change impacts, if designed and implemented in conflict insensitive ways, can create or exacerbate conflict dynamics. Creating new resources can lead to competition for them. For example, new wells dug for pastoralists in the pastoral reserve of Tolodjé in Mopti led Dogon farmers to settle there and, over time, assert rights over land surrounding these wells, increasing tensions and worsening pastoralist-farmer relations. (ICG 2020) Such recently available water reserves are partly related to violence between jihadi AOGs and community militias in the region. (ICG 2020)

Migration is both a resilience strategy and a conflict driver and impact

Migration is a way of life for many communities across Mali. Seasonal and circular migration has been a common adaptation strategy to climate variability for generations. Pastoralists graze livestock in northern areas during the rainy season and move south during the dry season. People who fish move in search of better catches, markets and work opportunities, including young fishermen moving to cities from which they hope to return with savings. Farmers and pastoralists move within the country and across borders in search of temporary employment to supplement incomes. Girls often contribute to familial incomes through seasonal migration to urban centres. (Nimaga 2012) A third of the rural delta workforce migrates each season to urban areas to search for work. (UNEP 2011) Their remittances are crucial for resilience to economic and environmental shock.

These migration patterns have been affected in recent years. Historical migration patterns are being replaced by a more permanent southward and urban shift, a trend that may intensify if extreme climate events increase in frequency and severity. A number of factors are driving these shifts including land use changes, for example expansion of agriculture into grazing lands in central and southern Mali, climate change impacts, environmental degradation, and violence. Increasing rainfall variability and recurring drought push farmers to migrate, particularly given already low productivity and degraded agricultural land. These factors also lead to decline in water bodies, causing those engaged in fishing to migrate to where fish are still plentiful. More pastoralists also are reducing their range of movement northwards. Different livelihood groups are driven southwards to where rainfall and population density is higher and agricultural productivity greater. These migrations increase natural resource pressures and conflict risk.

People who migrate can lead difficult lives, for example settling in informal and more marginal areas. Moreover, women and men do not have the same migration opportunities. Women who stay behind experience higher precarity as incomes are affected by climate shocks but they are excluded from resources required for resilience. (McOmber 2020) These migrations significantly affect societal structures with more women heading household and transformation of local economies.

Migration, climate and conflict are also linked in other ways. The 1970s and 1980s droughts led many young northern men to migrate to Algeria and Libya. While political economy factors and historical grievances were significant to armed secessionism, these young men were affected by exposure to revolutionary ideas. (Benjaminsen 2016) They were politicised by political indifference in the face of drought as well as government officials' theft of

drought relief aid. This experience of exile due to drought-induced migration and linked marginalisation played a significant role.

Although migration can enable resilience, the conditions that facilitated migration have changed recently due to environmental, political, and political instability. For example, in the Sikasso region in southern Mali, which is a zone of internal and external migration, increased migration - in addition to population growth, climate change and economic development - is changing historical receptiveness to migrants. Climate variability adds to livelihood precarity. As 'migrants' whose status does not change regardless of time spent in the area can only loan land, not own it, they are vulnerable to expropriation. This inferior status can lead to entrenched grievances. Alternatively, migrant communities seen as prosperous can attract resentment and attempts to limit access to land. Conflict between host communities and migrants is already visible and increased competition could result in recurrent disputes and outbreaks of violence if not managed well. (Marquette 2020)

Conflicts over natural resources are likely to increase

In Mali, climate change and conflict decrease the amount of land and water resources that are both productive for livelihoods and safe. Population growth, climate- and conflict-related migration, and the impacts of climate change increase pressure on and competition over natural resources. Population growth rates, amongst the highest in the world, increase demand for food production. Demographic pressures lead to soil erosion, reduction in grazing areas, and increased competition for arable land. Land-grabbing and appropriation, rent-seeking, power struggles, and conflict between the state and some communities further increase the impact of these dynamics. Depletion of water and foraging resources and encroachment of agricultural land onto grazing areas make conflict more likely.

Despite a history of mostly harmonious relations and mutually beneficial economic arrangements, natural resource-based conflicts increasingly take place in central and southern Mali within communities, for example between different lineages or within the family. They occur between communities that follow the same livelihood patterns such as Fulani or Tuareg or different farming groups due to degraded fields and lack of farmlands. They also happen between different livelihood groups. Increased climate variability has led to irregular seasons and blurred timings and unclear transitions of when farmers harvest and pastoralists subsequently move to allow their livestock to graze on this land or access water. The increase in length and severity of the dry season forces pastoralists to continually migrate to new areas in search of pasture while farmers extend agricultural practices into grazing areas to increase agricultural production.⁹ In the south, most communities lack established and delimited grazing areas and routes with access to water points - places where measures have been taken to put this demarcation in place experience fewer disputes.¹⁰

Livelihood diversification, an important response to changed natural resource availability, can remove vectors of economic cooperation. It can also place groups in direct competition with each other. Farmers who rear cattle no longer need pastoralist livestock on farmlands to increase soil fertility. For example, the farming Soninké and pastoralist Toucouleur have a long cooperative history of trading manure and grain, but, over time the Toucouleur established a village and the Soninké started raising livestock. As a result of increased competition for feedstock due to reduced rainfall and encroachment onto farmlands because of a greater number of animals, low-level conflict between the two groups has been growing. (McOmber 2020)

Nevertheless, there is no direct and automatic causal link between climate change and natural resource conflict. Violence is not inevitable. Government policy and practice has

⁹ According to a conflict analyst with knowledge of these dynamics.

¹⁰ Ibid.

played a significant role in conflict dynamics. Since the 1950s, successive policies have reduced pastoralists' access to land and water by privileging agricultural development at the expense of pastoralism. During the wet 1950s and 1960s, agriculture was expanded, intensified and commercialised. The 1970s and 1980s droughts not only made agricultural expansion unsustainable but also marginalised nomadic pastoralists who had been pushed further into the desert fringes and so were less able to sustain livelihoods when there was no longer high rainfall. (Watts 2012)

The devastating impacts of the droughts in northern Mali were in part due to development policies that ignored climate variability. This illustrates the need for integration of climatic uncertainty and the requirement to balance different livelihoods into planning. (Watts 2012) Instead, large-scale conversion of dry season grazing lands to crops has led to massive expansion of rice paddy fields at the expense of burgu, the main fodder resource in the delta. (Benjaminsen and Ba 2009) As more land, including that along the River Niger and its tributaries, is cultivated, grazing land decreases and pastoralists lose access to water resources. Conflict and climate change reduce flexibility for livestock movement. As a result of policies and laws focusing on agricultural modernisation, the jowros have lost power and wealth to farmers who had previously been marginalised and seen as of lower caste.

Moreover, customary arrangements around shared use are increasingly dysfunctional or unable to cope with rising numbers of conflicts while local leadership, state institutions and conflict management mechanisms are ineffective, biased, corrupt, and perpetuate rather than resolve conflict.¹¹ In neighbouring Niger, the presence of authorities and their adoption of effective measures such as demarcation of land, territorial monitoring and application of the rule of law have enabled communal violence over natural resources to be more quickly contained. (Raineri 2018) In Mali, these conflicts directly and indirectly further reduce productivity, reduce social cohesion, and fuel resentments. They are a factor in increasing grievances and mobilising individuals into jihadi AOGs and community militias. Regulation of access to natural resources and mediating related conflicts in the face of the inability of state officials and local leaders to do has bolstered jihadi AOG legitimacy as discussed above.

Climate change and conflict both reduce livelihoods and social cohesion

People in Mali experience reduced livelihoods and social cohesion due to climate change and conflict - which drives cycles of conflict and environmental degradation further. Climate change and extreme weather events mostly impact livelihoods directly dependent on natural resources through a decrease in agricultural yields, unsuitability of grazing land, changes in ground and surface water, and destruction of crops, livestock and homes due to flooding. Many non-climate related factors also affect precarity of livelihoods.

At the same time, conflict decreases climate change resilience by disrupting markets, limiting livelihood options, reducing financial savings, restricting movement, and affecting food security. The impacts of anti-Fulani discourse has reduced their mobility and access to land and water. Pastoralists engaging in transhumance from Mali and Burkina Faso to Benin and Togo find these routes blocked by governments that worry they will bring similar violence to their countries.¹² This inability to undertake seasonal migration traps pastoralists in areas beyond the time period they would otherwise be there, leading to increased population density and more frequent encroachment onto farmlands.

Climate insecurity affects women and men differently. Despite emphasis on men as heads of households and breadwinners, women's significant contribution to household production

¹¹ According to conflict analysts interviewed for this brief.

¹² According to a humanitarian worker interviewed for this brief.

and income is critical for many families. Women have a triple burden of childcare, household labour, and income generation. Although they represent 75 percent of the agricultural workforce, women rarely own the land on which they work. (UNDP 2018) They are continually denied access to land or the ability to farm safely. Patriarchal attitudes hold that women do not need to own land, allocate more fertile family land to male relatives, and see women's agricultural activity as secondary. Gendered power relations prevent women from having equitable participation in markets, accumulating assets, and building social networks, all crucial to resilience. Highly gendered pastoralist livelihoods mean men are usually responsible for managing herds and migration while women process and sell milk and dairy products. (McOmber 2020) When herds dwindle, suffer heat stress or are blocked by conflict from accessing pasture and water, milk production and women's incomes are affected. While men tend to care for larger and more financially advantageous livestock, women rear poultry and small ruminants. Men also have better access to networks, capital, time, and information to acquire and raise new breeds able to withstand ecological changes.

Male out-migration is a common adaptive strategy that leaves women left behind maintaining subsistence agriculture. Despite taking on more responsibility and a greater roles in the household and community, they are not necessarily able to influence community decision-making or connect with relevant resources of information concerning climate change, leaving them less able to plan for or contribute towards a climate-resilient future. (McOmber 2020) Rural women's household responsibilities, including firewood and water collection, are also closely tied to natural resources. Insufficient or contested water sources can require women and girls to travel farther, thereby putting them at risk of violence, dehydration, fatigue and back injuries and reducing the time otherwise spent on income-generating activities.

Conflicts over access to natural resources in a context of climate change also decreases levels of social cohesion. They make inter-ethnic polarisation more apparent. (Raineri 2018) Eroded resilience can push communities back into defence mechanisms where they see the other as an enemy and fear existential threats to their community. In areas of central Mali, for example, where natural resource competition is turning increasingly violent, there are serious tensions between Fulani and Tuareg pastoralists¹³ or between Fulani pastoralists and Dogon and Bambara farmers.

Patterns of pastoralist movement have also changed in recent years with young men moving to graze livestock while families remain in one place.¹⁴ These young men face immense difficulties. They are accused of being jihadists by defence and security forces, community militias and communities through which they pass. Due to gender and ethnic stereotypes and reduced social cohesion, these communities tend to view young Fulani men moving in groups as more of a threat compared to how they saw the Fulani families that moved together in the past. These men face arbitrary arrest and detention, disappearances, and physical violence.

Yet, economic interdependence, a history of coexistence and local peacebuilding initiatives serve as connectors bringing people together. There have been cases of Dogon people hiding their Fulani neighbours to safeguard them from violence. Indeed, conflicts in central Mali have historically had more to do with resource competition and control than entrenched ethnic identities and rivalries. This dynamics may be changing, however, with conflict narratives and hate speech entrenching mistrust and suspicion of the other, all communities

¹³ These tensions occur against a backdrop of Tuareg fighters engaging in raids against the Fulani from the 1990s onwards. In 2012, some MNLA fighters prevented Fulani pastoralists from having access to water and stole their animals. As a result, pastoralists felt persecuted by the MNLA and decided to arm themselves. A conflict analyst interviewed for this brief provided this information.

¹⁴ According to a conflict analyst who is Fulani and has in-depth knowledge of changes in Fulani pastoralist practices.

perpetrating and being subjected to harm, and an absence of sustained transitional justice, reconciliation and healing processes.

ENTRY POINTS TO REDUCE CLIMATE SECURITY RISKS

Climate change and conflict in Mali further compound each other and impact communities in a self-reinforcing feedback loop. Weak and poor governance, state abuses, corruption, gender norms, and inequality provide the foundation for the climate security risks identified above. These factors drive conflict in of themselves. They also drive conflict because of lack of coherent policy response to climate change. Given the climate variability predicted for Mali, the emphasis needs to be on policies and programmes that address climate security risks in a way that works for the future as well as the present.

➤ **Conduct an integrated climate security assessment to build understanding of climate change and conflict dynamics in the whole country and how they vary between regions**

Despite the significant role climate change plays in shaping the risk landscape, there is of yet no detailed evidence-based analysis of climate security in Mali that is grounded on both up to date climate science and conflict analysis and highlight the perspectives of people affected. An integrated climate security assessment that analyses current dynamics and plots future trajectories would fill this gap and serve as a foundation for evidence-based policy making and programming that is conflict and climate sensitive, gender transformative, and socially inclusive.

➤ **Build inclusiveness, accountability and responsiveness of state institutions including the defence and security forces, particularly in northern and central Mali**

Damaged relations between marginalised citizens and the Malian state is a key conflict driver. There are three points of note here. Firstly, evidence shows that good governance of natural resilience is a contributory factor to community resilience to violence and climate change. Land and grazing laws are more likely to be adopted, understood, supported and implemented if derived from an inclusive process and result in customary titles being formalised. (Raineri 2018) Secondly, structural reform of the Forest Service to ensure joint state-citizen forest management is required to protect the environment, enable livelihoods, and address current frustrations and grievances. Thirdly, mechanisms should be put in place that marry better training of defence and security forces on human rights, international humanitarian law and civilian protection and harm mitigation with proper monitoring of activities and accountability for violations. Security personnel should be supported to better understand their impacts on resilience and livelihoods and ensure they do not further undermine them.¹⁵ Their representativeness needs to be improved through transparent and inclusive recruitment procedures. Moreover, efforts are needed to improve civilian-military relations through feedback forums, outreach, recognition of abuses committed, and proactive measures to protect civilians. While these actions are needed across the country, they are particularly salient for northern and central Mali.

➤ **Reduce gender and other inequalities among populations vulnerable to climate change to ensure equity and mitigate conflict risk**

There is significant risk that socially excluded and marginalised populations, including women, girls, young men, people with disabilities and those of certain ethnic and caste backgrounds, will remain trapped in a cycle of vulnerability to climate change, conflict and the intersection of the two. They are likely to experience compounding inequalities as

¹⁵ For example, the motorcycle and pick-up truck ban in the Mopti, Segou and Timbuktu regions in 2018 were aimed to preventing attacks but negatively impacted health, livelihoods and food security.

poverty gaps deepen and they are prevented from responding to, recovering from and preparing for climate shocks and events.

To mitigate this increasing inequality, a range of actions is needed including: sustained support in climate smart agriculture, livestock rearing and fishing techniques; increasing social and institutional support systems to different livelihood groups; and accessible education, including adult education for all. In addition, doing so requires examining and addressing underlying structural inequalities and norms relating to gender, age, class, disability, ethnicity, caste, and other axes of exclusion as well as intersections between them. Crucially, it requires expanding who holds power to ensure meaningful participation of all in decision making on climate change resilience, on natural resource management, and in local, regional and national conflict management and peacebuilding processes.

A socially transformative approach that addresses underlying inequalities would not only promote justice and equality but also mitigate the risk of inflaming current grievances and creating new ones. Evidence shows that balanced gender power relations and better social cohesion contribute significantly to strengthening young people's resilience to involvement in violent armed groups - and that without women's contributions to redefining social gender relations, resilience among young people is impossible. (Raineri 2018) The current crisis represents an opportunity to move away from a hierarchical, ineffective, unequal, and rent-seeking mode of governance that provokes significant frustration and grievances and drives violence towards one that is more inclusive, includes of the *cadets sociaux*, and promotes intra- and inter-group unity.

⇒ **Build climate security resilience in southern Mali to mitigate the spread of violence**

An opportunity to prevent the escalation of land-based conflict already manifesting in the south exists. Doing so would mitigate the spread of violence from the centre or across international borders. While insecurity in other conflict-affected areas makes access and programming difficult, southern Mali is relatively secure. Putting in place mechanisms - or strengthening those that already exist to be more inclusive, coordinated and accountable - to manage disputes justly and non-violently is crucial. At the same time, early warning mechanisms and regular local conflict analysis can identify areas most at risk of violence and develop tailored conflict-sensitive, climate-smart, gender-transformatory and socially inclusive interventions accordingly. These interventions should seek to improve social cohesion, address material realities, and improve climate resilience.

⇒ **Build climate security into the UN's mandate in Mali for increased effectiveness**

It is imperative that the international community, the UN in particular, take climate security risks into account when designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and learning from development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding interventions. Peacekeeping operations need to ensure they do no harm to climate resilience and where possible actively promote it, for example by integrating understanding of climate and conflict dynamics around natural resources access into quick impact projects. Doing so includes ensuring future MINUSMA mandate renewals prioritise strengthening its Strategic Planning Unit's climate security analysis capacity as a core part of medium and long-term planning. This includes adequate financial and human resourcing as well as access to tools, data sources and training so knowledge and capacity of how to integrate data into strategic planning improves. Moreover, all UN agencies, funds and programmes should recognise the impacts of climate change on Mali's stability and build climate and natural resource issues into preventative approaches and early warning mechanisms.

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