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RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF THE AFRICAN UNION IN MAINTAINING CONTINENTAL PEACE AND SECURITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE MALIAN CRISIS

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Responsibilities and Challenges of the African Union in Maintaining Continental peace and Security:

A case study of the Malian Crisis

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Nigatu Abebe, entitled: The Responsibilities And Challenges of The African Union in Maintaining Continental Peace And Security: A Case Study of The Malian Crisis and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of the Master of Arts in African and Oriental Studies specialization on State and Citizenship in Africa complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Acronym

AFISMA	African- led International Support Mission in Mali
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
AQMI	Al Qaida au Maghreb Islamique
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African states
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMA	Islamic Movement for Azawad
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MNLA	Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
OAU	Organization of the African Unity
PSC	Peace and Security Council
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation

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Abstract

In the final decade of the 20th century, the mounting need for greater continental integration resulted in the transformation of OAU in to AU (African Union) in 2002. Among the priority agendas of the new organization became issues of peace and security. Despite the commitment and efforts to build institutional capacity to confront problems, objective realities on the ground reflects the fact that situations of political instabilities in the continent were far from significantly resolved. Therefore in this study the researcher tried to portray the challenges AU facing in the maintenance of continental Peace and Security in light of the Malian political crisis. The Malian case was preferred in consideration of the fact that it is one of the incidents where AU's involvement for crisis management was significantly curtailed by the outsiders (i.e., the Western powers). Besides it is a complex event thought to be identified with separatism, religious radicalism and organized regional "terrorist" groups that struck the researcher's curiosity and prompted him to conduct this study.

The researcher employed the qualitative research approach by making the head quarter of the African Union and the embassy of Mali in Ethiopia as areas of operation for the study. Accordingly the study result indicated the fact that the Malian crisis of 2012/13 was identified with issues of ethnic dissatisfaction, poor governance, and expressions of some form of religious radicalism that involved actors respective to each of the factors. It also demonstrated the fact that the crisis had a significant impact up on the Sahel in particular and regional West Africa in general. Finally it was explored that the challenges AU faced in the crisis were issues related with lack of capacity to conduct its operation, lack of cooperation from the Malians themselves and tension with UN over handling some political developments on the ground.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1. Back ground of the study

1.1.2. The African Union and Peace and Security in Africa

Among the basic agenda that underlie the transformation of the Organization of the African Unity in to the African Union in 2000 is the issue of peace and security. Africa is grappling with several difficult security challenges. These difficulties result not only from the magnitude of these challenges, but also from the lack of capacity of African Union member States and the organizations to respond quickly and effectively to such eventualities. While the bulk of Africa is compelled to deal with problems in inconsistent manner, there are indications that some states, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union (AU) are undertaking promising steps to respond. Some of Africa's core security challenges include

i. The legacy of historic notions of state sovereignty.
ii. The rise of regionalism in the absence of common regional values.
iii. The difficulty of managing hegemonic regionalism.
iv. Elitism in the form of regional integration occurring only at the level of leaders without permitting the consciousness of the people.
v. The creation of institutions with little or no capacity to manage themselves, resulting in a merely formal regionalism.
vi. The perception of regionalism as an externally driven project (Aning Kwesi 2007).

At the time it was founded, the OAU took upon itself the duty of supporting collective anti colonial struggles, racial discrimination and apartheid, as well as the responsibility to act as the guardian of Africa's hard-won yet fragile independence. The principles of equality, respect for national sovereignty, non-interference as well as territorial integrity constituted cardinal principles which defined the modalities and parameters of inter-governmental collaboration within the OAU. Yet, the radically altered international environment that resulted from the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution

of the Communist bloc in 1991, the pressures of unrestrained globalization and the unprecedented increase in the number and intensity of violent armed conflicts on the Continent prompted a repositioning and restructuring of the Organization. Particularly the recent transformation of the OAU into the AU was motivated by the need to enable the African continent and its peoples to meet the challenges of the 21st century, in particular those of poverty alleviation, broad-based and equitable development, good governance and the respect for human rights, as well as to strengthen the position of Africa in a globalized world. Furthermore, the realization that, without peace, security and stability, the attainment of these goals would be severely impaired led the Heads of State and Government to give the AU the mandate, powers and institutions required to decisively address issues of peace and security on the Continent. At the root of the AU's vision is the notion of comprehensive human security. Therefore as an instrument establishing AU, the Constitutive Act is identified with provisions addressing issues of peace although reiterating the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and non-interference, and security. It also gives the AU the right "to intervene in a member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" [article 4(h)], and provides for "the right of member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security" [article 4 (j)]. This reflects Africa's historical experience, especially in the 1990s, as well as recent developments in international law, in particular international humanitarian law. There is also a provision to suspend Governments which have come to power unconstitutionally (Constitutive Act of AU 200**).** But practical political experiences so far reflect the fact there will be a immense task to be accomplished so that continental peace and security maintained in a manner aspired by Africans.

The popular uprisings in North, Africa also known as "Arab Spring" in 2011 and more recent crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau have raised questions about the capacity of the African Union in responding effectively to such eventualities. In Mali, the military coup in March 2012, which ousted President Amadou Toumani Touré, occurred only two days after a ministerial meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council was held in the capital Bamako to consider the situation in the Sahel region and the unresolved Tuareg

insurgency in the northern part of the country (Mindize Affa'a-, 212).Therefore in this piece of work an attempt was made to assess the potential at the disposal of the African Union to deal with the issue under study in light of objective realities taking place in Mali and efforts unfolded with their respective up and downs as well as limitations witnessed in the process of its undertakings to resolve the problem.

1.1.3. Overview the Malian crisis

The Sahel country of Mali is undergoing a deep political crisis that threatens its sovereignty and territorial integrity and that has worrying implications for large part of the Sahel and West Africa as a whole. The current political crisis in Mali was not unexpected, although most national and international players were eager to maintain an unrealistic view of political developments in this Sahelian country. In a little more than two months, Mali's political regime has been demolished. An armed rebellion launched on 17January 2012 expelled the army from the north while a military coup deposed President Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT) on 22 March 2012. It was sparked off in March 2012 when the Tuareg rebels attacked towns in northern Mali, signaling the start of a new armed insurgency. The government of President Touré and the armed forces of Mali demonstrated their lack of capacity and ability to deal with the new Tuareg rebellion. Malian soldiers felt humiliated and under-resourced to respond to the new Tuareg insurgency. As such, disgruntled soldiers turned a mutiny against President Touré for his ineffective response to the Tuareg rebellion into a military coup on March 22nd 2012 that deposed the president and suspended constitutional rule, ahead of planned democratic presidential elections in April 2012.

Touré was accused of not doing enough to tackle issues of religious rebels in the north with the associated drug trafficking by different religious groups operating in northern Mali and the grievances of the state's armed force. Consequently, the military junta led by Captain Amadu Sonogo staged a coup and ousted the government. The coup was nominally motivated by the government's failure to devote adequate resources toward fighting the Tuareg insurgency in the vast, sparsely populated north by a loose alliance of predominantly ethnic Tuareg separatists and religious groups. After the coup, the

insurgents took advantage of the power vacuum created as the result of the fall of" state control" to "liberate" the north. But the insurgents were fragmented along ideological and ethnic lines, with religious groups increasingly outmaneuvering the separatists. The former include Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), a regional "criminal-terrorist" network that was designated by US as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, Ansar Dine (Harakat Ansar al-Dine), Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (Mujao), the Signed-in-Blood Battalion, the Islamic Movement for Azawad (IMA). The ethnic separatists were mainly represented by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) which was fighting for an independent homeland.

Three months before the April 2012 elections, Tuareg separatists in northern Mali under the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA, where "Azawad" refers to the northern regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu), declared an "independence" war against the central government. The regime's soldiers ill-equipped to withstand rebel assaults suffered defeat. Soldiers' discontent with the regime, which they blamed for their losses, erupted into protests, mutiny, and ultimately a coup against Touré on 22 March 2012. The military coup created a power vacuum that enabled the Tuareg separatists in the north backed by a patchwork of religious forces to take control of nearly two thirds of the country.

While facts on the ground seem to change daily, the underlying factors that threaten peace and human security in the Sahel region are not new. This narrow, semi-arid band that crosses the continent below the Sahara desert and above the southern savannas from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea has long faced an array of interlinked environmental, developmental, security, and governance challenges. These factors, combined with a population comprised of a mix of sedentary and nomadic people scattered over a vast area of "ungoverned" spaces, have created what has been described as "a volatile cocktail of under development and insecurity" (ICG 2012).Further more harsh environmental conditions like sporadic rainfall, periodic drought and flooding, unpredictable local harvests, and resulting high food prices worsened the situation. The region is further destabilized by political and security challenges caused by weak governance and security

structures, religious radicalism, and religiously driven violences all exacerbated by the consequences of the 2011 Libyan crisis and growing transnational criminality. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than 200,000 registered returnees had crossed the Libyan borders into Niger, Chad, Mali, and Mauritania by the end of 2011 (IPI 2013).

1.1.4. Statement of the Problem

Africa has been a theater of conflict and political crises in a manner that it is typical continental experience in the 1960_s. This state of affair is thought to be the result of different but inter related factors that had strong historical background. Among them the periods of the Slave Trade and European Colonialism take the lion share.

1.1.4.1. Legacies of Slave trade on Africa

It is difficult to denote the exact period when slavery as a social institution flourished in Africa. Accordingly there is no concrete agreement among scholars about the extent and nature of slavery among African societies before the advent of the demand of slaves from the outside world. According to some scholars the African continent witnessed four major slave trades roughly since the beginning of 800AD. These were the Trans-Saharan trade, the Red Sea trade, The Indian Ocean Trade and that of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade (Nathan, 2008). Among them the Trans Atlantic slave Trade was by far significant to attract scholars to conduct a detailed study. Beginning around the fifteenth century it entailed shipping of slaves from West, West central and Eastern Africa across the Atlantic to the plantations owned by the European in the new world (America) (Jeremy ,2000). It is also the largest of all in its volume that claimed about twelve million Africans in to captivity in the period between 15^{th} and $18^{th}C_s$ (Nathan, 2008).

Studies have begun to uncover and document the detrimental effects that the slave trade had on the institutional and social structures of African societies. They show how the external demand for slaves caused political instability, weakened states, promoted political and social fragmentation, and resulted in a deterioration of domestic legal

institutions. The most common way that slaves were taken was in wars and raids. Accordingly raids often involved villages raiding other villages, and this form of slave procurement often caused relations between villages to turn hostile, even if these villages had previously formed trading relations, or other ties(Toyin, 2000). In many cases, the consequence of these hostilities was political instability and the collapse of pre-existing forms of government. Pre-existing governance structures were often replaced by small bands of slave raiders, controlled by an established ruler or warlord. However, these bands were unable to develop into large, stable states. The states that were able to emerge during this period tended to be military aristocracies characterized by small size and instability. Another possible adverse effect of the slave trade is also stemmed from the fact that it impeded the formation of larger ethnic groups and therefore resulted in more ethnic fragmentation (William and Ross 1997) which became source for most conflicts prevalent on the continent today. Finally what is important worth mentioning is the fact that slavery by itself was corruption which involved theft, bribery, and exercise of brute force. Thus it may be seen as one source of pre-colonial origins for modern corruption in Africa which rendered the continent suffer from wide range of political resentment today (Patrick, 1990).

1.1.4.2. Legacies of colonialism on Africa

When Europeans ended the slave trade, they did not lose interest in Africa. The Industrial Revolution had changed economies in Europe and the United States. Africa could supply both raw materials, such as minerals, and new markets for goods. In addition there had been political motive that could be manifested by the European states rivalry for dominance in the international system, which served as the driving force for colonial possessions in Africa. Indeed The period from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s marked the zenith of imperial rule in Africa. The formalization of colonial rule was accomplished at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 when all the European powers met and partitioned Africa, recognizing each other's share of the continent.

One of the adverse impacts of colonialism was the orchestrating and promotion of ethno-linguistic and religious cleavage among the people of Africa (Patrick & Daniel, 2013). In doing so it fermented ethnic tension that resulted in devastating conflicts the continent is

subjected to face today. On the other hand most of the political boundaries between African states now are the artificial creations of the colonial powers that forced people having the same ethnic identities to live torn apart in different sovereign states. This in turn galvanized boundary disputes that rendered the geopolitics of Africa attain unstable dynamics. Apart from this most of the political mal practices of the ruling African élites today have many things to do with the past colonial experiences.

It was in light of such understanding that a continental organization was perceived so that problems of Africa could be solved by the Africans themselves. Consequently, some of the independent African states made an arrangement to establish the first continental organization by the name the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. OAU was supposed to be praised for its achievement in supporting efforts it has made to eradicate colonialism from the continent but it has disastrously failed to effectively address issues related with its legacies. Particularly, crises related with ethnicity and separatist movements as well as the quest for democracy are said to be challenges that that the organization failed to tackle in its capacity. The drawbacks in this respect are to some extent attributed to the provisions within the charter that established the OAU which hampered its operations significantly. Particularly the concern for respecting "sovereignty" of member states was supposed to be obstacles that curtailed most of its aspirations.

Consequently, there arises a need for more effective organizational framework to address the practical political, economic, social, etc issues in order for the bright continental future. This resulted in the transformation OAU into AU (African Union) in 2002 with a lot of hopes and expectations. Among the agendas with due concern in the new organization was the issue of peace and security. In line with this the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), which was ratified by the requisite number of member States in December 2003, thus making it possible for this instrument to enter into force, commits the AU to work towards the well-being of the African people and their environment, as well as the creation of conditions conducive to sustainable development. Furthermore, it calls for the promotion of democratic practices,

good governance, the rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law by member States. The Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol give the AU the power to create the structures and processes necessary for the establishment of a comprehensive peace and security architecture for the Continent. This architecture includes the PSC, the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force (ASF), and the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS).The PSC Protocol also provides for closer collaboration between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, as well with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations. (El Ghassim W, 2008). But all the above arrangements entail potentials rather than practical experiences taking place in the African continenet. Beginning from the very days of its emergence AU was subjected to face critical challenges in the field of peace and security that consumed match of its infant institutional capacity. Particularly crisis related with ethnic separatism and religious radicalism are currently making themselves more visible in the continent with their associated political, economic and social consequences. In this paper the researcher tried to visualize the extent of the problem in the context of the current Malian crises.

The Republic of Mali obtained its independence, ceasing to be a colony of French West Africa in September 1960. Even back then the Tuareg tribes of northern Mali have opposed their inclusion in to the independent State. To them, the geographic boundaries of Mali were arbitrarily determined, and they believe themselves to have no cultural, political, or economic ties with the Southern portion of the state. Consequently, they thought that northern region has been neglected by the southern, Bamako-based government in its endeavor to construct a viable statehood. Since then the armed Tuareg separatist movement engaged in a war against the government forces in a, low-intensity guerilla warfare. Through time Libya's Muammar Ghaddafi funded the Tuareg rebels, and even hired them as mercenaries to fight as part of the Libyan defense force. After his regime collapsed at the hands of rebel forces aided internationally in 2011, Tuareg armed forces employed as Libyan soldiers returned to northern Mali (Zachary E, 2012).

With the newly well-equipped and trained soldiers, the Tuareg rebels (calling themselves the MNLA, or the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) pushed government forces out of northern Mali. The war began in January of 2012 and continued to escalate, and with an inadequate response from the Malian government, the MNLA continued to gain ground. On 22 March, a small group of officers of the Malian military staged a coup d'état, and removed president Touré from power. The coup leader, Captain Sanogo, cited frustration over the complete fall of government support and subsequent inability in combating the Tuareg rebels as the primary reason for seizing power.

Currently, various armed groups operate in the north, including religious (Islamic) groups, secular rebels, secessionists, bandits and criminal enterprises trafficking drugs, people and goods. Even before the outbreak of the Malian crisis, northern Mali had become a breeding ground and safe haven for diverse groups identified with religious radicalism. These groups not only exploited the fundamental grievances of the local population against the government of Mali and its repressive military and security forces, but also organized sophisticated criminal enterprises that involved drug and human trafficking, arms and cigarette smuggling, and the kidnapping of Western nationals for ransom. These criminal enterprises became valuable sources of funding and were profitable for all stakeholders, including corrupt Malian government officials, state security agencies, local leaders, separatist rebels and religious groups. These Sahelian criminal enterprises and their profitable economic and financial opportunities made religious insurgency a lucrative economic activity. As such, economic opportunism became a motivation for the growing number of radical groups in the region (Francis David, 213).

The conflicts in northern Mali and the region of the central Sahara are increasingly complex. The region has traditionally been a pathway for many illegal commercial activities such as drug, arms or human trafficking from West and North Africa to Europe. Due to the vastness of the area and its inhospitality, none of the neighboring states of the central Sahara is able to control its entire territory. This development has created an area without effective regulation and policing and has thus made the central Sahara attractive

for" terrorists". Al Qaida au Maghreb Islamique (AQMI) has gained a foothold not only in North Africa but also in West Africa over the past years. A formerly Algerian problem has become the problem of the Sahel too. AQMI destabilizes the region, from a security point of view as well as from a political one. These developments hit Mali the hardest because of its particular weaknesses (Annette Lohmann, 2011). Extensive human rights abuses have been reported caused both by insecurity and a strict implementation of Shari'a law imposed by the religious "rebels". Access to basic services and food is severely hampered. In the beginning, the crisis has displaced over 400,000 people of which 200,000 have fled to neighboring states. Furthermore the situation has been exacerbated by the Sahel drought which caused high food prices and affected 1.76 million people in the north. Access to the region by humanitarian organization was severely curtailed until the French military intervention. Religious groups restricted international aid, and large areas are characterized by widespread insecurity and lack of basic infrastructure (ACAPS, 2012).

While some experts assume that the Malian government lacks the true political will to take action and thus continues with its unofficial policy of staying still, there have been signs of a possible policy shift due to mounting pressure by the US and France. At the same time, the new strategy of fostering political and economic development of the northern regions was a positive step. This government program also supports putting previous the peace agreements into practice. But the emergence of AQIM has diverted international attention: The focus is now almost exclusively on the "terrorist" movement. However, in order to understand the complex conflict situation in northern Mali and the region of the central Sahara, and to formulate an appropriate response, all the different conflict lines, actors and issues have to be taken into account because they are interlinked. The conflict is not simply the consequence of a security situation that is deteriorating because of religious militants.

Therefore it is possible to infer the fact that the current situation in Mali needs greater attention in the context of AU's aspiration for continental peace and security. Furthermore as an academic piece of work in this thesis the researcher tried to analyze

the developments in light different analytical perspectives so as to produce a certain point of view of what has been taking place and show alternative possibilities for change.

1.1.5. Research Questions

In order to address issues in systematic manner and look for framework for the study the following research questions were constructed.

i. What are the root causes of the Malian political crisis?
ii. What are the regional implications of the Malian political crisis?
iii. How could the role of the AU be described in responding to the Malian political crisis?
iv. What are the challenges the AU faced in dealing with the Malian political crisis?

1.1.6. Significance of the study

The issue of peace and security are important subjects worth studying given the fact that they are necessary preconditions for sustainable growth and development any Nation aspires to bring about. Besides for continents like Africa where there exist a great deal of records of conflicts and in fact still a political reality today, researches aimed at searching for alternative ways to deal with issue of peace and security are by far important. Specifically this study is might be significant in two dimensions. In the first place it tries to unfold the continental potential and practical capacity at the disposal of the continental organization (AU) to address peace and security issue. Secondly it tries to explore the current Malian problem in light of the existing continental initiative to deal with the challenge of peace and security issue. So, it is possible to understand the gaps between potentials and practical capacities to deal with African problem by Africans. In so doing it also highlights the way forward for the Malians to consider to get rid of the crisis situation.

1.1.7. Scope of the study

In this study the main concern is discussing the current Malian crisis beginning from 2012 in the context of the challenges of continental peace and security in Africa. But for

the sake of analyzing issue in substantive manner the researcher tried to review some prior historical experiences. In order to explore the dynamics of the current crisis the researcher tried identify the root causes and consequences of the crisis, the major actors with their respective role in the crisis, regional impacts of the crisis, as well as the role and challenges of the African Union in the crisis management initiatives.

1.1.8. Objective of the study

1.1.8.1 General objective

The objective of this study is to analyze the current state of the African Union in discharging its mandeted responsibilities with respect to maintaining continental peace and security in light of the Malian political crisis.

1.1.8.2 Specific objectives

Specific objective of the study includes the following:

i. To identify the root causes of the Malian political crisis.
ii. To explain the regional implications of the Malian political crisis.
iii. To illustrate the role of AU in dealing with the Malian political crisis.
iv. To Show the challenges AU faced in the Malian political crisis.

1.1.9. Limitations of the study

The first and foremost drawback this study identified with is the lack of direct exposure to the study area by the researcher due to shortage of finance and the necessary logistics. This made most of the information to construct a view point to be dependent on secondary data. Secondly, the researcher faced difficulties in obtaining informants pertinent to the issue. Thirdly most of the literature about Mali was written in French language which the researcher found difficult to comprehend. Finally, since the research subject by itself is an ongoing development it is difficult to ascertain some facts to generate a certain theme. So, these and other related issues are the factors behind the limitation of the study that to some extent hampered its potential to address the stated problem.

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Framework: Political Crisis

Today, the word 'crisis' is probably one of the most frequently used terms in everyday speech. It is used to describe personal, i.e. private situations but, more frequently, it is used to describe a state in which society as whole or individual organizations and systems within it find themselves, with potentially negative consequences. Still, in spite of its frequent use, the term "crisis" does not have a clear or uniform conceptual content. Instead, there are numerous and often mutually divergent interpretations. First the researcher will try to demonstrate the different conceptualization of the term in some literature.

Etymologically 'crisis' refers to a moment of decisive intervention, a moment of through going transformation, a moment of rupture (Hay Colin, 1999). Srđan. M & Želimir. K tried to trace the genealogy of the term to be related with the Greek (κριςις) meant "judgment" or "decision," i.e. the decisive moment that determines the further positive or negative development of a thing or a situation. The essence of crisis is that one must decide, but that no decision has yet been made (Srđan Milašinović & Želimir Kešetović, 2008). In social relations, crises are chaotic situations that might be experienced by people, states, governments, organizations, etc. The word 'crisis' means disorder; in other words we can explain that crisis is a situation which is not normal or stable. This term means an urgent situation that suddenly happens and breaks the routine processes of any system (Isyar Ömer Göksel, 2008). Crisis designates a point at which habitual reactions are no longer adequate and previous experiences provide no guidance. It names the moment at which some event or development exceeds an agent's present ability to cope. A crisis occurs, then, when a social system lacks the capacity and means to ensure its continued existence (Marc H, 2005). It is a situation in which a political body is vulnerable to collapse, by means of some combination of factors. Crisis is one in which a political order is threatened, not by the overwhelming force of an alien power, but rather by the failing enthusiasm or outright hatred of its own subjects. A polity in crisis courts

violence; the choices made by all parties to the crisis can have consequences that determine the fates of whole peoples (Livingston Jeremy, 2005). Crisis is a situation which disrupts the entire system or some part of it in a certain political being (McCormick James, 1978).

A comprehensive observation of the above definitions reflects a connection between those ideas that constitute the concept of political crisis and the current political experiences taking place in Mali. Most of the conceptualizations refer to a situation of instability, chaos, disruption…etc which is the order of the day in Mali. In line with this there are approaches that demonstrate the perspectives held by different scholars of social science to describe the concept in theoretical context.

2.1.1. Approaches to explain Political Crisis

It is possible to identify two general approaches to crises in international politics: the substantive and procedural approaches. The substantive approach is concerned with the contents of each crisis, problem and/or situation. Therefore, proponents of this approach consider above all the definitions and the effects of a specific instance of crisis. On the other hand, the purpose of the procedural approach is concerned with forming general theories about the crises to find out the procedural definition of general crises and focus on the shared characteristics of all kinds of crises without examining their specific subjects or contents (Warren P and Richard R, 1978)

Followers of the Procedural Approach have primarily developed two main theoretical perspectives when defining crises in international politics. First, the users of the decision-making approach, who take the government as the level of primary analysis, are interested in the conditions and the procedures within the actor. Second, the users of the international systems approach are interested in reciprocal changes among the actors (McCormick James, 1978). According to the decision-making perspective, there are two types of crises to talk about based on the number of parties involved: one-sided crises and two-sided crises (Joseph, H and Jonathan W, 1999). As a difference between the two types of crises, an actor amidst a crisis situation may perceive himself surrounded by

crisis and threat, while the opponent may not perceive crises. Ömer Göksel tries to exemplify the situation of one sided crises by referring to some political experiences. Accordingly For instance, in 1936,Germany with its leader, Hitler, did not perceive itself to be in a crisis situation when the Rhine area had been re-militarized, while Belgium Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, France, and England perceived crises. Similarly, Israel also had a crisis in 1976 because of the swift mobilization of the Syrian army. In this framework, the announcement of anon-fly zone in the north of Iraq in 1992 was also perceived by the Baghdad administration as a crisis (Isyar Ömer Göksel, 2008). Nevertheless, there can also be a crisis situation that is perceived by each actor, which would then be a two-sided crisis.

According to the definitions of crises in the light of the systems perspective, an international crisis is a situation in which ordinary patterns of interaction between nation changes significantly (Holsti Ole 1991) .There would be some sudden and extraordinary changes observed in the intensity and/or the capacity (volume) of the interactions that actors have with one another. According to Charles McClelland, an international crisis is a change of situation' that take place in the actions between the rivals and affects the entire international political system (Charles A. McClelland, 1977).

Practically it is difficult make strong justification in reference to what has been taking place in Mali based on the reflections of approaches of political crisis discussed above .To some extent the dynamics of procedural approach could have a potential to explain at list one component of the crises (i.e. foreign intervention) particularly by western powers and some African nations under the umbrella of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) or AU. On the other hand the substantive approach seems to be more open to accommodate diverse experiences and as such the multitude of events taking place in Mali would suppose to be included. Practically the crisis situation in Mali is a result of conflict that involved the government and groups identified with ethnic and religious causes. So, it could be analyzed in the context of intra-state conflict or civil war. According to Barbara, intra-state conflict is all about violent armed conflict to advance certain cause which could be interchangeably referred as civil war (Barbara. K, 2007).

Such conflicts furthermore can involve issues like secessionism, autonomy, or religion (Bercovitch Jacob & Derouen Carl, 2005) and therefore may include questions of identity, security… etc.

2.1.2. Theories of Intra-State Conflict

2.1.2.1. The Bargaining Theory

Originally the bargaining theory is meant to analyze conflicts within the realm of international relations. But with the recurrent nature of intra-state conflicts and the continued attention they are generating among scholars of political science, the theory is further extended to explore the dynamics associated with them. The bargaining theory basically analyzes conflict in light of the existence of private information and incentives to misrepresent, problems of credible commitment and issue indivisibility between the protagonists over a certain conflicting subject. Accordingly David explains "violence as the product of private information with incentives to misrepresent, problems of credible commitment and issue indivisibilities" (David A, 2003:81). So for the proponents of the theory bargaining problems associated with afore mentioned three conditions are central in explaining outbreak of a certain conflict.

One of the situations of bargaining failure that precipitate conflict is the existence of private information or information asymmetry between combatants which impedes peaceful settlement of differences. The concept of private information or information asymmetry could be understood from two different perspectives. First if the parties involved in the conflict have a possibility to discover the outcome of the conflict, they would have had averted the risks and costs of the war by resorting to negotiations. Second there is a probability of outbreak conflict on the condition that combatants may have private information about their capability of waging a successful war and incentives to hide this for a better deal in the upcoming confrontation (Fearon J, 1995). Hence holding onto one's private information may increase the odds of getting a better deal or winning a war, but it also decreases the odds of settlement. According to Barbara's argument, information asymmetry is likely to became more sever in intra-state conflict given the fact that information concerning the military capability of potential rebels is

often very much difficult to obtain and the fact that sometimes even the rebel groups themselves may not have sufficient information about the degree of their strength prior to first military engagement (Barbara F, 2009).

The second bargaining problem that entails conflict is related with absence of credible commitment between protagonists to keep on promises they made in advance as part of settling their differences (Wagner R, 2000). In this condition there would a probability of military confrontation given the fact that the prior settlement of conflict is no longer enforced over time due to multitude of factors that renders one or both of the parties vulnerable to possible attack. According to scholars the problem of credible commitment is again acute in intra-state conflicts at least for two significant reasons. In the first place usually there exist power asymmetries between the government and potential rebel groups that tempt the former not to keep on promises it made to solve previous disputes. This is especially the case when the rebel groups are weaker to penalize the government for failing to hold on agreements it made with them (Paris R, 2004). Secondly, there would a probability in which the military power of the rebels is progressively weekend due to demobilization of the soldiers and even losing territories they controlled as part of settlement of dispute so long as there is no possibility for the co-existence two different armies within a single state (Walter B, 1997). This sometimes tempts government not hold on promises it made.

The third and final bargaining problem which accounts for conflict according to the proponents of the theory is referred as issue indivisibility. It is all about the difficulty of the divisibility of the stake over which the combatants are fighting (Ikle F, 2005). Accordingly the possibility to run negotiation of disputes is largely dependent up on the availability of compromise to be made (Pillar P, 1983). But if the stakes are difficult to be divided between combatants so that neither side gets what it wants without hurting the other, the probability of successful settlement of disputes is hardly possible. This may include for instance issues of territory, political autonomy, government change…etc. In this respect Barbara puts the position of scholars concerning issues like this as "Scholars have determined that intrastate conflicts dealing with issues of sovereignty, such as those

about secessionism and autonomy, are less likely to be able to be mediated due to their intractability because of the deadlocked situation of the parties" (Barbara. K, 2007: 40).

When the current Malian crisis is observed in light of the bargaining theory discussed above it is possible to draw some sort of connection between existing knowledge and practical experiences. In general terms the issue of privet information that facilitates outbreak of conflict could be expected to exist between the government and the rebel groups operating in the north that rendered the region devastating military confrontations. Specifically it is possible to suspect the fact that absence of credible commitment is there given the fact that the government is supposed to have failed to keep on its promises on previous agreements concerning the status of the Tuareg communities that induced them to insist on rebellion. Finally the condition of issue indivisibility is by far important in the face of the persistent Tuareg demand for autonomy in the ongoing Malian crisis.

While the bargaining theory discussed previously is meant to show explanations for the outbreak of intra-state conflicts, the Democratic Peace and Realist Theories are going to be used to analyze the steps that need to be taken to pacify states failed in to civil conflict.

2.1.2.2 The Idealist Theory

According to the argument of the democratic peace theory (idealists) the priority step that should be taken to stabilize states failed in to civil conflict is to build institution of democracy (Carothers Thomas , 2007). Proponents of the theory claim that a state suffering from turmoil as the result of civil war above anything needs to deal with the question of attaining popular legitimacy to end a state of political instability. They hold that it is essential to restore trust in any divided society following civil war, by first building regimes enjoying popular legitimacy based on the institutional foundations of representative democracy, exemplified by holding competitive multiparty elections, building power sharing arrangements into constitutional settlements, strengthening legislatures and independent judiciary, expanding civil society, and decentralizing governance (Siegle Joseph T., Maichael M. & Morton H, 2004).

Furthermore the advocates of the theory came with some rationales to support their argument. Accordingly they state that first democracy provides opportunities for expression of discontent in an open manner (Michael M, 2010) that reduces the possibilities of emergence of extreme violence and at the same time it helps to build trust among the people that facilitates establishment of state legitimacy which is lacking in nations emerging out of a civil conflict through coercive means.

Second, idealists argue that democratic political institutions reduce state repression. Repression involves a wide range of actions which states use against their own citizens, ranging from curtailments of fundamental freedoms and the imprisonment of dissidents to outright violence and even genocide. Hence they suggest that, at minimum, democratic type of regime constrains governments from repressive acts against their own citizens and thus reduces the causes of home-grown conflict. Democracy curtails these acts through the mechanism of voice, since elected governments can be voted out of office, and through the mechanism of veto, since institutions check executive power. Repressive acts against citizens also violate democratic cultural norms and values, such as tolerance and compromise (Christian D, 2007)

Finally the idealists argue that the notion of 'prioritizing state building' than 'democratic governance' is by itself flawed since there are no guarantee to hold on governments stick to commitment of democracy once in power (Carothers Thomas , 2007).

Generally the idealist claim seem far from practical since the condition of instability by itself that characterizes states fall in to civil conflict, is not permissive to undertake the necessary steps to build institutions of democracy. In fact there are instances in which attempts are being made to set up institutional framework for states emerging out of civil war including the current general election held as part of democratic reconstruction to end the Malian crisis. But it is not without the military intervention for enforcement which the idealists are indifferent with.

2.1.2.3 The Realist Theory

Contrary to the idealists, the realists argue that democratic institutions are identified with limited capacity to deal with risk of conflict recurrence in a divided society since they are vulnerable to lingering disagreements about power sharing arrangements and hence rendering opportunities for continued insurgency to take place (Hegre Havard and Hanne Fjelde, 2010). They hold the view that the first priority in the peace building and reconstruction process following an internal conflict is state-building designed to expand governance capacity and establish conditions of social cohesion, order and stability, national unity, the rule of law, and the exercise of effective authority. 'State-building' is understood as an essential pre-condition for subsequent developments towards democracy, through the usual mechanisms of holding competitive elections, strengthening legislatures, and establishing independent checks and balances upon the executive.

Proponents of the realist view were motivated by the political experiences of states beginning from the post colonial African nations up to the recent cases of civil unrest in states like Iraq, Afghanistan, and some states in Africa and emphasizes the idea that state building specially in multicultural societies require authorities to use force to disarm the militia and establish legitimate control over national territories (Fukuyama Francis, 2004). If elections are held prior to accomplishing such processes, internal conflicts may be frozen prolonging instability. More over Monica Toft argues even to the extent of the fact that civil wars ending with military victories, where one side maintains control of the military and police, generate more durable order and stability (Toft Monica, 2010). Particularly they claim that elections are especially dangerous if held early in any transition process, before the mechanisms of political accountability, institutional checks and balances, and a democratic culture have had time to develop (Edward D. & Jack S, 2007).

Finally with regard to the current Malian crisis, there is fair deal of practical experiences representing the realist view as most of the initiatives to deal with the turmoil were inclined to the military option as priority measure in state reconstruction. The

government with the support of forces from the French and the African led Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) perused a military campaign in northern Mali to curb the rebel forces than resorting to any participatory dialog with the rebel forces.

2.1.3. Sources of Political Crisis in Africa

Political crisis in Africa is relatively the most common subject of literature in political science. Therefore identifying roots of instabilities, chaos, disruptions as continental phenomena is a widely discussed issue by different scholars and authors. But for the sake of building background for this work the researcher tried to demonstrate a general analysis of sources of political crises briefly.

During the four decades between the 1960s and the 1990s, there have been about 80 violent changes of governments in the 48 sub-Saharan African countries. During the same period many of these countries also experienced different types of civil strife, conflicts, and wars. At the beginning of the new millennium, there were 18 countries facing armed rebellion, 11 facing severe political crises and 19 enjoying more or less various states of stable political condition. And some of the countries in the last two categories have only recently moved from the first category (Adedeji Adebayo, 1999) .This is to show the extent of the typicality of political instabilities in Africa. There were different but interrelated factors that constitutes root for this state of affair. But most of them have something to do with colonial experiences of the late 19th and 20th centuries. Specifically we can consider Abdalla Bajura's analysis about explanations behind different political crisis in Africa. Accordingly he summarizes that:

- Boundary and territorial conflicts;
- Civil wars and internal conflicts having international repercussions;
- Succession conflicts in territories decolonized;
- Political and ideological conflicts;
- Others including those related to transhumance and irredentism (Abdella Bajura, 2002).

But these are the age old continental experiences still having repercussion for present situations. There is also a new trend manifested by events like:

- ❖ Increasing fragmentation of political authority across societies
- ❖ Mounting political influence of armed sub state actors
- ❖ Fragmented loyalties of armed official military/security groups
- ❖ Crises in food security and public health and
- ❖ Increasing vigilantism as a societal response to the inability of 'depleted' and often discredited state security agencies to provide protection (Aning Kwesi 2007**)**.

It is important to understand that in some instances individual states and sub regions can experience more than one of these challenges concurrently.

Another trend is the fact that the emergence of these crises is attaining regional dynamics. This development is manifested through mechanisms like: sub regional economic networks that directly and indirectly fuel insecurity through the exploitation and sale of natural resources (diamonds, timber, cocoa, cotton, and coffee), and by the transportation and sale of these commodities, facilitated by inadequate state regulatory frameworks; regional military networks that supply weapons to combatants and the provision of training facilities to those who are willing to destabilize the region; regional political and economic networks that provide support mechanisms and facilitate economic predation; and finally networks that comprise illicit smuggling activities and cross-border family ties that facilitate trade in valuable goods(UN Doc. S/2004/200).

In most of the cases a conspicuous element in triggering crisis in the continent is separatism in different manifestations. In many African nations, some sort of secessionist, or separatist movement, and even active violent rebellions exist and allow for many injustices to breed as well as create instability (Kuwali, D. 2011).

To sum up particularly the issue of separatism and activities of regional networks of criminal groups have many thing to do with the current Malian Crisis.

2.1.4. Efforts to deal with political crisis in Africa by African Capacity

The establishment of the African Union heralded a new trend to deal with issues of peace and security in the continent. It came up with the African Peace and Security Architecture aimed at prevention, management and resolution of crises or conflicts and post crisis

reconstruction. The main pillar of the APSA(African Peace and Security Architecture) is the PSC (Peace and Security Council), which is supported, in the discharge of its mandate, by various structures, namely: the Commission, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Peace Fund(Judith Vorrath 2012). Its component and responsibilities were outlined in the Peace and Security Council (PSC) protocol which was adopted in Durban 2002. The PSC is a collective security arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflicts and crisis situations in Africa; anticipate and prevent conflicts; promote and implement peace building and post-conflict reconstruction activities; and coordinate and harmonize efforts in the prevention and combating of terrorism. Furthermore, it is also expected to promote close harmonization, coordination, and cooperation between regional mechanisms and the Union in the promotion and maintenance of peace, stability, and security in Africa (African Union 2002).

The AU as the principal organization has undergone a normative shift by positing that non-interference does not mean indifference. On this basis, the AU has moved towards a more preventive, principled, and coercive role (Konare Alpha, 2004). This is relatively significant departure from the trend associated with its predecessor in 1963 (OAU). Although the concept, as has been articulated, will be challenging to implement, it is not impossible. However, since 2004 these norms, values, and principles have been unevenly applied to states that have fallen in to conflict. In the case of Togo for example, it took the combined leadership of ECOWAS and the AU to bring about a reversal of the palace *coup d'état* that took place after the death of President Gnassingbé Eyadéma in February 2005. In Mauritania, the application of sanctions after the *coup d'état* has not yet brought the desired change and a reversal of the military take-over, despite the suspension of its membership by the AU and broader international efforts to encourage a return to democratic government. Darfur presents a unique challenge concerning how such developing norms and principles should be applied. (Aning Kwesi, 2007)

Another trend in response to peace and security is the regional mechanism to react towards crisis situation. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

provides an example of this process, having intervened in both Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s. Learning from these interventions, in 1999 ECOWAS adopted a protocol formalizing its mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping, and security (ECOWAS 1999). Other sub regional organizations such as the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have similar protocols and conventions to tackle transnational challenges. These two sub regional organizations have attained a level of effectiveness when it involves armed conflict, small arms and light weapons, peacemaking and conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace building.

But still there remains a lot to be undertaken to harmonize developments in the area of peace and security in the continental context. Experiences in the Malian crises demonstrated efforts both from the regional organization (ECOWAS) and the African Union, but not to the extent deemed to be necessary. Consequently it is the hand of the western powers that had significant impact in deciding the course of political developments.

Chapter Three

3. Research methods and description of the study area

3.1. Research methods

The research design supposed to be convenient for this study is the qualitative approach. This is in consideration of the fact that the subject of the study needs critical thinking from different perspectives rather than a structured mechanism limited to describing the value of numbers to explain facts. Besides, the researcher tried to access a few number of respondents due to constraints beyond the capacity at his disposal to possibly deal with. So, a small number of respondents with valuable experiences in the subject and depth analysis of literature were made. Furthermore, the nature of the subject by itself is not convenient to identify segments of variables for statistical analysis and as an external observation there is a need to know more about practical experiences in a better detail which would be realized well through the application of qualitative design.

3.1.1. Data Gathering Instruments

With regard to data gathering tools Interview and document analysis are the mechanisms implemented in this study. Semi- structured interviews were prepared for the respondents so that they express their view relatively with ample freedom that enables understanding of issue in depth and from diversified point of view. Face to face interview had been a priority option while there were arrangements to make telephone and Email interview.

Document analysis is another alternative mechanism employed in the study. Accordingly the researcher tried to refer and make record, of official memos, communiqués, proceeding of summits, protocols, enactments, archival material in libraries and other related materials from the African Union and embassy of Mali in Ethiopia.

3.1.1.2 Sampling

Since it is a qualitative research the suitable sampling technique would be purposeful sampling. The research term used for qualitative sampling is purposeful sampling" (John W, 2012). Specifically Snow ball sampling was implemented so that there could be

opportunity to get in touch with those resourceful individuals in the field through the guidance of the respondents already contacted.

3.1.1.3. Data Analysis

The data obtained through the techniques mentioned above were analyzed qualitatively in light of objective realities surrounding the study area. Ideas were compared and contrasted from the different perspectives and critical analysis was made so that substantive theme could be produced. To this end descriptive and thematic technique of data analysis are the options considered suitable.

3.2. The study area

3.2.1. Geography

Mali is a large, relatively flat and arid country in the Sahel. At about 1,240,000 sq km (479,000 sq mi), the landlocked nation is nearly twice the size of Texas, and slightly smaller than its eastern neighbor, Niger. The Sahara in the north and the Niger River in the south shape the country's ecology, history, economy, and society (CIA, 2011). Geographically it is located southwest of Algeria, Northwest of Niger and Burkina Faso, North of Cote d' Ivoire, East of Guinea and Senegal and Southeast of Mauritania (Library of Congress, 2005). Again according to the report in the Library of Congress the topography of Mali is composed of three natural zones identified as southern cultivated Sudanese zone, Central Semi Arid Sahelian zone and Northern arid Saharan zone which covers a terrain that ranges from predominant savannah in the north to flat and rolling plains in the north (Library of Congress, 2005). Mali is drained by the two prominent West African rivers namely Niger and Senegal which are used for drinking, irrigation and transportation. Generally there are three climate zones which characterize the country. The northernmost Saharan zone has almost no annual rainfall with mean daily temperature highs of 48°C (119°F) and lows of 5°C (41°F). In the Sahel, the continent-spanning transitional region between the Sahara and equatorial Africa, annual rainfall averages 100–200 mm with a mean daily temperature of 29°C (84°F). The third, Sudanic or Sudanian climate zone averages 700–1,300 mm of annual rainfall with a mean daily temperature of 27°C (81°F) (Threat Assessment Department, 2008).



Fig.1 political map of Mali. Source :adapted from International Crisis Group Africa Report N°201

3.2.2. History

The West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai controlled much of the area in modern-day Mali and neighboring countries from the 7th to the 16th centuries. During the 17th and 18th centuries, many smaller kingdoms arose and competed for ethnic, economic, and religious dominance. In the 19th century, Europeans explored the area, and the French staked a colonial claim. By 1905, most of the region was under firm French control and known by the name French Sudan. It was administered as part of the Federation of French West Africa and supplied labor to France's colonies on the coast of West Africa. After World War II ended, the area quickly returned to self-governance. Within a few years, the colonies became autonomous republics within the French community and, finally, independent "nation-states **"**(Library of Congress, 2005).

The Republic of Mali declared its independence in 1960 with Modibo Keita as its first president. He proclaimed Mali to be a one-party socialist state. The new nation faced problems of economic development and outright rebellion among the Tuareg in the Sahara, who did not acknowledge the authority of the new government. Keita called for the end of the French military presence in his country. He tried to nationalize industries, banking, and land tenure, an effort recognized with a Lenin Peace Prize in 1963. In 1967, he launched an unpopular, Maoist-style cultural revolution, and he was deposed by Lt. Moussa Traoré in a military coup the following year (Francesca D, 2007).

Traoré led 10 years of direct military rule. Then in 1979 and 1985, Gen. Traoré won the presidential elections unopposed. One of his government's early actions was to invite the United States Peace Corps to Mali, and the first volunteers arrived in 1971. In that same year, Mali voted with the Soviet bloc to admit the People's Republic of China to the United Nations (Harveyt, 2004). Traoré was deposed in a military coup led by Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Touré. Touré organized a constitutional convention and oversaw the transition to a new government through multiparty municipal, legislative, and presidential elections (Martin, 2001). This effort earned him the nickname "Soldier of Democracy." Alpha Oumar Konaré, a professor of history and archeology, won the presidency in 1992 and was reelected in 1997. During his tenure, Mali joined the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), a United States-sponsored training for a continent-wide, rapid-response peacekeeping force (Alusine J and Toyin F, 2008).

In 2002, retired Gen. Amadou Toumani Touré was elected president. He was reelected in 2007 and stayed in power until the 2012 coup. During his presidency, lenders provided Mali with significant debt relief, and the government developed new industries. Mali became eligible for economic and trade benefits from the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2004 (Jalloh Alusine and Toyin Falola, 2008).

3.2.3. The Ethnic groups and Languages of Mali

According to the census conducted in 2009, the total population of Mali is reported to be 14, 528 662 (Thurston Alexander & Andrew Lebovich, 2013). It is composed of a dozen or more major ethnic groups and over 50 languages. Most Malians live in multilingual environments and speak more than one language (Dejorio Rosa, 2001). The greatest varieties of ethnic groups live in the population centers of the south and west. Generally the ethnic groups that exist in Mali include the Mande, Fulani, Senufo, Dongon, Songhai, Tuareg and Maure.

About half of Mali's population is Mande. These peoples speak related languages and live mostly in the southwest. The Bambara are the largest subgroup, making up the majority in the capital, Bamako. They are traditionally farmers and crafts. Bambara is the first or second language of 80% of Maians (Skattum Ingrid, 2002). Other Mande peoples include the Malinke and the Soninke, now known as traders and migrant workers. The Bozo, possibly descendants of Soninke who migrated out of the Ghana Empire, are traditionally fishermen (Jonsson Gunvor, 2008).

The Fulani are estimated to be about 15% of the Malian population. Descendants of the historical Peul, Macina, and Tukulor kingdoms, they speak Maasina Fulfulde. Cattle herding is their traditional way of life, and many of them have settled throughout the grazing range extending north and south from the Niger River. Their annual cattle-crossing festivals may include initiations, matchmakings, and other social events (Blauer Ettagale & Jason Lauré, 2008).

Senufo peoples, who are about 12% of the population, include the Mamara Senufo-speaking Minyanka and the Bomu. They live mostly along the border with Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire where their ancestors ruled the historical kingdom of Kenedóugóu. They are farmers and retain strong traditional religious beliefs (Finley Carol, 1999).

It is estimated that the Dongon accounts for less than 1% of the Malian population. They speak over 40 different dialects, some so unrelated that they could be considered separate languages (Blauer Ettagale & Jason Lauré, 2008).

The Songhai are 6% of the population. They live mostly in eastern Mali along the Niger River where they were originally fishers and later, farmers. They are descendants of the last ancient West African empire, the Songhai Empire, which controlled much of present-day Mali and parts of Niger (Conrad David, 2005).

In Mali's northern desert are the Tuareg and Maure peoples, who together make up an estimated 5% to 10% of the population (CIA, 2011). They are traditionally nomadic peoples who also reside in neighboring countries. They speak Tamashek which is a Berber language, distinct from other languages spoken in Mali. Since losing their camel herds to the French rulers, Tuareg groups have rebelled periodically against state authority in the south. To the west and into Mauritania are the Maure, also known as Moors. These Muslim peoples of Berber-Arabic descent speak the Semitic language of Hassanya Arabic, which is also the official language of neighboring Mauritania (Library of Congress, 2005).

Apart from African language mentioned above with their respective speakers, French is the official language of the Republic of Mali, the written language of government and business in spite of the fact that French speakers are a small part of the population, concentrated in urban areas.

3.2.4. Religion

Approximately 90% of Malians are Muslim, roughly 10% hold a variety of traditional beliefs, and anywhere from 1% to 8% are Christian (Melton Gordon ,2010). These numbers mask the blending of traditional beliefs and practices with Islam or Christianity that is common to most Malians. A recent survey found that almost 60% of Malians who identified as Muslim simultaneously hold non-Islamic spiritual beliefs and engage in non-Islamic rituals (Pew Forum, 2010).

3.2.5. Economy

According to the 2008 United Nations Development program report Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world with More than 87% of the population living in poverty. Its major economic activities include agriculture, fishing, mining, trade, tourism and to some extent manufacturing industry.

Agriculture, particularly subsistence farming is a dominant economic engagement which together with fishing accounts for involving an estimate of 80% of the Malian labor force and Malians produce foodstuffs such as millet, rice, sorghum, corn, peanuts and cotton, the major agricultural export (Djire, Moussa 2008). There is also livestock production which mostly includes livestock cattle, goats, and sheep (Library of Congress, 2005).

Although vulnerable to drought, pollution and changes as the result of construction of dams, fishing is also an important economic activity in Mali producing about 100,000 tons of fish annually 20% which is exported to Côte d'Ivoire (Library of Congress, 2005).

Mining is also another significant economic activity in Mali. Gold mining is the dominant activity of the sector accounting for 20% of the total production and Mali is the third largest gold producer in sub-Saharan Africa next to South Africa and Ghana (Library of Congress, 2005). There are also other minerals such as Phosphates, silver, gypsum, and salt.

The other major economic activity is trade despite the fact that Mali typically records an annual trade deficit. The World Trade Organization reported exports valued at USD 2.1 billion and imports at USD 2.6 billion for 2009 (World Trade Organization, 2010). Cotton, gold, and livestock make up nearly 90% of total export earnings (United Nations, 2009). Mali and other West African cotton producers continue to struggle in the world market (Delpeuch Claire, Anneleen Vandeplas and Jo Swinnen, 2010). Export of gold to South Africa accounts for a trade surplus within sub-Saharan Africa, where neighboring Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso are also important trade partners. Import

partners such as France, China, the United States, and Canada provide machinery, equipment, and processed products such as petroleum oils, cement, chemical fertilizers, and medicines (United Nations, 2009).

Mali's history, ecology, and cultures currently attract travelers. In 2010, tourism was 4.7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2011).

Processing agricultural products, including food (meat and sugar), textiles, plant oils, and soaps, is the primary industrial activity and it is mostly concentrated in Bamako, the capital (Library of Congress, 2005).

Chapter Four

4. The Root Causes of the Malian Political Crisis

The West African country of Mali is undergoing a deep crisis that threatens its territorial integrity, and therefore its sovereignty, and that has worrying implications for large part of the Sahel and West Africa as a whole. The fall of President Amadou Toumani Touré prompted a national strike which in turn triggered an institutional crisis that has been made worse through the control of northern Mali by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). Resolving the crisis has been made more difficult by the number of actors and groups involved. According to observers the roots of the current crisis in Mali have to be sought in the complexities of political factors that were identified with colonial heritages, particularly issues of political integration in the face of diverse ethnic dynamics as well as the trend of democratic development within the nation and background developments associated with the emergence of different religious groups in the northern part of the country.

4.1. The Tuareg Ethnic Rebellions

The establishment of Mali as an independent nation state in the 1960's was not accompanied by a structural adjustment for the effective accommodation of ethnic interests especially in the northern part of the country. From the very beginning of Malian nation hood the nomadic population, particularly the Tuaregs were not ready to be integrated in to the emerging nation. Consequently they felt marginalized in subsequent political developments that ended up in setting a new nation by the name Mali. The Malian state has also failed from the very beginning to develop a socio-economic model that can sensibly accommodate the differences and differing needs of the many ethnic groups that make up the country's population. This situation has been made worse by global economic developments and the structural demands placed on the country by donor nations. There were uprisings in the Tuareg-inhabited northern part of the country as far back as the 1960s, which had much to do with the close ethnic ties between the people there and those of the border regions, including those of Niger (Sambe Bakary, 2012). In fact the Tuareg nomads were in struggle for autonomy since the days of

establishment of French colonialism in the region in the 20thC. The Tuareg people have consistently demanded self-determination and in pursuit of such goals, they have engaged in a number of rebellions. The first was in 1916 when, in response to the French not giving the Tuareg their own autonomous zone (called Azawad) as was promised, they revolted. The French violently quelled the revolt and subsequently confiscated important grazing lands while using Tuaregs as forced conscripts and labor and fragmented Tuareg societies through the drawing of arbitrary boundaries between Soudan (Mali) and its neighbors. Yet, this did not end the Tuareg goal of an independent, sovereign state. Once the Mali attained independence, the Tuareg began to push toward their dream of establishing Azawad again with several prominent Tuareg leaders lobbying for a separate Tuareg homeland consisting of northern Mali and parts of modern day Algeria, Niger, Mauritania. However, Modibo Keita, Mali's first President, made it clear that independent Mali would not cede its northern territories (Sethi Aman 2012). As the result according to observers conventionally there were three major consecutive rebellions launched by the Tuaregs prior to the current crisis.

4.1.1. The First Tuareg Rebellion

The Tuareg felt greatly oppressed by the government of Modibo Keita, which came into power after the French had left, as they were discriminated, and were more neglected than others in the distribution of state benefits, which could be manifested by the fact that most of the senior leadership of post-colonial Mali were drawn from the southern ethnic groups who were not sympathetic to the pastoral culture of the northern desert nomads.

In addition to this, the government's policy of 'modernization' particularly policies such as "land reform" was perceived by the Tuaregs as a move to alienate them from their privileged access to agricultural products. The government of Keita was introducing Soviet style collective farms together with state owned corporations to monopolize the purchase of basic crops. Nevertheless the government guaranteed the unchanging nature of the customary land rights except the land is needed by the state for development works. Unfortunately for the Tuareg, this unchanging of customary land rights did not apply to the subsoil that was on their land. Instead, this subsoil was turned into a state

monopoly due to Keita's desire to ensure that no one became a capitalist based on the discovery of subsoil resources. Consequently the Minister of Rural Economy issued a decree of acquisition and registration in the name of the state, with prior publication of notice and a hearing to determine customary claims (Hazard John, 1969).

The above developments finally triggered a turmoil that eventually became the first Tuareg rebellion, which began with small hit-and-run attacks on government forces. However, it was quickly crushed due to the Tuareg lacking a unified leadership, a well-coordinated strategy or clear evidence of a coherent strategic vision. In addition to this, the rebels were unable to mobilize the entire Tuareg community. In contrary the Malian military, well-equipped with new Soviet weapons, conducted vigorous counterinsurgency operations. By the end of 1964, the government's strong arm methods had crushed the rebellion. It then placed the Tuareg-populated northern regions under a repressive military administration (Jaimie B, 2011).

Yet while the Malian military may have won the battle, they failed to win the war as their heavy-handed tactics not only alienated Tuareg who didn't support the insurgency, but also the government failed to follow through on promises to improve the local infrastructure and increase economic opportunity. To avoid the military occupation of their communities, as well as due to massive drought in the 1980s, many Tuareg fled to nearby countries such as Algeria, Mauritania, and Libya. Thus, the grievances of the Tuareg went unaddressed, only creating a situation in which a rebellion would once again occur.

4.1.2. The Second Tuareg Rebellion

While Mali was transitioning to a democracy, in the 1990's the Tuareg people were still not in a position to benefit them from the newly changing order. Three decades after the first rebellion, the occupation of Tuareg communities still had not ended and resentment fueled by the harsh repression, continued dissatisfaction with government policies, and perceived exclusion from political power led various Tuareg and Arab groups to begin a second rebellion against the Malian government.

The second rebellion was precipitated by an event in which the government forces attacked the Non-Tuareg Malians at the southernmost edge of the Tuareg regions. This resulted in a new wave of conflict between the Malian army and Tuareg rebels until the first major step to peace was made in 1991 by the transitional government and resulted in the Tamanrasset Accords, which was negotiated in Algeria between the military government of Lt. Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré (who had taken power in a coup on March 26, 1991) and the two major Tuareg factions, The Azaouad Popular Movement and the Arabic Islamic Front of Azawad, on January 6, 1991. In the Accords, the Malian military agreed to disengage from the running of the civil administration and will proceed to the suppression of certain military posts, avoid zones of pasture land and densely populated zones, to be confined to their role of defense of the integrity of the territory at the frontiers. Consequently ceasefire was created a between the two main Tuareg factions and the government (Seely Jennifer, 2001).

In spite of these developments the accord did not able to bring a lasting solution. This was partly attributed to the fact that not all of the Tuareg factions signed onto the Accords, insisting on the removal of current administrators in the north and their replacement with local representatives as the Accord represented a political compromise in which more autonomy was granted to Tuareg communities and local and regional councils made up of local representatives were established, yet the Tuareg still remained a part of Mali. As the result tensions between the Tuareg and the Malian government remained unabated.

Therefore in a further move to settle the tension the transition government of Mali attempted to open another negotiation with the Tuareg which culminated in the April 1992 National Pact between the Malian government and several Tuareg factions. The National Pact allowed for integration of Tuareg combatants into the Malian armed forces, demilitarization of the north, economic integration of northern populations, and a more detailed special administrative structure for the northern regions (Seely Jennifer, 2001).

With the election of Alpha Omar Konaré as a new president of Mali in 1992, the status of Tuareg autonomy was further improved and restrictions on local authorities were removed within the framework of the republic of Mali. But the question of unique status of the Tuaregs left without a clear recognition and some rebel groups, such as the Arabic Islamic Front of Azawad, did not attend the National Pact talks and the violence continued, eventually resulting in the deaths of 6,000-8,000 people before a peace agreement was signed by all factions (Murison Katharine, 2003).

The beginning of the involvement by the Arabic Islamic Front of Azawad to the Tuareg rebellion is also the introduction of radical Islam in the struggle for Tuareg independence. The emergence of radical Islam was supported by Gaddafi in the 1970s which is facilitated by the fact that many Tuareg had fled to Libya and other countries, mainly for economic opportunity and he exploited the opportunity to found the Islamic Legion in 1972. The goal of the Legion was to further Gaddafi's own territorial ambitions in the African interior and advances the cause of Arab supremacy. However, it came to an end due to the price of oil declining in 1985, which meant that Gaddafi could no longer afford to recruit and train fighters and left many Tuareg going back to their homes in Mali with large amounts of combat experience (McGregor Andrew, 2011).

4.1.3. The Third Tuareg Rebellion

In May 2006 an insurgency that kidnapped and killed members of the Malian military was staged by a group of Tuareg army deserters. It was this event that attained a status to be referred as the third rebellion. The rebels attacked military barracks in Kidal region, seizing weapons and central to their demands were greater autonomy and development assistance for the region (Freedom House 2009). Amadou Toumani Toure the then president after winning the presidential elections in 2002 resorted to peace talk with the rebel groups represented by a coalition known as the May 23 Democratic Alliance for Change through the good office of Algeria. Accordingly a peace agreement by the name the Algiers Accord which entailed Malian government's commitment to improving the economic and social situation in the northern areas and up keeping promises pertinent to the National Pact was signed (Thurston Alexander and Andrew Lebovich, 2013).

However, many rebel groups were indifferent to the agreement and continued to destabilize the region that prompted government response to launch military occupations of the region with a large offensive force to eliminate the insurgency.

After 2006 the hope to settle the Tuareg rebellion remained elusive due to fragmentation of rebel group and their associated demands. Consequently there were series of conflicts and skirmishes between the government forces and different rebel groups that rendered the region unstable geopolitical circumstances. The introduction of the cocaine trade to the region in the early 2000s as well as the trade in weapons, cigarettes, and other narcotics further exacerbated the dynamics of instability that gradually precipitated the current crisis.

4.2. The dynamics of Political Development since Independence in Mali

The post-colonial political period between 1960 and 1991 was identified with one-party rule and military dictatorship with the ensuing personalized rule and bad governance led not only to the politicization of the army and security agencies, but also to the fragility of the state.

After the overthrow of Moussa Traoré in March1991, the stage for the transition to "democratic" governance became more facilitated. But the institutional bases for this transition to take place were ye to be constructed. Accordingly by the time "democratic politics" was introduced in Mali in 1992 with the advent of multi party democracy and election of the first "democratic president", Alpha Omar Konaré, Mali had had no credible foundations for such a political shift and functioning institutions and practices that can accommodate the changing order.

Following the establishment of a multiparty democracy ,political developments presumed to be facilitating the democratization process(for instance Regular elections declared to be generally" free" and "fair" were held , political space for freedom of expression is widened, there observed existence of numerous political parties and civil society organizations) were taking place with their associated drawbacks. In economic spheres

Mali also achieved notable milestone that witnessed the emergence of a new generation of entrepreneurs and a flourishing tourist industry that attracted foreign investment. Consequently between 1992 and 2012 Mali was perceived by the international community as a model of democratic governance in West African region which is identified by civil wars and authoritarian regimes.

However in reality, many saw democracy as merely a cover for a corrupt system. Amadou Toumani Touré , who was re-elected in 2007, pursued a broad and flexible ruling coalition and a style that he referred to as "consensus" politics, in the absence of clear ideological preferences or platforms among political parties. This system appears to have provided incentives for corruption among political elites, or at least contributed to growing public perceptions that the system was corrupt. Civil society, likewise, largely revolved around the centers of political power and state patronage. As of early March 2012, the future of the "consensus" system was uncertain, given Amadou Toumani Touré's stated determination to step down once elections scheduled for April 2012 were held, and his lack of a clear successor. Tension over an anticipated political vacuum may be the fact behind the prevalence of speculation in the local press, around the time of the military seizure of power, that Amadou Toumani Touré , in contrary to the reports of his commitment to step down was secretly plotting to prolong his time in office indefinitely in the name of dealing with the rising insecurity in the north (Arieff &Kelly , 2012). Against these background observers refers to Mali as nothing more than a superficial democracy and a fragile state that was unable to address its fundamental political, governance, security and socio development challenges (Francis, 2013). In view of such a statuesque Kwesi Aning and Sarjoh Bah insist that Mali represents an acute combination of the challenges of poor governance, constitutional crisis, armed rebellion, and growing criminality, especially drug trafficking and illicit flows of small arms and light weapons **(**Aning and Sarjoh , 2009). These factors in turn led to Mali's 'twin crises': a fragile interim government after a March 2012 military coup and an occupation by religious groups in the north that sought to impose their strict application of *sharia* law". This argument is further strengthened by Mindzie Affa'a in such a way that ineffective rule of law and weak security institutions, as well as poor governance and corruption

have are among the root causes of the current crisis in Mali (Mindzie Affa'a, 2013). This image was recognized until very recently, despite a growing discrepancy with the reality that prevailed.

Today, critics point to several issues that should be addressed both nationally and internationally that resulted in a democratic stagnation of Mali. At the regional level, various important questions need examining, e.g. those relating to Mali's past relations with the former Libyan president, Muammar Qaddafi and those relating to the role of Algeria in the region. Malian observers feel that the country's political elites have been relying unilaterally on Mali's two neighbors to secure the northern part of the country and address issues that should have been the core duty of the government, such as the Tuareg question and the rigorous enforcement of previous peace settlement (Marchal Roland, 2012**).**

Consequently the 2012 coup received little condemnation from the public. The junta, which called itself the National Committee for the Recovery of Democracy and the Restoration of the State (CNRDRE), justified its action by citing public disappointment with a corrupt and weak government, especially with regard to the president's handling of the decades-long recurring Tuareg rebellion, the most recent manifestation of which began in January 2012.

4.3. Islam versus Rise of Different Armed Islamic Groups in Mali

The advent of Islam in present-day Mali is associated with the trans-Saharan trade around the 8th century, between the Sahel and North Africa. In fact, the name "Mali" itself is supposed to be derived from the name of a powerful state (i.e., the Kingdom of Mali) that covered parts of present-day Mali from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, which is reputed for its historic mosques and mausoleums that were built in the then cities of Timbuktu, Djenné, and others. Diverse expressions of Islam have shaped Mali's history as well as its contemporary society. In the pre-colonial period, cities like Timbuktu became renowned centers of Islamic scholarship and wealthy trading centers. In contemporary Mali, majority of the population is Muslim mostly identified with Sunni

orientation and virtually belonging to the Maliki School of jurisprudence (Thurston &Andrew, 2013). Therefore Mali is a place where Islam has such a long history and considerable significance. It has also a central place in the social and historical imagination of the people. Malians usually make reference to Timbuktu and Djenné, renowned centers of ancient Islamic learning as a source of national pride. They also regularly cite Muslim rulers of various pre-colonial states and empires and past Muslim clerics, saints, and miracle workers from the distant and more recent colonial and postcolonial past (Soares Benjamin, 2005).

Although the Malian state uses European-derived codes of law, Muslims in Mali regularly apply Islamic legal principles derived from *fiqh* (Arabic jurisprudence) and the Maliki School of jurisprudence in particular in the conduct of their personal lives and affairs. For example, Muslim merchants often rely upon and make reference to such principles in the conduct of commerce, including the prohibition on interest as well as on bids. Many Muslims in Mali also ordinarily apply Islamic legal principles in areas of so-called family law, including marriage, divorce and inheritance. This is the case even though such principles sometimes conflict with postcolonial Malian law (Soares Benjamin, 2000**)**. Many ordinary Muslim religious specialists in the country regularly advise people on how to conform to Islamic legal principles. While most Muslim religious leaders in Mali regularly refer to *shari'a*, there are relatively few Malians arguing that *shari'a* be made into state law.

After the 1991 coup, the new Malian constitution reaffirmed the principle of secularism and religiously based political parties were outlawed. Given the state's greater commitment to freedom of association and expression, there has been a proliferation of new associations and organizations, as well as newspapers and radio stations in the country. Some of these new associations and NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) are affiliated with Islamic activism. Most of the founders, leaders and activists in these Islamic associations are graduates of *madrasa* (institute of Islamic learning) or those with a more 'traditional' Islamic education. There are also Muslim intellectuals, who are members of new highly educated postcolonial Muslim elite with strong traditional ties

and sometimes affiliations (Olivier, 2004). These Muslim activists usually attempt to speak on behalf of the Muslim society and promote ideals of Islamic values. Some of them seem able to articulate the concerns of many ordinary Malian Muslims, who face the contradictions of living as modern Muslim citizens in a "modernizing" and "secularizing" state. As Muslim activists began to engage in politics in new ways, they took the meaning of secularism into question. Consequently Many Malian secularists and outside observers find such activism alarming and warn the danger of germination of political Islam in Mali (Bratton Michael, Massa Coulibaly, and Fabiana Machado, 2002).

However Islam in Mali relatively has been practiced in a rather "moderate" and "tolerant" form, with considerable freedom given to practitioners to mix it with traditional African values. The significant influence of the Qadiriyya Sufi sect in Mali has moderated Wahhabi tendencies and helped counterbalance the impact of Saudi Arabian and Libyan supported radical Islamic movements (Laremont R &Hrach, 2006). Consequently jihadist movements have not yet found a place in Malian society.

Despite this tradition, since around 1990_s relatively harder Islamic political orientation began to gather momentum that resulted in the establishment of High Islamic Council of Mali (HCIM) in 2000 under the sponsorship of Konare's administration (Colombant Nicolas, 2002). Besides the number of Islamic association operating in the country increased to a considerable amount. Thus, the coexistence of a "secular" state with a vibrant Muslim civil society gave Muslim activists substantial opportunities to influence formal politics. The position of Islam to play a significant role in the Malian politics further strengthened with the appointment of HCIM's Secretary General Dr.Mamadou Diamoutene as head of the Independent National Electoral Commission in September 2011. The HCIM became a platform for Muslims to act as a pressure group in the political arena, especially around contested issues perceived to affect the country's moral character. In this respect its reaction to the 2009" code of person and of the family" passed by Mali's National Assembly is important to consider. After the law was endorsed, the HCIM organized a meeting on August 9, 2009 at which Muslim leaders spoke against the code at the central mosque in Bamako (IRIN 2009). It further launched

a mass rally against the code, reportedly drawing a crowd of 50,000 people (IRIN 2009). Consequently, the then-President Amadou Toumani Toure asked legislators to redraft the code that resulted in adoption of a new version of the code passed in 2011. It had been heavily modified to take Muslim leaders' concerns into account. Despite these developments, HCIM pressed for more concessions and continued organizing another mass rally to force the promulgation of a new code, which was taken in to consideration by ATT to be formally launched in 2012 around the time that the MNLA began attacking targets in the northern Mali. Therefore on the eve of the rebellion, Muslim leaders had already demonstrated a significant capacity to reorient policy priorities in the capital.

The roots of Islamic activism that shaped Ansar al-Din, AQIM, MUJWA and other Islamic groups are difficult to trace. But available evidence suggests that the period from 1991 to 2012 witnessed a shift in the religious landscape of northern Mali due to the interactions between the local and global Islamic activists that involved more than just the importation of "foreign" ideas and fighters. Consequently this transnational interaction was supposed to have brought considerable influence on the religious conviction of northerners, particularly the Tuaregs. This influence is further strengthened by the fact that transnational nongovernmental organizations began to bring influx of aid dollars to the northern regions of Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidalan from the wider Muslim world in order to shape political developments in the region with radical religious orientation. As the result, Muslim politics in the north followed its own course where by new Muslim associations flowered with local inspiration and others linked to outside actors like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Most of the outside groups focused on spreading a particular interpretation of Islam to counter what they perceived as Islam mixed with traditional values of Africa (Guteliu, 2007).

Northern Islamist leaders were influenced both by the climate in northern Mali during the last twenty years and by their encounters with Muslim activists outside Mali. For instance Ag Ghali, the leader of Ansar al-Din spent time in Libya, Syria, and elsewhere as a fighter for Libya's Colonel Muammar Qaddafi in the 1970s and 1980s before returning home to help lead the rebellion 1990. In the 2000s, when he was in Saudi Arabia, Ag

Ghali converted to a more radical form of Islam (Daniel, 2012). The same is true about Ould Hamaha, an Islamist commander frequently identified by the press as a leader within either Ansar al-Din or MUJWA. He attended his religious learning in Mauritania and spent time in Algeria that possibly enabled him to have access to groups identified with radical Islamic thought (Cavendish , 2012). Just as Malian Islamist commanders were drawn into larger jihadist networks in the 1990s and 2000s, global jihadists were drawn into local northern Malian life. News reports and policy analysis have depicted the period from roughly 2004 to 2011 as a time when AQIM and its predecessor organizations gained footholds in northern Mauritania and northern Mali through various means. Building on smuggling networks that centered on cigarettes and weapons in the 1990s, AQIM became involved in cocaine smuggling in the 2000s. Smuggling, along with kidnapping operations, strengthened ties between AQIM and local criminal networks, militias, power brokers, and rebel commanders (Sidibé, K. 2012). State weakness allowed AQIM a degree of freedom to operate openly in remote areas. By 2011, AQIM had developed bases in northern Mali's Wagadou Forest, and preachers affiliated with the group were conducting tours in remote villages along the border area between Mauritania and Mali (Oumar Jemal, 2011). Despite the military defeat of Ansaral-Din, AQIM, MUJWA and others in January 2013, many of the conditions that enabled them rise remain in place. Their presence in northern Mali may continue through guerrilla attacks, as well as underground criminality (Thurston Alexander, 2013).

5. The major Actors in the Malian political crisis

The crisis situation in Mali is identified with complexities in terms of the role played by different actors. Therefore there should a need to identify the players with their respective role in the crisis, which is of course a difficult task given the intricacy of alignment of groups with different and sometimes overlapping interests and the diversity of factors behind the ongoing turmoil. But according to David's analysis the major actors in the crisis could be classified as:

i. Secessionist
ii. Religious groups (Islamic rebels)

iii. The military or the Government (Francis David, 2013).

But there are also players identified with ethnic causes and unilateral foreign military intervention, (i.e., the French)

5.1. Secessionists

The secessionists are groups that claim age old issue of establishment of a separate state that would comprise northern Mali espousing the name Azawad. These groups are mostly identified with ethnic causes, with particular reference to the Tuareg. This ethnic group has been represented by different movements and organizations throughout the history of political crisis in the region. But with eruption of the current crisis, the group calming to be secular in its ideology and dedicated to the cause of Azawad is referred as Movement for the National Liberation of Azawd, (MNL) known in its French identification as *Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad, (MNLA)*. Its establishment as an armed group is dated to 2011 a year before the beginning of the crisis (ICG 2012). MNLA is a product of diverse groups claiming to represent the Tuareg cause. Some of them are members of previous opposition movements that include the group led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, who was in charge of the opposition movements of 2007. Some of the remnants of fighters within the rank of Libyan military under the Gaddafi regime are also incorporated by MNLA (Cristiani Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, 2013). Particularly its military leadership is identified with Ag Najim and others associated with the previous Libyan military while the political front is spearheaded by individuals affiliated with Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, who died in 2011 (ICG 2012).

The major objective of MNLA as is claims is the establishment of an independent state of Azawd that will be a home Land for the Tuaregs (Derek Henry 2012). Originally the territory of Azawad entailed the area along the Niger River, the land between Timbuktu and the town of Bourem to the northwest of Gao. But currently this claim is further extended to encompass virtually the entire of northern Mali (Cristiani and Riccardo, 2013).

The military engagement of MNLA in the current crisis is marked by the attack it launched on the Malian forces in January 2012 targeted on strategic bases (Lyammouri Rida, 2013). With gradual fortunes emerging as the result of the weakness of the central government to maintain the security of the frontier in the north and particularly the deterioration of the central administration due to the March successful coup by the army, the MNLA was able to seize large portion of northern Mali. Consequently it swiftly moved to declare the independent state of Azawd in April 2012(Cristiani Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, 2013). Nevertheless MNLA was assumed to be not in a position to maintain its gain given the fact that its institutional base is cemented on fragile alliances between different groups and the weak military capacity at its disposal compared to other Islamic groups operating in northern Mali. Therefore it opted for collaboration with one of those Islamic groups known by the name Ansar- Al Din to advance efforts in a more vibrant manner. Accordingly agreement was reached between the two groups to forge a common front in May 2012(BBC, 2012). But this agreement was not long lasting given the fact that MNLA's secular identification is far from getting complemented with the relatively radical religious aspiration of Ansar- Al Din. Besides the radical groups were gathering momentum in the region in terms of military power and dominating the course of the political event in the region. In contrary the lack of support among the local people except the Tuaregs due to its ethnic aspiration made MNLA to be marginalized with consequent deterioration of its military power that could be manifested in its loss of the vast territory it controlled in the beginning of the crisis to the Islamic groups. As the the result the MNLA eventually abandoned its claims of independence in favor of greater autonomy (Boisvert M, 2012).

But with the French military intervention MNLA was fortunate to regain most part of Kidal, which is traditionally supposed to be the Tuareg homeland. This was made possible due to the fact that the French had virtually established amicable relationship with MNLA before the outbreak of the crisis given its secular orientation and the opportunity they perceived with it to combat "terrorism" in the region in the absence of strong commitment from the Malian state (ICG 2012). However with the Malian state

reluctance to peace deal with MNLA, the French were not in a position to clearly decide on matters of allegiance.

5.2. Islamic Groups

Other actors in the Malian political crisis are those groups identified with propagating the ideals of radical Islam operating mostly in the northern areas. Their religious aspiration could be inferred from their declared purposes, for instance implementation of Sheri 'a, spreading jihad, setting up an Islamic state in Mali…etc (Francis David, 2013). These include groups like:

- Ansar Al Din,
- Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb(AQIM),
- Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO/MUJAWA),
- Islamic Movement For Azawd (IMA),
- Signed in Blood Battalion,

5.2.1. Ansar al -Din

Ansar al-Din is an Islamic group established by the reputed Tuareg rebel leader Iyad Aghaly in December 2011, some months before the outbreak of the crisis (Arieff Alexis, 2013). It is a product of the disagreement between the MNLA elements and Aghaly over the question of power. When his aspiration for leadership in the MNLA rank is shattered, Ag Ghaly ended up in establishing a new group under his personal control identifying it as Ansar al-Din assumed to be meaning Defenders of the Faith (Lyammouri Rida, 2013). The 1990_s Tuareg rebellions were the events that opened opportunities for Aghaly to assume a prominent figure in the politics of northern Mali. Since then he had been identified himself with the radical Islamic thought and aspired to spread this across northern Mali. But for some time he had been in good terms with the central government of Mali after a peace agreement was signed and even assumed the position of cultural attaché in the Malian embassy of Saud Arabia in 2007. But he was immediately outlawed due to the suspect that he was creating links with groups supposed to be related with Al-

Qaida which is perceived detrimental to the national interest of Mali and Saud Arabia (Thurston Alexander & Andrew Lebovich, 2013).

The declared aim of Ansar al-Din is the institutionalization of Shari ‘a at the beginning across northern Mali but later expanded to claim the whole of Mali. But given its small organizational base this grand aspiration would be difficult to deal with. Consequently it began to create network of alliances with other radical groups like AQIM which enabled it boost its military capacity to be a vibrant force against the Malian military. Hence it was able to attain a position of significant power in the beginning of the crisis and controlled Timbuktu, Gao and a portion of Kidal together with AQIM and MUJAWA until the French military intervention (Shivit Bakrania , 2013).

In its structural adjustment Ansar al-Din is composed of the Tuareg and Arab fighters who deserted from the Malian army within the military rank and groups of Tuareg identified with the ifogah tribe in the political front. Led by prominent figures such as Alghabass Ag Intallah, the political wing was able to involve significantly in the negotiations with the Malian state. This faction claims itself to be moderate and pragmatic in its ideological orientation. Accordingly there had been continuous disagreement between it and the relatively radicalized stance of the military front owing allegiance to Iyad Ag Ghaly over handling matters with the Malian state. Consequently immediately following the French military intervention the political wing declared its break away from the rank of Ansar al-Din and established a new organization identified as The Islamic movement for Azawad (Lyammouri Rida, 2013).

5.2.2. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb is one of the Islamic groups taking part in the Malian political crisis. The leadership of this group is supposed to be identified with prominent figures like Moktar Belmoktar and Abdel Hamid Abou Zeid (Lyammouri Rida, 2013).But according to observers such as Dario Cristiani and Riccardo Fabiani, the rank of leadership is currently occupied by Yahya Abu al-Hammam (Cristiani Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, 2013). In contrast, other claim the fact that its origin is associated with

the political dynamics in North Africa (Algeria) and currently it operates on Trans national scope largely encompassing the Sahel. In fact the genesis of AQIM is supposed to be traced back to the Algerian civil war of 1992-200 in which the two armed groups, Armed Islamic Group and the Sal fist Group for Preaching and Combat indentified in their French acronym as GIA and GSPC respectively made their presence in Mali and Niger. The GSPC, which is well-known for its brutality against civilians officially merged with Al-Qaida in the period 2006-2007 and renamed itself as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Thurston Alexander & Andrew Lebovich, 2013).

Gradually building on networks of smuggling and creating relationship with influential groups of local population by making marriage alliance in it leadership ranks as well as by conducting preaching and humanitarian services so as to earn credibility, AQIM was able to establish strong hold in northern Mali (Thurston Alexander & Andrew Lebovich, 2013). Its economic base was stood on trafficking of illicit goods particularly drug and payment of ransom for the kidnapping of foreigners moving across the region. It is assumed that there is symbiotic relationship between AQIM and drug traffickers. Accordingly in the perceived network of drug transport stretching from South America to the west across the Atlantic, AQIM provides escorting service for the drug traffic passing through northern Mali in return for funding from the traffickers to finance its operation in the region (Sidibé K, 2012).

According to Lyammouri, the size of AQIM is supposed to be between 500 and 1500 combatants organized in different operating cells (Lyammouri Rida, 2013). The composition of its warriors is mostly drawn from the Tuaregs, Arabs, and Moors. But there are also men from sub-Saharan Africa even though they are limited in number. Besides northern mail its recruitment base for combat extends to nationals from Mauritania, Tunisia and Libya (Cristiani Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, 2013).

The basic agenda of AQIM is to institutionalize Shari ‘a throughout the Sahel by destroying secular states across the region. In order to realize this cause it tried to create links with local Islamic groups that had considerable reputation in the region. Particularly

it had strong collaboration with Ansar al Din and (MUJAO), a splinter from AQIM itself. Accordingly it played a significant role together with the aforementioned groups in the current political crisis in Mali which further helped it expand its sphere of influence in the region considerably before the French military intervention (Lyammouri Rida, 2013). However internal division within the rank of AQIM's leadership significantly affected its operation in the ongoing crisis. Consequently in December 2012 once again another break away was made by Belkmoktar and he established his new organization known as signatories in Blood or also referred as Signed- in- Blood Battalion (Andrew Lebovich, 2013).

5.2.3. Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA)

The defining feature of the Islamic groups operating in northern Mali is the continuous shifting of alliances and affiliation. Whenever disagreement appears within the rank of leadership it is usual to observe them torn apart and resorting to establish a new splinter organization. MUJWA is among the groups that emerged in such a manner. It came in to publicity in the late 2011 by breaking away from AQIM (Cristiani, Dario 2011). A man supposed to be identified with the leadership of MUJWA is known by the name Hamada Ould Kheiru. Leadership dispute over the share of ransom, on one hand and the dissatisfaction with the privileged access to the Algerian in the membership status together with inconsistent commitment for the cause of Shari 'a and Jihad on the part of AQIM (as perceived by members of MUJWA) are the factors that assumed to account for the break away (Abu al-Ma'ali Mohammed M, 2012).

Gao is the place where MUJWA made its strong hold exploiting the advantage of the anti-Tuareg sentiment of the local people due to MNLA's preferential treatment particularly the Songhai/peul who are the majority there. Fighters within the rank of MUJWA are from diverse nationalities including men of Malian Arabs (Tilemsi Valley in Gao region), Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Morocco (Western Sahara), Egypt, Niger, and Benin (Lyammouri Rida, 2013). Like other groups operating in the region its financial base was the trade in narcotics and ransom payment for kidnapping of foreigners.

MUJWA's basic agenda is also similar to its partners (i.e., spreading Jihad and Shari' a across northern Mali). Accordingly it maintains Islamic ideological orientation in harmony with Salafism. In line with this it tried to establish its version of Shari'a in areas it controlled. With outbreak of the current crisis despite the previous antagonism it created partnership with AQIM and Ansar al-Din that enabled it earn considerable military fortunes (Lyammouri Rida, 2013).

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Men like Alghabass Ag Intallah were influential in the political platform of Ansar al-Din. They are particularly dedicated to their respective ethnic cause (Tuareg) and to this end they took part in the current political turmoil that plagued the Malian state. In the middle of the crisis they represented Ansar al-Din in the political dialog with the Malian state. Nevertheless their moderate and pragmatic ideological orientation could not endure a harmonious co-existence with the more radical sentiments identified with the military leaders affiliated with Iyad Ag Ghaly. Consequently they broke away from the group and established a new organization known by the name Islamic Movement for Azawad (IMA) in January 2013 immediately after the French military intervention (Shivit Bakrania, 2013).

IMA claims to the fact that its basic goal is advancing its agenda through peaceful political dialogue with the Malian state. Accordingly it openly condemned the military confrontation waged by other Islamic groups operating in northern Mali. Besides it tried to establish contact with the French military so as to deal with security issues in Kidal. Accordingly it opted for negotiation with the Malian state by promoting itself as a significant political actor in the region despite the latter's rejection in favor the more pliable MNLA (Cristiani Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, 2013).

5.2.5. Signed- in -Blood Battalion

Another offshoot from AQIM to play a significant role in the current Malian crisis is the group calling itself al-Muwaqi'un Bil Dima, often translated as Signed in Blood

Battalion. It was supposed to be came in to existence in the late 2012 under the leadership of a famous rebel leader with in the rank of AQIM known by the name Mokhtar Belmoktar. The attack on Algeria,'s gas facility, Amenas was the first episode that brought this group in to publicity. It was reported that in that incident the group kidnapped sizable number of westerners and 38 people were died as the result of the operation of Algerian forces to free the hostages (BBC News, 2013). The group mostly runs its activity making Timbuktu and Gao as its stronghold. There is a report about the death of Belmoktar by international Medias in March 2013 by the French military operation.

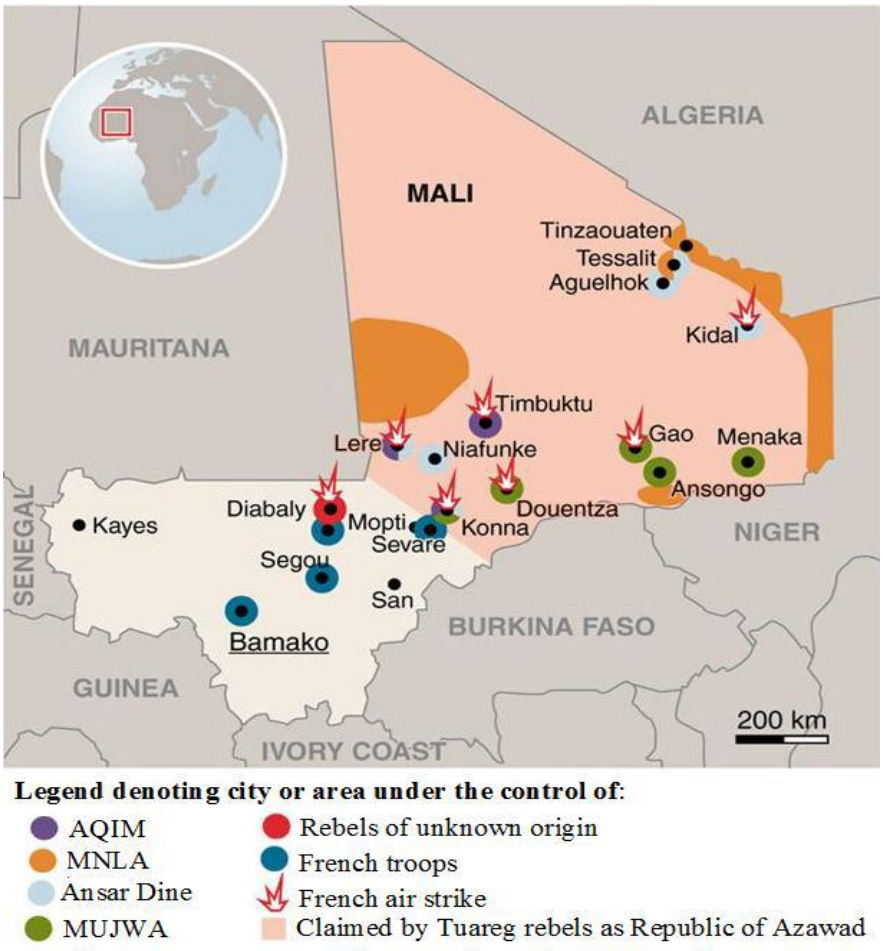


Figure 2: Map of Mali Conflict Landscape Showing Stronghold of Forces and Air Strike source: AlJazeera Center for Studies www.http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/

5.3. The government of Mali

According to observers the role of the Malian state in the current crisis needs to be analyzed in light of its commitment to deal with the multi dimensional security problem in the northern Mali. Around 2011 Mali was supposed to be a country to face the immediate impacts of the Libyan crisis in North Africa. This was owing to the weak security policy of president ATT concerning the vulnerable northern region. Particularly the flaws associated with the project identified as Special program for Peace, security and Development in northern Mali, known in its French acronym as PSPDN is supposed to have significant connection with the current crisis. The purpose of the project is to establish new Secure Development and Governance center at a strategically selected areas in northern Mali with the cost of €50 million by the joint contribution of France, Canada and the European Union which had the vision of reaffirming the state's effective presence in the region thought to be withdrawn since the propagation of different armed groups identified with interests ranging from "self determination" to institutionalizing radical Islam across the Sahel. But to the contrary the project under the direct supervision of ATT had yielded considerable odds in the region (ICG 2012).

From the very beginning the stated project was conceived without concern about the response of the local population which merely entailed the "southern" military presence in the north. Besides ATT's direct involvement in the leadership of the operation at the expense of stakeholders within the government itself (i.e., ministers responsible for security affairs) had created significant problem. The other point worth mentioning is the supposed misunderstanding between the donors and the president over the expectations of outcome of the project as perceived by observers of the region. Accordingly the formers' intention lies on the strengthening of previous peace agreement while the latter aimed at constructing capacity to deal with the security threat at the expense of the previous agreements. Consequently the project easily fell prey to the criticism of the local advocacy networks operating in the region and they exploited the situation to agitate the local people against the government by capitalizing on different grievances associated with the project. These included the lack of participation of the local population in the

program, the scheduling of the implementation of close to the presidential election, the disproportionate allocation of resources to the security rather than to development and the corruption that the project had the potential to generate (ICG 2012). Consequently there observed a trend of distrust on the part of the population towards the government forces in the region. Together with other related factors this contributed for the exacerbation of crisis situations already getting ground in the region.

On the other front the government of ATT was frequently criticized for the way it was handling its armed force. It was reported that the military was suffering from underfunding, nepotism, corruption, under training and poor payment (McGregor Andrew, 2012). In addition to this it was also noted that the military is poorly armed even to the extent as claimed by Cristiani Dario, & Riccardo Fabiani, that there was allegation referring to the fact that there were about 1500 guns available for 3000 soldiers operating in the north (Cristiani Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, 2013). Furthermore there is also a trend in which section of the military particularly the leadership involving in the business of drug and hostage trafficking in collaboration with the Islamic groups. Therefore following the state's ineffective response to the attack launched by the rebel forces in January 2012, the military under the leadership of Captain Amadou Sanogo promptly resorted to violent take over power from the civil administration by justifying its action in the weakness of ATT's administration concerning handling the security threat in the north and the high level of the rampant corruption identified with it. Furthermore the junta referring itself as the National Committee for the Re establishment of Democracy and Restoration of the State known in its French acronym as CNRDRE suspended the constitution ahead of planned presidential election (Shivit Bakrania, 2013).

The military coup provided an opportunity for the Tuareg secessionists, who had by then formed an alliance with the Islamic groups to tighten their military control over large parts of northern Mali. In April 2012 Tuareg separatist rebels, now formally constituted as the MNLA and in alliance with Ansar ed-Din, seized control of the whole of northern Mali and declared an independent Tuareg state of Azawad (Francis David , 2013). This is

the height of the crisis which provoked regional, continental and international attention to what is going on in the state of Mali.

5.4. France

It is supposed that there is historical attachment between France and its ex colonies in West Africa. Indeed it seems sometimes a norm for some of francophone African states to seek French military assistance to deal with internal security threats (Samuel Decalo, 1989). Accordingly the French are always ready to act at in times of emergencies to these states despite some challenges from regional organizations and the African union. Concerning their involvement in the current Malian crisis the French referred to the request of the interim president Dioncounda Traore to deal with the northern rebels. In fact their military involvement to some extent seems vital given the weakness of the Malian military in the face of the combined forces of Islamic groups and ethnic separatists and the fact that the regional and continental initiative was to slow to be operational. Hence the French swiftly launched a military operation which they called "Operation Serval"on January 11, 2013 (Alexander.Thurston & Andrew Lebovich, 2013).

The real motivation of French military intervention in the Malian crisis according to observers is very much related to protecting its economic and strategic interests. Strategically the France was concerned about the natural resource of Mali particularly the gas and other mineral resources in the interior part of the country which is close to the Algerian oil field (Al Jazeera, 2013). In line with this it is supposed that the French were concerned about their economic interest in the country and especially to the neighboring Niger. In Niger they had uranium mines which are thought to be the major source of raw material for the French nuclear industry and for which France is prominent in the world, particularly its export of electric city. Therefore the spillover of the current crisis of Mali to adjacent state of Niger meant the jeopardy of this grand French economic interest which became more likely to occur after the kidnapping of employees of Areva, a French nuclear company, across the border of Niger and taken to Mali for a ransom (Francis

David ,2013). Besides the French were also threatened by the perceived expansion of "terrorism" across the Sahel which would be detrimental to its national interest that can be manifested in different forms. For instance it is estimated that there about 6000 French citizens living in Mali and they are mostly targets of kidnapping operations launched by the al-Qaida linked groups operating in the Sahel (Freedom C & Thurston A 2013).

There are critics often reflected by analysts in the region concerning the French military intervention. From the outset the military intervention does not have the unanimous support from officials within the rank of the Malian government. While the interim president, the man responsible for the request of the intervention is in favor of the French, the junta leader captain Amadou Sonogo who had considerable public influence in Bamako is indifferent towards the intervention owing to his suspicion about the political support the French had to his opponent (interim president) (Al Jazeera, 2013). Another controversial issue was the way the French were dealing with the MNLA. They launched the an operation to liberate kidal, the strong hold of MNLA, by excluding the Malian army from the scene, which raised confusion among the Malians who are not affiliated with MNLA, that are the French are helping Mali recapture its lost territory? In deed the French had friendly relationship with MNLA since the beginning of its existence. It had active political contact in Paris and its activities are disseminated through a web site known by the name"Toumost press". Furthermore the French saw MNLA as a legitimate partner in the" war on terror" and admitted its presence in negotiations pertinent to the region(ICG 2012).In addition to these MNLA itself also openly declared that it would cooperate with the French in the military operation against the "terrorists" in any form.

Finally there are observers who are concerned about the possibility of another Afghanistan or Somalia in the Sahel given the fact that as the French forces are able to drive out the Islamic groups from their strong hold in the north, they will resort to urban guerrillas or tactics such as drive-by-shooting, targeted assassinations, gruesome beheading of captured forces, use of improvised devices and suicide bombing against targets. Added to this is the presence of men affiliated with the Islamic groups who had experiences in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq (Freedom C & Thurston, A 2013).

Regarding this situation the position paper of Al Jazeera center for studies makes its conclusion in the following quote

> *"…many obstacles challenge the military intervention driven by the intent to protect French interests in Azawad. However, it is an intervention that could, for the region and the French, open doors of a war whose ends are unknown. It is unknown where it might lead"* (Al Jazeera, 2013 :5).

5.5. Groups identified with ethnic causes

5.5.1. Arab militias

The Arabs in northern Mali were thought to be in harmony with the notion of secular state and they are concerned about the possible domination by the Tuaregs. Hence they resorted to armed struggle representing themselves by the National front for the Liberation of Azawad, known in it French acronym as FNLA or also sometimes referred as al-Jabhah al- Arabiya meaning "The Arab Front and Bérabiche Arab militias, owing allegiance to the Marabout tribe (Andrew McGregor, 2012). They are supposed to be perusing non secessionist and non Islamic agenda. Furthermore it reported that they need northern Malians self determine their aspiration (i.e., autonomy, independence or the statuesque) through a certain legitimate means such as referendum (Ying, 2013).

5.5.2. Ganda Koy and Ganda Iso

The Ganda koy movement was established in 1990,$_s$ following the second Tuareg rebellion to advance the cause of the Songhai ethnic group. It was created in response to the Tuareg attack of its locality and the perceived marginalization in the previous agreements between the government and the Tuaregs (Benjaminsen ,2008). In the events of the current crisis among the leaders of the group known by the name Mohammed n'Tissa Maiga urged members to rearm themselves in the face of the new Tuareg threat and it was alleged that the group has got support from the Malian army in undertaking its operation (Arieff, 2013).

The Ganda Iso (Ganda Izo) is assumed literally to mean “the son of the Land” is an other ethnic based movement mostly affiliated with the Fulani. It was established around 2009 with leaderships segmented in to the political and military wing identified with Seydou Cisse and Sergeant Amadou Diallo respectively (Andrew McGregor, 2012). In similar fashion with the Ganda Koy, the Ganda Iso also made its military operation against the Tuaregs and the Islamic groups in the currently ongoing crisis.

6. Consequences of the crisis

Due to the ongoing crisis, Mali is experiencing multifaceted troubles that plagued the nation’s capacity to remain as a viable state. It is possible to observe the consequences of the crisis in light of the dimensions of social economic and political realities.

6.1. Social/ Humanitarian Consequences

6.1.1. Migration /Refugee/

It is usual to observe the fact that the first response of people in the outbreak of conflict is to fled the region where turmoil prevails. Accordingly Apart from loss of life, the armed conflict in Mali, particularly in the north triggered large scale population displacement. According to Melissa, since the beginning of the crisis the total number of people displaced from their locality is estimated to more than 400,000 with about 282,548 displaced internally while about 175,211 were migrated to the neighboring states of Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Algeria before the French military intervention together with 22,000 and 14,000 displaced out of Mali and with in Mali respectively after the intervention (Melissa, 2013). But Arieff Alexis makes the figure relatively to shrink to about a total of 355,000 people were dislocated from their locality (with 200,000 were internally displaced while 155,000 displaced externally) (Arieff, 2013). Furthermore Diana in the research dedicated to the publication of IOM(International Organization for Migration) described that the number of people dislocated as the result of the crisis in Mali amounts to nearly half a million with the figure of 301,027 and 185,144 displaced in respective to internally and externally (Diana C, 2013). Therefore it is possible to

understand the fact that migration is one of the acute troubles that Mali faced as the result of the ongoing crisis.

6.1.2. Food security

Due to the drought that plagued Mali in 2011 a considerable number of the population is already in a state of emergency situation for food. But unfortunately the condition was further worsened by the outbreak of the current crises which raised the number of victims of the food shortage. Accordingly there exist sever situation of food insecurity. Since the beginning of the crisis it is estimated that about 747000 people are victims. Of which 510,000 are people living in the north, the severely affected region (Arieff Alexi, 2013). What makes things even worse is the fact that the ongoing violence blocked the movement of humanitarian agencies that could at least support the emergency situation. Besides, the food situation is steadily deteriorating due to disrupted food supplies, restricted market supplies, dwindling food stocks, increasing prices and diminishing cash resources. Particularly in the northern areas the situation is reported to be more serious that it threatened a huge humanitarian catastrophe (Louiza & Reyhana**,** 2013).

6.1.3. Human Right Abuses

Since the beginning of the crisis it is reported that there were numerous events that demonstrated experiences of crimes against humanity. These includes summary and extra judicial execution of prisoners of war and civilian population, rapes and related sexual abuses, use of civilians as human shields, enrollment of child soldiers, destruction of places of worship and religious and cultural shrines, pillage of property belonging to civilians and public institutions such as hospitals, schools, tribunals….etc (Moctar M & Florent G, 2012). Christians were persecuted and their churches were destroyed which forced them flee their localities. There are also reports of deliberate and arbitrary beatings, torture and killings committed by different groups involved in the conflict. Apart from these there are also abuses committed in the name of applying shari'a by different Islamic groups operating in the north. Accordingly people accused of drinking alcohol, adultery, owning bars, not dressing in accordance with Islamic code are publicly

flogged and some have their hands cut off (Amnesty International, 2012). Conditions are further exacerbated by the fact that the atrocities by a certain armed group usually provoke the other for retaliation and even the government forces are also implicated, particularly targeting the Tuareg community.

6.2. Economic Consequences

The current Malian crisis is also identified with its adverse effect to the nation's fragile economy. Since the outbreak of the crisis the country is experiencing continued economic recession. Added to this is the restraint of donors for a budgetary support to boost the macro economy of the weakening state. Furthermore the decision of donors to suspend their financial aid amidst of the ongoing crisis had a drastic impact up on the production sector of the economy in particular, the construction and public work sector. The deteriorating security situation also significantly hampered the intensity of travels to Mali. This had a considerable impact on commerce, tourism, hotel and other related service giving sector of the state's economy. Consequently the government resource and expenditures declined in a significant amount. With this development the nation's economy demonstrated a recession that could be manifested by the economic growth rate of -2.1% in 2012 compared to its growth rate of 4.3% in 2011(IMF, 2013). .

The inflation rate had also showing a trend of rising up that is estimated to 5.3% in 2012 compared to 3.5% in 2011. This was particularly reported to be owing to the rising price of food and fuel. Consequently there observed the deterioration of the tertiary sector of the economy manifested by the closure of hotels, tourist establishments, and a decline in foreign trade. The secondary sector also had suffered significantly, particularly the construction industry. Especially it is the Tax revenue that was hit hard by the economic recession in 2012. Budget aid is uncertain until a clear roadmap towards democratic elections emerges. The humanitarian crisis caused by the displacement of people to the south of the country and neighboring countries puts upwards pressure on social spending. A military intervention to regain control of the north of the country necessitated an increase in military spending. As the result the government is resorted to take actions consistent with austerity measures that focused on expenditure on priority area such as

paying wages, pensions, student grants, army and security expenses, education, health and social protection. But still the investment in the public sector remained declined significantly (IMF, 2013).

Another aspect of the crisis accountable to the state's economic setback is the loss of about CFAF 18 billion, (which is estimated to be 3.5% of the state's GDP) from banks through theft of bank notes, looting and increase in non performing loss in 2012(IMF, 2013). Finally it is expected that the existing fragile socio-political consensus in the nation would discourage confidence on investors and donors that will result in a further slowdown of economic growth.

6.3. Political consequences

The explosion of the current political turmoil in Mali according to some observers of the region is an incident that exposed the superficial nature of Mali's democracy praised to be deviant in the dynamics of regional West African politics. The military junta that staged the coup in March did not face any popular discontent given the fact that it removed a political class identified as corrupt and inefficient. Even those actors from regional and international community seemed more inclined to endorsing somehow relatively a non violent departure of the incumbent government rather than restoring its legitimacy. However the continued advance of the northern rebels made it clear the fact that even the coup makers were also far from military efficiency to handle the security of the north on which they put their excuse to overthrow the ATT's government. Furthermore their presence in the political scene in the immediate aftermath of the coup triggered tension in the central administration of the state and there observed a split of political and military forces in the capital Bamako between those who were pro-junta and that of those against it. Major political parties represented in the National Assembly with the exception of African Solidarity for Democracy and Independence known in its French acronym as SADI are against the coup d'état. There were also groups identified with in a big political umbrella known by the name Coordination of Patriotic Organizations of Mali (COPAM) who are in favor of the political change brought by the coup (ICG,

2012). Consequently the government remained in state of paralyze and became practically unable to handle the security tension in the north.

The northern part which is identified with the question of self- determination and religious aspirations is also suffering from recurrent shift of alliances between different competing groups. So, situations are changing so rapidly that it is difficult to identify a certain political force to be in reference for a further political engagement to decide on the fate of the region. Particularly the emergence of ethnic militias in the excuse of self defense agenda is exacerbating the security tension prevailing in the region (Wolfram & Denis, 2013)

Hence, the political landscape of the current situation in Mali according to observers could be summarized as a state in which there exist the Tuareg clan Politics, a contested multi party system based in Bamako, international domains of Franco- African relations and the ideology and networks of global jihad. Consequently there are groups claiming the fact that the coup completed the disintegration process of the Malian state that had already lost its territorial integrity due to the control of the north by the Tuaregs and the different Islamic groups (ICG, 2012). But this seems hardly a reality since most of the territories in the north were regained thanks to the French military intervention and the developments related with undertaking of the nationwide election. Despite these state of affair there exist a threat of loss of sovereignty to non state actors such as ethnic rebels and the Islamic groups in the north given the fragile political viability of evolving state structure in Bamako (Melissa, 2013). Some critics go further even describing the threat of emergence of another Afghanistan in West Africa given the fact that the country is becoming totally dependent on foreign military intervention to handle its security problems and the spreading of al-Qaida linked Islamic groups which are often targets of "anti-terrorism" campaign of the western powers (Guillaume L, 2013)

7. Regional implication of the Malian crisis

The current conflict in Mali is assuming repercussions in proximate as well as distant neighbors that shaped the course of events in the direction of generating regional security

threat. The level of security threat posed by the current Malian crisis can be described in light of the general security implication it has on regional context of west and North Africa and its particular impact on the Sahel. According to some observers the potential of the security threat posed by the current events in Mali emanate from the possibility that the nation would be relegated to a failed state owing to its inability to deal with the age old ethnic contradictions and the growing influence of religious radicalism that will make the state a center from where activities detrimental to regional security could be directed to disturb the statuesque (Francis, 2013).The current events in Mali are demonstrating the fact that the dynamics of global jihad apart from its previous area of operation in south Asia is getting ground in North Africa and the Sahel too.

The conflict in Mali is particularly drawing neighboring states to respond to the spillover of security threats. The influx of refugee and the different units of Islamic rebels in the territories of these states is becoming source of threat to the national security and political instability to them. They have thus suffered and will continue to suffer from the fallout of the crisis. Victims of the dynamics of the crisis include states from regional west and North Africa in general and states from the Sahel in particular. Specially the issue of ethnic secessionism with its declared objective of self determination is assumed to have impact on the unity and integrity of the neighbor states, like Niger, Mauritania, Chad, Senegal, Cote d' Ivoire, Guinea, Algeria, Morocco and Libya (Elhadj O, 2012). Furthermore with its associated threats of religious radicalization, the crisis in Mali has also security implication to Nigeria (Francis David, 2013). For the sake of clarity the researcher tried to portray national security concerns of some of these states in connection with the Malian crisis in brief detail which includes cases of Niger, Mauritania, Algeria and Nigeria.

7.1. Niger

Niger's national security concern in relation to the Malian crisis emanates from its similar domestic issue identified with Tuareg ethnic issue and its geographical proximity to Mali sharing a common border area. The influx of separatist rebels from northern Mali is threatening to trigger ethnic tension by the Nigerian Tuaregs. Besides the retreating

armed religious groups from their base in northern Mali to areas adjacent to the territory of Niger in order to conduct guerillas against the French and the African union forces is a major threat to the nation's political stability and territorial integrity. Furthermore there is already allegation that a new armed Tuareg organization has declared that the conflict in Niger would begin soon (Marchal, 2012). In similar fashion in Mali there are also groups involved in the security forces of Gaddafi in Niger too who flocked back with considerable combat experience and possibly create havoc to security situation. Even though the government of Niger contrary to its Malian counterpart tried to disarm the soldiers coming from Libya it is difficult to conclude the fact that it was able to conduct total disarmament. Particularly the presence of those different armed groups in northern Mali with their associated fortunes in accumulating resources was expected to encourage these soldiers to follow their suit in Niger.

Despite the fact that the Nigerian authority are relatively vigilant enough to make arrangement to extend the political platform so as to address the possible ethnic dissatisfaction of its Tuareg population as well as measures of disarming disenfranchised soldiers of the Gaddafi forces, there is a growing threat that Niger will be engulfed by the multi faceted effect of the Malian political crisis.

7.2. Mauritania

By virtue of its location as the northern neighbor to Mali and particularly its proximity to the perceived territory of Azowad, Mauritania is another nation expected to face the effects of the turmoil in Mali. Especially the context of Mauritanian security concern in light of the Malian political crisis is relatively complex to discern by observing ongoing political developments on the ground. On the one hand the Mauritanian authorities are claiming the fact that the political crisis in Mali has nothing to do with their nation's national security, hence remaining neutral. But on the other hand there is allegation that the Mauritanian government is supporting the cause of the Tuareg in the ongoing Malian crisis. Observers refer to the statement made by Mauritanian foreign minister Hamadi ould Hamid which espoused that the Tuaregs issue is about identity, to support their argument concerning the Mauritanian stance on the situation in Mali (Elhadj O, 2012).

There are also allegations that the Mauritanian military and security apparatus is secretly supporting the activities of the Tuaregs in northern Mali. However most of the arguments concerning the Mauritanian position in the ongoing Malian crisis are based on unofficial evidences, and in fact they are a little more than allegation.

Concerning the possible threat that the Malian crisis will entail on the Mauritanian national security, it is expected that the growing ethnic tension between the Arab and black population is going to be exacerbated as the result of the stimulating effect of the struggle of separatism by the Malian Tuaregs. It is reported that there are persistent calls made by organizations dedicated to the cause of black population in Mauritania for separation from the Mauritanian entity by referring to the difference in identity and the social and political marginalization of the blacks as a base for justification (Elhadj O, 2012).

7.3. Nigeria

Although Nigeria is not geographically located to share a common border with Mali, it was deeply concerned about events taking place in Malian state. The rationale behind this is the threat posed by the Nigerian religious radical groups, among them, the group known by the name Boko Haram. According to some reports, some of the religious group operating in northern Mali, particularly, AQIM is providing training on armed insurgency aimed at spreading jihad for Boko Haram in northern Nigeria. More over Nigeria is anxious about the possibility of the collapse of state order in Mali as the result of the current crisis that would entail the fact that it is going to be a safe haven for the breeding of different radical religious groups and probably a base for armed insurgency against the territorial integrity of Nigeria. The threat became more practical when a Nigerian armed religious group known by the name Ansaru kidnapped French citizens in northern Cameroon, on the border with Nigeria and on March 10, 2013 the same group killed foreign hostages it seized in the northern Nigerian state of Bouchi (Francis David, 2013). Therefore it is evident that Nigeria is committed to the undertakings of crisis management in Mali thorough the good office of ECOWAS.

7.4. Algeria

Algeria's connection to the Sahel in general and Mali in particular is relatively motivated by its age old concern of maintaining its own territorial integrity in the face of the dynamics of ethno-religious threats associated with its Maghreb neighbors and states in the Sahel. Concerning Mali Algeria had been involved in crisis management since the days of the beginning of Tuareg rebellion particularly in the period 1991-1995 and 2006-2009 (Arieff Alexis 2012).

With respect to the current Malian crisis the state of Algeria is concerned about the growing influence of different religious group in its border areas with Mali. Among them are there are groups that had their origin in the Algerian civil war of 1990_s, particularly an organization identifying itself as Le Group Salafiste Pour La Predication et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) after renaming itself as AQIM since 2007 is playing a significant role in the politics of the Sahel. Most of the leadership of the group is dominated by Algerian Nationals. Furthermore the religious groups had established training and logistical base in the areas of Ageulhok and Tessalit, which are near the southern border of Algeria (Francis David, 2013). This created tension on the Algerian part that on the event of escalation of the conflicts there would be a possibility of the retreat of those religious combatants to its territory. This fear became evident when some of the fighters fleeing the French air strike in Timbuktu and Gao retreated to the mountainous area around Kidal which is close to the Algerian border. In addition to this there had been an incident of kidnapping committed by the Islamic groups against foreigners in the In Amenas Gas Plant in Algeria in response to the French military intervention in Mali. Therefore these developments threatened the national security of Algeria and it is consciously following unfolding events in the ongoing Malian crisis.

8 .Role of AU in Mali As an Actor in Crisis Management

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which has been set up for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict, oversees peace support operations and can institute sanctions as well as facilitate humanitarian action. Core to the new organization's vision is therefore the active promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent as emphasized by Heads of State and Government in the preamble to the Constitutive Act which reads as "conscious of the fact that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and of the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda" (African Union 2000).

In order to carry out its peace and security mandate, that would enable effective implementation of the decisions taken in the areas of conflict prevention, peace-making, peace support operations and intervention, as well as peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, the AU adopted The Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in Durban, South Africa on 9 July 2002. Accordingly the Peace and Security Council Secretariat provides the operational and administrative support required by the PSC, to enable it and its subsidiary bodies to perform their functions effectively. The Secretariat acts as the storehouse of the institutional memory on the work of the PSC and facilitates its interaction with other organizations and institutions on issues of peace and security. The Defense and Security Division (DSD), with in the PSC addresses long-term, cross-cutting defense and security issues. The DSD is in charge of issues relating to arms control and disarmament (small arms and light weapons, land mines and chemical weapons), counter terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, maritime safety and security and other strategic security issues, including Security Sector Reform and Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes. The DSD conducts research, and produces policy documents and other publications and implements related projects in consultation with Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and the International Community, Partners,

Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders. The Division also plays a key role in the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

Regionally, the APSA relies on the continent's regional economic communities (RECs).The relationship between the AU and the RECs is supposed to be hierarchical but mutually reinforcing. AU harmonizes and coordinates the activities of the RECs in the peace and security realm, in part through the contact of officers from the RECs serving within the AU Commission in Addis Ababa. At the continental level, a variety of institutions coordinated by the AU's Peace and Security Council comprise the APSA (Paul, 2011).

Based on the above legal and institutional framework AU opted to unfold efforts to deal with situations of the Malian crisis in spite of the fact that the events were too complicated to be handled in such institutional capacity. Some claim that the French intervention in Mali once again exposes the limitations of African states and regional organizations in dealing with continental problems. However, both AU and the regional organization (ECOWAS) have tried to involve in the mediation and resolution of the Malian crisis from its beginning. With the outbreak of the secessionist rebellion and military coup, both bodies imposed a range of political, diplomatic and economic sanctions on the "illegal" regime in Mali and mobilized international support not to recognize both the separatist Azawad state and the military junta in a bid to force the military regime to return the country to civilian democratic and constitutional rule (ECOWAS, 2012).

In line with the above commitment AU submitted a Strategic Concept for the Resolution of the Crises in Mali to the UN Secretary-General, which supports the bilateral efforts taking place under the auspices of ECOWAS. The strategic concept was presented as an important step toward greater coordination between Mali and the international community in efforts to restore stability in Mali and the Sahel-Sahara region as a whole (Mindzie Affa'a, 2013). The crisis in Mali was a serious violation of the Charters and

Constitutive Acts of both AU and ECOWAS relating to respect for the unity and territorial integrity of member states and the outlawing of coup d'états. To this end, the AU, together with ECOWAS, attempted to search for a political settlement of the crisis via a peace mediation process facilitated by the president of Burkina Faso. Furthermore AU played a central role in the preparation of Peace Plan and Strategic Concept of Operation for Military Intervention which formed the basis for the French-backed UN Security Council Resolution 2085 that authorized a military intervention known by the name African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) to end the Malian crisis (UNSC, 2012b). The AFISMA project is a comprehensive initiative that includes civilian, military and police concept of operations. Its strategic objectives include:

- Achieve full operational capability of AFISMA through coordinated support by stakeholders for force generation, training, equipping, technical assistance and funding.
- Facilitate mobilization of resources to support the MDSF including coordination of contributions to the Trust Fund for Peace and Security in Mali.
- Support the Malian authorities in the restoration of State authority and preservation of Mali's national unity and territorial integrity.
- Protect the population with respect to international human rights and international humanitarian and refugee law, and with adherence to the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.
- Reduce threats posed by terrorist groups and transnational criminal networks in Mali.
- Establish a safe and secure environment in Mali.
- Support the Malian authorities in implementing the road map for the Transition.
- Assist the Malian authorities in the reform of the defense and security sectors as required and within capability.
- Facilitate establishment of conditions for the engagement of the wider international community in Mali.

The overall mission of AFISMA is to conduct security operations in order to recover and stabilize Mali, and contribute to the creation of the necessary conditions for a stable, democratic Malian State exercising authority over its national territory and assuming its

responsibilities in the protection of the population, properties and livelihood means, and addressing regional security challenges. The total number of man power envisaged within AFISMA is about 9620 with the corresponding number of Civilians (173), Military (8,859) and the Police (590). The implementation of the mission is classified into three phases as:

i. Complete deployment
ii. Stabilization
iii. Transition

AU received a total of about 455.53 million US dollar pledge for its operation under AFISMA with contribution from Japan (120 USD), USA (96 USD), EU (75 USD), France (63 USD), AU (50 USD), Germany, Bahrain (10 USD), South Africa (10 USD), Ethiopia (5 USD), Nigeria (5 USD) and Ghana (3 USD) (Mehari T, 2013).

The other related concern is the issue of human right particularly in places that are directly affected by the crisis. Accordingly the African Commission on Human and People's Rights reflected its deep concern on the situation of human right in Mali in its resolution (217) at its 51st session held from 18 April-2 May 2012 in Banjul, The Gambia. Besides among the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 327th meeting held on 14 July 2012, directly stated that it

> *"Strongly condemns the violations of human rights perpetrated by the various armed, terrorist and criminal groups which occupy the northern part of Mali, and the senseless and unacceptable destruction of the cultural, spiritual and historical heritage of this region, notably in Timbuktu, which is a serious violation of international law, and urges that the perpetrators be brought to justice before the relevant international jurisdictions" (African Union 2012).*

Consequently AU decided to deploy a team of human right observers within the framework of African- led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). Following

the deployment of four Human Rights Observers to the Northern Mali town of Gao, on 07 June 2013, a second team of Observers, comprised of two ladies and two men, deployed to Timbuktu, 14 June 2013 (African Union 2013). The Timbuktu team is accompanied by the Head of the AFISMA Human Rights Component, Ms. Reine Alapini Gansou, a Lawyer and Law Professor from Benin, who is a Member of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders in Africa and a Member of the UN Permanent Court of Arbitration. Prior to their deployment on the ground, the Human Rights Observers were briefed on the political, security and human rights situations in Mali; the special situation of vulnerable groups, including women, children and displaced persons; and strategies and techniques for monitoring prisons and detention centers. The Observers have spent time in Bamako, meeting with Malian Government and technical officials, non-state and international human rights players, detainees and members of the International Community, with a view to creating the proper environment for implementation of their mandate.

9 .Challenges of the African union in Dealing with the Malian security Crisis

Since its establishment the African Union in general and the African Peace and Security Council in particular is promoting the idea of "African Solution for African problem". But the achievement on the ground is far from significant. Ironically most of the problems specially related with peace and security are being addressed by the former colonial powers that are sometimes part of the problem themselves. In this respect the Franco-phone West Africa is typical example. This state of affair is a result of different but inter-related factors that limited the potential of African states individually and in organized manner, like the African Union to deal with issues of continental peace and security. Among all the question of capacity is by far important that needs due concern. Bewketu further clarifies this in his statement about the limitation of the African union in handling matters of continental peace and security in such a manner that " ….the main constraint of the African union in general and the peace and security council in Particular

is the lack of adequate financial resources to support its overall activities" (Bewketu, 2012). In addition to that Mahamadou Nimaga consular of the embassy of Mali in Ethiopia has also confirmed the idea that the African Union was short of capacity to deal with the Malian crisis on timely basis. Amamadou Diongue, an informant from the African union adds that besides the capacity issue there is also commitment problem on member states within the AU to deal with issue of peace and security in the continent. Therefore as can be inferred from the description of funding for AFISMA stated in page 66, the African Union continues to be fully dependant on donors, such as USA and EU, to finance its institutional apparatus and running cost of its operations. The growing dependence on external funds and expertise implies that actors such as the European Union and the United States are increasingly reversing the prospect of "African solution for African problems".

According to some observers the swift military intervention of the French in an effort to avert the Malian crisis entailed once again the weakness of the AU and ECOWAS to take on responsibility in crisis management. In this respect Mehari says "…Like the Libyan crisis, Africa's failure to deal with its own problem invited external intervention, and France has done what is within its capacity and interest" (Mehari T, 2013). Although, AU designed an initiative by the name AFISMA in an effort to deal with the security crisis in Mali its actual deployment on ground proves to be slow notwithstanding the emergency nature of the situation. This is due to a number of complicated factors, mostly related with the issue of capacity. Pierre Buyoya, head of the AFISMA recognizes the delay and he attributed it to the logistical and coordination problems of countries providing troops for the project. He further clarifies the logistical difficulties by referring to the insufficient equipments and shortage of transportation facility (Pierre Buyoya, 2013). According to Mehari a serious challenge for AFISMA is insufficient and unpredictable funding for its operation in the face of organized crime and arms supplies prevalent in northern Mali (Mehari T, 2013).

Furthermore another challenge AU is facing in Mali is to strike a balance between the aspirations of different actors, involved in the crisis management. For instance the

interest of regional states may contradict with the wishes of the international forces which prefer military option to deal with issues of organized crime and "Terrorism" in Mali while states like Algeria are anxious about the military solution in light of its national security concern. Beside another important issue worth mentioning is the attitude of the Malian politicians and military towards the AU and ECOWAS military mission to deal with the nation's security crisis. They preferred the French military to the continental and regional military in initiative for reasons yet to be explored (Francis David, 2013). Therefore it is possible to say that from the outset AU was not able to struck credibility among Malians that further hampered its search for cooperation from the local communities to facilitate its activities in northern Mali.

While AU is struggling to materialize what has been intended under the AFISMA initiative, there emerges a new tension between it and the UN over the issue of the possible transformation of AFISMA into a UN mandated program of Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (GC, 2013). In the first place there exists lack of common understanding between AU and UN over the nature of the operation of MINUSMA. Here Nimaga remarks that to some extent there exist lack of coordination between AU and UN on what hast to be done practically to harmonize their operation in crisis management in Mali. According to the expectation of AU, MINUSMA is going to be involved in the "counter-terrorism" directly on its capacity while that was not the case in the intention of the UN which aspired to rely on the French military for the possible combat operations. In this respect Diongue argues that the African Union force should take the precedence in combat operations since they are Africans fighting for African issue.

Secondly there lie disagreement between the two organizations (AU and UN) over the issue of appointment of senior mission leadership for MINUSMA, such as head of the mission, his or her two deputies, the force commander and the police commissioner. The third source of tension is over the decision of the UN Security Council which is not in harmony with the request of the AU to create a UN funded support package for AFISMA. The fourth point of disagreement is related with one of the contingent criteria that formed

basis for the deployment of MINUSMA. Accordingly it was stipulated that the deployment will be conducted after the end of major combat operations which made AFISMA unclear about whether it would operate until the end of its mandate (December 2013) or be replaced by MINUSMA some other time. This created some problem on the bureaucratic undertakings particularly in hiring personnel and managing the logistical affairs. The last but not the list is the tension which lies on the fact that the inclusive negotiation for peace in Mali is to be facilitated by the UN secretary General through his Special Representative to Mali that curtailed the hope of AU to play a" central role in crisis management. Here Diongue remarks that the African Union has the legitimacy to take priority in the political dialogue to bring peace to Mali by virtue of legal instruments establishing the Union itself.

Chapter Five

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

10.1. Conclusion

From the discussion made so far it is possible to understand the fact that the crisis in Mali is identified with diverse and complicated political, religious and ethnic factors. In the political front the rampant corruption with the rank of senior government officials coupled with different forms of mal governance and dissension within the military force due to preferential treatment of individuals with respect to issues of payment and promotion were the dynamics that entailed outbreak of the crisis situation. The religious aspect is defined by the continued influx of ideas of radicalism among groups identified with advancing religious cause in a "secular" state and the emergence of different armed Islamic groups in the relatively" ungoverned" northern region of Mali which claimed affiliation with groups identified with" international terrorism". The other concern is the age-old Tuareg ethnic issue in northern Mali. The Tuareg were pressing for self government since the days of French colonialism of the area. These and other interrelated factors precipitated a political crisis defined by the march military coup and the military confrontation in northern Mali between the government in one hand and the Tuareg ethnic secessionists aligned with different armed Islamic groups on the other.

With the outbreak of the turmoil in Mali there had been initiatives generated to deal with the crisis situation. This initiative could be classified as regional, continental and international. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took on the regional response in the going crisis management effort. But its legitimacy and capacity to address the crisis was repeatedly challenged by different section of the Malian public. In fact it had little to do practical undertakings apart from condemning the coup makers in the beginning of the crisis and its institutional resource were not readily available to deal with the emergency situations. The African Union, by virtue of its legitimacy to maintain continental peace and security reacted to the situation in Mali from the outset. As the constitutive act of the Union denies legitimacy for unconstitutional change of government the AU swiftly outlawed the coup makers and discharged the diplomatic

undertaking to mobilize international support for the return of civilian rule in Mali. It also prepared a strategic concept paper jointly with ECOWAS to as part of crisis management initiative. But all these efforts were far from stabilizing the chaotic situation in the country in the beginning of the crisis. The people were in need of any force that can save them from possible threat of casualties in that emergency situation and the African Union was slow for such an undertaking. This was of course due to the institutional and capacity problems that AU is suffering from which curtailed its commitment from being fully practical in Mali. In fact together with ECOWAS, AU had taken several steps in the crises management process in the latter phases of the turmoil both in the political and military front including the project identified as the AFISMA. The other initiative is from the international community. The French unilateral military intervention could be thought as the first practical response in the rank of the international community to deal with the crisis situation and that intervention was relatively successful in averting the military threat from the north and of course in stabilizing the crisis in the capital Bamako. That is why the Malian public as well as the politicians prefer to owe trust to the French than the continental initiative. But according to some observers it is difficult to conclude the fact that French unilateral military intervention is motivated by the sacred solidarity cause given the multitude of national interest they had in the region and therefore it is unlikely to think them as part of lasting solution to the problem. Finally the United Nation had been instrumental in authorizing missions meant for comprehensive approach to bring about peace and stability to Mali.

10.2. Recommendations

In the face of the complicated crisis Mali is suffering from, there exist through tasks to be done in order to realize the sociopolitical reconstruction of the nation and bring about sustainable peace that will entail the harmonious co existence of different ethnic, religious and political groups. In the crisis management initiative the role of various actors is of considerable significance that needs cautious observation given the fact that there are players who are trying to advance their own factional agenda through different units taking part in the ongoing crisis. With respect to suggesting practical alternatives as a way forward the problem, the researcher came up with the following points to be

considered by the Malian state and the different stake holders who are part of the crisis management initiatives.

1. The first and the most important issue to be considered is the question of the Tuareg ethnic problem. given the fact that the nucleus of the current and for that matter the previous political problems in northern Mali is related with the Tuareg dissatisfaction, there should be clear and substantive political settlement of the issue is of paramount importance.
2. There should be an effort clearly distinguish the groups identified with political cause that could be manifested in the quest for self rule or other for those criminal groups operating in northern Mali taking the advantage of the "ungoverned" nature of the region.
3. Given the fact that there are Tuaregs in the neighboring states of Mali and the growing status of criminal groups to attain regional dynamism in the Sahel, organized regional response that involves almost all of border sharing states with Mali by far is another significant measure to be considered.
4. What is more for Malians is the fact that rebuilding statehood on the basis good governance and inclusive political framework will guarantee sustainable peace and security.
5. Apart from constructing the legislative frameworks for maintenance of continental peace and security, the African Union should take further stapes to build its capacity so that it can practically deal with problems at emergency without delay like the case in Mali.
6. The AU should also harmonize its effort with significant regional and international actors in crisis management, particularly with the UN in dealing with issues of continental peace and security.

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