

Research Briefing

3 July 2023

By Louisa Brooke-Holland

UN ends peacekeeping force in Mali



Summary

- 1 What is MINUSMA?
- 2 A “peacekeeping operation where there is no peace to keep”
- 3 Why is Mali calling for MINUSMA to leave?
- 4 Recent developments in Mali

Image Credits

MINUSMA military operation in Ansongo – 23 February 2015 by Mission de l'ONU au Mali - UN Mission in Mali. Photo: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)/ Marco Dormino Flickr home page. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) / image cropped.

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing [‘Legal help: where to go and how to pay’](#) for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Sources and subscriptions for MPs and staff

We try to use sources in our research that everyone can access, but sometimes only information that exists behind a paywall or via a subscription is available. We provide access to many online subscriptions to MPs and parliamentary staff, please contact hoclbraryonline@parliament.uk or visit commonslibrary.parliament.uk/resources for more information.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

Contents

Summary	4
1 What is MINUSMA?	6
2 A “peacekeeping operation where there is no peace to keep”	7
2.1 Tensions with the Malian transitional authorities	8
2.2 The Wagner group in Mali	8
2.3 UK and other countries withdraw troops from Mali	9
2.4 The status quo “is not an option”	9
2.5 Security Council end mandate	11
2.6 The UK Government’s position	11
3 Why is Mali calling for MINUSMA to leave?	12
4 Recent developments in Mali	14
4.1 A new constitution: More powers to the President	14
4.2 Humanitarian and security situation	15

Summary

The decade-long UN peacekeeping mission in Mali has come to an end. [The UN Security Council decided to terminate the mission's mandate on 30 June 2023](#), at the request of Mali's transitional authorities. Personnel will be withdrawn by 31 December 2023.

“MINUSMA is a peacekeeping operation where there is no peace to keep”

UN Secretary-General

January 2023

The withdrawal was not expected. The [Security Council had been anticipated to extend the mission's mandate](#) for a further year when it met on 16 June 2023.

However, the transitional authorities in Mali, which have run the country since taking power in a coup in May 2021, have [requested the mission leave “without delay”](#).

The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has been in Mali since 2013. While its mandate has changed over the years, its main priorities have been to support the political process and protect civilians. Its mandate has been renewed annually by the Security Council, most recently in June 2022.

Rising tensions between Mali and the UN

The call to leave follows rising tensions between the authorities and the UN mission, MINUSMA, in recent years. The UN says Mali has restricted the mission's ability to operate, rejecting flight requests and limiting troop rotations.

The [UK withdrew its 250-strong contingent from the mission](#) half-way through its planned deployment. France ended its separate decade-long counter-terrorism mission in 2022. Both countries cited Mali's close relationship with the Russian Wagner Group and [“obstructions” by the Malian authorities](#).

The [Mali transitional authorities have questioned the effectiveness of MINUSMA](#), arguing that ten years after its deployment “the fact remains that the security situation has deteriorated.” They have requested MINUSMA engage in counter-terrorism operations and provide more support to the Malian armed forces.

António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, has [described MINUSMA as a “peacekeeping operation where there is no peace to keep.”](#) Having reviewed the mission, [he said maintaining the status quo is not an option](#). In June 2023, [he presented the Security Council with three options](#), ranging from increasing the number of uniformed personnel (currently 15,000, including

13,000 military personnel), retaining the current number of personnel but with a reduced footprint, and withdrawing the military elements and focusing wholly on the political mission.

Referendum favours new constitution

In June Malians voted in favour of a new constitution. This is a key stage in the planned transition to a democratically elected government. Legislative elections are expected later in 2023 and a presidential election in February 2024, with the transitional authorities handing over power by March 2024.

The [new constitution will expand the powers of the president](#), allowing them to determine policy and appoint remove the Prime Minister and cabinet. It also allows the president in “exceptional measures” in the event of a “serious and immediate” threat to the country.

A decade-long crisis

The current crisis in Mali has its roots in the events of 2012, when northern separatists and Islamist armed groups forced government forces out of northern Mali, and the military overthrew the Government. Fresh elections in 2013 and 2018, and a peace accord in 2015 between the Government and two northern separatist movements, brought hope of stability.

However, a continued Jihadist insurgency and attacks by a myriad of armed groups, means little progress was made in implementing the 2015 accords. [Anti-government demonstrations by a coalition of opposition forces](#) led to the removal of President Kéïta in summer 2020.

A second coup in May 2021 saw the removal of interim president Bah N’Daw and his prime minister. Colonel Assima Goïta, N’daw’s former deputy, and one of the people behind the 2020 coup, took over and [was sworn in as interim president in June 2021](#).

Mali faces significant governance challenges: the [state has limited control of the territory](#), with a presence in only 22% of central and northern regions.

There is also little security: civilians face threats from Islamist groups, organised criminal networks, competition between pastoralists and farmers over limited resources, and long-standing intracommunity conflicts. [Over 375,000 people are believed to be internally displaced](#) and 8.8 million people are estimated to need humanitarian assistance and protection.

1

What is MINUSMA?

MINUSMA is the UN stabilisation mission in Mali, formally known as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

It was set up in April 2013 by UN [Security Council Resolution 2100](#) (PDF). Initially its focus was to support the stabilisation of the country and the political transition process, protect civilians, promote human rights, support humanitarian assistance and cultural preservation, and national and international justice. It currently numbers just over 15,000 uniformed personnel, including 13,000 military peacekeepers.¹

Its mandate has been amended over the intervening years to reflect new realities on the ground, for example to support the implementation of the [Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali in 2015](#) (PDF) (also known as the Algiers Accord or the comprehensive peace agreement). The Security Council has renewed MINUSMA's mandate in successive annual resolutions.²

The mandate was extended to 30 June 2023 by Security Council in resolution 2640, adopted on 29 June 2022.³ The MINUSMA webpage [provides a summary of its current mandate](#).

1 One of the deadliest UN peacekeeping missions

Personnel have been targeted repeatedly by a wide range of armed groups, making it "[one of the most dangerous peacekeeping missions in Africa](#)," according to one analyst.⁴ It is second only to UNIFIL, in Lebanon, in the total number of fatalities.

192 personnel have died because of hostile acts, as of 13 June 2023.⁵

The UN [peacekeeping mission website provides figures](#) up to 30 April 2023. This states that 304 personnel have died whilst serving with MINUSMA since 2013. By comparison, 329 have died serving with UNIFIL since 1978.⁶

¹ [MINUSMA fact sheet](#), UN Peacekeeping, accessed 27 June 2023

² A chronological list can be found on [Security Council Report: UN documents for Mali](#).

³ [UN Security Council Resolution 2640](#) (PDF), 29 June 2022

⁴ Dr Comfort Ero, "[The UK and Sub-Saharan Africa – oral evidence](#)", Lords International Affairs and Defence Committee, 4 March 2020

⁵ [MINUSMA: Personnel](#), accessed 27 June 2023

⁶ [UN Peacekeeping: fatalities](#), accessed 27 June 2023

2 A “peacekeeping operation where there is no peace to keep”

António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, has described MINUSMA as a “peacekeeping operation where there is no peace to keep.”⁷

The Secretary-General reviewed the mission in early 2023. He noted that early political and security gains have, since 2016, been eroded, with a “dramatic increase in violence” by terrorist and criminal networks in northern and central Mali.⁸

He attributes the spread of insecurity to several factors:

Internal governance challenges in Mali, with long-standing grievances of communities or areas that considered themselves marginalized; transnational terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, taking advantage of local conflicts and intracommunity dynamics, as well as of competition over limited resources between pastoralists and farmers, aggravated by climate change; and the prevalence of organized criminal networks fighting to control illicit trafficking routes and lucrative resources, including artisanal gold mining.⁹

Guterres notes that MINUSMA has a peacekeeping mandate, which has put it at odds with calls by some Malian and regional actors for it to undertake combat operations against terrorist groups. He says this means the mission has been “unable to meet the expectations of the Malian population and some regional actors,” with peacekeepers subject of “persistent criticism”.¹⁰

He also describes Mali as “one of the most difficult operating environments for peacekeeping” because of its size, poor state of infrastructure, and insecurity. It can take up to four weeks to resupply the furthest locations, with supply convoys exposed to improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and ambushes. Between July 2013 and January 2023, IEDs killed 103 and wounded 638 uniformed personnel.¹¹

⁷ [Internal review of the UN Multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in Mali](#), United Nations (PDF), 16 January 2023, S/2023/36

⁸ As above

⁹ As above

¹⁰ As above

¹¹ [Internal review of the UN Multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in Mali](#), United Nations (PDF), 16 January 2023, S/2023/36

2.1

Tensions with the Malian transitional authorities

Since the coups of 2020 and 2021 there have been clear tensions between the Malian transitional authorities and MINUSMA. The Secretary-General has chronicled these in his quarterly reports to the UN Security Council throughout 2022 and 2023.¹² These tensions include restrictions on freedom of movement and constraints on mission operations. For example, between 1 April and 11 May 2023, 30% of the mission's requested flights were not authorised (167 of 565 flight requests).¹³

The Secretary-General has also reported disinformation campaigns against MINUSMA in Mali across all types of media.¹⁴ Between April and June 2023 there was a "surge in misinformation and disinformation" against the mission, including calls for violence against staff and premises.¹⁵

2.2

The Wagner group in Mali

The Russian mercenary Wagner Group has reportedly been in Mali since late 2021.¹⁶ The UK, with several other European countries, condemned the deployment at the time, saying it can "only further deteriorate the security situation."¹⁷

The UK has estimated there may be between 1,000 and 1,900 Wagner operatives in Mali, but cautions these numbers are highly uncertain.¹⁸

Following the armed rebellion by mercenary troops led by Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin in Russia over the weekend of 25 to 26 June 2023, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wagner soldiers will remain in Mali (and the Central African Republic).¹⁹

¹² [Situation in Mali, Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 2 June 2022 S/2022/446; [Situation in Mali, Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 3 October 2022, S/2022/731

¹³ [Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 1 June 2023, S/2023/402

¹⁴ [Situation in Mali, Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 3 October 2022, S/2022/731

¹⁵ [Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 1 June 2023, S/2023/402

¹⁶ Centre for Strategic and International Studies, [Tracking the arrival of Russia's Wagner group in Mali](#), 2 February 2022

¹⁷ FCDO, [UK and international partners condemn Wagner Group's plan to deploy mercenaries in Mali](#), 23 December 2021

¹⁸ [HL7577 \[Africa: Wagner Group\]](#), 18 May 2023

¹⁹ [Russian FM Sergei Lavrov says Wagner mercenaries will continue to operate in Africa](#), Euronews, 26 June 2023

2.3

UK and other countries withdraw troops from Mali

The UK Government has accused Wagner of actively seeking to interfere with the UN and French-led missions in Mali.²⁰

On 14 November 2022, James Heapey, the Armed Forces Minister, announced in Parliament that the “UK contingent will be leaving the MINUSMA mission earlier than planned.” He said “[responsibility for all of this sits in Bamako](#)”, citing the coups, the Malian Government’s partnership with the Wagner Group and the restrictions placed on the multinational forces presence. He concluded that “this Government cannot deploy our nation’s military to provide security when the host country’s Government are not willing to work with us to deliver lasting stability and security.”²¹

France, as the former colonial power, had maintained close relations with Mali. However, tensions with the Malian transitional authorities prompted President Macron to end France’s counter-terrorism operation in Mali in 2022. France cited “multiple obstructions” by the authorities as one of the reasons for ending Operation Barkhane and Task Force Takuba.²²

Sweden and Germany also announced the early withdrawal of their forces. In March 2022 Sweden announced it was withdrawing its troops in June 2023, a year earlier than planned.²³ In May 2023 Germany’s parliament approved a final one-year extension to the German deployment, to May 2024.²⁴

Further discussion of the reasons for the UK early withdrawal and wider security situation in Mali and neighbouring countries can be found in Commons Library paper [UK military in the Sahel: Developments in 2022](#), CBP 9634.

2.4

The status quo “is not an option”

The Secretary-General undertook a review of the mission in 2022 to assess how the mission could continue to operate. His review was submitted to the Security Council on 16 January 2023.

²⁰ [HC Deb 14 November 2022 c401](#)

²¹ [HC Deb 14 November 2022 c401](#)

²² [Joint declaration on the fight against the terrorist threat and the support to peace and security in the Sahel and West Africa](#), Elysee, 17 February 2022

²³ [Sweden announces early pullout of troops from UN Mali mission](#), Reuters, 3 March 2022

²⁴ [Germany to withdraw troops from Mali in 2024](#), Politico, 22 November 2022; [Germany extends military mission to Mali for one final year](#), Reuters, 26 May 2023

António Guterres set out three options for reconfiguring MINUSMA, ranging from:

1. increasing the number of personnel to fully implement the mission's mandate.
2. Focusing on strategic priorities and retaining existing resources and troop ceiling but with a reduced footprint.
3. withdrawing the military elements and convert it into a special political mission, with no civilian presence outside of Bamako.²⁵

The Secretary-General discussed these options in his situation report of June 2023. Arguing that “maintaining the status quo is not and cannot be an option,” he recommended the middle option, in which MINUSMA retains its current authorised strength but reconfigures and streamlines to focus on a more limited set of priorities until the political transition period ends in March 2024.²⁶

However, he warned this option, which would involve handing over or closing bases, could be perceived as MINUSMA “abandoning local populations” and risk their takeover by extremist groups.²⁷ He warned withdrawing uniformed personnel entirely (the third option) would “likely result in a serious deterioration of the security situation in Mali.”²⁸

Guterres recommended extending the mandate for a further year.²⁹

The Secretary-General also set out what he called four parameters for effective engagement with the Malian transitional authorities, calling on them to move forward with the political transition, implement the 2015 peace agreement, allow freedom of movement, and fully implement the mandate, including its human rights provisions.³⁰

The Security Council heard from the head of MINUSMA at its meeting on 16 June 2023 when it was expected to renew the mandate. The Council did not reach agreement.³¹

²⁵ [Internal review of the UN Multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in Mali](#), United Nations (PDF), 16 January 2023, S/2023/36; [Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 1 June 2023, S/2023/402

²⁶ [Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 1 June 2023, S/2023/402. In the report he refers to paragraphs 73 to 75 of the review, which refers to option 2(a).

²⁷ [Internal review of the UN Multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in Mali](#), United Nations (PDF), 16 January 2023, S/2023/36

²⁸ As above

²⁹ [Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 1 June 2023, S/2023/402

³⁰ [Internal review of the UN Multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in Mali](#), United Nations (PDF), 16 January 2023, S/2023/36

³¹ UN Security Council, [Amid Endless Violence, Stabilization Mission in Mali Essential for Region's Stability, Special Representative Tells Security Council](#), 16 June 2023, SC/15325

2.5 Security Council end mandate

On 30 June 2023 the Security Council decided to end the mandate, on its last day. In [resolution 2690](#), the mission will now begin the process of transferring its tasks and withdrawing its personnel by 31 December 2023.³²

MINUSMA is authorised to respond to imminent threats of violence to civilians and contribute to the safe civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance until 30 September 2023.

MINUSMA will continue with some of its functions, such as providing security for UN personnel and convoys, until 31 December 2023.

2.6 The UK Government's position

UK deputy permanent representative to the UN, James Kariuki, told the Security Council at its 16 June meeting that MINUSMA “still has an important role to play in supporting the Malian people.”

He said the UK remains committed to supporting MINUSMA's efforts and called on the Malian transitional authorities to allow the mission to fulfil its mandate.³³

Ambassador Barbara Woodward, the UK's Permanent Representative, said during the 30 June meeting that the UK “would not have chosen to withdraw MINUSMA at this moment”, given increasing instability in the Sahel. She also said Mali's partnership with the Wagner Group will not deliver long-term stability or security for the Malian people. She said the UK regretted it was not possible to adopt a “more prudent withdrawal timeline”, nor a mandate to enable MINUSMA to continue to provide support during its drawdown. She also called on the Malian authorities to “deliver on their commitment to the political transition, with free and fair presidential elections in February 2024.”³⁴

³² [Security Council Terminates Mandate of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2690 \(2023\)](#), UN, 30 June 2023 (SC/15341)

³³ [FCDO, UK urges Malian authorities to uphold responsibilities and allow the UN Mission to fulfil its mandate: UK statement at the Security Council, 16 June 2023](#)

³⁴ [FCDO, The UK regrets the decision to withdraw the UN Mission in Mali: UK statement at the Security Council, 30 June 2023](#)

3

Why is Mali calling for MINUSMA to leave?

The Mali transitional authorities have questioned the effectiveness of MINUSMA, arguing that ten years after its deployment “the fact remains that the security situation has deteriorated.”³⁵

Mali outlined its dissatisfaction in its submission to the Secretary-General’s review in December 2022.³⁶

Mali said much of the criticism of MINUSMA concerns its “peacekeeping” role “in a context in which the peace needs to be established rather than kept”. It says it needs to engage in counter-terrorism and offensive actions and patrols.³⁷

The transitional authorities also want MINUSMA to plan jointly with the Malian armed forces, and to share intelligence, provide rations and fuel, medical and casualty evacuations, and transportation and logistics. It does not support an increase in UN personnel numbers.³⁸

Mali also says MINUSMA should prioritise the security aspects of its mandate and place less emphasis on other issues, including what it describes as the “politicization and instrumentalization of the human rights issue.”³⁹ This is in part a reference to the UN report linking the Malian armed forces with the deaths of 500 civilians in Moura (see box 3).

However, at the UN Security Council meeting in June 2023 to discuss renewing the mandate, Abdoulaye Diop, the Malian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said the mission has become part of the problem and called for the withdrawal, without delay, of MINUSMA. He said the mission cannot meet the security challenges and disagreed with the options proposed by the Secretary-General in its review of the mission.⁴⁰

³⁵ [Internal review of the UN Multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in Mali](#), United Nations (PDF), 16 January 2023, S/2023/36, Annex

³⁶ As above

³⁷ As above

³⁸ As above

³⁹ As above

⁴⁰ UN Security Council, [Amid Endless Violence, Stabilization Mission in Mali Essential for Region’s Stability, Special Representative Tells Security Council](#), 16 June 2023, SC/15325

On 23 June, Diop wrote to the Security Council clarifying Mali's request for the Council to adopt "a resolution exclusively on the details of MINUSMA's plan for immediate withdrawal".⁴¹

On 30 June, Mali's representative Issa Konfourou welcomed the Security Council's termination of the mandate and committed to working with the UN to implement the resolution within the timeframe.⁴²

Not everyone in Mali agrees with this position. A coalition of armed groups in the north oppose the departure of MINUSMA. The CSP-PSD (the Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace, Security and Development) said MINUSMA's exit "without a credible alternative would constitute a threat to security in Mali and the whole region".⁴³

2 UN Human Rights office implicate Malian Armed Forces in Moura massacre

In May 2023 the UN Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published the findings of its fact-finding mission into the killings in Moura in central Mali in March 2022. The Office concluded there were strong indications that troops of the Malian Armed Forces and foreign military personnel had killed over 500 people during a five-day military operation in the village.⁴⁴ The UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN explicitly named the Wagner Group as participants.⁴⁵

Mali's transitional government said in response that it "vehemently denounces this biased report, which is based on a fictitious story and does not meet established international standards".⁴⁶

The UK Government issued a joint statement with Canada and the United States encouraging the transitional government to implement the report's recommendations, including "pursuing an independent, impartial, efficient, exhaustive, and transparent investigation."⁴⁷

⁴¹ [Ensuring MINUSMA's smooth departure from Mali](#), Crisis Group, 27 June 2023

⁴² [Security Council Terminates Mandate of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2690 \(2023\)](#), UN, 30 June 2023

⁴³ ['Fatal blow': Mali rebels warn against UN peacekeepers departure](#), Al Jazeera, 22 June 2023

⁴⁴ [Malian troops, foreign military personnel killed over 500 people during military operation in Moura in March 2022](#), MINUSMA, 12 May 2023

⁴⁵ [FCDO, UK urges Malian authorities to uphold responsibilities and allow the UN Mission to fulfil its mandate: UK statement at the Security Council](#), 16 June 2023

⁴⁶ [Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 1 June 2023, S/2023/402

⁴⁷ [Joint statement: UN report on the killings in Moura](#), US Embassy in Mali, 12 May 2023

4

Recent developments in Mali

Ongoing political instability since 2012The current crisis in Mali has its roots in the events of 2012, when northern separatists and Islamist armed groups forced government forces out of northern Mali, and the military overthrew the Government. Fresh elections in 2013 and 2018, and a peace accord in 2015 between the Government and two northern separatist movements, brought hope of stability.

However, a continued Jihadist insurgency and attacks by a myriad of armed groups, meant little progress was made in implementing the 2015 Algiers accords. [Anti-government demonstrations](#) by a coalition of opposition forces led to the removal of President Kéïta in summer 2020.⁴⁸

There was a second coup in May 2021, removing the interim president Bah N’Daw and his prime minister. Colonel AssimiGoïta, N’daw’s former deputy, and one of the people behind the 2020 coup, took over and was sworn in as interim president in June 2021.⁴⁹

Expected elections in February 2022 were postponed, and Goïta subsequently agreed to a revised election timetable for the transition to end in March 2024.⁵⁰ More information on the delays and agreement can be found in Commons Library paper [Mali: Why have elections been delayed until 2024?](#) (CBP 9636).

4.1

A new constitution: More powers to the President

The first phase of the transition was a referendum on a new constitution in 2023.

Maliens voted overwhelmingly in favour of a new constitution in a referendum held on 18 June 2023. The electoral authority said 97% of votes supported new constitution, although turnout was low, at 39.4%.

⁴⁸ [Mali coup: Thousands take to Bamako streets to celebrate](#), BBC News, 21 August 2020; Library paper [UK deployments and recent political challenges in Mali](#) (24 September 2020) discusses the context of the coup in more detail.

⁴⁹ [Mali coup leader Goita sworn in as interim president and appoints PM](#), Reuters, 7 June 2022

⁵⁰ [Post-coup Mali sets timetable for vote ahead of key summit](#), France 24, 30 June 2022

According to BBC Monitoring analysis, the constitution will expand presidential powers. The president will determine policy and appoint and fire the Prime Minister and cabinet. While the president is limited to no more than two terms in office, they can undertake “exceptional measures” in the event of a “serious and immediate” threat to the country.⁵¹

The constitution also grants an amnesty to those behind the 2020 and 2021 coups, defines Mali as a secular state, and demotes French as the official language (Mali was a former French colony, and there are 13 other languages in use).

4.2

Humanitarian and security situation

Mali faces significant governance challenges; the state has limited control of the territory, with a presence in only 22% of central and northern regions.⁵²

Over 1,000 civilians died because of armed conflict, improvised explosive devices and criminal acts between 1 July 2022 and 22 May 2023. This was a decrease from 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022, when 1,556 civilians were killed.⁵³

Over 375,000 people are believed to be internally displaced and 8.8 million people are estimated to need humanitarian assistance and protection.⁵⁴

3 Commons Library papers

- [UK military in the Sahel: Developments in 2022](#), CBP 9634
- [Mali: Why have elections been delayed until 2024?](#), CBP 9636
- [UK deployment and recent political challenges in Mali](#), CBP 8903
- [Mali: June 2016 update](#), CBP 7614
- [Mali in crisis: a political and security overview](#), SN06457

⁵¹ Explainer: Mali constitutional referendum likely to entrench junta rule, BBC Monitoring, 16 June 2023

⁵² [Internal review of the UN Multidimensional integrated stabilisation mission in Mali](#), United Nations (PDF), 16 January 2023, S/2023/36

⁵³ [Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 1 June 2023, S/2023/402

⁵⁴ [Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (PDF), United Nations, 1 June 2023, S/2023/402

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)