Conflict Factsheet

Tuareg Rebellion in Mali 1990-1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of conflict</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Locality</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Western Africa</td>
<td>1990–1995</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Agricultural / Pastoral Land, Water</td>
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Livelihood insecurity and migration

Extreme weather events and disasters

Conflict Summary

The Tuareg Rebellion against the government of Mali (1990-1995) was primarily motivated by the economic and political marginalization of Mali’s northern Azawad region. Yet, the Sahel droughts of the 1970s and 1980s played an important part in laying the foundations for the violence. For the one part, they contributed to the migration of many young Tuaregs to Libya, where they received military training and were exposed to revolutionary discourse. For the other part, the droughts highlighted the lack of interest and involvement of Bamako in the northern part of the country.
Conceptual Model

Climate Change
- More Frequent / Intense Extreme Weather Events

Environmental Change
- Extreme Weather Event
- Land Use Change
- Increased Land Scarcity

Intermediary Mechanisms
- Change in Access / Availability of Natural Resources
- Anti-State Grievances
- Displacements / Migration
- Reduced State Capacity and/or Legitimacy

Fragility and Conflict Risks
- Social and Economic Drivers
- Economic Development
- Agricultural / Pastoral Land, Water

Context Factors
- Water-stressed Area
- Food Insecurity
- High Unemployment
- History of Conflict
- Low Level of Economic Development
- Political Marginalization
- Unresponsive Government
Conflict History

Severe droughts in the Sahel between 1968 and 1985, as well as a strong feeling of marginalization among Tuareg groups in Mali’s northern Azawad region, led to an important emigration of young Tuareg to Algeria and Libya. Deteriorating economic conditions in these countries during the 1980s combined with promises of assistance by the Malian government eventually led to their return. Yet, the government failed to hold its promises, further straining its already tense relationship with Mali’s northern groups and ultimately leading to a Tuareg insurgency in June 1990. After two peace accords in 1991 (Tamanrasset Agreement) and 1992 (National Pact) as well as several rounds of negotiations, the rebels finally took down their arms in 1995, after the government had promised greater autonomy and a higher share of economic resources for the North (Hershkowitz, 2005; Benjaminsen, 2008). By that time, the conflict had already claimed more than 300 lives. Moreover, it laid the foundations for a second insurgency in 2007 and has contributed to the fragile situation currently witnessed in northern Mali (UCDP, 2014).

Political marginalization in northern Mali
Tuareg groups in northern Mali’s Azawad region share a long history of dissatisfaction with the government in Bamako. Agricultural modernisation, which often encroaches upon the traditional lands of the Tuareg, intensifies long-standing feelings of marginalization and exclusion. Prior to 1990, dissatisfaction with the government in northern Mali had already triggered several uprisings, which were harshly repressed by the government.

Drought, desertification and pressures on the government
The Sahel droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, overgrazing and gradual desertification, as well as deteriorating economic conditions and an overall lack of employment opportunities in Mali contributed further to the marginalization of northern groups and exposed the lack of government involvement in the north. Moreover, they forced many young Tuareg to flee to Algeria and Libya, where they were exposed to revolutionary discourse and acquired military training, serving in Gadaffi’s army (Benjaminsen, 2008). Finally, increasing pressures for democracy by civil society and opposition groups had weakened Moussa Traoré’s military regime, which was subsequently overthrown in March 1991. Taken together, these factors provided ripe conditions for an insurgency (Lode, 2002; Hershkowitz, 2005).

The peace accords of 1992, initiated a period of dialogue and bargaining between different Tuareg rebel groups and the Government of Mali, ultimately leading to the end of the insurgency in 1995. Yet, a lack of resources and commitment to rapidly implement the provisions of the National Pact, as well as persistent insecurity at the local level, prevented regional authorities and civil society actors from effectively addressing the underlying causes of Tuareg grievances, which eventually paved the way for renewed conflict.
Resolution Efforts

Following a series of early defeats in the first months of the insurgency, the Government of Mali swiftly entered into direct negotiations with the Tuareg rebels. A first agreement was signed in Tamanrasset, Algeria in January 1991 with the support of the Algerian government as a mediator. It satisfied the core demands of the rebels for regional autonomy and development aid, but it was soon perceived as a threat to Mali’s territorial integrity and precipitated a military coup against the fading regime of Moussa Traoré. Although this temporarily slowed the peace process, negotiations continued with the support of Algeria and representatives from France and Mauretania. The National Pact was signed in March 1992 and promoted peace and security, as well as initiatives to foster public services and infrastructures in the North. Moreover, it accorded the North a special status within the framework of the unitary state of Mali and envisioned the appointment of a special ‘Commissioner for the North’, which operates directly under the president’s authority to oversee implementation over a renewable five-year period (Lode, 2002).

Disarmament and military reform
This political process was backed by a large disarmament campaign with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), as well as efforts to integrate former Tuareg fighters into the armed forces. Until the end of 1994, the government of Mali also managed to improve troop discipline and discourage violence against the civil population, thus fostering popular support in the peace process (Lode, 2002).

External support and local peace processes
Furthermore, the UNDP’s resident representative and the new Commissioner for the North worked closely together to coordinate the international community’s effort to support and finance the peace process. These steps provided a positive signal to rebel leaders and encouraged the disbandment of their movements. With the help of the government they further promoted a series of regional consultations to engage civil society and initiated a shift of responsibilities to the local level. This was an important step in the conflict resolution process, which allowed for local peace agreements between inter-dependent communities and fostered overall reconciliation (Lode, 2002).

Slow implementation and renewed violence
However, the success of the peace process was only temporary. Stagnant economic development in the North, partly due to a lack of financial resources, in concert with considerable delays in the devolution of powers to regional authorities let anti-state grievances rise again among the northern population. International donors showed little interest in the peace process and persistent ethnic violence hampered civil society initiatives at the local level. Mistrust and resentment against the government built up again amongst the Tuareg, providing the fragile context in which more recent conflicts have erupted (Fleury, 2010; UCDP, 2014).
## Intensities & Influences

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<tr>
<td><strong>INTENSITIES</strong></td>
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<td>International / Geopolitical Intensity</td>
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<td>Human Suffering</td>
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<td><strong>INFLUENCES</strong></td>
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<td>Environmental Influences</td>
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<td>Societal Influences</td>
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## Resolution Success

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<tr>
<td><strong>Reduction in Violence</strong></td>
<td>Violence reduced significantly, but did not cede.</td>
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<td><strong>Reduction in geographical scope</strong></td>
<td>There has been no reduction in geographical scope.</td>
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<td><strong>Increased capacity to address grievance in the future</strong></td>
<td>There is no increased capacity to address grievances in the future.</td>
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<td><strong>Grievance Resolution</strong></td>
<td>Grievances have been mostly ignored.</td>
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<td><strong>Causal Attribution of Decrease in Conflict Intensity</strong></td>
<td>Conflict resolution strategies have been clearly responsible for the decrease in conflict intensity.</td>
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Entry Points for Resilience and Peace Building

Disarmament, demobilisation & reintegration
A large disarmament campaign, as well as efforts to integrate former Tuareg fighters into the armed forces, was conducted with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Mediation & arbitration
The UNDP worked with the Commissioner of the North to coordinate the international community’s effort to support the peace process, and to promote regional consultations engaging civil society.

Treaty/agreement
The Government of Mali entered into direct negotiations with the Tuareg rebels, ending in with the signing of the National Pact in 1992, which promoted peace and security, as well as initiatives to foster public services and infrastructures in the North. Local peace agreements between communities were also made.

Resources and Materials

References with URL
Fleury, K. (2010). Tuaregs and climate change

Further information