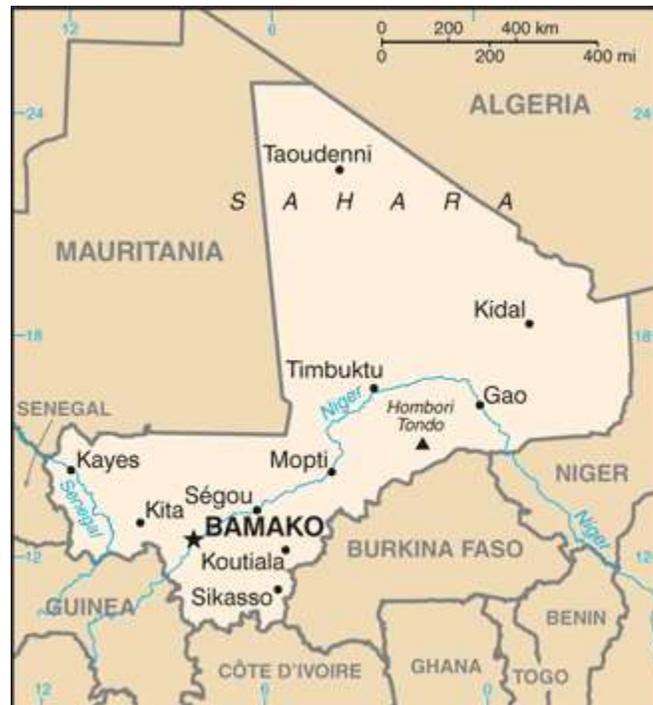




International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Returning to Mali

Country Information Sheet



Source: CIA World Fact book, 2014, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html.

Prepared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Malta, with contributions from IOM Mali, within the framework of the project 'Enhanced Cooperation between Malta and Migrants' Countries of Origin. Lessons Learned and Sharing of Experience with Other European Countries' (RF 2013-05), funded by the European Return Fund under Annual Programme 2013.



**General Programme Solidarity & Management of Migration Flows
2007-2013**

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Sustainable Management of Migration Flows

Political situation¹

Historically, Mali is the result of the independence of the Sudanese Republic and Senegal from France in 1960 and, consequently, of Senegal's withdrawal after a few months.

The military coup in 1991 marked the transition from dictatorship to the period of democratic rule, with Alpha Konare as the first democratic President of the country in 1992 and – for the second term – in 1997. After the constitutional two-term period limit, he stepped down in 2002 and was succeeded by Amadou Toumani Toure, who was re-elected in 2007 in a climate of electoral irregularities.

In recent years, the return of Malian people and, with them, the influx of arms from the 2011 Lybian civil war exacerbated tensions in the northern regions of the country, leading to the rebellion of Tuareg ethnic militias in January 2012 (already in the early 1990s, the nomadic Tuareg began an insurgency over land and cultural rights). On 22 March 2012, a military coup overthrew President Toure, considered unable to deal with the rebellion. In April 2012, the mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) led to a new civilian administration with the appointment of interim President Dioncounda Traore.

In this context of political instability, rebels expelled military governmental forces from the three northern regions of the country (namely, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal), favoring the Islamists' presence. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of Malians living in the northern regions of the country fled towards southern Mali and neighboring countries.

In January 2013, the Government of Mali (GOM) – assisted by an international military intervention – regained control over the northern regions. Nevertheless, several terrorist organizations – including Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – take advantage of those areas for holding hostages and planning operations. Attacks from their bases in the countryside still remain a threat throughout the country.

In the presidential and legislative elections of July and August 2013, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita became the new elected President. Despite the improved political situation in the country, a lot of concerns remain regarding the security situation in the country with both Tuareg separatists and Islamists sporadically active.

¹ CIA World Fact book, 2014. Africa, Mali. Available from www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html (accessed 10 March 2015); U.S. Passports & International Travel, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2014. Country Information, Mali. Available from <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/mali.html> (accessed 10 March 2015); BBC News, 2015. Africa. Mali country profile – Overview. Available from www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13881370 (accessed 11 March 2015).

Economic situation and employment

Economic situation²

Economic activity in Mali – a landlocked country considered among the 25 poorest countries in the world – is confined to the irrigated area by the Niger River, as 65% of its land is desert or semi-desert.

Economy essentially depends on gold mining and agricultural exports for revenue. Particularly, cotton and gold exports represent around 80% of export earnings. Apart from industrial activity on processing farm commodities, Mali is trying to develop its iron ore extraction industry to diversify foreign exchange earnings. Nevertheless, the country remains dependent on foreign aid.

In recent years, security issues such as the terrorist activity in the north of the country have undermined the tourism sector. Generally, high population growth, corruption, weak infrastructure, low levels of human capital and, lastly, the global recession and the military coup represent long term threats to the Malian economy.

Employment opportunities³

About 80% of the labor force is engaged in subsistence farming and fishing while about 10% of the population is nomadic. Frequently, women work to integrate the household income with small activities by making shea butter.

Many cottages industries, such as handicrafts, exist in the country, among them, wood carving, pottery, basket-weaving and textiles. Mostly addressed to the domestic market, some items start to be exported.

However, below is a useful web link for job offers online in the tertiary sector in Mali:

www.infomine.com/careers/jobs/country/mali/

² CIA World Fact book, 2014. Africa, Mali. Available from www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html (accessed 11 March 2015).

³ CIA World Fact book, 2014. Africa, Mali. Available from www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html (accessed 11 March 2015); Our Africa (website). Available from www.our-africa.org/mali/education-jobs (accessed 12 March 2015).

Health care system⁴

Medical facilities in Mali are extremely limited, especially outside of the capital Bamako where only two large hospitals exist. In other main towns and cities there are hospitals but the lack of equipment, medicines and qualified staff exasperate the healthcare standards in the country.

Therefore, traditional medicine – for treating certain illnesses – still remains popular in the country. Particularly, researches into traditional cures are carried out in some departments in the main hospitals.

Malaria remains the main health problem throughout sub-Saharan Mali during all seasons and, sporadically, also in the north part of the country. Other diseases, such as meningitis and cholera, also occur, and are mainly linked to poor hygiene. However, there is low incidence of HIV/AIDS in the country, compared to other African countries. In October 2014, two imported cases of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) from Guinea were registered, but the situation in Mali was well contained, as opposed to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

Malnutrition is also common in Mali where over half the population is living below the poverty line. As a result, infant mortality rates are very high.

Education

Educational system⁵

In Mali, education is free of charge and compulsory between the age of 7 and 16 years. The first six years are primary schooling and, in order to have access to middle high school, students must first pass a test called *diplôme d'étude fondamentale*. Secondary schools – many of which are private – are concentrated in urban areas. Upper levels of education are represented by vocational education (for those with with literacy and basic agriculture knowledge skills), and tertiary education, namely the University of Bamako with its five faculties (Science and Technology; Law and Public Service; Humanities, Arts and Science; Economy and Management; and Medical).

However, there is an element of imbalance in the schooling levels in the country since there are not enough secondary schools and, in some rural areas, there is a complete lack of schools. Moreover, existing fees such as for uniforms, books and supplies makes it very difficult for families to enroll their children in school.

⁴ U.S. Passports & International Travel, U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2014. Country Information, Mali. Available from <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/mali.html> (accessed 10 March 2015); Our Africa (website). Available from www.our-africa.org/mali/poverty-healthcare (accessed 17 March 2015).

⁵ Our Africa (website). Available from www.our-africa.org/mali/education-jobs (accessed 12 March 2015); Foreign Credits, Classbase. Education Database. Available from www.classbase.com/countries/Mali/Education-System (accessed 13 March 2015).

Therefore, since many students are deprived of the possibility to continue their studies, pupil attendance is very poor and less than half of young people (aged 15-24 years) are literate. This applies more to girls – who often stay at home to help with the daily work – than to boys.

Vocational training courses⁶

The Malian government is trying to expand vocational training by introducing a national apprenticeship system. After having finished secondary school, students who have obtained good marks can apply for government scholarship to finance their vocational training. This notwithstanding, the problem of accessibility exists and for many students without a scholarship these trainings may prove too expensive.

Listed below are some centres that provide vocational training courses:

- (a) Centre de Formation Technique Quinzambougou (CFTQ):
 - (i) A private secondary technical school in Bamako which provides two-year or four-year trainings;
 - (ii) The two-year training is addressed to future electricians, administrative assistants or assistant bookkeepers; the four-year training is addressed to future electrical-mechanics, construction draftsmen, executive secretaries or bookkeepers;
 - (iii) There are around 700 students, of which 400 have obtained government scholarships; for the remaining 300, school fees are between €140 and €230 per year, depending on the courses.

- (b) Centre Père Michel:
 - (i) A secondary technical school in Bamako – with a good reputation to train qualified and skilled professionals – which provides three-year trainings only for boys of 16 to 22 years old;
 - (ii) The three-year trainings are addressed to future car mechanics, electricians, metalworkers or agricultural machinery mechanics;
 - (iii) There are around 360 students divided into 12 classes – mostly students from low-income families and with any government scholarships;
 - (iv) The school fees are approximately €115 per year.

IOM Mali AVRR process

- Sending IOM Mission sends Advance Booking Notification (ABN) to IOM Bamako informing that a migrant will be returning voluntarily to Mali and is entitled to reintegration assistance; and requests IOM Bamako to confirm airport assistance on arrival.
- IOM Mali acknowledges receipt of the ABN and replies to this message by confirming airport assistance on arrival.

⁶ Sutmuller, P., 2015. Study funding can improve accessibility vocational training Mali. *Van Doorn Foundation (website)*, 19 January. Available from www.vandoornstichting.com/.

- IOM Bamako Operations Assistant meets the returnee at Bamako airport and provides him with the address and phone number of the Mission. He can also provide him his own phone number and collect that of the returnee, if available.
- IOM Bamako Operations Assistant sends a message to the sending Mission to confirm that the returnee arrived safely in Bamako and will be in touch with the Mission for his reintegration process as soon as possible.
- The returnee comes to IOM Bamako office to discuss his reintegration process with IOM Operations Assistant who collects all the details and documents related to the project pre-established by the sending mission with the migrant. Through their conversation, IOM Operations Assistant can often note the job that the returnee was doing before leaving his country of origin. Once consensus is reached and the returnee's reintegration project is identified, IOM Operations Assistant requests the returnee to bring 3 quotations from 3 different vendors/service providers to be submitted to the sending Mission for approval, following IOM accounting standards (when reintegration amount exceeds 1000 USD, 3 quotations are required and when the amount is less than 1.000 USD only one quotation is needed).
- The returnee comes back to IOM Bamako office with the 3 appropriate quotations. IOM Operations Assistant verifies if the quotations are correctly done and prepares the IRP (individual reintegration plan form) to be submitted to the sending Mission. Among these quotations, only the one suitable to the returnee will be retained to cover the reintegration. Finally, the IRP and the 3 quotations will be transmitted to the sending Mission for approval.
- Once the approval received from the sending Mission, IOM Operations Assistant prepares BIDS-PR-PAYMENT and all supporting documents to be transmitted to accounts for the check issuance to the selected vendor/service provider.
- Once the check is done, IOM Operations Assistant contacts the returnee and the vendor to deliver the goods at the IOM office. When it is impossible to deliver goods at the IOM Office, IOM Operations Assistant meets the migrant at the vendor's shop to deliver the check and to collect the goods for the returnee. Supporting pictures will be taken when collecting the goods for the returnee.
- After the delivery of goods and the signature of different supporting documents by the returnee and once the pictures are taken on the day of delivery with the consent of the returnee, the Operations Assistant proceeds with scanning of all the supporting documents and sending them to the sending Mission before giving them to the accountant.
- If a monitoring is required, the Operations Assistant proceeds to it 4 or 6 months after the delivery of the reintegration assistance. At this stage, a monitoring report will be sent to the sending Mission.

Sources:

BBC News

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IOM Mali

Procédures de réintégration des migrants de retour volontaire