



THE SENTRY



Mercenary Meltdown



The Wagner
Group's
Failure in Mali

August 2025

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Executive Summary | 4 |
| Tinzaouatène: Wagner's Defeat in Mali | 6 |
| Wagner Group's Failed Counterterrorism Strategy in Mali | 9 |
| Fear and Chaos | 16 |
| Wagner's Criminal Economy in Mali | 24 |
| Conclusion | 31 |
| Recommendations | 33 |
| Endnotes | 35 |

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Executive Summary

The first Wagner Group fighters arrived in Bamako in January 2022 to assist the Malian military junta in its counterterrorism campaign.¹ Three and a half years later, the group has announced its withdrawal from Mali to make space for Africa Corps with the statement “Mission accomplished.”² But as the number of Wagner fighters in Mali will stay roughly the same, since many had already signed contracts with the Russian state prior to the announcement,^{3,4} the group’s claim to success—and their overall strategy in Mali—merits scrutiny.

Despite the Wagner Group possessing a reputation for being battle-ready and claiming occasional public triumphs in Mali, its strategy has been plagued by a series of failures.⁵ Wagner forces have been unable to take control of areas in the north and center of the country where armed terrorist and separatist groups are challenging the authority of the Malian state. There has been a significant increase in attacks on civilians and in civilian casualties since Wagner’s arrival in Mali, and this, in turn, has severely undermined relations between the Malian military and the Malian public. Faced with challenges such as insufficient air support, a lack of trust, and a lack of reliable information from informants, the Wagner Group has become more reactive and violent—allowing the very terrorist groups they were hired to neutralize to gain more control and increase recruitment in Mali.

Wagner’s playbook in Mali has not only affected the civilian population; it has also helped perpetuate insecurity and has paved the way for the fragmentation of the Malian state. Wagner fighters have created chaos and fear within the Malian military hierarchy, forcing the Forces Armées Maliennes (Malian Armed Forces, or FAMA) to remain silent in cases of civilian abuse. In addition, the lack of order and communication within the chain of command has led to the progressive deterioration of the FAMA’s ranks. Abuses against the Malian armed forces by Wagner troops have increased, as have complaints from Malian soldiers. Within the Malian military junta itself, the varying degrees of partnership with Russian actors are contributing to a shift in power relations in Bamako, as Malian leaders regard one another with suspicion.

Despite official discourse suggesting that Wagner and Russia are reliable partners in the Malian conflict, the Wagner command in Mali has demonstrated a reluctance to intervene militarily—even in cases where the capital is directly threatened—without first having assurances of financial compensation. At the outset of its Malian venture, Wagner was seeking to secure mining concessions that would likely replicate the group’s self-funding arrangements in other countries. However, the Malian junta appears unwilling to allow Wagner to control the mining sector, and Wagner’s forays into that sector have thus far been limited.

Ultimately, the Wagner Group has failed in its task of eliminating terrorist groups in Mali. The Russian presence is instead creating upheaval amid the Malian military and causing rifts within the Malian junta. And as Wagner has seemingly gone unpaid for months and failed to obtain access to lucrative natural resources, its deployment in Mali has not been a worthwhile investment for any party involved.

Wagner is not an infallible actor. If anything, the Malian example illustrates that the group can fail, and this should be a warning to other African clients who are considering hiring Wagner—or its more official



offshoot, Africa Corps. At the same time, policymakers in the Global North should see Wagner's failures as an opportunity for alternative policy approaches in the Sahel region.

Key recommendations

- The Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court (ICC) should open an investigation into war crimes perpetrated by Wagner troops in Mali and prosecute those responsible for human rights abuses. Alternatively, the United Nations Security Council should refer Wagner abuses in Mali to the Office of the Prosecutor at the ICC.
- The government of Mali should take steps toward criminal accountability and reparations for the victims of massacres such as Moura, as well as for the abuses against and displacement of civilian populations following attacks by the Wagner Group in the north and west of the country.
- The EU, the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia should investigate and, if appropriate, designate for sanctions the network of individuals and entities in Sadio Camara's inner circle who enable, support, or benefit from Wagner's presence in the country, as well as those involved in corruption and human rights abuses. They should coordinate sanctions to increase their impact.
- International mining companies operating in Mali and foreign refineries processing Malian gold should conduct comprehensive audits of their operations to ensure that they are not conducting business with sanctioned Wagner Group entities or individuals, such as Ivan Maslov.
- The Algerian government should facilitate renewed negotiations on a peace agreement between Bamako and the northern rebel groups. As the political and security landscape has changed since the 2015 agreement, which was facilitated by Algeria, including as a result of the withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping operation MINUSMA, new terms will need to be agreed.



Tinzaouatène: Wagner's Defeat in Mali*

On July 25, 2024, a convoy of approximately 30 vehicles left the town of Tessalit in northeastern Mali, heading east toward the village of Tinzaouatène.^{6, 7} Comprised of members of Russia's paramilitary Wagner Group and the Forces Armées Maliennes (Malian Armed Forces, or FAMA), the convoy was on a mission to claim the northern part of Mali.⁸

While the convoy encountered some improvised explosive devices in the early hours of the trip,⁹ it wasn't until it was within 10 km of the village that it was shot at. Wagner and the FAMA were facing down members of the Cadre Stratégique Permanent pour la Défense du Peuple de l'Azawad (Strategic Permanent Framework for the Defense of the People of Azawad, or CSP-DPA), a rebel faction operating in the northern part of Mali,¹⁰ who were aided by civilians in the area. As the fighting progressed, the CSP-DPA was joined by members of Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, or JNIM), an al-Qaeda offshoot in the Sahel, with at least two vehicles.^{11, 12} In the hours that followed, FAMA drones and helicopters were unable to provide aerial support due to a sand-storm,¹³ leaving FAMA and Wagner operatives to fend for themselves in unfamiliar territory.

While part of the convoy managed to escape, they found themselves in JNIM-controlled territory.¹⁴ Ultimately, the casualties were high. The CSP-DPA claimed to have killed 84 Russian mercenaries and 47 FAMA soldiers;¹⁵ a member of the CSP-DPA also told The Sentry that they kidnapped two members of the Wagner Group.¹⁶ Among the Wagner mercenaries presumed deceased in Mali in July were Russian military veterans such as Nikita "Belyi" Fedyanin, administrator of the famous Russian Telegram channel The Grey Zone,¹⁷ and Sergei "Prud" Shevchenko, who was in charge of the 13th assault unit deployed to Tinzaouatène.¹⁸ In addition to this, photos of victorious CSP-DPA fighters with trophies taken from dead



CSP-DPA fighters posing in front of a Wagner/FAMA VP11 armored truck after the military confrontation with Wagner and the FAMA in Tinzaouatène, Mali. Photo: X.

*Reports by The Sentry are based on interviews, documentary research, and, where relevant, financial forensic analysis. In some cases, sources speak to The Sentry on the condition that their names not be revealed, out of concern for their safety or other potential retaliatory action. The Sentry establishes the authoritativeness and credibility of information derived from those interviews through independent sources, such as expert commentary, financial data, original documentation, and press reports. The Sentry endeavors to contact the persons and entities discussed in its reports and afford them an opportunity to comment and provide further information.



Wagner mercenaries have been widely disseminated across media.¹⁹ Neither the Wagner Group nor the CSP-DPA replied to The Sentry's request for comment.

Wagner's defeat at Tinzaouatène epitomized its mediocre performance in Mali, which fell far short of the junta's expectations. The loss was a blow to Wagner's reputation on the African continent that, more than a year later, they have yet to recover from.

The Malian insecurity landscape

When Colonel Assimi Goïta seized power in Mali in May 2021 in the second of two coups within nine months,²⁰ he brought with him a decidedly different approach to foreign security agreements. Until then, Mali had relied on the French for security and counterterrorism support,²¹ but their successes had been limited and their failures deeply felt.^{22, 23} By the time Goïta came to power, just a few months after a French air strike had resulted in the deaths of 19 civilians, public sentiment in Mali had turned, and armed conflict was proliferating.²⁴

As the Sahel region was rocked by significant political instability, relations between Mali and the French swiftly deteriorated.²⁵ In August 2022, French troops withdrew from Mali, and relations with other Western security partners quickly unraveled.^{26, 27}

And so it was that the first Wagner elements arrived in Bamako between December 2021 and January 2022 to provide support to the Malian military junta in its counterterrorism campaign against JNIM and the Islamic State in the region (IS-Sahel).^{28, 29}



One Wagner fighter (center, face blurred) surrounded by members of the Malian armed forces. Photo: Telegram.



It was clear from the first year of Wagner's engagement in Mali that the fighters needed time to get accustomed to the Malian security landscape. The first reported encounter between Wagner mercenaries and JNIM militants occurred on January 3, 2022, in the center of the country, and Wagner suffered several losses.³⁰ Moreover, when Wagner troops arrived in Ménaka town on June 13, 2022, following the departure of the French, they were reportedly "poorly equipped."³¹ They stayed close to their barracks, not venturing further than 10 kilometers; this changed in early November 2022, when they conducted "a single offensive patrol" roughly 50 kilometers south of Ménaka.³²

Two years later, the Wagner Group's confidence had grown. In 2023, on a march toward Kidal and Aguelhok, the northern strongholds of the CSP-DPA, they had several successes reconquering rebel-held towns.³³ A Malian Ministry of Defense official told The Sentry that after successes in Kidal and Aguelhok, "Wagner, they figured they could control the north by going further up ... showing they can get anywhere, anytime."³⁴ A humanitarian worker in the region told The Sentry in June 2024 that their local sources in both northern and central regions of Mali reported how, "as soon as [Wagner fighters] hear of a terrorist deployment on a specific axis, they hop on their motorcycles, call in their drones ... and they leave the base to engage in battle."³⁵

The Tinzaouatène debacle in July 2024 put a stop to that. And today, the Russian mercenary presence in Mali is as precarious as ever, with Africa Corps renegotiating Wagner contracts.



Wagner Group's Failed Counterterrorism Strategy in Mali

While Tinzaouatène was a particularly dramatic blow to Wagner's operations in Mali, it is far from an isolated case. Despite occasional public successes claimed by Wagner and the FAMA in Mali—the April 30, 2024, killing of Abu Huzeifa, or “Higgo,” a Moroccan national and leader of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, being one—the group's counterterrorism strategy has been plagued by a series of failures.^{36, 37, 38} Wagner's troops appear unable to take control of the areas in the north and center of the country where armed terrorist and separatist groups are challenging the authority of the Malian state. In the far eastern province of Ménaka, the Wagner Group has not been able to compete with the IS-Sahel,³⁹ and in the southern and western regions,⁴⁰ it struggles to maintain a continuous presence, undermining its own counterterrorism strategy.

Despite occasional public successes claimed by Wagner and the FAMA in Mali, the group's counterterrorism strategy has been plagued by a series of failures.

Ultimately, the Wagner Group has not been able to adapt to the terrain in Mali, where very mobile armed groups are able to cover a large territory and hide in the bush.⁴¹ Aerial control is fundamental to the success of operations, and those involving only ground forces—the majority of FAMA-Wagner operations—have on several occasions resulted in troops' forced withdrawal.⁴² Aerial support, however, is limited. Mali's air force only has about 20 combat-capable aircraft and seven attack helicopters,⁴³ which are not enough to cover the ground operations carried out on a daily basis across the entire Malian territory. In addition, an official within the Malian Air Force told The Sentry that even those aircraft that could be deployed when needed are often stranded due to a lack of fuel.⁴⁴

Part of the reason for Wagner and the FAMA's defeat at Tinzaouatène was precisely the lack of air support as the battle was raging.

Faced with these challenges, the Wagner Group has become more violent. This behavior results in greater civilian casualties and a subsequent erosion of trust within local communities, enabling the very terrorist groups they were hired to neutralize to gain more control and increase recruitment.

Off target

The Sentry has found the Wagner Group's approach to counterterrorism in Mali to be highly reactive. Instead of adopting a planned strategy of counterinsurgency in the center and north of the country, Wagner has acted haphazardly, in a way that has not ultimately served its mandate. Since Wagner's arrival in Mali, there has been a significant increase in attacks against civilians and in civilian casualties linked to Malian security forces and allied militias.^{45, 46, 47, 48, 49}

In fact, the Wagner Group has been employing tactics that indiscriminately target civilians. For one, Wagner introduced the use of booby traps to the Malian troops.⁵⁰ While this tactic had not previously been employed by any of Mali's partner forces, Wagner had used booby traps, landmines, and IEDs while fighting in Libya, even placing them inside toys, killing or injuring more than 300 people between May 2020 and March 2022.^{51, 52, 53} Wagner's use of drones, as well, has impacted Malian civilians. In February 2024, military drone strikes on a wedding celebration and a burial site resulted in the deaths of at least 14 civilians, including four children.⁵⁴ Wagner fighters have also been reported to have engaged in sexual violence and mass executions, as evidenced by the Moura massacre in March 2022.⁵⁵





A Wagner fighter shows a FAMA soldier how to correctly place an improvised explosive device (IED), May 2024. Photo: The Sentry.

The Malian army—which had already been the subject of criticism for its actions against the civilian population—is also reported to have scaled up brutal attacks on civilians since Wagner’s arrival.⁵⁶ Ousmane Diallo at Amnesty International stated in 2022 that “many, many reports and many people that we interviewed talked about the army being more brutal” and that the increased brutality has come “since Wagner’s arrival.”^{57, 58, 59} Diallo noted, “There is a new element: the abuses and the violations by the Malian army are not new, but the scale and the brutality have heightened since January 2022 – and that is something that cannot just be dismissed.”^{60, 61, 62} Much like in the Central African Republic (CAR), allegations of human rights violations against civilians by the national armed forces have emerged since the deployment of Wagner Group personnel to Mali.^{63, 64}

Wagner’s counterterrorism focus on the north of Mali has caused mass displacement, with outsized impact on local ethnic communities. The UN estimates that between 40,000 and 50,000 individuals were compelled to flee their homes in the wake of the military operation to retake Kidal.⁶⁵ Since Wagner arrived in Mali, the towns of Kidal, Adjelhoc, Anefif, and Tessalit have lost around 70% of their population.⁶⁶ Most of the wealthier families have fled to Algeria, Niger, and Mauritania, while the middle-income and poorer families have taken refuge in the surrounding areas, including in Nigerien border towns.⁶⁷ In the Timbuktu region and around Kidal, which is now in the hands of other pro-junta forces, Wagner and its Malian partners are conducting a punitive campaign, using terror tactics to empty the north of its population, according to Azawadian rights groups.⁶⁸ Many are convinced that this scorched-earth policy is mandated by Bamako,⁶⁹ as it would provide the central government with a solution to the “Tuareg problem” and prevent further rebellions by Tuareg groups seeking more autonomy from the Malian state.^{70, 71}

The Wagner counterterrorism toolkit also includes directly blockading people in towns and cities, essentially creating open-air prisons to control the population. The Diafarabé case exemplifies the open-air prisons approach. By early spring 2024, Wagner and the FAMA were using this town on the Niger River as a base. On May 3, 2024, JNIM attacked the town.⁷² Believing that JNIM must have had informants inside Diafarabé, the FAMA and Wagner arrested at least 30 individuals for interrogation between May



12 and May 30, and they bombed several areas where insurgents were said to have hidden.^{73, 74} In retaliation, armed JNIM fighters then decided to block people from entering Diafarabé,⁷⁵ demanding that Wagner liberate its hostages in order to stop the embargo. In turn, the FAMA and Wagner did not allow individuals to leave, so as to prevent them from sharing information with JNIM.⁷⁶



A video clip shows guns and ammunition collected by JNIM in Diafarabé after their attack on May 3, 2024. Arabic text displays “Part of the spoils seized by the mujahideen amid the blessed raid on Diafarabé.” Photo used only for informational purposes. Photo: Az-Zallaqa Foundation video.

Similar open-air prisons are being enacted in numerous towns in the center of Mali:⁷⁷ While JNIM maintains control of routes outside of towns and villages, the FAMA and Wagner are situated in bases within the towns and cities, effectively imprisoning civilians. And while this enables them to hold positions of strength for a period of time, they are unable to cover all the territory in which JNIM and IS-Sahel are hiding. Unless Wagner can deploy fighters in every town, city, and village of Mali, its counterinsurgency strategy will remain a game of whack-a-mole with no end in sight.

Counter intelligent

Since Wagner’s arrival, informants—a fundamental counterterrorism asset in Mali’s elusive conflict landscape—have shown a reluctance to communicate with the FAMA, significantly eroding the Malian military’s capacity for intelligence collection. Wagner’s extreme violence against civilians and partnerships with ethnic militias have gradually fostered an atmosphere of distrust and apprehension among civilians, who might otherwise provide vital intelligence.

Prior to the implementation of Wagner’s counterterrorism strategy in the center of the country, informants were dispersed throughout villages and towns.⁷⁸ In the Bandiagara area, for instance, informants would communicate with the FAMA in brief text messages, sometimes coded, providing updates on the arrival and departure of JNIM fighters.⁷⁹ This enabled the FAMA to gain current information on the location of armed groups and to provide civilians with some basic protection.

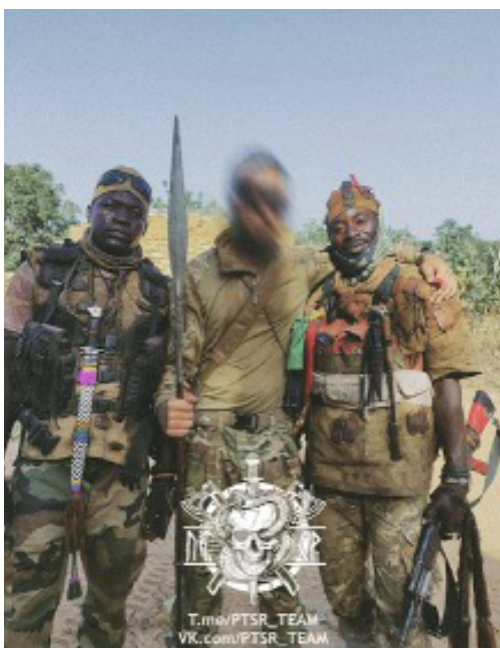


In return, the FAMA exercised great caution in its interactions with individuals. In the event of uncertainty regarding an individual's potential collaboration with JNIM, informants were called upon to provide triangulated intelligence.⁸⁰ FAMA fighters also ensured that they were not solely seen with one or two people in a certain village, as those implicated would be executed or arrested.⁸¹ Instead, they sought to cast a wider net to deter potential retaliation from JNIM. Such behavior was crucial to safeguarding sources of intelligence.

Since Wagner's arrival, however, informants have exhibited a reticence to communicate with the FAMA, particularly about matters of a sensitive nature. This reluctance can be attributed to Wagner's tendency to act against suspected terrorists without first consulting the FAMA. A source inside the FAMA told The Sentry, "I am hearing things, that now Wagner do not really check whether the rumors about a certain story are true or not, they have their translator, and they just kill people [they suspect] without verifying first."⁸²

The constant threat posed by Wagner has rendered family and friendship ties insufficient to guarantee the safety of civilian informants. Consequently, many members of the Malian armed forces are perceived as complicit in failing to provide protection for informants, making it difficult for them to obtain information over the past few years.^{83, 84}

Wagner's informal relations with local ethnic militias, as well, present a lethal conundrum for civilians. In the center of Mali, Wagner has partnered with Dozo ethnic militias in the Bandiagara area, the most established of them being the Dan Na Ambassagou, whose fighters Wagner has recruited and who now operate with Wagner weapons and insignia.⁸⁵ The Sentry was able to speak with one former Dan Na Ambassagou member who had joined Wagner's ranks, confirming that Wagner recruitment is underway.⁸⁶ The Dan Na Ambassagou and other Dozo militias have been filling the security gap left by the state since 2016, while at the same time committing ethnic violence and extensive cattle raiding campaigns across central Mali.^{87, 88, 89 90, 91}



A Wagner mercenary posing with two Malian Dan Na Ambassagou fighters in central Mali. Photo: VK.

In terms of intelligence gathering, Wagner's alliance with the Dozo militias is contributing to the erosion of trust between civilians and the FAMA. The fact that Wagner has a direct line of communication with the Dozo while being formally partnered with the FAMA makes people wary that any information shared with the FAMA could reach the Dozo militias and result in ethnic violence.⁹²

Wagner fighters do not appear to understand the intricacies of the conflict context they are in, and they seem to be unwilling to consult their Malian counterparts for clarification. For one, the Wagner Group seems to disregard the



coercion capacity of armed groups. “Problems are partly due to the collaboration of communities with the jihadist groups, who have forced [us] to sign pacts with them,” one Djenné resident reported. “When you agree to sign a pact, you are obliged to work with these people. If you don’t, they make life hard for you.”⁹³ Citizens are essentially held captive between Wagner and local armed groups. Those citizens who work in trade are obliged to travel to engage in the sale or purchase of goods. However, if they leave their towns, they are immediately labeled as terrorists by Wagner. If they stay put, they lose their livelihoods. Meanwhile, those who attempt to reach the town from the outside are immediately identified as supporters of the FAMA or Wagner and thus attacked by JNIM militants.⁹⁴

In a conflict of this nature, where JNIM and IS-Sahel are not embedded in urban or populated areas but rather traverse them continuously, the impact of poor intelligence on counterterrorism efforts is significant. Wagner has begun to resort to other tactics to increase and control the flow of information, destroying telecommunication antennas within its operational zones and, in some cases, employing children in a clear display of clumsy intelligence collection techniques.^{95, 96, 97}

Wagner’s presence strengthens JNIM’s influence

Despite the Wagner Group having been brought into Mali to neutralize terrorist groups, Wagner’s intervention in Mali is not weakening JNIM. Instead, it is forcing JNIM to employ more remote and indiscriminate violence and engage in retaliatory attacks, and it is providing the terrorist organization with a recruitment tool in the center and north of Mali.

In addition to this, following Dan Na Ambassagou’s collaboration with Wagner, JNIM has intensified its repression of this and other Dozo militias and what it perceives as allied communities, resulting in frequent attacks on villages, embargoes, forced evictions, and displacement.^{98, 99}

Wagner’s offensive in the north is bringing northern rebels from the CSP-DPA closer to JNIM militants. For example, one of the leaders of the CSP-DPA, Alghabass Ag Intalla, stated in May 2024 that he was “negotiating a non-aggression pact” with JNIM. He said that the objective of the agreement would be to “facilitate the free movement of fighters, the sharing of information on enemy movements between the Malian army and Wagner, ... and to protect the population.”¹⁰⁰ In addition, there is evidence that the groups have recently fought Wagner alongside one another. In the Tinzaouatène battle, accounts of the ambush indicate a certain degree of tactical coordination between JNIM and the northern rebel factions.¹⁰¹ This type of collaboration between Tuareg separatists and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb fighters has been a trigger for protracted conflict in the past: It was one of the contributing factors to the 2012 crisis in Mali, which resulted in military deployment and the involvement of France.¹⁰²

So far, Wagner’s foothold in the north has only forced JNIM into a more defensive posture. JNIM now engages in more distant violence, using ambushes,¹⁰³ drone-delivered explosives, suicide car bombs, land mines, artillery, or IEDs; it tends to directly target less capable forces such as Dan Na Ambassagou and other Dozo self-defense militia groups in the center of the country.^{104, 105} This doesn’t mean that JNIM’s operational tempo has decreased, however, nor that its territory has been reduced.¹⁰⁶ As evidenced by the number of incidents initiated in the Mopti and Ségou regions, JNIM attacks have remained relatively constant over the past two years, even as the conflict has rapidly become more technological.¹⁰⁷ All this means more indiscriminate violence against civilians, this time at the hands of JNIM.¹⁰⁸



The demonstrated connection between Wagner and the Dozo militias in the Bankass and Bandiagara areas, in particular, has led to more vicious attacks on civilians by JNIM. For example, on January 27, 2024, JNIM attacked the village of Ogota, which is populated mainly by the Dozo ethnic group.¹⁰⁹ The attack was in retaliation for the local presence of the Dozo Dan Na Ambassagou militia, which in that area closely collaborates with Wagner. A local source told The Sentry that, before the raid, JNIM combatants had demanded the cessation of collaboration between Dan Na Ambassagou and Wagner troops, or else the village would be subjected to an attack.¹¹⁰ Villagers contacted Malian soldiers based nearby to seek protection and explain the conditions imposed by JNIM, but received no help.¹¹¹ JNIM “invaded the village, shooting at everything and everyone, for over an hour,” a woman in Ogota told Human Rights Watch. “They set fire to the whole village.”¹¹² The ferocity of JNIM’s attack on Ogota sent a clear message to the FAMA and Dozo militias that there will be consequences for any continued collaboration with Wagner.

JNIM’s posture against Wagner has helped in its recruitment efforts. In an October 2024 interview, Amadou Koufa, who controls the branch of JNIM in the center of Mali,¹¹³ said that Wagner’s higher degree of brutality in Mali has meant a strong reaction from populations “ready to defend their religion, their land and their goods.”^{114, 115} While there is no data on JNIM recruitment for 2024,¹¹⁶ there was a noted surge in jihadi recruitment in central Mali in 2022, and there was an increase in fundraising by jihadi groups in markets and mosques between late September and October 2022.¹¹⁷ This has been fueled by instances of Wagner harassing and abusing civilians, which have become commonplace and widely shared on social media. For instance, a video taken from a Wagner fighter’s cellphone showing a Wagner operative harassing a Tuareg woman and asking her to undress has circulated extensively across Mali, fueling citizens’ hatred toward the Wagner Group.¹¹⁸

Echoes from Mozambique

The Wagner Group’s foray into Mali contains echoes of the group’s short-lived deployment in Mozambique in late 2019.¹¹⁹ In Mozambique, much like in Mali today, Wagner deployed in a counterterrorism context with lucrative natural resources at stake, it exhibited poor relations with the national military, and it ultimately made strategic miscalculations that led to operational failures. By any measure, the deployment was a disaster.

Mozambique President Filipe Nyusi visited Russia in August 2019, where he reportedly signed agreements with Russia President Vladimir Putin on energy, mineral deposits, defense, and security.¹²⁰ The following month, 160-200 Wagner Group troops deployed to Mozambique, accompanied by three attack helicopters and other weaponry.^{121, 122, 123} According to some reports, the Wagner Group had initially been tasked with presidential security for the upcoming presidential elections in October 2019,^{124, 125, 126} but this quickly transitioned into a deployment in Cabo Delgado, a region in northern Mozambique with an estimated \$50 billion in liquefied natural gas projects under development, where insurgent groups have been active since 2017.^{127, 128, 129, 130, 131}

Right from the start, the Wagner Group was beset with strategic missteps in Cabo Delgado, ill-prepared for the challenges it would face.^{132, 133, 134} Its troops were



unfamiliar with the terrain in northern Mozambique and had no experience with combat in a tropical jungle, where Wagner's potential technological advantages, such as attack helicopters and combat drones, were undercut by heavy tree cover.^{135, 136, 137} Wagner leadership also underestimated the combat strength of the Islamic State - Central Africa Province (IS-CAP) insurgency, which at the time numbered in the thousands and had reportedly called on reinforcements from regional allies once Wagner deployed.^{138, 139, 140}

As Wagner quickly found itself on the losing end of combat with IS-CAP, relations with its ostensible allies in the national military, Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique (Armed Defense Forces of Mozambique, or FADM), rapidly deteriorated. Wagner Group troops saw FADM forces as undisciplined and underprepared, while FADM troops perceived Wagner forces as bullying and overconfident.¹⁴¹ The two groups also differed on operational decisions, such as whether to conduct bombing runs on insurgent forces—an idea that the Wagner Group supported and the FADM opposed.¹⁴² The differences between the groups widened to such an extent that they ceased to go on joint patrols, leaving the Wagner Group further exposed, as it knew neither the terrain nor the language.¹⁴³ Incidents in October 2019—variously attributed to either IS-CAP ambushes or friendly fire—resulted in the deaths of seven Wagner Group fighters and twenty members of the FADM special forces and led Wagner to retreat to a rear base the following month and wind down operations in Mozambique by early 2020.^{144, 145, 146, 147}

The Wagner Group was succeeded by other private military companies and then by military interventions from Rwanda in July 2021 and from the Southern African Development Community in August 2021, which have fared considerably better.^{148, 149}



Fear and Chaos

The Wagner playbook in Mali is not merely impacting civilians; it is also contributing to the perpetuation of insecurity and paving the way for the fragmentation of the Malian state. Wagner's fighters create chaos and fear within the Malian military hierarchy, forcing the FAMA to remain silent in cases of civilian abuses, such as the Moura massacre, and ultimately creating a deep rift within the Malian military junta. The lack of order and communication within the chain of command has resulted in the progressive deterioration of the FAMA ranks. Wagner's abuses against the Malian armed forces have become increasingly prevalent, as have complaints from Malian soldiers. Concurrently, the variable geometry of partnership with Russian actors is also contributing to a shift in power relations within the junta itself, endangering its very survival as its most prominent members regard one another with suspicion.

A military partnership with Wagner is a losing partnership

Since it deployed to Mali in December 2021, the Wagner Group has taken part in roughly one third of FAMA operations, mostly in the center and north of the country.¹⁵⁰ In the process, Wagner operatives have fostered dysfunction among the Malian armed forces, introducing destructive new elements to the Malian hierarchy while at the same time amplifying existing issues. Despite being in a formal partnership with the Malian military, Wagner fighters often operate outside the chain of command, use FAMA equipment without permission or notice, and carry out operations without consulting FAMA leadership. What's more, Wagner fighters display racist behavior toward the FAMA and preferential treatment for their militia partners, who they can control more easily. All of this creates disconnect within the FAMA, and that, in turn, gives rise to operational challenges in the immediate term and, in the longer term, fosters a deterioration of trust in the armed forces.

At the core of the FAMA's issues with Wagner is the likelihood that many of the Wagner fighters deployed in Mali lack formal military experience; the quality of the fighters has deteriorated over time. One source close to Russian military circles told The Sentry that the composition of units in Africa "degraded" with the beginning of Wagner's participation in Ukraine and that the criteria for occupying command positions were not professional qualities, but loyalty and personal connections.¹⁵¹ The source concluded that, as a result, "among the rank and file there are a large number of people with weak professional skills."¹⁵² Indeed, video footage from September 2022 showed Yevgeny Prigozhin, the Wagner Group's founder, addressing a large group of prisoners in Russia and telling them that their sentences would be commuted in exchange for service with his group: Prigozhin insisted that "no one will go back behind bars" if they would serve with his group.¹⁵³ This has had an impact on the way Wagner is seen by the FAMA. One member of the Malian security services told The Sentry that Wagner's violent behavior should be no surprise: "These people are scum, they come from prisons, they have done unspeakable things."¹⁵⁴

Wagner's freewheeling approach to counterterrorism means that the group operates outside the FAMA chain of command. One high-ranking FAMA official who participated in Operation Keletigui in the center of the country in 2023 and who had collaborated with numerous Wagner units described a challenging relationship, particularly with his immediate superior and subordinates. He told The Sentry that once Wagner personnel were assured of the objectives, methods, and geographic scope of an operation, they would embark on solitary missions, occasionally requesting the accompaniment of FAMA personnel, without first obtaining approval from their own commanding officers. Upon returning to the base and



being questioned, these Wagner operatives would either dismiss the matter or claim that FAMA superiors had given them the green light.¹⁵⁵ This was often not true, however. “Most of the time, my superiors were unaware of what had happened. So, in the end, I was held accountable for any losses, whether personnel or vehicle,” this official told The Sentry.¹⁵⁶

Wagner's fighters create chaos and fear within the Malian military hierarchy, creating a deep rift within the military junta.

On these unsanctioned “adventures,”¹⁵⁷ Wagner often appropriates FAMA equipment without notifying its military partners. While the members of Wagner have their own weapons, communications interception systems, and observation drones, they often travel in the FAMA's armored vehicles to remain discreet.¹⁵⁸ As a result, however, the FAMA is often left without equipment it needs. In some instances, terrorist attacks could not be halted because equipment was missing. “There was this one operation, near Bangassi ... we had heard that terrorists were hiding there,” one Malian Special Forces soldier stationed in Sofara told The Sentry, “and then we realized Wagner [fighters] had taken two of our Typhoons and gone in a whole other direction. This is chaos, this makes no sense, we could not intervene, and 5 civilians died as a result.”¹⁵⁹ The lack of readily available vehicles meant that the FAMA could not deploy to stop the killings.

Indeed, the FAMA do not appear to be able to rein in Wagner operatives. For instance, following the July 25, 2024, Tinzaouatène attack in which dozens of Wagner fighters were killed, Wagner operatives started targeting the Nampala village in Segou region, thousands of kilometers away from Tinzaouatène.¹⁶⁰ ¹⁶¹ A journalist who follows Wagner operations in the area told The Sentry that it was “as if they wanted to avenge in Nampala the men who died in Tinzaouatène.”¹⁶² Customary and religious leaders in the village managed to convince the military chief to ask the FAMA to rein in Wagner and demand that they stop indiscriminately targeting civilians, but the FAMA merely responded that they had no leverage over Wagner.^{163, 164}

It is no surprise, then, that within the bases that host Wagner fighters, FAMA commanders do not just fear terrorist armed groups; they are afraid of possible clashes between Wagner operatives and their own troops. Until April 2023, Wagner had stationed its agents at the Sofara forward operating base to cover the Mopti region.¹⁶⁵ Soon after their arrival, as early as March 2022,¹⁶⁶ they began shooting and detaining people in the base without consulting the FAMA on the identity of detainees or the intelligence that led to detaining them in the first place, as one interviewee told The Sentry.^{167, 168} In one case, they tortured a prisoner they had captured near Djenné, only to find out later that he was the older brother of one of the Malian soldiers on the base. The soldier said he would leave the force because of how his brother was treated, and he was later transferred to avoid any violence with the Wagner soldiers: “We became famous for being the ones that [would] try to relocate our troops, and that is just because we were one of the first outposts where they [Wagner] would be with us, in an isolated space. ... They were the danger.”¹⁶⁹

As early as 2022, Jeune Afrique reported that “tensions have been perceptible between Wagner mercenaries and certain Malian soldiers, who do not appreciate receiving orders from foreigners.”¹⁷⁰ Wagner mercenaries appear to consider their Malian counterparts not as partners but as subordinates and often exhibit racist behavior.^{171, 172} This is a sensitive subject in Mali following the withdrawal of the French military mission, Barkhane, which was often accused of undue interference in Malian security and defense



matters, as well as the imposition of its own agenda on Malian security forces.¹⁷³ One high ranking FAMA official told The Sentry that Wagner operatives “are worse than the French, they think my men are more stupid than them. We have gone from the frying pan to the fire.”¹⁷⁴ In the case of Wagner, this is corroborated by the way Wagner-affiliated Telegram channels talk about Malians,¹⁷⁵ and there is documented evidence of the Wagner Group’s racism, which is leading to mutual alienation between Wagner fighters and Malian soldiers.¹⁷⁶

Additionally, Malian forces express discontent with the preferential treatment afforded to Wagner fighters by the military junta and their commanding officers.¹⁷⁷ Medical evacuations, particularly those involving aircraft, are a particularly contentious issue. Due to the scarcity of fuel, the number of FAMA medevac operations is limited, and in instances where they do occur, Russian partners are typically placed on the plane before their Malian counterparts, as confirmed by an element of the Malian Air Force in an interview with The Sentry.^{178, 179} Deaths of Malian security forces seem to have doubled since Wagner’s arrival.¹⁸⁰

Members of the Dozo militia Dan Na Ambassagou, as well, are seen to be receiving better treatment than the Malian armed forces. Dan Na Ambassagou recruits report receiving timely salaries and good equipment and having more freedom of action thanks to their partnership with Wagner—despite not being official forces.¹⁸¹ Conversely, the FAMA have long lamented their poor treatment by the Malian government.^{182, 183, 184} In addition to this, the presence of the Dozo militia is viewed as hypocritical, as they are deeply involved in ethnic violence against the Fulani population in the center of the country.^{185, 186} Statements made by the Malian junta that never mention the ethnic dimension to this conflict appear particularly dishonest given that Wagner—the junta’s chosen military partner—recruits, arms, and sends into battle an ethnic militia.^{187, 188}

Discontent between partner forces operates both ways, as Wagner fighters have also lamented their Malian partners’ lack of collaboration. The Tinzaouatène defeat illustrates perfectly the reasons for this. The intelligence Wagner operatives received from their Malian partners was deeply flawed. One Malian official who was in a base in the north at the time of the attack told The Sentry that the location of the ambush was the only correct information.¹⁸⁹ The FAMA severely underestimated the number of CSP-DPA fighters present and the organizational capacity of the resistance. Malian forces were also accused of abandoning their Wagner allies when the situation turned against them, according to a Sentry source in Mali and the All Eyes On Wagner collective.^{190, 191} One high-ranking source within the Malian armed forces told The Sentry that, in the aftermath of the Tinzaouatène defeat, Wagner troops on their base “don’t speak with us anymore, don’t even ask if one location seems like a possible jihadist spot to us ... It clearly shows that they don’t trust us.”¹⁹² What’s more, the Malian Ministry of Defense refused to acknowledge the defeat, the faulty intelligence, and the fact that more Wagner troops died than Malian troops.¹⁹³ In a FAMA communiqué on the ambush,¹⁹⁴ Wagner fighters are not even mentioned. The Malian Ministry of Defense did not reply to The Sentry’s request for comment.



The Moura Massacre: Wagner Imposes Silence

The Moura massacre in central Mali exemplifies both the types of crimes committed by Wagner fighters in Mali and the silence imposed by the Malian junta and Wagner leadership around civilian massacres.

Over the course of several days in late March 2022, the FAMA and Wagner engaged in a siege in the town of Moura. Malian and Russian forces engaged in looting, detained villagers, and executed hundreds of people.¹⁹⁵ At least 500 individuals were unlawfully executed, and some were killed without being subjected to any form of questioning. At least 58 women and girls were subjected to sexual violence.¹⁹⁶ The mercenaries stole jewelry and seized cell phones, most likely to prevent people from filming their atrocities.^{197, 198, 199}

A statement released by the Malian Ministry of Defense on April 1, 2022, said that the victims were “terrorists,”²⁰⁰ and The Sentry found that sections of the Malian army and their Russian partners restricted the freedom of other FAMA fighters to discuss the Moura massacre publicly.

Two units have been directly involved in silencing the Malian army: the 33rd Parachute Commando Regiment (33rd RPC), an elite unit led by Colonel Moustapha Sangaré whose members are colloquially known as the “red berets,” and the Autonomous Special Forces Battalion (BAFS), led at present by Major Lassine Togola.²⁰¹ Some of the Malian armed forces involved in the massacre wanted to come forward but fear of the “red berets” prevented them from doing so publicly, one Malian journalist told The Sentry.²⁰² He added that the FAMA based in the Djenné area during the massacre were aware of what was happening and informed their superiors, who told them not to intervene because “the BAFS are there, the Russians are there, they know what they are doing, and in any case they will execute us all if we make any noise.”²⁰³

Some members of the Malian armed forces who participated in the massacre had familial ties with some of the individuals who were executed.²⁰⁴ One woman indicated that, as her brother was being taken away, she recognized a soldier she knew from her husband’s side of the family and implored him to spare her brother. The soldier in question returned to Moura the following year to request forgiveness and to explain that he had been compelled by both his superiors and the Russians to carry out the orders he had received.²⁰⁵

Some FAMA soldiers have expressed profound resentment toward Wagner’s involvement in Mali. They told a Malian journalist that the Moura massacre was due to the influence of Russian mercenaries on their superiors: “Without Wagner, there would have been no Moura, not this scale, not this duration, not all the dead.”²⁰⁶ In addition, the fact that Wagner was deeply involved in the massacre made it impossible for both civilians and the Malian armed forces to speak out publicly to demand transparency, accountability, and reparations.

Bad fences make bad neighbors

Despite official discourse indicating that Wagner and Russia are reliable partners in the Malian conflict, the Wagner command in Mali has demonstrated a reluctance to act without assurances of compensation. One need only look at the attack on the Bamako international airport and military police school



to see how Wagner's mercenary nature does not work in the Malian government's best interest when payment is unavailable.

On September 17, 2024, 13 JNIM fighters led by Abdel Salam al-Foulani and Salman al-Bambari evaded the Bamako airport's security measures and gained access to the presidential pavilion, as well as the Faladie military police school near the airport.^{207, 208, 209} Over nine hours, the fighters targeted military personnel and materials and burned planes, according to a recording in the Bambara language made by one of the planners of the attack, obtained by The Sentry.²¹⁰ In the recording, which was distributed on Whatsapp during the attack, he warned the population not to interfere in the ongoing battle, which only



A JNIM fighter setting fire to a plane at Senou Airport in Bamako, September 17, 2024. Photo: X.

concerned military personnel and military targets, not civilians. JNIM killed approximately 100 individuals and injured 255 others during the raid.²¹¹ The Wagner Group, despite being stationed just outside the airport,²¹² did not respond to the attack until had been underway for five hours.^{213, 214} It is unclear whether any Wagner fighters perished in the assault, but it is clear that Wagner failed to intervene when needed.^{215, 216}

Wagner's delayed response to these attacks suggests that the group and its leader in Mali, Ivan Maslov,²¹⁷ do not consider themselves re-

sponsible for securing the airport and, perhaps more significantly, that their military involvement in and around their own base is contingent upon a case-by-case negotiation—or renegotiation—of the contract between Wagner and Bamako.²¹⁸ An airport security guard who was there during the attack told The Sentry, “If you don’t pay them, they don’t move huh? ... The Russians I think took care of their own ‘lawn’ and then only after speaking with the chief of staff did they decide to intervene. I don’t know how much money they were paid to come in late, when most of the work had been done anyway.”²¹⁹

The FAMA has witnessed such behavior from Wagner before. When, in 2022, jihadists from the al-Qaeda-linked Katibat Serma surrounded the town of Boni and cut off the national road linking Mopti to Gao, no armed forces intervened. “The people of Boni have been under siege for three weeks, and no vehicles have been allowed through. The Fama and Wagner are in Hombori, 70 kilometers away, but they don’t move a finger,” a member of a local armed group told Jeune Afrique.²²⁰ Regarding this particular incident, a senior officer of the Malian Army told The Sentry that the lack of action on the part of the FAMA stemmed from the lack of Russian support, as they had planned for and needed Wagner’s



assistance, but: “Surprise, no money, no help.”²²¹ Due to the Malian government’s lack of funds, the Wagner Group had not been paid for their services from at least the end of April 2022 to May 2022.^{222, 223}

In both instances, Wagner’s inaction was met with considerable alarm by Malian troops, and even those in more senior positions within the military were angered at the lack of Russian support,^{224, 225, 226} particularly considering persistent rumors that the Malian government is providing their salaries.^{227, 228, 229} These assaults highlight that even when Wagner is in a position to support its partners, it may not be inclined to do so, which further complicates the Wagner-FAMA relationship.



A cartoon depicting Wagner’s lack of satisfaction with its Malian partners, published in *Jeune Afrique* in French on June 29, 2022. Artist: Damien Glez.

Tensions amongst junta members

Wagner’s arrival in Mali has also meant a recalibration of power relations in Bamako. The initial decision to pay Wagner’s mercenaries a huge sum from the Malian state budget raised many eyebrows among Malian politicians. One official at the Ministry of Mines told *The Sentry* that the initial choice to call in Wagner mercenaries was made by Defence Minister Sadio Camara and junta leader Assimi Goïta jointly,²³⁰ but that once Goïta realized the state budget could not cover this expense for longer than a few months, his relations with Camara started to deteriorate.²³¹ Junta members closer to Camara have woven an invisible web around Goïta’s power and now, thanks to their Russian allies, can threaten the collapse of his regime. The Malian Presidency did not reply to *The Sentry*’s request for comment.

Wagner’s survival in Mali is primarily championed by the Ministry of Defense, led by Camara, and the Agence Nationale de Sécurité de l’État (National Security Agency, or ANSE), led by Modibo Koné.²³² Camara was the primary driving force behind the negotiations with the Russians.²³³ His regular travels to Moscow and the time he spent at the Higher Military College in the Russian capital in 2019 earned him the nickname “Moscow man in Bamako.”^{234, 235} Meanwhile, Koné’s ANSE saw its budget inflated in 2022 to accommodate payments to Wagner.²³⁶ As the money is controlled by someone close to Camara, this support weakens Goïta’s position within the junta, while Goïta’s own inability to rein in Wagner’s attitude



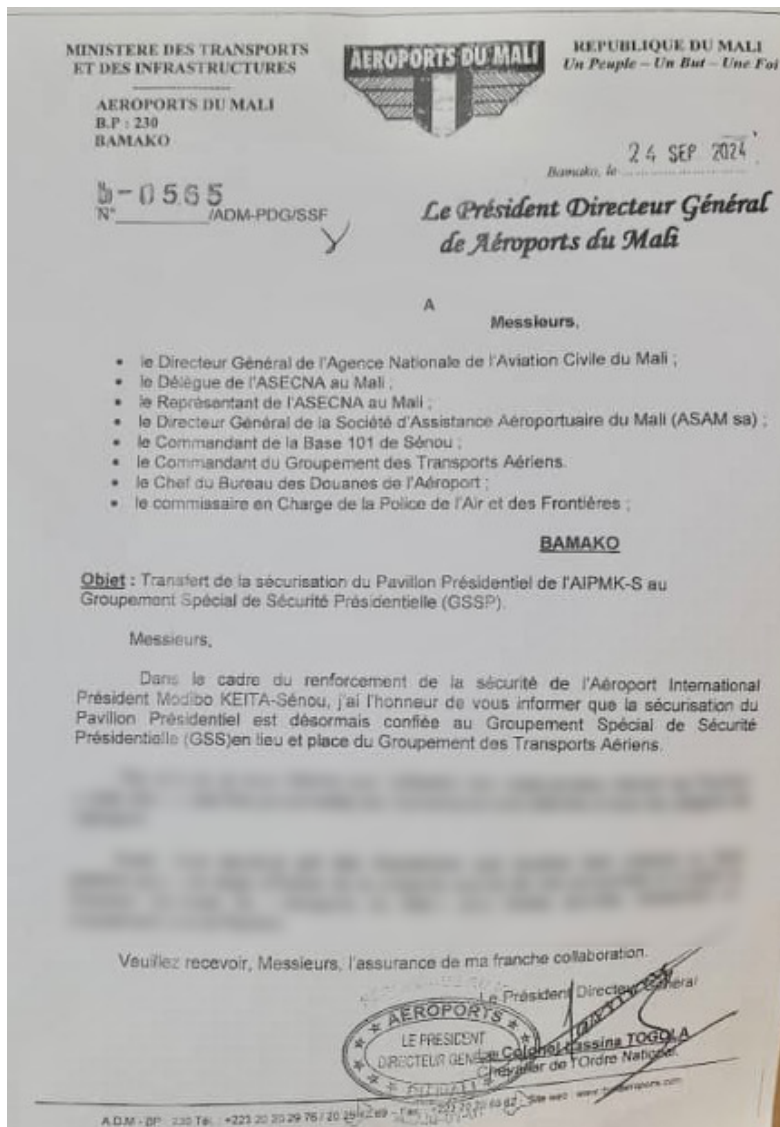
toward its Malian military partners damages his reputation within the army. The ANSE did not reply to The Sentry's request for comment.

This split between two factions of the Malian junta is reflected in the economic benefits enjoyed by individuals close to Camara. ZAM Magazine reported that, just outside Bamako, "on the road to the garrison town of Kati in Mali, new houses for the colonels have recently sprung up like mushrooms, and more construction is still ongoing."²³⁷ A citizen in the neighborhood told ZAM that "Colonel Sadio Camara is feeding several horses in his yard. He even has two stables. While we are struggling to survive."²³⁸ A FAMA colonel confirmed to The Sentry that some junta members are profiting from Wagner's tacit protection: "The fact that there is someone guaranteeing the well-being of certain individuals within the junta ... Some junta members and their friends are omnipotent now, they can get whatever they want, as quickly as they want it. License to build in a certain area? Granted. License to have this or that guy be promoted within the army? Granted." The colonel went on to note, however, that "Sadio and his men are in control of Bamako, but their control terminates there."²³⁹

Goïta appears to be reacting to the current situation by building up his own personal security apparatus. One senior ANSE official told The Sentry that, wary of the Camara-Koné-Wagner relationship, Goïta requested support from the Turkish mercenary group Sadat, and that, more recently, the security company SYS-Group had arrived in Mali.^{240, 241, 242} Diplomatic exchanges between Goïta and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had already begun in September 2021, just a few months after Goïta was made president.²⁴³ Two years later, Turkey delivered the first batch of Bayraktar TB2 drones to the Bamako authorities, followed by the delivery of another batch of Bayraktar TB2s in a move called "drone diplomacy."^{244, 245} The closest members of Goïta's security entourage, particularly the Special Group for Presidential Security (GSSP), will soon be trained by both Sadat and Turkish intelligence agency MIT, sources in Bamako confirmed.^{246, 247} Sadat told The Sentry that the "company hasn't had any operational, commercial, or advisory engagement with neither Goïta nor the Republic of Mali, or any other country in West Africa with the exception of Mauritania."²⁴⁸ SYS-Group did not reply to The Sentry's request for comment.

These changes do not guarantee Goïta's position, however. Turkish private military contractors may prove useful for Goïta and his entourage, but it is unlikely that Ankara has any appetite to guarantee the president's protection should Camara and Wagner choose to depose him.²⁴⁹ In addition, at least one official close to Goïta has expressed concerns for his safety. After the joint attack on the Bamako airport and the military police school on September 17, 2024, Goïta put the GSSP in charge of the security of the presidential pavilion there, according to a document seen by The Sentry. This was met with discomfort by one official close to Goïta, who told The Sentry, "The President's enemies will exploit this, he needs more men alongside him now that he sent some of his best to the airport."²⁵⁰ When asked which enemies he meant, the official replied, "Those who are wearing the Russian flag around their shoulders must be kept happy, otherwise the President risks losing his post."²⁵¹





Following the Bamako airport attack, the director general of Malian airports, Colonel Lassina Togola, shared a letter indicating that the Special Group for Presidential Security (Groupement Spécial de Sécurité Présidentielle, or GSSP) would take over security at the Senou Airport Presidential Pavilion. Photo: The Sentry.



Wagner's Criminal Economy in Mali

Information on how Wagner finances its operations in Mali is limited, but details about Malian government budgets and Wagner's activities in gold mining areas suggest that the armed group's invoices have not been paid through conventional state budgetary support.

Accessing information on Wagner payments and contracts was particularly challenging.²⁵² One Ministry of Finance official told The Sentry that he does not know anyone who has seen a contract and that “most exchanges happen between closed doors, aides and secretaries are not involved, only a handful of official interpreters.”²⁵³ A Ministry of Mines official mentioned that “everything is filed elsewhere” and that “often Ministers go to meetings without their chief of Finances ... even Ministers don't take their pens to meetings of the Council of Ministers.”²⁵⁴ Neither the Ministry of the Economy and Finances nor the Ministry of Mines replied to The Sentry's request for comment.

Paying Wagner's bill

In 2021, Reuters reported that the Malian government would be paying the Wagner Group approximately 6 billion CFA francs (almost \$11 million) per month for its services.²⁵⁵ This number was confirmed in February 2023 by the US top military chief for Africa, Stephen Townsend. Townsend went on to note, however, that the Malian government would likely “have to trade in kind for natural resources such as gold or gemstones, because I don't know how they come up with \$10 million a month.”²⁵⁶

A review of the Malian national budget reflects much of this speculation.²⁵⁷ In the June 2022 budget, the amount allocated to the ANSE, which is under the direct authority of Goïta but led by Koné, stood at more than 71 billion CFA francs,²⁵⁸ roughly \$120 million, for the year—\$10 million per month. This is a staggering figure. In comparison, prior to Wagner's arrival, the annual budget for the ANSE was 11 billion CFA (roughly \$19 million).²⁵⁹

As Townsend noted, however, Mali's coffers were unable to sustain payments at this scale, and struggling with sanctions imposed by ECOWAS and the resultant inflation,²⁶⁰ the junta discontinued payments to Wagner at least from the end of April 2022 to mid-June 2022.^{261, 262} Similarly, the budgets for the ANSE in 2023 and 2024 were significantly reduced to about 16 billion and 17 billion CFA francs (\$26 million and \$30 million), respectively.²⁶³

While the budget allocation has seemingly changed, the number of Wagner operatives in Mali remains considerable, estimated to be approximately 2,000 Russian combatants.²⁶⁴ Some sources indicate that as many as 4,000 fighters carry the Wagner insignia,²⁶⁵ and this number includes locals hired by Wagner, mostly Malians who know the territory and have relations in strategic villages.²⁶⁶ Wagner is thus responsible for their payments, which are in any case much lower than those of Russian fighters.²⁶⁷ Nevertheless, 17 billion CFA francs—the most recent ANSE budget—is not enough to pay Wagner regardless.

Some reports claim that international mining companies indirectly contribute to the payment of Wagner forces by injecting billions of CFA francs into the Malian state budget.^{268, 269} However, a source in Bamako informed The Sentry that, in 2023 and 2024, the Russian state was responsible for the majority of the



Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances

Direction Générale du Budget

République du Mali

Un peuple - un But - une Foi

BUDGET D'ETAT : DEPENSES2022

Situation d'exécution des crédits du budget général par dotation et par programme au 30/06/2022

22/07/2022 10:15:11

(en milliers de francs CFA)

| Groupe de fonction Titre de dépense | Autorisations d'engagement | Crédits de paiement | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | Dotations | Notifications | Engagements | Liquidations |
| 230 MINISTERE DE LA SECURITE ET DE LA PROTECTION CIVILE | | | | | |
| 1.010 Administration Générale | 1 922 500 | 22 934 512 | 0 | 7 010 429 | 6 571 470 |
| 2.021 Ordre et Sécurité | 14 859 659 | 91 547 296 | 0 | 49 524 940 | 37 921 537 |
| 2.022 Prévention des Risques et Calamités et Organisation des Secours | 5 051 037 | 18 796 479 | 0 | 9 901 836 | 7 916 237 |
| TOTAL | 21 833 196 | 133 278 287 | 0 | 66 437 204 | 52 409 244 |
| 235 AGENCE NATIONALE DE LA SECURITE D'ETAT | | | | | |
| 0.002 Securite d'Etat | 2 000 000 | 103 710 896 | 0 | 100 350 028 | 100 350 028 |
| TOTAL | 71 467 500 | 103 710 896 | 0 | 100 350 028 | 100 350 028 |

The Malian budgets for the Agence Nationale de la Sécurité d'Etat (ANSE) for 2022 (above) and 2024 (below). In 2021, the budget for ANSE was just 11 billion CFA francs (roughly \$19 million), which makes the 2022 increase to 71 billion CFA francs (roughly \$120 million) suspiciously steep. The budgets for the ANSE in 2023 and 2024 were then significantly reduced to about 16 billion and 18 billion CFA francs (\$26 million and \$30 million), respectively. Photos: Mali Ministry of Economy and Finance.

| Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances | | République du Mali | | | |
|---|---|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Direction Générale du Budget | | Un peuple - un But - une Foi | | | |
| | | BUDGET D'ETAT : DEPENSES | | 2024 | |
| 20/09/2023 | | Détail des dépenses par section, programme/dotation et article | | (en milliers de francs CFA) | |
| Type budget / Section | Programme ou Dotation Nature / Article | Autorisations d'engagement 2024 | Crédits de paiement | | |
| | | | 2023 | 2024 | |
| 1 BUDGET GENERAL | | | | | |
| 235 AGENCE NATIONALE DE LA SECURITE D'ETAT | | | | | |
| 0.002 Securite d'Etat | | 0 | 16 270 657 | 17 924 657 | |
| | Biens et services | 0 | 14 120 657 | 15 774 657 | |
| 60 Achats de biens | | 0 | 13 467 162 | 15 121 162 | |
| 61 Acquisitions de services | | 0 | 653 495 | 653 495 | |
| | Transferts et subventions | 0 | 150 000 | 150 000 | |
| 64 Transferts | | 0 | 150 000 | 150 000 | |
| | Investissement | 0 | 2 000 000 | 2 000 000 | |
| 23 Acquisitions, constructions et grosses réparations des immeubles | | 0 | 2 000 000 | 2 000 000 | |
| Total | | 0 | 16 270 657 | 17 924 657 | |

financial outlay associated with Wagner.²⁷⁰ If Russia has been funding the Wagner Group's operations in Mali, it has most likely been in anticipation of the eventual monetization of Malian natural resources, probably gold or lithium. But early indications suggest that Mali is not going to part with its natural resources so easily. The Russian government did not reply to The Sentry's request for comment.

Bamako is not Bangui

At the outset of its Malian venture, one significant objective for Wagner was to secure mining concessions, likely to replicate modes of self-financing employed by the group in other arenas. From its initial



arrival in CAR, for instance, Wagner sought to obtain control of gold and diamond mines, terrorizing the civilian and miner populations to gain full control over natural resource financial flows.²⁷¹ Similarly, in Sudan, Wagner's leadership started participating in mostly small-scale artisanal gold mining, establishing themselves as a major player in the Sudanese gold sector.²⁷²

In its earliest approaches to the Malian mining sector, the Wagner Group demonstrated that it had done its homework, deploying experts who knew the Malian mining sector to set up ventures in the country. In 2022, Sergei Laktionov, a geologist who had previously worked for the group in CAR,²⁷³ flew to Bamako.²⁷⁴ Later that year, Andrei Mandel, the head of Wagner's Sudanese subsidiary M-Invest, was also transferred to Mali with the intention of making contact with Malian mining authorities and setting up the first operations there.²⁷⁵ Between the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022, three Russian mining companies—Prime Security, Alpha Development, and Marko Mining—were legally established in Mali as Malian companies.^{276, 277} Their role was to act as bridges between the Malian Ministry of Mines and Russian prospectors, and at least two of their employees had worked in the Malian mining sector previously, The Sentry discovered, both with private companies and within the Ministry of Mines.^{278, 279}

But Russian emissaries had not considered that positive relations with Minister of Defence Camara would not necessarily translate into positive relations with Goïta. Despite rumors that mining licenses were granted in the southwestern region of Bakolobi to people close to Camara, and that such licenses could be exploited by Wagner operatives, all three Russian ventures were unsuccessful in securing long-term licenses.^{280, 281, 282} One source at the Ministry of Mines told The Sentry that the Russians tried to acquire mining concessions, but that there was no willingness to bend to their demands. He clarified that the Malian government had no interest in ceding profitable international mines to Russian companies, but that “maybe in the future they would consider granting some licenses to their new partners.”²⁸³

In Mali, however, international mines are vital to the junta's survival. Four companies dominate the sector: Barrick Gold Corporation, B2Gold Corporation, Resolute Mining Limited, and Allied Gold Corporation.^{284, 285, 286} Mali's relationship with these British, Canadian, and Australian gold extracting companies predates the first coup d'état in 2021,²⁸⁷ which puts these companies in a difficult position whenever a sudden political change occurs. They are particularly valuable to the Goïta regime and, at the same time, prone to government interference, as they are seen as central to the functioning of the Malian administration, given how profitable they are. Barrick Gold Corporation, B2Gold Corporation, Resolute Mining Limited, and Allied Gold Corporation did not reply to The Sentry's request for comment.

First, revenues from international companies have been too vital to the regime to jeopardize, especially as it struggled with significant financial difficulties caused by ECOWAS-imposed sanctions.²⁸⁸ Gold mining companies collectively accounted for over 50% of total tax revenues generated by the Malian state in 2022.²⁸⁹ A potential Russian infiltration into one of the internationally controlled mines would not only slow down revenues, but also threaten the livelihood of the sector as a whole, as it would set a precedent for other mining areas to be ceded to Russian control. Between 2023 and 2024, the large Loulo-Gounkoto site, managed by Canadian firm Barrick Gold, contributed over \$1 billion in taxes to the Malian GDP.²⁹⁰ While some of this figure includes salaries, royalties, and payments to Malian suppliers, it is still a significant amount for the Malian economy to rely on, especially considering that Mali's GDP was less than \$19 billion in 2022.^{291, 292}



The junta is also trying to further capitalize on foreign mines. The new Malian Mining Code approved in September 2023 stipulates that, in addition to Bamako having a 10% free share in any mining company, the Malian state can buy an additional 20% of the shares in a mining project and a private Malian company can buy another 5%—a decision that sits with the Malian government.²⁹³ An audit commissioned by the Malian government, enacted by Malian company Inventus Mining and French firm Mazars, threatened several mining companies with the retroactive application of the code, demanding payments on shares the government did not previously own.²⁹⁴ International mining companies reacted cautiously in public, possibly to avoid deterring investors from continuing to support their projects in Mali.

In September 2024, Bamako claimed nearly \$500 million from Barrick Gold.^{295, 296} In January 2025, following further tax disputes with Barrick Gold's leadership connected to the government's share of profits from the new ownership arrangement, the junta seized approximately four tons of gold, and the company warned that it might have to suspend operations at the complex over the long-running dispute.^{297, 298} About two months earlier, in November 2024, Australian firm Resolute Mining shares were suspended as Mali was demanding \$160 million to resolve the same tax dispute.²⁹⁹ If these international companies do not pay, their alternative is closing off the mines and leaving Mali. But closing off the mines would be very complicated and costly. In the case of Allied Gold's Sadiola mine, for example, the estimated closure costs (as of December 31, 2022), exclusive of retrenchment, would reach \$89.6 million.³⁰⁰

There is speculation that the junta is imposing taxes on foreign mines to chase them away in order to make space for Wagner.^{301, 302} While the imposition of the new Mining Code and the request for retroactive payments show that the junta is willing to take extreme measures to obtain more from international mining companies, it is no indication that they wish to grant Wagner control of the mines. It appears instead that the junta is looking to have the Malian state profit in the industrial mining space. In November 2022, in order to better control the Malian mining sector, the Goïta administration announced the formation of a new state-owned, state-funded mining company, the Société de Recherche et d'Exploitation Minière du Mali (Sorem SA).³⁰³ Souleymane Gueye, president of the legal commission, said that "for the mines that will be developed by Sorem, the state will get 100% of the benefits," instead of splitting revenues with foreign miners.³⁰⁴ It is unclear whether Sorem SA is profiting from Mali's mining sector yet. What is clear is that Wagner entered Mali believing it could access the lucrative industrial mining sector, but things did not go as planned.

Wagner leadership does not appear to have understood the different political forces at play in Mali, nor has it understood the extent of control that junta leader Goïta is exerting. Having established a strong relationship with Camara during the early negotiations to bring Wagner into Mali, Moscow may have thought they had a foot in the door with a member of the military junta. It is no surprise, then, that Wagner turned to Camara again in seeking mining licenses. For example, a source in Bamako confirmed that Camara attempted to pressure his brother-in-law Lamine Seydou Traoré, the former minister of mines, energy and water, to promise the Bakolobi mine to Wagner—through a network of Malian front companies—without asking Goïta's permission. Goïta then blocked the acquisition.^{305, 306} This, along with other mistakes made during his tenure,³⁰⁷ led Traoré to resign, and it caused a rift in relations between Goïta and Camara. The ministry itself was split in two, arguably to grant Goïta better control over mines, with Amadou Keita heading the Ministry of Mines and Bintou Camara in charge of energy and water.^{308, 309}



Goïta and his advisors appear to be thinking longer term. Allowing Russia to control the mining sector would ultimately lead to a powerful and uncontrollable Wagner Group that would undermine Goïta's authority in Mali. Wagner's actions in CAR act as a cautionary tale, as they show that, given the space to operate undisturbed, Wagner can gain control over a state's most profitable resources. And Malian officials know this; they have followed developments in CAR. As one Ministry of Mines official told The Sentry, "Assimi and his team are not fools, we did not reject one invader to open the door to another one, like they did in CAR."³¹⁰

Turning to artisanal gold mining

After Wagner's efforts to secure mining licenses were rebuffed, the group began making advances that would suggest it was seeking to control artisanal gold mines in the north, an approach that somewhat mirrored its operations in Sudan. Since about 2016, northern Mali has experienced a surge in gold mining activity, with an influx of artisanal miners in the northern Kidal and Gao regions.³¹¹ The artisanal gold mining business for Mali is huge, despite official numbers, with more than 50 tons extracted every year.^{312, 313} If Wagner was able to obtain control over some of the northern mines, profits could be significant, meaning that the group could potentially rely less on the junta—or on the Russian government—for its payments.

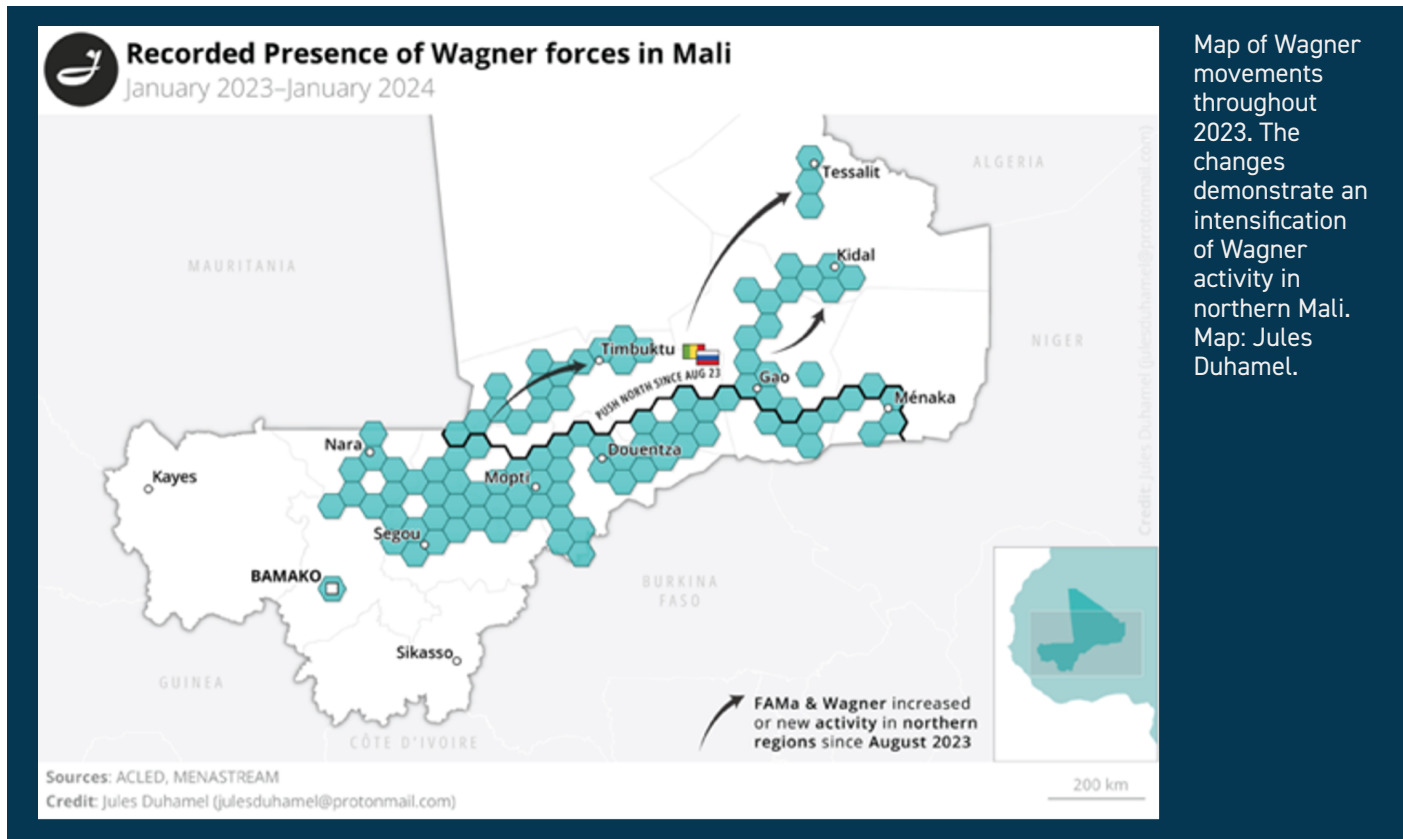
But Wagner does not appear to have succeeded in securing control over artisanal mines. In early 2024, Wagner personnel were said to have taken control of the In'Tahaka gold mines, the largest artisanal mining site in northern Mali, made up of the In'Tahaka and In'Tillit mines.³¹⁴ They arrived by helicopter on Friday, February 9, accompanied by Malian soldiers.³¹⁵ This was initially thought to be Wagner's final move into the mine, but just a few weeks later, Wagner's operatives were reported to have left.³¹⁶ Several reliable sources in In'Tahaka and around the mines in this area reported that a few Russians with a Malian interpreter came, spoke with some miners who had licenses, and asked about revenues, transport, and whether terrorists would show up to collect zakat (Islamic tax) and with what frequency.³¹⁷ Unsurprisingly, "nobody said that JNIM members often collect zakat in In'Tahaka, otherwise they might be considered complicit," one source who frequently travels to In'Tahaka told The Sentry.³¹⁸ July 2024 Maxar Technologies satellite images reveal the presence of extensive encampments that extend over vast distances, but no evidence of Wagner's involvement.^{319, 320}



(Left) An aerial image of the In'Tahaka gold mine site, including worker's tents, May 2022. (Right) Satellite imagery of In'Tahaka. Images do not show any significant infrastructure in In'Tahaka following Wagner's arrival at the mine. Photos: Cover Images via AP Images; Maxar.



Wagner has also displayed interest in other mines. A source told The Sentry that at the JNIM-controlled Al Mahamar mine, which is approximately 15 km north of Ber, in the Timbuktu area, the FAMA and Wagner bombed the water tower to hamper JNIM activities there.³²¹ One Wagner operative mentioned that Wagner is also eyeing the In'Dersat mine in the north.³²²



An analysis of Wagner's movements across Malian territory since August 2023 reveals a notable change in its operational patterns and presence in northern regions: Wagner military operations appear to be intensifying in the north and slowing in the center of the country.³²³ It is challenging to confirm whether their objective is to establish a secure corridor from In'Tahaka to Bamako, but one source told The Sentry that, after Wagner's visit in February 2024, "buyers no longer come directly to the mine to buy at a lower price."³²⁴ It has been a common practice in that area to buy gold directly from the mine, as, due to the risks associated with transport, the closer to the mine the gold is purchased, the cheaper it is. Following Wagner's visit, gold now needs to be transported directly to Bamako to be refined, instead of being sold to buyers between the mine and the capital.³²⁵ It appears that Wagner forced this change in order to get some accurate estimates of the profitability of In'Tahaka. This would also explain why Wagner agents only visited these two artisanal gold mines, without establishing a long-term presence there.³²⁶



A refinery to rule them all

Soon after realizing that international mines would not be so easily handed over to them, the Wagner leadership informed the Moscow diplomatic envoys in Bamako, who shifted strategy and sought instead to act as “middleman” in the Malian gold business.³²⁷

In November 2023, Malian Finance Minister Alousseni Sanou announced that the Malian junta and the Russian government had signed a four-year memorandum of understanding to build a gold refinery in Bamako. The refinery would be capable of processing 200 tons of gold per year and would reportedly be the largest in West Africa.³²⁸ In March 2024, Africa Initiative, a Russian news agency operating in the Sahel led by a former Wagner member,³²⁹ announced that Malian Minister of Mines Keita visited Krasnoyarsk in Siberia to sign a memorandum of understanding with Russian precious metals producer Krastsvetmet to build the Russian refinery.³³⁰

Whether the refinery will become operational is less certain, however. The capacity of the proposed refinery largely surpasses Malian industrial production. The total quantity of industrial gold produced in Mali in 2022, for example, was almost 70 tons,³³¹ the majority of which was derived from mines owned by international conglomerates such as Barrick Gold, B2Gold,³³² Resolute Mining,³³³ Allied Gold,³³⁴ and Endeavour Mining.³³⁵ For these international companies, the use of a Russian refinery could be detrimental to their businesses, as having their gold refined by Russian entities could leave them vulnerable to violating international sanctions on those Russian companies that would be building the refinery.³³⁶ The international companies—who pay Goïta’s salary, according to one source within the Malian Ministry of Mines—are not likely to accept such a proposal. A refinery like the Russians want “is just a fantasy, a dream,” the source concluded.³³⁷ The scale of this refinery could suggest that Moscow’s intentions are to process gold from artisanal mines and from the rest of the region, making Bamako a gold refining hub for neighboring states.



Conclusion

In September 2024, word began circulating that the Russian Ministry of Defense and the Russian military intelligence service, the GRU, offered Wagner fighters a choice between leaving Mali or operating fully under the Russian flag.^{338, 339, 340} Wagner was the ideal entry point for the Putin administration to set foot into Mali and neighboring states before seeking to obtain a stronger hold of political, military, and potentially business operations there. Wagner's failures, however, are leaving a difficult legacy: no viable business has been set up; relations with the military, Wagner's primary partner in Mali, have only worsened with time; and Wagner's fearsome reputation has been undercut by a series of military setbacks.

The deployment of Wagner in Mali represented a long-term investment for the Russian state. Thus far, however, the investment has proved costly. Not only has the Wagner Group failed to achieve its own objectives and those of the Russian state, it also has worsened the security situation in Mali and further fragmented the Malian military and junta apparatus. Terrorist attacks are continuing unabated, while rebel fighters and extremist armed groups are forming alliances, as between the northern rebels and JNIM,³⁴¹ to set up counteroffensives against Russian and Malian forces. Meanwhile, Wagner has been unable to secure gold mining licenses for either industrial or artisanal sites, likely forcing Moscow to provide most salaries for Wagner fighters.³⁴² Ultimately, Wagner's presence in Mali has served neither Mali nor Russia—nor Wagner, even.

Nonetheless, Moscow is interested in obtaining more control of operations in Mali, at least formally, as the recent announcement of Wagner's substitution with Africa Corps demonstrates.³⁴³ Even before the deaths of Wagner's leaders Yevgeny Prigozhin and his aide Dimitri Utkin in August 2023,³⁴⁴ Moscow had initiated the formation of Africa Corps, an expeditionary corps under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Defense with the stated objective of conducting "large-scale military operations on the African continent to support countries seeking to finally rid themselves of neo-colonial dependence, cleanse the Western presence, and acquire full sovereignty."^{345, 346, 347} However, the demise of the Assad regime in Syria means that Moscow may be currently relying less on its bases in the country, potentially shifting its assets to Libya instead.³⁴⁸ This complicates things for Africa Corps, as it makes the logistics of their deployment less comfortable.

Russia is using Mali and several other countries as a beachhead for its expansionary ambitions for Africa. Wagner, on the other hand, has very clearly contributed to insecurity and has destabilized an already volatile region, compelling civilians to seek refuge in neighboring countries, fueling tensions with Algeria, and putting a strain on Mauritania's eastern border. The Tinzaouatène battle in July 2024, so close to the Algerian border, prompted concerns among the Algerian government that tensions between Malian security forces and Tuareg separatists may resurface,³⁴⁹ despite Russia's diplomatic efforts to maintain civil relations between the two neighbors.³⁵⁰ Relations between Algiers and Bamako have also worsened after the shooting of a Malian army drone patrolling the Algerian border.³⁵¹ Wagner's actions have been detrimental to prospects for peace between Tuareg separatists in the north and the Malian state in Bamako. This is a development that countries like Niger, which has suffered from two successive Tuareg rebellions in the past,³⁵² should be acutely aware of.

Two additional elements of Russia's intervention in Mali should be of concern to the junta leaders in Niger and Burkina Faso, the two other Sahelian capitals that have recently undergone military coups



and chosen Russia as their new partner.³⁵³ The first is the huge cost of Wagner's presence, and the second is the rift that the group creates, not only among military leadership and rank-and-file officers, but also among the junta members themselves. In addition to this, partnering with Wagner or Africa Corps contradicts the main rhetoric behind all the military coups in the central Sahel: to rid themselves of any foreign influence.

So far, the European Union and its member states have been reacting with alarm to the specter of Russia's gradual encroachment into the Sahel and other African countries, fearing that Moscow will soon control access to natural resources such as gold and uranium in Niger and Mali and be able to dictate migratory flows across the African continent toward the Mediterranean.³⁵⁴ But the European Union may be operating on an outdated understanding of Wagner's strength and tactics. As the cracks in Wagner's operations begin to show, alternative diplomatic options may emerge for Brussels, London, and Washington to exert influence with Sahelian leaders toward better outcomes for their countries.



Recommendations

The EU, the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia

The European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels should prepare a demarche document directly criticizing the negative impact that Wagner Group operations are having on the Malian armed forces.

The EU, the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia should investigate and, if appropriate, designate for sanctions the network of individuals and entities in Sadio Camara's inner circle who enable, support, or benefit from Wagner's presence in the country, as well as those involved in corruption and human rights abuses. These designations can be brought pursuant to a number of relevant sanctioning authorities in these jurisdictions, including supporting peace in Mali, combating corruption and/or human rights abuses, and providing support to Wagner, an entity designated collectively for transnational criminal activity, terrorism activity in Russia, and activity in Ukraine. Sanctions should be coordinated to increase their impact.

International businesses

International mining companies operating in Mali and foreign refineries processing Malian gold should conduct comprehensive audits of their operations to ensure that they are not conducting business with sanctioned Wagner Group entities or individuals, such as Ivan Maslov.

Canadian and Australian companies with gold mining operations in Mali should adhere to the principles espoused in their own corporate social responsibility policies, particularly concerning human rights and corruption. This should include not only an independent evaluation of their own mining operations, but also analysis of human rights violations and corruption by those directly or indirectly financed by revenue from the gold mining industry—the Malian junta and their allies, particularly the Wagner Group. The findings should be made publicly available, not least to properly inform potential investors and current shareholders of the risks of doing business in Mali.

The United Nations and the International Criminal Court

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) should continue drafting fact-finding reports into the Wagner Group's human rights abuses across Mali. At the same time, it should continue pushing the Malian state to independently investigate instances of human rights abuses by the Wagner Group.

The Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court (ICC) should open an investigation into war crimes perpetrated by Wagner troops in Mali and prosecute those responsible for human rights abuses. Alternatively, the United Nations Security Council should refer the situation in Mali to the Office of the Prosecutor at the ICC.

The Independent Expert on Mali mandated by the Human Rights Council (HRC) should address human rights abuses in Mali linked to the Wagner Group in his forthcoming report.



The UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries should consider a mission to Mali, particularly following allegations of human rights abuses in Moura and retaliatory attacks by Wagner after the defeat of Tinzaouatène.

The government of Mali

The Malian government should allow and facilitate the visit of the Independent Expert on Mali to assess the human rights situation in the country and identify areas for improvement, particularly in relation to the intervention of a foreign army.

The government should take steps toward criminal accountability and reparations for massacres such as Moura, as well as for the abuses against and displacement of civilian populations related to attacks by the Wagner Group in the north and west of the country.

The Malian government should conduct an internal investigation into abuses against members of the Malian army. If the military junta in Bamako hopes to defeat extremist groups, it should seek to build a trust-based relationship with the armed forces and to reestablish a credible hierarchy that does not suffer from Russian meddling.

The governments of Niger and Burkina Faso

Niger and Burkina Faso should avoid summoning Wagner's security services. In Mali, a neighboring country which is dealing with some of the same insurgencies as within their own borders, Wagner has not been able to stem violence perpetrated by terrorist and other non-state armed groups. If Niamey and Ouagadougou choose Wagner as their security provider, their military hierarchy will be severely challenged and relations between junta leaders weakened.

The government of Algeria

The government of Algeria should facilitate renewed negotiations on a peace agreement between Bamako and the northern rebel groups. As the political and security landscape has changed since the 2015 agreement, which was facilitated by Algeria, including as a result of the withdrawal of the UN peace-keeping operation MINUSMA, new terms will need to be agreed. Such terms would need to consider potential requests by northern rebel groups to exclude Wagner interference in northern territories and to the necessity of holding elections in Bamako.



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Jessica Berlin et al., “The Blood Gold Report,” 21 Democracy, December 2023, available at: <https://bloodgoldreport.com>
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Jessica Berlin et al., "The Blood Gold Report," 21 Democracy, December 2023, available at: <https://bloodgoldreport.com>
- 288 Hannane Ferdjani, "Economic Hardship, Insecurity Spike in Mali as ECOWAS Exit Looms," Al-Jazeera, February 8, 2024, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/2/8/economic-hardship-insecurity-spirals-in-mali-as-ecowas-exit-looms>
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Mali Secretariat Generale du Gouvernement, "Loi N°2023-040 du 29 août 2023 portant Code minier en République du Mali" (Law No. 2023-040 of August 29, 2023, Regarding the Mining Code in the Republic of Mali), Journal officiel de la Republique du Mali, Numero 22, September 1, 2023, available at: <https://sgg-mali.ml/JO/2023/mali-jo-2023-22.pdf>
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The Sentry interview with a former rebel fighter, Tahoua, Niger, May 2024.
David Baché, “Mali: l’armée et le groupe Wagner investissent la mine d’or artisanale d’Intahaka” (Mali: Army and Wagner Group Invest in Intahaka Artisanal Gold Mine), RFI, February 12, 2024, available at: <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20240212-mali-l-armée-et-le-groupe-wagner-investissent-la-mine-d-or-artisanale-d-intahaka>
The Sentry interview with technical counsel at the Malian Ministry of the Economy and Finances, Bamako, June 13, 2024.
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David Baché, “Mali: l’armée et le groupe Wagner investissent la mine d’or artisanale d’Intahaka” (Mali: Army and Wagner Group Invest in Intahaka Artisanal Gold Mine), Radio France Internationale, February 12, 2024, available at: <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20240212-mali-l-armée-et-le-groupe-wagner-investissent-la-mine-d-or-artisanale-d-intahaka>
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David Baché, “Mali: l’État veut exploiter la mine d’or artisanale d’Intahaka dans le Nord” (Mali: State Wants to Exploit the Intahaka Artisanal Gold Mine in the North), Radio France Internationale, August 30, 2024, available at: <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20240829-mali-l-état-veut-exploiter-la-mine-d-or-artisanale-d-intahaka-dans-le-nord>
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