“NO ONE IS SPARED”

WAR CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE MALIAN ARMY AND FOREIGN ALLIED FORCES ALONG THE MAURITANIAN BORDER

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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First published in 2020
by Amnesty International Ltd
Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW, UK

Index: AFR 37/1347/2026
Original language: French

amnesty.org

Cover photo: *A man walks past a structure damaged in a drone attack allegedly carried out by the Malian army near the Algerian border in Talhandak on 8 July 2026.*
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1. GLOSSARY

WORD	DESCRIPTION
AES	Alliance des Etats du Sahel [Alliance of Sahelian States]
CAT	Committee Against Torture
CD-DPA	Collectif pour la Défense des droits du Peuple de l'Azawad [Collective for the Defence of the Rights of the Azawad People]
ECOWAS	Economic Committee of West African States
CSP-PDA	Cadre stratégique pour la défense du Peuple de l'Azawad [Strategic Framework for the Defense of the People of Azawad]
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICC	Internation Criminal Court
IS-SAHEL	Islamic State- Sahel Province
FAMA	Malian Armed Forces
G5 SAHEL	Group of 5 for the Sahel
GATIA	Groupe d'autodefense Touareg Imghad et allies [Imghad Touareg Self-Defence Group and allies]
GSIM	Group for the support of Islam and Muslims
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissionner for Refugees
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Missin in Mali
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
RFI	Radio France International
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

> **"We arrived in Mberra [Mauritania] from Mali in 2024 because we had far too many problems. There were killings, people mutilated while still alive, pillaging, and the destruction of our property. In their minds [that of the FAMa and Wagner], all herders are terrorists, and so they don't hesitate to burn people and property. They don't even spare the blind or the elderly."**
>
> In-person interview with Hamma* (44 years), (name changed for security reasons), a Malian refugee in Mberra, 1 July 2025.

In August 2023, hostilities resumed between the Malian government, and the armed separatist groups in the north of Mali that had signed the 2015 peace agreement, after eight years of a ceasefire. Heavy fighting broke out in Ber, Timbuktu, and Léré following the withdrawal of troops from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), at the request of the Malian authorities after a 10-year presence, and the departure of the "anti-terrorist French regional military operation known as Barkhane, the previous year.

Intensification of FAMa operations with Wagner between 2023 and 2025

Faced with the activity of separatist armed groups, as well as the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims [GSIM], an armed group affiliated to Al-Qaeda whose violations of international law have been documented by Amnesty International, the Malian Armed Forces (FAMa) intensified their military operations, conducted jointly with elements of the private military company, Wagner, which has been involved in Mali since 2022.

Little public documentation emerged about these operations and their impact on the population, apart from a few official statements from the army and the armed groups. Indeed, the military authorities have suspended international and national media outlets, some of which are accused of spreading "untruths" about the conflict. Other domestic media outlets have self-censored on the subject to avoid state repression. Members of civil society who have criticized the Malian authorities have been subjected to arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances. Silence has been imposed in the name of "patriotism" and "the fight against

terrorism", and impunity has continued to reign for those responsible for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the context of the armed conflict.

It is against this backdrop that Amnesty International has conducted research into these operations and their impact on the civilian population. Unable to travel to central and northern Mali due to access restrictions and insecurity, Amnesty International delegates visited Mauritania, specifically the Hodh ech-Chargui region bordering Mali, where hundreds of thousands of Malian refugees fleeing the conflict are located. Between June 2025 and April 2026, Amnesty International researchers gathered testimonies from 119 refugees from the regions of Ségou, Timbuktu, and Mopti (in Mali). Amnesty International also conducted 15 additional interviews with political leaders, human rights and humanitarian organizations, community leaders, and journalists based primarily in Mali and Mauritania. In addition to these direct sources, the report draws on a wide range of secondary sources, including an analysis of Malian laws and other texts, photos and social media posts related to certain incidents, photos held by some victims, documents produced by humanitarian organizations and research centres, press releases and dispatches from the FAMa, documents produced by armed groups involved in this conflict, NGO reports, and media articles.

This report documents violations of international and Malian law committed by members of the FAMa and Wagner mainly during joint military operations between June 2023 and December 2025. It presents conclusive evidence proving that these violations constitute war crimes of murder, torture, outrages upon human dignity, pillaging, and the destruction of civilian property, in addition to other serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, such as arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances. The report also documents the consequences of two drone strikes carried out by FAMa, which likely constituted direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects, or even indiscriminate attacks, and may amount to war crimes.

Killings of civilians during joint patrols

Amnesty International gathered testimonies from 33 individuals reporting that at least 34 civilians not directly involved in hostilities had been killed by members of the FAMa or Wagner during military operations, mostly conducted jointly, in seven locations between 2023 and 2025 (Fatakara, January and March 2025; Echell and Taborak, January 2025; Tin Adanda, February 2025; Lerneb, November 2024; Lougui, October 2023; Toulé, July 2023 and March 2024, in the border regions of Mauritania). This number of killings only covers the incidents that Amnesty International was able to document and corroborate and is therefore far from being an exhaustive account of the full extent of the crimes potentially committed during patrols in the period under review.

The vast majority of the victims of these operations were pastoralists (Fulani, Arabs, and Tuareg) who, according to the testimonies collected by Amnesty International, were suspected by members of the FAMa and Wagner of colluding with or sympathizing with non-state armed groups. These suspicions appeared to be based solely on the victims' ethnicity, their presence in areas where these armed groups operate, or accusations of possessing walkie-talkies or motorbikes, equipment used not only by armed groups but also by nomadic people and their families for communication and transport.

According to the testimonies gathered, all the victims of the seven incidents documented in this report were civilian men. They were deliberately shot, had their throats cut, or were burned alive. Those interviewed indicated that none of the victims were armed or directly involved in hostilities at the time of their death. According to the testimonies gathered, the victims were grazing their animals in the bush, were in or near their homes or, in some cases, were hiding or trying to flee the arrival of patrols when they were killed or apprehended by joint FAMa/Wagner patrols before being killed.

People in these villages who were present during joint patrols testified that they saw individuals being killed by patrol members while trying to flee their arrival, or upon returning to the village after hiding during the military operation, believing the patrol had left. Furthermore, many witnesses present during a joint patrol said they saw or knew during the operation that people – family members, neighbours, or relatives – had been arrested and taken by patrol members to the outskirts of the villages. Some witnesses claimed to have seen these arrested individuals executed, while others saw their bodies bound, riddled with bullets, or burned after the patrol had left. Many witnesses reported mutilated bodies, notably with their throats cut or burned, particularly in Fatakara, Taborak, Lerneb, Lougui, and Toulé. In the documented cases in Lerneb, Échell, Toulé, and Taborak, the victims either had their throats cut after death or their bodies were burned or mutilated.

In most cases, it is impossible to establish direct responsibility for the killings on the part of any particular patrol member. They were, however, committed during joint FAMa/Wagner patrols, where actions appeared to be coordinated. Witnesses confirmed the presence of Wagner members alongside the FAMa, noting their skin colour and language, which was unfamiliar to the villagers.

Among the documented cases, in Taborak (Timbuktu region), on 24 January 2025, a joint FAMa/Wagner patrol killed four individuals. Assa*, the wife of one of the victims, witnessed her husband's execution right outside her door. She said:

"My husband was killed right in front of me, before my very eyes. What happened is unbearable. They shot him at my door. It was a group with two black men and some white. I didn't understand their languages, but the two black men told us not to cry, to stay calm. (…). They were all wearing military uniforms when they came to my house in Taborak."

The same scenario unfolded in Tin Adanda (Tin Aicha commune, Timbuktu region), where four individuals were killed on 12 February 2025 during a joint patrol. Hana*, 65, a survivor of the incident who took refuge in Mberra, lost two sons and a cousin, who were arrested and then executed outside the village. She told Amnesty International:

"I lost two of my sons and my paternal cousin in Tin Adanda. They were arrested by the soldiers [while they were in the village on 12 February] and taken outside the village before being executed with complete impunity. The soldiers entered Tin Adanda in six vehicles. They were mostly white men, accompanied by members of the FAMa."

While statements issued by the FAMa claim they only target members of armed groups during their military operations or patrols, the information gathered and corroborated by Amnesty International reveals a completely different reality. The testimonies analysed show that these murders were deliberate: the victims who were shot, had their throats cut, or were burned alive, were civilians not directly involved in hostilities at the time of their deaths.

Drone strikes on civilians

Amnesty International has also collected several accounts indicating that at least 23 people – including at least one woman and five children – were killed in drone strikes during military operations in the villages of Ejder and Tangata in 2025, in the region of Timbuktu. The organization found no evidence of the presence of armed group members or military targets in the vicinity of these two strikes. If this was the case, then these would have be direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects, which constitute war crimes.

On 16 March 2025, a strike targeted the Ejdeir market (Timbuktu region), killing the son and brother of Abdoul Aziz*, 85, and resulting in a total of 16 deaths and some 10 injured, including Abdoul Aziz *. This latter, a survivor of the strike, gave Amnesty International his account of the events:

"The [Ejdeir] market is a place where everyone meets. We had finished our shopping and, after the Zuhr prayer, at around 2pm, we started loading our belongings. That's when the strike occurred. (…) The car was under a tree next to the market. I was sitting right next to it, but my son and brother were loading goods into the vehicle, mainly goats and small animals. I don't remember anything specific, but I was suddenly thrown in the air, and I felt an intense pain in my leg. I could see that the vehicle and the animals were burning before I lost consciousness. I came round in another vehicle. The people on it told me that my son and brother had been killed in the strike."

Torture, ill-treatment, and unlawful detention during joint military operations and in military camps.

Amnesty International has gathered testimonies from 15 people, all men, who suffered torture and ill-treatment, mostly at the hands of Wagner members, with the FAMa fully aware of these incidents. Amnesty International has also gathered testimonies from individuals who directly witnessed some 30 acts of torture and ill-treatment, either committed in front of them or against fellow detainees. The accounts also refer to five people who died in military camps as a result of torture and poor detention conditions.

Amnesty International was able to corroborate the testimonies of torture through the marks of abuse still visible on the bodies of witnesses, or through photos that also showed the physical scars of those who were tortured. Cross-checking testimonies from individuals detained at the same time or who witnessed the same acts of torture and ill-treatment also helped corroborate these accounts.

These acts of torture occurred during joint military operations by the FAMa and Wagner in the towns or villages of Nampala, Lerneb, Fatalkeirou, and Ségou, as well as in the military camps of Nampala and Léré. Most of the testimonies collected by Amnesty International show that the acts were carried out to gather information about armed groups and/or about the alleged membership of or support for armed groups by those tortured. The torture techniques used included suspending the upper limbs from a metal bar, waterboarding, beatings with iron bars and sticks, and electric shocks to sensitive parts of the body such as the hands.

Those detained and tortured in the military camps of Nampala and Léré were not brought before a judge. They were denied access to a lawyer or to their families. Very often, their relatives were unaware of their situation after their arrests.

Several testimonies thus reported acts of torture perpetrated by Wagner operatives in the Léré military camp. Abdoullahi*, a 41-year old herder, recounted his four-day detention at the camp after being arrested by a joint Wagner-FAMa patrol near the Mauritanian border, along with other herders who were moving through the area:

"The soldiers started beating us violently. I was hit in the face and my cheek swelled up due to the kicks. One of the soldiers pointed a rifle at my face, then forced my nose to the ground. They tied our hands behind our backs while sniffer dogs circled around us. They took ropes and tied our hands to the posts in the hangar. Our feet were suspended such that they didn't touch the ground. A soldier kept hitting me on the chest with an iron bar. I fainted but, when I woke up, I was still being beaten, this time with a wooden stick. Sometime between dusk and the Isha prayer, they untied us from the hangars and chained us alongside Tanto [another herder arrested with him] using an iron chain. They started hitting us again and, at one point, I realized that Tanto was no longer alive. The beating lasted about 30 minutes. All of this was at the hands of Wagner because, within the camp, we were in their sector."

These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Committed within the context of a non-international armed conflict, they constitute war crimes of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. Furthermore, the instances of deprivation of liberty in military camps (ranging from one day to several months) without due process amount to arbitrary detention and possibly qualify as enforced disappearances.

Pillaging and destruction of civilian property during joint operations

The report also presents numerous cases of pillaging and destruction of civilian property during military interventions by the FAMa and Wagner in villages along the border with Mauritania, notably in Tin Adanda (February 2025), Echell (January 2025), Taborak (January 2025), Lerneb (November 2024), Nampala (July 2024), Toulé (March 2024), Diadia (December 2023), Lougui (October 2023), and Massabougou (2023). Amnesty International also documented acts of pillaging in several other locations, including Idjardahanene (June 2025), Tin Boulel (January 2024), Nambo (July 2024), Banamba (August 2023), Boundou Boubou (June 2024), Toladji (January 2024), Dendegué (July 2024), and Boumodi (January 2024). In the documented cases, joint patrol members pillaged various items such as mattresses, blankets, motorbikes, jewellery, phones, pharmaceutical products, assorted goods, livestock, and money. They also destroyed houses and shops and killed livestock. None of the seizures of civilian property appeared to be justified by military necessity.

Dada*, a pharmacist from Lerneb, who was a victim of pillaging by members of a joint_military operation in the town on 12 November 2024, said:

"They took everything (ointments, medicines, jewellery, toiletries, underwear, nappies, and women's clothing). They also looted my house, taking mattresses, cushions, food, and my identity card. There was nothing left but an empty barrel and a mat. They took everything."

These acts, which are prohibited under international humanitarian law and Malian law, constitute war crimes.

Amnesty International calls on all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law. In light of the serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights committed mainly during military operations by the FAMa and Wagner between June 2023 and December 2025, as documented in this report, Amnesty International makes several recommendations to the Malian authorities, including:

- To take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of civilians during military operations and strict compliance with international humanitarian law on the part of the FAMa and their foreign military partners;
- To respect all applicable rules of international humanitarian law, especially those aimed at protecting civilians, including: the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution in attacks; the prohibition of attacks on life and physical integrity, particularly murder of any kind, mutilation, cruel treatment, and torture; the prohibition of attacks on human dignity, especially humiliating and degrading treatment; the prohibition of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence; the prohibition of pillage and the seizure or destruction of civilian property; and respect for the dead, notably by preventing the plundering or mutilation of their remains;
- To ensure that no-one is subjected to arbitrary detention or enforced disappearance, and to release all victims of these violations of international and Malian law;
- To ensure that all members of the FAMa, foreign military partners, and armed groups suspected of responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law, constituting war crimes, committed in the context of the conflict since 2023 are prosecuted through the ordinary courts and tried in proceedings that respect the standards of a fair trial, without recourse to the death penalty;
- To reconsider the decision to withdraw from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- To ensure that the agreement governing the partnership between the Government of Mali and Africa Corps (a Russian Ministry of Defence entity which replaced Wagner as a security partner of the Malian army in June 2025) incorporates human rights and international humanitarian law commitments and safeguards and is published to allow for adequate scrutiny;
- To establish a clear and formalized chain of command for all foreign personnel (Wagner / Africa Corps) who have operated and are operating alongside the Malian authorities, in accordance with the rules of command responsibility under international law;

Amnesty International also urges the African Union:

- To re-engage more decisively with the protection of human rights and international humanitarian law in Mali by systematically placing the situation in Mali on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council, condemning abuses and violations against civilians, and supporting the fight against impunity for crimes under international law committed in the context of the armed conflict;
- To proactively leverage the good offices of the Special Representative for Mali and the Sahel to initiate dialogue with the Malian authorities, ensuring they respect and enforce their regional and international obligations and commitments regarding international humanitarian law and human rights.

3. METHODOLOGY

This report is one of the results of research conducted by Amnesty International in 2025 and 2026 into crimes committed by parties to the conflict in Mali along the border with Mauritania (including the regions of Ségou, Timbuktu, and Mopti). Since 2023, this area has seen an intensification of armed operations amid the resumption of hostilities between the government and the groups that signed the 2015 peace agreement, on the one hand, and an ongoing conflict with the GSIM, on the other.

This report focuses on cases of serious violations of international humanitarian law committed between June 2023 and December 2025 by government forces and Wagner operatives, which may constitute crimes under international law, in a context where these violations are ignored by the authorities and remain unpunished. The private military company, Wagner, was present in Mali from 2022 to June 2025, acting alongside the FAMa in their operations in the centre and north of the country. While Africa Corps, a Russian Ministry of Defence entity, replaced Wagner in Mali in June 2025 and has since operated alongside the FAMa, all incidents documented in this report except one, involving foreign elements alongside the armed forces occurred before this transition. The cases documented during research into crimes under international law committed by GSIM have formed the subject of other Amnesty International reports.[1]

This report stems from research conducted in Mauritania's Hodh ech-Chargui region, which borders areas where serious incidents occurred in Mali between 2023 and 2025 and where many Malians sought refuge to escape the conflict. Amnesty International was unable to visit the incident zone in Mali due to access difficulties, insecurity linked to intensified military operations, and the government's growing hostility towards non-governmental actors. As a result, Amnesty International was unable to access the civilian populations affected by the parties to the conflict who were still present in the areas of military operations in Mali.

Amnesty International conducted two research missions, from 28 June to 8 July 2025 and from 28 March to 9 April 2026, in the Hodh ech-Chargui region of Mauritania. In Bassikounou, Fassala, Douenkara, Kindjerla, Aghor, Hassi Touil, Tinouaghitine, Ehel Mahal Allouch, Barotoma, Kleiveu, and Mberra refugee camp, Amnesty International delegates interviewed 119 refugees (39 women and 80 men) from the Malian regions of Ségou, Timbuktu, and Mopti. For most of the interviews, Amnesty International used French-speaking interpreters to facilitate discussions with respondents who spoke Arabic, Tamasheq, Fulfulde, and Bambara. Those interviewed were the victims of, as well as direct and indirect witnesses to, violations and abuses committed by parties to the conflict in Mali. These included killings, looting, theft, and destruction of property; unlawful detention and enforced disappearances; torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment; violations of personal dignity; and sexual violence.

Amnesty International also conducted 15 additional interviews on the issue of violence along this border with political leaders, human rights organizations, humanitarian organizations, community leaders, and journalists based in Mauritania and Mali.

All these interviews were conducted in confidential and private settings to ensure the confidentiality of the information provided and to minimize the risk to the interviewees. Based on these principles, the names of the interviewees have been anonymized using pseudonyms throughout this report. Before each interview, the organization's representatives informed the interviewees of the nature and objectives of the research, the conditions under which the information collected would be used and ensured they gave their informed

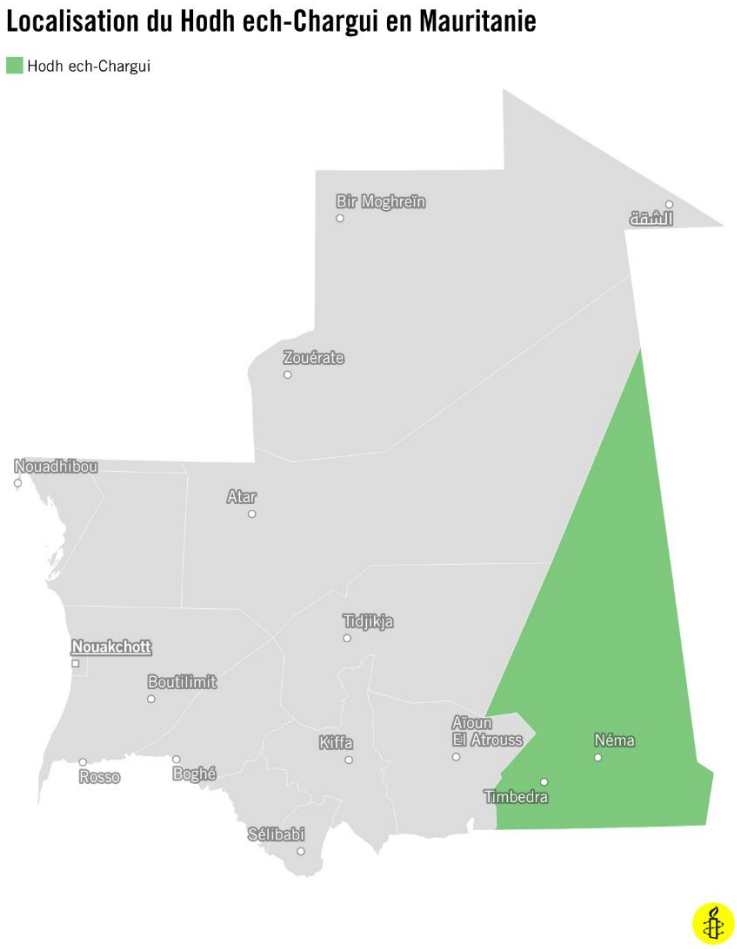
[1] Amnesty International, "Mali: GSIM must observe international humanitarian law and ensure safety of civilians as Bamako is under siege", 15 May 2026 https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/05/mali-bamako-siege/; Amnesty International, "Mali: Evidence of war crimes by armed groups in Gao region', 29 July 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/07/mali-war-gao/

consent. All of these individuals were informed that they had control over the interview and could choose not to answer certain questions or end the interview if they wished to withdraw their consent.

In addition to these direct sources, the report draws on a wide range of secondary sources to verify and corroborate the facts and accounts, and to examine the legal framework. Amnesty International thus analysed the laws and regulations of Mali, photos and other social media posts related to certain incidents, photos held by some victims, documents produced by humanitarian organizations and research centres on the conflict and its consequences, press releases and dispatches from the Malian army regarding their military operations, documents also produced by armed groups involved in this conflict, NGO reports, and press articles. Analysis of a number of satellite images of locations where incidents occurred did not allow for their inclusion in this report.

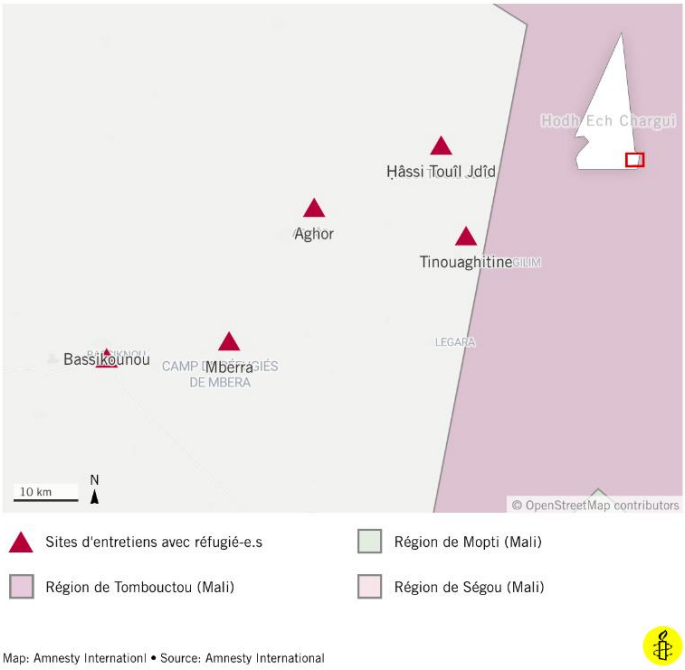
On 3 August 2026, Amnesty International sent a letter to General Assimi Goita, Head of State of Mali and President of the Transition, outlining the main conclusions of this report and requesting a response to the allegations of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, some of which may amount to war crimes. Amnesty International did not receive a response to its main conclusions from the Malian authorities, at the time of publication of this report.

Amnesty International would like to thank all the local organizations in Mali and Mauritania, the activists who facilitated the interviews, and everyone who agreed to share their experiences, expertise, and analysis of the non-international armed conflict in Mali.



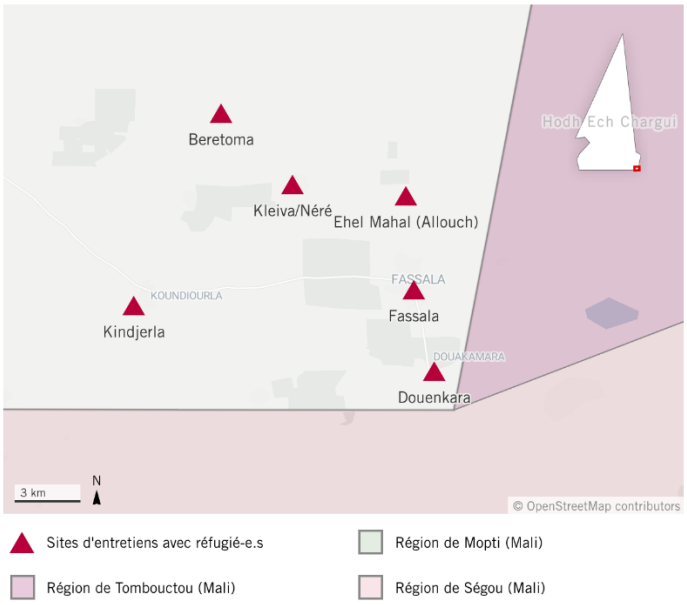
Location of Hodh ech-Chargui in Mauritania

Sites où des entretiens ont été menés dans le Hodh ech-Chargui



Map: Amnesty International • Source: Amnesty International

Sites où des entretiens ont été menés dans le Hodh ech-Chargui



Map: Amnesty International • Source: Amnesty International

Site where interviews were conducted in Mauritania with refugee populations from Mali

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 A NEW DYNAMIC IN THE CONFLICT SINCE 2023

While the conflict between the Malian army and jihadist armed groups – currently the GSIM, affiliated to Al-Qaida, and Islamic State in the Sahel (IS-Sahel) – has never ceased since 2012, hostilities resumed in August 2023 between government forces and their allies, on one side, and the armed groups that signed the 2015 peace and reconciliation agreement, on the other.[2] Fighting between the Malian Armed Forces and members of armed groups advocating for the autonomy or independence of the northern regions (Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu) – or "Azawad" as they refer to it – thus broke out in Ber, Bourem, and Léré (Timbuktu region). The breakdown of the peace agreement came in the wake of domestic and international tensions, with the Malian government increasingly clashing with its international partners such as France, the United Nations, and the European Union. The government questioned the impact of their presence in Mali on the country's stability and criticized the signatory armed groups for failing to implement the peace agreement.[3]

Tensions leading to the breakdown of the agreement and the resumption of hostilities had already been brewing for three years. On 18 August 2020, several military officers overthrew the government of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, just weeks after the bloody crackdown on renewed anti-government protests.[4] An 18-month political transition was negotiated between the officers, political actors, representatives of civil society, and other key players in Mali, with mediation from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other international actors.[5] This period of consensus on the transition was nonetheless short-lived.

On 24 May 2021, the political transition in Mali took an abrupt turn following the announcement that the transition president, Bah Ndaw, and his prime minister, Moctar Ouane, had been "stripped of [their] powers" in a televised message delivered by a military officer.[6] This announcement came just a few hours after Moctar Ouane had appointed a new government following weeks of negotiations. The five general officers behind the coup d'état of 18 August 2020 seized power, with Colonel Assimi Goïta proclaimed as head of state and president of the transition.

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[2] The Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Mali, resulting from the Algiers process: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2024/05/accord20pour20la20paix20et20la20rc3a9conciliation20au20mali20-20issu20du20processus20d27alger0.pdf

[3] International Crisis Group, "Northern Mali: A Conflict with No Victors", Q&A 13 October 2023, https://www.crisisgroup.org/qna/africa/sahel/mali/nord-du-mali-une-confrontation-dont-personne-ne-sortira-vainqueur

[4] Amnesty International, *Mali: Killed, wounded, and forgotten? Accountability for the killings during demonstrations and the coup in Mali* (Index:AFR 37/3748/202), 21 April 2021, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr37/3748/2021/en/

[5] ECOWAS, Press Release : Mission de médiation de la CEDEAO au Mali, 25 September 2020, https://lefaso.net/IMG/pdf/fr.communique_final_mediation_au_mali_25_septembre_2020.pdf

[6] Emmanuel Akinwotu, "Mali: leader of 2020 coup takes power after president's arrest", 25 May 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/24/mali-president-prime-minister-and-defence-minister-arrested-sources-say

Strategic tensions quickly arose regarding the conduct of military operations, particularly with France, which was carrying out "anti-terrorist operations" in Mali and four other Sahel countries (Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad) through Operation Barkhane. The unilateral announcement of the "end of Barkhane" by the French government in July 2021[7] was seen in Bamako as an "abandonment in mid-flight"[8] and undoubtedly prompted the search for new security partners. From September 2021 onwards, several media articles announced the deployment of a thousand members of the private military and security company (PMSC) Wagner to Mali.[9] This presence, which had been gradually increasing since December 2021, became evident in January 2022 with the launch of Operation "Keletigi".[10] While the Malian government has consistently denied the presence of members of a PMSC on its territory, claiming to have a security and defence partnership with the Russian government, Russian authorities have stated that Mali requested support from "a private Russian company" to combat insurgent fighters on its territory.[11] Geopolitical tensions escalated with the presence of these troops alongside Malian forces and the Barkhane force. In February 2022, following the expulsion of the French ambassador to Mali, the Malian government spokesperson demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Barkhane force from the country after nine years of presence.[12]

From 2022 on, military operations intensified, particularly in the central regions (Mopti, Ségou, Nioro, Nara). These were marked by the bloody incident in the town of Moura, where at least 500 people were extrajudicially executed and 58 women and girls were the victims of sexual violence during a joint FAMa/Wagner operation between 27 and 31 March 2022 in the Djenné Cercle, Mopti region.[13] The Malian authorities have firmly denied any wrongdoing, and the military justice system announced that it would open an investigation[14] into allegations of their responsibility for these crimes; this investigation has made no progress.[15]

The publication of a report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in May 2023, directly pointing to the responsibility of the Malian Armed Forces and their "foreign military partners" for these crimes in Moura, sparked a new wave of tensions between the Malian state and the United Nations. On 16 June 2023, Mali's Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded the "immediate withdrawal" of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), denouncing "the instrumentalization and politicization of the issue of human rights" and the conclusions of the OHCHR report on the incidents in Moura.[16] On 30 June 2023, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2690 (2023) ending MINUSMA's mandate on 31 December 2023.[17]

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[7] BFM TV, "Sahel : Emmanuel Macron annonce la fin de l'opération Barkhane "au premier trimestre 2022" », 14 July 2021, https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/sahel-emmanuel-macron-annonce-la-fin-de-l-operation-barkhane-au-premier-trimestre-2022_AD-202107130555.html

[8] Le Monde with AFP, "Le Mali reproche à la France un 'abandon en plein vol' dans la lutte contre les djihadistes au Sahel", 26 September 2021, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2021/09/26/le-mali-reproche-a-la-france-un-abandon-en-plein-vol-dans-la-lutte-antidjihadiste-au-sahel_6096029_3212.html

[9] Reuters, "EXCLUSIVE Deal allowing Russian mercenaries into Mali is close – sources", 13 September 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/exclusive-deal-allowing-russian-mercenaries-into-mali-is-close-sources-2021-09-13/; Le Monde with AFP, "L'hypothèse Wagner fait monter la tension entre la France et le Mali", 27 September 2021, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2021/09/27/au-mali-le-premier-ministre-ouvre-la-voie-aux-mercenaires-russes-du-groupe-wagner_6096210_3212.html

[10] "Celui qui fait la guerre" in Bambara, the most widely spoken language in Mali.

[11] Reuters, "Lavrov says Mali asked private Russian military company for help", 25 September 2021 https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/mali-asked-private-russian-military-firm-help-against-insurgents-ifx-2021-09-25/

[12] Le Monde, "Mali : France acte son retrait avec la fin de l'opération militaire 'Barkhane'", 17 February 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/02/17/la-france-acte-son-retrait-militaire-du-mali-sur-fond-de-rupture-avec-la-junte-au-pouvoir-a-bamako_6114042_3212.html; Le Monde with AFP, "Au Mali, la junte au pouvoir demande à la France de retirer ses soldats 'sans délai'", 18 February 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/02/18/au-mali-la-junte-au-pouvoir-demande-a-la-france-de-retirer-ses-soldats-sans-delai_6114277_3212.html

[13] Amnesty International, "Mali: The perpetrators of the Moura massacre must be prosecuted and tried by a competent court", 17 May 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/05/mali-les-auteurs-des-tueries-a-moura-doivent-etre-poursuivis-et-juges-devant-un-tribunal-competent/

[14] Le Monde with AFP, "Au Mali, la justice militaire ouvre une enquête sur le massacre de Moura", 7 April 2022 https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/04/07/au-mali-la-justice-militaire-ouvre-une-enquete-sur-le-massacre-de-moura_6120940_3212.html

[15] Amnesty International Mali, *Crimes without convictions: Analysis of the judicial response to conflict-related crimes in central Mali* (Index: AFR 37/5192/2022), 13 April 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr37/5192/2022/en/

[16] Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, Address by H.E. Mr Abdoulaye DIOP, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, on the occasion of the review by the Security Council of the Secretary-General's quarterly report on the situation in Mali. New York, 16 June 2023, https://maliembassy.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ADDRESS-BY-HE_-DIOP.pdf

[17] UN News, "Security Council Terminates Mandate of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali", 30 June 2023, https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15341.doc.htm

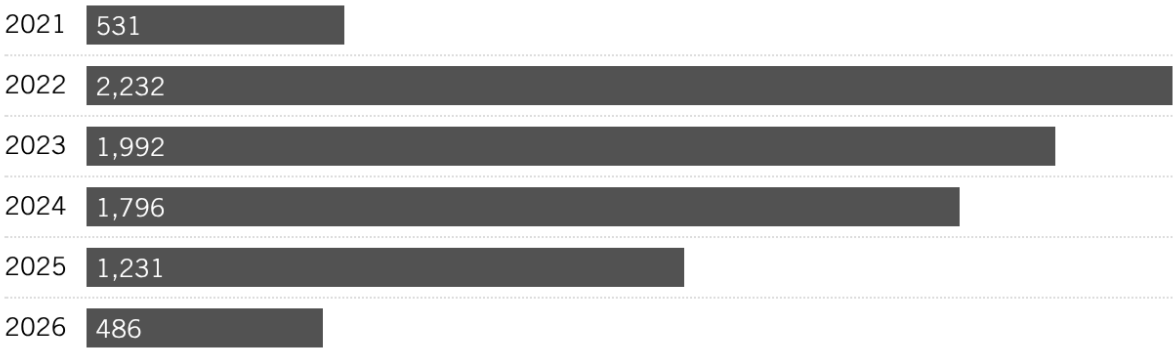
As peacekeepers gradually withdrew and UN bases closed, tensions that had been simmering for months between the government and the armed groups that signed the 2015 peace agreement erupted, leading to a resumption of hostilities in August 2023. The fighting in Ber, Foita, Léré, Lerneb, and Timbuktu has led to a mass exodus of people towards Algeria and Mauritania. **Hassane*, 30,** a Tuareg refugee from Mali living in Mberra, Mauritania, told Amnesty International that he had fled Goundam, Mali, following tensions linked to the resumption of hostilities.

"I left Goundam by motorbike for Mberra after bringing what little I owned here. I could see the disaster coming, and I had no desire for it to affect my family or me. Here, I live with my brothers, my parents, my wife, and my two sons. My youngest son was born here in Mberra, two months after I arrived. My family arrived in August 2023, and I followed in September/October 2023"'.[18]

In November 2023, the Malian Armed Forces retook the town of Kidal, a historic stronghold of Tuareg rebellions, after 10 years of effective control by armed groups. Controlling the urban centres of the regional capitals and facing action from jihadist armed groups in the interior of the country, the Malian Armed Forces, along with their Russian partners, have since regularly conducted operations from their bases in the north and centre. The conflict has thus intensified in the regions of Nara, Mopti, Ségou, and Timbuktu, which lie on the border with Mauritania. Parts of these regions, particularly the Wagadou Forest and the Foita zone, have long been under the influence of armed groups, and military operations in these areas have aimed to dislodge them. The intensification of the conflict has led to a sharp rise in the number of civilian casualties in the border regions.

Number of civilians killed during the conflict in Mali (2021-2026*)

Data taken from the Armed Conflict Location Event Database (ACLED)



For 2026, the data is current as of 14 May 2026

Chart: Amnesty International • Source: Amnesty International/ACLED

Civilians suffer abuses committed by the armed groups, but also by government forces and their allies during their operations. There is significant insecurity for certain populations due to their ethnic belonging (Tuareg, Arab, and Fulani)[19] or their nomadic lifestyles, as they are suspected of collaborating with armed groups. According to two pastoralists from Sokolo and Nampala:

"We arrived in Mberra, Mali, in 2024 because we had far too many problems. There were killings, people mutilated while still alive, pillaging, and the destruction of our property. In their minds [that of the soldiers and Wagner], all herders are terrorists, and so they don't hesitate to burn people and property. They don't even spare the blind or the elderly."[20]

[18] In-person interview with Hassane* (name changed for security reasons), 30, Mberra, July 2025.
[19] The Africa Report, "Wagner's red room: How Russian mercenaries flaunt their crimes on Telegram", 25 June 2025, https://www.theafricareport.com/386622/wagners-red-room-how-russian-mercenaries-flaunt-their-crimes-on-telegram/
[20] In-person interview with Hamma* (44 years), (name changed for security reasons), a Malian refugee in Mberra, 1 July 2025.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were over 290,000 Malian refugees in Mauritania in February 2026. Around 120,000 of them were in the Mberra camp, while more than 170,000 were spread across over 70 host villages.[21] In comparison, as of 29 June 2025, there were 120,090 Malian refugees in Mberra and nearly 40,000 registered refugees living in several villages outside the Mberra site but still within the Hodh ech-Chargui region.[22]

In June 2025, the Wagner group was replaced by Africa Corps, an initiative of the Russian Ministry of Defence, as part of a reconfiguration that strengthens the diplomatic and security partnership between the Malian and Russian governments. This development was initially institutional; many members of the Wagner group in Mali simply became members of Africa Corps, in a process of absorption rather than rupture. Furthermore, the presence of Africa Corps represents a significant legal and political development as its forces fall under the direct authority of the Russian government, which therefore bears responsibility for any serious violations of international humanitarian law. Nevertheless, all the incidents documented in this report involving foreign elements alongside the armed forces, with one exception, occurred before Wagner was replaced by Africa Corps.

4.2 THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Political and military developments have led to tensions between Mali and regional political, economic, and military bodies, as well as with several neighbouring states, while at the same time strengthening its relations with others.

The expulsion of the ECOWAS representative from Mali in October 2021 was already[23] a signal of future tensions between Mali and the regional organization throughout the transition period. In January 2022, ECOWAS, which had mediated the organization of the transition in September 2020, imposed trade, financial, and political sanctions on Mali for unilaterally extending the transition period. This decision was strongly contested by the Malian authorities who, backed by citizen protests in several cities across the country, engaged in a showdown with ECOWAS and all those supporting these sanctions. These regional tensions coincided with the conflicts pitting Mali against France and the United Nations and formed part of a geopolitical realignment initiated by the military authorities, who were dissatisfied with the role of international actors in Mali. Finally, an agreement was reached between ECOWAS and Mali to extend the transition period by two years (March 2022 to March 2024) and lift the sanctions.[24]

Amid heightened tensions with ECOWAS, on 15 May 2022 Mali also announced its withdrawal from all G5 Sahel bodies and institutions, including its joint force, denouncing a "loss of autonomy" and the "instrumentalization" of the organization by foreign interests. The refusal to grant Mali the rotating presidency of the organization in February 2022 was one of the factors behind this decision. The G5 Sahel was established in 2014 by Mali and four of its Sahelian neighbours (Mauritania, Chad, Niger, and Burkina Faso) in order to work together on security and development issues. The G5 Sahel was established in the wake of the international intervention in Mali in 2013 and was strategically linked to Operation Barkhane, alongside which it operated in the same regional area.

Initially isolated at the regional level, Mali found allies among neighbouring countries following the coups d'état in Burkina Faso (September 2022) and Niger (July 2023). The rise of military regimes in these two countries was accompanied by criticism of international action in the Sahel, of the national political classes, and of the principles of democratic governance championed by ECOWAS. The military authorities of the three countries, facing the same security challenges linked to the active presence of armed groups on their territory, adopted a similar narrative focused on "recovered sovereignty"[25], distinguishing between "patriots" and "traitors" among their populations, repressing critical voices, and responding to the armed conflict with a purely military approach. In September 2023, the three countries announced the formation of the Alliance of Sahel States [*Alliance des États du Sahel*, AES], a new military alliance to address security challenges. On 2 December 2023, Burkina Faso and Niger followed Mali's lead by announcing their

[21] UNHCR Mauritania, Country Factsheet (February 2026): https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/121838
[22] In-person interview with UNHCR staff in Bassikounou, June 2025.
[23] MaliActu, "Mali: Le gouvernement malien justifie l'expulsion du représentant de la Cédéao", 25 October 2021 https://maliactu.net/mali-le-gouvernement-malien-justifie-lexpulsion-du-representant-de-la-cedeao/
[24] France 24, "La Cédéao lève les sanctions économiques au Mali, accord pour deux ans de transition au Burkina", 3 July 2022, https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20220703-la-c%C3%A9d%C3%A9ao-l%C3%A8ve-les-sanctions-%C3%A9conomiques-au-mali-accord-pour-deux-ans-de-transition-au-burkina
[25] IRIS (by Francis Laloupo), "Mali/Sahel: une souveraineté retrouvée", 3 february 2026, https://www.iris-france.org/mali-sahel-une-souverainete-retrouvee/

withdrawal from the G5 Sahel, which resulted in the dissolution of the organization's joint force.[26] A month later, the three countries jointly announced their withdrawal from ECOWAS, which became official and final in January 2025.[27] In June 2026, they formally submitted their notifications of withdrawal from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to the United Nations Secretariat – a withdrawal that will take effect one year later.[28]

4.3 THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, VICTIMS OF ARMED GROUPS

The Malian authorities have been fighting armed groups in a non-international armed conflict (NIAC) since 2012. While the conflict between the Malian state and separatist armed groups in the north was governed by the 2015 peace agreement until its breakdown in 2023, there has never been a formal, recognized agreement between the Malian government and the jihadist armed groups, which were excluded from the Algiers negotiation process in 2014-2015.

While military operations by the Malian Armed Forces and their allies intensified in the centre of the country in 2022 and then in 2023 following the breakdown of the peace agreement signed with the separatist groups in the north, the jihadist armed groups IS-Sahel and GSIM continued to commit violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights. This included deliberately or indiscriminately attacking civilians, committing unlawful killings, and forcibly imposing *zakat*[29] on the populations in their areas of influence.

The armed groups violated both the principles of distinction and of precaution in their armed operations.[30] In March 2022, IS-Sahel thus launched a deadly offensive in the regions of Ménaka and Gao, making little distinction between civilians and members of the Movement for Azawad Salvation [*Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad,* MSA] and the Imghad Tuareg Self-Defence Group and Allies [*Groupe d'autodéfense touareg Imghad et alliés,* GATIA]. In the attacks on the towns of Tamalat, Inchinane, Émis-Émis, and Andéramboukane, this group targeted both members of armed groups and civilians, unlawfully killing hundreds of civilians and causing a mass displacement of these populations to Ménaka, the regional capital.[31]

On 18 June 2022, suspected members of GSIM attacked the villages of Diallassagou, Dianweli, and Dessagou in the Bankass Cercle (Mopti Region), killing at least 130 people, mostly civilians, according to the authorities.[32] This modus operandi, where civilians are killed in large numbers during attacks that sometimes target the military, has continued over the years. Such was the case in Sévaré in April 2023 (10 civilians killed and 60 injured, with houses and shelters destroyed), in Bodio and Yarou in August 2023 (15 killed in Bodio and 22 in Yarou),[33] and in the attack on the ship "Le Tombouctou" in Zarhoy on 7 September 2023 (at least 49 civilians and 19 soldiers killed).[34]

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[26] Le Monde, "Le Burkina Faso et le Niger quittent la force antidjihadiste G5 Sahel", 2 December 2023, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2023/12/02/le-burkina-faso-et-le-niger-quittent-la-force-antidjihadiste-g5-sahel_6203554_3212.html#:~:text=Le%20Burkina%20Faso%20et%20le%20Niger%2C%20deux%20pays%20gouvern%C3%A9s%20par,malien%2C%20parti%20en%20mai%202022.; France 24, "La Mauritanie et le Tchad actent la dissolution de la force antijihadiste G5 Sahel", 6 December 2023, https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20231206-g5-sahel-mauritanie-tchad-dissolution-force-alliance-antijihadiste-mali-burkina-faso-niger

[27] Le Quotidien, "Rupture CEDEAO-Mali : Le divorce prononcé le 29 janvier", 16 January 2025 : https://lequotidien.sn/rupture-cedeao-mali-le-divorce-prononce-le-29-janvier/

[28] Amnesty International, "Burkina Faso / Mali / Niger: Withdrawal from the Rome Statute consecrates impunity and threatens to deny victims of war crimes justice and reparations", 2 July 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/07/burkina-mali-niger//

[29] *Zakat* is a legally mandated charitable contribution on accumulated wealth for all Muslims, amounting to 2.5% of unused annual savings. In the Sahel, *zakat* is imposed and forcibly collected by GSIM and IS-Sahel from the populations in the areas under their control.

[30] Rules 1-10 and 15-21 of customary international law, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1. See also the legal section of this report.

[31] Amnesty International, "Mali: New eyewitness testimony describes killings and mass displacement amid surge in violence in Menaka", 16 June 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/174337/

[32] Libération, "'Massacre jihadiste de Diallassagou : au Mali, les civils pris pour cible", 21 June 2022, https://www.liberation.fr/international/afrique/massacre-jihadiste-de-diallassagou-au-mali-les-civils-pris-en-etau-20220621_2FF72NIK3BF37JITW4KOYJFAIQ/?redirected=1

[33] Amnesty International, 'Mali', *The State of the World's Human Rights (2023)*, 24 april 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/5670/2023/en/

[34] Amnesty International, "Mali : Amnesty International condamne l'attaque contre le bateau « Tombouctou » et appelle à la protection des civils", 8 September 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2023/09/mali-amnesty-international-condamne-lattaque-contre-le-bateau-tombouctou-et-appelle-a-la-protection-des-civils/

In May 2024, suspected members of GSIM killed nine youths on the road between Goundam and Diré villages, in the Timbuktu region, while they were participating in an army recruitment programme. In the same month, suspected members of GSIM killed 19 internally displaced people on their farms in Diallassagou town, in the Mopti region, according to local and media sources.[35] According to government sources, in July 2024, they killed around 23 people in the villages of Djiguibombo and Sokorokanda in the Mopti region, destroying property, including a health centre. They further attacked Dembo village, also in Mopti, killing 20 smallholders.[36]

In addition to these unlawful killings, there are also unlawful detentions and the forced imposition of *Zakat* by GSIM in areas under its control. The vast majority of Malian refugees interviewed by Amnesty International in Hodh ech-Chargui reported the collection of *zakat* from the population, sometimes voluntary and sometimes forced, as well as dress codes imposed on women and girls (compulsory wearing of the hijab) and on entire communities. [37]

Furthermore, as part of their opposition to the Malian state, GSIM often restricts the free movement of people and goods, targeting towns that host military garrisons or those whose inhabitants are accused of collaborating with government forces.[38] This tried-and-tested tactic, which extends beyond Mali[39], has become one of GSIM's modus operandi. Places like Kouakourou and Dinangourou have been subjected to these sieges and have sometimes been forced to sign local agreements requiring the disarmament of government self-defence militias in exchange for allowing people access to their fields. Between May and September 2022, the towns of Boni, Douentza, Hombori, and Gossi were subjected to these sieges, as they were accused of "collaborating" with the Malian army, forcing commercial transport operators to be escorted by the army. On 2 August 2022, 19 civilian trucks carrying goods were attacked and burned in Hombori by GSIM while awaiting an army escort.[40] The towns of Timbuktu, Mourdiah, Léré, and Diabata were subjected to sieges between 2023 and 2025. Following the Malian army's capture of the Goundam and Léré bases in August 2023, which came after the withdrawal of MINUSMA troops, GSIM imposed a siege on Timbuktu and attacked the airport. This situation prompted at least 33,100 residents to flee to neighbouring countries, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).[41]

Since July 2025, GSIM has imposed a series of sieges on several regional capitals in Mali, including Kayes, Bamako, and Nioro du Sahel, and has declared its intention to sabotage all fuel supplies to Mali from neighbouring countries with a coastline, such as Côte d'Ivoire or Senegal.[42] Direct attacks on trucks or military escorts occurred between Didiéni and Kolokani (13 September 2025), between Kaniéra and Lakamané (14 September 2025),[43] and also on the Sikasso-Bamako road.[44] These attacks resulted in an energy crisis in Bamako towards the end of 2025, affecting the civilian population. In November 2025, through one of its spokespersons, GSIM announced a tougher siege, directly threatening the drivers. They would henceforth be considered "militants" and would no longer merely be taken prisoner but executed if they continued to drive fuel trucks to Bamako.[45] On 29 January 2026, GSIM members attacked a

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[35] AFP, Mali: plus d'une vingtaine de civils tués par des hommes armés, 26 May 2024, https://www.voaafrique.com/a/plus-d-une-dizaine-de-maliens-tu%C3%A9s-par-des-hommes-arm%C3%A9s-/7627630.html

[36] Amnesty International, *The state of the World's Human Rights: April 2025* (Index Number: POL 10/8515/2025), 28 April 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/, p.252.

[37] In-person interview with Rhali* and Hamedine* (names changed for reasons of confidentiality), a prominent community member and refugee in Kleiveu, June 2025. Interview with several prominent community members and heads of pastoralist communities from the communes of Léré, Fassala, and Hassi Touil, April 2026.

[38] Mahamadou Bassirou Tangara and Ibrahima Poudiougou, "Vivre sous blocus: cas des zones sous influence du JNIM au Mali", Réseau RÉCAP, Working Paper No. 5 (December 2025), https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/WORKING%20PAPER%20N%C2%B05%20-%20FR%20%28WEB%29.pdf

[39] Amnesty International, *Burkina Faso: 'Death was slowly creeping on us': Living under siege in Burkina Faso (Index:* AFR 60/7209/2023), 2 November 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr60/7209/2023/en/

[40] Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2022/23: The state of the world's human rights* (Index Number: POL 10/5670/2023), 27 March 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/5670/2023/en/, p.247.

[41] OCHA, "Mali: Le blocus dans la région de Tombouctou - Rapport de Flash No. 1", 28 August 2023, https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/mali/mali-le-blocus-dans-la-region-de-tombouctou-rapport-de-flash-no-1-le-28-aout-2023

[42] "Alerte/Mali: Nabi Diarra veut exécuter tous les chauffeurs de camions-citernes qui entrent dans le pays", Alerte Ivoire Info TV, https://www.facebook.com/ivoireinfotv.net/posts/alertemali-nabi-diarra-veut-ex%C3%A9cuter-tous-les-chauffeurs-de-camions-citernes-qui/1180403820937497/l; Hasret Kargin, X post, "In #Jnım new video, Al Bambari (Nabi-Bina Diarra) addresses the people of Bamako and tells them to repent", https://x.com/KargnHasret/status/1990873317172285813?s=20

[43] RFI Afrique, "Mali: les jihadistes détruisent des dizaines de camions-citernes et réaffirment leur blocus à Kayes", 15 September 2025, https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20250915-mali-les-jihadistes-d%C3%A9truisent-des-dizaines-de-camions-citernes-et-r%C3%A9affirment-leur-blocus-%C3%A0-kayes

[44] DW, "Des camions bloqués par le JNIM au Mali", 17 September 2025, https://www.dw.com/fr/mali-citernes-b%C3%B6cus-du-jnim/a-74022752

[45] RFI Afrique, "Mali: les jihadistes du Jnim tentent de convaincre et annoncent un durcissement du blocus", 19 November 2025 https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20251119-mali-les-jihadistes-du-jnim-tentent-de-convaincre-et-annoncent-un-durcissement-du-blocus

convoy of tanker trucks under military escort between Diboli and Kayes. Several drivers and their apprentices, caught as they tried to flee, were executed.[46]

4.4 AN INCREASINGLY REPRESSIVE POLITICAL CLIMATE

Since coming to power, the military authorities have adopted a strong narrative focused on patriotism and the "fight against terror", promising an end to the conflict.

This narrative has masked authoritarian practices aimed at silencing any criticism of the authorities' actions and any independent information about the conflict, particularly regarding operations conducted by government forces. The authorities have thus passed decrees and laws that severely restrict the freedoms of expression, information, and association, and have cracked down on dissenting voices.

The French media outlets TF1, and LCI were suspended in November 2025 by Mali's High Authority for Communication [*Haute Autorité de la communication*, HAC], which accused them of "unverified claims and falsehoods" in their coverage of the conflict.[47] The HAC also suspended Joliba TV in November 2024, while RFI and France 24 have been suspended since April 2022.[48]

All political parties were dissolved by decree on 13 May 2025.[49] Several well-known figures who criticized the authorities were subjected to arbitrary detention. Such was the case of former Prime Minister Moussa Mara, who was arrested in August 2025 for posting a message on social media platform X in which he stated that he would fight "by any means necessary" for the rights of those detained for expressing their opinions. Charged with "undermining the State's reputation and opposing legitimate authority", he was sentenced to one year in prison in October 2025.[50] Rokiatou Doumbia, also known as Rose Poivron or Tantie Rose, has been detained since March 2023 for speaking out about the cost of living and insecurity in Mali. She remained in custody on charges of "undermining the reputation of the state" and "criminal conspiracy".[51] On 17 August, she was convicted along with Mohamed Youssouf Bathily, a radio pundit known as Ras Bath, to ten years imprisonment, three of which were suspended for these charges.[52]

This restrictive and repressive environment has imposed silence and self-censorship, allowing only the voices of the authorities and state media to emerge. They glorify the actions of the Malian Armed Forces and their allies and systematically deny allegations of abuses committed during military operations.

Nonetheless, in 2021, shortly after the military took power and under pressure from civil society organizations and the United Nations, military courts initiated several legal proceedings involving military personnel. These proceedings related to allegations of unlawful killings or extrajudicial executions, particularly in Dioura (February 2018), Boulikessi (May 2018), Nantaka (June 2018), and Massabougou (June 2020). These investigations have, however, made little progress, and none have resulted in a trial as of the date of this report's publication.[53] On 6 April 2022, the Public Prosecutor at the Mopti military court

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[46] Amnesty International, Mali: GSIM must observe international humanitarian law and ensure safety of civilians as Bamako is under siege, 15 May 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/05/mali-bamako-siege/

[47] Le Monde, "Le Mali suspend « jusqu'à nouvel ordre » les chaînes françaises LCI et TFI", 14 November 2025, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2025/11/14/le-mali-suspend-jusqu-a-nouvel-ordre-les-chaines-francaises-lci-et-tfi_6653478_3212.html

[48] Reporters sans Frontière (RSF), "Mali : retrait de la licence de Joliba TV, la presse indépendante en péril", 26 November 2024, https://rsf.org/fr/mali-retrait-de-la-licence-de-joliba-tv-la-presse-ind%C3%A9pendante-en-p%C3%A9ril; France 24. «RFI et France 24 définitivement suspendues au Mali », 27 April 2022 https://www.france24.com/fr/info-en-continu/20220427-rfi-et-france-24-d%C3%A9finitivement-suspendues-au-mali

[49] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Mali: Dissolution of political parties a step in the wrong direction, warn UN experts", 22 May 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/mali-dissolution-political-parties-step-wrong-direction-warn-un-experts

[50] Amnesty International, "Mali. Authorities must immediately quash unjust conviction and sentence of former prime minister Moussa Mara", 9 February 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/02/mali-moussa-mara/

[51] Amnesty International "Silence and repression: the new face of the Sahel", 20 October 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2025/10/silence-and-repression-the-new-face-of-the-sahel/

[52] Amnesty International, « Mali: Detained and convicted activists must be released: Rokiatou Doumbia and Mohamed Youssouf Bathily », 1 September 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr37/1382/2026/en/,

[53] Amnesty International, *Mali: Crimes without Convictions: Analysis of the judicial response to conflict related crimes in central Mali (Index Number: AFR 37/5192/2022)*, 13 April 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr37/5192/2022/en/

announced the opening of an investigation into the incidents in Moura that had taken place the previous month.[54] For this case, too, no public information has been made available on the status of the proceedings.

Furthermore, amid intensified military operations along the border with Mauritania since 2023, conducted in silence and with complete impunity, this report details cases of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by government forces and their allies, which may constitute war crimes.

[54] TV5 Monde and AFP, "Au Mali, ouverture d'une enquête sur les exactions présumées à Moura", 7 April 2022, https://information.tv5monde.com/afrique/au-mali-ouverture-dune-enquete-sur-les-exactions-presumees-moura-186788

5. KILLINGS DURING MILITARY OPERATIONS AND DRONE STRIKES AGAINST CIVILIANS

Amnesty International has gathered testimonies from 33 individuals, reporting that at least 34 civilians not directly involved in hostilities have been killed by FAMa or Wagner forces during military operations, mostly conducted jointly, in seven locations (Fatakara, Echell, Taborak, Tin Adanda, Lerneb, Lougui, Toulé) between 2023 and 2025.

The vast majority of the victims of these operations were pastoralists (Fulani, Arabs, and Tuareg) who, according to the testimonies gathered by Amnesty International, were suspected of collaborating with or sympathizing with non-state armed groups, or who lived in rural areas where these groups are active. These suspicions appeared to be based solely on the victims' ethnicity, their presence in areas where these armed groups operate, or accusations of possessing walkie-talkies or motorbikes, equipment used not only by armed groups but also by nomadic people and their families for communication and transport.

According to the testimonies gathered, all the victims in the seven incidents documented in this chapter were male civilians. They were deliberately shot, had their throats cut, or were burned alive. Those interviewed indicated that none of the victims were armed or directly involved in hostilities at the time of their death. According to the testimonies gathered, the victims were grazing their animals in the bush, were in or near their homes, or in some cases were hiding or trying to flee the arrival of patrols when they were killed or apprehended by joint FAMa/Wagner patrols before being killed.

Some of the interviewees were present in the villages during a joint patrol and testified that they saw Wagner or FAMa members commit murders as they tried to flee their arrival. Others claimed to have witnessed murders upon returning to the village after hiding during the military operation, believing the patrol had left. Furthermore, many witnesses present during a joint patrol said they saw or knew during the operation that people – family members, neighbours, or relatives – had been arrested and taken by patrol members to the outskirts of the villages. Some witnesses claimed to have seen these arrested individuals executed, while others saw their bodies bound, riddled with bullets, or burned after the patrol had left.

In most cases, the victims were shot dead. At least 14 victims had their throats cut. In the documented cases in Lerneb, Échell, Toulé, and Taborak, the victims either had their throats cut after death or their bodies were burned or mutilated.

In most cases, it is impossible to establish direct responsibility of the killings on any particular patrol unit. They were, however, committed during joint FAMa/Wagner patrols, where actions appeared to be

coordinated. Witnesses confirmed the presence of Wagner members alongside the FAMa, noting their skin colour and language, which was unfamiliar to the villagers. According to some accounts, killings were carried out by Wagner operatives, with support from FAMa who acted as interpreters to question the local population or provided military support to search houses and secure villages, preventing residents from escaping.

The seven incidents documented in this report are certainly far from an exhaustive list of all the incidents that may have occurred in Mali between 2023 and 2025 during joint FAMa/Wagner patrols. Amnesty International has thus gathered testimonies from 51 Malian refugees in Mauritania regarding additional killings that occurred during joint patrols between 2023 and 2025 in 16 other locations across the regions of Timbuktu, Mopti, and Ségou, suggesting that the true scale of the violations is significantly greater than what is documented in this report. These killings shared the same characteristics as the seven incidents documented in this chapter. However, as Amnesty International was unable to substantively corroborate these allegations, these cases were not included in the report.

Amnesty International has noted the numerous statements issued by the FAMa in which they claim to target only members of armed groups during their military operations or patrols. Nonetheless, the information gathered by Amnesty International paints a completely different picture, revealing a systematic pattern of killings in all its forms, committed by members of joint FAMa/Wagner patrols against individuals who were not directly involved in hostilities, within the context of a non-international armed conflict, or who are *hors de combat*. In some cases, the bodies of the 16 victims were mutilated or burned. These attacks on life and personal dignity may constitute war crimes under Malian law and international humanitarian law.[55]

Indeed, although Amnesty International was unable to visit the incident sites due to the access and security constraints outlined in the methodology section, the consistent accounts from interviewees describing the killing of civilian men not involved in the hostilities, based on a perceived and unverified association with armed groups, or on a "culpability" derived from their location in areas where these armed groups are active, indicate a clear pattern of unlawful killings. This pattern is reinforced by the fact that these killings occurred repeatedly alongside other violations targeting the entire civilian population (destruction of property, looting and, in some cases, detention and torture). This suggests that these killings, far from being incidental to the fighting, were part of a broader pattern of behaviour aimed at punishing communities for their perceived support of armed groups. Furthermore, even assuming that some of those killed had any association with an armed group, the manner in which they were killed in the vast majority of documented cases – extrajudicially after being separated from others, with no evidence of active combat at the time of death – is sufficient to classify these killings as unlawful, regardless of the victims' status. International humanitarian law does not permit the summary execution of captured individuals or those who are otherwise *hors de combat*, regardless of their prior affiliation.

Finally, Amnesty International has also gathered several testimonies indicating that at least 23 people – including at least one woman and five children – were killed in drone attacks during military operations in the villages of Ejdeir and Tangata in 2025, in the Timbuktu region.

With regard to these two strikes, the organization found no evidence of the presence of members of armed groups or military targets. Had this been the case, the strikes would have constituted direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects, which amount to war crimes.

5.1 UNLAWFUL KILLINGS AND EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

5.1.1 FATAKARA, COMMUNE OF TÉLÉ, JANUARY AND MARCH 2025

Amnesty International interviewed several former residents of Fatakara, a village in the Goundam Cercle (Timbuktu Region) of Mali, who fled to Mauritania following abuses committed during joint FAMa/Wagner patrols in January and March 2025, during which seven residents were killed.

[55] For more details on the legal framework, see section 8.1 "Murders".

In January 2025, three herders were killed in Fatakara by a joint patrol; their mutilated bodies were found by residents who had returned from fleeing after the patrol had left. Amnesty International gathered the testimony of Hassanatou*, 35, a mother of six and widow of one of the herders who was killed. Hassanatou* left Fatakara two months after the murder of her husband Sambourou, 50, after she herself was physically beaten by the soldiers during another patrol in the month of Ramadan [*March 2025*]. In her own words:

"It was on 7 January 2025 that my husband Sambourou was killed along with two other men. It happened while he was grazing the animals in the bush when the military convoy [of Wagner and FAMa] surprised him [in the bush]. They were killed not far from Fatakara, but I didn't witness the incident. When the convoy was seen [from a distance], everyone fled to hide in the bush but Sambourou (50 years old) and the other two, Oumarou (30 years old) and Moussa (35 years old), couldn't hide. They were captured and executed."[56]

Khalid*, a 58-year-old Fatakara elder who fled to Mauritania after the incident, corroborated this account:

"On 7 January 2025, an army and Wagner patrol came to Fatakara. It wasn't the first time; they had already been here the previous year, carrying out executions and searching for people. But on 7 January 2025, they arrested three herders at the exit to the village, executed them, and cut off their feet. We found their bodies after they left, on the edge of the village. Two weeks later, I decided to leave and came to Mauritania with many other residents."[57]

Hassanatou*, still shaken by events, fell victim to violence in March 2025 during another military patrol, in which four other Fatakara residents[58] were killed by the FAMa. While the January patrol was a joint operation between the FAMa and Wagner, the survivors of the second patrol are unanimous in identifying the FAMa as the only actors present during the March 2025 incident. According to Hassanatou*, she was beaten by the FAMa because she was confined to her home due to her widowhood and refused to leave.

"They came back while I was a widow, staying at home during the month of Ramadan [two months after the killings of 7 January 2025]. They beat me in front of my children before arresting several villagers, some of whom were killed."[59]

These accounts were corroborated by Khalid*, a Fatakara elder, and several other Fatakara refugees living in Aghor who witnessed the incident and helped evacuate Hassanatou* and her family to Mauritania.

According to Khalid*,

"On the day they attacked Hassanatou*, they also took 13 people and killed four of them. They also looted Samba's shop, whose parents and wife are here in Aghor."[60]

Alpha*, a 61-year-old man, was among the 13 people arrested by the FAMa during the March 2025 incident in Fatakara. He was arrested outside the village by the patrol and taken, along with 12 others, to Camp 2 in Goundam. There, they allegedly suffered abuse for three days, after which he was released along with eight others, while the remaining four were reportedly executed.

"I was walking outside the village when the patrol stopped me. Twelve other men were also arrested. We were all taken to the Goundam military camp. Between Fatakara and Goundam, the soldiers beat and kicked us with their boots and weapons. We were blindfolded and our hands were tied. We were held at Camp 2 in Goundam for 3 days. On the fourth day, they released me along with eight others. The other four were executed by the soldiers while in custody. In Goundam, they ordered us to give them news about the mujahideen [term used by the witness]. They wanted to know who among the people of Fatakara had links to the armed groups."[61]

Fatima*, 35, a mother of four, is also a refugee in Aghor. Her husband was one of the four people killed in March 2025 during the military operation. She told Amnesty International:

'We left [Fatakara] because there were killings, and they scared us. The Malian army was responsible for all these killings. In March 2025, 13 people were arrested in Fatakara during an army operation. Of these, four were

[56] In-person interview with Hassanatou* (name changed to protect her confidentiality) and her daughter, Aghor, July 2025.
[57] In-person interview with Khalid* (name changed to protect his confidentiality), a prominent community member from Fatakara in Aghor, July 2025.
[58] Amnesty International collected the names of the four victims but has kept them confidential for security and precautionary reasons.
[59] In-person interview with Hassanatou* and her daughter, Aghor, July 2025.
[60] Interview with Khalid*, a Fatakara elder, in Aghor, July 2025.
[61] Interview with Alpha* (name changed to protect his confidentiality), 61, a resident of Fatakara in Aghor, July 2025.

killed and the other nine were released. The four people killed were executed on the same day, including my husband and the father of this child here beside me."[62]

5.1.2 ÉCHELL/TABORAK, , 23-24 JANUARY 2025

Between the evening of 23 January and the morning of 24 January 2025, members of a joint FAMa and Wagner patrol killed five people in Échell and the hamlet of Taborak, in the Goundam Cercle (Timbuktu Region). Amnesty International gathered testimonies in Aghor, in the Hodh ech-Chargui region, from five survivors of the patrol, including four widows of the five victims who were shot dead before having their throats cut. They watched the scene from a distance and saw their bodies after the soldiers, accompanied by members of Wagner, had left. Some of these women were also assaulted by members of the patrol.

According to these accounts, the patrol arrived at the Échell market on Thursday 23 January 2025, where it carried out checks and killed a resident of Taborak, Hamma Gouro. The patrol then went to the village of Taborak, located 4 km further away. Hamma Gouro was murdered in front of his wife, Batouly*, who told Amnesty International the following:

"My husband was killed in Echell on market day. White and black soldiers had arrived on Thursday around 4pm, at the time of the Asr prayer. They arrived towards the end of the market and started inspecting and looting people's belongings. They grabbed Hamma Gouro and beat him; then they took him with them before shooting him. After doing that, [in the evening] they came back to my house, beat me, and then undressed me. They then demanded that I follow them. There were four white soldiers and two black. The latter two spoke Songhay, Fulfulde, and other languages."[63]

After passing through Échell, the same patrol headed towards Taborak, a hamlet near the village of Taborak, where its members committed murders and acts of violence during the night of 23-24 January 2025.

Ili*, 17, saw the patrol arrive in the village of Taborak on the evening of 23 January 2025 while he was outside the village. Seeing the convoy of 10 vehicles arrive, he had time to hide and watch them enter the village, where they stayed for several hours before leaving. The same convoy returned at dawn, when most of the men who had fled thought they had left and were returning to their homes. Now taking refuge in Aghor, Ili* told us the following:

"I saw the soldiers arrive in Taborak. I was hiding in a tree 200 metres from their vehicles, and they drove past me. When they reached the camp, I heard gunfire. I didn't dare move. Most of the men were in the bush at that time, and there were not many people in the hamlet. They arrived in the evening [at dusk], and I think I saw 10 vehicles enter the village. There were also some around the hamlet and at the exit, and I could hear them talking even though I didn't understand what they were saying. [64]

They stayed [in the village] until 2 or 3 in the morning before leaving. But they returned around 6am, just before the Fajr prayer, and that's when they came across the men who were coming back and they shot them, killing them. These men had fled the day before and thought that Wagner had gone for good when they left at around 2 or 3 in the morning. They surprised them as they were returning, and I heard two bursts of gunfire in the early morning."

According to testimonies gathered by Amnesty International, members of the patrol who returned to Taborak at dawn shot four men dead who had returned to the village after fleeing the patrol's arrival the previous day.

Assa*, the widow of Hamma Djibo, one of those killed by the patrol, told Amnesty International:

"My husband, Hamma Djibo, was killed right in front of me, before my very eyes. What happened is unbearable. They shot him at my door. It was a group with two black men and some white. I didn't understand their languages, but the two black men told us not to cry, to stay calm. (…). After killing my husband, they communicated with us through gestures. As for the white men, all I understood from them was "thank you". They were all wearing military camouflage uniforms when they came to my house in Taborak. The soldiers stayed in Taborak for a long time. They arrived around 6pm, walked around, and left the camp before returning at night." [65]

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[62] In-person interview with Fatima* (name changed to protect her identity), Fatakara's widow, and her sister in Aghor, July 2025.
[63] In-person interview with Fati*, a resident of Échell/Taborak, in Aghor, July 2025.
[64] In-person interview with Ili* (name changed to protect his confidentiality), a survivor of the Taborak attack, Aghor, July 2025.
[65] In-person interview with Assa* (name changed to protect her identity) and other widows from Taborak, Aghor, July 2025.

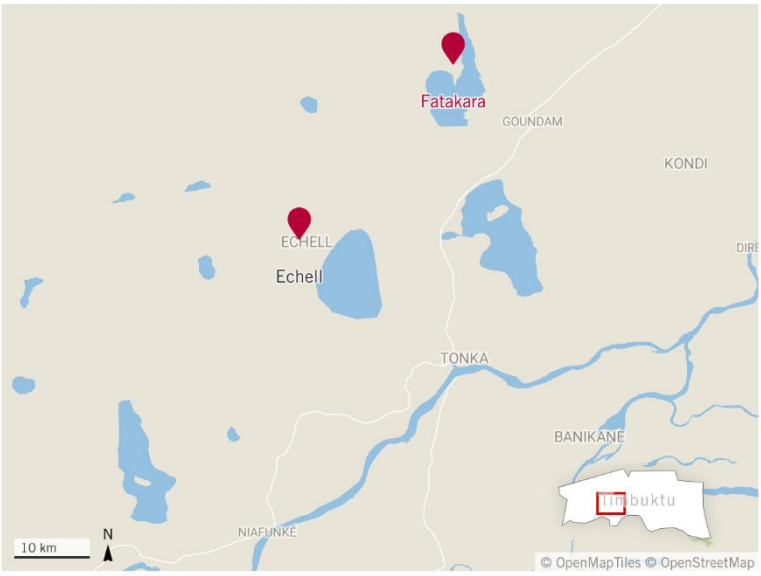
Amina* and Oumou Salam*, sisters and wives respectively of Demba Yero and Ousmane Almaami, who were killed during the patrol, recounted the incidents they witnessed firsthand. According to Amina*:

"10 soldiers came to my house at dusk. They stayed until early morning before leaving but, in the meantime, they left the hamlet in the middle of the night. There was a black man with them who spoke Soninke and a little Fulfulde. When they returned to my house at dawn, they found my husband Demba Yero at the door and shot him. They were armed and asked me if there were any weapons in the house, to which I answered no."[66]

Oumou Salam*, whose husband was killed by members of the patrol, recounted that during their first visit (on the evening of 23 January), patrol members came to her house to question her and her daughter. They physically assaulted both of them and forced her daughter to undress:

"They were talking, but I couldn't understand anything they were saying. They beat me and they beat my daughter, who they stripped naked. My daughter is not yet 20 years old. They beat us for a long time. They arrived at my house just before the Fajr prayer, after leaving my sister Amina's house*. Wagner was patrolling the area, but this was the first time they had come to Taborak camp. We'd heard about their actions in Gourma and other areas before."[67]

Fatakara and Echell (Timbuktu region)



Map: Amnesty International

5.1.3 TIN ADANDA, 12 FEBRUARY 2025

During a patrol on 12 February 2025 in Tin Adanda, a small hamlet located between Léré, Niafounké, and Goundam in the Timbuktu region (Tin Aïcha commune), an area where armed groups like GSIM are active, members of a joint FAMa/Wagner patrol killed four individuals, including two brothers: Oumar ag Gadaweya (40) and Ali ag Gadaweya (36). The two other victims were Ousmane ag Hamatta and Hassane ag Hawi

[66] In-person interview with Amina*, Oumou Salam* (names changed to protect their identities), and other widows from Taborak, July 2025.
[67] In-person interview with Amina*, Oumou Salam* and other widows from Taborak, July 2025.

(27). When the patrol left, the soldiers also took two residents of Tin Adanda with them. Their relatives have had no further news of them since.

Amnesty International interviewed several family members of the four victims. All of these people were in Tin Adanda when the murders took place.

Hana*, 65, mother of Oumar and Ali, and Ousmane's cousin, told Amnesty International:

"I lost two of my sons and my paternal cousin on in Tin Adanda. They were arrested by the soldiers [while they were in the village on 12 February] and taken outside the village before being executed with complete impunity. The soldiers entered Tin Adanda in six vehicles. They were mostly white men, accompanied by FAMa. I was there that morning, on 12 February, when they killed my two sons and my cousin around noon. The next day, I left my home village for Mberra. The mission arrived in Tin Adanda at 10am. Previously they would pass by and move on, never stopping at our place, even though we heard a lot about the damage they caused. Tin Adanda is just 7 km from Gargando." [68]

When the soldiers arrived, the men tried to hide, a common scenario given the scale of violations of international law in Mali. But the soldiers found some of them and killed them. According to Hana*:

"When the patrol arrived, the men tried to hide in the bush. The soldiers searched the entire village and ransacked everything. Cunning as ever, they then gave sweets to the children before asking them to show where the men were hiding. They took them to the trees, where they were arrested before proceeding with the executions."

Asia*, 39, Oumar's widow, also told Amnesty International:

"I was in Tin Adanda when my husband was executed by the patrol that came from the north and entered the village at 10am. They spread out across the village, searching every house, making people bring out their belongings, and asking the women where the men of the village were.

The men were not far away in the bush, and one of the soldiers spotted them with his binoculars. He was a white soldier. They managed to round up a lot of the men and, when they left, they took my husband and shot him at close range. From where I was standing, I could see what was happening. My younger brother was also killed almost at the same time. His name was Hassane ag Hawi, and he was born in 1997. It was the first time the soldiers had come to Tin Adanda. They dug a shallow grave to dispose of the bodies but, after they left, we dug them up so that we could bury them with dignity. When they left our hamlet, they also took two people with them: Mohamed ag Ahmad and another young man whose name I don't know."[69]

According to Hana*, the soldiers and militiamen wanted information about the activities of armed groups. They asked about their movements and whether there were weapons in the village. The questions were asked through an interpreter who spoke Tamasheq, the language spoken by the inhabitants of Tin Adanda. She told Amnesty International:

"There was a black Tamasheq man with them who spoke and interpreted [during the interrogations of the villagers]. Someone whose name I don't know, to be honest. They asked us where the men were, and we replied that there were no men in the village. They asked if we had weapons or information about the movements of armed fighters. The Bella[70] **was the one who translated for us. There were also three black men among those questioning me, along with a few white men. They were scattered across the village, searching and asking questions. Not all the villagers were there that day, as many were in the bush. Some are still there."**[71]

According to Barra*, the widow of Ali ag Gadaweya, the FAMa and Wagner had ordered the hamlet's inhabitants to leave the village a few days before these incidents. She also told Amnesty International:

"In February 2025, Malian soldiers and Wagner came to tell us that we had three days to leave the village to avoid an attack by an Islamist group. They told us that these people had walkie-talkies and weapons, that they

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[68] In-person interview with Hana* (name changed to protect her identity), a refugee from Tin Adanda and mother of Oumar and Ali ag Gadaweya, Mberra, July 2025.
[69] In-person interview with Asia* (name changed to protect her confidentiality), a refugee from Tin Adanda and widow of Oumar ag Gadaweya, Mberra, July 2025.
[70] The Bella are an indigenous Black population living in the Sahel, among the Tuareg (Kel Tamasheq), to whom they traditionally served as agricultural labourers, in a stratified setting in which they occupied the lowest stratum. Historically they have the victims of enslavement and discrimination.
[71] In-person interview with Hana*, a refugee from Tin Adanda and mother of Oumar and Ali ag Gadaweya, Mberra, July 2025.

were coming to our village, and that the army would have to respond to the attack. I didn't know if they were telling the truth and wanted to protect us but, when they came back, they arrested and shot four people, including my husband Ali ag Gadaweya.

Some residents of Tin Adanda received an alert on their phones warning them of the arrival of FAMa and Wagner. Many of them had gone to hide in the forest [after that], and my family and I hid our most valuable possessions in the bush. The soldiers and Wagner entered my house and searched everything. They were looking for walkie-talkies and weapons. They threw all our belongings on the floor but didn't find much. We'd hidden everything in the bush, fearing our belongings might be stolen. But they took everything when they went into the bush to look for the people who had fled. They stole my carpet and my blanket."[72]

On 12 February, Barra* was questioned by soldiers on patrol, who persistently asked her why she and the other residents were staying in Tin Adanda and not leaving the hamlet. In her own words:

"I didn't understand the language of the white men who had come to my house. They were sitting next to me and had spotted Ali [her husband] with their binoculars. The Malian soldiers said nothing. They were only translating what the white men were saying. They asked me why we continued to live in the village, telling me there was no peace, no schools, and no economic activity. I was very scared, but the soldiers didn't attack me. They still threatened my sister, accusing her of being a spy for the armed groups."[73]

Tina*, Barra's* sister, who was threatened by Wagner's soldiers, also told Amnesty International:

"[When they entered the house], the Wagner members accused me of hiding a walkie-talkie and of being a spy for the armed groups. I was sitting on the floor with my legs spread apart, and they thought I was hiding something under my dress. One of Wagner's men threatened to shoot me, holding his gun to my head. He was about to shoot me when a family member intervened, saying I had a mental disability."[74]

The murders of Tin Adanda were also documented by the Collective for the Defence of the Rights of the People of Azawad [*Collectif pour la Défense des Peuples de l'Azawad,* CD-DPA] in its semi-annual report of June 2025,[75] which states that the same patrol was also responsible for the murders of two other young men, Aliad ag Mohamed Issa and Mahmoud ag Hatobi, in Gouber, 7 km from Gargando.[76] No investigation has thus far been announced to establish the facts and bring those responsible to justice.

5.1.4 LERNEB, 11–12 NOVEMBER 2024

On 11 November 2024, FAMa and Wagner conducted an operation in the town of Lerneb (Timbuktu), arresting several traders and subjecting them to torture and ill-treatment, looting their stalls, several houses, and a pharmacy, and killing at least two people who had been taken from Lerneb to Farko (south-west of Lerneb) during the operation, according to testimonies corroborated by Amnesty International. The bodies of the two victims, a mechanic and his apprentice, were found in Farko after the soldiers who had camped there following their patrol during the Lerneb market on 11 November 2024 had left. Amnesty International interviewed 12 people who were in Lerneb that day, 11 of whom were detained, tortured, and/or had their belongings looted by members of the patrol.[77] According to other sources, seven people were reportedly killed during this patrol in Lerneb.[78]

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[72] In-person interview with Barra* (name changed to protect her confidentiality), a refugee from Tin Adanda and widow of Ali ag Gadaweya, Mberra, July 2025.
[73] In-person interview with Barra*, a refugee from Tin Adanda and widow of Ali ag Gadaweya, Mberra, July 2025.
[74] In-person interview with Tina* (name changed to protect her confidentiality), a refugee from Tin Adanda and Barra*'s sister, in Mberra, July 2025.
[75]Annex to the semi-annual report covering the period October 2024 to March 2025. Détails sur les violations des Droits Humains et Droit international Humanitaire du Collectif pour la Défense des Droits du Peuple de l'Azawad/Nord-Mali. p.16. Amnesty has a copy of this document
[76] Annex to the semi-annual report covering the period October 2024 to March 2025. Détails sur les violations des Droits Humains et Droit international Humanitaire du Collectif pour la Défense des Droits du Peuple de l'Azawad/Nord-Mali.
[77] See sections 6.4 and 7 for these other violations in Lerneb.
[78] RFI (by David Baché), "Mali: l'armée et Wagner exécutent sept civils à Lerneb, dans la région de Tombouctou", 13 november 2024, https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20241113-mali-l-arm%C3%A9e-et-wagner-ex%C3%A9cutent-sept-civils-%C3%A0-lerneb-dans-la-r%C3%A9gion-de-tombouctou

Hadji*, 23, one of the shopkeepers whose store was looted and who was subjected to torture [see section 6.4 of this report], stated that three people were taken by the soldiers outside the town and that the bodies of two of them, Yahya and Hamidou, were found outside the town. He told Amnesty International:

"Yahya was a motorcycle mechanic, and Hamidou was travelling with his mother when he was killed. As soon as you have a motorbike or a walkie-talkie, you become a target [for the soldiers], and Yahya had a motorbike. And Hamidou had a walkie-talkie with him. We nomadic people use walkie-talkies to communicate with each other, to get information about the roads, the location of our animals, and news about the rain, who saw what, that's all. It's not for combat. I don't know why Wagner came to our place. Perhaps they suspected us or were looking for weapons."[79]

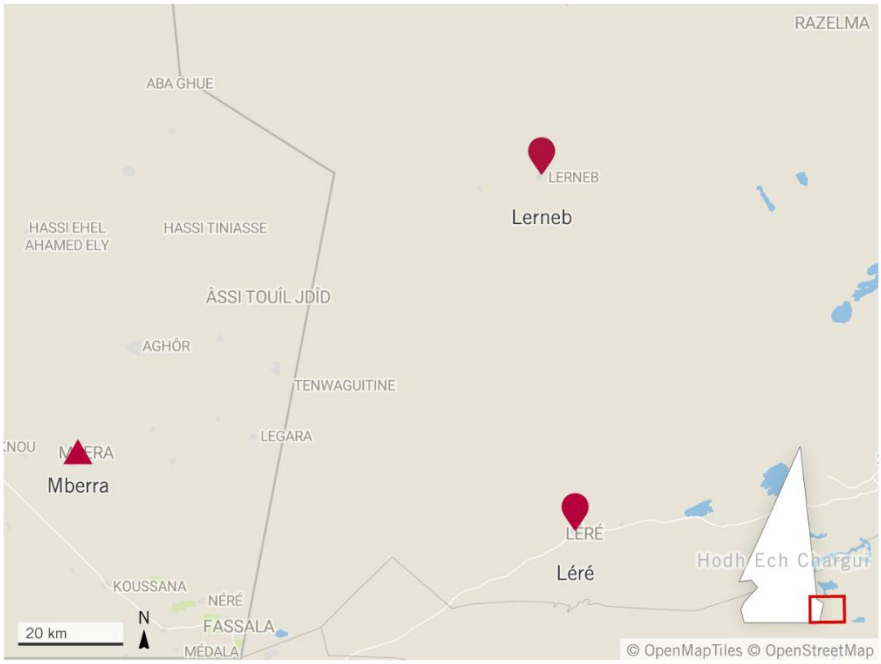
Hadji*, who didn't see what happened but saw the bodies after the soldiers had left, also stated:

"When they left, we went to check on the bodies and found that Yahya had had his throat cut and Hamidou had been shot."

Dada*, a pharmacist from Lerneb who has relocated to Aghor in Mauritania, was absent during the operation on 11–12 November 2024. When she returned to the town the next day, she found her pharmacy and her house ransacked, and she learned of the deaths of Hamidou and Yahya:

"When I returned, I learned that two people had been killed during the operation. They were both mechanics who repaired motorbikes. Oubay ould Hamaha were the first to find their bodies two kilometres from the village, with their heads cut off."[80]

Lerneb and Léré (Timbuktu region)



Map: Amnesty International

5.1.5 LOUGUI, 21 OCTOBER 2023

As part of military operations, patrols are often conducted during weekly village markets to check the identity and status (civilian/member of an armed group) of market traders, and to make arrests. It is not uncommon

[79] In-person interview with Hadji* (name changed to protect his confidentiality), 23, a refugee and trader from Lerneb, Aghor, July 2025.
[80] In-person interview with Dada* (name changed to protect her confidentiality), a refugee from Lerneb, Aghor, July 2025.

for violations of international humanitarian law to occur during these markets, either during arrests or when gatherings of people are mistakenly taken for gatherings of members of a non-state armed group and become the target of military strikes.[81]

In Lougui (Mopti region), members of a joint patrol killed 10 people on 21 October 2023 during a weekly market. Amnesty International interviewed five survivors of the operation and two other residents of Lougui, who described in detail how the incident unfolded, leading to the evacuation of all inhabitants to Mauritania.

According to the testimonies gathered by Amnesty International, five villagers (**Oumarou**, **Hammadi Seyo**, **Bokar Dicko**, his **son Rhoris, and Abèrè)** were shot dead as they tried to flee when the patrol arrived.[82] Three other people (**Mohamed Baraika, known as "Amirouche",** the village chief of Lougui, **Tenani**, and **Idou ag Mohamed)** were taken from a house, led outside, and then had their throats cut.[83] Two other people were seized in the village and taken to a hangar where they were burned alive. Their bodies were later found after the soldiers had left, according to three survivors of the attack who discovered the bodies.

The patrol in Lougui intervened a few weeks after attacks by the Strategic Framework for the Defence of the People of Azawad *[Cadre Stratégique pour la Défense du Peuple de l'Azawad,* CSP-PDA] on the military camps of Léré (Timbuktu) and Dioura (Mopti) on 17 September 2023, which led to a military reconfiguration in the border area with Mauritania. The operation in Lougui began on Saturday 21 October around 10am when the soldiers entered the Lougui market with four vehicles and 10 motorbikes. It only ended the next day at the same time as the soldiers left the hamlet, and the fleeing residents began to return to assess the carnage. Lougui is a small hamlet with around 40 houses.

Nina*, the widow of Amirouche who was executed at the exit to the village, was in Lougui at the time of the operation. According to her account:

"The patrol came to find us in the house on Saturday in Lougui. Amirouche was praying at the time, and he was taken, along with my uncle Idou and the blacksmith Tenani. We were in the courtyard of the house when the three of them were taken away by the soldiers, who had already burned many shops in the village. They killed the animals, scattered the millet, and destroyed a lot of things simply because they could. When they took Amirouche and the others, I kept my head down and prayed in silence. I was with my daughters and nieces, but the children were outside and saw the soldiers execute them. All three were forced to lie down and had their throats cut with axes. Blood was dripping everywhere, and one of the children who saw it even fainted and had to be brought round."[84]

Farouk* and **Ayan***, Amirouche's nephew and brother respectively, were also in the village when the operation took place. While **Ayan*** was with **Nina*** and witnessed the arrest of Amirouche and the other two, **Farouk***, his son, managed to escape from the village when the patrol arrived. Ayan told Amnesty International:

"I was lying in the courtyard, under a shelter, when the soldiers came. I was there with women and children, including Aichetou*, a pregnant woman who was beaten by the soldiers right in front of me. They grabbed her and threw her to the ground, face first. Over the course of the day, she miscarried in front of us, with no one able to help her. I was with three women, relatives who helped me with everything throughout that day when soldiers were in the village. One of the soldiers kicked my hands with his boots, causing me to fall off the bed. During the night on Saturday, the women started to sneak out of the village with their children, but I couldn't move and I was with three of my relatives. They tried to get me onto a cart, but it wasn't possible, and two of them left the village that night. I stayed with one of them until Sunday when, after the Wagner soldiers had left, the survivors began to return."[85]

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[81] For other cases of military interventions at rural markets, see Éric Landal, "Guerre Au Mali, les militaires à nouveau accusés d'exactions meurtrières contre les civils", *Libération*, 22 April 2022; https://www.liberation.fr/international/afrique/au-mali-les-militaires-a-nouveaux-accuses-dexactions-meurtrieres-contre-les-civils-20220422_L2ALK7AGQ5CNDMTXVMTXLD3GXI/ ; Amnesty International, "Mali: The perpetrators of the Moura massacre must be prosecuted and tried by a competent court, 16 May 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/05/mali-les-auteurs-des-tueries-a-moura-doivent-etre-poursuivis-et-juges-devant-un-tribunal-competent/ ; Amnesty International, " "Mali: Authorities must investigate deaths of at least eight civilians, including six children, after drone strikes in Inadiatafane", 5 November 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/11/mali-les-autorites-doivent-enqueter-sur-la-mort-dau-moins-huit-civils-dont-six-enfants-a-la-suite-de-frappes-de-drones-a-inadiafatane/

[82] Interviews with several survivors of the Lougui operation, 21-22 October 2023. Interviews conducted in Douenkara Barotoma and Mberra, July 2025 and April 2026.

[83] Interview with a prominent community member from Fassala, a security analyst and member of the CD-DPA bureau, in Nouakchott, Bassikounou, and Fassala June and July 2025.

[84] Interview with **Nina***, widow of Amirouche and a survivor of the Lougui killings, Mberra, April 2026.

[85] Interview with **Ayan***, a survivor of the Lougui killings Bérétoma, April 2026.

Woura*, daughter of Idou, who was executed at the exit to the village, was in Lougui during the operation and told Amnesty International:

"A Wagner/FAMa mission came to the weekly market in Lougui on a Saturday around 10am. They surrounded the village and searched all the women. They then went to the house of the brother of the village chief. Only three women were not searched. One woman who had just given birth was held for 24 hours during the mission, such that her newborn baby died. The other women remained in the bush for three days. Seven people were arrested and separated from the others. These were the village chief and two of his brothers/cousins, including my father Idou ag Mohamed, two market traders (one Fulani and one Arab), a blacksmith, and a Bella whose names I don't know. They locked the two market traders in a house, which they then burned down.

The village chief, Amirouche, my father Idou, and the blacksmith Tenani were tied up, taken away, and then beheaded. I was in the house when they were taken, but I fled into the bush like many others. I was there with a lot of other women and children. With every cry or noise, we feared we would be shot [as we weren't far from the village]. When the soldiers left, we returned and saw the decapitated bodies of our relatives to the south of the village."[86]

The decapitated, burnt, or shot bodies were only discovered from Sunday 22 October on, when the inhabitants started returning to the hamlet after the patrol had left. The survivors began to gather north of Lougui to find out what had happened. While searching for a mother and her two children, who had managed to hide and were missing, several men began to discover the bodies of Oumarou, Hammadi Seyo, Bokar Dicko, Rhoris, and Abèrè in the vicinity of the village.

"These men were looking for a woman [who had fled with them but was unaccounted for} when they began to discover the bodies. The bodies of Amirouche, Idou, and Tinani were found south of the village, their heads severed. They also found several bodies of residents and market traders, including a Fulani, a spare parts vendor from the Lougui market, and another person. The body of Oumarou, the borehole guardian, was found one kilometre east of the village. The woman they were looking for and her two children were found safe and sound, but they were parched from the ordeal."

According to Nina*, Amirouche's widow:

"The soldiers stayed until 11am on Sunday before leaving Lougui, and no one dared move in the village. They slept in Lougui. The women's bodies were torn to shreds as they tried to sneak through the bushes to hide, with the branches scratching their bodies and causing them to bleed. On Saturday night, we went into the bush with the children. Someone on a motorbike was able to bring us some water."[87]

Seydi*, who had escaped like Farouk* when the soldiers raided the market, told Amnesty International before returning:

"At 10am on Sunday, we returned to Lougui but there were only a few animals in the village, and a lot of houses had been burned down. We returned when we saw the patrol leave Lougui. The soldiers had spilt all the grain in the village, torn open sacks of potatoes, and killed many of the animals."[88]

Those who survived the operation stayed in the ruins of the village and its surroundings for a few days to assess the damage and gather the survivors before seeking refuge in Mauritania across the border. According to Farouk*, Amirouche's nephew and a survivor of the attack:

"After seeing the extent of the damage and what had happened, we stayed in the area until Tuesday. Then we started to move our belongings into the bush and, on Wednesday, families began to leave. We left many of our things there because we couldn't carry everything with us. The village remains deserted to this day. The soldiers destroyed the two boreholes. They burned down my house, that of Amirouche, the village chief, and the house of another resident, Hamma. They also burned down many of the Fulani houses in the hamlet."[89]

The evacuation of residents to Mauritania lasted almost a week, according to the locals. No investigation has been carried out into this attack.

[86] In-person interview with Woura* (name changed to protect her confidentiality) and her grandmother in Douenkara, July 2025.
[87] Interview with Nina*, widow of Amirouche and a survivor of the Lougui killings, Mberra, April 2026.
[88] Interview with Seydi*, a survivor of the Lougui killings, Bérétoma, April 2026.
[89] Interview with Farouk*, a survivor of the Lougui killings, Barotoma, April 2026.

5.1.6 TOULÉ, JULY 2023 AND MARCH 2024

Amnesty International gathered testimonies of cases of unlawful killings, illegal detentions, torture, and other ill-treatment committed during operations in the village of Toulé, located in the commune of Nampala (Ségou region), in 2023 and 2024.

The first incident occurred in 2023 during the planting season [June-July 2023], according to Allaye*, a prominent community member from Toulé who has been living in Kindjerla, Mauritania, since 2024. According to his account, five individuals were arrested and executed by Wagner soldiers, who were operating independently of the FAMa in the village on this occasion. According to Allaye*:

"In 2023, the situation for us in Toulé was at its worst. Wagner came alone during the rainy season, when we were sowing millet. They told everyone to go to the mosque and, when we got there, they started checking our identity documents. During the checks, one of the Wagner soldiers pointed at me and said 'bandit'. They then took three of the men from the mosque, including two of my cousins, and led them outside the village. From the mosque, we heard gunshots and knew that those men were most likely dead.

When the troops left Toulé, we went to where they had been taken, which was three kilometres from the village. There, we found five bodies, including those of my cousins and the person who had been arrested with them. The other two people who were killed were tending to their fields outside the village when they were also stopped and executed."

The second incident took place in March 2024. A joint FAMa/Wagner patrol first entered the village on 18 March (Saturday, the 7th day of Ramadan). Hassatou*, 19 and pregnant, died after the intervention due to a lack of care. A few days later, a Wagner patrol returned to the village.

According to Njobdi*, a man among those detained by the patrol:

"'Wagner and the Malian Army were both in the village. They surrounded it with their vehicles, and three yellow vehicles entered the village. There were about 30 soldiers involved in the operation, some on the vehicles with their weapons and others on motorbikes."[90]

The troops made all the men leave their houses and gathered them to the west of the village for checks and questioning.

"They asked us if we were tired [of the war] and we said yes. They said, 'It's not us who've tired you out; it's the bad people [the jihadists].' They asked for our documents and gathered all the men together, while others went to search the village. They took our phones. They tied some people up, beat others, and used knives to cut the hair of anyone with long beards or long hair. Before leaving, they told us not to move and, when they had gone, to collect our IDs and phones. They released us around 3pm." [91]

It was in this context that Hassatou*, Njobdi's* wife, lost consciousness during the operation. According to Njobdi's account to the Amnesty International delegation:

"My wife was 19 years old and was in her final stages of pregnancy. She fainted when they made me leave with the men. A week before the incident, I had taken her for an antenatal check-up, and we were due to return a week later for the birth. She was almost full-term when the operation took place and I was taken with the other men to the west of the village (…) When I was released [after the troops had left], I returned to the village to see how she was doing; she was quite traumatized. I rented a vehicle for 100,000 FCFA (USD 176) to go to the clinic [in Nampala] and, when we arrived, they told us we had to go to Niono. On the way to Niono, we met people who told us we couldn't continue along the road because it was blocked by a Wagner convoy. My wife died in the car while I watched the baby moving in her womb.

A few days later, a Wagner patrol returned to Toulé to arrest and kill his nephew, Sidi Sambourou, 30. Njobdi said he didn't know why he was being detained or what he was accused of.

"The following Wednesday, they came to take my nephew, Sidi Sambourou, my sister's son. He was 30 years old. They tied him up and took him outside the village, where they killed him and burned his body. Although they [Wagner members] were outside the village, we could see them from a distance. We saw them setting the fire.

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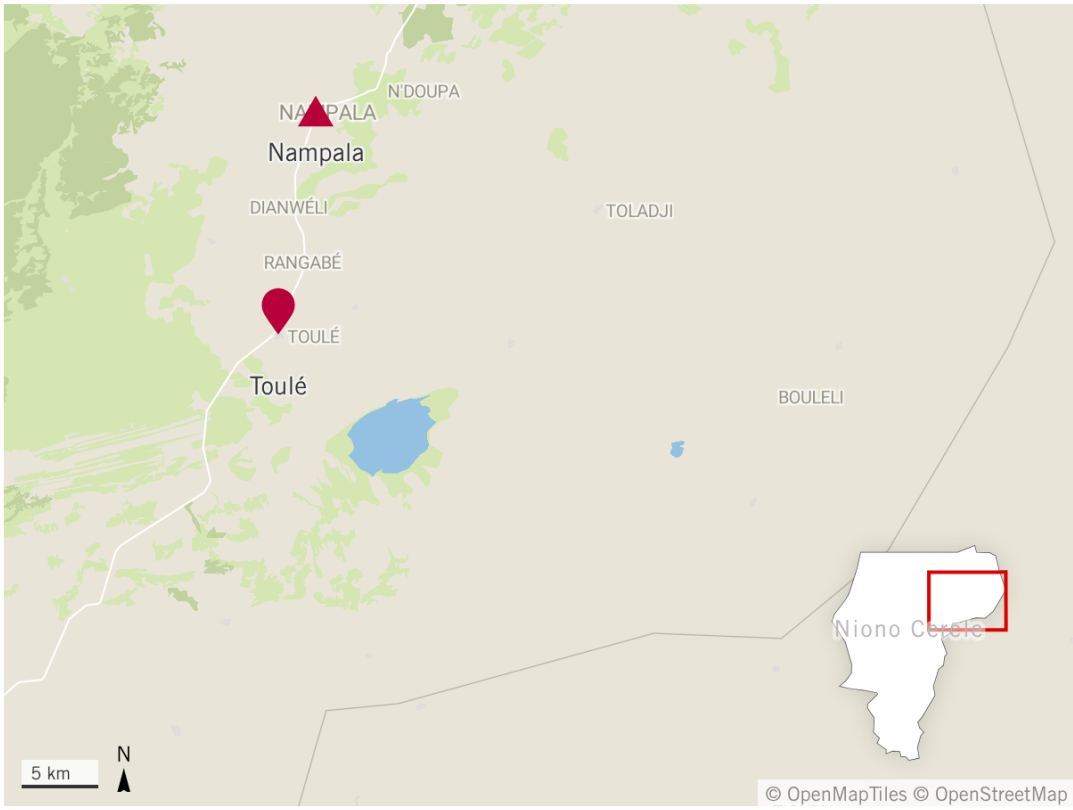
[90] In-person interview with Bacca* (name changed), 59, a refugee in Hodh ech-Chargui.
[91] In-person interview with Allaye* (name changed to protect his confidentiality), a prominent community member from Toulé, who is now a refugee in Douenkara, July 2025.

We didn't know if they'd already killed him because we didn't hear any gunshots. When they left, we went to the site to retrieve his body and bury him. We then saw that Sidi's head was almost severed from his body, which was partially burned. After burying him, all the inhabitants of Toulé decided to leave. Everyone fled, and the village chief left for Bamako."[92]

The killings in Toulé are not limited to the cases documented by Amnesty International. According to a Human Rights Watch report, FAMa and Wagner from the Nampala military base conducted a military operation in the same village on 15 August 2024, during which seven men were killed, and some 10 houses were set on fire. The victims had their hands tied behind their backs, were blindfolded, and had their throats cut.[93]

Toulé (Segou region)



Map: Amnesty International

[92] In-person interview with Njobdi*, a 59-year-old marabout, Douenkara, July 2025.
[93] Human Rights Watch, "Mali: Atrocities by the Army and Wagner Group", 12 December 2024, https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/12/mali-atrocities-army-and-wagner-group

5.2 DRONE STRIKES ON CIVILIANS

5.2.1 EJDEIR MARKET, 16 MARCH 2025

On Sunday 16 March 2025, a drone strike by the Malian Armed Forces killed 16 people at the Ejdeir market, a town in the far north west of Timbuktu region (50 km northwest of Lerneb and 20 km from the border with Mauritania).[94]

Amnesty International was able to speak with three survivors of the strike, all of whom were injured and lost family members during the attack.

In a statement released on 17 March 2025, the General Staff of the Malian Armed Forces claimed to have targeted "terrorist groups in a monitored transit camp located in the Lougmeiza area, 109 km north-west of Léré"[95], neutralizing "11 terrorists" and destroying "3 pick-up trucks". These claims are, however, contradicted by the survivors of the strike who were interviewed by Amnesty International. According to Abdoul Aziz*, an 85-year-old survivor who lost his son and brother in the strike, it occurred around 2pm, just as most of the market traders were preparing to leave. Several local sources, including representatives from community organizations and journalists interviewed by Amnesty International, claim that the strike only caused damage to civilians and that there were no members of armed groups or military targets at the market.[96]

Amnesty International has obtained a document listing the names of 16 people killed in the strike, as well as those of seven injured individuals, including Abdoul Aziz*. The document also states that three pick-up vehicles carrying sheep, goods, and passengers were burnt out as a result of the strike.[97] These details align with the accounts of the survivors interviewed, who reported that three vehicles were burnt out by the strike, in addition to the human and animal casualties.

While Amnesty International cannot completely rule out the potential presence of a military target, the testimonies gathered show that most of the victims were market traders, displaced by the conflict, who were buying supplies at this market held every Sunday.

According to Abdoul Aziz's* account:

"We arrived at the Ejdeir market around 10 or 11 in the morning. We did our shopping and, after the Zuhr prayer, around 2pm, we started loading up the goods. It was while loading the vehicle that the strike occurred. I saw my car burn before my very eyes…. That day, I had gone to buy some small animals, tea, and cereals. There were women and children at the market that day. The market is a vibrant place that everyone goes to. Some even come from Mberra [in Mauritania] to sell butter and other dairy products."[98]

Their car, which was one of the pick-ups parked under a tree, was targeted by the strike as they were loading their goods:

"The car was under a tree next to the market. We parked it there because it was in the shade. I was sitting right next to it but my son and brother were loading goods into the vehicle, mainly goats and small animals. I don't remember anything specific, but I was suddenly thrown into the air and I felt an intense pain in my leg. I saw the vehicle and the animals burning and then I lost consciousness. I came round in another vehicle that was taking me to Mauritania, and the people there told me that my son and brother had been killed in the strike."[99]

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[94] RFI Africa, "Mali: au moins une dizaine de civils tués dans une frappe de l'armée à Ejdeïr, région de Tombouctou", 17 March 2025,https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20250317-mali-au-moins-une-dizaine-de-civils-tu%C3%A9s-dans-une-frappe-de-l-arm%C3%A9e-%C3%A0-ejde%C3%AFr-r%C3%A9gion-de-tombouctou. See also: Annex to the semi-annual report covering the period October 2024 to March 2025. Détails sur les violations des Droits Humains et Droit international Humanitaire du Collectif pour la Défense des Droits du Peuple de l'Azawad/Nord-Mali. Amnesty has a copy of this document, which lists the names of the 16 people killed in the strike, as well as the seven injured.

[95] Statement from the Malian Armed Forces (FAMAs), 17 March 2025, https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=954365506886259&set=pb.100069384541979.-2207520000%203&checkpoint_src=any

[96] Interview with Abdoul Aziz*, Houraye*, Salah*, Yasin*, members of the CD-DPA, and community members in Hodh ech-Chargui. June and July 2025, and April 2026.

[97] Annex to the semi-annual report covering the period October 2024 to March 2025. Détails sur les violations des Droits Humains et Droit international Humanitaire du Collectif pour la Défense des Droits du Peuple de l'Azawad/Nord-Mali, p.16. Amnesty has a copy of this document.

[98] In-person interview with Abdoul Aziz* (name changed for reasons of confidentiality), 85, a survivor of the Ejdeir drone strike, Nouakchott, July 2025.

[99] Interview with Abdoul Aziz*, 85, a survivor of the Ejdeir drone strike, Nouakchott, July 2025.

Abdoul Aziz* was taken to Mberra, where he received treatment before being transferred to the hospital in Néma and then to Nouakchott.

"My right leg is broken. One of the toes on my left foot is missing. The pain is constant… I have burns on both my legs… After the strike, I lost consciousness and only remembered being told that my son and brother were dead as I was being taken away in a transport vehicle.

The injuries of Abdoul Aziz, a victim of the strike on 16 March 2025 on the market traders in Ejdeir. Photo taken in Nouakchott in July 2025.*

Houraye*, a Malian refugee in Mauritania, had gone to Ejdeir to do domestic work for the market traders who needed it. She spoke to Amnesty International:

"We left Aghor at two in the morning for Ejdeir. I was in a convoy of vehicles with shopkeepers, market traders, and other people. Everything was going well until around 2pm, when the market was shutting up. I was sitting with a group of merchants who had stored their goods when the explosion happened, to the west of the site. All I know is that my back was torn and bleeding, and one of the vehicles took me to Mberra, then to Bassikounou and Nema. I was unconscious and only came round in Mberra; two other injured people were with me."[100]

[100] Interview with Houraye*, 34, (name changed to protect his identity), a survivor of the drone strike in Ejdeir, Aghor, April 2026.

Salah*, 56, a livestock dealer, also survived the strike but lost his nephew Towalhayatou, a trader. He also confirmed that the strike occurred as the market was shutting up and most of the traders were preparing to leave:

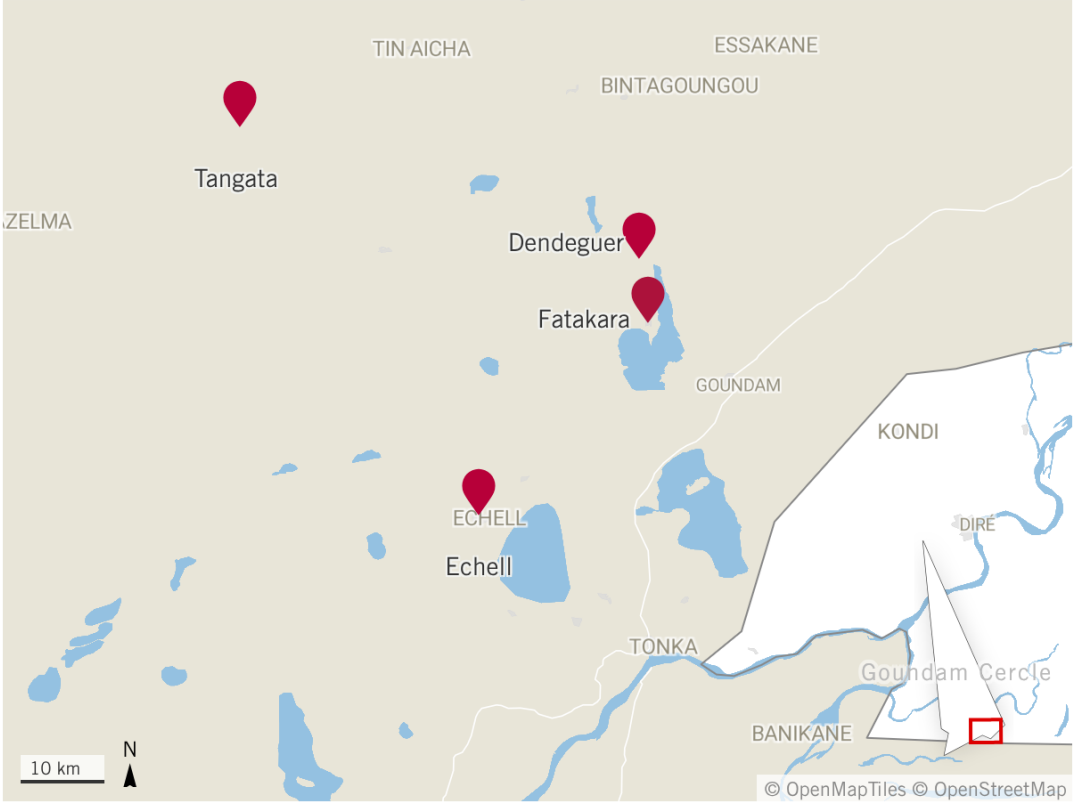
"We were on the south-east side of the market when the strike happened, just as people were getting ready to leave. Three of the victims were killed while praying. They were Mohamed Fadel Ould Khattar, Towel Hayat Ould Othman, my own nephew, and Muku Ould Sweidi. We were all sitting, getting ready to leave the market and head back to Hassi Touil.
The livestock I was herding was completely burned during the strike. I lost consciousness and woke up next day in Néma at nine in the morning. Three vehicles were burned out; nothing suspicious had happened during the market. There were no armed men, just people with sticks. I had injuries to my head and back, on the left side, and to my right foot. I was covered in soot from the explosion. I'm still in pain to this day, and I'm in debt because the animals I'd bought were destroyed in the strike."[101]

5.2.2 TANGATA VILLAGE, 13 NOVEMBER 2025

On the night of Thursday 13 November 2025, a family of seven was killed in a drone strike on the village of Tangata, in the commune of Tin Aicha (Goundam Cercle, Timbuktu Region). The strike occurred around 9pm at night. The victims were: the father of the family, Aly ag El Mehdi (41), his wife, Toraghite Walet Innabaghor (35), and their five children, Mohamed (15), Fadimata (13), Mohamedoune (11), Fatimata (9), and Mohamed Ibrahim (7). The victims were killed as they slept in their home, according to testimonies gathered by Amnesty International from two residents of Tangata who were there at the time of the strike and who went to the scene shortly afterwards.

[101] Interview with Salah*, 56 (name changed to protect his identity), a survivor of the Ejdeir strike, Hassi Touil, April 2026.

Tangata (Tin Aicha commune, Timbuktu region)



Map: Amnesty International

Hameydatt*, 34, who was in Tangata at the time of the strike, told Amnesty International:

"I had returned to Tangata from Mberra to visit my brother and my family there when the strike occurred. But I was away from the house, on the other side of the village. The drone was circling in the sky throughout the day, and we could see there was activity in the area. The strike occurred after the Isha prayer and wiped out my brother's family. I was on the other side of the village at the time, and there had been a wedding in the house where I was the day before. If I'd been in the house, I could have died with them.

There are no armed combatants in Tangata, but armed groups do sometimes move around the area. That day, there were no armed fighters but there were a lot of motorbikes in the village because of the wedding. People had come from all over the place."[102]

Ziyad*, 32, another resident of Tangata who attended the funeral after the strike, also said:

"The victims were to our east when the strike occurred around 9pm. It was on Thursday night. An entire family was wiped out, along with four sheep. Many livestock were also injured during the strike. It was a night like any other until the strike occurred. There was nothing out of the ordinary. There had been a wedding in the village of Tangata the day before, and several young people had come to the village on motorbikes. And there were real joy and excitement. On Thursday, during the day, people were already starting to leave after the wedding the previous day.

[102] Interview with Hameydatt*, a native of Tangata and a refugee in Mberra, April 2026.

The strike targeted the eastern side of the town. It was followed by a huge explosion and, as I headed towards where it seemed to have struck, I was stunned by the noise of that explosion and the fact that I could hear very little, if anything at all.

The villagers had already started to leave Tangata, and I went to a hill where I could get a phone signal and let people know about the strike. I'm certain it was a drone, not an aircraft; in this area, we're now used to drones and can tell them apart from helicopters. The drone was still flying over the village an hour and a half after the strike (…)

When the danger had passed, I plucked up the courage and, along with a few others, returned to the village, where I was able to see the targeted compound. There were seven victims in the house, and six were burnt beyond recognition. The shell appeared to have hit the mother and the children who were sleeping in the same room. They were unrecognizable. But the father, Aly, was more recognizable; he was injured in the neck and head, and his body was right in front of the shelter where his family slept. They were buried in the courtyard of their house. Given their condition, it was impossible to wash or move them. (…) I stayed for a week after the strike in Tangata and the surrounding area to gather my brother's family's belongings and livestock so that I could give them to their parents."[103]

[103] Interview with Ziyad*, a refugee in Mberra, and in Tangata at the time of the strike, April 2026.

6. TORTURE, ILL-TREATMENT, AND UNLAWFUL DETENTION IN MILITARY CAMPS AND DURING PATROLS

Amnesty International has gathered testimonies from 15 individuals, all men, who experienced torture and ill-treatment at the hands of members of Wagner. It has also obtained reports from those who directly witnessed around 30 instances of torture and ill-treatment, either happening before their eyes or affecting fellow detainees. The accounts also refer to five people who died in military camps as a result of torture and poor detention conditions.

These acts of torture and ill-treatment occurred during joint FAMa/Wagner patrols in villages, as well as in the military camps of FAMa and Wagner members in Nampala and Léré. Testimonies also show that acts of torture and ill-treatment were committed while transferring people arrested during patrols to these camps, with the individuals bound and blindfolded.

Amnesty International was able to corroborate the testimonies of torture through the marks of abuse still visible on the bodies of witnesses, or through photos that also showed the physical scars of those who were tortured. Cross-checking testimonies from individuals detained at the same time or who witnessed the same acts of torture and ill-treatment also helped corroborate these accounts.

Most of the testimonies gathered by Amnesty International show that torture was used to obtain information, particularly about armed groups. In the military camps, the victims were subjected to interrogations interspersed with torture sessions, conducted by Wagner members, with the aim of extracting "confessions" as to their membership of, or association with armed groups. Other testimonies suggest that torture was used solely as a form of punishment or to force rural residents not to associate with members of armed groups.

None of the interviewees who claimed to have been tortured in military camps by Wagner members were brought before a judge or the judicial system. They were denied access to a lawyer and to their families. Very often, their families were unaware of their place of detention. In some cases, reported to Amnesty International, families or relatives of detainees were afraid to go to the military bases to inquire about their situation for fear of reprisals.

The torture techniques identified include beatings with boots or rifle butts, suspending the upper limbs from a metal bar, tying the hands and feet behind the back ("hog-tie"), electric shocks to sensitive parts of the body such as the hands, the soles of the feet, or the chest,, burns, humiliation including forms of sexual

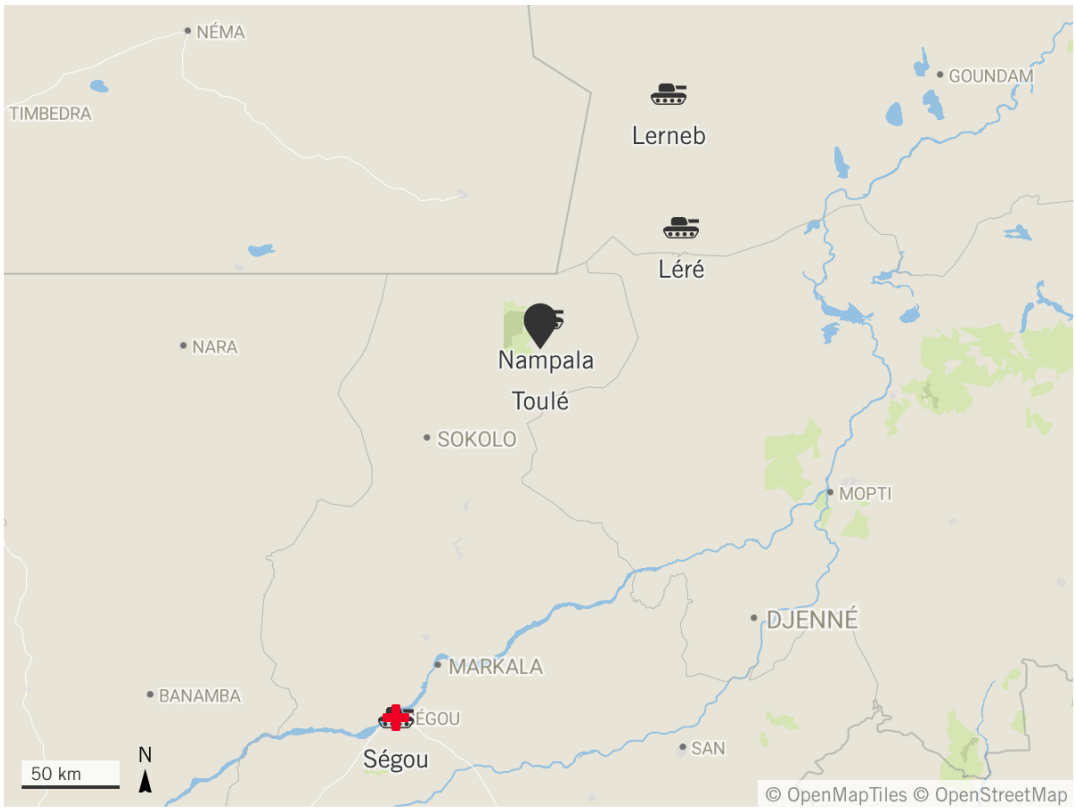
violence such as forced nudity in public, psychological torture (through threats of execution or making the victim watch others being tortured), and also simulated drowning, commonly known as “waterboarding”.

This torture ended when a third party intervened, when the detainee was released due to lack of evidence or a confession regarding their association with armed groups, or after a sum of money was paid to the jailers. After enduring torture, many victims sought refuge in Mauritania for their safety. Given the vast number of cases of these atrocities documented during joint operations and in the military camps, the use of torture by Wagner with the complicity, acquiescence or consent of the FAMa, can be considered as a recurrent practice which occurs in total impunity.

Torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment are prohibited in all circumstances under international human rights law and international humanitarian law and are also prohibited by Malian law. They constitute war crimes in the context of a non-international armed conflict. The Malian authorities have an obligation to prevent torture and ill-treatment, to investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment, to bring the alleged perpetrators of these acts to justice, and to provide reparation to the victims. Furthermore, the Malian authorities must ensure that any statement proven to have been obtained through torture cannot be used as evidence in any proceedings.

In addition, the cases of detention (ranging from one day to several months) in military camps outside the judicial system, as detailed in this report, are unlawful and some may qualify as enforced disappearances. Individuals were arrested during military patrols and taken to the camps in Léré, Goundam, and Nampala where they were held incommunicado without their relatives being informed of their place of detention or the reasons for their arrest. These enforced disappearances are the responsibility of the Malian State, and it has an obligation to conduct effective investigations into these cases and identify those responsible.

Sites where acts of torture were committed by Wagner



Légende

Toulé (village)

Segou hospital

Military base

6.1 TORTURE AND DEGRADING TREATMENT AT THE SPORTS GROUND AND MILITARY CAMP IN NAMPALA, JULY-AUGUST 2024

Amnesty International was able to gather testimonies from six people who witnessed acts of torture and ill-treatment perpetrated by members of a joint FAMa/Wagner patrol at the Nampala sports ground, as well as accounts from six former detainees from the Nampala military camp, a town in the Ségou region near the Mauritanian border. These six individuals either experienced torture themselves or witnessed others being subjected to torture and ill-treatment. According to the testimonies gathered from former detainees, the

perpetrators of these acts of torture and ill-treatment were most often Wagner members, usually with the complicity of members of the Malian Armed Forces who were sometimes present during interrogations, including those acting as interpreters. As early as 2016, Human Rights Watch was documenting allegations of torture within the same military camp, targeting herders arrested during military operations and the lack of sanctions against or even investigations into the perpetrators, who were members of the FAMa.[104] These acts of torture continued with the deployment of Wagner at the base from 2023 on.[105]

6.1.1 NAMPALA SPORTS GROUND, 7 JULY 2024

On Sunday 7 July 2024, a joint FAMa-Wagner patrol arrived in Nampala. The patrol members forcibly removed several dozen men from their homes and gathered them on a sports field for nine hours. According to four individuals who were detained during this incident, the patrol members were looking for people suspected of being associated with an armed group, as well as a walkie-talkie.

Hassimi*, 30, is now a refugee in Fassala, Mauritania. A former resident of Nampala who was present when the patrol arrived, was at that time managing the business of a relative who was conducting commercial transactions with Wagner. Hassimi was among the men, including boys aged seven to 10, rounded up by the patrol on the sports field. According to his account, the men were divided into several groups based on their villages of origin; those from Nampala were separated from those from Toulé and Ndoupa, who had fled the military operations to take refuge in the commune's main town. These men were detained from 8am to 5pm. Among the FAMa, one acted as an interpreter for the Wagner members, translating between Russian, Fulfulde, and Bambara for intelligence purposes. During this patrol, two residents of Ndoupa were abused in front of the gathered crowd, according to Hassimi*.

In his own words:

"They [the soldiers on patrol] went over to the group of people from Ndoupa and asked for someone named Ahmadou. This latter stood up and asked what they wanted with him, but they grabbed him, dragged him to the middle of the field, stripped him of his clothes, and started beating him. He was left in just his underwear, and they beat him until he couldn't breathe. Then they grabbed him, threw him into a vehicle, and started beating him with iron bars. At one point, they grabbed his head and plunged it into a large bucket of water. I don't know what they were accusing him of, but when they had finished beating him, they went to ask who Ahmadou's relatives were. Someone [from Ndoupa] raised their hand to say they were Ahmadou's older brother; they too were seized and thrown into the same vehicle as him."[106]

Samba*, 48, another Nampala native who was part of the group arrested with Hassimi* and has since also sought refuge in Mauritania, corroborated his account:

"It was a Sunday. We were rounded up by the soldiers and forced to stay on the sports field from morning until 5pm, under the scorching sun, with nothing to eat or drink. There were children, the elderly, middle-aged men, everyone. We didn't even dare lift our heads to look at the soldiers; everyone was sitting with their heads down. They started questioning people about the jihadists, but the answers didn't satisfy them. They asked for news about the jihadists. We said we didn't know. They said we had to answer but we had no answer. We hadn't seen the jihadists; they weren't from our village. They didn't hit me, but they took other people and submerged their heads in a barrel of water. I don't know how many people; I kept my head down. They beat them too. I could hear the screams and the blows."[107]

After finishing with the people from Ndoupa, the Wagner members turned their attention to the Nampala group and singled out an individual, the son of a prominent community member from Nampala. He too, was tortured in front of the gathered crowd. According to Hassimi*:

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[104] Human Rights Watch, Mali: Abuses Spread South: Islamist Armed Groups' Atrocities, Army Responses Generate Fear, 19 February 2016, https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/02/19/mali-abuses-spread-south

[105] Forbidden Stories, *"Torture and Forced Disappearances: Inside Wagner's Secret Prisons in Mali",* Viktoria Project, 12 june 2025, https://forbiddenstories.org/torture-wagners-prisons-mali/

[106] Interview with Hassimi* (name changed for security reasons), 30, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, June 2025.

[107] Interview with Samba* (name changed for security reasons), 48, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, July 2025.

"The soldiers grabbed him and tied him to one of the water tower poles right next to them. His hands were tied behind his back and to one of the poles. They beat him on the chest with sticks and brought a large bucket of water, into which they forced his head, first.

During these interrogations and identity checks, Wagner members reportedly threatened to kill the gathered men, calling the residents of Nampala "bandits".[108]The gathered individuals, including children, not only witnessed this torture but were also subjected to other forms of psychological torture. Around 3pm, Wagner members brought shovels, spades, and other digging tools from a vehicle. For Hassimi*, the intention was to "commit a massacre".[109] Seven of the people gathered on the sports field were ordered to get into a vehicle but, according to Hassimi*, one of the militiamen challenged this command:

"One of them, from the Wagner group, who spoke a little French, rebelled. I don't know what they said to each other but, in any case, they almost got into a fight right in front of us… When this man objected, they started shouting at each other. Those who were telling people to get into the vehicle got angry and left."[110]

Wagner members left the scene around 3pm, leaving the individuals who had been detained with the Malian soldiers. It was only at around 5pm that all these people were released following a discussion between the second deputy mayor and a captain in the Malian army. According to Elghass*, 37, who was also detained during the incident and witnessed the acts of torture, seven people were taken away by the FAMa when the patrol left, including two of the individuals tortured in front of the group.[111]

That same evening, several residents fled Nampala seeking refuge elsewhere, fearing the patrol would return.

6.1.2 NAMPALA MILITARY CAMP (JULY 2024)

The day after the incidents at the Nampala sports stadium, Wagner members returned to the town looking for the owner of the shop that Hassimi* was managing in his absence. According to him:

"They came to the shop the next day and were looking for the owner, who had left for town [Bamako] and had entrusted me to run the place. The owner had business dealings with Wagner and supplied them with products, but his lorry had been intercepted by armed groups seven days earlier, and he had fled immediately afterwards. When they came [to the shop], there were about 10 of them. One of them called me over, talking as if he wanted to buy something. He asked me if I sold gas [butane gas for cooking]. I replied that I didn't… Since FAMa soldiers were with them, they didn't want to reveal their intentions. They told me to leave but then, after I'd taken two or three steps, they asked me to come back to see what they were looking for. I looked into their vehicle, and then they pushed me inside. It was a Toyota Land Cruiser with a tarpaulin. I was on the back seat, and one of them put a knife to my hand, asking me where the owner was. I replied three times that he was in Bamako, and then they tied my hands and feet with rope before taking off at high speed."[112]

Wagner members had also arrested another shopkeeper and his son, who were tied up in the same vehicle as Hassimi*. A local elected official and the president of the Nampala youth organization, Husseini Ba, were also detained during this patrol. While the local official has since been released, according to the residents interviewed, Husseini Ba's fate remained unknown as of April 2026.

The five people were taken to the Nampala military base, located outside the city. Once there, they were thrown into the courtyard, where a Wagner commander singled out Hassimi* and another, gesturing with his hand that they were about to get their throats cut. Hassimi*, separated from the others, was taken to a hangar where he was tortured by Wagner members.

Hassimi described the acts of torture he endured at the Nampala military camp, perpetrated by members of Wagner:

"They forced my head into a bucket of water, and I couldn't breathe. I struggled until I fell onto my back, and then they started asking me questions. They wanted to know where the shopkeeper was, and I told them he was

[108] Interview with Elghass*, 37, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, July 2025.
[109] Interview with Hassimi*, 30, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, June 2025.
[110] Interview with Hassimi*, 30, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, June 2025.
[111] Interview with Elghass*, 37, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, July 2025.
[112] Interview with Hassimi*, 30, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, June 2025.

in Bamako, just as I had already told them in the car. They asked me the same question again before asking my age and occupation."[113]

After this interrogation, Hassimi* was detained in unsanitary conditions at the base, in the toilets, where he found Ahmadou of Ndoupa' s older brother, who had been arrested the day before.

"When he saw me, he asked if I'd seen his brother [Ahmadou], but I didn't know anything about him. The other shopkeeper [Omar] joined us, as did the young community leader, whose clothes were completely soaked and who was in a bad state."[114]

After a while, Hassimi* was again taken out of his cell and interrogated, still about the shopkeeper and the goods that had not reached their destination in Nampala.

"A Wagner combatant came and took me to a small concrete hangar. They forced me onto the ground, on my knees, with my hands tied behind my back. When the interpreter arrived, they started asking me more questions about the truck and the shopkeeper. I repeated the same thing to them: that the owner had gone to Bamako a few days earlier to stock up. The lorry was supposed to arrive on a Sunday, but it never reached Nampala, and the owner had notified the military authorities of its absence. The militiamen accused me of lying and started hitting me again with an electric cable, striking my shoulders and face. They beat me for a long time but, at one point, one of them said it was enough and that I was telling the truth. They then sent me to another cell, a dilapidated kitchen, where I found a young Bella boy aged 17-18 and a Moor who spoke only Hassaniya. The young Bella had been arrested in the bush with his goats, and the Moor while he was looking for his camels around Dogofry."[115]

In all, Hassimi* was detained for seven days at the Nampala military base, where he underwent three interrogation sessions involving torture. He was released on the night of Sunday 14 July 2024, after being taken from his cell by a Wagner member who spoke French, along with Omar*, the other shopkeeper, who could no longer walk and was dragged along with his feet dangling by the Wagner members.

"They told me in French: 'We're going to release you but tell Oumar that we know he's working with the terrorists [members of the GSIM]. If we see him in Nampala again, he's a dead man.' They took our photos and our names, and the FAMa captain at the base said the same thing to Oumar in Bambara."[116]

According to Samba*, another resident of Nampala who formed part of the group gathered at the sports ground on Sunday 7 July 2024:

"The next day [Monday 8 July 2024], we went to the village chief to find a solution to all these arrests. On that day, they took two people: Gorou Cissé, one of the mayor's deputies, and Husseini Ba [youth leader]. Gorou, the deputy mayor, was released sometime after his detention but, to this day, there's still no news of Husseini, despite all the efforts made. Wagner's soldiers found us at the village chief's home and pointed their weapons at us for 30 minutes before leaving. That same day, at dusk, I decided to leave Nampala for Fassala [in Mauritania; 70 km away] along with many others. We slept on the road that night but, by morning, we were in Fassala… I left my house, my belongings, my animals – around 10 of them – and I don't even know if they're alive or not."[117]

The fate of Husseini Bah, president of the Nampala community youth group, remains unknown after his entry into the Nampala camp, despite efforts by members of the Nampala community to secure his release. Omar's son, who had been arrested at the same time as Hassimi* and his father, was released on Thursday 10 July 2024, three days after their detention.

Maouloud*, 35, another trader who was among the seven people arrested following checks at the sports ground on Sunday 7 July 2024 in Nampala, claims to have been detained from Sunday to Monday afternoon in harsh conditions. Taken to the base with their hands tied and eyes blindfolded, the seven people arrested were first photographed before being questioned separately about their connections to members of armed groups. During this time, Maouloud describes interrogations interspersed with acts of torture and ill-treatment.

[113] Interview with Hassimi*, 30, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, June 2025.
[114] Interview with Hassimi*, 30, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, June 2025.
[115] Interview with Hassimi*, 30, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, June 2025.
[116] Interview with Hassimi*, 30, a refugee from Nampala, Mberra, June 2025.

"They beat us and kicked us with their feet, and they stood on us. When we were lying down, they would stand on our backs and on our chests with their feet. My wrists still hurt from being squeezed so tightly."[118]

Maouloud* was detained in the base's toilets along with six other people. The cramped conditions meant the detainees were uncomfortable and couldn't lie down. They were forced to sit squatting all night. Interrogations and torture sessions took place outside the cells, in a hangar within the camp and were conducted by Wagner members, who, according to Maouloud, could be distinguished for not using French or local languages, and for speaking Russian instead. After two interrogation sessions, he was released on 8 July at around 6pm.

6.1.3 NAMPALA MILITARY CAMP (31 JULY-4 AUGUST 2024)

Allaye*, 54, a prominent community member from Toulé, a village in the commune of Nampala, told Amnesty International about the torture he endured at the Nampala military camp at the hands of Wagner members on 31 July 2024. The community elder was arrested in Toulé by a patrol from the military base, then taken there to be "interrogated" and tortured. He was finally released after four days of illegal detention:

"They arrived in Toulé at 11am[119] and again asked everyone [all the men] to go to the mosque. But they took me by motorbike to their vehicles, still with my hands tied and eyes blindfolded. They stopped en route. I was later told that during this stop, they cut the throats of an old man and his son, who were in their fields. It was only around 4pm that they headed towards Nampala, towards the base. When I got there, they told me to take off all my clothes, even my underwear. They tied my hands behind my back and took me to a house, where they made me lie on my back. They placed a chair on my chest, and someone sat on it."[120]

Allaye* described other types of torture to Amnesty International:

"They took two buckets of water and placed a scarf over my nostrils and mouth. They started pouring water over me from 4pm until dusk. At one point, I think I passed out. When I woke up, they started pouring water on me again, and two people were sitting on my legs, preventing me from moving. They whipped me on the soles of my feet, and I lost consciousness again. When I woke up, the man sitting on the chair was lighting a cigarette lighter and running it along my ribs."[121]

After this torture, Allaye* was kept in the toilets inside the camp until the early hours of the morning. His hands had become swollen due to the ropes that bound his wrists as they were preventing blood circulation.

"The next day, one of the militiamen cut the ropes with a knife but I couldn't do anything with my left hand until noon. It was from Wednesday to Thursday, and I was completely naked the whole time."[122]

During this detention, Allaye* was also subjected to degrading treatment by members of the Wagner group. Detained in the toilets from Thursday to Saturday, he was taken out and forced to weed the camp with his hands, along with two other detainees. He said,

"The person watching us had a rifle and a knife and was constantly mimicking the act of cutting our throats."[123]

On Saturday afternoon, he was given food for the first time after four days of detention:

"At 5pm, I sat down and they gave me food and water. I couldn't eat anything because of the pain, but I drank the water. I was then taken back to the filthy toilets before being brought to the Wagner leader's quarters in the camp. He turned on a Bluetooth speaker and ordered me to dance with two other detainees. One of them had cans of soft drink brought in, which they handed to us. Four bottles for the three detainees plus a fair-skinned little boy who was there with them, cleaning up while they ate and doing other small tasks for them."[124]

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[118] Interview with Maouloud*, 35, a refugee trader in Mberra, July 2025.
[119] Soldiers and members of the Wagner Group based in Nampala had already passed through Toulé in 2023 and in March 2024. During these operations, Allaye* had also been subjected to ill-treatment and torture, while other residents had been extrajudicially executed. See section 5.1.6 of the report. Allaye* was also illegally detained by GSIM during this period.
[120] Interview with Allaye*, 54, a prominent community member from Toulé, Douenkara, July 2025.
[121] Interview with Allaye*, 54, a prominent community member from Toulé, Douenkara, July 2025.
[122] Interview with Allaye*, 54, a prominent community member from Toulé, Douenkara, July 2025.
[123] Interview with Allaye*, 54, a prominent community member from Toulé, Douenkara, July 2025.
[124] Interview with Allaye*, 54, a prominent community member from Toulé, Douenkara, July 2025.

At dusk, he was released from the camp and told to return home after four days of detention:

"The leader pointed his finger at me and gestured for me to come over to him. I followed him towards the east of the camp. He opened the door and said 'home'. I then realized he was asking me to leave. As I was struggling to walk, he said, 'Hey' and mimed running. But I couldn't run with my swollen feet, and I was also completely naked. I was detained in that camp for four days. I struggled to walk to the outskirts of Barkerou. But I was completely naked so I couldn't enter the village like that. I called out to a woman from the village who was passing by and asked her to bring me some clothes.

Some time later, a young man came with clothes and water for me. I asked him if he could help me find a motorbike to get back to Toulé, but he told me that there was no one left in Toulé and that, since the arrests, the whole village had scattered. I asked for news of my mother, and they told me she was in Nampala. I went to Nampala by cart (…) where I received treatment at the health centre.

After this incident, one of my friends from Nampala sent a car from Kindjerla and asked me to join him. I didn't want to but the people from Nampala and my neighbours told me to go, saying it was safer."

6.2 TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT AT THE LÉRÉ MILITARY CAMP, 2024 AND 2025

Amnesty International has gathered accounts from four men and a woman, now refugees in Mauritania, who were detained at the Léré military base, located 70 km from the Mauritanian border (Timbuktu region). All suffered ill-treatment, and three of the four men were also subjected to interrogations and acts of torture by members of the Wagner group with the aim of extracting information about armed groups or specific individuals. The detainees described a camp divided into two, with the FAMa and Wagner members occupying different areas. They all agreed that these crimes took place in the section occupied by Wagner and that the FAMa were aware of the violations happening there; they often even threatened the detainees with further arrests if they did not cooperate with the armed forces when they were released. One of the victims witnessed the death of another detainee who had been arrested with him and tortured to death at the Léré military camp. He was then threatened by Wagner members with the same fate as his fellow detainee if he did not "cooperate" with them. Another described the deaths of three people detained with him at the Léré camp.

6.2.1 ABDOULLAHI*, JUNE 2024

Abdoullahi*, 41, now a refugee in Tiloate, was detained in June 2024 at the Léré military base, where he was tortured. While migrating with his animals and other herders from Gargando towards Mauritania, Abdoullahi* was arrested near a well in Dar-es-Salam, along with another of his companions, Tanto ag Yahia. They were apprehended by Malian soldiers and members of the Wagner Group, who, according to Abdoullahi*, were in four or five vehicles. After checking their IDs, the patrol members beat them before loading them into the vehicles, which were heading to the Léré base.

"My hands were tied, and my eyes were blindfolded with a turban. Tanto Ag Yahia was put in another vehicle. I was thrown into the back of a vehicle, and a soldier placed his boot on my ear. They beat me and kicked me despite the bumps on the road. From noon until we arrived, I didn't change position, and as dusk fell, we reached Léré. That was the start of my ordeal. I saw Tanto ag Yahia again in the camp, and we were thrown on the ground like sacks."[125]

On arrival at the base, where he was detained for four days, the violence resumed and intensified. His companion Tanto died very quickly as a result of this torture:

[125] Interview with Abdoullahi* (name changed for security reasons), 41, a herder from Mberra, July 2025.

"The soldiers started beating us violently. I was hit in the face and my cheek swelled up due to the kicks. One pointed a rifle at my face and then forced my nose to the ground. They tied our hands behind our backs while sniffer dogs circled around us. They took ropes and tied our hands to the posts in the hangar. Our feet were suspended such that they didn't touch the ground. A soldier kept hitting me on the chest with an iron bar. I fainted but, when I woke up, I was still being beaten, this time with a wooden stick. Between dusk and the Isha prayer, we were removed from the hangars and chained with Tanto with an iron chain. They started hitting us again and, at one point, I realized that Tanto was no longer alive. The beating lasted about 30 minutes. After the abuse, I lost consciousness again. I was awakened by the sound of a motorbike and tubes placed over my nostrils, from which black smoke was escaping. All of this was at the hands of Wagner because, in the camp, we were in their sector."[126]

In the camp, torture was carried out by Wagner members, who also conducted the interrogations. Abdoullahi* was also subjected to psychological torture, with Wagner members threatening him with the same fate as Tanto if he continued to refuse to answer as they wanted.

At one point, Wagner members showed him Tanto's decomposing body to intimidate him and force him to talk:

"Tanto had indeed died in the camp. And I was separated from him and sent to a cell that was a hermetically sealed container, where I was held with another person. There was nothing inside the cell, no furniture, nothing. I was there until the next day, when a paramilitary member opened the door to check if I was still alive before closing it again. Over the next few days, they gave me a bottle of water, sardines, and Gloria [condensed milk] to keep me going. Then they took me out of the container to show me Tanto's decomposed body, which I hadn't seen for two nights when I was still chained to him. It was around 4pm. They started asking me questions about GSIM and the bandits, I told them I knew nothing about their activities. They told me to take a good look at Tanto's body and that I would end up like him if I didn't cooperate with them."[127]

After four days of detention at the Léré base, Abdoullahi* was finally released.

"At dusk [on the 4th day], around 4-5pm, I was released along with another person. Wagner's militiamen took us to the section of the Léré camp where the FAMa were. There, the commander and two of his soldiers led us to the gate and told us to leave.

It was raining and I struggled to walk due to the intense pain in my chest and head. They told us to go to the town, but we decided to head north from Léré until around 10-11pm. We had nothing. We didn't see any vehicles along the way so we both slept under the stars.

When we woke up, we continued walking with difficulty and, around 10am, we found some puddles of water to take a few sips from.

As we set off north again, we came across some nomadic herders on the move and followed them. We were about 70 km from Léré, not far from Dar es-Salam, where we had been captured. They let us ride their camels, and that's how we arrived in Mauritania after spending the day with them."[128]

6.2.2 KHAIRA* AND HER FATHER, JULY 2024

Khaira*, 34, a Malian refugee from Razelma, was also detained with her father, 70, at the Léré military base after being detained by a patrol while herding their animals on seasonal migration near the town of Léré in July 2024. According to Khaira, they were arrested because they had a walkie-talkie, which made them "suspicious" to the military.

"They [the soldiers] told us we had been detained because we had a walkie-talkie in our bags. The walkie-talkie helps us stay in touch with our relatives back in Razelma, talk to other herders, and get updates on our animals. While we were detained in Léré, a gendarme questioned us about the walkie-talkie we had on us. We were

[126] Interview with Abdoullahi* (name changed for security reasons), 41, a herder from Mberra, July 2025.
[127] Interview with Abdoullahi* (name changed for security reasons), 41, a herder from Mberra, July 2025.
[128] Interview with Abdoullahi* (name changed for security reasons), 41, a herder from Mberra, July 2025.

questioned about it three times. These were Malian gendarmes who questioned us. They said it's a device that terrorists use."

During their arrest, she and her father were beaten by the soldiers in the vehicles, and again upon arrival at the Léré base, where her father was allegedly injected with an unknown substance by members of the Wagner group. According to Khaira*, the mistreatment began when they were transferred to the Léré camp:

"In the car, they hit me on my back, on my hip, and on my head with the back of a machete. When we arrived in Léré, a Wagner member injected my father with something using a syringe. Then they separated us, and a Wagner member started hitting me again. At that moment, a Tuareg soldier [from the Malian army] jumped up and told him to stop. The soldier then took me to a small room, and I stayed there. They treated me well. From that day on, no-one touched me again. But, after our release, my father told me that they beat him every morning."[129]

Khaira* and her father were detained for four months in Léré before being transferred to the military base in Timbuktu, where a gendarme questioned them again about their possession of a walkie-talkie. They were subsequently released without any charges being brought against them.

"God alone knows why we weren't killed when they saw the walkie-talkie on us because very often, they do not spare people; they rob them and kill them."[130]

6.2.3 ACHERIF* AND NASSER*, APRIL 2025

Amnesty International recorded the testimony of Acherif*, a herder from Sirangou, who was arrested by a joint patrol in Kandou Nia, a small village 20 km from Léré, while he was watering his animals in April 2025, along with eight other herders. They were all detained in Léré and subjected to torture. Acherif* testified that he saw one of his fellow detainees, Hatta, 22, die in the camp "due to heat, lack of water, and torture"[131]. One of those detained with them was a 10-year-old child. In his words:

"I was watering my animals when soldiers, both black and white, arrived in Kandou Nia in four vehicles. As soon as they arrived, they fired into the air, which made many people flee into the bush, but I stayed because I had nothing to feel guilty of. But I was still arrested along with eight other people. They blindfolded us, tied our hands with my turban, and took us to the Léré military base. Once at the base, they stripped us of all our clothes and started beating me with their fists and with batons. They also gave us electric shocks and took us out of a container where we were being held for interrogation and torture. There was a little boy, around 10 years old, with us in the container."[132]

Acherif* was adamant that it was members of Wagner that carried out these violations.

"It was the white men who beat us and electrocuted us. They had a Malian soldier who translated for them and asked the questions. The Malian soldiers also beat us from time to time, but it was mainly the white men. When they wanted to question us, they took us out of the container and led us into the courtyard, which was surrounded by several containers. We were all naked or just wearing underwear… The torture was constant. We reached a point where we no longer knew if it was day or night… I was no longer a person. I was someone approaching death."[133]

Acherif* was never brought before a judge and, during his two weeks in detention, he was given only a small amount of bread to eat, with long gaps between meals. In the end, it was thanks to interventions by relatives and the payment of a ransom that he was able to leave the base after two weeks, on 3 May 2025.

"I was released, along with my friend Youssouf, thanks to the intervention of relatives who paid the soldiers 250,000 FCFA (USD 435) each. As soon as I was released, I decided to leave Mali for Mauritania, and I was able to receive

[129] Interview with Khaira (name changed for security reasons) *, 34, a refugee in Aghor, July 2025.
[130] Interview with Khaira* (name changed for security reasons), 34, a refugee in Aghor, July 2025.
[131] Interview with Acherif* (name changed for security reasons), a herder, in Mberra, July 2025.
[132] Interview with Acherif* (name changed for security reasons), a herder, in Mberra, July 2025.
[133] Interview with Acherif*, a herder from Mberra, July 2025.

treatment in Mberra for the pain in my stomach. Youssouf came with me, but he died the very day we arrived in Mberra."

Amnesty International also gathered the testimony of Nasser*, 59, a prominent community member from Nia who has lived in Mberra since 2025. He was also illegally detained at the Léré military camp. While he himself was not tortured, three of the four people arrested with him in Nia died in detention at the camp less than two days after their arrival. In his own words:

"I was a victim of Wagner in April 2025. It was in Nia; a village located 20 km south of Léré. I was arrested in my own house at 11am, along with an 11-year-old boy who had a mental disability. We were taken in a convoy of seven vehicles, all pick-ups, along with four other people: Mohammed Ag Mohammed Youssouf, Youssouf Ag Kerki, El Hadj Traoré, and Amadou Barry. The latter was a herder who was arrested by the borehole. As they took us to Léré, they left the child with the Gendarmerie brigade, and I was taken to the Léré camp with the other adults.
I was detained in the camp for eight hours until the intervention of prominent individuals from Bamako led to my release. I was isolated, alone in a room, and my right hand was handcuffed to a container. In the evening, the FAMa military coordination, the Russian officials, and the prefect of Léré came to tell me I could leave. As I was released at 11pm, I slept at the home of the village chief of Léré, whom I knew very well, and stayed for two days to find out what had happened to my fellow detainees. It was during those two days that they told me the three people I was arrested with in Nia had died in detention inside the container. I was blindfolded, tied up, and taken to Léré, all in front of people who knew me. It was humiliating for me as a respected figure. When I learned that my companions had been killed, I decided to leave Nia for Mberra."[134]

6.3 ILL-TREATMENT IN FATALKEIROU, JUNE-JULY 2024

According to testimonies gathered by Amnesty International, Wagner patrol members, accompanied by FAMa, subjected residents of Fatalkeirou, also known as Lemghass (in the commune of Dogofry, Niono Cercle, Ségou Region), to ill-treatment.

Aghaly*, a resident of Fatalkeirou, described to Amnesty International the violence he and six others at his home, including several of his brothers and nephews, had experienced.

According to his account:

"Wagner arrived in my area, and they spent two nights in a village 6 km from Fatelkeirou, which is by the roadside. They returned to the village in the morning while I was repairing a cart in the courtyard of my house. There was a group of young people with me in the yard. When they drove in with their vehicle, there was an axe lying in the yard. One of the soldiers grabbed it and hit me on the head without even saying a word.

They then took six other young people and ordered us to lie face down in the courtyard. They beat us with a whip until we bled, then left. Events unfolded very quickly, and I can't tell you how many were in the yard, but they were all in a vehicle that drove right into the yard. We couldn't understand a word they were saying, and they beat us for about 30 minutes. It wasn't their first time in Fatalkeirou but it was the first time they'd been violent towards people. They whipped us until an army soldier, a black man, told them to stop the violence. The soldier was in uniform and spoke Bambara.

After they'd gone, we were left stunned, we were completely perplexed and could only put our trust in God." [135]

According to several village elders, the soldiers conducted operations around Fatalkeirou for several days, venturing to the neighbouring village of Daouma and bombing sites sheltering GSIM members. A few weeks after the Fatalkeirou incident, GSIM combatants came to the village accusing the villagers of collaborating with the army and Wagner. They rounded up all the men in the village and gave them a 24-hour ultimatum

[134] Interview with Nasser*, 59, a prominent community member from Nia who now lives in Mberra, April 2026.
[135] In-person interview with Aghaly (name changed for security reasons), 45, a refugee in Kleiveu, July 2025.

to leave the village or they would be attacked. The residents had to flee and seek refuge in Nampala, a journey that took 17 days, during which their livestock was forcibly seized by GSIM combatants.[136]

6.4 TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT IN LERNEB, 11 NOVEMBER 2024

According to testimonies gathered by Amnesty International from 10 people present at the scene, at least 10 shopkeepers and market traders in Lerneb were subjected to torture and ill-treatment by Wagner members during a patrol of the town's market on 11 November 2024. The patrol, which lasted about three hours from 10-11am to 1-2pm according to the testimonies, was jointly conducted by FAMa and Wagner members, who were in 10 vehicles. According to accounts from several people who were in Lerneb at the time, the soldiers reportedly started firing as soon as they entered the market, causing panic and prompting the market traders to scatter. The patrol then reportedly looted several shops, houses, and a pharmacy, and conducted searches in the village. Several shopkeepers were held for several hours by Wagner members and subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

Akli*, a shopkeeper from Lerneb who witnessed the scene, told Amnesty International:

"Malian army soldiers and [members of] Wagner arrived together. The Wagner members immediately started hitting people with their hands, with electric cables, and with tent poles. It was the white people who were doing the beating. The Malian soldiers, on the other hand, were taking goods from the shops and loading them into their vehicles. Once they'd finished stealing, they started hitting people. They stayed until 1pm."[137]

Hadi*, a 36-year-old shopkeeper, was stopped during the operation and beaten by the soldiers. He told Amnesty International:

"They arrived at Lerneb market in a convoy of 10 vehicles, which caused panic and led many market traders to flee. They started shooting at some people. Since I had done nothing wrong, I stayed with my stall at the small market. That's where they arrested me and started beating me and other stallholders. I was bleeding because they were hitting me on the head with their boots and the sticks they had.

Then, after they'd beaten us, they demanded our IDs. I gave them my NINA card,[138] **and then they accused us of being bandits, which we denied. I was loaded into one of the pick-up trucks, along with a lot of others, and taken to their patrols. There, they conducted searches, ransacked houses, and filled their vehicles with goods before burning other merchandise, including mine. After about two hours, they dumped me right in the centre of Lerneb. I don't know if they thought I was dead, but they left me there and went away."**[139]

The acts of torture suffered by Hadi* were corroborated by at least six other people who were in Lerneb during the incident and who were interviewed by Amnesty International.[140]

[136] Interview with Rhali* (name changed for security reasons), the village chief, and several other residents of Fatalkeirou/Lemghass, Kleiveu, July 2025.
[137] Interview with Akli* (name changed for security reasons), a shopkeeper from Lerneb, July 2025. Aghor.
[138] A biometric card issued by the Malian authorities that gives the holder a national identification number (NINA).
[139] Interview with Hadi* (name changed for security reasons), 36, a shopkeeper from Lerneb. By phone. July and November 2025.
[140] See interviews with Akli*, Hadji*, Elyas*, Dada*, Sofian*, Isselmou*, and other residents of Lerneb, interviewed in Aghor, July 2025.

Photos showing the marks of abuse suffered by Hadi during the joint FAMa/Wagner operation in Lerneb on 11 November 2024*

Elyas*, 33, who owns a grocery store in Lerneb, was also subjected to violence by Wagner members in front of his shop. According to his account, he was violently slapped in front of his shop immediately after the group arrived and thrown to the ground before being kicked repeatedly in the head, face, and then all over his body. He was then taken to a large shop where he suffered further violence, along with nine other people, including Hadi*.

"There were 10 of us in the shop, and we were held there until around 1pm. They kicked and beat us with their batons then, every so often, they would do a tour of the village before coming back and hitting us again. There were a lot of Malian soldiers with Wagner but only the Wagner members committed the acts of violence. They beat Sidi, Hadi*, and al-Hoq, and reproached Hadi* for having a Wi-Fi connection in his shop, threatening to kill him. A FAMa officer intervened, saying they should leave us alone. But, as they left, they threatened us, saying that if they found us in Lerneb when they returned, they would kill us all."[141]

According to Akli*, electric shocks were also used on the shopkeepers:

"I was beaten, and I could clearly hear the word 'bandit' in what they were saying. I didn't understand their language, but I could make out that word, and I imagine they were asking us questions about armed groups. They beat us with their batons and then, at one point, they tasered us on our chests, heads, and hands. When I received the shock, I was unable to move for several minutes and, because of this torture, my limbs became

[141] Interview with Elyas (name changed for security reasons), 33, a shopkeeper from Lerneb, by phone, July 2025.

swollen. During the torture, they removed Hadi* from the group twice and took him with them to the city. I saw with my own eyes how they put him in the vehicle. He was lying on his back, pinned to the ground by a white man and two black men who held his arms and legs to prevent him from moving… When the soldiers left, they stole everything from our shops."[142]

Hadji*, 23, another resident of Lerneb who witnessed the violence, said:

"They surrounded the village and the market, fired two shots into the air, and everyone fled, leaving the shops open. I hid, but I could still see them. They took people from the village and held them until around 2pm. They beat six people severely. They held a knife to the throat of one of them, beat him, and then just left him. They took a bag from another person, and put their head inside, and started whipping them until they fell. Then they just left them there. Then they took everything from the shops: the money, the goods – anything they could carry, they took. They took six cartons of cigarettes from the shop where I was."[143]

Sofian*, 30, another resident of Lerneb, was arrested during the operation. Although he was not subjected to violence, one of the people detained with him was beaten by the Wagner members leading the patrol.

"I was detained from 12pm to 2pm. As soon as we saw them coming, we hid our phones because we knew they'd steal anything they could find. The Malian army stopped at the village entrance, and only Wagner entered the town. They started searching for the houses but found no weapons or explosive devices. They arrested me along with two other people, one of whom was called Al Nafa. They beat him. Al Nafa was wearing a kaftan, a traditional garment, while the other man and I were wearing trousers and T-shirts. I felt they had preconceived ideas about people wearing traditional clothing, associating them with Azawad fighters and rebels... After two hours, they released us, and we noticed our donkeys were gone. So, we set off to find them and, as soon as we did, we left Lerneb. Since that incident, the village has been deserted; you won't even see crows there now. We left everything we had there. Some of us went back to retrieve our belongings but they had been stolen."[144]

6.5 ILL-TREATMENT AT SÉGOU HOSPITAL (NOVEMBER 2023-JANUARY 2024)

Acts of ill-treatment are not confined to patrols or military bases. In one case, they occurred in a public hospital run by civilians, where soldiers intervened to interrogate and mistreat an individual who had been brought in from a conflict zone and was seeking medical care.

This was the case of Hamma*, 44, a livestock herder and trader from the Nampala area, who has been a refugee in Mauritania since January 2024. He was ill-treated while taking his son to Ségou Hospital for treatment. According to him, his son, who is also a livestock herder, was attacked by an armed and well-known "bandit" who wanted to rob him of his possessions.

"He was wounded by a live bullet fired by a bandit known in the region. The bandit wanted to steal the money he had earned by selling a bull for 150,000 CFA (USD 261). My son was sleeping outside, at a lodger's place, in Dioura (Mopti region). The bandit shot my son in the forehead and struck him in the teeth with the butt of his hunting rifle while he was asleep. He lost teeth, a part of his tongue and his nose as a result. He could no longer speak after that."[145]

At the Ségou hospital, Hamma* and his son were accused of being "bandits" [meaning members of armed groups] by gendarmes, who then subjected Hamma to ill-treatment.

"We had just had an X-ray done at the hospital when five gendarmes came to question us. When they saw my son's injury, they accused us of terrorism and said they were going to kill us. Fortunately, a doctor stepped in to defend us, but the gendarmes handcuffed me to the window of the room we were in. I was left suspended from the window from 10pm until 9am the next morning, with only the tips of my toes touching the ground. Meanwhile,

[142] Interview with Akli* (name changed for security reasons), a shopkeeper from Lerneb, July 2025, Aghor.
[143] Interview with Hadji* (name changed for security reasons), 23, a resident of Lerneb, July 2025, Aghor.
[144] Interview with Sofiane* (name changed for security reasons), a resident of Lerneb, Aghor, July 2025.
[145] Interview with Hamma*, 44, a herder and refugee in Mberra, July 2025.

my son was lying on a mat in the same room. At 9am the next morning, a gendarme finally uncuffed my hands so I could give my son some water. I wasn't released until 4pm. This treatment was because I am Fulani, a livestock herder, and my son had been wounded by a firearm. We Fulani, Kel Tamashek, and Arabs are truly exhausted." [146]

[146] Interview with Hamma*, 44, a herder and refugee in Mberra, July 2025.

7. PILLAGING AND DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIAN PROPERTY

Amnesty International has documented cases of pillaging and destruction of civilian property during military operations by FAMa and Wagner in villages along the border with Mauritania. These acts, which are prohibited under international humanitarian law and Malian law, may constitute war crimes.

Almost all the Malian refugees interviewed by Amnesty International in Hodh ech-Chargui, who witnessed military operations by Wagner and the FAMa, reported acts of pillaging and destruction of property carried out by members of the joint patrols. This is particularly the case for those who testified about FAMa and Wagner operations in the villages of Tin Adanda (February 2025), Echell (January 2025), Taborak (January 2025), Lerneb (November 2024), Nampala (July 2024), Toulé (March 2024), Diadia (December 2023), Lougui (October 2023), and Massabougou (2023), as documented in this report. In most cases, members of a joint patrol would arrive in the villages with several pick-up trucks and, sometimes, motorbikes. They would search for members of armed groups, ransack houses, assault or kill fleeing residents or those accused of collaborating with armed groups, and loot and vandalize houses and shops during their operations.

In the cases documented, members of joint patrols stole various items such as mattresses, blankets, motorbikes, money, jewellery, phones, pharmaceutical products, and various goods. The testimonies also report the theft of livestock and the destruction of numerous civilian belongings, including homes and shops. These seizures and the destruction of property were not driven by military necessity but appeared to be aimed at punishing residents for their continued presence in areas where armed groups are active, for their alleged links with these armed groups, or simply for opportunistic reasons on the part of the perpetrators. These acts of pillage and destruction of civilian property, particularly livestock, agricultural resources, and infrastructure, have left owners in a precarious situation, especially in terms of their ability to provide for themselves, their families, and loved ones.

Aminata* and Oumou Salam*, two women whose husbands were killed by Wagner members during a patrol in the hamlet of Echell/Taborak on 23–24 January 2025, described the looting of their homes during the military operation:

"These soldiers also took everything, even the blankets and everything that is essential to us."[147]

Amnesty International also gathered accounts from Sidi and Hammadi, two herders from the Niono area (Ségou region), who reported a case of livestock theft during a military operation in the villages of Diadia and Nambo around December 2023.

Sidaty*, a resident of Diadia who has now relocated to Mberra, also stated:

[147] In-person interview with Amina*, Oumou Salam* (names changed to protect their identities), and other widows from Taborak.

"They [the soldiers] took all my livestock: 80 animals (cows and sheep). They don't ask questions anymore. They just take our property, our livestock, sheep, goats, and cattle. In fact, anything they can take. … if they feel like it, they kill the livestock. If they feel like it, they take whatever they want."

Speaking about the FAMa and Wagner intervention in Nampala on 7 July 2024, Alfousseyni*, 56, a prominent community member from Nambo (a village in the commune) who has relocated to Nampala, stated that the troops not only left with residents of the town but also with livestock:

"They also stole 100 head of livestock in Nampala. Wagner's people. On Sunday 1st of Muharram last year [7 July 2024]."

Alkeydi*, 35, told Amnesty International that, in 2023, in Massabougou, a village in Diabaly commune, the soldiers killed his livestock and destroyed infrastructure essential for agriculture and the residents' livelihoods:

"In Massabougou, the soldiers slaughtered some of my goats and loaded others into their vehicles, without asking me anything. They just did as they pleased. The army also destroyed the pipes in my rice field and sabotaged the generator used for irrigation. The *dozos*[148] were also in the area, doing as they pleased."[149]

Several refugees who encountered FAMa/Wagner patrols also told Amnesty International that they were the victims of extortion, being forced to pay or hand over any money they had in order to leave with their lives.

This also happened to Alkeydi* in another incident in Nara, also in 2023. After being arrested and detained, he had to pay 100,000 FCFA [USD 179] to be released. He recounts:

"I had gone to work in Nara when I was arrested. My motorbike had broken down, and I was near the checkpoint at the town entrance, so I was on foot. I wanted to have some tea while waiting for my motorbike to be fixed but when I showed my ID card, the soldiers accused me of being a jihadist. They took me to the gendarmerie, where I found many people in the same situation as me. They were being rounded up at the weekly market and detained there. There were hundreds of detainees, all Fulani, held there with me. They were arrested while they were at the local *garbal* [livestock market]. They tied me up and demanded I give them information about the jihadists. While I wasn't subjected to the electric torture machine, many detainees in the cell told me they had been. I had to pay 100,000 FCFA [USD 179] to be released after 16 days in detention."[150]

Dickel*, 32, a resident of Nampala who was among those detained by FAMa and Wagner during their operation in the town in July 2024 (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2), also stated that he had 1,130,000 FCFA [USD 2,018] taken from him along with his phone when he was taken to the Nampala military base. According to this shopkeeper, the soldiers also stole all the goods from his shop, including sugar, tea, milk, and coffee.

"Once there [at the Nampala military camp], they searched our pockets to see if we had any money. I had 1,130,000 FCFA [USD 2,018] and a phone. That money included 942,750 FCFA [USD 1,684] that belonged to the village. I was the treasurer of the Boundou Boubou village fund… The people who were rifling our belongings were from Wagner. They took the money and my phone… What hurts me most is that they took the village's money. When they released us, they told the community that they had given everything back to us, including the money. The money they stole belonged to the village of Boundou Boubou, some 25 km from Nampala. [151]

Isselmou*, 36, a trader and commercial driver in the Timbuktu area, was intercepted by five Wagner members on 10 November 2024, just west of Lerneb, as he was on his way to the market. The 15 passengers in his vehicle were about to enter the town when they were stopped, and all of them were forced out of the vehicle. After checking their identities and searching the vehicle and the passengers, the Wagner members forcibly took money from at least two of them. According to Isselmou*:

"On Sunday, leaving Aghor with my son and a butcher, we were in a car on our way to the Lerneb fair. As we approached the town, we saw checkpoints with soldiers and Wagner members, and we were stopped at the village entrance.

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[148] The term "dozo" refers to a traditional hunter who protects the community in certain Malian societies. In the context of the conflict in Mali, some groups of hunters have become actors in the conflict, supporting state armed forces and opposing armed groups, particularly in the centre and south of the country. See Héni Nsaibia, "From Hunters to Militias: The militarization of Dozos in Mali", ACLED Report, 8 October 2025: https://acleddata.com/report/hunters-militias-militarization-dozos-mali
[149] Interview with Alkeydi, 35, originally from Massabougou and now a refugee in Mberra, July 2025.
[150] Interview with Alkeydi, 35, originally from Massabougou and now a refugee in Mberra, July 2025.
[151] Interview with Dickel* (name changed for security reasons), a resident of Nampala who fled to Mberra, July 2025.

They ordered us to open the doors, which we did. And when they searched the vehicle, they found a 12-gauge shotgun. They asked who it belonged to and if it was my son's.

I said no, it was mine. When they searched the people in the vehicle, they found 7,000,000 FCFA [USD 12,500] on me and 200,000 ouguiyas [USD 5,004], which they took. They also took 600,000 FCFA [USD 1,060] from the butcher. Given my health, I do business by converting currencies, so I always carry a lot of cash with me.

After taking our money and the rifle, they let us continue on our way. When I arrived in Lerneb, Wagner was there, and there was uncertainty about whether the market would take place the next day [on Monday]. Throughout Monday, we were in Lerneb with the soldiers and couldn't do anything because they were carrying out operations throughout the town. We stayed there all day until 5pm, in the occupied town. When the army left, around 6pm, we headed for Farko and from there we made our escape, getting as far away from Lerneb as possible.

The return journey was uncertain for us, as we were afraid, we might encounter more soldiers. And there were so many people fleeing Lerneb, completely exhausted, who also wanted to be taken to Aghor [in Mauritania]."[152]

During the same military operation in Lerneb, **Dada*,** a pharmacist from the town, was also a victim of pillaging. She was away from Lerneb during the patrol and, upon her return to the town on 12 November 2024, she found that her pharmacy and her home had been ransacked:

"They took everything (ointments, medicines, jewellery, toiletries, underwear, nappies, and women's clothing). They also looted my house, taking mattresses, cushions, food, and my identity card. There was nothing left but an empty barrel and a mat. They took everything."[153]

[152] Interview with Isselmou* (name changed for security reasons), a refugee in Aghor, July 2025 and April 2026.
[153] Interview with Dada*, a refugee in Aghor originally from Lerneb, July 2025.

8. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

At the time of the events described in this report, and up to the time of its writing, the Malian government was and remains involved in several non-international armed conflicts against various organized armed groups, notably GSIM, Islamic State Sahel Province, and separatist armed groups. The Malian government received support from Wagner from 2022 to June 2025, and since then from Africa Corps.

All the violations documented in this report were committed in the context of, and were associated with, a non-international armed conflict. As such, the conduct of parties to the conflict is governed by international humanitarian law (IHL), which notably aims to protect civilians and those who have been rendered *hors de combat* due to illness, injury, detention, or any other cause.

Mali is bound by Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions (common Article 3),[154] Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions (AP II),[155] and customary international humanitarian law.[156]

Common Article 3 sets out fundamental guarantees for civilians and persons *hors de combat*, applicable in non-international armed conflicts. It provides, in particular, that they "shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria" and notably prohibits:

> (a) "violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture";
> (c) "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment);".[157]

AP II extends the protection afforded to the civilian population to civilians and persons *hors de combat*. Article 4, in addition to providing protections equivalent to those in Article 3 of the Common Convention, also expressly prohibits:

> "(…) b) collective punishments; …
>
> e) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault;
>
> f) slavery and the slave trade in all their forms;
>
> g) pillage;
>
> h) threats to commit any of the foregoing acts."[158]

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[154] Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949. Mali became a party to the four Geneva Conventions on 24 May 1965.
[155] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II). Mali became a party to Additional Protocol II on 8 February 1989
[156] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, available at https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1.
[157] Geneva Convention IV, Article 3(1). See also Additional Protocol II, Article 4(2)(a) and (e).
[158] Additional Protocol II. Article 4(2)(b), (e), (f), (g), and (h).

These prohibitions are also enshrined in customary international humanitarian law.[159]

Mali has an obligation to conduct effective investigations and, where there is sufficient evidence, to prosecute – in accordance with international standards on the right to a fair trial and without resorting to the death penalty – serious violations of international humanitarian law that constitute war crimes, committed on Malian territory, regardless of who committed them.[160]

The alleged war crimes documented in this report notably include murder, torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon human dignity (including the mutilation of corpses), and the looting and destruction of private property.

Mali is also party to several human rights treaties, notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention against Torture (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Maputo Protocol, which continue to apply in situations of armed conflict.[161]

Under international human rights law, Mali has an obligation to prevent, investigate and, where there is sufficient evidence, prosecute – in accordance with international standards for a fair trial and without resorting to the death penalty – crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations. It must also provide victims and survivors with adequate medical and pyscho-social support, as well as effective remedies and appropriate reparations.[162]

Mali ratified the Rome Statute on 16 August 2000, thereby becoming a member state of the International Criminal Court (ICC).163 Mali subsequently referred the situation on its territory to the ICC in July 2012.164 In January 2013, the ICC Prosecutor opened an investigation into crimes committed in Mali since January 2012, announcing a focus on allegations of war crimes committed in the northern regions of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu, as well as in the south, in Bamako and Sévaré.165 This investigation has led to two cases already heard against Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi and Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz, and an arrest warrant, which is still awaiting execution, against Iyad Ag Ghaly. In June 2026, Mali formally submitted its notification of withdrawal from the Rome Statute to the United Nations Secretariat. This withdrawal will take effect one year later, on 2 June 2027. The ICC does nevertheless retain jurisdiction over crimes committed on Malian territory from 2012 until the date the withdrawal from the Rome Statute takes effect, and the State of Mali remains obliged to cooperate with the ICC regarding the investigation and cases opened while it was a party to the Rome Statute. Article 127(2) of the Rome Statute states: "A State shall not be discharged, by reason of its withdrawal, from the obligations arising from this Statute while it was a Party [...] and shall not affect any cooperation with the Court in connection with criminal investigations and proceedings in relation to which the withdrawing State had a duty to cooperate and which were commenced prior to the date on which the withdrawal became effective, nor shall it prejudice in any way the continued consideration of any matter which was already under review by the Court prior to the date on which the withdrawal became effective."

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[159] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rules 87-93.
[160] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 158. See also UN Economic and Social Council, *Promotion and Protection of human rights/Impunity/Report of the independent expert to update the set of principles to combat impunity*. Addendum/Updated Set of principles for the protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity, 2005, https://docs.un.org/en/E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1 and also United Nations *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law,* General Assembly resolution 60/147, 16 December 2005, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/basic-principles-and-guidelines-right-remedy-and-reparation
[161] International Court of Justice (ICJ), *Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo* v. *Uganda)*, Judgment, 19 December 2005, paragraph 217; *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Advisory Opinion, 19 July 2024, paragraphs 99-100.
[162] UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 31: The Nature of the General Legal Obligation Imposed on States Parties to the Covenant, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add, 13, 26 May 2004, paras. 15-16 and 18; African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, General Comment No. 3 On the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: The Right To Life (Article 4), 4–18 November 2015, paras. 15-21; General Comment No. 4 on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: The Right to Redress for Victims of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Punishment or Treatment (Article 5), 23 February-4 March 2017.
[163] Republic of Mali, Law of 29 May 2000, Law No. 00-001, 4 July 2000, p. 764, online (pdf): https://sggmali.ml/JO/2000/mali-jo-2000-20.pdf
[164] ICC, "ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda on the Malian State referral of the situation in Mali since January 2012", 18 July 2012, https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-prosecutor-fatou-bensouda-malian-state-referral-situation-mali-january-2012
[165] ICC, "ICC Prosecutor opens investigation into war crimes in Mali", 16 January 2013, https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-prosecutor-opens-investigation-war-crimes-mali-legal-requirements-have-been-met-we-will; Amnesty International, "Mali. Mali: ICC investigation of conflict crimes a key step towards justice", 16 January 2013, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pre01/021/2013/en/

8.1 MURDERS

Common Article 3, Article 4 of Additional Protocol II, and customary international humanitarian law prohibit murder.[166]

Murder constitutes a war crime when the perpetrator kills a person knowing that they are a civilian or *hors de combat*, and with knowledge of the context of the armed conflict.[167]

It also constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of the right to life, which is protected under international human rights law.[168]

Furthermore, the ICC has stated that:

> … … murder is committed when the perpetrator killed one or more persons, as a result of an act or omission. A causal link must be established between the perpetrator's conduct and the victim's death. (…) the killing of civilians only qualifies as murder if they are persons taking no active part in hostilities at the time of the events...

With regard to subjective elements, pursuant to Article 30 of the Statute, the perpetrator must have: (i) acted deliberately; and (ii) meant to kill one or more persons or been aware that death would occur in the ordinary course of events. Furthermore, … the perpetrator must have been aware of the factual circumstances that established the protected status of the victim.[169]

Article 2 of the Malian Constitution enshrines the right to life, liberty, security, and personal integrity.[170] Articles 312.1 and 313.3 of the Malian Criminal Code incorporate the definitions of crimes against humanity and war crimes as set out in the Rome Statute. Furthermore, according to the Malian Criminal Code, murder is an act that constitutes a crime against humanity when committed as part of "a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack".[171]

In this report, Amnesty International has documented the cases of 34 people not participating in hostilities who were killed by members of the Malian Armed Forces and/or Wagner in seven locations: Fatakara (January and March 2025), Échell and Taborak (23-24 January 2024) Tin Adanda (12 February 2025), Lerneb (12 November 2024), Lougui (21 October 2023), and Toulé (July 2023 and March 2024). These murders were deliberate: the victims were shot, had their throats cut, or were burned alive. These acts were committed against unarmed men who were grazing their animals in the bush or were in or near their communities, sometimes in hiding or on the run, or were arrested during military operations. According to the testimonies provided, they were civilians, and none of them were directly involved in hostilities at the time of their deaths.

These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and amount to the war crime of murder.

8.2 ILLEGAL DRONE ATTACKS

During attacks, the parties to the conflict must always respect the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. The principle of distinction requires a distinction to be made at all times between combatants and military objectives, on the one hand, and civilian objects, on the other. It is prohibited to directly attack civilians and civilian objects. Only combatants and military objectives may be attacked. [172]

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[166] Geneva Convention IV, Article 3(1)(a); Additional Protocol II, Article 4(2)(a); ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 89.
[167] Rome Statute Article 8(2)(c)(i); ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(c)(i)-1.
[168] ICCPR, Article 6; ACHPR, Article 4; UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36, *supra note* 120.
[169] ICC, *The Prosecutor v. Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman ("Ali Kushayb")* Trial Chamber I, Judgment, 6 October 2025, paras. 773-776.
[170] Republic of Mali, Article 2. Decree No. 2023-0401/pt-rm of 22 July 2023 promulgating the Constitution. https://sgg-mali.ml/JO/2023/mali-jo-2023-13-sp-2.pdf
[171] Malian Criminal Code, Articles 312.1 and 312.3
[172] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rules 1 and 8. Additional Protocol II, Article 13(2).

Military objectives are "objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose partial or total destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage." [173]

The corollary of the rule of distinction is that "indiscriminate attacks are prohibited". [174] Indiscriminate attacks are those likely to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction either because they are not directed at a specific military objective or because they employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective or they employ a method or means of combat the effects of which cannot be limited as required by international humanitarian law. [175]

International humanitarian law also prohibits disproportionate attacks, which are those "which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated."[176]

The parties to a conflict must also respect the precautionary principle, which obliges them to ensure at all times that civilians and civilian objects are spared during military operations. This includes taking all feasible precautions to avoid or minimize incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, and damage to civilian objects during attacks. [177]

This means that parties to a conflict must do everything in their power to verify that targets are indeed military objectives, notably by conducting thorough and up-to-date intelligence operations, as well as by analysing and verifying all available information concerning a target. They must cancel or suspend an attack if it appears, at any time during its planning or execution, that the target is not a military objective or that the attack would be disproportionate.[178] The parties to the conflict must also take all feasible precautions in the choice of means and methods of warfare, including its timing, with a view to avoiding or minimizing incidental damage to civilians and civilian objects. They must also give effective advance warning of attacks that are likely to affect the civilian population, unless circumstances do not permit. [179]

According to the Rome Statute, intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities constitutes a war crime. [180] Furthermore, under customary international humanitarian law, intentionally launching an indiscriminate attack that results in the death or injury of civilians, or the destruction of or damage to civilian objects, or intentionally launching a disproportionate attack, constitutes a war crime. [181]

Article 2 of the Malian Constitution enshrines the right to life, liberty, security, and personal integrity.[182]

Article 313.1 of the Malian Criminal Code incorporates the definition of war crimes as set out in the Rome Statute. As such, intentionally directing an attack in the knowledge that it will incidentally cause loss of life among the civilian population, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment that is manifestly excessive in relation to the overall concrete and direct military advantage sought, may be considered a war crime.[183]

Amnesty International documented and interviewed the victims of two drone strikes that killed 23 civilians and injured seven others in Ejdeir market and the village of Tangata. The organization found no evidence of the presence of armed group members or military targets in relation to these two strikes. If this was in fact the case, then these would have been direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects, which constitute war crimes.

However, even if armed group members or military targets were present, it does not appear that the Malian government took all possible precautions to avoid or minimize accidental civilian casualties. In Ejdeir, the drone strike targeted a market in the middle of the day, when it was crowded and bustling with activity. This would indicate a violation of the precautionary principle and that the attack targeted civilians, civilian objects, and military targets indiscriminately. This would amount to an indiscriminate attack which, given that civilians were killed and wounded, could constitute a war crime if it was carried out intentionally or through

[173] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 8.
[174] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 11.
[175] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 12.
[176] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 14.
[177] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 15.
[178] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rules 16 and 18-19.
[179] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rules 17 and 20.
[180] Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(i).
[181] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 156.
[182] Republic of Mali, Decree No. 2023-0401/pt-rm of 22 July 2023 promulgating the Constitution, https://sgg-mali.ml/JO/2023/mali-jo-2023-13-sp-2.pdf , Article 2.
[183] Malian Criminal Code, Article 313-1 on war crimes.

gross negligence. In the village of Tangata, a house filled with sleeping civilians was targeted, resulting in the deaths of seven people, including five children. According to the available information, there may have been a violation of the precautionary principle, particularly the obligation to do everything possible to verify that a target is indeed a military objective.

8.3 TORTURE, CRUEL TREATMENT, AND OUTRAGES UPON PERSONAL DIGNITY

Common Article 3, Article 4 of PA II, and customary international humanitarian law prohibit "torture", "cruel treatment", "outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment", and, more generally, any harm to the "health and physical or mental well-being of persons". [184] International human rights law, including the Convention against Torture (CAT), prohibits torture and other ill-treatment in all circumstances.[185] Serious violations of Common Article 3, particularly torture, cruel treatment, and outrages upon personal dignity, constitute war crimes under the Rome Statute and customary international humanitarian law. [186]

The war crime of torture, as defined by the Rome Statute, requires that the perpetrator has "inflicted severe physical or mental pain or suffering upon one or more persons", that the victim be a civilian or a person *hors de combat*, and that the perpetrator acted for a specific purpose, meaning that they "inflicted pain or suffering with the aim of obtaining information or a confession, punishment, intimidation or coercion or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind".[187]

The ICC has also specified that:

> The pain or suffering inflicted must have been severe, whether caused by a single act or a combination of acts taken as a whole. This can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering all the circumstances of the particular situation. It is not necessary to prove that the pain or suffering involved specific injury (such as organ failure), impairment of a bodily function, or death. The pain and suffering may be either physical or mental. The consequences of torture do not have to be visible on the victim, nor must the injury be permanent. …
>
> This specific aim must be among the motives for the conduct, but it does not have to be the "predominant or sole purpose". … The perpetrator must also have been aware of the factual circumstances that established the status of the victim.[188]

The war crime of cruel treatment, as defined by the Rome Statute, requires that the perpetrator has "inflicted severe physical or mental pain or suffering on one or more persons" and that the victim be a civilian or a person *hors de combat*.[189] The ICC has also specified that:

> The determination of whether a particular conduct amounts to cruel treatment will depend on an assessment of all particular circumstances of a case, taking into account the nature of the acts or omissions concerned, the context in which they took place, their duration or repetition, their consequence on the physical or mental state of the victim, as well as the characteristics of the victim concerned, such as their age, gender or state of health. The damage caused to the victim does not need to be permanent or irreversible, but it must have more than temporary or passing effects on the victim. In addition to the above, the perpetrator also needs to be aware of the factual circumstances that established the status of the victim. [190]

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[184] Geneva Convention IV, Article 3(1)(a) and (c); Additional Protocol II, Article 4(2)(a) and (e); ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 90.
[185] Convention Against Torture (CAT), Articles 1 and 16; ICCPR, Article 7; ACHPR, Article 5.
[186] Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(c)(i-ii); ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 156.
[187] ICC: Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(c)(i)(4).
[188] ICC, *The Prosecutor v Dominic Ongwen*, Trial Chamber IX, Judgement, 4 February 2021, paras. 2701 and 2706.
[189] ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(c)(i)(3).
[190] ICC: *The Prosecutor v. Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona*, Trial Chamber V, Judgment, 24 July 2025, para. 3831.

Furthermore, the war crime of outrages upon personal dignity, as defined by the Rome Statute, requires that "the perpetrator has humiliated, degraded or otherwise violated the dignity of one or more persons", that "the severity of the humiliation, degradation or other violation was of such degree as to be generally recognized as an outrage upon personal dignity", and that the victim be a civilian or a person *hors de combat*.[191] The ICC has also stated the following:

> The question of whether the "severity" of the humiliation, degradation or violation is "generally recognized" as an outrage upon personal dignity entails the objective assessment of a reasonable person and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. This objective component has been defined as requiring that the "humiliation to the victim must be so intense that the reasonable person would be outraged". The suffering or injury caused does not need to have long term effects.
>
> The Court's legal framework does not provide a definition of conduct that humiliates, degrades or is otherwise an outrage upon someone's dignity or is "inhumane treatment". The jurisprudence of this Court and international tribunals has established that the following acts constitute outrages upon personal dignity: rape, hanging naked prisoners from handcuffs or forcing them to maintain a certain position for a long time, forcing someone to dance naked on a table or to undress and do gymnastics in a public courtyard, using detainees as human shields or making them dig trenches, or forcing detainees to, *inter alia*, relieve themselves in their clothing … As to the subjective elements, pursuant to Article 30 of the Statute, the perpetrator must have: (i) acted deliberately; and (ii) meant to cause the humiliation, degradation or violation of the dignity of the victim, or been aware that such a consequence would occur in the ordinary course of events. The perpetrator need not have completed a value judgment as to the severity of the humiliation, degradation or violation inflicted. In addition, it must be proven that the "perpetrator was aware of the factual circumstances that established" the status of the victim.[192]

International humanitarian law also prohibits the mutilation of corpses, [193] which is considered an "outrage upon the dignity of the person" under Common Article 3. [194] This is confirmed by the ICC's "Elements of Crimes", which specify, with regard to the element of humiliating, degrading, or otherwise violating the dignity of one or more persons, that "for this crime, the term 'persons' may include deceased persons". [195]

Torture is defined by Article 321-15 of the Malian Criminal Code, in line with the definition set out in the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Torture is also considered a war crime under the Criminal Code, as is inhuman and degrading treatment, including biological experiments, outrages upon personal dignity – particularly humiliating and degrading treatment – and the intentional infliction of intense suffering or severe damage to physical integrity or health.[196]

In this report, Amnesty International has documented the cases of 15 individuals, all men, who suffered torture and ill-treatment at the hands of the FAMa and members of the Wagner Group. It also presents accounts from people who directly witnessed around 30 instances of torture and ill-treatment, either committed against them or against fellow detainees, including at the Nara gendarmerie. The report also details the cases of five individuals who died in military camps as a result of torture and poor detention conditions.

Wagner Group members tortured civilians and subjected them to cruel treatment and/or outrages upon human dignity, notably in Nampala, Toulé, and Fatalkeirou (Ségou region), as well as in Léré, Lerneb, and Fatakara (Timbuktu region), within the military camps of Léré and Nampala, and at the Ségou regional hospital. These acts of torture were committed in the presence of and with the knowledge of FAMa members. Interviewees spoke of degrading acts such as being forced to strip naked in public or the mutilation of corpses.

These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Given that these unlawful acts were committed in the context of a non-international armed conflict that the

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[191] ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(b)(xxi).
[192] ICC, *The Prosecutor v Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman ("Ali Kushayb")*, Trial Chamber I, Judgment, 6 October 2025, paragraphs 767-770.
[193] ICRC Customary IHL Study, rule 113.
[194] Geneva Convention IV, Article 3(1)(c); ICRC, Commentary on the Fourth Geneva Convention (2025), paragraph 758.
[195] ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(c)(ii), footnote 57
[196] Republic of Mali, Law of 13 December 2024 of the Criminal Code, Article 313.1.

victims were civilians, a status of which the alleged perpetrators were also aware, and that they were committed with the necessary intent and knowledge, including for the specific purpose of torture, they constitute war crimes of torture, cruel treatment, and outrages upon personal dignity.

8.4 ARBITRARY AND UNLAWFUL DETENTIONS

Customary international humanitarian law prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of liberty. [197] Common Article 3, along with Articles 4 and 5 of PA II, further stipulates that parties to a conflict must ensure humane treatment and the physical and mental well-being of detained persons. International human rights law also prohibits arbitrary arrests and detentions, as well as enforced disappearances.

Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that:

> "Every individual shall have the right to liberty and to the security of his person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.... Anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him." [198]

Article 6 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights also states that:

> "Every individual shall have the right to liberty and to the security of his person. No one may be deprived of his freedom except for reasons and conditions previously laid down by law. In particular, no one may be arbitrarily arrested or detained..."[199]

International human rights law also prohibits enforced disappearances. Article 1 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, ratified by Mali in 2009, states that: "No one shall be subjected to enforced disappearance" and that "No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other state of emergency, may be invoked as a justification of enforced disappearance".[200] The Convention defines enforced disappearance as "the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law."[201]

International human rights law also guarantees the right to a fair trial. According to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, a trial that fails to meet international standards for a fair trial, either in whole or in part, may result in the deprivation of liberty being deemed arbitrary. Anyone deprived of their liberty has the right to access a lawyer from the outset and throughout their detention, including during interrogations, and must be brought promptly before a judge to determine the lawfulness of their arrest.

One of the minimum guarantees outlined in Article 14(3) of the ICCPR is that an accused person shall not be "compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt".[202] In its General Comment No. 32 on the right to a fair trial, the Human Rights Committee clarified that "the absence of any direct or indirect physical or undue psychological pressure from the investigating authorities on the accused, with a view to obtaining a confession of guilt" is necessary for the effective exercise of the right to a fair trial as set out in Article 14(3) of the ICCPR.[203] The Human Rights Committee adds that any confession obtained under duress, in violation of Article 7 of the ICCPR, must be excluded from the evidence.[204]

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[197] ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 99.
[198] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 9, https://www.ohchr.org/fr/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights.
[199] ACHPR (cited above), Article 6.
[200] OHCHR, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED), https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-protection-all-persons-enforced, Article 1.
[201] CPED Article 1.
[202] ICCPR, Article 14 (3).
[203] UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 32: Article 14: Right to equality before courts and tribunals and to a fair trial, 23 August 2007, CCPR/C/GC/32, para. 41.
[204] HRC, General Comment No. 32 (previously cited), para. 41

IHL also stipulates that: "No one may be convicted or sentenced except pursuant to a fair trial affording all essential judicial guarantees."[205]

Articles 324-1 and 324-2 of the Malian Criminal Code prohibit unlawful arrests and impose penalties of 20 years' imprisonment and a 10-year ban on residence:

> "1) anyone who, without an order from the public authorities and except in cases where the law requires the apprehension of suspects, defendants, or accused persons, particularly in cases of crime or *in flagrante delicto*, arrests, detains, or confines any person;
>
> 2) those who, knowingly, provide a place for the detention or confinement to take place."

Article 324-53 of the Malian Criminal Code defines enforced disappearance in the same way as international human rights law; it is a crime punishable by life imprisonment.

Article 324-55 extends criminal liability to a superior who "knew or deliberately failed to take into account information clearly indicating that their subordinates were committing or about to commit the crime of enforced disappearance, and who did not take all necessary and reasonable measures".[206]

Amnesty International has documented 57 arbitrary and illegal arrests and detentions by members of the Malian Armed Forces and/or the Wagner group, notably in Fatakara/Goundam, Nampala, Toulé, Lerneb, and Léré, as well as by the gendarmerie in Nara. In the vast majority of cases, people were held incommunicado for periods ranging from one day to several months, with no access to their families or a lawyer, and without ever being brought before a judge. In certain cases where the places of detention were unknown to the families, the detentions may be classified as enforced disappearances.

These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

8.5 **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

International humanitarian law prohibits sexual violence, which it considers a violation of the principle of humane treatment and of the prohibitions against attacks on life and physical integrity, torture, and outrage upon personal dignity.[207] International human rights law also prohibits sexual violence.[208]

Under the Rome Statute, the war crime of sexual violence requires that "the perpetrator committed an act of a sexual nature against one or more persons, or coerced such person or persons into such an act by the use of force or by the threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by the threat of violence, duress, detention, psychological pressure, abuse of power, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or by exploiting the inability of said persons to give their free consent", that "the acts were of a gravity comparable to that of a serious violation of Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions"[209], and that "the perpetrator was aware of factual circumstances that established the gravity of the conduct".[210]

Sexual violence differs from rape in that it does not involve penetration of the victim's body, which is a constituent element of the war crime of rape.[211] According to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), "Sexual violence is not limited to physical invasion of the human body and may include acts which do not involve penetration or even physical contact."[212] For example, forced nudity is a form of sexual violence.[213]

In this report, Amnesty International has identified 13 cases where members of the Malian Armed Forces or the Wagner group committed sexual violence against civilians, notably by forcing them to undress, within the

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[205] ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 100.
[206] Republic of Mali, Article 324-55 of the Law of 13 December 2024 on the Criminal Code.
[207] Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 3(1)(a); Additional Protocol II, Article 4(1) and (2)(a); ICRC, Commentary on the Fourth Geneva Convention (2025), paras. 792-798; ICRC Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 93.
[208] African Union, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women, Article 11.
[209] ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(b)(xxii)-6.
[210] Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(vi); ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(e)(vi)-6.
[211] ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(e)(vi)-1.
[212] International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, *The Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu*, 2 September 1998, para. 688.
[213] ICTR, *The Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu,* Chamber I, Judgment, 2 September 1998, para. 688; ICTY, *The Prosecutor v. Kvočka*, Trial Chamber, Judgment, 2 November 2001, para. 180.

military camps of Léré, Nampala, and Taborak. Furthermore, some of these victims reported that several of their fellow detainees were also forced to strip naked in public by their jailers during their detention. These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Given that these acts were committed in the context of a non-international armed conflict, of which the alleged perpetrators were aware, they constitute war crimes of sexual violence.

8.6 **PILLAGE**

Article 4 of PA II and customary international humanitarian law prohibits pillaging. [214] Given the negative impact of pillaging on victims' livelihoods, such acts also violate Mali's obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),[215] particularly the right to an adequate standard of living.[216] Violation of this right can, in turn, undermine the victims' enjoyment of the right to life. [217]

Furthermore, the pillaging of livelihoods such as agricultural resources and livestock infringes upon their right to food. States have an obligation to respect existing access to sufficient food and, consequently, not to take any measures that could hinder this access. This obligation requires States to "protect" this access by taking measures to ensure that third parties do not deprive individuals of their access to sufficient food.[218]

Under the Rome Statute, the war crime of pillage requires that the perpetrator "has appropriated certain property", that they "had the intention of depriving the owner of that property and of appropriating it for private or personal gain", and that "[the appropriation took place] without the consent of the owner". [219]

The ICC further clarified the following:

> The pillaging of a town or place encompasses all forms of appropriation of property, including acts committed by individuals for their own benefit and organized or systematic acts of appropriation. Pillaging encompasses the appropriation of all types of property, whether private or public, movable or immovable.

ICC trial chambers have found that the appropriation need not have occurred on a large scale to constitute the crime of pillaging. The ICC has provided further clarifications:

> … the perpetrator must have specifically intended to deprive the owner of the property and to appropriate it for private or personal use. The use of the phrase "for private or personal use" indicates that "appropriations justified by military necessity cannot constitute the crime of pillage". Appropriations justified by military necessity require that appropriation's use be directed to further the war effort and thus be used for military purposes. If combatants' appropriate property essential to their survival, such as food, this alone does not make the appropriation one of military necessity.
>
> … When the property owner has fled, such appropriations must be assumed to have been without the owner's consent, absent any contrary indication. This could be the case, for example, when property is taken from an empty house whose occupants have fled.
>
> As to the mental elements of the crime, pursuant to Article 30 of the Statute, the perpetrator must have:
>
> (i) acted deliberately; and
>
> (ii) meant to "deprive the owner" of his or her property and to "appropriate it for private or personal use" or been aware that this consequence would occur in the ordinary course of events.

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[214] Additional Protocol II, Article 4(2)(g); ICRC Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 52.
[215] Mali became a party to the ICESCR on 16 July 1974.
[216] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 11.
[217] African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, General Comment No. 3, paragraph 43.
[218] UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR): *General Comment No. 12 on the right to adequate food* (Article 11), General Comments and Recommendations 12 May 1999, *E/C.12/1999/5,* https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/ec1219995-general-comment-no-12-right-adequate-food, para.12.
[219] Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(xvi); ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(b)(xvi).

> In addition, […] the perpetrator must also have known that the appropriation was without the consent of the owner. [220]

Malian law defines "the pillage of a town or place, even taken by assault" (313.1, paragraphs d–v) as a war crime.

Furthermore, theft is also considered a common law offence under Malian law, outside the scope of the law of armed conflict. Malian law defines theft as "the act of fraudulently taking something that does not belong to the person".[221] Article 435-10 of the same code imposes a life sentence for "any pillaging or damage to stores of food or goods, belongings, or movable property, committed by a group or gang using force".[222]

In a context of non-international armed conflict, such as in Mali, the classification as a war crime should take precedence over that of a common law offence, including in terms of its non-applicability of statutory limitations and non-amnesty.

Amnesty International has documented several instances of pillaging committed against civilians during joint FAMa/Wagner military operations in the villages of Tin Adanda (February 2025), Echell (January 2025), Taborak (January 2025), Lerneb (November 2024), Nampala (July 2024), Toulé (March 2024), Diadia (December 2023), Lougui (October 2023), and Massabougou (2023). Acts of pillaging have also been documented in various other locations, including Idjardahanene (June 2025), Tin Boulel (January 2024), Nambo (July 2024), Banamba (August 2023), Boundou Boubou (June 2024), Toladji (January 2024), Dendegué (July 2024), and Boumodi (January 2024). In the cases documented, none of the seizures of civilian property appeared to be justified by military necessity. These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Given that these acts were committed in the context of a non-international armed conflict, which the alleged perpetrators were aware of, and that they were carried out with the necessary intent and knowledge, they constitute the war crime of pillage.

8.7 DESTRUCTION OR SEIZURE OF CIVILIAN PROPERTY

International humanitarian law prohibits "the destruction or seizure of the property of an adversary … unless required by imperative military necessity". [223] Like pillage, the destruction of civilian property can also violate the right to an adequate standard of living as outlined in the ICESCR, [224] and undermine the victims' right to life. [225]

Under the Rome Statute, the war crime of destroying or seizing enemy property requires that "the perpetrator destroyed or seized certain property", that "the property was the property of and adversary", that it "was protected from that destruction or seizure under the international law of armed conflict", and that "the destruction or seizure was not required by military necessity". [226]

According to the ICC:

> … to "destroy" can be, either by act or omission, to set ablaze, demolish, pull down or damage so badly that it is no longer fit for purpose; and the "property" destroyed can be movable or immovable, private or public items. The act of destruction can be committed during or outside the conduct of hostilities.
>
> … the property must belong to the "adversary", namely to individuals or entities considered to be aligned with the opposing party to the conflict, adverse or hostile to the perpetrator. Regarding the destruction of property belonging to persons who had no stated or apparent allegiance to a party involved in the conflict, it may be established nonetheless that these persons or entities were

[220] ICC, *The Prosecutor v Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman ("Ali Kushayb")*, Trial Chamber I, Judgment, 6 October 2025, paragraphs 718-722.
[221] Article 412-1 of the Malian Criminal Code.
[222] Article 435-10 of the Malian Criminal Code.
[223] ICRC, Study on Customary International Humanitarian Law, Rule 50. This rule stems from Article 23(g) of the Hague Convention IV of 1907, which has acquired the status of a customary norm. See also International Court of Justice, Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024, para. 96.
[224] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 11.
[225] African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, General Comment No. 3, para. 43.
[226] Rome Statute, Article 8(2)(e)(xii); ICC, Elements of Crimes, Article 8(2)(e)(xii).

> "adverse" or were considered as such by the perpetrators; for example, by showing that they were not aligned to or supportive of the perpetrators' party or its objectives.
>
> Property is protected under international law when it does not constitute "military objectives" … For the purpose of determining whether or not property was "protected", the applicable standard is that a reasonable person, in the circumstances of the case, could not have believed that the property attacked and destroyed was a military objective.
>
> … the crime of destruction of property requires that the destruction was not required by military necessity. This applies to situations where destruction is "imperatively demanded by the necessities of the conflict". Such a compelling necessity must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the particular circumstances prevailing at the time, including whether the destroyed property was defended.
>
> As to the mental elements, pursuant to Article 30 of the Statute, the perpetrator must have: (i) acted deliberately; and (ii) meant to destroy the property or was aware that this destruction would occur in the ordinary course of events. In addition, the perpetrator must have been aware that the property was the property of the adversary and aware of the factual circumstances that established the "status of the property". It is therefore not necessary to establish that the perpetrator had concluded, following an assessment of the situation, that the property was effectively protected from destruction under international humanitarian law. Lastly, the perpetrator must have been aware of the fact that the destruction was not justified by military necessity.[227]

Malian law defines "the destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out on a large scale in an unlawful and arbitrary manner" (Article 313-1(a-IV) of the Criminal Code) as a war crime.

Amnesty International has documented several instances of the destruction of civilian property by members of the Malian Armed Forces and/or the Wagner Group. The destruction of houses, shops, livestock, and other civilian property in these areas served no military purpose, nor did the sabotage of agricultural infrastructure essential for the population's subsistence. These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Given that these acts were committed within the context of a non-international armed conflict, a fact the alleged perpetrators were aware of, and that they were carried out with the necessary intent and knowledge, they constitute the war crime of destruction of enemy property.

8.8 USE OF AND RELIANCE ON PRIVATE AND MILITARY SECURITY GROUPS

While there are several international conventions governing the use of "mercenaries", there are few legal documents regulating the deployment of private military and security companies (PMSCs), which are playing an increasingly important role in contemporary warfare. In this regard, the Montreux Document, which is non-binding, is the text that best covers this new category and sets out obligations for three categories of actor:[228]

- Contracting States, which are those that use PMSCs, must ensure these actors respect international humanitarian law and human rights by exercising adequate oversight and establishing clear accountability mechanisms.

[227] ICC, *The Prosecutor v Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman ("Ali Kushayb")*, Trial Chamber I, Judgment, 6 October 2025, paragraphs 725-730.
[228] ICRC, The Montreux Document on relevant legal obligations and good practices for States regarding the operations of private military and security companies during armed conflicts, https://shop.icrc.org/the-montreux-document-on-private-military-and-security-companies-pdf-en.html

- The territorial states in whose territory PMSCs operate have an obligation not to recruit PMSCs for activities prohibited to them as states, nor to allow the continuation of any violations committed.
- And, finally, the states of origin where PMSCs are based or whose nationals make up their personnel must regulate the activities of their nationals abroad and refuse export licenses for illicit military services.

Despite this distinction of roles and responsibilities, the Montreux Document is not binding on states and does not provide for complaint or oversight mechanisms. Furthermore, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, adopted by the Human Rights Council in 2011, affirms the obligation of states to protect against human rights abuses by third parties, including business enterprises, within their territory and/or under their jurisdiction. This requires taking appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress such abuse through effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication. Furthermore, the Guiding Principles require private companies to respect human rights in their activities.[229] They set out principles requiring companies to respect human rights, avoid infringing them, and address any negative impacts on human rights caused by their activities. Companies must also exercise due diligence on human rights by assessing actual and potential impacts, collating findings and acting accordingly, as well as monitoring the measures taken, and communicating how these impacts are being addressed.[230] In the context of PMSC activity, they require due diligence of their operations in conflict zones.

Mali nonetheless still has obligations to protect those protected by international humanitarian law within its territory. Under this law, Mali is obliged to respect and ensure respect for IHL, in accordance with Article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions. This obligation extends to exercising due diligence to ensure that PMSCs engaged by the State fully respect international humanitarian law and protected categories.[231] The obligation also extends to the need to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of war crimes committed by members of PMSCs on its territory.

Furthermore, under the ICCPR, Mali is obliged to protect the rights set out therein, particularly the right to life and liberty.[232] General Comments Nos. 35 and 36 clearly state that Mali has an obligation to prevent and punish violations committed by individuals, including members of private military companies, on its territory or under its jurisdiction.[233] The same applies, as a minimum, under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Convention against Torture (CAT).

The Malian Criminal Code contains no specific provisions regulating PMSCs as distinct entities from individual mercenary activity.

[229] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: www.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/guiding-principles-business-and-human-rights
[230] Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Para. 17
[231] OHCHR, Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/geneva-convention-relative-protection-civilian-persons-time-war
[232] OHCHR, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16 December 1966, Articles 6 and 9.
[233] OHCHR, General Comment No. 35 on Article 9 on the right to liberty and security of person (2014), and General Comment No. 36 on Article 6 on the right to life (2019).

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> **Six people had their throats slit in Goundam by the FAMa, after being arrested and then accused of being terrorists. It was in August/September 2023. This event was the last straw that convinced me to leave Goundam.**
> **There is profiling of people wearing turbans, riding motorbikes, and who are seen as suspects. There is no legal framework protecting victims of extrajudicial killings. The community elders are no longer respected. It is the law of the strongest in Mali right now.**
>
> Interview with Hassane*, a Malian refugee from Goundam, in Mberra, July 2025.

Mali entered a new phase of armed conflict in August 2023, with the resumption of hostilities between government forces and the signatories to the 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. This development follows a major geopolitical realignment, with the gradual departure of the Barkhane force and MINUSMA from the country, the arrival of the Wagner group alongside the FAMa, the withdrawal of regional frameworks such as the G5 Sahel and ECOWAS, and the formation of a new bloc, the Alliance of Sahel States.

On the political front, this new dynamic has coincided with a drastic shrinking of civic space in Mali. This is evidenced by the arbitrary arrests of civil society representatives who have voiced criticism of the governance style and the authorities' response to the armed conflict, as well as the suspension of media outlets and the dissolution of associations and political parties.

In this context, civilians have found themselves in a situation of extreme insecurity amid increasingly intense conflict, with war crimes being committed by all parties with complete impunity.

Government forces and their allies have scaled up their military operations along the border with Mauritania. While the authorities have imposed silence on the conduct of these operations, this report shows that serious crimes have been committed during their conduct by the Malian Armed Forces and members of Wagner. Testimonies gathered by Amnesty International thus reveal numerous cases of civilians being murdered during joint patrols in the country's central regions. Residents were killed as soon as government forces arrived in towns and villages. Others suspected of supporting armed groups were arrested and then killed, with some having their throats cut. There are also reports of numerous civilians killed in drone strikes. This report also details numerous cases of torture and ill-treatment inflicted by members of Wagner or members of the FAMa on individuals "suspected" of links to armed groups. These acts took place in towns

and villages during patrols, or in the military camps of Nampala and Léré. The testimonies gathered also indicate looting, destruction of civilian property, and theft of livestock by government forces during their operations. All these serious violations of international humanitarian law may amount to war crimes.

Due to the high level of insecurity for civilians and the impunity for war crimes, many people from the areas around Timbuktu, Ségou, and Mopti have fled to the Hodh ech-Chargui region of Mauritania. This region is geographically and culturally close to central Mali and offers shelter from the violence of armed groups. In February 2026, this region was home to over 290,000 Malian refugees, with around 120,000 in the Mberra camp and more than 170,000 spread across over 70 host villages.[234] According to the UNHCR, women and children made up over 80% of the newly arrived refugees.[235]

In light of this situation, Amnesty International recommends:

9.1 TO THE MALIAN AUTHORITIES

On the protection of civilians during military operations

- Take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of civilians during military operations and ensure strict adherence to international humanitarian law by the FAMa and their foreign military partners;
- Respect and apply all applicable rules of international humanitarian law, especially those aimed at protecting civilians, including: the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution in attacks; the prohibition of attacks on life and physical integrity, particularly murder of any kind, mutilation, cruel treatment, and torture; the prohibition of attacks on human dignity, especially humiliating and degrading treatment; the prohibition of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence; and respect for the dead, notably by preventing the plundering or mutilation of their remains;
- Take all necessary measures to put an end to the looting and destruction of civilian property, including medical facilities, markets, food supplies, livestock, and other community and humanitarian infrastructure, by the FAMa and their foreign military partners;
- Immediately cease criminalizing the documentation of the human rights and international humanitarian law situation in the context of the armed conflict by NGOs, associations, or institutional actors.

On illegal detentions, torture, and ill-treatment in military camps and during operations

- Ensure that no one is subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention, and release all individuals who are victims of arbitrary detention;
- Ensure that no one is subjected to enforced disappearance, and release all victims of enforced disappearance;
- Ensure that no one is subjected to torture while in detention;
- Allow the ICRC and humanitarian actors unrestricted access to military camps and other sites where individuals apprehended during military operations are detained;
- Inform all detainees of the reasons for their arrest or detention immediately and provide them with comprehensive information on their rights;
- Ensure that all detainees are held in humane conditions, have access to the outside world, including their lawyer and their family or loved ones, receive medical care when needed, and have the opportunity to challenge their detention before a judge;
- Ensure that detainees can consult a lawyer of their choice without delay. If a detainee does not have their own legal counsel, they must be assigned a court-appointed lawyer, free of charge if they cannot afford one;

[234] UNHCR Mauritania, Country Factsheet (February 2026), https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/121838
[235] UNHCR Mauritania, Country Factsheet (February 2026), https://data.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/121838

- Ensure that detainees have prompt access to an appropriate medical examination, if they request it, as well as to medical care upon request or as needed throughout their detention. Detainees should be allowed to seek an independent medical opinion if they wish.

On the fight against impunity

- Ensure that all members of foreign military partners, the FAMa, and armed groups suspected of being responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law constituting war crimes (including murder, torture, sexual violence, looting, and destruction of property) committed in the context of the conflict are prosecuted through the ordinary courts and tried in proceedings that meet fair trial standards, without resorting to the death penalty;
- Open judicial investigations in civil courts into all cases of war crimes documented in this report ;
- Suspend any member of the security and defence forces, the administration, or any other state body who is under investigation by the competent judicial authorities for crimes under international law or other serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;
- Provide the necessary technical and logistical support for the proper functioning of the competent judicial authorities, including the protection of judicial investigations;
- Ensure access to justice for victims of abuses or violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as for their families;
- Ensure prompt and fair compensation for victims of abuses or violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, or for their families, including through medical and social rehabilitation, compensation, and the recovery and restitution of all looted property, as well as compensation for the loss of income caused by these acts;
- Reconsider and revoke the decision to withdraw from the Rome Statute.

On the presence of foreign military partners and their compliance with international humanitarian law

- Make the agreement governing the partnership between the Government of Mali and Africa Corps, and previously between the Government of Mali and the private military company Wagner, accessible, and allow for open debate on its key principles;
- Establish a clear and formalized chain of command for all foreign personnel (Wagner / Africa Corps) who have operated and are operating alongside the Malian authorities, in accordance with the rules of command responsibility under international law;
- Establish an independent accountability mechanism for the actions of foreign military partners;
- Revise the Criminal Code to ensure it includes provisions covering the actions of PMSCs, recognizing them as distinct entities from individual mercenaries.

9.2 TO THE MALIAN ARMED FORCES

- Ensure that all military operations, including those conducted with foreign personnel, comply with international humanitarian law, encompassing the principles of proportionality, distinction, and precaution, in accordance with international humanitarian law;
- Clarify and make public the doctrine on the use of armed drones during military operations and ensure that the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution-are respected during attacks in order to limit the impact of these strikes on civilians and persons *hors de combat*;
- Immediately put an end to serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, such as killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, cruel treatment, and outrages upon personal dignity, including mutilation, sexual violence, pillaging, and destruction of property;
- Ensure the prohibition of arbitrary and illegal detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and other inhuman and degrading treatment in military camps, particularly those in Nampala and Léré;
- Conduct thorough and impartial investigations into all allegations of violations of international humanitarian law committed by military personnel – including those documented in this report – and

take disciplinary action or initiate legal proceedings against those responsible, regardless of their rank.

9.3 TO THE ARMED GROUPS THAT ARE A PARTY TO THE CONFLICT

- Respect international humanitarian law in their operations;
- Immediately cease attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as pillaging, forced extortion, and other violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses;
- Punish those involved in serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses;
- Refrain from imposing sieges on villages and towns that illegally deprive civilians of access to services and goods essential for their life and survival: food, water, basic necessities, and humanitarian aid, and allow the free movement of civilians ;
- Authorize and facilitate rapid, unrestricted, and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to ensure aid reaches all those in need, and to protect humanitarian personnel and facilities.

9.4 TO THE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES

- Make the agreement governing the partnership between the Government of Mali and Africa Corps accessible and allow for open debate on its key principles;
- Bring all members of the Russian military forces and members of the Wagner Group deployed in Mali who have allegedly committed serious violations of international humanitarian law constituting war crimes in Mali before the competent courts.

9.5 TO THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)

- Re-engage more decisively in the protection of human rights and international humanitarian law in Mali by systematically placing the situation in Mali on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council, condemning abuses and violations against civilians, and supporting the fight against impunity for crimes under international law committed in the context of the armed conflict;
- Proactively leverage the good offices of the Special Representative for Mali and the Sahel to initiate dialogue with the Malian authorities, ensuring they respect and enforce their regional and international obligations and commitments regarding international humanitarian law and human rights.

9.6 TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

- Deploy field missions to Mali to support the authorities in ensuring that military operations comply with international humanitarian law, through the deployment of Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups on torture, the working group on Indigenous populations/communities and minorities in Africa, and the working group on the death penalty, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and enforced disappearances in Africa;
- Publicly condemn violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed in the context of the conflict in Mali and call for an end to impunity;
- Call on the Malian authorities to respect the rights to freedom of expression, information, and association, in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

9.7 TO THE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

- Investigate war crimes committed from 2023 to the present – particularly those committed by the Malian Armed Forces and their foreign military partners, as documented in this report – as part of its ongoing investigation into the situation in Mali.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. WHEN INJUSTICE HAPPENS TO ONE PERSON, IT MATTERS TO US ALL.

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“NO ONE IS SPARED”

WAR CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE MALIAN ARMY AND FOREIGN ALLIED FORCES ALONG THE MAURITANIAN BORDER

This report documents violations of international law and Malian law committed by members of the Malian armed forces and of the private military security company Wagner during joint military operations between June 2023 and December 2025. These operations were conducted as hostilities resumed with signatory armed groups following the breakdown of the 2015 peace agreement, and as UN troops withdrew from Mali. The intensification of the military operations had a significant impact on civilians living along the Mali-Mauritania border and led to a large influx of Malian refugees into neighbouring country. The report presents conclusive evidence that multiple violations of international humanitarian law were committed by the Malian Armed Forces and their allies. These violations constitute war crimes of murder, torture, attacks on human dignity, sexual violence, pillaging, and destruction of civilian property, in addition to other serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, such as arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. Based on these findings, recommendations are made to the Malian authorities, among others, to protect civilians, prevent the recurrence of these violations, and hold those responsible for them accountable.

INDEX: AFR 37/1347/2026
SEPTEMBER/2026
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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