

# War in Mali

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## How France defends its dominant position in West Africa

### **Statement on the French military intervention by Afrique-Europe-Interact – published at the 7th of February (long version)**

In the course of the last year, Afrique-europe-interact has let its voice be heard continually on the multiple crisis in Mali, also – among other topics – about the „White March“ from Mopti to Douentaza, initiated by the Malian section of Afrique-europe-interact.<sup>1</sup> In this respect we now want to make a statement on the political, economical and military backgrounds of the French military intervention in Mali, which has begun on January 11th, 2013.<sup>2</sup> The fact, that we have communicated with the Malian activists of our transnational network on an almost daily basis during the last months, plays a central role in this statement. This communication has given us the opportunity to always see the conflicts through the eyes of the Malian civil population as well and to therefore avoid forced reduced perspectives, falsities, projections, and eurocentristic views, or to at least minimize them.

### **Statement on the French military intervention by Afrique-Europe-Interact**

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**This text is the short version of a much longer statement which has been published by Afrique-Europe-Interact at 7th of February 2013.**

On February 2nd the French President Francois Hollande was welcomed enthusiastically in Mali. The good atmosphere could be confirmed by Malian activists of Afrique-Europe-Interact. This should primarily be understood as a sign that radical Islamism is by no means self-propelled, a fact that is also true for economically poor regions of the world with a predominantly Muslim population. On the contrary: The people in Mali, strongly characterized by Sufi-Islam, definitely hated the everyday impositions of the Sharia regime. Thus the atmosphere among the population, which in the beginning of the crisis was extremely sceptical about intervention and war, changed in a landslide after the representatives of the Islamic fundamentalist group “Ansar Dine”, who had been involved in the peace negotiations in Burkina Faso and Algeria, had relatively abruptly taken back their offers to participate in a dialogue.

## The Colonial Inheritance

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### **Notes on the Tuareg conflict in Mali: Published in the latest 4-pages newspaper of Afrique-Europe-Interact (8th of December 2012)**

Since militant Islamic fundamentalists have conquered power in the entire northern part of Mali, the shock runs deep. For Salafism and fundamentalism haven't got a social basis in this traditionally tolerant Islam which is characterized by Sufi mysticism in this West African country. The desire to throw off the yoke of the Sharia, which has been enforced with unscrupulous brutality, is correspondingly high. Nevertheless the unsolved conflict between the Tuareg population in the North and the central government in Bamako, which has been going on since independence in 1960, should be taken into account also from our perspective in Europe. This is necessary because it is undeniable that the Islamic fundamentalists, among them the Al Quaida of the Maghreb, could never have brought under control an area the size of France without the uprising of the Tuareg rebels who were first allied with them.