

# Popular Perceptions of the Causes and Consequences of the Conflict in Mali

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Afrobarometer Policy Paper 10 | Massa Coulibaly

## Summary

In the December 2012 Afrobarometer survey, Malians highlighted the primary causes of the serious sociopolitical crisis that their country was going through, as lack of patriotism on the part of the leaders and weakness of the State. At that time, most Malians had lost trust in the political class and in politicians. One year later (December 2013), however, a follow-up Afrobarometer survey revealed that foreign terrorists and corruption are rather the two primary causes of the Northern conflict and occupation.<sup>i</sup>

The change in perceptions on this question in the space of a year is explained by the change in the nature and scale of the crisis. The crisis went from the occupation of two-thirds of the territory to war via the intensified radicalism in the occupants' management of the occupied areas and their many acts of banning and punishment. Next, the change in perceptions is also explained by the peaceful organization of presidential and legislative elections with record participation rates of Malian citizens since the advent of democracy in 1992, more than 50% in the presidential ones and a little less than 50% in the legislative ones. These elections deemed free and honest explain in turn that the need to resort to violence for a good cause is perceived by close to one out of five Malians versus close to one out of three Malians one year prior.

One of the major challenges of the governance in Mali is still maintaining and deepening confidence between Malians and their ruling class. To do so, measuring the populations' perceptions helps to track the will of the people and ensure that policies serve this will and not the reverse.

## Key Findings

The main popular perceptions from the December 2013 Afrobarometer survey can be summarized as follows:

- The three main reasons for the Northern conflict and occupation are foreign terrorists, corruption and the desire for natural resources. However, in formerly occupied areas, the weakness of the State is in conflict with the desire for natural resources.

- For the overwhelming majority of Malians, rebels and Islamists appear in first place of those presumed to be involved in drug trafficking, alongside transnational organized crime.
- The Northern conflict brought about internal displacement of populations of around 6% with 3% who already returned home, 2% with the intention of returning and 1% with no intention of returning. This phenomenon proportionally affects city dwellers, women and those under 25 or age 35-44 slightly more.
- In total, close to one out of three Malians were affected, personally or through family members, by the Northern conflict and occupation, in one of the many ways in which one could be affected, from the explosion of one's domicile to death via sharia punishment or physical aggression of any kind
- For the very large majority of Malians (86% to 95%), three major options would help resolve the conflict: civic education, justice and a strong State
- For close to two out of three Malians, signing a new agreement will probably be the basis for sustainable peace in Mali.

## **1. Causes of the conflict**

There were quite a few causes for the conflict, from the arrival of foreign terrorists on the national territory to the military coup d'état via corruption, incompetence or lack of patriotism of the Malian leaders, etc. We can certainly add drug trafficking including rebels and Islamist groups as well as foreigners, and even transnational organized crime who are suspected of this, based on the survey data.

### **1.1. A variety of reasons**

In December 2012 when we surveyed Malians on the causes of the crisis that the country was experiencing, they put at the top the lack of patriotism of the leaders, weakness of the State, foreign terrorists and incompetence of the political class, four reasons which accounted for more than two-thirds of all of the causes listed (68%). When we know that foreign terrorists accounted for only 11%, it becomes apparent that the three main reasons were internal, for 57% in total, with 67% for survey respondents from Segou and 69% from Sikasso.

When we asked the same question in December 2013, thus coming out of the occupation of two-thirds of the national territory, foreign terrorists were by far the primary cause of the occupation and Northern conflict. Lack of patriotism of the leaders went down to fifth place, replaced by corruption, desire for natural resources and weakness of the State. Note that this classification experiences some regional effects except that regardless of region, foreign

terrorists are still perceived as the primary cause for the Northern conflict and occupation thus with no regional effects.

On the 9 reasons listed, lack of development in the North is ranked 8th, just before the coup d'Etat that occupies last place, except in the regions directly concerned in Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. For all of the areas occupied by armed groups, rebels and Islamists, this reason climbed to 4th place. Likewise, the desire for natural resources is perceived as the 3rd reason for the conflict versus a modest position of 6th place in formerly occupied areas.

Table 1: **Reasons for the occupation and the Northern conflict by area of occupation**  
| by rank |

	2012	2013		Total
		Not occupied	Occupied	
<b>Foreign terrorists</b>	3	1	1	1
<b>Corruption</b>	9	2	2	2
<b>Desire for natural resources</b>	5	3	6	3
<b>Weakness of the State</b>	2	4	3	4
<b>Lack of patriotism of the leaders</b>	1	5	7	5
<b>Complacency of the administration</b>	8	6	8	6
<b>Incompetence of the political class</b>	4	7	9	7
<b>Lack of development in the North</b>	7	8	4	8
<b>Coup d'Etat</b>	6	9	5	9

## 1.2. Drug trafficking

It has always been said that drug trafficking was one of the major causes of the crisis in the North and thus the occupation and armed conflict. Studies (GREAT, 2013<sup>ii</sup>) have also revealed that generally, trafficking of all kinds was the basic issue between all those involved in the Sahel-Saharan strip: trafficking of drugs, arms, cigarettes, human beings, etc. Among those most involved in this traffic, rebels, transnational organized crime and Islamic groups are at the top. In Gao and Kidal, the primary offenders are rebels and Islamists, specifically the two occupants of the north, with the highest scores, 72% and 100% for Gao and Kidal respectively. This must be considered a revelation from actual experience and not just a simple perception. In two other regions of the country, in this instance Kayes and Sikasso, these two groups (rebels and Islamists) are perceived as being the two biggest drug traffickers.

One significant difference between Kidal and the other two Northern regions, even with the entire rest of the country, is the clearly higher score in Kidal than everywhere else of the involvement of public bodies like customs (58% in Kidal versus 30% in Gao and 4% in Timbuktu), Malian military (27% versus 3% each of the two other Northern regions) and local elected officials (25% versus 6% respectively 3%). Isn't that also another revelation from actual experience of the populations of this region and not just a simple perception?

Table 2: **Those presumed to be involved in drug trafficking by region**  
| Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Rebels</b>	82	89	85	86	84	70	72	100	81	83
<b>Transnational organized crime</b>	75	78	57	82	79	64	70	64	60	71
<b>Islamic groups</b>	80	59	63	46	55	54	72	100	59	60
<b>Foreigners</b>	40	37	48	41	41	20	22	42	32	38
<b>Customs</b>	23	26	31	38	17	4	30	58	28	27
<b>State officials</b>	14	16	24	26	15	3	7	18	15	18
<b>Foreign military</b>	16	10	25	18	21	6	11	9	14	17
<b>Police</b>	18	14	18	20	14	2	10	27	18	16
<b>Malian military</b>	13	9	24	14	14	3	3	27	9	13
<b>Elected local officials</b>	10	5	16	13	7	3	6	25	6	9
<b>Humanitarians</b>	5	6	13	16	5	1	0	0	6	8

## 2. Effects of the conflict

The Northern conflict is not unfamiliar with the payment of ransom to powerful people, the displacement of populations and multiple forms of punishment and abuse imposed on the residents of occupied areas and even beyond. Likewise, it's under the occupation in 2012 that the use of violence for a good cause appears as a necessity for the largest proportion of

Maliens, a proportion never reached in the previous rounds, not even in the special round of 2013.

### 2.1. Ransom

The crisis in Mali disclosed the pressing question of the safety of persons and their property. Also, already in 2012, 4% of Malians age 18 and up stated that people in their communities would pay money to powerful people to protect themselves and their property, a percentage that remained similar in 2013 (at 3%). This practice of paying ransoms does not differ by religion, education, sex, age or place of residence. It is ultimately one of the reasons for the conflict since in 2013, the proportions are even higher in regions formerly under occupation, up to 25% in Kidal, 9% in Gao and 7% in all occupied areas.

Table 3: **Powerful people forcing members of your community to pay money, by occupation status**  
| Percentage |

	Not occupied		Occupied				Total
		Total occupied	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	
<b>Never</b>	98	93	94	95	91	75	97
<b>Only once</b>	1	3	3	3	2	8	1
<b>A few times</b>	1	3	3	2	5	8	1
<b>Often</b>	0	1	0	0	2	8	0

In 2012, the survey revealed the same proportions indicating that nothing had changed with the occupation and the Northern conflict. Therefore, ransoms are more a consequence than a cause of these events.

### 2.2. Displacement of the population

One of the most visible consequences, and the most broadcast in the media, is the displacement of populations, whether they are refugees in neighboring countries or displaced internally in their regions of origin or elsewhere in the country. The survey was only able to track this second category of displaced persons (IDP, internally displaced persons). So, 6% of the people surveyed inside the country state that they have been or are still displaced including close to half who have already returned to their locations of origin. Only the regions of Kayes and Sikasso recorded no displaced nationals. The recorded cases of displaced persons in the region of Koulikoro are explained by its border with Mauritania which was a real sieve for rebels



and other jihadists operating along the borders. Out of proportion with this, the phenomenon of displaced populations in particular affected the Northern regions with Timbuktu at the top (35% of its population age 18 and up) followed by Kidal (33%) and Gao (21%).

Table 4: **Have been or are still displaced by region**  
| Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Ségou	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Displaced persons</b>	0	4	0	4	3	35	21	33	7	6
<b>Returned</b>	0	0	0	0	1	33	19	25	0	3
<b>With the intention of returning</b>	0	2	0	3	2	2	1	8	5	2
<b>With no intention of returning</b>	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	1

One fact about displaced persons from Kidal is that they all come from this region itself meaning that no one from another region fled to Kidal. Those from the two other Northern regions come mostly from the same regions but not exclusively. Koulikoro and Bamako are the only regions that shelter displaced persons from all regions of origin. Displaced persons from Kidal were able to find refuge in Koulikoro, Segou and of course Kidal itself.

Table 5: **Region of origin of displaced persons by region**  
| Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Mopti</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Timbuktu</b>	0	1	0	3	1	34	0	0	3	3
<b>Gao</b>	0	2	0	1	1	0	21	0	2	2
<b>Kidal</b>	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	27	0	0

Looking at the main socio-demographic characteristics, it appears that the IDPs are mostly city dwellers, women age 18 to 24 or 35 to 44. They come mostly from areas occupied during the Northern conflict and occupation.

Table 6: **Have been or are still displaced by socio-demographic characteristics**  
| Percentage |

	Urban	Women	Age 18-24	Age 34-44	Occupied areas	Total
<b>Displaced persons</b>	9	6	8	4	22	5
<b>Returned</b>	2	2	3	2	20	2
<b>With the intention of returning</b>	6	3	4	2	1	2
<b>With no intention of returning</b>	2	1	1	1	0	1

The main regions of origin of displaced persons are still Timbuktu and Gao. Just like Gao replaces Kidal for displaced persons under age 25.

Table 7: **Region of origin of displaced person by socio-demographic characteristics**  
| Percentage |

	Urban	Women	Age 18-24	Age 34-44	Occupied areas	Total
<b>Mopti</b>	1	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Timbuktu</b>	4	3	4	2	13	3
<b>Gao</b>	3	2	3	1	7	2
<b>Kidal</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0

### 2.3. Visible effects

The survey data shows that in total, 18% of persons surveyed were personally affected in one way or another by the recent Northern conflict and occupation, 25% through members of their families and 29% in either case (i.e. personally or through a family member). For all of the occupied areas, these percentages are respectively 57, 62 and 69% versus only 12, 19 and 23% in non-occupied areas. In the Northern regions, Kidal was the region most affected in terms of proportion of population affected in one way or another by the conflict. On the other hand, Gao is the only region where there are proportionally more than people affected directly by the conflict than by other members of their families.

Table 8A : **Affected personally or through a family member by region**  
| Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Personally</b>	5	11	9	6	31	62	79	82	17	18
<b>Family</b>	10	15	10	14	44	74	65	93	29	25
<b>Personally or family</b>	13	17	17	14	49	81	79	93	32	29

There is no significant effect of occupation among persons affected by the Northern conflict. On the other hand, there are more city dwellers than rural residents and more persons with secondary and higher education levels. Compared to others, those who express national identity ("I feel only Malian") are more likely than those who express an ethnic identity to report being affected by the conflict.

Table 8B : **Affected personally or through a family member by characteristics**  
| Percentage |

	Urban	Secondary education	Higher education	I feel only Malian	Total
<b>Personally</b>	21	22	16	21	18
<b>Family</b>	33	29	33	29	25
<b>Personally or family</b>	36	33	38	33	29

When we look at the various ways of being affected, six consequences were listed most frequently. For persons directly affected, these are the destruction or closure of businesses, loss of employment, housing displaced persons, change in occupation, witnessing killings or beatings, intimidation. This order doesn't change (with the only exception of housing displaced persons which went down to 6th place) even when we are interested only in the persons surveyed in areas formerly under jihadist and rebel occupation. In the end, however, women seem to have suffered proportionally more than men from abandoned or exploded houses.



In looking at certain specific ways of being affected, Gao clearly had the highest rates of sharia punishment (18% here versus 1% in the entire country and 7% in all of the occupied areas) and sexual harassment or rape (2% versus 0% respectively 1%). Kidal records the strongest prevalence of torture, 8% versus less than 1% in total or even 3% in the only occupied areas.



Photo: Irinnews.org

Table 9A : **Have been personally affected in one of the following ways by region**  
| Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Destruction or closure of your business</b>	0	8	8	4	18	34	44	55	7	10
<b>Loss of employment</b>	0	3	0	3	11	35	23	42	5	6
<b>Housing displaced persons in your house</b>	5	4	2	4	11	13	8	18	10	6
<b>Change of occupation due to the conflict</b>	0	2	0	4	6	21	33	64	4	5
<b>Witness of beatings or killings</b>	0	2	0	2	4	18	56	54	6	5
<b>Intimidation or threats</b>	0	2	0	2	5	24	55	45	5	6
<b>Abandonment of house for other places in the rest of Mali</b>	0	4	0	5	3	23	13	9	7	4
<b>Damage to your property</b>	0	2	0	2	3	13	8	9	5	3
<b>Destruction of your house</b>	0	1	0	2	1	11	6	18	2	2
<b>Abandonment of house for other places in the North</b>	0	0	0	0	1	11	8	25	1	1
<b>Explosion of your house</b>	0	0	0	1	1	7	6	9	2	1
<b>Physical aggression</b>	0	1	0	1	0	6	7	9	1	1
<b>Charia punishment</b>	0	0	0	1	2	4	18	0	1	1
<b>Abandonment of house for other places outside Mali</b>	0	0	0	0	1	6	5	0	1	1
<b>Torture</b>	0	0	0	1	0	4	3	8	1	1
<b>Imprisonment</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
<b>Sexual harassment/rape</b>	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0

For persons who state that members of their families were affected by the Northern conflict and occupation, they highlight the same six ways. The regions most affected are those in the North as well as Mopti. It should be noted that 5% of respondents state that members of their families died as a result of the occupation and conflict, a rate that is 25% in Kidal, 15% in Timbuktu and 8% in each Gao and Mopti. The prevalence of sharia punishment on family members is 25% in Kidal and 22% in Timbuktu versus 15% and 14% in Gao and Mopti respectively. Physical aggression and torture were practiced most in Timbuktu and Kidal (29% and 27% for physical aggression and 19% and 18% for torture respectively).



Photo: [Irinnews.org](http://Irinnews.org)

Table 9: Have been affected by family members in one of the following ways by region  
| Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Destruction or closure of their business</b>	5	9	4	6	27	54	38	64	12	14
<b>Loss of employment</b>	6	7	5	6	27	55	26	54	11	13
<b>Abandonment of house for other places in the rest of Mali</b>	6	9	4	9	20	54	23	36	13	13
<b>Change in occupation due to the conflict</b>	4	5	2	6	23	44	34	64	7	11
<b>Witness of beatings or killings</b>	1	6	3	8	18	40	40	54	9	11
<b>Intimidation or threats</b>	1	6	2	6	21	46	43	45	8	10
<b>Housing of displaced persons</b>	3	3	3	5	11	35	11	25	14	8
<b>Damage to their property</b>	4	5	1	5	13	30	8	25	13	8
<b>Abandonment of house for other places in the North</b>	0	0	1	2	8	31	14	54	6	5
<b>Explosion of their house</b>	2	3	1	4	9	22	9	27	6	5
<b>Destruction of their house</b>	3	2	0	4	7	26	9	27	8	5
<b>Physical aggression</b>	2	3	1	2	7	29	7	27	5	5
<b>Death</b>	5	5	1	3	8	15	8	25	4	5
<b>Charia punishment</b>	1	0	0	1	14	22	15	25	5	5
<b>Abandonment of house for other places outside Mali</b>	2	1	0	1	5	24	11	45	3	4
<b>Torture</b>	1	3	2	2	7	19	5	18	3	4
<b>Sexual harassment/rape</b>	1	0	0	1	4	13	6	17	2	2
<b>Imprisonment</b>	0	1	0	1	3	14	5	9	2	2



There were in total 18.5% of the persons surveyed who sustained at least one of the ways of being personally affected from the recent Northern conflict and occupation.

Table 10: **Number of times personally affected**  
| Percentage |

	Number of persons	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<b>0</b>	1847	81.5	81.5
<b>1</b>	175	7.7	89.2
<b>2</b>	74	3.2	92.4
<b>3</b>	31	1.4	93.8
<b>4</b>	34	1.5	95.3
<b>5</b>	20	.9	96.2
<b>6</b>	30	1.3	97.5
<b>7</b>	17	.7	98.3
<b>8</b>	18	.8	99.1
<b>9</b>	11	.5	99.5
<b>10</b>	3	.1	99.7
<b>11</b>	3	.1	99.8
<b>12</b>	3	.1	99.9
<b>17</b>	1	.1	100
<b>Total</b>	2267	100.0	

When it concerns family members, 25% of persons say they were affected in one way or another. Here, we count up to 7 respondents as the number of persons stating that they have had family members affected in 17 or 18 possible ways, or even 2% of the persons affected through family members.



Table 11: **Number of times affected through a family members**  
| Percentage |

	Number of persons	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
<b>0</b>	1692	74.6	74.6
<b>1</b>	85	3.8	78.4
<b>2</b>	87	3.8	82.2
<b>3</b>	92	4.0	86.3
<b>4</b>	29	1.3	87.6
<b>5</b>	35	1.6	89.1
<b>6</b>	44	1.9	91.0
<b>7</b>	42	1.9	92.9
<b>8</b>	38	1.7	94.6
<b>9</b>	23	1.0	95.6
<b>10</b>	19	.8	96.4
<b>11</b>	24	1.1	97.5
<b>12</b>	14	.6	98.1
<b>13</b>	5	.2	98.3
<b>14</b>	11	.5	98.8
<b>15</b>	11	.5	99.3
<b>16</b>	2	.1	99.4
<b>17</b>	7	.3	99.7
<b>18</b>	7	.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	2267	100.0	

#### 2.4. Political violence

In December 2012, the Afrobarometer survey revealed that 28% of those surveyed found it necessary to resort to violence for a good cause, which constituted the highest rate of all the previous rounds including in 2005 when this rate was only 15%. This result followed the occupation of two-thirds of the national territory by armed Islamic and rebel groups. One year later, this rate went back down to 23%, the rate that it had reached in 2002, an election year of ATT (Amadou Toumani Touré) to the supreme judiciary based on disputes of the proclaimed results. The high rate in 2012 was mainly brought by Segou (52%) and Koulikoro (35%), the same regions that are decreasing in rate for 9% and 16% respectively out of the 24% for 2013. These two regions are the leading sites of political struggle between candidates in the elections.

Table 12: **It is sometimes necessary to resort to violence for a good cause**  
| Percentage |

	2000	2002	2005	2012	2013
<b>Region</b>					
<b>Kayes</b>	5	9	14	26	30
<b>Koulikoro</b>	28	34	8	35	16
<b>Sikasso</b>	16	7	20	22	34
<b>Segu</b>	20	36	16	52	9
<b>Mopti</b>	38	30	17	9	24
<b>Timbuktu</b>	28	29	12		22
<b>Gao</b>	24	19	2		16
<b>Kidal</b>	25	2	21		54
<b>Bamako</b>	11	28	20	19	25
<b>Age</b>					
<b>18 - 24</b>	22	32	14	28	29
<b>25 - 34</b>	21	28	15	28	24
<b>35 - 44</b>	23	22	15	30	21
<b>45 - 54</b>	21	18	16	26	23
<b>55 - 64</b>	23	19	22	24	16
<b>65 - 74</b>	17	27	9	21	21
<b>75 and up</b>	20	16	6	41	16
<b>Education</b>					
<b>None</b>	17	21	15	28	21
<b>Informal</b>	26	28	13	26	20
<b>Primary</b>	23	23	15	32	22
<b>Secondary</b>	23	31	19	22	30
<b>Higher</b>	39	25	17	27	36
<b>Total</b>	21	24	15	28	23

Out of all of the rounds observed, the willingness to consider a resort to political violence is most perceived by young people and persons with secondary or higher education. In 2013, the positive correlation with education and negative with age is again observed. The prevalence of 23% in that year is basically by those under 25, intellectuals, and mainly in the regions of Kidal, Sikasso and Kayes.

As to whether or not violence is inevitable in politics, close to one out of five Malians really think so, this time with no real effect from age or education. It is curious that respondents from formerly occupied areas think so a lot less than those from non-occupied areas (16% versus 21%). The regions the most tied to the idea that violence is inevitable in politics are Kayes (36%), Bamako (31%) and Gao (27%). This contrasts clearly with the regions of Segou (10%), Timbuktu (12%) and Koulikoro (14%). For Segou and Koulikoro, this is a trend reversal compared to the results from one year prior.

Table 13 : **When it comes to politics, violence is inevitable**  
 | Percentage |

	2013
<b>Region</b>	
<b>Kayes</b>	36
<b>Koulikoro</b>	14
<b>Sikasso</b>	15
<b>Segu</b>	10
<b>Mopti</b>	19
<b>Timbuktu</b>	12
<b>Gao</b>	27
<b>Kidal</b>	18
<b>Bamako</b>	31
<b>Age</b>	
<b>18 - 24</b>	19
<b>25 - 34</b>	20
<b>35 - 44</b>	22
<b>45 - 54</b>	20
<b>55 - 64</b>	17
<b>65 - 74</b>	23
<b>75 and up</b>	12
<b>Education</b>	
<b>None</b>	21
<b>Informal</b>	19
<b>Primary</b>	20
<b>Secondary</b>	18
<b>Higher</b>	24
<b>Status of occupation</b>	
<b>Not occupied</b>	21
<b>Occupied</b>	16
<b>Total</b>	20

### 3. How to find a resolution

Beyond the stabilization of Mali, the return to sustainable peace is a pressing concern given violence in the latest events and the resurgence of armed conflicts in the north. This poses the problem of governance and the structural conditions to be met to resolve the conflict while getting to its roots. Also, is it important to probe the opinion of Malians regarding the probability that another signed agreement is the basis for sustainable peace in Mali.

#### 3.1. Issue of governance

In 2013 like in 2012, the persons surveyed were asked to state how to escape an elected but corrupt and incompetent regime. Nowadays, this question has become a major preoccupation for all those interested in countries transitioning from dictatorship to democracy or the negation of human rights to freedom or in countries getting over a serious sociopolitical crisis like Mali where in 2012 a military coup d’Etat reversed the elected power ATT who was visibly incapable of dealing with the new challenges of safety, national unity and defense of the motherland. Protesters in Egypt and Tunisia again escalated this question, which in the end has to do with the will of the people to take care of themselves against regimes that have lost all legitimacy.

Table 14A: **How do we escape an elected but corrupt and incompetent regime**  
| 2013 | Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Elections</b>	35	44	51	35	59	64	41	20	48	46
<b>Respect for the constitution</b>	40	33	28	50	25	15	39	70	25	33
<b>Resignation of the government</b>	9	9	9	6	3	14	7		10	8
<b>Revolution</b>	9	8	3	5	7	4	1	10	6	6
<b>General strike</b>	6	2	1	1	3	4	5		4	3
<b>Military coups d’etat</b>	1	3	7	2	2		1		2	3
<b>Other</b>			1	1	1		6		3	1
<b>Do not know</b>										

The two main options given by respondents are elections and respect for the constitution, regardless of survey round, 2012 or 2013. The regions most attached to the electoral process in 2013 are Timbuktu (64% of respondents) and Mopti (59%). In 2012, we saw Kayes (61%) and Mopti (55%). Between these two years, note that two options lost their importance in the eyes of Malians. These are general strike (6% in 2012 versus 3% in 2013) and military coups d'état (7% in 2012 versus 3% in 2013).

Table 14B: **How do we escape a regime elected but corrupt and incompetent**  
| 2012 | Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Bamako	Total
<b>Elections</b>	61	48	47	40	55	38	48
<b>Respect for the constitution</b>	17	27	13	17	18	35	21
<b>Resignation of the government</b>	5	7	13	8	4	9	8
<b>Revolution</b>	4	4	8	11	7	2	6
<b>General strike</b>		6	9	9	4	6	6
<b>Military coups d'état</b>	10	3	6	10	9	5	7
<b>Other</b>	3	2	1	4	0	1	2
<b>Do not know</b>		3	2	1	2	5	2

### 3.2. Options for resolving the conflict

Beyond the security crisis and the occupation of a portion twice as large as what remained of Mali, war broke out in January 2013. Also, the question "How can we escape the current crisis" of 2012 was replaced in 2013 by "How many of the following options could help resolve the conflict". In 2013, the favored response options go from a strong state to the development of the Northern regions via education and the need to render justice to all those who were involved. On the other hand, in 2012 the choices pertained to the dialogue between the State and armed groups, war against armed groups in the North with or without the support of the ECOWAS, and finally only a strong State.



Table 15A: **How many of the following options could help to resolve the conflict**  
| 2012 | Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Bamako	Total
<b>Strong State</b>	9	13	11	3	21	18	12
<b>Render justice to all people involved</b>			1		1	2	1
<b>Civic education</b>	2	3			3	3	2
<b>Dialogue between the State and armed groups</b>	43	20	29	36	30	18	29
<b>Secession of the Northern regions</b>			1	2			
<b>War with the support of the ECOWAS</b>	13	8	14	11	18	15	13
<b>Malian armed war against armed groups of the North</b>	26	30	25	38	12	15	25
<b>Discussions</b>	1	15	6	1	1	9	6
<b>Elections</b>	1	4	5	2	1	10	4
<b>Prayers</b>		2	6	6	6	5	4
<b>Do not know</b>	3	3	2	2	4	4	3

It is curious to note that Gao and Kidal are the regions least favorable to dialogue between the State and armed groups (33% respectively 42% versus a national average of 61% with 71% in Timbuktu). These two regions are also the most in favor of a strong state (100% each) and the development of the Northern regions (100% respectively 100%). The secession of the Northern regions is given as option by the regions of Kayes (16%), Mopti (13%) and Sikasso (12%) versus 4% in Timbuktu, 2% in Gao and 0% in Kidal. How can we understand these results when we know that autonomy and independence are the hallmarks of the rebel groups in the North, the secession being put forward by the regions apparently the least directly affected by the conflict, Kayes and Sikasso. Do these regions perceive the multiple interventions in the North as a sign that they've been abandoned by the public powers and their partners, however also entangled in serious problems of economic and social development, with Sikasso also consistently categorized as being the poorest region of the country?

Table 15B : **How many of the following options could help resolve the conflict**  
| 2013 | Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Strong State</b>	93	95	91	96	94	99	100	100	96	95
<b>Render justice to all people involved</b>	85	89	91	95	94	84	98	92	80	89
<b>Civic education</b>	83	83	90	97	92	80	100	100	71	86
<b>Development of the Northern regions</b>	69	60	80	77	87	91	100	100	68	75
<b>Dialogue between the State and armed groups</b>	59	56	73	64	72	71	33	42	43	61
<b>Secession of the Northern regions</b>	16	9	12	7	13	4	2	0	8	10

### 3.2. Chances for peace

The recurrence of the rebel and terrorist movements in the North casts doubt on the advent of sustainable peace in the north and thus in the entire country. Also, only 65% of persons surveyed believe that signing a peace agreement between the Government and rebels in the North is probably the basis for sustainable peace in Mali (34% a little probable and 30% very probable), a percentage that does not significantly depend on the status of areas as occupied or not occupied by jihadist and rebel forces. We see this even less in Gao (51% including only 19% very probable) but more in Mopti (72% including 49% very probable).

Table 16: **Probability that signing an agreement is the basis for sustainable peace in Mali**  
| Percentage |

	Kayes	Koulikoro	Sikasso	Segu	Mopti	Timbuktu	Gao	Kidal	Bamako	Total
<b>Not at all probable</b>	32	16	23	25	18	22	40	25	25	24
<b>Not very probable</b>	13	15	10	15	9	12	8	8	8	12
<b>A little probable</b>	22	49	34	35	23	24	32	33	40	34
<b>Very probable</b>	33	20	32	23	49	42	19	33	26	30
<b>Do not know</b>				1						

The perceptions that sustainable peace is “very probable” decrease with education level. Apparently, the more that Malians learn, the more that they are skeptical of peace agreements which in any case have been signed each time that a conflict broke out without ever managing to put an end to them.

Table 17: **Probability that signing an agreement is the basis for sustainable peace by education**  
| Percentage |

	None	Informal	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Total
<b>Not at all probable</b>	19	26	23	35	25	24
<b>Not very probable</b>	15	6	13	9	13	12
<b>A little probable</b>	34	33	34	32	43	34
<b>Very probable</b>	32	34	30	23	18	30
<b>Do not know</b>		1				

## Conclusions

To render justice, the populations of the zones formerly under jihadist or rebel occupation must be heard first. Likewise, persons who were affected, personally and/or through members of their families, cannot be ignored. Quite the opposite, they must be identified and targeted by national reconciliation, otherwise, there is a risk that these populations perceive the rest of the society as being indifferent to their plight or even as being implicitly complicit to their aggressors.

As well in matters of institutional governance for resolution of the conflict even for the recurrent Northern crisis, based on the surveys, popular demand is for the organization of free, transparent and honest elections, with no possibility of falsifying the results. Looking at the results of this survey (see the accompanying Policy Paper No. 9) free elections seem to have been experienced during the last presidential elections of July-August 2013, that brought IBK (Ibrahim Boubacar Keita) to power.

It must be added that this same popular demand is also to maintain and deepen the confidence the populations can have in their ruling class, all of which could only be achieved by meeting the basic needs of said populations, in particular in justice, development and security.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Afrobarometer is an African social science research network. It measures public opinion on key political, social and economic questions. The data is obtained through face-to-face interviews in the official and national languages with representative samples of African citizens age 18 and up. In its 5th round, including the survey in December 2012 in Mali, more than 50,000 citizens were surveyed in 34 African countries. This report is based on a specific round R5.5 on "Democracy, governance and national reconciliation in Mali" with the field surveys conducted from December 17, 2013 to January 5, 2014. The results are reliable with a ±2% margin for error at a level of confidence of at least 95%.

From December 17, 2013 to January 5, 2014, a special round of Afrobarometer field survey was conducted to track the popular perceptions of Malians on "Democracy, governance and national reconciliation in Mali". The survey involved in total 2,486 individuals age 18 and up including 200 in an oversample in the 3 Northern regions and 219 other individuals all displaced internally in the Koulikoro, Segou, Sikasso and Bamako regions. Out of the overall sample, 450 persons surveyed (or 18% of the total) come from areas formerly under jihadist and rebel occupation, areas that could not be surveyed in 2012 during the normal round of Afrobarometer surveys. These areas are made up of the 3 Northern regions plus the Douentza circle in the Mopti region as well as a part of the Niono circles (Segu region) and Mopti.

This report deals with the weighted perceptions proportional to their respective sizes in the country's population of the 2,267 respondents including 200 additional ones from the 3 Northern regions. These perceptions relate more specifically to the causes and consequences of the recent conflict and occupation in the North, perceptions that the report next compares to the causes of the country's sociopolitical crisis of 2012. Reference is also made to the role of violence in politics as well as the ways and means of escaping the diminishing hope for sustainable peace in Mali.

<sup>ii</sup> The GREAT Cahiers no. 46: Conflit et gouvernance de la sécurité au Mali – Analyse des jeux d'acteurs, October – December 2013

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