

Mali

President Konare Delivers Anniversary Speech

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[Speech by President Alpha Oumar Konare in Bamako
on 25 March—live]

[Text] Dear countrymen: A day of glory, 26 March is also a day of remembrance. Malians will always remember that on that day the will of a people united and on its feet triumphed over the destructive force of an inimical system—a day of remembrance, but also one of memory of gratitude and humility. Malians will forever cherish the memory of all those who did not see the (?dawn) of 26 March and who went to sleep forever on the battlefield of honor—untimely snatched away in the prime of

their lives—in order that this day could come. It is a day of gratitude to the martyrs of 1991 and humility for we ourselves who survived, in order that at all times we may remember the ideals of a struggle and the exigencies of building a democratic state.

Dear countrymen, we must once more recall to mind the struggle of our underground organizations for decades, the struggle of the democratic organizations since the formation of the National Committee for Democratic Initiative, the Alliance for Democracy in Mali, the Association of Malian Students and Pupils, and the youth organizations—the (?HDP), the (?GLU) [expansions unknown]—and the full commitment of the Malian Association for Human Rights, the Malian Bar Association, and the National Union of Mali Workers, with a singleness of purpose: secure greater freedom for the Malian people and take part in establishing the fundamental (?rights) of Mali of citizens like the freedom of expression and political association.

The intransigence of the government of the day led to a radicalization of the Malian people's struggle, pushing it to accept and to make every sacrifice, including the sacrifice of blood and of (?honor). It was the struggle of the people, a people who love peace, tranquility, and serenity. They abhor all that is immoderate. The fact remains that Malians today have a desire to build through their own toil a prosperous country, doing so in concord, tolerance, and brotherhood. Finally, the fact remains that this objective, in order to be achieved, requires that the citizenry as a whole accept the bases of a reflection and an action based on consensus. Each and everyone of us must accept to play our (?part) in the concert of the new Mali in order that, at last, the reforms and changes for which we fought and which we look forward to with hope and impatience—something I do perfectly understand— may materialize.

These reforms and changes for a better well-being alone justify our struggle and form the basis of our hopes and aspirations. It is only in this way that we can give our democracy any chance to consolidate itself in order to confer on our country the image of an exemplary country worthy of the esteem and respect of the international community.

Dear countrymen, I wish you a happy 26 March anniversary. May the ideal of 26 March triumph for eternity.