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## MALIAN ARMED FORCES ENTERED KIDAL

On November 14, 2023, in mid-day, the Malian Armed Forces (FAMas), together with their deputies from the Private Military Society (PMS) Wagner, entered Kidal city.

The Malian soldiers, moving along the Takalot road (south-east of Kidal), bypassed the defence lines set up by the Permanent Strategic Framework (CSP) along the main road (south-west) to Kidal.

Thus, around 2:00 PM local time, some mercenaries of PMS Wagner reportedly entered Kidal city without encountering any resistance. An hour later, Malian soldiers were present inside the former MINUSMA camp and along the airstrip.

Tuareg executives and fighters reportedly started to leave the city as of the evening of Monday, 13 November. Meanwhile, the wounded CSP fighters who were being treated in Kidal hospital were evacuated northward.

While Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) obviously took part to the ambush by the CSP forces on the FAMa convoy on November 11 in Wadi Alkit 35 kilometres southwest of Kidal, the Jihadi group took an observation stance in the face of the arrival of the FAMas and their Wagner allies to Kidal.

As of the evening of November 13, the emir of the Province of Kidal and de facto military emir of JNIM, Sidan ag Hita, informed the group's Arab executives of the convoy's arrival in Kidal, confirming that no attack was planned by JNIM.

### Comment:

*The takeover of Kidal by the Malian army was a symbolic victory in several ways. This includes achieving the nationalist ambitions advocated by the junta's colonels since the coup of May 24, 2020. This victory was also an opportunity for those supporting the use of PMS Wagner's mercenaries to justify the interest of this collaboration. Finally, it was a military victory for the Malian army, which had fed a sense of revenge since its defeats in Kidal on May 21, 2014, and July 22, 2016.*

*The entry of the FAMas and Wagner into Kidal was also a defeat for JNIM. Withdrawing the group could be part of a strategy aiming at letting CSP fail to block the FAMas, with a view to later emerging as the most likely entity able to ensure the protection of the North Malian population and to embody resistance to the Malian army and Wagner.*

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**IN BRIEF**

- On November 14, 2023, the Malian armed forces entered Kidal city without encountering any resistance from the fighters of the Permanent Strategic Framework (CSP) nor Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM).
- The Tuareg rebels reportedly started to leave the area as of the evening of November 13, then to evacuate their wounded members northward. The Tuareg executives of JNIM have seemingly taken an observation stance, for no reaction has been planned to date.
- The takeover of Kidal represents a military and political victory for the ruling junta. Indeed, the latter may now enjoy the achievement of its sovereignist ambitions, justify its resorting to the private military society Wagner and boost the image of the Malian army, crippled by the defeats in Kidal on May 21, 2014 and July 22, 2016.

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**AFRICA  
SPECIAL**

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**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: SITUATION BEFORE THE DECEMBER 20  
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

Close associates of President Felix Tshisekedi have been striving over the last few weeks to convince the Head of State to invalidate the candidature of Katangese opponent Moïse Katumbi for the December 20, 2023 election, for reasons linked to his citizenship. Indeed, critiques of Mr. Katumbi have been using his dual citizenship, as it is forbidden by the Constitution.

In case his candidature is invalidated, the Katangese opponent is allegedly determined to organize major protests and even to stir unrest. In fact, it seems that President Tshisekedi has no intention of preventing him from running for President, despite the pressure exercised by his close circles. Indeed, as he is convinced of his future victory, he fears that the ousting of his main opponent will end up discrediting the ballot and undermining, in fine, the legitimacy of his reelection.

The opponents of the outgoing Head of State are wondering about the opportunity to form an alliance. Negotiations were engaged to appoint a unique candidate and should continue after the candidates are approved by the Constitutional Court, on

November 17. At this stage, only a coalition of opponents, the creation of which seems highly uncertain, would be able to gather the necessary conditions to defeat the President.

Several associates of former President Joseph Kabila however (2001-2019) recently publicly criticized Felix Tshisekedi's regime. The former Head of State is allegedly willing to organize a political transition without his successor, whom he accuses of having betrayed a political agreement made in 2019. John Numbi, dismissed of his position as general inspector of the national police in 2010 and currently in exile in Zimbabwe, even called on the armed forces to rebel against the regime in early October.

Finally, there are still many uncertainties around the capacity of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) to solve the logistical difficulties around the deployment of its staff and the electoral equipment on the territory. Against this backdrop, we can't completely rule out a last minute technical postponement of the ballot of a few days or weeks.

**MOZAMBIQUE: ISLAMIC STATE'S CAPABILITY TO ACT**

Despite the neutralization on August 22, 2023 of his historical operational leader, Ibn Omar, the "Islamic State" in Mozambique (IS-M) continues to carry out the actions planned during the July Shura Council. Under the supervision of emir Farido Suleiman, its mobile units are carrying out retaliating attacks against the local armed forces and their African partners (namely Rwandan and South African). The group wants to achieve its global objective of challenging the presence of the State in the province of Cabo Delgado, with a willingness to target the civilian population and the drivers of development (NGOs and foreign companies).

The jihadist threat remains particularly important in the coastal districts (Mocimboa da Praia and

Macomia), from where the IS-M tries to carry out operations of a larger extent through the maritime conduit. In addition, the organization still has a presence in the districts at the border of Tanzania (Nangade and Palma), to control the flow of equipment and fighters coming from abroad (DRC). Finally, some IS elements settled in the districts of Montepuez and Anucabe, where large mining sites represent a source of income for the group.

In parallel, the IS-M went through a major reorganization, as its emir, Tanzanian national Sheikh Hassan Lulanga is being very criticized for its lack of involvement in the operations. Local cadres therefore requested his removal from the IS central command.

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## ETHIOPIA: ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRETORIA AGREEMENT

One year after it was signed in Pretoria (November 2, 2022), the “agreement for a sustainable peace through a permanent ceasefire” between the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and the federal authorities is still in force. The initial overall optimism however has given way to certain doubts, as security is deteriorating in the two most populated regions of the country, Oromia and Amhara.

In early October, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed underlined the delays experienced in the demobilization of Tigray’s forces, as well as the operations carried out by the Amhara militias, the TPLF radical branch and Eritrea, which violate the spirit and provisions of the November 2 agreement.

Although Abiy Ahmed insisted on the measures taken by his government in the framework of the implementation of the agreement, some of the provisions haven’t been enforced yet, such as the organization of local elections and the appointment of Tigray’s representatives in parliament. This situation could continue until the 2026 general elections. The interim regional Authority, which governs the region of Tigray and was created in the framework of the Pretoria Agreement, headed by Getachew Reda, currently faces legitimacy issues, as it is caught in-

between the most radical elements of TPLF and the independentist opponents.

Finally, although the signing parties have shown their willingness to enforce the agreement over the last year, there are still many essential issues to solve. The political dialogue was supposed to be launched one week after the TPLF stopped being called a terrorist group (in March 2023), but it still hasn’t started.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, is on hold. Tigray’s forces refuse to proceed with disarmament operations as long as the Eritrean army refuses to withdraw from the Eastern Tigray and the Amhara regional units continue to occupy the areas of Raya, Tselement and Western Tigray. Eritrean forces for their part refuse to withdraw without the previous disarmament of the Tigray troops.

Overall, Tigray’s regional environment is today a source of concern for the future of the Pretoria agreement because of existing tensions along the border with Eritrea (accusations of Addis Ababa on the support given by Asmara to the Fano rebels, Ethiopian claims for an access to the Red Sea), but also because of the on-going clashes in the region of Amhara, a direct consequence of the Pretoria agreement’s rejection by Amhara nationalist group.

## NIGER: GENERAL SALIFOU MODY, MINISTER OF DEFENSE



Born in 1962 in Zinder, Salifou Mody is from a Djerma background, and grew up in the Gamkalé neighborhood, in Niamey. His wife's father, Safiatou Moussala, was minister of Education under President Kountche (1974 - 1987).

Salifou Mody joined the armed forces in 1983. From 1984 to 1986, when he integrated the officer corps, he studied at the Joint Military Academy in Yaoundé. Later, he became section leader in the Niger Armed Forces (FAN) in Tondibiah, and N'Gourtî (Diffa). In 1993, he became commander in the garrisons of Agadez and Niamey. In 1995, he headed the military intelligence office of the FAN within Niamey military staff.

Salifou Mody is one of the rare Niger officers who holds two distinctions for acts of war. He received the first one for his involvement in the fight against the Tuareg rebellions from 1990 to 1995 and from 2007 to 2009. The other one was for his participation in the

operations against the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), in the early 2000's.

In early 2020, General Mody became Chief of Military Staff. He was criticized for his ambiguous behavior during the failed coup attempt which occurred the day before the inauguration of President Mohamed Bazoum (March 31, 2021). He was promoted Corps General on March 29, 2023, and replaced by Issa Sidikou on March 31 to be appointed ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

On July 26, General Salifou Mody was standing next to Abderrahmane Tiani on his appointment as President of the National Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland (CNSP), and became minister of Defense. He is currently in charge of coordinating the security and diplomatic activities of the junta. Divisions within the latter however could encourage General Tiani to oust Salifou Mody, as he suspects him of wanting to take power by relying on the armed forces, which generally hold him in high esteem.

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