



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 14, 2013

## France Bombs Mali While Backing Jihad Elsewhere

Despite openly supporting [self-styled Jihadist “revolutionaries” seeking an Islamic theocracy in Syria](#), and [Libya before that](#), the new socialist French government, with help from other Western powers, has also just launched a series of military attacks against Muslim rebels [who seized control of northern Mali](#). The controversial operations, ironically, are being taken under the guise of fighting Islamic extremism. Meanwhile, Islamists in the region have vowed retaliation, saying the French attacks were killing civilians and promising to strike “at the heart of France.”



According to French officials, the air-bombing campaigns targeting rebel strongholds throughout Mali are needed to prop up the embattled central government in the capital city of Bamako — a regime [widely perceived as illegitimate](#) after the nation’s elected authorities were [overthrown by rogue U.S. government-trained military officers](#). France’s armed forces directly and openly intervened in the conflict late last week when rebels reportedly began another southward push after having declared independence in the north last year.

“We must stop the rebels’ offensive, otherwise the whole of Mali will fall into their hands — creating a threat for Africa and even for Europe,” [claimed](#) French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, attempting to justify his government’s support for the dubious Malian regime and its out-of-control army. “Regarding France’s direct involvement, it is only a matter of weeks. Later on, we can come as back-up, but we have no intention of staying forever.”

The unilateral French intervention in Mali came after the United Nations Security Council voted last month on a resolution purporting to [authorize an international invasion of the country](#). The UN and some of its member states are claiming to be concerned about a complex conflict marked by shifting alliances among rebels, and an illegitimate central government nominally in charge of the south that was installed by military strongmen after a coup in March.

In the north, a coalition of nomadic Tuareg rebels seeking independence from the central government took advantage of the turmoil to establish its own homeland — a longtime dream of the Tuareg people, who have been oppressed by assorted North African despots for generations. Meanwhile, hardcore Islamists under the banner of the Ansar Dine group, armed with [weapons that flowed out of Libya following the devastating NATO-led “regime change” operation there](#), joined forces with the rebels to sever all ties from the regime in Bamako.

Western powers [including the Obama administration](#), however, have vowed to crush the rebellion on behalf of the central “government,” which had its previous “prime minister” [arrested by military officers last month and replaced with a new “leader.”](#) The UN-approved international invasion was supposed to come later this year, possibly as late as September, composed largely of multi-national African troops backed by Obama and various European governments.



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However, with rebels apparently pushing southward quickly, possibly toward the capital, the socialist French government decided to immediately intervene militarily last week, supposedly to stop all of Mali from falling into the hands of Islamists. “French fighter jets aimed at and destroyed several targets this Sunday, some training camps, infrastructure and logistical bases,” [claimed](#) French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. Special Forces and hundreds of soldiers from France, normally stationed in neighboring countries, are also on the ground, authorities said.

Analysts say that the French military or the various African regimes promising to help would have a tough time accomplishing anything of substance in Mali. Other Western powers, however, are expected to offer support, and many have already pledged to do so. “The Americans are going to back up our operation in terms of intelligence and in terms of a support both for logistics and provisions,” French defense chief Le Drian claimed.

British officials, meanwhile, are already providing logistical support for the French assault, offering cargo planes and more. “What is being done in Mali is in our interests and should support France’s actions,” [claimed](#) U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron in an interview with the state-run BBC, adding that there would be no boots on the ground — for now at least.

Like the socialist French government, Cameron tried to make the battle appear to be about Islamic extremists, a shift from previous claims that the fight was about supporting “democracy” or Mali’s supposed territorial integrity. “There is a very dangerous Islamist regime allied to al-Qaeda in control of the north of that country. It was threatening the south of that country and we should support the action that the French have taken,” he claimed. “So we were first out of the blocks, as it were, to say to the French ‘we’ll help you, we’ll work with you and we’ll share what intelligence we have with you and try to help you with what you are doing’.”

The Obama administration also pledged its support. “We stand by our French allies and they can count on U.S. support,” Air Force Maj. Robert Firman in the office of the defense secretary was [quoted as saying](#) by Fox News. He said information sharing and logistics would be among the U.S. government’s “contribution” to the war effort. Obama also [just admitted](#) that American forces helped the French government carry out a failed raid in Somalia on January 11.

Nigerian forces and equipment have also been deployed to the nation to help in the battle, according to news reports citing government officials. More are expected soon. Other governments and tyrants in the region of West Africa have also promised to send troops in the coming weeks and months, with European governments and the Obama administration promising to train and equip them.

Still, rebels in northern Mali have ridiculed the French government’s efforts. “It’s we who control Gao,” Islamist activist Sanda Abou Mohamed was [quoted as saying](#) by the *Wall Street Journal* regarding one of the towns just bombed by fighter jets from France, Mali’s former colonial master. “The French are just bombing civilians.”

At the same time, however, rebels are vowing to retaliate. “They should attack on the ground if they are men. We’ll welcome them with open arms,” spokesman Oumar Ould Hamaha with the rebel group MUJWA [told](#) Europe 1 radio. “France has opened the gates of hell for all the French. She has fallen into a trap which is much more dangerous than Iraq, Afghanistan or Somalia.” Another rebel from a separate group quoted in the press said French citizens throughout the Muslim world would face “consequences” for their government’s actions.

A major leader in the rebellion, also part of a jihadist group, also promised counter-strikes throughout



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Africa and Europe during an interview with the French news service AFP. “France has attacked Islam. We will strike at the heart of France,” said the Islamist boss, part of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa. “From today all the mujahedeen are together.”

The threat of retaliation is being taken very seriously, and concerns have been increasing in France. Earlier this month, a prominent French judge warned about the potential for “blowback” — unintended consequences tied to foreign policy schemes. “All the ingredients exist so that there are repercussions on our soil,” said Judge Marc Trevedic, pointing to the large number of African-descent and Islamic French citizens. “France is backing those that want to intervene militarily in Timbuktu. So we are the enemy and are identified as such.”

Even as the socialist French government purports to be fighting Islamists, however, analysts have called those justifications absurd. At the same time, France has been among the most vocal supporters of the [Islamic extremists waging war on Syria’s secular tyrant](#), Bashar al-Assad. In Libya, the French government was also key in the [“regime change” plot that armed known Islamic terrorists](#) — many were openly affiliated with al-Qaeda — to overthrow the secular autocracy of dictator Moammar Gadhafi. As [the UN](#) and French authorities admit, many of the weapons from the Libyan conflict are now in the hands of the same rebels in Mali who supposedly need to be crushed by global military force.

Aside from Syria and Libya, the UN and the French government, with support from the Obama administration, also played a key role in ousting the Christian president of the Ivory Coast and installing a Muslim central banker in his place. [Thousands of innocent Christians were slaughtered](#) by UN- and French-backed Islamist militias during the campaign. After seizing power, the new Ivorian “president” promptly began [shutting down newspapers critical of his regime while rounding up dissidents](#). He is now among the chief proponents of an international invasion of Mali, too.

*Photo of French Mirage 2000 D aircraft flying over Mali: AP Images*

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