

Mali



General statistics

Population: 14,517,176 (2009)
Area: 1,240,192 km²
Independence: 4 April 1960 (France)
Capital: Bamako
Government: Semi presidential republic
Administrative language: French
Currency: West African CFA franc (XOF)
GDP: 16.031 billion USD
GDP per capita: 1,173 USD
Calling code: + 223
Motto: Un peuple, un but, une foi (One people, one goal, one faith)
Anthem: Le Mali (Mali)



Minerals : Gold, uranium, diamond, Iron ore, Bauxite, Manganese, copper, gypsum, phosphate, lithium

The Republic of Mali is a landlocked country in Western Africa. Mali borders Algeria on the north, Niger on the east, Burkina Faso and the Côte d'Ivoire on the south, Guinea on the south-west, and Senegal and Mauritania on the west.

History :

Mali was once part of three famed West African empires which controlled trans-Saharan trade in gold, salt, slaves, and other precious commodities. These Sahelian kingdoms had neither rigid geopolitical boundaries nor rigid ethnic identities. The earliest of these empires was the Ghana Empire, which was dominated by the Soninke, a Mande-speaking people. The nation expanded throughout West Africa from the 8th century until 1078, when it was conquered by the Almoravids.

The extent of the Mali Empire's peak

The Mali Empire later formed on the upper Niger River, and reached the height of power in the 14th century. Under the Mali Empire, the ancient cities of Djenné and Timbuktu were centers of both trade and Islamic learning. The empire later declined as a result of internal intrigue, ultimately being supplanted by the Songhai Empire. The Songhai people originated in current northwestern Nigeria. The Songhai had long been a major power in West Africa subject to the Mali Empire's rule.

In the late 14th century, the Songhai gradually gained independence from the Mali Empire and expanded, ultimately subsuming the entire eastern portion of the Mali Empire. The Songhai Empire's eventual collapse was largely the result of a Moroccan invasion in 1591, under the command of Judar Pasha. The fall of the Songhai Empire marked the end of the region's role as a trading crossroads. Following the establishment of sea routes by the European powers, the trans-Saharan trade routes lost significance. The worst recorded famine occurred between 1738 and 1756, killing about half of the population of Timbuktu.

In the colonial era, Mali fell under the control of the French beginning in the late 19th century. By 1905, most of the area was under firm French control as a part of French Sudan. In early 1959, French Sudan (which changed its name to the Sudanese Republic) and Senegal united to become the Mali Federation. The Mali Federation gained independence from France on June 20, 1960. Senegal withdrew from the federation in August 1960, which allowed the Sudanese Republic to become the independent Republic of Mali on September 22, 1960. Modibo Keita was elected the first president. Keita quickly established a one-party state, adopted an independent African and socialist orientation with close ties to the East, and implemented extensive nationalization of economic resources.

In November 1968, following progressive economic decline, the Keita regime was overthrown in a bloodless military coup led by Moussa Traoré. The subsequent military-led regime, with Traoré as president, attempted to reform the economy. However, his efforts were frustrated by political turmoil and a devastating drought between 1968 to 1974, which killed thousands of people from famine. The Traoré regime faced student unrest beginning in the late 1970s and three coup attempts. However, the Traoré regime repressed all dissenters until the late 1980s.

The government continued to attempt economic reforms, and the populace became increasingly dissatisfied. In response to growing demands for multi-party democracy, the Traoré regime allowed some limited political liberalization, but refused to usher in a full-fledged democratic system. In 1990, cohesive opposition movements began to emerge, and was complicated by the turbulent rise of ethnic violence in the north following the return of many Tuaregs to Mali.

Anti-government protests in 1991 led to a coup, a transitional government, and a new constitution. In 1992, Alpha Oumar Konaré won Mali's first democratic, multi-party presidential election. Upon his reelection in 1997, President Konaré pushed through political and economic reforms and fought corruption. In 2002, he was succeeded in democratic elections by Amadou Toumani Touré, a retired general, who had been the leader of the military aspect of the 1991 democratic uprising. Today, Mali is one of the most politically and socially stable countries in Africa.

Climate :

Southern and western Mali have a Sudanese climate with a short rainy season from June to September. Rainfall averages 140 cm (55 in) at Sikasso in the far south. To the north is the Sahelian zone, a semiarid region along the southern border of the Sahara. At Gao, in Mali's northeast Sahel, rainfall is about 23 cm (9 in) a year. Actual year-to-year rainfall, however, is extremely erratic. In the Sahelian zone there are considerable variations of temperature, especially in April, May, and June, the period of maximum heat, and in December, when the hot, dry harmattan blows. Continuing north, one gradually enters into a Saharan climate, marked by the virtual absence of rain and an extremely dry atmosphere. Over 40% of the country is, in fact, desert, and unsuitable for agriculture. The year is divided into three main seasons varying in length according to latitude: October–January, a cool and dry season; February–May, a hot

and dry season; and June–September, a season of rains characterized by lower temperatures and an increase in humidity. Between 1968 and 1974, Mali, with neighboring Sahel states, experienced the worst drought in 60 years. Drought returned during 1982–85, and there is continuing concern over the southward advance of the desert.