

# Mali: Analysis with Unseen Images of Ansar al-Din Macina Brigade in Central Mali

*October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016*  
*By Rida Lyammouri*



Macina Brigade fighters, September 2016. Source: Sahel MeMo.



Fighter of Macina Brigade showing arms seized in Nampala July 19th. Source: Sahel MeMo.

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Central Mali caught the attention of national and international attention when Malian forces were attacked in January 2015 in multiple locations. Malian authorities and international community were consumed by violence in the north while strategically Ansar al-Din established a new front in Central Mali. The fact that no one knew what to call the group demonstrated how little was known about Ansar al-Din Macina brigade. To be fair, the brigade itself was in the making and took it awhile to really establish itself as a real threat to Malian and foreign forces. For instance Macina's first video was released almost 18 months since its first attack and it was of poor quality. In 2016 so far the group stepped up its media campaign but still relying on Ansar al-Din media arm to release statements in Arabic, French, and English to claim attacks. Because of its local image representing Fulani community Sahel MeMo is unaware if the group have been releasing statement in Fulbe [Fulani language].

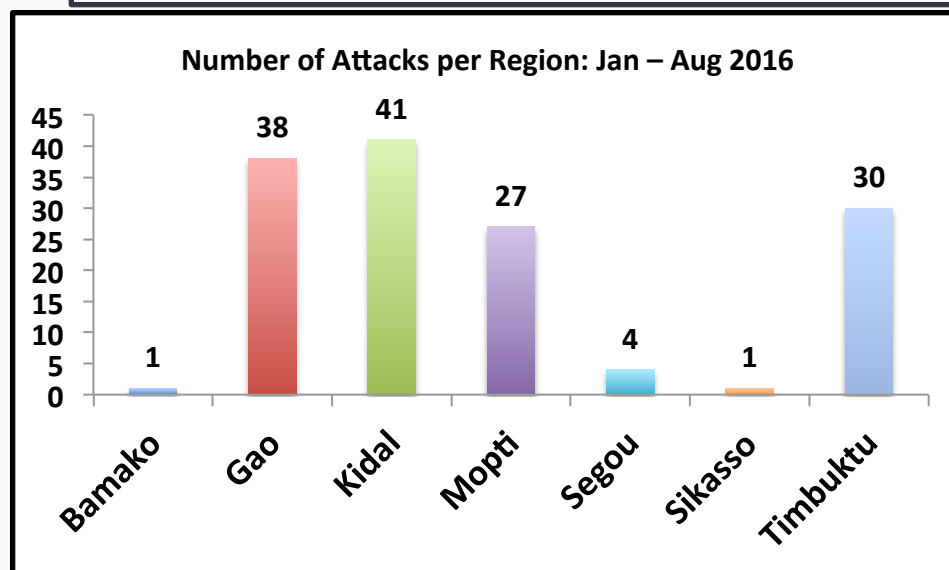
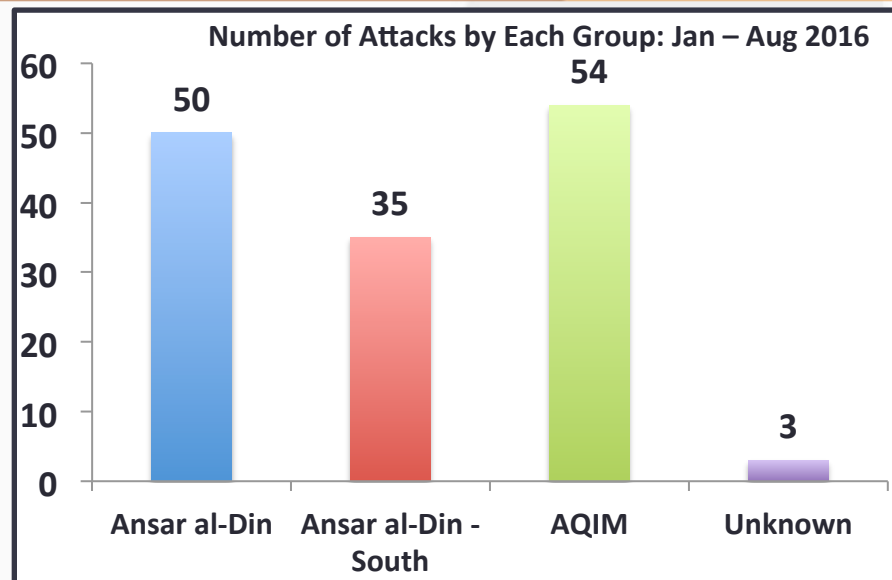
This report, however, includes unseen images and screenshots of Macina brigade high quality video after Nampala attack. For the first time Sahel MeMo is providing pictures of Macina fighters and important amount of weapons seized from Malian Army in Nampala July 19<sup>th</sup>. Malian officials might have claimed the attack was carried by three groups: Macina brigade of Ansar al-Din, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and newly formed non-jihadist group National Alliance for the Protection of Peul Identity and Restoration of Justice (ANSIPRJ). This assumption was a result of the complexity of the attack rather than facts. First AQIM never claimed to have participated in the attack. Second despite sharing similar sentiment toward the Malian Army and ethnicity backgrounds, a video released by ANSIPRJ Secretary General in September, Oumar Aldiana, that Sahel MeMo obtained a copy of denied any ties with jihadist groups. After Nampala attack ANSIPRJ only released a quick unconvincing statement through al-Akhbar Info made by its Secretary General Deputy Sidey Cisse.

Group dynamics aside Nampala attack was by far the deadliest attack on Malian forces in Central Mali that involved Macina brigade. In 2016 attacks by the group became increasingly complex and deadly, this also could explain by the frequency of the attacks and number of casualties shown in graphs in the following slides.

Since it emerged in January 2015 Macina brigade relied on small unit tactics using small arms. The number of attacks in that year were close to 30 total according to data collected by Sahel MeMo. In 2016 however, as of August 31<sup>st</sup>, Macina brigade have conducted at least 35 attacks, including more complex assaults using IEDs and Malian Army bases. Mopti Region witnessed at least 27 attacks, 7 attacks in Segou Region, and 1 in Sikasso.



Emir Abou Mahmoud of Macina Brigade. Source: Sahel MeMo.

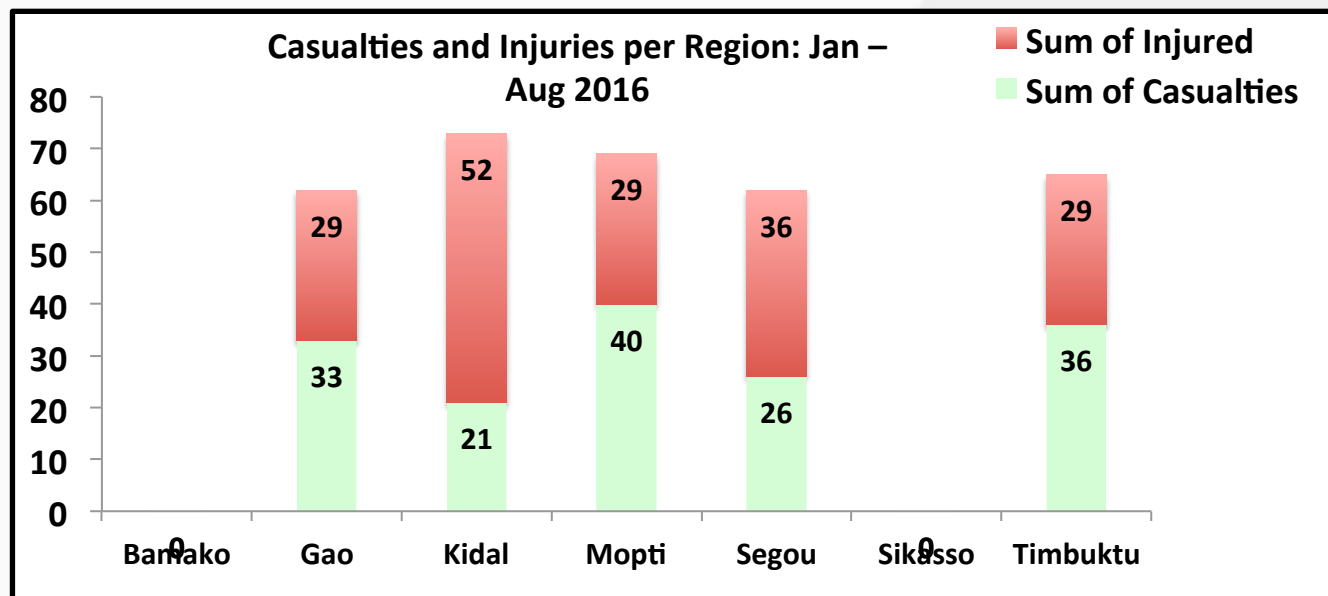


Data Source: Sahel MeMo.



In 2016, Sahel MeMo recorded at least 29 casualties and 40 wounded. Mopti Region where Macina brigade operates became also a deadly region in addition to Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu. Number of casualties does not include victims of inter-community tensions.

**Data Source: Sahel MeMo.**



**Ahmedou Bah, young fighter of Macina Brigade.**  
Source: Sahel MeMo.



**Abou Nuh, fighter of Macina Brigade.** Source: Sahel MeMo.



**Weapons and arms seized by Macina Brigade during Nampala attack July 19<sup>th</sup>. Source: Sahel MeMo.**





**Above: Macina Brigade fighters, September 2016.**  
**Source: Sahel MeMo.**

**Right: Macina Brigade motorcycles, September 2016.**  
**Source: Sahel MeMo.**





**Weapons and arms seized by Macina Brigade during Nampala attack July 19<sup>th</sup>. Source: Sahel MeMo.**







**Above: Weapons and arms seized by Macina Brigade during Nampala attack July 19<sup>th</sup>. Source: Sahel MeMo.**

**Right: Use of motorcycles by Macina Brigade have been a common trend, September 2016. Source: Sahel MeMo.**

