

# Mali: February 2017 Violence Related to AQIM, Ansar al-Din, MUJWA, and Other Security Incidents

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## Analysis and Comments

- Sahel MeMo recorded in February 2017 at least 20 incidents related [or at least suspected to be] to violent extremist organizations operating in Mali. This includes failed attempts by VEOs, such as when improvised explosive devices (IEDs) been discovered and dismantled.
- Sahel MeMo recorded 11 casualties and 18 wounded among Malian security forces while 8 peacekeepers of MINUSMA injured.
- In February 2017 only 2 attacks were officially claimed by Ansar al-Din and AQIM.
- Niger witnessed at least one deadly attack on its forces in Tillabéry Region on the borders with Mali. At least 15 soldiers killed and 18 injured. This forced Nigerien government to declare state of emergency in most of Tahoua and Tillabéry Regions. Barkhane also established a remote post in Tillabéry Region.
- Security situation in Burkina Faso on the borders with Mali has degraded. Militant group identified as Ansarul Islam emerged in the area while little is known thus far about the group and its capabilities. However local officials and school teachers have been [threatened](#) by unidentified individuals at Soum near borders with Mali.
- Colombian nun kidnapped by unknown gunmen at Karangasso, Sikasso Region. Hostage identified as Gloria Argoti and as of March 7<sup>th</sup> no group claimed responsibility. This brings total of 8 hostages being taken and held by jihadist groups or other unknown groups in Mali and neighboring countries in the Sahel.
- Reportedly, members from Fulani and Bambara communities engaged in violent clashes in Ké-Macina, Mopti Region. At least 20 people killed.
- Armed banditry continues to be threat to civilians and peacekeeping operations in central and northern Mali.

- **AQIM:** Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
- **MUJWA:** The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
- **MINUSMA:** United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
- **CMA:** Coordination for the Movement of Azawad
- **GATIA:** Self-Defense Imghad Tuareg Group and Allies
- **HCUA:** High Council for the Unity of Azwad (HCUA)

**2 FEB 17:** Gunmen attacked Malian gendarmerie in Diandiouri, Mopti Region. Ansar al-Din claimed responsibility. (right: Ansar al-Din statement.

**4 FEB 17:** Unknown gunmen attacked Malian Army checkpoint south of Ménaka toward Andéramboukane. 4 Malian soldiers killed and 10 injured.

**4 FEB 17:** Unknown gunmen attacked Malian security checkpoint at Madina-Coura, 5km from Mopti, Mopti Region. 4 gendarmes killed.

**5 FEB 17:** MINUSMA vehicle escorting logistical convoy 30km from Tessalit toward Aguelhoc, Kidal Region. 4 peacekeepers injured.

**7 FEB 17:** Colombian nun kidnapped by unknown gunmen at Karangasso, Sikasso Region. Hostage identified as Gloria Argoti and as of March 7<sup>th</sup> no group claimed responsibility. This brings total of 8 hostages being taken and held by jihadist groups or other unknown groups in Mali and neighboring countries in the Sahel.





**8 FEB 17:** Malian Army vehicle struck an IED between Timbuktu and Goundam, Timbuktu Region. 1 soldier killed and 4 injured, and AQIM claimed responsibility. (right: AQIM statement)

**8 FEB 17:** Barkhane forces discovered and dismantled an IED in Kidal, Kidal Region. The IED was connected to unknown number of mortars.

**8 FEB 17:** Malian Army discovered and neutralized an IED north of Gao.

**8 FEB 17:** MINUSMA forces discovered and dismantled an IED near Ansongo, Gao Region.

**10 FEB 17:** Unknown gunmen attacked and burned 4 logistical MINUSMA trucks between Hombori and Boni, Mopti Region.

**10 FEB 17:** Unknown gunmen attacked and fired at Malian National Guard camp in Ansongo. 1 guard died on 17 FEB after suffering severe injuries during the attack.

**11 FEB 17:** Allegedly Malian Army killed 4 civilians and arrested 10 during counterterrorism operation in Dialloubé, Mopti Region.

تدمير عربة عسكرية للجيش «المالي» على طريق «تيمبكتو» و«قندام»  
بتوفيق من الله عز وجل، فجّر مجاهدو منطقة الصحراء،  
مساء يوم (الأربعاء 12 جمادى الأول 1438هـ/ 8 فيفري 2017م)،  
عبوة ناسفة على عربة عسكرية للجيش «المالي»، مما أدى  
إلى تدميرها تدميرا كليا. وذلك على الطريق الرابط بين مدينتي  
«تيمبكتو» و«قندام»، والحمد لله رب العالمين..

11 جمادى الأول 1438هـ/ 9 فيفري 2017م



View inside Ansongo. Source: Sahel MeMo LLC

**12 FEB 17:** Malian forces claimed to have dismantled a jihadist cell in Dialloubé, Mopti Region, and 24 suspects were arrested. However, the suspects were released on 26 FEB 17 after and are not believed to be members of a jihadist group as Malian forces initially claimed. Malian Army [conducted](#) 48hrs counterterrorism operation in the area.

**14 FEB 17:** Barkhane forces discovered and dismantled an IED in Kidal, Kidal Region. Barkhane also neutralized 15 mortars.

**15 FEB 17:** Malian Army vehicle struck an IED between Boni and Hombori (20km from Hombori). 1 Malian soldier killed and 4 injured.

**16 FEB 17:** Malian security forces arrested 4 suspected jihadists in Segou Region. Arms and motorcycles also seized.

**18 FEB 17:** Nigerien security forces seized arms and ammunition at Abalak, Niger checkpoint. Arms belong to individuals returning from Libya.

**19 FEB 17:** Civilian transportation bus struck an IED between Gossi and Hombori. 1 passenger killed and 14 injured.

**19 FEB 17:** Allegedly, unknown gunmen abducted 2 individuals under unclear circumstances at Dialloubé, Mopti Region.



**Mortars and IED discovered and destroyed by Barkhane in Kidal. Source: [defense.gouv.fr](http://defense.gouv.fr)**



[19 FEB 17](#): MINUSMA vehicle struck an IED 50km south of Aguelhoc, Kidal Region. 4 peacekeepers injured.

22 FEB 17: Unknown gunmen attacked Nigerien forces patrol convoy at Tilwa. 15 Nigerien soldiers killed and 19 injured, 4 vehicles destroyed and 7 seized by militants. [Reports](#) said Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahraoui claimed responsibility of the attack, however other reports denied the claim and the group never released official statement to claim it.

[23 FEB 17](#): Barkhane forces clashed with small group that was identified as “terrorist group” at Tin Afaghout (20km west of Boughessa), Kidal Region. 2 militants reportedly killed and 3 arrested, 2 lance rockets and 4 Kalashnikovs seized. However Barkhane forces are [accused](#) of engaging with minors. Barkhane insisted that although the 2 militants might be minors, they were the ones that fired first and French forces had to retaliate.

23 FEB 17: Senegal security forces arrested 2 Malians in Dakar suspected to have participated in planning the Grand Bassam, Cote d’Ivoire attack.

[26 FEB 17](#): Barkhane forces announced deployment more of its troops to Tillabéry Region, Niger on the borders with Mali. This comes in response to increased attacks against Nigerien forces by unknown gunmen, although several media outlets claim it was a jihadist attack likely by Al-Murabitun of Adnane Abu Walid al-Sahraoui that pledged allegiance to so-called Islamic State in May 2015.

[26-27 FEB 17](#): Barkhane forces arrested an unknown suspect in Kidal.

[27 FEB 17](#): Malian, Mauritanian, and Barkhane forces seized arms and ammunition at Wagadou forest on the borders with Mauritania. Wagadou forest have been a hideout and a fall-back to AQIM’s brigade al-Furqan and likely continues to be. Also, multiple attacks against Malian Army in Nampala and Diabaly, Central Mali, are believed to be planned in the same area.

**27 FEB 17:** Unknown gunmen carried multiple attacks on different police stations in Soum Province. Locations are Baraboulé, Tongomayel, and Diguel. 1 civilian injured according to Ministry of Security and no group claimed responsibility. In Tongomayel militants seized 2 motorcycles and burned 16 others while setting the police station on fire and writing Ansarul Islam in Arabic, claimed Mohamed Dah, a high-ranked police officer in the region. In Baraboulé, militants seized 2 motorcycles and burned 2 others, and damaged the police station with gunfire. In Diguel, computers were taken and prefecture's doors were damaged.

**27 FEB 17:** Barkhane forces destroyed explosives discovered by locals in Ménaka. Reportedly explosives were to be used in a planned attack.



**Alleged Ansar al-Din Macina brigade suspects arrested and arms seized 12 FEB. Source: Facebook**



**Malian Army vehicle destroyed by IED between Goundam and Timbuktu on 08 FEB. Source: Facebook.**

[2 FEB 17](#): Malian forces seized mini-bus transporting 18 under age children between 16 and 17 years old at Sikasso on the borders with Burkina Faso. Allegedly children identified as Talibé and belong to unidentified Kuranic schools.

[4 FEB 17](#): Gunmen attacked and seized 2 trucks belonging to the French construction company SATOM at Kassoum in charge of repairing Niono-Timbuktu road.

[09 FEB 17](#): Unidentified gunmen attacked mobile unit of *centre de santé de référence* (CSREF) 30km from city of Gao. Vehicle and medical equipment seized by gunmen. Team members abandoned returned to Gao unharmed.

[9 FEB 17](#): Unknown gunmen opened fire on two Daoussahak Tuareg near Ménaka. 1 killed.

[11-12 FEB 17](#): Gunmen fired at a young man and seized his motorcycle at Kati, Kayes, Region. 1 civilian killed

[11-12 FEB 17](#): Gunmen attacked and injured a woman [civilian] during armed robbery at Kati, Kayes, Region.

11 FEB 17: Unknown gunmen opened fire on two water and forests agents in Mopti Region, between Timissa and Djenné. 1 agent injured.

[13 FEB 17](#): Two armed bandits attacked and seized rental vehicle from civilians at Hamakouladji, near Gao, Gao Region. Armed bandits also robbed passengers from their belongings.

[15 FEB 17](#): Five armed bandits attacked 17 merchants at Fassou-debé, near Diéma, on the borders with Mauritania. Armed bandits seized more than 8,000 USD livestock value.

21 FEB 17: Unknown gunmen seized vehicle in Hama-Bangou belonging to Timbuktu hospital.



22 FEB 17: Gunmen attacked and robbed traveling local businessman on Hombori – Boni transit route. Cash and 4x4 vehicle seized by armed bandits.

[23 FEB 17](#): Unknown gunmen attacked and robbed local merchant traveling to Simby market, 35km of Hombori. Bandits seized 4x4 vehicle and important sum of money.

10-12 FEB 17: Reportedly, members from Fulani and Bambara communities engaged in violent clashes in Ké-Macina, Mopti Region, Central Mali. At least 20 people killed. Allegedly the killing of a Bambara merchant identified as Cheick Traore on February 11th triggered the violence, however this remains difficult to confirm. Fulanis in the area are mainly livestock herders were the first to be accused of the killing by Bambaras who are mostly farmers. In response, Bambaras reportedly carried attacks the following day around Ké-Macina, Niono, and Diawaribougou. In addition to traditional conflicts between Fulanis and Bambaras, since 2015 Fulanis have been repeatedly perceived to be associated with the emergence of Ansar al-Din Macina brigade, a militant group that emerged in Central Mali since January 2015.

**Cultivated small farm at Bamada, Mopti Region. Source: Sahel MeMo LLC**



**Oromodi village near Ténenkou, Mopti Region. Source: Sahel MeMo LLC**

