

Country – capital	Republic of Mali - Bamako <sup>1</sup>
Population	Total population 20.7 million (est. 2022). Ethnic groups: Bambara 33.3%, Fulani (Peuhl) 13.3%, Sarakole/Soninke/Marka 9.8%, Senufo/Manianka 9.6%, Malinke 8.8%, Dogon 8.7%, Sonrai 5.9%, Bobo 2.1%, Tuareg/Bella 1.7%, others (2018 est.) <sup>2</sup>
Geography	West Africa, bordering Algeria, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Niger <sup>3</sup>
Languages – official / lingua franca	Mali has 13 national languages in addition to its official language: <sup>4</sup> French (official), Bambara 46.3%, Peuhl/Foulfoulbe 9.4%, Dogon 7.2%, Maraka/Soninke 6.4%, Malinke 5.6%, and several other languages (2009 est.)
Writing system	Latin <sup>5</sup>
Education and literacy	Literacy rate total population: 35.5% (male: 46.2%, female: 25.7% - est. 2018). <sup>6</sup> Over 2 million children aged 5 to 17 do not go to school, and over half of Mali's young people aged 15 to 24 are not literate. 73.8 % of girls are enrolled in primary basic education, and 85.8 % of boys (but >30% do not complete it), but this drops at secondary school to 15 % (girls) and 21 % (boys). <sup>7</sup> Education is free of charge and compulsory between ages 7 and 16, (6 years primary school, 3 years middle school and 3 years secondary education). Many poorer children do not attend because of high ancillary education costs. Students can continue schooling after primary school if they pass the <i>diplôme d'étude fondamentale</i> . Secondary school has a standard curriculum for the next 3 years. Upper secondary schools prevail in urban areas, the best of these privately paid. <sup>8</sup>
Religions	Muslim 93.9%, Christian 2.8%, animist 0.7%, none 2.5% (2018 est.) <sup>9</sup>
Conflict history and overview	Mali is the epicentre of a jihadist insurgency that began in the north of the country in 2012 and spread three years later to neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso. <sup>10</sup> In 2012, rising ethnic tensions and an influx of fighters - some linked to Al-Qa'ida - from Libya led to a rebellion and military coup. Rebels expelled the military from Mali's three northern regions, allowing terrorist groups to develop strongholds in the area. French military intervention helped the Malian government to retake most of the north. However, government's grasp in the region remained weak with local militias, terrorists, and insurgent groups trying to expand control. <sup>11</sup> President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who took office in September 2013, was unable to unify the country or put down the insurgency, and was toppled in an August 2020 coup led by Colonel Assimi Goïta. Goïta put a transitional government in place, but took power again in May 2021 after a dispute with the cabinet. <sup>12</sup> In May 2022, Mali ended the defence agreement with France, instead strengthened relations with Russia and allegedly deployed Kremlin-related Wagner mercenaries. <sup>13</sup>
Humanitarian situation	Life expectancy at birth: 62 yrs. Population below poverty line: 42.1% (2019). <sup>14</sup> Two military coups in August 2020 and May 2021 and growing insecurity in Mali have resulted in a stagnant economy, exacerbated by food price inflation that particularly hurt the poor. <sup>15</sup> As a result, the nr of food insecure people rose to >1.3 million in 2021, a threefold increase on 2020. <sup>16</sup>
Human rights situation	Human rights deteriorated in 2021: numerous attacks, killings, abductions, sexual abuses by armed Islamist groups; also many abuses, unlawful executions and forced disappearances by security forces, with impunity for atrocities by all actors. <sup>17</sup> Wagner mercenaries have been linked to the massacre of 456 civilians in 2022. <sup>18</sup>
Situation of women FGM – early marriages	Maternal mortality rate: 562 deaths per 100,000 live births (2017). <sup>19</sup> Child marriages: 16% of the girls are married by the age of 15 and 54% by 18. <sup>20</sup> One-third of all women experience sexual or gender-related violence. <sup>21</sup> FGM prevalence: 89 % (90 % type II), highest in south and southwest. No legislation banning FGM. <sup>22</sup>
Situation of LGBTI	Homosexual activity in Mali is legal, same-sex marriage unrecognised. No legal protection against discrimination. <sup>23</sup>
Asylum / migration / (IDPs)	IDPs within Mali: 350,000 (as of 31 Dec 2021), 326,000 due to conflict and violence, 24,000 due to disasters. <sup>24</sup> Malta arrivals/applicants 2020 and 2021 unknown.

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- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>2</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>3</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>4</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>5</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>6</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>; <https://datatopics.worldbank.org/education/country/mali>
  - <sup>7</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/education-in-mali/>; <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/>
  - <sup>8</sup> <https://www.scholaro.com/pro/countries/Mali/Education-System>
  - <sup>9</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>10</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220107-russian-military-advisors-arrive-in-mali-after-french-troop-reduction>
  - <sup>11</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>12</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/mali/>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13881370>
  - <sup>13</sup> <https://www.africanews.com/2022/05/04/mali-france-has-lost-legal-basis-for-military-operations/>;  
<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220502-mali-junta-breaks-off-from-defence-agreements-with-france>
  - <sup>14</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>15</sup> <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/09940810426225555/idu07a1d24040e60904acc093690fd2d766e83cd>
  - <sup>16</sup> <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/mali>
  - <sup>17</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/mali>
  - <sup>18</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/04/russian-mercenaries-wagner-group-linked-to-civilian-massacres-in-mali>
  - <sup>19</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mali/>
  - <sup>20</sup> <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/mali/>
  - <sup>21</sup> <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries/africa/mali>
  - <sup>22</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/mali/en/reports/female-genital-mutilation-mali>; <https://www.28toomany.org/country/mali/>
  - <sup>23</sup> <https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report>; <https://www.equaldex.com/region/mali>
  - <sup>24</sup> <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/mali>
  - <sup>24</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>

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This factsheet was compiled by Adri van den Berg for BDE. Adri worked for many years as a Country of Origin Information (COI) researcher, her final post before retiring being with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in Malta.