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Towards Analyzing Violent Contestation for Power in Mali, 2012 – 2021

By Ekanem, Ekanem Asukwo, Nebeife, Chigozie Joseph & Celestine Okafor

Federal University Wukari

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Towards Analyzing Violent Contestation for Power in Mali, 2012 – 2021

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I. Introduction

Geographically, Mali is located in West Africa, bordering Algeria on the north, Niger on the east, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire on the south, Guinea on the south west, as well as Senegal and Mauritania on the west. In terms of land mass, Mali is the 7th largest country in African continent. It is a landlocked state, but rich in agriculture (farming, fishing and pastoralism), due to the availability of water resources from Niger River. Her land is also rich with mineral resources such as gold, uranium, including salt. Arieff and Johnson (2012) further hinted that Mali had a population of 14.5 million people, spread among 10 regions; Kayes, Koulikoro, Bamako, Sikasso, Segou, Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal and Menaka. According to 2011 estimate, the major ethnic groups in Mali are Mande (50%), Peul/Fulbe (17%), Voltaic (12%), Tuareg and Moore (10%), Songhai (6%) including Bozo (5%). Islam is the major religion in Mali with 90% of its entire population as worshippers while the remaining 10% are Christians. The official language in Mali is French, while Bambara is the local language among the people (Chauzal, & Damme, 2015).

Author α: Ph.D, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria. e-mail: ekanem4ekanem@gmail.com

Author σ ρ: Department of Political Science, Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria.

In 1969, Mali got independence from France, and had Modibo Keita as the first elected president of that country. President Keita ruled the country until 1968, when he was removed from power through military coup, led by General Moussa Traore. General Traore became a dictator who dominated the political space of Mali for 23 years, until March 1991, when General Amadou Toumani Toure (also known as ATT) overthrew that regime. General Toure did not delay the transition programme to democratic rule. Hence, in June 1992, a general election was conducted and won by President Alpha Oumar Konare, who served two terms, and handed over power to Amadou Toure in April 2002 as the next democratically elected president of Republic of Mali (Boas, 2019). Between 2002 to 2007, Mali was seen as a beckon of democracy for other countries in Africa to emulate. Regrettably, Chauzal and Damme (2015) lamented that:

> ...long standing distrust between different ethnic communities' economic frustration, political resentment and strategic opportunity taking, all of them rooted in the fragmented nature of the country... As a result, any effort to achieve sustainable peace now, needs to address not just the immediate run-up to the latest armed conflict in the country, but also the conditions that account for the recurrence of crisis (p.10).

Though President Amadou Toure started well, but non implementation of Tamanrasset Accord (brokered by Algeria) that permitted the northern regions (Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal) to attract massive development projects and semi-autonomous statute led to massive exodus of Tuaregs to Libya. They were accommodated by late Colonel Gaddafi until that regime collapsed in 2011. "Tuaregs who formerly fought alongside Gaddafi had returned to their countries following his demise-precipitated a new rebellion that was fueled by underlying resentment" (International Crisis Group, 2012, p.2). International Crisis Group (2012) further added that:

> Stories of massacres, the poisoning of wells… forced exile from 1963, and the bloody settling of scores carried out by pro-government militias against Tuareg civilians in the 1990s are passed down to each new generation of fighters… shape the collective memory of history marked by violence and suffering (p.2).

The returnees did not hide their plan, but had meetings with community leaders in northern regions; Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. They informed them of the

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need for the creation of a separate state from the present Mali, popularly known as Republic of Azawad. Ansar Dine (protector of the faith), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), National Movement for the Liberalization of Azawad (MNLA), Movement for Unity and the Jihad in West Africa (MUJOA) were present in the meeting. Their leaders, Ag Najim (MNLA), Ag Ghali (Ansar Dine) and Mokthar Belmokhtar (AQIM) played significant roles in Malian regime change. On 17th January 2012, Ansar Dine, National Movement for Liberation of Azawad, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and Movement for Unity and the Jihad in West Africa attacked and overwhelmed Malian military base at Menaka in Gao region. International Crisis Group (2012) recalled that, "the soldiers had their throats cut after their hands had been tied behind their backs" (p.14). The Malian Human Rights Association (AMDH) and the International Human Rights Federation (FIDH) also confirmed this brutal murder of Malian soldiers by the rebel group.

Expectedly, wives and relatives of the soldiers protested at the Presidential Palace, urging President Amadou Toure to withdraw the military from the northern regions. Aning, Okyere and Abdallah (2012) posited that, "while the activities of the rebels continually undermined the security of the Malian state, a section of the national army described the president as weak and incapable of sufficiently providing them with necessary resources to fight the rebels." (p.4). On 22nd March 2012, junior military officers led by Captain Amadou Sanogo, arrested some political leaders except the President and declared himself (Sanogo) as a new Head of State. Justifying the coup d'état, Captain Sanogo decried, "the government's failure to provide adequate equipment to the defense and security forces...to defend the country's territorial integrity" (International Crisis Group, 2012, p.18). Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 23rd March, 2012. In a separate statements and communiques issued by Economic Community of West African States, United Nations, European Union, African Union, they pleaded for the safety of President Amadou Toure and unconditional restoration of democratic regime. Aning, Okyere and Abdallah (2012) hinted that:

> ECOWAS called for immediate restoration of constitutional rule and reminded the National Committee for Rectification of Democracy and Restoration of the State (CNRDRE) of its responsibility for the life, safety and security of the president and members of his government, the population as well as respect for institutions (p.4).

Alassane Quattara, the President of Cote d'Ivoire, appointed Blaise Compaore, the President of Burkina Faso, to mediate over the crisis in Mali. A threat of sanction was imposed on the military junta and this forced them to relinquish power to ECOWAS appointee, Dioncounda Traore, the President of National Assembly on 12th April 2012 as Interim President of Mali, until the elected president was sworn in. Regrettably, during this period of power struggle in which ECOWAS was contemplating of deploying "Standby Force," "the coup d'état has...crippled the security agencies into disorder, allowing the MNLA to overran the three northern regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, declaring independence from Mali..." (Aning, Okyere & Abdallah 2012, p.6). The declaration of the northern regions as Republic of Azaward, implementation of Sharia Law and the human rights abuses associated with this incidence prompted the Interim President, Dioncounda Traore, to appeal President Francois Holland of France for military support. Accepting this appeal, Alexander (2013) recorded that, "as the former colonial power in Mali, and concerned over the safety of some 6,000 of its citizens in the country, France immediately intervened militarily, which included launching airstrikes against the jihadist forces occupying the north" (p.11). Ansar Dine, leader, Ag Ghali warned the Malian Interim President against the invitation and declared that "...while Dionconda asked for help from France, we ask for guidance from Allah and from other Muslims in our sub-region, because this war has become a war against the crusader" (cited in Alexander, 2013, p.11).

Despite series of hurdles, the Interim President, Dioncunda Traore was able to conduct a general election that led to the swearing in of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita as the President of Mali on 13th August 2013. Regrettably, his second term in office which he won the election on 12th August, 2018, had been truncated through military coup, led by Colonel Assimi Goita on 28th May, 2021. Questions that need answers are:

(i) Which theoretical framework can adequately explain violent contestation for power in Mali?
(ii) What are the remote causes of violent contestation for power in Mali?
(iii) What are the impacts of violent contestation for power in Mali?
(iv) What are the international responses to violent contestation for power in Mali?

The first section of the study deals with introduction while the second section is concerned with theoretical framework. The third section is the materials and methods of the study. The remote causes of violent contestation for power is the fourth section while the impact of the violent contestation for power is the fifth section. The international responses to violent contestation for power constitutes the sixth section, while the conclusion and recommendations is the seventh section. References constitute the last part of the study.

II. Frustration-Aggression Theory

Frustration-Aggression Theory was propounded in 1939 at Yale University by Dollard, Doob, Miller,

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Mowrer and Scars. According to these Yale scholars, "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise always lead to some form of aggression" (1939, p.13). The term frustration was defined as "an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal response at its proper time in the behavior sequence" (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer & Scars, 1939, p.7). Added to this, Newcome (1968) argued that, "frustration always induces motivation of some kind of aggression which acts as a drive or motive to react, combat or make attack" (cited in Breuer & Elson, 2017, p.7) Contributing to this theory, Freud (1927) cited in Gur (1970) posited that aggression has instinct dimension. Instinct theory of aggression comes as a result of genetical (biological) inheritance from the parent.

Furthermore, individual who is aggrieved can express his grievance overtly as well as covertly. The overt entails outward expression while covert is an inward expression. Citing Freud (1927), Johan (2010) posited that, "... aggression was a primordial reaction when the individual attempts to obtain pressure or avoid pain was blocked" (p.7). Extending this explanation, Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Scars (1939) cited in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraft (1979) hinted that the occurrence of aggression depends on "(i) the strength of instigating to the frustrated response (ii) the degree of interference with the frustrated response (iii) the number of frustrated response to sequence" (p.283). In order words, thwarting, which is the gravity of deprivation, attempts toward resolution, and the frequencies it occurs determine the rate of aggression. Thus, the response to frustration can take the form of overt and covert. Overt aggression requires open (direct) attack, while covert aggression entails secret (indirect) attack on the perpetrator of the frustration. Indirect aggression can also take the form of self-castigation especially in an extreme case like suicide. The theory also postulates the concept of punishment. Morlan (1949) explained that covert aggression occurs if the aggressor anticipates punishment. If punishment does not exist, aggressor operate overtly. "Put precisely... anticipated punishment, which is a primary source of frustration, affected the inhabitation of overt aggression..." (Johan, 2010, p.2). "Act of aggression can be inherited, especially when their commission would lead to punishment or other undesirable consequences. The expectation of punishment reduces overt aggression, and the greater the certainty and amount of punishment anticipated for an aggressive act, the less likely is that act to occur" (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer & Scars, 1939, p.54). Punishment as a concept was closely followed with the concept of displacement. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraft (1979) hinted that, "...there may occur a displacement of aggressions, in which case the individual directs hostility towards someone or something not responsible for the original frustration" (p.25). If the aggrieved individual hits at the source of frustration (instigator), it is the direct target while hitting at the agent of frustration refers to the indirect target. Catharsis is the last concept in this theory and it refers to "...a release of aggressive energy or tension and a reduction in the instigation to aggression" (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer & Scars 1939, p. 58). Regrettably, Morler argued that the expression of an aggressive impulse does not end at catharsis, but "set up a vicious cycle that lead to further aggression" (p.1).

Relating this theory to the study, it is not hard for one to identify the crux of the matter. The Malian government (both colonial and postcolonial regimes) has failed its citizens, especially the northerners; Tuareg, Arab and Fulbe. Politically, the northerners have no value. As Chauzal and Damme (2015) confirmed, "Arabs have been deeply marginalized by the Malian central power. Before the 2012 crisis, no Arab succeeded in being elected to the National Assembly or the High Council of Regional Authorities" (p.38). Economically, lack of developmental projects in the north compared to the south constitutes source of frustration. As Lecocq and Klute (2013), cited in Davis (2018) argued, "the rebellions expressed frustration with "the disproportionate development of southern versus northern Mali..." (p.4). Agricultural production and tourism have been the major source of revenue to the government of Mali. Regrettably, these sources of revenue which is the mainstay of the northern economy have not been developed by the Malian government. As Davis (2018) posited.

> The Malian government... by not investing in agricultural production in Mali, effectively stifles the economy of the north, which is primarily Tuareg and Arab. Furthermore, the prohibition of tourism by the Malian government also helped engineer an economic crisis in the north. Consequently, the financial situation in Mali angers many Tuaregs and Arabs and further encourages them to join... the growing number of anti-state militant groups... (p.4).

It is the response to the above stated political alienation and economic marginalization of the northerners that gave birth to aggression. The Islamist groups that left Libya due to the NATO bombardments returned with arms and overwhelmed Malian military in Timbuktu, Kao and Kidal and declared the northern regions as a Republic of Azawad. In addition, The Malian military was disappointed over the manner their welfares were treated by the government of Mali. They were not well paid nor promoted and the necessary equipments and ammunition that could assist them in defeating the armed groups were not provided by the government. As International Crisis Group (2012) stated, "among the reasons for this frustration was the way that Amadou Toure promoted officers of his generation to the rank of general… and the perception... that close associates of the president were indulging in an unprecedented degree of corruption..." (p.18).

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The frustration Malian army experienced while battling armed groups in the northern Mali, led to mutiny in Kati, a military camp near Bamako. According to Kimenyi, Adibe, Djire, Jirgi, Kergna, Deresse, Pugliese and Westbury (2014), "their mutiny transformed into coup d'état when, on March 22, 2012, the military rebels overthrew President Amadou Tormani Toure and instituted the National Committee for the Rectification of Democracy and Restoration of the State" (p.5). The overt attacks that involved armed groups invading military barracks and the subsequent coup d'état that led to the overthrow of former Malian President, Amadou Tourmani Toure can be seen as a direct attack at the source of frustration. The covert attack at the source of frustration include; raping, child soldiers, kidnapping and other crimes against humanity committed by the Islamist groups. International Criminal Court (2013) recorded that on 17th January, 2012, the armed groups executed between 70 and 153 detainees at Aguelhok. Between March to April 2012, there were reported cases of rape, torture and enforced disappearance committed by both the armed groups and Malian soldiers in northern Mali. Though the reports were taken secretly, the Chief Prosecutor (Luis Moreno Ocampo) had record of all those that involved in the covert activities. Similarly, there was also displacement in the aggression. The armed groups intentionally attacked World Heritage site in Timbuktu. According to International Criminal Court (2013); "from 4th May 2012 to 10th July 2012 a series of attacks against at least 9 Mausoleums, 2 Mosques, and 2 historical monuments in the city of Timbuktu were intentionally perpetrated by members of Ansar Dine and AQIM and possibly also MUJOA. Information confirms that the attacks were intentional" (p.24).

Despite the fact that Malian government had collapsed, international community cannot allow the armed groups to commit crimes with impunity. International responses became imperative, and it came in a form of punishment against the armed groups. France responded rapidly through the establishment of Operation Several that involved the deployment of 4,500 soldiers. President Holland of France, "assisted the Malian Armed Forces (FAM) to stop the advance of terrorist groups and repelled them while ensuring the safety of civilian populations" (Davis, 2018, p.5). The United States government also decided to implement hash measures on the military junta in order to deter them from prolonging their stay in power. Arieff (2013) recorded that:

> US security assistance programmes have, therefore, been suspended. Mali's $461 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact-which focused on improving agricultural development along the Niger River and construction of a new international airport in Bamako has been terminated. The administration has also suspended some potentially legally permissible programmes, including security cooperation activities, administered by the Defence Department... (p.15).

Regrettably, this punishment that would have served as deterrent (catharsis), eventually led to further aggressive activities, committed by the armed groups. The AQIM had abducted French tourist in November 2012, at Malian border close to Mauritania (Koepf, 2013). Lacher (2012) further hinted that, "by April 2012, 42 foreign nationals had been targeted; of these, 24 were released 5 were killed.... and 13 were still being held hostage as of the end of August 2012... in northern Mali by AQIM" (p.9). Even Movement for Unity and the Jihad in West Africa (MUJOA) had reiterated its commitment to continue the fight. The Islamist group warned that "France has opened the gates of hell. It has fallen into trap much more dangerous than Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia," (cited in Alexander, 2013, p.19).

III. Materials and Methods

This study has descriptive design that depended on secondary source (books, journal articles, monographs, conference papers, internet materials) of data collection. The data were sourced from libraries in Nigeria and internet. They were subjected to content validity before analyzing qualitatively into the study. The researcher used qualitative method, in order to embark on an in-depth study of Malian crisis and further expand the frontier of knowledge for future research.

Furthermore, the population of this study was drawn from Tuareq, Fulbe, Mende, voltaic, Songhai, Arab among other ethnic groups. The sample of the study focused on Tuareq, Arab and Fulbe who are the natives of northern Mali. The choice of northern Mali, despite the fact that other regions (central and southern) also exist is judgmental. The northern region is the most marginalized region and its people are alienated from the state, since colonial era. Regrettably, dearth of materials on Malian crisis has created opportunity for unfounded argument and generate gap in extant literature. It is hoped that this study would correct it and bridge the gap accordingly.

IV. Remote Causes of Violent Contestation for Power in Mali

Undeniably, the present Mali is a forced union between people of different ethnic groups. The northern Mali, that is dominated by the Tuaregs and the Arabs did not want to be part of the state, regrettably, they were forced into that union through intimidation and manipulation by French colonial master. Immediately the state got independence in 1959, crisis erupted in 1963, Mali had another crisis in 1990 before 2006 crisis that ended in 2008. Therefore, the 2012 crisis that ended the regime of President Amadou Toure is a continuation of unsettled issues that occurred in the past. According to

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International Crisis Group (2012), "the rebellions that took place in these years reflected the profound historical misunderstanding between the elites in the north and south at the time of independence in 1960, later entrenched by the south's marginalization of the north" (p.2). The colonial master did not unite the entire state, rather concentrated in divide and rule policy. Western education was provided for those in the south (who is now the ruling elites) and above all, the north was not provided with the basic infrastructure such as road, hospital, water, schools among others. As Chauzal and Damme (2015) stated, "by ignoring northern aspiration for economic development (especially social and economic infrastructure) or political representation (lack of governmental seats for instance), the Malian authorities have paved the way for violent contestation and separist action" (p.30). The northern agitation for inclusiveness started during the colonial period, unfortunately, the Tuaregs and the Arabs were seen as violent peole that worth nothing. They were not given good attention, but marginalization. Their children were not given western education, rather depended on Islamic education, thereby creating the present gap in education between the north and the south. Chauzal and Damme (2015) further added that:

> ...relationship between north and south populations have always been distrustful. The French occupation even exacerbated these resentments. This is due to the attitude of the French during the colonial period when they decided to educate a ruling class almost exclusively composed of majorly black southerners... and used strategies to do so; that ranged from favouritism and patronage to economic marginalization, divided and rule and military control. This was far from helpful in strengthening the country's unity and popular adherence to the construction of a nation (p.17).

Unfortunately, this historical fault line created by the colonial master continued unabated by the post-colonial elites who were mainly southerners. There was ethnic imbalance in the political appointment, military and civil service recruitments. It should be recalled that before the 2012 crisis, out of 147 Deputies in Mali, only 12 Tuaregs were elected into the National Assembly, regrettably, none was elected from Arab's ethnic group, as a parliamentarian, or a member of High Council of Regional Authorities. Humphreys and Ag Mohammed (2005) confirmed that, "whilst Moussa Traore's various governments included a "toke" Tuareg minister, northern Mali had little influence over politics during his reign... Consequently, there was a gross under-representation of Tuaregs and Arabs in post-independence cabinets, the army and in senior civil service positions..." (cited in Bakrania, 2013, p.10). The ruling elites from the south come from the same ethnic group (Mande) that had western education as the basic criteria for political ascension. Majority of the staff in the state bureaucracy are from the south. Their services are mainly rendered in the south. Few who are posted to the northern regions, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal are there for punishment. Since they hate the northern regions, their services to the people are full of distrust, sometimes violence. "This policy greatly contributed to a deep discontent among Arab and Tuareg populations who interpreted it as a second colonialization and never accepted this..." (Chauzal & Damme, 2015, p.21).

The economic disparity between the north and south is another area of discontent. Despite abundant mineral resources in the north, the region is the poorest in the entire country. Studer (2013) cited in Chauzal and Damme (2015) maintained that, "the subsoil of Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu could contain around 850,000km^2 of oil and gas" (p.27). The region is good for farming and animal husbandry, in view of its nearness to Niger River. It is also here in the north that gold, uranium and salt that are the main export commodities of Mali are situated. Regrettably, the Malian government has not been able to annex these resources for the benefit of all. As Humphreys and Ag Mohammed (2005) stated.

> Since independence in 1960, northerners have suffered proportionately more than the rest of Mali from economic neglect and marginalization... Economic marginalization has continued into recent times, manifesting in a lack of investment in the north and a perception of unequal access to health and education. Socioeconomic data (measuring school attendance, malnutrition and vulnerability to food security) for the period 1995-1997 suggests that in the north these conditions were exceptionally poor compared to other regions of the country (p.46).

The economic marginalization of northern Mali is compounded with environmental degradation (drought, soil erosion, etc) unemployment and above all poverty. Abdalla (2009) posited that, "the Tuareg rebellion have strong roots in access to land rights which have been affected by environmental change, thereby threatening livelihoods and enforcing the economic marginalization of the Tuaregs" (p.3). Unarguably, the northern Mali can be described as barren land due to drought, desertification, deforestation, soil erosion and insufficient supply of portable water, caused by climate change. Caparini (2015) added that, "...climate change has rendered the north an even more inhospitable and conflict prone environment... a reduction of Mali's average rainfall by 30% since 1998 and the more frequent occurrence of droughts have resulted in high rate of chronic hunger" (p.5). Expectedly, poverty that associated with these environmental challenges are indisputable. Boas (2019) recalled that Mali, "ranked 179th of 187 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index 2017. Mali is one of the world's poorest countries, where most of the people scrape a living from agriculture and animal husbandry-traditional livelihoods that are threatened both by violence and conflict and by demographic trends" (p.14). Unemployment becomes the nightmare of the northern youths. Some of them that have attempted to

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acquire western education are still roaming streets, as a result of divide and rule strategies of the southern political elites. As Chauzal and Damme (2015) stated, "young people have become frustrated by the difficulties of improving their social status as they see their chances of finding a job or getting married fade away. This situation has fostered a generation of disillusioned young people" (p.26). Since the energy is in them, they cannot wait for empty promises any longer, hence have to take law into their hands by confronting the system that put them in a perpetual state of hopelessness.

Consequently, most of the unemployed youths had to leave Mali to Libya and were well received by Gaddafi's regime. Some of them were recruited into Libyan National Army, while some were given permanent residential status that permitted them to work anywhere in the country. The Pan-Arab Initiative of Qaddafi assisted the late Libyan leader in fighting Chad and sending mercenary to Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, including Turkey. Immediately, Gaddafi's regime collapsed in 2011, following the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombardments, they were forced to return home. The returnees came back to Mali with large number of arms and ammunition. International Crisis Group (2012) hinted that, "Gaddafi overthrow not only deprived the region of one of its main political brokers and patrons, it also put on the market quantities of heavy arms that were redistributed in the region according to local demands and aspirations" (p.9).

The availability of small arms and light weapons in northern Mali complicated the fragile security network that existed during the regime of President Amadou Toure. Sidibe (2012) equally argued that, "the availability of arms increased insecurity in northern Mali to the point where "almost every inhabitant carries a small arm, because they are cheap in the region" (p.27). There would have been no way for President Amadou Toure's regime to survive the rebellious onslaught from the militant groups in view of the weak and corrupt government, which he operated. As Ibrahim and Zapata (2018) stated:

> The Malian state has been incapable of establishing effective security throughout the country. Numbering around 15,800 – about 8,000 military and 7,800 paramilitary – Malian security forces are undersized for securing a 4478,841 –square-mile territory... Malian security forces have historically been ill equipped, lacking basic military equipment such as vehicles, fuel and bullets... The state's ineffectiveness, neglect and abuse have left a vacuum of authority that local communities and other non-state actors compete to fill (p.9).

V. Impacts of Violent Contestation for Power on Mali

The crisis that erupted in 2011 had forced nearly half of the entire Malian population into refugee and Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (2013), "over 350,000 are internally displaced in central and southern Mali, mostly staying with host families, and around 175,000 are refugees in camps in border areas and dispersed in urban areas (with little access to assistance) in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger" (cited in United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012, p.4). States accommodating Malian refugees were having challenges of meeting their needs. Human Rights Watch (2012) reported that refugees in Nigerien camps were malnourished and children faced malnutrition on daily bases. In Burkina Faso, refugees who were not registered received no assistance from the government. This policy led to serious hardship among the refugees. Those Malians who were internally displaced also faced serious challenges. Women and children suffered more than men. Islamic Relief (2013) added that:

> Violence has also disrupted an already weak system of education and social services; 58 percent of schools have been forced to shut, and the health care system is in a desperate condition. Many health workers fled the northern regions, medical facilities have been destroyed and looted, and lack of funds may soon reduce the already scare government resources allocated to healthcare. These could have devastating consequences (p.1)

Like other Sahelian states (Niger, Chad, Senegal, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania etc), Mali is a drought prone state. The state is facing challenges of desertification that characterized by water shortage. World Bank and UNICEF supplied water to local population in central and northern Mali. The 2012 Malian crisis disrupted the activities of these donor agencies thereby resulted in cholera outbreak. As Islamic Relief (2013) reported.

> ...access to water is limited in areas across the north, including Debere, where there is only one functional water point for 6 villages (nearly 6,300 people). In a number of areas, 86 percent of schools... lack of functional water service, while 14 percent of community health centres were also deprived. This lack of water and sanitation is already causing health problems, in more than 44 percent of households... there was at least one case of diarrhea in each family over a 14 days' period (p.4).

Food insecurity that associated with Malian crisis should not be undermined. The crisis that started in 2012 led to forced migration of farmers from villages to Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camp as well as foreign states. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2012) reported that in Timbuktu, almost a quarter of the entire population fled the city. Farmers who were living in that city could not harvest their crops nor had access to farms for further planting.

Gao the centre of rice production in northern Mali was devastated. According to Haysom (2014), "In Gao, rice was not planted during the conflict, animals

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were not taken out to pasture and the maintenance of infrastructure such as dykes, which prevent the Niger River from flooding, did not take place" (p.11). Those with little reserve consumed all, rather depended on foreign donors for survival. The supply of food from the southern Mali to the central and northern region was disrupted due to the crisis. Kimenyi, Adibe, Djire, Jirgi, Kergna, Deresse, Pugliese and Westbury (2014) lamented that:

> Traders were limited in their market participation due to fear of attacks, lack of transportation, and low or unreliable supplies of crops to market. Some traders also abandoned their businesses altogether due to the conflict... Consumers did not have enough cash to buy sufficient quantities of product. Moreover, most of the buyers from government projects or NGOs, left due to the conflict, further diminishing demand for food crops.

Similarly, Malian crisis of 2012 had resulted in human rights abuses. International Crisis Group (2012) documented atrocities committed by Islamist groups (AQIM, Ansar Dine, MUJOA) MNLA as well as Malian armed forces. Malian Commission of Inquiry (2013) gathered evidence and witness statements from soldiers and civilians who escaped massacre in northern Mali that "... unnamed Malian soldiers arrested and their hands tied behind their backs before being killed in cold blood" (cited in International Crisis Group, 2012, P. 15). International Criminal Court (2013) also hinted that in January 2012, between 70 and 153 detainees at Ajuelhok were executed without trial. Between March and April 2012, incidents of looting and rape committed by armed groups were reported in northern Mali. In the same vein, "separately incidents of torture and enforced disappearance were reported in the context of the military coup around 21-22 March 2012 and a counter-coups attempt on 30 May 2012" (International Criminal Court 2013, P. 13). Human Rights watch (2012) also reported that on 2nd April 2012, Malian soldiers fighting in Sevare arrested, detained and executed 4 Tuaregs who are members of Malian security services. Added to this, FIDH (2013) and Amnesty International (2012) posited that on 18th April 2012 Malian Soldiers allegedly killed 3 unarmed persons whom they accused of spying for the MNLA in Sevare. International Criminal Court (2013) equally documented that; "during the night of 8-9 September 2012, 16 unarmed Muslim preachers were reportedly shot dead by the Malian army at the army checkpoint while they were on their way to Bamako. There is reasonable basis to believe that the war crime of murder under Article 8(2) (C) (i) was committed by these forces" (P. 22)

Malian crisis did not respect women dignity. Women were violated severally. International Federation for Human Rights (2012) decided that following the takeover of the northern Mali, especially GAO and Timbuktu, more than 50 women were reported raped by the armed groups and Malian security forces. "Cases of rape were reported in Gao, Timbuktu, Niafounke villages around Dire and in the Menaka region" (International Criminal Court, 2013, P. 25). Child Soldier was also common among the armed groups. Boys below the age of 18 years were forcefully conscripted and enlisted into the armed groups. United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (2012) reported that in July 2012, "at least 175 boys aged 12-18 were recruited into "armed groups" in Mali (p.4). Furthermore, 2012 Malian crisis had disrupted economic activities in that country. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) cited in Arieff and Johnson (2012) had maintained that, "... 2012 economic growth projections have dropped from previous estimates of 6% to negative 1%. It is also estimated that government revenues are 1/4th the level they were just one year ago... accordingly, government provision of basic social services has sharply fallen" (p.13). Even Hillary Clinton, (the former United States' Secretary of State) during her official visit to Africa in 2012 hinted that by some estimates (the current crisis) could set back Mali's economic progress by nearly a decade" (cited in Arieff & Johnson, 2012, p.13). Tourism has been the major economic hub of the people of Mali. Regrettably, the crisis in the northern Mali as well as the abduction of tourists for ransom by the armed groups have dissuaded foreigners from travelling to Mali. This affected the revenue normally generated from tourism. As Arieft and Johnson (2012) posited, "tourism in various areas of the country (including the north) previously provided significant revenue and employment, but security concerns have devastated the industry over the past decade" (p.12). In the same vein, the agricultural sector, especially livestock business has been affected by the crisis. According to Kimenyi, Adibe, Djire, Jirgi, Kergna, Deresse, Pugliese and Westbury (2014):

> Livestock traders faced enormous security challenges in bringing their products to market. The rebels often attacked their flocks and plundered their cash and animals. Thus, many of them were either forced to limit their activities or quit livestock marketing altogether. Also, the absence of a well-functioning banking system exacerbated the insecurity of the traders, who had no secure way of storing the cash that they earned (p.10).

Buyers were not having enough money to buy livestock due to increase in price. In Timbuktu, for instance, the price of meat per kilogram that was sold in 2011 at 1,250 CFA (Malian currency) rose to 2,500 CFA in 2013. In Gao, the price of meat with bones rose from 1,800 CFA per kilogram to 2,250 CFA per kilogram (Kimenyi, Adibe, Djire, Jirgi, Kergna, Deresse, Pugliese and Westbury (2014). The crisis also triggers unemployment in Mali. Industries had collapsed, foreign investors have deserted, and government ministries, department and agencies had crippled following the crisis. The overall impact of all these, is high rate of unemployment. "Finding a job is extremely difficult due

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to lack of connections... even qualified teachers struggle to find jobs despite the overcrowded schools..." (Islamic Relief, 2013, p.8).

VI. International Responses to Violent Contestation for Power in Mali

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was the first foreign body to intervene in Malian crisis. The military mutiny that erupted in Aguelhok between 21st and 22nd March 2012 following the massacre of Malian security forces and civilians by the Islamist groups resulted in coup d'état. On 27th March, 2012, President Quattara of Cote d'voire, the then President of ECOWAS convened a meeting of ECOWAS Head of States in Abijan. The sub regional body denounced the coup and urged the junta to relinquish power and returned Mali to constitutional rule. The immediate response from ECOWAS was as a result of fear that the gains of democratic government in West Africa could be reverse through spiral spread of military coups. Haysom (2014) hinted that, "ECOWAS motive for intervening in Mali stemmed from the threat to West African stability that the conflict was thought to pose with the potential to spill over into Niger and the possibility of stronger relations developing between Islamist extremist groups in Mali and Nigeria." (p.14)

President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso was appointed as the mediator in the Malian crisis. ECOWAS went further to impose sanction on Mali. The sanctions included; the suspension of Mali's membership from ECOWAS, immediate recall of member states' Ambassadors from Mali, travel ban on members of military junta and their associates, including the closure of borders of member states with Mali.

Aning, Okyere and Abdallah (2012) alerted that, "perhaps, sensing the possible harsh effect of the sanction, the military junta agreed to hand over power to a transitional government" (p.4). On 6th April, 2012, ECOWAS lifted sanction on Mali and appointed Dioncounda Traore (the President of National Assembly) Interim President. He was sworn in on 12th April, 2012. Modibo Diarra was also appointed Acting Prime Minister while Captain Sanogo, the coup leader was legally recognized as the former Head of State (International Crisis Group, 2012). Despite the temporary political solution in the south brokered by ECOWAS, the armed groups were not ready to surrender to the legitimate government in Bamako. ECOWAS was faced with challenges of restoring sovereignty in the entire state. The only option left was the deployment of ECOWAS Standby Force in Mali. This military option was rejected by Malian military and the political class. The Malian military preferred to be assisted in terms of logistics instead of intervention. The political class was not also happy with ECOWAS over the appointment of members of interim government. According to Bakrania (2013), the political class argued that:

> The approach to mediation, which treated Sanogo as an almost exclusive interlocutor and provided Campaore with free hand, has been chaotic and unilateral in nature... There was minimal consultation with Malian political circles over the choice of Modibo Diarra as Acting Prime Minister... Critics within Mali have presented arguments about national sovereignty, emphasizing that leaders should not be imposed on Mali from the outside... (p.14).

Malian immediate neighbours, Algeria and Mauritania who are not members of ECOWAS did not support the deployment of standby force, "due to concerns about the effect, such an intervention would have in sending militant back, over their borders" (Caparini, 2015, p.7). In view of these difficulties, ECOWAS mission in Mali (MICEMA) did not achieve a remarkable success. As Haysom (2014) captured it, "this idea did not come to fruition; the organization did not have the political clout or financial resources to go ahead without international assistance..." (p.4).

In April 2012, the regional body, African Union (AU) intervened in Malian crisis. "AU imposed sanctions, asset freezes and travel bans against the junta and others deemed to be involved in contributing to the destabilization of Mali" (CNN 2013, cited in Hyasom, 2014, p.4). ECOWAS mission in Mali (MICEMA) was formally transformed into the Africa-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) in June, 2012. This transformation made it African not West African initiative. On 14th July 2012, the AU's Peace and Security Council strategized on the use of force. The ECOWAS also sent a Technical Assessment Mission that included members of African Union and United Nations to Bamako, preparing for the deployment of military force (AFISMA) in Mali.

Caparini (2015) posited that, "the concepts proposed that the main Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger would train, set up bases in the south, and then support the Malian army in its lead role of conducting combat operations to retake the north" (p.8). The original proposal envisages the deployment of 3,300 troops which would later increase to 7,700 troops by the end of January 2013. Regrettably, financial challenges and the unwillingness of the member states of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) to fulfill promises prompted the Islamist groups to wage war in northern and central Mali. Even Bakrania (2013) confirmed that, "the African Union itself accepts that its response to the conflict has been too slow" (p.15). The inability of the troops to fight in desert terrain as well as commitment to human rights were issues of concern. On 10th January 2013, the Islamist groups (AQIM, MUJOA, Ansar Dine and MNLA) took over Konna, a strategic town in central Mali, and headed towards south. Caparini (2015) hinted that, "given the

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degraded state of the Malian army, and the lack of readiness of AFISMA to respond, the Malian interim government requested France assistance and the French-led military intervention "Several" was launched on 11th January 2013" (p.21). Narrating the major reason for Franch quick intervention in Malian crisis, Koepf (2013) explained that:

> France, the former colonial power... has been most affected by AQIM's activities. Between 2007 and 2011, commandos linked to the terrorist group kidnapped several French citizens, launched bomb attacks on the French embassies in Mauritania and Mali and repeatedly threatened to launch terrorist attacks on French soil. This spurred France to assume a leadership role in international efforts to fight AQIM (p.3).

On 11th January 2013, France carried out a successful military operation against the armed groups in northern Mali. France troops in collaboration with Chadian troops launched both air and ground attacks against the Islamist groups who fled to neighbouring countries; Algeria, Niger, Mauritania including Libya. In August, 2014 Operation Several was transformed into Operation Barkhane. The essence of its transformation was to incorporate other Sahelian states; Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger who were also affected by Islamist threats. Staff of Operation Barkhane are given attractive pay package, and its headquarter is at N'Djamena, the capital of Chad. France has also established a permanent military base in Ivory Coast, "which it has used to conduct counter insurgency campaigns in the Sahel region and South of Maghreb (Haysom, 2014, P.15).

Furthermore, France initiated the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM). On 17th January 2013, member states of European Union contributed 620 soldiers whose purpose was to train and advise Malian Armed Forces on fighting the armed groups as well as protecting civilian population. According to Bakrania (2013), "the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) has an initial mandate of 15 months and will specifically train and advise the Malian armed forces. The training will contribute to restoring military capacity and enabling the armed forces to engage in combat operations..." (p.15). In the same vein, on 15th April 2014, European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali was launched. The mission was aimed at supporting, advising and assisting Malian National Police to implement security reform. United Nations was another non-state actor that had contributed immensely towards the protection to Malian sovereignty. On 25th April, 2013, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2100 was passed which established; United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The mission deployed 12,500 personnel of which 11,200 were soldiers to take over from AFISMA. They were to support and monitor AFISMA in Malian cities of Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal, Mopti, Segou, Menaka as well as Bamako (Ibrahim & Zapata, 2018). Regrettably, Cserkits (2020) decried that, "since its implementation in 2013, it ranked at 4th place regarding the death toll of the UN mission... and is likely to gain the sad 1st place in the foreseeable future" (p.2).

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings have revealed that colonial legacy, political alienation and economic marginalization are the major factors that triggered Malian crisis in 2012. The conflict had led to humanitarian crisis, economic hardship, as well as human rights abuses among Malians. International community; ECOWAS, AU, UN, EU, US, France among others have responded to the crisis, but the permanent solution is still wanting.

The study, therefore, recommends immediate restoration of democratic regime. This is imperative, in view of the fact that, the present military rule, headed by Colonel Assimi Goita who overthrew, the elected President of Mali on 28th May 2021 is illegal and currently under stiff sanctions by international community. Speedy conduct of general elections and further transition to civilian rule would bring back confidence in the system, and endear foreign partners. Citing Afrobarometer (2012), Coulibaly and Bratton (2013) restated that, "December 2012 survey results, showed that more than 80percent of Malians committed to elections, despite increasing skepticism about democracy as practiced in Mali" (p.4).

Similarly, the newly elected officials should prioritize good governance as the only political antidote that can bring unity in Mali. Politics of exclusion, economic marginalization and above all, corruption should have no place in new Mali. The elected political leaders should ensure even development throughout the entire state, open political pace for democracy to flourish and guarantee transparency and accountability in the management of state resource. As Bleek, Dembele and Guindo (2016) argued, "good governance is not an elixir for state weakness or the increasing insurgent threats to the Sahel, but it is a necessary condition for creating the foundation for a sustainable peace" (p.18).

Furthermore, Malian government should expedite action towards inclusive dialogue. This dialogue should entail all segments of Malian society; especialy the ethnic groups such as Arab, Fulbe, Mande, Tuareg, Moore among others. The religious organizations; Muslim and Christians should not be excluded in the negotiation. Even the terrorist group, AQIM, MUJOA, MNLA and Ansar Dine should be part of the negotiation. The role of Islam which is the major religion in Mali should be part of the new Malian constitution. The people would admire Sharia if entrenched in the constitution and contribute their quota towards nation building. Even International Crisis Group

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(2021) corroborated this opinion that, "the Malian government should... facilitate a public debate on the role of Islam in determining the state's institutional and political principles, the provision of justice and public moral codes" (p.29).

In addition, International Community should collaborate with elected Malian officials and bring lasting peace to Mali. African Union should open talks with major international actors in Malian crisis, especially France, United States, United Kingdom, European Union and United Nations. Africa cannot afford stateless society in Mali, hence there is need for foreign cooperation. Presently, Mali has been isolated from international community following the coup d'état that brought Colonel Assimi Goita into power since 28th May 2021. The common people are suffering as a result of sanctions, and the northern Mali is still a safe haven for the Islamist groups. As International Crisis Group (2012) opined that, "the international community should now deploy the threat of individual sanctions against both terrorist actors in the north and opponents of political normalization in the south..." (p.33). Time to act is now.

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