

*Civil Society Takes  
Responsibility*

*Popular Involvement in the Peace  
Process in Mali*

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## FOREWORD

In 1990, a rebellion broke out in the Northern regions of Mali. For various reasons, the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) found itself near the centre of events. The NCA had been running a huge development project in the province of Timbuktu. Two Malian staff-members of this project became general secretaries of two different rebel movements. I had served as director of the NCA project in 1987–88 when they were promoted to important positions within the project. Another Malian NCA staff-member has held various positions in the government of Mali since April 1991.

For these and other reasons, the government of Mali wanted the NCA to play an active part in the peace process. I was personally approached by one of the rebel leaders and by people belonging to various ethnic groups, and was asked to become involved.

This involvement, which lasted from August 1995 through March 1996, was to have consequences more far-reaching than we of the NCA could have imagined. In fact, we became facilitators for the large-scale participation of civil society in a process of reconciliation and consolidation of the peace throughout the North of Mali. I myself know of no other conflict in which the ‘grass-root sector’ has reacted so massively and has had such a deep influence on a peace process.

So unique was the involvement of civil society that the NCA wished to contribute to a broad analysis to explore whether some general lessons could be drawn from the Malian experience. They approached the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), and it was arranged that I should work for four months at PRIO to carry out such a study. The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to finance this undertaking, just as they had financed most of the NCA’s involvement in the peace process in Mali. I would like to thank all those who encouraged me and made this study possible. A special greeting to Susan Høivik at PRIO for very useful comments and language corrections.

*Kåre Lode*

Tromsø, Norway, 31 August 1997



# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Objectives of Study

In 1996 I published an analysis of the involvement of civil society<sup>1</sup> in the peace process in Mali.<sup>2</sup> That study explains who organized the peace process, how it was organized, what the problems were, how they were solved and the results of the participation of civil society. The 1996 work was an analysis of *there* and *then*.

But the Malian experience, with such heavy involvement of civil society, was unique. Thus it would be interesting to see what more general lessons might be drawn.<sup>3</sup>

First I will examine the causes that led to the armed rebellion and relate the peace settlement to these causes. This should provide some indication of the extent to which there have been lasting solutions to the main problems.

Secondly I will discuss how the group with which I was associated gained the necessary trust to become facilitators for civil society.<sup>4</sup> More generally, I present some reflections on the importance of trust in such a situation.

Thirdly I will study the conditions that made possible the heavy popular involvement. In more general terms, I will try to identify the basic conditions that must be met if this model is to be applicable to other areas of conflict.

The case of Mali also provides an interesting illustration of the possibilities and limits for legal actions against war crimes and of reconciliation once peace has been restored. Therefore I will touch on that subject as well.

### 1.2 Definitions

The social and political organization of societies differs from place to place, as of course does the entire cultural setting. Even though the definition of 'civil society' will have a few central elements that will apply to all situations, it needs to be adapted to the local situation before it can be used as a tool in a specific situation.

Poulton and Ag Youssouf define civil society as 'those citizens who form themselves into associations to promote an interest which does not include seeking or exercising political power'(see note 1). I agree that in the case of Mali it will be useful to include village leaders, clan or faction leaders and religious leaders as leaders of civil society. In the present report I mention some initiatives taken by civil society in the capital city of

Bamako, but I have studied civil society only in Northern Mali and will not try to discuss whether this definition is applicable to the country as a whole.

Civil society consists of several elements, all of which merit deeper analysis. In Mali, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has organized a group of researchers who have started to look into this matter. The results of their study are still forthcoming;<sup>5</sup> here I will simply mention the elements that I have been able to identify through my own study of the peace process. I include this short analysis because each of the subdivisions of civil society mentioned below played a distinct role in the activities to be studied here. It was not until these various elements realized that they had common interests that civil society could really become a force in Mali.

In the capital city of Bamako live a number of well qualified, very often influential, professional persons of all ethnic groups. Because of their education, their positions in society and their geographical situation, they are usually better informed, have a higher degree of protection and greater possibility of expressing their opinion than the elite of civil society who live in the provinces. I have no comments as to the role and composition of civil society on the lower level in Bamako, however.

The elite elements of civil society in Bamako are close to those in power, and it is not always correct to say that they do not seek political power. (We shall return to this point later.)

In the provinces we find the same distinction between two levels as in Bamako. But the grass-root level – approximately the same as ‘traditional’ society – is comparatively far stronger than that in Bamako. This difference was, however, not particularly salient in the setting I have studied.

Then there is in Mali an ethnic and social subdivision of civil society which is modified by economic activities. There are the Songhoy, or Arabs, with two main subdivisions: merchants and nomads; and there are the Tuareg, with two main subdivisions: traditionally free people and former slaves.

An awareness of these subdivisions is crucial for understanding the possibilities and the limitations of civil society in the peace process. These ethnic-economic subdivisions have other sub groupings as well, but these were not of any great relevance to my study.

The people of the towns in the North are very different from those living in the rural areas – in terms of ethnic, social and professional background – and these differences are of course reflected in civil society as well. So important are these differences that the same strategy for the involvement of civil society in the peace process could not be used in both areas. In fact, a strategy for the towns was never developed, or at least never used. As a result, frustration and dissatisfaction remain considerably stronger in urban areas in the North than in the rural areas.<sup>6</sup>

From the time I arrived in Mali, I found myself fascinated by ‘something’ that was typically Malian: something that I could see the outlines of, that I could sense in relations with Malians – but that I could not describe precisely. Other expatriates with experience from other parts of Africa often made the same observation. This ‘something’ must, I feel, be what has been called ‘social capital’. Poulton and Ag Youssouf describe it as ‘the sum of the human, cultural and spiritual values of society’ and they conclude: ‘Malian Social Capital produced the peace in Northern Mali.’<sup>7</sup> The group of researchers working with the UNDP in Bamako has defined social capital as something distinct from civil society: The concept of ‘Civil Society delimits an area of social life. It does not have any

normative dimension, unlike the case of social capital, which defines institutions, value resources and precise social interactions, those which contribute towards a social consensus, towards a community approach and towards the adopting of collective decisions.’<sup>8</sup>

People in Northern Mali are conscious of this social capital. An element of explanation and understanding is a term that exists in all languages in the North. It describes a phenomenon of people belonging to each other and to the environment. People feel related to their family and to their neighbours, whatever ethnic group these neighbours may belong to. A neighbour is a brother. The sign and seal of this fellowship is the meal they share or the milk they drink together. Problems are shared in common, and so are solutions.

But this relationship also concerns people and their linkages to the environment, to nature, to domestic and wild animals, to the grass and to the trees, the stones, river, sand dunes. This gives people a feeling of pride in being a part of all this, and a willingness to defend and protect nature, people and the relations between them. Nowhere else in Africa have I found such a high degree of awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. In Northern Mali, it is considered to bring misfortune to a person if he or she has to leave this fellowship for a long period of time.

In this report I will not try to describe the social capital in any detail, or to see what role it might have played in the peace process. This I leave to the UNDP researcher group, who will be focusing on that. Their research may yield a deeper understanding of the root causes of civil society’s massive involvement in the peace process in Mali.

### **1.3 Methodology**

From 20 August 1995 to 29 March 1996 I participated in the peace process in Mali as a facilitator for civil society on the local level. I had a large number of conversations and made many observations, which I recorded in my note book. I signed 37 contracts concerning the organization of local intercommunity meetings and have official minutes with appendixes from 34 of these meetings; this material has been systematically analysed. These documents, observations and conversations all provide abundant sources of information.

Before finishing the first booklet on the peace process in Mali, I spent two weeks in Mali in June 1996, working on the manuscript with the four persons who had been my main advisors in the peace process. I also made a number of interviews on that occasion. In December 1996 (two weeks) and in February/March 1997 (10 days) I was in Mali on business for two different Norwegian Protestant mission organizations. In both cases I had some interviews relevant to the present study and collected some new documents.

From 11 March to 10 July 1997 I worked on this material at the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo. This made it possible to compare my own material from Mali with analysis of other conflicts, in order to find some general patterns. I had the opportunity to make yet another visit to Mali in May 1997. During those two weeks I carried out new interviews concerning the continuation of the peace process.

After having completed this manuscript, I was in Mali for two weeks in August 1997, working with the Malian government in order to set up a project for follow-up of the peace process in the North. This gave me a final possibility to check with key persons on certain points brought up in the text.

I have been able to obtain all official documents and documents from UNDP that I have asked for. In addition, I have been corresponding with people who have written about the rebellion and the peace process, and have exchanged draft manuscripts with them. Moreover, I have had the opportunity to discuss issues and preliminary drafts both with people in Mali and with highly qualified academic staff at PRIO in Oslo.

In brief, then, this study is based on personal experience, on relevant written sources and a large number of interviews on five different occasions since the Malian rebellion was finally over in March 1996. In this report I will not go into any discussion of key words like civil society, ethnicity etc., but will simply use definitions that seem relevant for my purpose. What I seek to do is to describe what happened, and compare this to some selected cases from other areas of conflict in order to see what general conclusions may be drawn.

## Chapter 2

### REASONS FOR REBELLION

#### 2.1 Nomads

The nomads of Mali belong to two main groups, Tuaregs<sup>9</sup> and Arabs. Depending on circumstances the 'Tuareg' group sometimes includes some ethnic groups which on other occasions will be excluded. But for the purpose of analysing the rebellion it seemed useful to use a broad definition: All those who speak the Tamacheck language. This definition corresponds with the one commonly used by outsiders.

The Tuareg are scattered over about 1,000,000 square miles and are divided between five countries. Their approximate numbers are as follows: Niger 500,000, Mali 300,000-400,000, Libya 50,000, Burkina Faso 30,000 and Algeria 20,000.<sup>10</sup>

In Mali there are approximately 75,000 *Arabs*, scattered throughout the North. Most are found north of the river Niger but with some south of the bend of Niger. They are related to the Arabs of Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. Although they are mainly nomads, quite a few Arabs are merchants in the towns and larger villages. There are generally close relations between merchants and nomads.

For many years the Tuareg put up violent resistance to French colonization. Because of this resistance and because it proved difficult to administer a nomadic population, the French used harsh means against them, often enforced with much cruelty. This finally led to two revolts: in 1915 by Tuaregs at the bend of the Niger and in 1916-17 by Tuaregs in northeastern Niger and southeastern Algeria. Again the French repression was very severe.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the general poll tax, the nomads had to pay a heavy tax on cattle, even though no other groups were taxed for their traditional economic activities. During World War I the French requisitioned so many camels that the trans-Saharan trade broke down. The remaining trade was given as monopoly to three international companies. In addition, the trade became oriented towards the sea and was dominated by the French. The French placed stiff restrictions on the nomads' freedom of movement, assuming that the nomad culture would disappear and that the policy of the colonial administration would speed up this inevitable change.<sup>12</sup>

The Tuaregs were organized in loose confederations, sometimes called tribes. The colonial power systematically broke down the authority of the tribe/confederation leadership and worked through the chiefs of factions, who were granted increased power. The French also drew up administrative sub-divisions along the river Niger parallel to the

river, thereby splitting the transhumance routes of the nomads into two subdivisions. By contrast, the sedentarists generally had all their resources in one subdivision.<sup>13</sup> While there had been major problems with transhumance and caravan trade during the colonial period<sup>14</sup> national independence led to increased difficulties for the Tuaregs. Among other things, it became more difficult to cross borders, due to strict control, with much paperwork and intimidation. After national independence there was a spontaneous revolt in 1963 with the centre in Kidal, which I shall briefly comment on later. This uprising was suppressed with much cruelty by the national army. It became forbidden for Tuaregs to have firearms, particularly in the Adrar region northeast of Timbuktu. As a result of the government's distrust, no Tuareg was ever admitted to the national military academy. There were very few Tuareg civil servants and not a single one in Kidal. In the period following national independence, there were one or two Arabs/Tuaregs as ministers in the government. But they held extremely few positions, higher or lower, in the central and local administration and very few in the diplomatic corps. In general, the nomads felt that they were considered as second-class citizens. In 1973-74 and in 1984-85 two severe droughts hit the North, and many Tuaregs left for neighbouring countries. They were not well received in Algeria, which finally expelled a large number in 1986. Some of them lacked proper identification papers and were not well received in Mali on their return. This engendered widespread feelings that they no longer had a country to which they belonged.<sup>15</sup> The droughts also forced the Tuaregs to sell their animals at very low prices in order to buy food. Rich farmers from the South and merchants from the cities bought the cattle; the nomads then became paid herders for the animals that no longer belonged to them.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2 General

In Mali, civil servants tended to view a posting in the North as a form of exile. They took every opportunity to go to Bamako on 'business'. Such frequent absences meant that public services were not very efficient - with the exception of the tax collectors and the forest guards, who had personal profit from their jobs. This efficiency served personal purposes as much as it served the state. What it did *not* do was serve the local communities.<sup>17</sup>

The population of the North, both nomads and sedentarists, certainly felt that they had some cultural elements in common. In the 1950s this had led to some attempts to create an independent Sahara state, with the support of France. I shall comment on that later. The majority of local leaders in the North were against this idea and it never materialized. But there is no doubt that the population had a genuine need for some kind of decentralized government that would enable them to take care of their own affairs and which would respect their cultural identity.

But the reality was very different. Nowhere in Mali was the administration more authoritarian than in the North. In fact the entire North was under military rule until the administration collapsed during the rebellion. The area was haunted by the fact that civil servants and soldiers could commit illegal actions with impunity.

After the drought of 1973-74 and to a certain extent after the drought of 1984-85, the distribution of emergency aid was delayed by civil servants. They placed obstacles to the distribution, so that aid rarely got further than to the main urban areas.

Statistics show that the North got far less in allocations from public budgets than did other regions. International financing institutions, like the World Bank, did not consider the North economically viable; they therefore ceased allocating funds to the North after the droughts, which further widened the already increasing gap between the North and the South.<sup>18</sup>

All the regions of the North were neglected in terms of communications. Roads were not maintained. The paved road to Gao opened as late as 1986; before that it could take one week to drive the 425 kms from Douentza to Gao. Automatic telephone exchanges to the three regional centres opened as late as February/March 1996. Until the rebellion started there were extremely few places with public water system or electricity.

In 1980 the entire North had one state secondary school in Gao and a French-Arabic secondary school in Timbuktu. The other regions also had only one state secondary school each, but because of the great distances in the North these schools were out of reach for most of the population. Primary school attendance was considerably lower in the North and in the region of Mopti than elsewhere in Mali. And within the North, the nomads were underrepresented as school pupils.

Even though the number of inhabitants compared to the health infrastructure was about average for the country, distances were such that access was very limited. Moreover, very often the health staff was simply not present.<sup>19</sup>

### **2.3 Opposing Nomads and Sedentarists**

The French were good farmers, but they had little understanding of the nomads' way of life. Whenever there was a conflict between farmers and nomads, the French colonial administration tended to favour the former.<sup>20</sup>

The administration of Mali was highly centralized. The bureaucrats did not understand the nomads – and most often they were not interested in understanding them either. The civil servants posted to the North were all sedentarists, mainly from the South. In general they failed to understand the nomads and tended to favour sedentarists. In their day-to-day handling of affairs they were influenced by their background.<sup>21</sup>

Traditionally the riverine communities had complementary economic activities and generally found ways to share resources and to solve conflicts. But with the colonial administration, the authoritarian state and the droughts, this situation changed. The number of conflicts increased, and the administration now had the exclusive right to deal with such conflicts and to seek solutions. What often happened was that they used the conflicts to split communities; rather than being solved, conflicts were in fact maintained by the administration.<sup>22</sup>

In the 1980s Mali decided to give highest priority to national self-sufficiency in food production. As a result, some pasture land along the river was put to use as farm land, which further reduced the resources of the nomads.<sup>23</sup>

### **2.4 Summary of Main Causes**

Firstly, there was the marginalization of ethnic groups. This was due mainly to:

- lack of proper representation for Arabs and Tuaregs in important positions (the exception was a period under Moussa Traouré when Tuaregs were relatively well

represented in the National Assembly): government, diplomacy, army, administration on all levels.

- absence of a policy of decentralization which could have enabled the communities in the North to handle their own local business in accordance with the local cultural context.
- militarization of the North, where the population lived in a constant state of emergency.

Secondly, there was the increasing gap in development between the North and the South. Indeed, throughout Africa, lack of development and a widening gap between regions or ethnic groups seems to be a major cause of violence. For instance, International Alert<sup>24</sup> points to a very important reason for the outbreak of the rebellion and later civil war in Sierra Leone ‘...failure of the development process <...> widening gap between rich and poor <...> marginalization of young people from mainstream society, many of whom have lost confidence in civil society’.<sup>25</sup>

## Chapter 3

### PEOPLE'S REACTIONS

#### 3.1 Nomad Cooperation

In the colonial period the nomad population could either cooperate with the new authorities, or simply disregard them. Many seem to have accepted the cooperation out of sheer necessity: They cooperated enough to live in peace.

While the French tried to reduce the power of the chiefs of 'tribes' or 'confederations', the chiefs of factions were granted new powers as tax collectors and local representatives for the colonial administration and later the Malian government. They had personal interest in maintaining the new system; on the other hand, very few got higher positions in the political system.<sup>26</sup>

The Arab merchants were often relatively rich. Nevertheless, most of them certainly shared the general opinion of other groups in the North, that they were receiving unjust treatment from the central authorities.

Despite these preliminary remarks on Tuaregs and Arabs indicating some minor differences, we should stress the overall similarities between the two ethnic groups.

#### 3.2 Nomad Disengagement

A great many nomads disagreed with the central government and did not understand why they should have to report to it and take orders from it. But they were aware of the force of that government and its readiness to use that force in order to keep control. Nomads accepted what they had to, opting to avoid civil servants and public services whenever possible. They did not send their children to school; they also gave too low figures to tax collectors for the number of persons and cattle.

They also generally ignored the elections. Only 1% of the population in Kidal (the large majority in this area are still nomads) participated in the 1946 parliamentary elections. In 1956 there were 5,133 registered voters in Kidal, but only about 50 Tuaregs actually voted.<sup>27</sup> The same year 50% of the sedentarists voted in Gourma,<sup>28</sup> but only 10% of the nomads.<sup>29</sup>

In 1951 the idea of a larger all-Saharan state under French dominion was presented. The underlying intention was to maintain French control over vital resources, oil in particular. When the oil started to be exploited in 1956, France took several steps in the direction of the establishment of an all-Saharan state. On 30 May 1958 more than 300 leaders from the North – Arabs, Tuaregs and even some Songhoy – sent a letter to the president of France, saying that 'we will for ever remain French Muslims with our cherished private status'.<sup>30</sup> But the French government did not carry the project through. The majority of Tuareg leaders opted for integration in the new emerging states, and the idea of a Saharan

state remained dead until it was taken up by some rebel leaders as an element of justification for the rebellion in 1990.<sup>31</sup>

Following strong provocation from the administration, in 1963 a spontaneous revolt broke out in Kidal against the new independent state. This uprising was not organized, and even though it got support from nomads abroad, it was not a success. The government regained in control in 1964 and reacted with severe repression.

National independence and then the revolt in 1963 induced new waves of people, especially young men, to leave the country for Algeria or Libya. These were the so-called '*ichoumars*', which comes from the French word *chomeur*, which means 'unemployed'. The droughts of 1973-74 and 1984-85 added thousands of new refugees, all of whom fled either because they had been fighting against the government or because the government had proved incapable of providing help when it was needed. These *ichoumars* were not good ambassadors for Mali and were of course a potential element of destabilization.<sup>32</sup> We may note that a similar phenomenon can be found in Sierra Leone. There, the 'marginalization of young people from mainstream society, many of whom have lost confidence in civil society', is considered to be one of the main causes of the outbreak of the civil war.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.3 Role of Nomad Refugees

History shows that refugees have been a threat to the Malian state.<sup>34</sup> They have left in difficult situations after a rebellion or after a drought that the government has not been able to handle. They were bitter and did not trust the Malian state. The attempt in 1958-60 to organize an independent Saharan state and the rebellion in 1990-96 were mainly initiated from abroad.

Some, but rather few, Arabs enrolled as soldiers in the Polisario of West Sahara. In Libya, Ghadaffi feared the influence from the *ichoumars* on the population. Therefore, some Tuaregs, especially among the *ichoumars*, were induced to enlist in the Muslim army of Libya and fought in Chad, in Lebanon, in Iraq and other areas of conflict. For many years Ghadaffi had common interests with the Tuaregs which he could use to destabilize the neighbouring countries and to promote a pan-Arab state, even though the Tuaregs are very conscious that they are not Arabs. This support became less obvious from 1981, but it was still from Libya that Tuareg leaders tried to organize a rebellion in Mali and Niger.<sup>35</sup>

The will of some of these refugees to fight against the Malian state was not commonly shared by the population that had stayed behind. These people had instead adapted to the catastrophic situation and had managed to find a *modus vivendi* with the authorities.<sup>36</sup>

#### 3.4 Reactions from Sedentarists

The sedentarists never organized systematically against the regime. Within the North they were favoured:

- because they were sedentarists, as were all the colonial and civil servants
- because they had easier access to all public infrastructure which was located in urban centres or in larger villages where they were in the majority
- because they dominated the urban centres and could influence the administration

- because the policy of the colonial power and the independent state favoured the economic activities of sedentarists.

All the same, most of them shared the general opinion that the North was not getting its fair share of the public services.<sup>37</sup>

## Chapter 4

### REBELLION AND ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

#### 4.1 Outbreak

In 1990 the cumulative effect of all these reasons was an extremely strong feeling of marginalization. The North was seen as ‘the useless Mali’, unjustly deprived of public services – compared to the South, ‘the useful Mali’. This was linked with a hopeless feeling of poverty and lack of hope for the future. For many nomads, such feelings were so strong that they were ready to take up arms against the government.

Even though, as we have seen, the sedentarists had less reasons to support a rebellion, also their feeling of injustice was so strong that the rebellion had broad moral support from their side as well. The two groups had complementary economies, so they were in fact highly interdependent.<sup>38</sup>

Here I do not intend to study the rebellion in detail. The following lines will present the main events and the names of the main actors, as a background for understanding the role of civil society.

Many Tuaregs were disappointed with Ghadaffi, who had not proved willing to support a rebellion in Mali. But – or so the reasoning probably went – they had learned to solve problems by force in Chad, so why not return to Mali and change the unjust situation by creating an independent state in the North, or at least insist on greater autonomy for the North?

The rebellion started the night between 28 and 29 June 1990, when a local administration centre of Tidermene in northeast Mali was attacked by armed Tuaregs<sup>39</sup> under the command of Iyad Ag Ghali, Secretary General of the Peoples Movement<sup>40</sup> of Azawad (MPA).<sup>41</sup> On 30 June he attacked Menaka. Contrary to the general opinion, Iyad had no backing from Ghadaffi. In fact he and some other Tuaregs, former soldiers in the Islamic Army, had left Libya, frustrated by the lack of support from Ghadaffi. Iyad had six Kalashnikovs when he attacked Menaka. There he gained control of 122 Chinese carbines, 5 heavy machine guns, two Russian machine guns and 14 automatic pistols.

Twelve four-wheel drive cars were also taken from two NGOs.<sup>42</sup>

Lacking foreign assistance to finance the rebellion, the Movements had to rely on:

- contributions from Malians in Mali and working abroad
- sale of stolen cars
- sale of stolen cattle.

Thus, resources were severely limited. This would seem to be one important explanation why this rebellion never reached the volume of some of the major conflicts in Africa. But it should also remind us that if the root causes of the conflict have not found their solution, there may be resources available to finance a new conflict at a later time.

## **4.2 Role of Islamic Arabic Front of Azawad (FIAA)**

Some have claimed that the FIAA was organized and armed by the Malian government shortly after the outbreak of the rebellion, as a counterpower to the MPA. In fact, in Niger the Tuareg rebellion was challenged and partly neutralized by a movement instigated by Arabs. Most Arabs in Mali reject the theory that the FIAA was organized by the government, claiming that FIAA existed before the attack on Menaka. They maintain that the rebellion started in May 1990 when the FIAA attacked Tarza, on the Mauritanian border. However, this attack was not followed by any other armed action. There is no convincing proof that the FIAA did exist in May 1990, that is before the attacks by the Tuaregs in Menaka. But it came into existence shortly after the outbreak of the rebellion, and the organization grew in force until the agreement in Tamarasset; and whether or not its existence was not due to governmental initiative, the FIAA was considered a great advantage for the government. However, it seems that another event was much more decisive for the rapid growth of the FIAA .

In early 1991, the MPA attacked the town of Goundam, southwest of Timbuktu, and killed some soldiers. The commanding officer sent for 31 of the main nomad leaders. They were all executed in Léré. The following days, the army hit the nomads severely and killed a considerable number of Arabs in the Goundam area. These acts led to mass mobilization of support for the FIAA. Zahaby Ould Sidi Mohamed, who had not participated in the rebellion so far, now obtained a key position in the FIAA. If anyone had entertained thoughts that the FIAA could be used against the Tuaregs, this would certainly not be possible with Zahaby in a leading position. Zahaby was a man with a very clear vision of the common interests and basic unity of all communities in the North.

## **4.3 Agreement in Tamanrasset**

On 7 March 1990 the first independent newspaper, *Echos*, was published; a second one, *Aurore*, soon followed. This meant that civil society and the political opposition now had platforms for information. Until the fall of the regime in 1991 these two forces had more or less identical goals and often acted together. On 7 August 1990 an open letter was sent to the government, demanding a democratic evolution. In December the same year two newly established political parties, CNID and ADEMA organized marches against the regime.

At this point, public opinion in the South was generally positive to the rebels because the rebellion was a serious threat to the authoritarian regime of Moussa Traoré. The government, however, badly needed to concentrate its efforts in the new political struggle in Bamako. It therefore readily agreed to negotiate with the rebels. As a result of these negotiations a treaty was signed between the MPA, the FIAA and the government in Tamanrasset (Algeria) on 6 January 1991. The government thus had got the needed peace in the North and could concentrate troops and energy in Bamako against the increasing opposition to the regime.

However, the government probably felt that it had gone too far in Tamanrasset: at any rate, the text of the agreement was never published. But it became publicly known that the expression ‘particular status’ was used. People in the South thought that the government had capitulated to the rebels. This led to a storm of protest. However, the agreement was never respected by the regime – in fact it would not have been possible to

honour it, even with all the good will possible. The government had gone too far in promising funds for development projects in the North.

So far the rebellion in the North had full support from all communities, including the sedentarists. They all felt that the cause of the rebellion was just. They gave support to the combatants whenever needed and on some occasions they hid them to protect them against government soldiers.<sup>43</sup>

Iyad hoped to avoid involving civilians in the rebellion. He wanted to attack symbols of the unjust administration, to take control over the North and to conclude an agreement that would give large concessions to the North. He would then pursue the fight by political means. For him Tamarasset should have been the end of the rebellion. However, he seems to have underestimated the strength of popular discontent and the uneasiness of civil society, especially among the sedentarists, who knew that a treaty had been signed but had no information about the terms. The sedentarists became increasingly suspicious as of the motives and the aims of the MPA. Why – they asked – could the MPA not publish the terms of the agreement? Was it because the sedentarists were to be made to pay a price they were not ready to pay?

Also many Tuaregs from Mali had another vision than Iyad. In the beginning of the rebellion the combatants, the *ichoumars*, tried to keep a distance to the population. They did not know them very well and did not trust them. But many local Tuaregs joined the ranks of the combatants after the atrocities committed by the army in the Gao/Kidal region by late July/early August 1990, as recorded by Ambeiry Ag Rhissa:

- Tawardé (200 km northeast of Gao): Paratroopers killed or burned some men; their wives were given to soldiers who raped them.
- Tin Aouker (70 km north of Gao): Paratroopers sacked and destroyed every single house in the village; men and women were undressed and whipped severely: some men were taken prisoners. The soldiers dropped one person in Tiguerwen; he had been tortured to death. Six other persons were executed in Gao a few days later.
- Tiguerwen (48 km north of Gao): On their way from Tin Aouker, the paratroopers whipped 29 men severely. All the houses were systematically plundered.
- Djébock (36 km east of Gao): the commander-in-chief of the paratroopers organized a large public meeting at which he said: ‘The solution concerning the Tuaregs is their extermination. I have come here to take care of that, and I will not waste my bullets, because one litre of gasoline is enough to burn 10 Tuaregs.’
- Alik (25 km west of Kidal): The same paratroopers attacked the camp of a chief of a Tuareg faction who had been mobilized to find a solution to the rebellion. Men and women were separated and were severely tortured. The officer in charge said to the women: ‘We shall kill your husbands over there and we shall marry you in order to get children with you who will love us.’ Then he threw two grenades at the men: six died and four were severely injured. Another man was shot. The camp was sacked, and the clothes and jewellery of the women and girls were sold in the market place in Kidal.<sup>44</sup>

Few Tuareg leaders and combatants felt in the mood for negotiating immediately after these events northeast of Gao. Moreover, knowing that Moussa Traoré’s regime was weak and that its days were doomed, they reasoned that an agreement with that regime would have no value. They also took the fact that the government did not publish the

terms of the agreement of Tamanrasset as a clear sign that the government had no intention of abiding by that agreement.

There were thus many reasons why the Tuaregs wanted to maintain a strong organization that was ready to defend the interests of the North with arms. Failing to gain sufficient understanding for these views within the MPA, they decided to break out and organize new Movements. Two of those were to become main actors in the rest of the rebellion:

- the People's Liberation Front of Azawad (FPLA)
- the Revolutionary Liberation Army of Azawad (ARLA)

By this time, the government had indeed lost its credibility. It was overthrown on 26 March 1991.

#### **4.4 National Pact**

The Transitional Government failed to take any significant steps towards honouring the agreement of Tamanrasset. Instead, it started a violent repression that forced tens of thousands of nomads to flee to the neighbouring countries. Or maybe it is correct to say that the Transitional Government lost control over the military units in the North. After the coup d'état against Moussa Traoré, army discipline was weak. Non-commissioned officers were organized in a kind of 'trade unions'; they often acted on their own initiative without taking orders from their superiors. They were certainly beyond governmental control.

Civil society started early to organize. The Committee for Development and Peace (CPD) was created in March/April 1991 by resource persons from the North – mainly, but not exclusively, nomads. The goal was to resist the pressure from some groups in the South to cancel the Tamanrasset agreement, and rather use it as the basis for a more comprehensive and realistic final agreement. Local meetings were organized in the North, as were meetings between rebel leaders and local leaders. Shortly afterwards – in May/June 1991 – two other organizations were established, mainly on the initiative of sedentarist resource persons in Bamako:

- Association for Implementation of Peace and Security in the Northern Regions (AIPSR)
- Malian Association for the Preservation of National Unity (AMSUN).

However, this initiative was misunderstood as a manipulation for mobilizing the sedentarists. That led to a reaction from Tuaregs who, on 14 July 1991, sent a letter to all embassies in Bamako and to the government, justifying the rebellion by reference to:

- poor military administration
- the lack of development, made unbearable by the droughts
- the lack of access to public services.

At this point there was a risk that civil society would split. But these three associations merged to form the *Coordination des associations oeuvrant pour la paix et le développement au Nord*, with Abacar Sidibe as chairman. Many rebel leaders were demanding that an independent state be proclaimed in the North. This position was favoured by the fact that the ARLA and the FPLA were organized at this time. However, the government was not even willing to consider an independent state in the North. The 'Coordination' worked to find a solution that could ensure self-determination within the framework of one state. They finally came up with a proposal that was accepted by the involved parts as a basis for discussion.

Under pressure from civil society, the Transitional Government had called a National Conference (29 July to 12 August 1991) in Bamako to discuss the future of the country and a new constitution. On the second day of the National Conference the representatives from the North, 192 persons altogether, met to discuss the new proposals for an agreement.

This was the first time since the rebellion started that all groups from the North discussed the issues related to the rebellion. They decided to form a commission to follow up the issues of the agreement. For the time being, however, this remained mostly an event at the top level in Bamako. Grass-roots civil society in the North was not involved, with the exception of the first local meetings. From the grass roots came the general complaint that people lacked sufficient information, and that the government did not encourage popular involvement nor did the Movements. Finally, the sedentarists were also negative, feeling that the agreement failed to pay serious attention to their particular needs. On the whole, then, the conditions were not present for local civil society to act.

But the government opted to follow another strategy. First, Algeria was asked to play a more active role in the peace process. Then they invited two persons, known for their personal qualities and neutrality, to do whatever they could in order to bring the Movements to the negotiations table. These two men were Edgar Pisani of France and Ahmed Baba Miské of Mauritania.<sup>45</sup>

But civil society on top level was able to put pressure on the transitional government and the Movements and follow up the initiative from the representations of the North that were present at the National Conference all the way through. Civil society was heavily represented at a meeting in Segou on 25-27 November 1991, where a document was prepared for negotiations with the Movements in Mopti. On 10-13 December that year, the Movements met in El Golea in Algeria to create a common platform, the United Movements and Fronts of Azawad (*MFUA*).

The meeting in Mopti, on 15-17 December 1991, was of a different nature. The negotiations were not secret and civil society was directly involved in the negotiations. The MFUA and the government agreed that a solution should be sought within the framework of the existing Malian state. Independence for the North was no longer a viable option.

A series of meetings took place in Algiers (29–30 December 1991; 22–27 January 1992 (called Algiers 1); 15–19 February 1992 (Algiers 2) and 15-25 March 1992 (Algiers 3). Each meeting added some new elements to the preparation of what was to be known as the National Pact, with Algiers 3 as the most important. In these negotiations, Algeria had played a key role, as had Pisani and Miské.

Amadou Toumani Touré, president in the transitional period, took a very courageous step towards peace when he in a public speech admitted the systematic neglect of the development of the North. On 11 April 1992, the National Pact was signed in Bamako between the MFUA, represented by Zahaby Ould Sidi Mohamed, and the Transitional Government, represented by Colonel Bréhima Siré Traoré, who had also made a major contribution to the design of the National Pact.

The main points of the Pact were as follows:

- to implement peace and security in the North,
- to obtain national reconciliation,

- to make a special effort to promote socio-economic development in the North, to give the North a special status within the framework of the unitarian state of Mali.<sup>46</sup>

However, there were at least three weak points:

1 The leadership of the Movements did not always have good control over their combatants. Many of the combatants behaved as if they were conquerors in the country of an enemy. In addition to the main Movements there were smaller organizations and there were groups of bandits which acted independently, disregarding the negotiations and the National Pact. Some of them still thought that the best road to influence and wealth was through guns. Many people did not see much difference between these categories.

2 No organization representing the sedentarists was co-signatory to the National Pact. Many sedentarists had an increasingly strong fear that it was they who would have to pay the price of the peace in the North. The behaviour of the combatants further fuelled these feelings of fear and insecurity. Plundering and robbery committed by the independent gangs became too common and many innocent sedentarists were killed. Some of the same persons who were in the leadership of the Association for the Preservation of National Unity (AMSUN) published a violent attack on the 'armed rebel bandits' and invited the sedentarists to organize in self-defence.<sup>47</sup>

3 Finally, Mali did not get any help from the international community to implement the peace.

The main actors did not seem to trust each other; they were not able to control their armed forces; they got no help from the international society. And so the fighting continued. Between 12 April and 7 July 1992, some 50 armed attacks were carried out. This led to a psychosis in the North and in Mopti and Segou, with blind reprisals against Tuaregs and Arabs in Timbuktu, Gao and Sevare and some other places.<sup>48</sup>

Civil society locally in the North had no possibility and no motivation to take any initiative towards peace at this moment. This was a period when each group was trying to strengthen its own positions.

The *Coordination* in Bamako, however, was active. They managed to facilitate the organization of the 'Days of Concertations for the Development of the Regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal' 23–27 February 1993 with participation of experts from the UN and the Institute of Research and Application of Methods of Development (IRAM). They prepared a programme for implementing parts of the National Pact, mainly:

- integration of 640 combatants in the national army
- a new economic effort in the North and
- the return of the administration to the North.

The first point was carried through, but was not very successful. It was not well organized: the combatants became soldiers and officers without having to undergo any formal training. Many soldiers were very frustrated by the facilities offered to the former combatants. This created many problems and certainly added to the lack of discipline in the army.

No economic effort took place. International society failed to respond, and NGOs in Mali had either quit or reduced their activities because of the insecure situation.<sup>49</sup>

The Movements continued to push for a very high number of combatants to be integrated in the national army and for positions in the administration. This only increased the frustration felt in the army and among the sedentarists.

It added to the general mistrust that all these negotiations were secret, and took place not in Mali but in Algeria.<sup>50</sup>

The administration did not return to the North at this point, but a 'Mobile Unit for Support to the Peace Process and Development' (EMA) was organized in each region from 17 August 1993. These were in fact mobile administration units intended to represent the technical and political administration where and when these were not in place. They were staffed with 4-5 persons each, men with high education, experience from administration, reflecting the main component groups in society and with a reputation for honesty and integrity. This was to prove an excellent idea.

The EMAs did a very important job in mobilizing civil society in the North, by means of two actions. First they organized, with the help of national and foreign advisors, temporary transitional bodies in most of the *arrondissements* in the North. Unfortunately these bodies were given no resources and were not quite able to play the role that was intended. But this at least marked a start towards a new structure and it gave a valuable contribution to the understanding of decentralization.<sup>51</sup>

A second – and more important role – for the EMA was to identify resource persons in the North. They claim to have identified about 20,000 such people, who were then encouraged to organize (or co-organize) public meetings. At these gatherings, problems related to the rebellion were discussed, and the content of the National Pact was explained. The Movements also organized big meetings (in Lerneb, Kidal, Tawarde and Gossi), sometimes together with top representatives from civil society; and finally, some traditional leaders were able to organize meetings on their own initiative, as was the case with Intallah Ag Attaher in Kidal.

A newly founded national NGO, the Association of Rural Artisans of Intedaine-Menaka (GARI), played a significant role in facilitating meetings. But in general the meetings were largely dominated by the outside organizers or co-organizers. They did not have full backing from all relevant groups; moreover, the more important the meeting, the stronger were the destructive forces that sought to disorganize and bring about confusion.<sup>52</sup>

Civil society was also experiencing difficulties. For one thing, it was divided; a further problem was that it was not convinced that all parties really wanted to find a peaceful solution; and finally, civil society was never left alone, but was continually being influenced and manipulated by representatives of the main actors on the scene.

On 12 January 1994 the FCFA<sup>53</sup> was devalued by 50%, which led to an economic crisis. The students went on strike, and Bamako was full of sedentarists from the North who had fled from the insecurity, plundering and arbitrary killings. The newspapers in Bamako were full of violent attacks on the nomads, in particular the Movements, and their supporters. The nomads dominated the media coverage on the international scene with reports and commentaries that were no less virulent.

In February 1994, President Alpha Oumar Konaré appointed his third prime minister in 20 months. By then the political discussion – in particular concerning the North – was concentrated in Bamako, and with the government on the defensive. Had the new prime minister, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, failed to find a way out of the deadlock, it is likely that

the army would have overthrown the government. Fortunately, however, the government succeeded in regaining the initiative by taking the debate back to the people.

In order to bring the increasingly difficult situation under control, three meetings were held in Tamanrasset in Algeria between the MFUA and the Malian government: 16–20 April, 10–15 May and 27–30 June 1994. At these meetings, the two parties assured each other that they were in favour of peaceful solutions. But in reality, Mali was now on the brink of full-scale civil war.

On 19 May 1994 representatives of Northern sedentarists publicly declared the establishment of the Malian Patriotic Movement Ganda Koye (MPMGK). (*Ganda Koye* means ‘the masters of the land’ in Songhoy.) They deplored that the government was not able to protect ordinary people and described themselves as a self-defence movement. The MPMGK military branch was led by Mahalmadane Maïga, who had defected from the national army for this purpose.<sup>54</sup>

In mid-May 1994, the MPMGK, officially pursuing cattle thieves, attacked the village of Tacharane, where eight nomads were killed. The FIAA mounted a counter-attack on Fafa, where the MPMGK was thought to have a training camp. On their way back, the FIAA troops ran into an MPMGK military unit; a top military leader of the FIAA was killed in the skirmish. This led to a new period of fighting between the MPMGK and the FIAA. The ARLA and the FPLA opted to await the course of events, whereas the MPA was cooperating openly with the government.

On 28 May 1994 the President held a public speech in which he resisted pressures to arm self-defence groups. But he recognized that the situation had become intolerable and that the national army should be mobilized to put an end to the rebellion. To this purpose, headquarters were established in Mopti. In the same speech, President Konaré declared that it was not possible to accept any kind of ethnically based solution, and that the national unity of Mali must be preserved.

In August 1994 the government invited the various groups to meet on a regional basis, to discuss the main problems of their region. The point was to gain new input from alternative political and social forces to the top leadership of the political parties in Bamako, especially concerning the situation in the North. But it was also of importance for the government to show the rest of the country that it was not neglecting their problems because of the situation in the North. Through these new ‘Regional Concertations’, the government side-stepped the Bamako-based political elite, mobilizing in their place the voice and the wisdom of civil society in every region. Indeed, by this time the government had come under heavy pressure from civil society in Bamako to do so. These concertations included local representatives of political parties, the public administration, traditional and religious leaders, rural and urban associations, NGOs and professional organizations. The Regional Concertations tipped the balance of political debate away from Bamako and the political parties, and back to the general population and civil society.<sup>55</sup>

On 25 October 1994 Boubacar Sada Sy became minister of defence. He contacted the editors of newspapers in Bamako and warned them against publishing articles that could incite ethnic violence, very often without any serious foundation. He also started to inform the general public, by means of press conferences and through articles in the army newspaper, in detail about incidents in the North that had hitherto been treated as military

secrets. Moreover, the government now launched an information offensive on the international scene.<sup>56</sup> But the civil society was still lacking the legal right, as well as the financial and moral support from the government, that was necessary in order to act. By October 1994 it had become obvious that the government was now on the offensive with information. The army was under control. The Movements were growing weaker, and some of them were on the way to peace.

The President continued to stress the importance of giving time and space to civil society to create dialogue and reconciliation. On 2 November 1994 he visited Gao and Kidal, where he insisted that the number of attacks from rebels could not justify reprisals on innocent civilians. By the end of the same year he had decided that there should be no new government initiatives 'until we have given time for civil society to work out a solution'.<sup>57</sup> To this end, he organized the withdrawal from the North of the military units who had committed atrocities during 1994, and confined many other units to barracks. He insisted that regional authorities should support, but not interfere with, the work of civil society.<sup>58</sup>

These were very clear signals to civil society to assume their responsibility to lay the foundation for their own future. This was indeed the moment for civil society in the North to move again. This time it did not let the opportunity pass; moreover, the grass-root level was much more involved.

The village chief of Bourem, Hafizou Alhéro Touré, invited the heads of the nomad factions around Bourem to meet with representatives of the sedentarists in Bourem in November 1994, the first intercommunity meeting of Bourem. The nomad chiefs agreed to contribute to peace by motivating the people in their zones of influence. This initiative led to a number of meetings. Local peace treaties were made at the second Bourem meeting on 11 January 1995, a few days later in Gao, in Menaka in March and in Ansongo in April 1995 between the FPLA and the MPMGK. The Ansongo meeting also included ARLA.

Nor was it without good reason that it was the FPLA that took the first step on the way to peace with the MPMGK: partly because of its dynamic leader Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine, but also because many of the combatants and the supporting groups of the FPLA were nomads whose economy was oriented towards the river valley. When the forces that tended to oppose nomads and sedentarists of the river valley became weaker, the two groups joined hands again. The feeling of ethnic conflict had never gone very deep. These two groups belonged together – socially, economically, emotionally. The social capital was strong enough to mobilize people for peace and reconciliation.

The public meetings that were held before June 1995, with one very important exception, were dominated by the rebel Movements which started the final peace process from the bottom, with Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine as a key person. But local civil society also played an important role. On 30 April 1995 an intercommunity meeting in Aglal managed to stop the MPMGK units that had been terrorizing the nomads on market days. This was a clear signal that civil society had had enough of violence.

From 13 to 25 May 1995 several governmental commissions, each headed by a minister, travelled through the northern regions of Mali. The objective was to listen to the expectations and wishes of the people, and to try to get a realistic idea about the tensions

that still existed. These commissions realized that the local communities were now ready to take the initiative, and they encouraged civil society to act.<sup>59</sup>

The disarmament of the combatants was carried out between 15 November 1995 and 15 February 1996, organized by UNDP, the rebel Movements and the Malian government. It coincided in time with a large number of intercommunity meetings.

On 27 March 1996 some 3,000 weapons collected from the combatants were burned in Timbuktu in a ceremony called 'The Flame of Peace', with the international community heavily represented. Before the arms were put to the torch, the FPLA secretary-general read a declaration confirming the formal dissolution of the Movements, on behalf of all the five Movements.

Before I look into the wave of these intercommunity meetings, in which the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) played a key role as facilitator, I shall use the NCA and the Malians who cooperated with it as an example of the importance of trust. The use of the NCA as case-study does not imply that the NCA was the only facilitator at any point. Some of the other facilitators will be commented on later.

## Chapter 5

### STRATEGY AND IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

#### 5.1 Role of Peace Negotiators

The international peace negotiator has received her or his mandate from outside, or from a very few persons at the top of the society in question. Ideally, the negotiator will have both carrots and sticks available to bring about peace.<sup>60</sup>

Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, has said that at times the UN can achieve some objectives more easily by positive incentives than by force. He mentions two categories. The first is 'civic action' with a limited purpose, namely to gain the good will and cooperation of the population. The second category involves rewards, such as development projects, for cooperation between antagonists. This dual-focus strategy was used with great success in Mozambique. But it failed in Rwanda because the UN did not get the budget that was needed.<sup>61</sup>

This analysis has a weakness in that it generally underestimates the role of common people, seeing them as simply obliged to accept the policy of the actors on the main scene. In Mali, however, civil society played an extremely important role in implementing peace and reconciliation. After the conclusion of the National Pact in April 1992, the peace in Mali might have been effective, if only the UN and the rest of the international community had contributed investments in infrastructure and other development projects. But they failed to do so – with the result that the violence started over again.

In 1995, the UNDP provided a leadership for the representation of the international community in Mali.<sup>62</sup> They were able to finance the disarmament process. They are still trying – with very limited success so far – to convince international donors to contribute towards the development of the North, on which the long-term peace is totally dependent. What the UNDP did not try to do was to mobilize civil society directly, probably because it is difficult for the UN to do so.

#### 5.2 Trust in Norwegian Church Aid

Gourma was considered to be a very conservative and isolated area until the paved road came in the late 1980s. As of 1953, 65% of the nomads were still slaves of the white Tuaregs. Gourma was known for inter- and intra-tribal rivalries and problems.<sup>63</sup> This is to a certain extent still the case.

In 1984, the NCA started a relief project in Gourma. This saved the various communities in the area from disintegration and the nomads in particular from extinction. After a broad socio-economic survey carried out in 1986/87 under the direction of Dr. André Marty, a French social anthropologist with broad experience of research and development

work in the Northeast of Mali, the project was reorganized to become a development project. It was by far the biggest in the North, with an annual budget of some USD 4 million. The size and the effect gave the NCA a special position in the North, where it was able to maintain a good balance between the various communities:

- in the way they gave support
- in the general recruitment of staff and
- in particular in staffing of top positions of the project.

All this is not to say that the NCA was universally acclaimed. Because the nomads were in majority in Gourma, because they tended to be harder hit than the sedentarist farmers, and because their culture was more ‘colourful’ and ‘exotic’ in Western eyes and was therefore a more appealing media object - for all these reasons it was not difficult for those who wanted to blame the NCA for supporting the nomads, to find good grounds to do so.

In 1987 the project was ready to be reorganized as a development project. The NCA board had taken a formal decision to promote Malian senior staff. This was indeed an exciting time. The staff and the local communities were enthusiastic and the project budget was at its highest level.

It was at this point that I was appointed director. One of my first tasks was to implement the board’s decision concerning the change in objectives and the recruitment of highly qualified Malian staff, to be promoted when they had proved their capacities.

Two such persons were later to become leaders within two different rebel Movements:

- Zahaby Ould Sidi Mohamed (promoted as NCA deputy director in December 1987) became secretary-general of the FIAA and head of the MFUA .
- Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine (recruited in February 1988) became secretary-general of the FPLA.

A few other individuals held lower positions in the Movements. It was the policy of the NCA that no employee could be active in the rebellion. If such a case occurred, that person would have to leave the NCA.

Another senior staff member who was recruited later, Mohamed Ag Erlaf, became minister in the government. He has held various positions since his first cabinet appointment in April 1991.

It so happened that I personally was given credit for the positive sides of the change of objectives in the NCA project even though these changes had been prepared and decided before I became director. No director before or after me had the possibility of carrying through so many changes that would, by their nature, be perceived as positive by Malians.

The sedentarists dominated the trade union.<sup>64</sup> A full-scale agreement for working and social conditions was negotiated between the trade union and the NCA, and then signed and approved by the authorities. According to the regional inspector of working conditions and social affairs, it was the first private agreement of this kind in the history of Mali. The trade union leaders were very proud; and because I signed on behalf of the employer, I was given credit for that historical agreement.

In May 1997 I interviewed many people, of all origins and in all positions. Everyone seemed to agree that the main reason for trust in the NCA was the fact that it unswervingly remained true to its policy of giving priority to the poorest communities, its ability to promote dialogue – and that it did not pull out when it was severely hit by the

rebellion. There is no doubt that this long-term and persistent involvement contributed to trust more than any other consideration.

At this point it is only right to give credit to all the NCA staff members who continued to carry out the development programme in Gourma under extremely difficult and risky conditions. In particular I should like to mention the deputy director Rhissa Ag Mohamed Ahmed and the administrative secretary Oumar Poudiougou, who carried the burden of responsibility from the summer of 1994 to the summer of 1995 when, for security reasons, there were no expatriate staff in Gourma. There can be no doubt that the presence of the project and in particular the human qualities of these two top Malian leaders saved many lives – in some cases because of their personal initiative, when they threw their own security in the balance to save others.<sup>65</sup> One Malian said to me: ‘The presence of the NCA in Gourma even in the most difficult periods kept reminding us that peace was possible. Otherwise they would have left’.

The decision to stay on was a difficult one for the NCA board to take. It certainly saved a number of human lives. It maintained hope in the area. But it meant a heavy burden on the shoulders of the staff, and eight staff members lost their lives while in service. With humility and respect I can testify that their sacrifices were not in vain.

Here the experience of International Alert, which played a central role in the peace process in Sierra Leone, may be relevant. International Alert stated: ‘It is important for NGOs to maintain their presence in many areas of Sierra Leone including the North to offer reassurance to the local people and give them some confidence in the peace process.’<sup>66</sup>

In Mozambique a Roman Catholic community called Sant’Egidio played a crucial role in bringing the government and RENAMO together in the talks that finally led to peace. Sant’Egidio is active in several countries. When asked why they chose to play such a role in Mozambique, the spiritual leader of Sant’Egidio answered that it was because they had a long presence with development work in that country.<sup>67</sup> Thus, it would seem that a long-term development involvement, showing solidarity and respect in difficult situations, could serve as a strong base to provide the trust that is necessary to play a role in a conflict.

On the other hand, it happened on at least two occasions, long before the rebellion, that the NCA was accused of having a hidden agenda for its presence in the North. And, as we all know, it is indeed difficult to prove what your *intentions* are and what hidden agendas you do *not* have. The NCA insisted that the accusations were false – and the explanation was accepted ‘because you are religious people who tell the truth’.

Thus, for some people a reason for trust in the NCA was its religious basis. Zeidan Ag Sidalamine has often stressed the importance of the religious foundation of the basic NCA philosophy of commitment to the poor and social justice. Another Malian top staff member, himself a devout Muslim, several times mentioned to me the importance of having expatriates who were committed Christians. ‘When you recruit new staff, please recruit believers. They have another understanding of human values. In fact that is your main advantage over other NGOs.’

I myself had been a Protestant missionary for many years, a fact that I did not hide. And I found that I had got the reputation of being ‘a man of God’, that is: just, honest and reliable.

Mainly because two of the senior staff members' involvement in central positions of the rebellion, the NCA was accused of supporting the rebellion. In mid-May 1992 a total of six Malian staff members were killed,<sup>68</sup> and two others were killed in July 1994.<sup>69</sup> The army was not responsible for the first killing, which was carried out by armed rebels who attacked the NCA base to steal cars. Then the army responded, claiming complicity on the part of five Tuaregs working for the NCA, by killing five persons. It has not been possible to provide any argument that makes it likely that they had had anything to do with the attacks or with the rebel movements in general. Terje Eltervåg, director of the NCA at that time, put heavy pressure on the government to get the persons responsible for these murders punished. Their identities were known, but no legal action was ever taken. After that experience, Eltervåg made considerable efforts to protect those who were in danger – which, at that time in his area, meant mainly Tuaregs and some Arabs. This was later used by some groups to argue that the NCA supported the rebellion. Because of the rebellion the NCA had to reduce its activities to some extent; a few staff members were laid off, some of whom were sedentarists. In the very tense situation prevailing at the time, this too was interpreted and used against the NCA as being signs of support for the rebellion.<sup>70</sup>

However, the government knew that such accusations against the NCA were false. They were quite aware that Terje Eltervåg and the head of the Africa desk at NCA headquarters, Njell Lofthus, had on several occasions acted as go-betweens in relation to Zahaby and thus made a valuable contribution towards the peace. Because the government trusted the NCA and because of the position the NCA held, it wanted the NCA to play a more active role in the peace process. The NCA accepted, and from October 1994 Njell Lofthus and I looked for ways to get the NCA involved in the peace process. I had the advantage of not having been employed by the NCA during the years of rebellion, so nobody could link me to any particular event or group. Finn Andresen, who became director in June 1994, organized an information campaign in order to give a true picture of the NCA as a comprehensive development agency, and thus to show that such accusations were false.

This then should suffice as background information to explain why it was possible for the NCA to act as facilitator for civil society in Mali.

As we have seen, the massive involvement of civil society did not really start before October 1994. In late November 1994 I was in Mopti on business for the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS). There I was approached by Mr. Attaher Maiga, regional inspector of working and social conditions (he is a Songhoy, the main sedentarist ethnic group of the North) who indirectly encouraged me to consider a personal involvement. Dr. Hamada Idoual Maiga, also a Songhoy, came all the way from Gao (he had to travel 600 kms, over half of them with military escort) to see me and ask me to get involved in getting the refugees back home. Dr. Maiga had been the main negotiator on behalf of the trade union when we made that work agreement, and Mr. Attaher Maiga had been the one who approved it on behalf of the authorities. I think that this common experience was a factor in the mutual trust between us. Mr. Attaher Maiga had participated in the preparatory work for the National Pact. But neither of these two men held top positions. In January 1995 I was asked by Rhissa Ag Mohamed Ahmed, deputy director of the NCA, to come to Mali and participate in the peace process. The decisive call finally came in April 1995, when I was on another mission to Mali for the NMS. I was approached by

Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine, who told me that they were in the midst of a very promising process ‘of which we must not lose control. I want you to come and be oil in the machinery’. He made a short draft of a plan of involvement that I worked on with a few other persons. We prepared the outline of a plan for my involvement which I immediately showed to the Minister of Transport and Public Works – and former NCA staff member – Mohamed Ag Erlaf, who found it interesting.

The NCA headquarters has a reference group that is consulted whenever the NCA is involved in peace and reconciliation processes. With input from Mali, this group prepared the outline of an action plan that convinced the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give an important financial contribution. Later, however, this plan was modified, so that the strategy which was actually used was one designed in Mali, mainly by Malians.

When I arrived in Mali on 20 August 1995, Mohamed Ag Erlaf was to introduce me to the Commissioner of the North.<sup>71</sup> But Mohamed had left on business and I tried to remain silent until he returned. The Commissioner, a former police officer whom I had never met and who had not been previously informed about my coming, sent for me two days later. He said that he had heard about my assignment, he had collected information about me – and was happy that I was there. The gist of his words of welcome was as follows: Whatever you are able to do to promote peace and reconciliation in the Gourma, you are welcome to do it, and if you think that you can contribute with something elsewhere in the North, please do it. Always keep me informed about what you are doing. -He also gave me some documents and asked me to read them and advise him how to act upon them.

Such a reaction – on the part of a total stranger – was possible only because he already had enough information to trust the NCA; then the information he had got about me in the few days after my arrival had confirmed his appraisal.

### **5.3 Description of Strategy and Expansion of Civil Society’s Involvement**

The next step was to establish a steering committee for my work. Initially my mandate covered only Gourma, the area where NCA’s development project was located. I wanted to work together with Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine and Ibrahim Ag Youssouf, both of whom immediately accepted. Ibrahim, a Tuareg from Gourma, served as UNDP consultant for the North. He holds a PhD degree in socio-linguistics from the USA and has been extremely active in trying to organize Malian civil society for peace. Zeïdan, a graduate from teacher training college, had been a front figure in the first very risky and courageous steps on the way to a final peace. The Movement with which he was involved had made peace with the MPMGK in January 1995, and he certainly enjoyed the confidence of most of the sedentarists. Then there was Aghatam Ag Alhassane, former member of the top leadership of the FPLA, now deputy Commissioner for the North, an agricultural engineer and Tuareg as well. I also needed someone from the sedentarist groups, but the two persons that I had in mind did not live in Bamako, where I needed to have the committee available.

Dr. André Marty, former consultant for the NCA, who had contributed to the peace process by helping the government to set up mobile administration units<sup>72</sup> in the North, was a man well acquainted with the problems and key persons in the North. He

telephoned me from France and gave me the names of two sedentarists who could be considered. One of them struck me as unsuitable the first time I met him, but the other one, Abacar Sidibe, proved an excellent choice. He was a Fulani from the Northeast,<sup>73</sup> had studied agriculture in the Soviet Union, Italy and France, and had broad experience from various positions in the administration of governmental development programmes in the North. He had already been very active in mobilizing civil society for peace. All four of these men undertook extensive travelling in the North as part of their committee work.<sup>74</sup> We had a mutual appreciation of each other's competence and trusted each other. To the best of my knowledge, no Malian ever expressed doubt concerning the impartiality of the members of the committee. All of them had proved by their actions in recent years that they were working for peace and reconciliation. However, in the course of my interviews in May 1997, one person said that he had noticed with some uneasiness that there was no Songhoy on that steering committee. Even though he had the impression that it was easier for Tuaregs to get our support, he concluded that the overall picture was 'acceptable'. Our committee had neither sticks nor carrots. Our mandate came mainly from below and was founded on trust. Because it became obvious that we had that trust from below, and from the top as well, we were able to get the necessary support from donor agencies and government representatives. We could provide civil society with a legal framework, a practical outline and some rather limited financial support, all of us being quite aware that the amount would not be sufficient to carry through a meeting. Those who accepted the responsibility for the local processes knew that they would have to raise additional money to carry out the assignment. They accepted the responsibility because they trusted us.<sup>75</sup>

The main lines in the strategy were drawn up by Ibrahim Ag Youssouf and Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine, with smaller contributions from myself, the two other members of the steering committee and from a few other persons. It was agreed that the communities who shared the same territory, who were dependent on the same resources, who shared the same market place should meet to try to solve the problems that had been caused or aggravated by the rebellion; further, they should avoid discussion of matters that would distract their attention from their daily problems that they were able to solve. This was a new principle of subdivision of the population, and something quite different from the official subdivision inherited from the colonial power which had operated on the time-honoured principle of 'divide and rule'.

The problems indicated were:

- to find a common attitude on how to verify information before taking action
- to find a common attitude towards armed bandits
- to find a common and positive attitude on how to reintegrate demobilized fighters
- to find a procedure for reintegrating refugees
- how firearms should be controlled or collected
- how to solve conflicts over rights to use land and water resources. It was agreed that the decision-makers should be:
  - the traditional political leaders of all the nomad factions and villages
  - the religious leaders
  - the leaders of new groups, such as women's groups and youth groups.

The following groups should have no role other than observers:

- civil servants of all categories, including armed forces
- central politicians
- leaders of rebel Movements.

The main reason for these points was to make it possible for the communities to renew their traditional dialogue without any intermediaries, in order to repair relations between them. The government favoured this approach, for two reasons: it could contribute to reconciliation and consolidation of the peace, and it was in line with the formal decision that had been made to promote decentralization in the country.

The organizer would receive an amount as a help to finance the meeting, but it would not cover all expenses. The organizer would have to raise additional funds. We deliberately did not ask for accounting of the use of the money, but insisted that it should be controlled according to local customs for the use of common resources. The receipt would be the minutes from the meeting, with the names of official representatives to prove that it had been attended by all communities, the decisions taken and the names of those who were chosen to follow up the decisions.

The results of the first intercommunity meetings were so positive that some members of the committee, and a few other persons, asked me to move on to areas east of the Niger River, providing I could raise the money to do that. I called NCA headquarters, who immediately promised money for five more meetings – and ahead we went. We decided to make a comprehensive plan for the entire North because I could see that through our strategy we had managed to unleash a very strong force. It was obvious that it gave the answer to a deeply felt need. This plan had the merit of providing a general idea of the magnitude of efforts to be made. On the other hand, it was constantly modified as local leaders took the initiative and heavily influenced the final setup. After all, it was their future that depended on the outcome of the meetings. The responsibility was theirs and theirs alone. For our part, we had to be sure of the representativeness and the outline of the meetings. It happened that we did not support initiatives that would clearly favour the position of particular groups or persons. Before long it was obvious to us that we had gained the trust of the entire civil society in the North, with the leaders of whom we were in constant dialogue. On 23 November 1995, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to give another amount to enable us to continue the process.

But this success also created problems. We realized that it could be politically risky for the NCA to act as sole sponsor of civil society throughout the entire North. Moreover, we would also need further funding to carry through the whole process.

André Marty, who was in Mali in order to work with the mandate of the mobile administration units (EMAs), advised me to include some German organizations and other possible donors to give the process a broader international backing. He suggested that I see Mr. Henner Papendieck. The result was that, in December 1995, the NCA, the German development programme for the North, the Canadian Embassy and the Swiss development agency, created a fund to promote peace and reconciliation in the North (FAR-Nord) of which I became the coordinator. The creation of this fund was decided very quickly and very easily, probably not least because three of my advisors, Abacar Sidibe, Aghatam Ag Alhassane and Ibrahim Ag Youssouf, were consultative advisors for the German development programme for the North. This underlines the importance of creating networks.

From this moment on, every new step was presented and discussed in a joint meeting of the steering committee and representatives for the donors. It was a question of the NCA using its network to facilitate relations of trust among persons and institutions central to achieving our goal. On the other hand, the other participants may well have seen this as a situation where they were using *their* network to achieve the goal. After all, it was a case of both Malians and expatriates participating on an equal basis, in pursuit of the same goal.

The actions now covered so huge an area that we needed a better infrastructure in communication and information. André Marty introduced me to the ‘Mobile Units for Support of the Peace Process and Development’ (EMA), which from that day on became close and very competent co-workers. These units were under command of the Commissioner of the North, and of course they knew very well the members of the committee and their qualities. The unit in the Timbuktu region had taken the initiative to give technical support to the organization of intercommunity meetings in their region right from the beginning.

It may seem pretentious to draw comparisons with the peace process in Mozambique and the central role played there by Sant’Egidio. The difficulties in the case of Mozambique, with a 30-year-long tradition of rebellion and civil war, and with far bigger forces involved, were obviously of quite another scale than in Mali. On the other hand, from the very beginning Sant’Egidio had to make extensive use of its network of private and public relations to carry through its initiative. Two important pieces of that network were the Roman Catholic Church and the Italian Ministry of Cooperation.<sup>76</sup>

In Mali, the most important level of trust was that between local leaders and our committee. Social organization at the intercommunity level is extremely weak; at the inter-ethnic level it is hardly existent. We had to select organizers on the basis of their reputation and independence, always striving to maintain a certain ethnic balance between the main organizers in a larger area.

Whenever I signed a contract and gave the local leader the money it was explicitly stated that from this point on there was very little the committee members could or even would do to facilitate the further work of that local group. The main organizer could be a person with high formal education, although more often it was one of the faction leaders or village chiefs, some of whom were illiterate. But there always came the crucial moment when I had to trust the person of our choice, knowing that from now on he would be able to do better than the whole committee. The entire responsibility, the risk, the honour of a successful meeting or the dishonour of a failure: these matters were no longer in our hands. The local leaders knew that I was neither willing nor indeed able to go further. I knew that in my circles, in the case of a failure, I would be criticized for having been too naive and trusting all kinds of people. But I could see no other way. Often we prayed together for God’s blessing and protection, we trusted each other – and in the end we could share success. All the 37 community meetings, with perhaps one exception, were successful.<sup>77</sup>

## **5.4 Basis for Trust**

How was it possible to create an atmosphere of such trust? I feel we can conclude that the trust was built on a number of factors.

As far as I know, the basis for the involvement of other NGOs have many common points with the situation of the NCA. But I have not had the possibility to study this in detail, so I have concentrated on the NCA. It, together with the German side, played the most important role in facilitating this stage of the involvement of civil society in the peace process in Mali.

Through its participation in peace processes in Guatemala, in Eritrea, in Sudan, in Afghanistan and by the role played by Njell Lofthus in an earlier stage of the conflict in Mali, the NCA had gained the trust of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Through its policy in Mali it had gained trust – with a few exceptions, as we have seen – from the communities in the North, from the government, from the NGOs, from some of the diplomatic representations in Bamako and from the rebel Movements. This is a result of long-term serious work. Or, as one person put it to me: ‘The NCA has the great advantage that none of its directors has been a complete idiot’.

Because of my role at a crucial point of the NCA project in Mali, because of personal relations I enjoyed with some key actors and probably because of personal qualities, I managed to win the necessary trust that meant that our group got financial, moral and practical support whenever it was needed.

Most of the local leaders had the same trust in the NCA and in myself. This, however, would probably not have been enough for them to dare to take action in a highly risky and tough situation. But from the composition of the steering committee of which I was the coordinator, they knew that our initiative had the tacit approval of the government, the rebel Movements, the UNDP and the NGOs.

The steering committee was a crucial factor. We were all well educated, held important positions, had good knowledge of the area and were generally considered to be persons of high personal integrity. None of the participants had any reason to feel inferior or superior to any of the others. We had complementary personal qualities. Sometimes the discussions were hard, sometimes we disagreed, but we always respected each other and if necessary stood up for one another.

In my opinion, the NCA could not have contributed seriously to the peace process in Mali, had it not had such a long-established presence of honest development work and a network of important Malians and expatriates.

## Chapter 6

### WHAT MADE THIS INVOLVEMENT POSSIBLE?

#### 6.1 Role of Civil Society

It is easy to throw the responsibility for all evil on the colonial power, but it is not always right to do so. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the French colonial administration had invested considerable imagination and force in their attempts to reduce the power of the traditional leadership in Mali, especially among the nomads. Local leaders had learned through bitter experience that it was best to take no initiatives, but rather to bow their heads and obey. Those who were not willing to play this role, simply left for a neighbouring country. This proved to be an excellent system for the authoritarian governments of the independent Mali as well. The system continued as before until the local administration in the North disintegrated because of the rebellion.

Where there is no tradition of civil society taking responsibility, it will not be a simple matter to change this state of affairs. In Mali, such ‘responsibilization’ was obtained at a high price: a rebellion that cost of some 6,000–8,000 human lives,<sup>78</sup> creating some 150,000 refugees and tens of thousands of internally displaced persons, as well as a situation of generalized armed plundering and robbery, breakdown of the local administration, coup d’etat. In addition came the devastating effects of the drought. There was an increasingly strong feeling of being manipulated and used by others, and people began to realize that in order to change things they would have to take responsibility themselves. On the national level, the elite of civil society did assume that responsibility and achieved many positive results. This in turn also helped to encourage local civil society to act. And, it should be recalled, it was only the local civil society in the North that could achieve a real peace and especially reconciliation.

Civil society on the local level was dependent on the goodwill of the Movements and the government, for effective decisions to get the civil society involved, combined with support from the international community. To some extent they still needed to be pushed by external facilitators, but when they did act, it was efficiently, with authority and wisdom, and they made a major contribution to the final peace.

#### 6.2 Policy of Decentralization

The Movements had demanded a special status with local autonomy for the Northern regions, and indeed this was granted in the National Pact. But it was feared that a kind of federation could lead to a split between North and South. Therefore the National Assembly passed a decentralization law which entailed the creation of new municipalities throughout the country, run by democratically elected bodies. This made the idea of local self-government in the North easier to accept for the people in the South. The National

Assembly also decided to divide the region of Gao, organizing Kidal as a new region in order to strengthen the organization of the North within the framework of the constitution.<sup>79</sup>

Other African nations have had to face similar problems. In *Ethiopia* the whole country was threatened by disintegration after the end of the civil war. Thus, the new constitution of 1994 provides for a highly decentralized federal structure consisting of autonomous ethnic regions and district. There is even a clause concerning the right to secession. *South Africa* is still struggling with the question of autonomy for regional groups, and no final decisions have yet been made. By contrast, in *Mozambique* and *Uganda* federalism and autonomy do not seem to be a major issue.<sup>80</sup>

Unfortunately the CTAs had very limited resources to function and enjoyed little prestige. While they did have the merit of being a visible sign of the government's will to transfer power to the local level, in most cases the local communities did not look to them for the leadership they needed.

The National Commissions of Decentralization were meant to listen to the people and then propose new subdivisions taking into account the existing economic resources and historical ties. Our committee gave the people in the North the possibility to try a new system of subdivisions as a basis for solving problems of importance to all of them. In some cases people decided that the subdivisions that we proposed should serve as base for the new municipality, but most often they did not. The important thing, however, is that they had the possibility to experience an alternative subdivision scheme, applied to matters of crucial importance. I think that this experience will better enable them to make decisions on how to organize the handling of local affairs.

Some of the problems discussed at the meetings had hitherto lain within the exclusive competence of the state. But now it was made clear that the local representatives of the state were not to interfere with the meetings. All this was a clear consequence of the policy of decentralization: what the intercommunity meetings did was to fill this policy with substance.

### **6.3 Leaders on All Sides Wanted Peace**

The rebel movements had signed the National Pact with the government. In 1992, 1993 and 1994 I had conversations with Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine (FPLA), with Zahaby Ould Sidi Mohamed (FIAA) and Mohamed Ag Erlaf (Minister of Transport and Public Works). They all convinced me that everybody wanted peace. This happened before we had seen the signs of the new policy of the government. Many people thought that Zahaby and the FIAA wanted to fight to the bitter end, but he convinced me that he wanted peace. Indeed, this was confirmed publicly a year later, in June 1995, when Zahaby issued an appeal for peace from Tripoli in Libya. This was a basic precondition for the massive participation of civil society; it was also a precondition for the NCA's involvement and for my own participation.

As could be seen from the situation of the peace process in the Middle East as of August 1997, progress is nearly impossible as long as the main parties mistrust each other's motives and do not feel sure that the other part really wants peace. This is a process in which some of the most powerful nations and organizations in the world have become heavily involved, using both sticks and carrots – with apparently no effect.

Nor did it prove possible for the UN to achieve anything in Somalia. Even the US Army very soon became reduced to playing a role as a faction among others that contributed to violence and fear – simply because some of the dominant faction leaders were not ready for peace at that moment. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said: ‘...the operation could only be predicated on the parties’ will to peace. If factions are intent on military victory at the expense of reconciliation, the UN’s efforts will be futile’.<sup>81</sup>

For political reasons I could have no contact with Zahaby during the process itself, nor did I attempt to do so. But from time to time someone would bring a greeting from him – including Njell Lofthus, who met him in Mauritania – confirming that I had his approval for my work.

By early 1995, the rebel leaders could see that the government was able to control the army and that they were serious about peace. This encouraged some leaders, and in particular Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine, to work actively for local peace treaties, and for the involvement of civil society. In turn, these actions convinced many local leaders that the mainstream of the rebellion shared their will to find a peaceful solution.

With few exceptions, the combatants were now disciplined, but the armed robberies organized by smaller freelance groups still went on. However there was no systematic use of drugs, there was absolutely no use of landmines and no use of children as soldiers. The rebellion thus avoided elements that in other places tend to make peace difficult. This is also a sign of responsibility on the part of the rebel leaders and the army.

## **6.4 Civil Society Ready to Take Responsibility**

In the case of Mozambique, Adekanye points to the fact that ‘by the beginning of the 1990s a military deadlock had ensued in the conflict between the government’s side FRELIMO and its major opponent RENAMO, while the population at large had discernibly grown weary of the conflict. (...) The Mozambican thirty-year-long war was “ripe for resolution”’.<sup>82</sup>

There is no doubt that by the end of 1994 the common people of Northern Mali had also had enough of war and manipulation. What they wanted was peace and to be able to take the initiative for the change into their own hands, because they had seen how they had been manipulated by others. But there was also a precondition: they would have to be convinced that such an initiative would be accepted by the main actors in the conflict.<sup>83</sup>

The local population had seen how the government’s representatives, mainly people from the South, had fled from the area, leaving them without any services or protection. A positive exception were the EMAs, which were made up of competent and dedicated people from the North.

There were also other factors at work. More and more leaders of local civil society had come to disagree strongly with the most extreme of the rebel leaders. In a period, the army was not adequately disciplined, committing atrocities against the population instead of protecting them. Neither the administration nor the army was able to provide protection against the armed robbers. There were also problems among the refugees, as some influential leaders there had persuaded, tricked, frightened or forced people to leave as refugees, because they exploited the system and made money on every new refugee that arrived in the camps. And finally, some NGOs, on which the economic development of the area depended, had left or had reduced their activities.

Those who had not fled realized that they had to take action. However, there were very few cases where the traditional civil society had managed to organize and carry out their intentions without outside help. Social organization on a level higher than faction or village was weak, and leadership on that level was simply non-existent. That was true of traditional society and civil society alike: both needed a new leadership, and that would have to be built up.

Fortunately help was available from local and international NGOs, commonly called 'partners for development'. Our committee was the main facilitator for intercommunity meetings, but it was definitely not the first nor the only one to facilitate the involvement of civil society in the process of consolidation of peace and in reconciliation.

Some meetings were sponsored by ACORD, GARI (in Menaka), Tassaght (in Djebok), World Vision, women's groups like the APIF (the Association for the Promotion of Women's Initiatives) in Gao or the sewing school of Pastor Nok Yattara in Timbuktu.<sup>84</sup> In some cases the government also provided assistance, but the largest contributor was probably the German Cooperation Programme for Mali-North. Through this involvement these organizations made an important contribution towards peace and towards the broader involvement of civil society.

Many of these meetings involved civil society/ Movements/Government as participants. This gave us the opportunity to analyse, to select the good elements while omitting the less positive ones as we drew up our own strategy for motivating civil society.

## **6.5 Role of the International Community**

The UN played an insignificant role in the beginning of the peace process in Mali. Perhaps it might have been possible to obtain a lasting peace in 1992 based on the National Pact. But the international community showed no interest in paying for peace, and the UN representative showed no interest in trying to organize anything. When Mr. Tore Rose became UNDP Resident Representative in 1994, he became the unofficial coordinator of the assistance from outside. He was able to get a budget for the disarmament process of the Movements, and followed that process closely.<sup>85</sup> He thus made a firm contribution to the peace process and to an atmosphere of hope in which civil society could act, but the UNDP concentrated its own work through official channels and did not work directly with civil society.

## Chapter 7

### RECONCILIATION

#### 7.1 Legal Proceedings

Demands for justice are often put forward by outsiders, by observers to the conflicts. It is they who cry that justice must be done, that people be punished according to the gravity of the crimes committed. A war crimes tribunal, or a general judgement on 'traitors', is generally possible only when there is a victor and a defeated part – as was the case in Nuremberg and in the 'traitor process' in Norway, after World War II.

However, nobody can take away from the parties involved in a conflict the responsibility for the past, the present and the future. It is they who will have to pay the price, if a price is to be paid. And theirs will be the honour if the right solution is found.<sup>86</sup>

In South Africa, the process of healing the wounds goes through the truth commissions. For a certain period, those who know that they have done things that might qualify for punishment can present their cases and have them examined in a public cross-examination. If crimes have been committed for clearly political reasons, the perpetrators will go free. The truth will be known, but there will be no traditional punishment - the reasoning being that their punishment is that these crimes will be known in detail by their children, by their neighbours, by their colleagues and be part of the common memory of the nation. Those who do not come until the 'period of grace' expires, however, may be tried and punished if they are found guilty. This was what it was politically possible to obtain in South Africa.

When an armed conflict is over, the people will have to decide how far the process of retribution/healing can go. They will have to decide what price they are willing to pay in order that justice be done. In general, those in power will not be prepared to go so far that they might lose control. In the end, the legal actions taken represent a political decision as to how far, and at which price.

In Mali it soon became clear that there would be no legal procedures for assigning guilt and responsibility. All the parties involved had dirty hands. It was not possible to identify the 'good' and the 'evil'. By the end of the fighting there was no victor, and none was really defeated. It would be extremely difficult to distinguish between pure crime, and violence that had a political or military purpose. Likewise, it would be extremely difficult to know how far to go, or how to decide who are guilty and who are not guilty according to agreed legal criteria – if indeed it were possible to arrive at such criteria. Should the government agree to direct its efforts towards justice for a year or two and thus divert attention from urgent development needs? Should it decide to grant compensation for the atrocities committed by the national army because the latter was representing the government in the conflict? Would the army agree to be found guilty of such atrocities? If it should happen that members of one group were found guilty more often than another

group, this group might well decide to defend itself with arms. No group would agree to being labelled more 'evil' than the others.

In the common declaration of dissolution of the Movements issued by the five rebel Movements on 27 March 1996 it is stated: 'with the hope of achieving forgiveness and reconciliation between all the sons of the nation, we ask that the National Assembly pass a law of general amnesty covering all illegal actions committed during the period of armed conflict.'

In February 1997 the National Assembly did adopt such a general amnesty. Thus, there will be no legal proceedings.

I was advised to propose that a list be drawn up with the names of all those who died as victims of the rebellion and the repression, no matter what the circumstances were. This would become part of the common memory and show everybody the price that the communities had paid. However, this idea was not feasible: the common people were afraid of how such a list could be used.

I still think that it would be good to write a detailed history of the rebellion, with as many details of attacks and casualties as possible. This would contribute to the common memory, reminding people of the cost of the rebellion and of the repression. But it would be less personal. The responsibility would be placed on the armed forces, the unorganized bandits and the Movements. This could be a good substitute for the list of victims. Individuals would be able to unload some of their heavy burdens on the particular sections of the history that deal with the specific occasion(s) when blind injustice hit them. Through such a publication the aggressions and their results will become part of the common history of all Malians.

My booklet in which I analysed the process of intercommunity meetings, is, according to reliable sources, being used by people who proudly point to the lines where their meeting is mentioned. 'There!', they say. 'That is my part of the peace.'

Another venture could be to collect the stories of persons who, with courage and at personal risk, contributed to the peace or to the protection of innocent people who were considered enemies by the community. That will be an extremely difficult task, because when the peace has been obtained, so many will try to claim their part of the glory, either inventing stories or transforming stories that have a grain of truth. Few persons were willing to pay the price of courageous actions when it was needed, but many will queue up afterwards to reap the honour, whether it is due or not.

## **7.2 Reconciliation at Mbouna**

The first intercommunity meetings from November 1994 through June 1995 were mainly local peace negotiations. Then a meeting was organized at Mbouna 8-11 September 1995 with more than 2500 participants from all the communities west of the Niger river, of which 85 were representing Malian refugees in Mauritania. This was the first meeting where reconciliation between the communities was the main topic. The meeting was made possible because of the heavy support from the German Cooperation Programme for the North of Mali. It was prepared by the Consultative Committee of the Programme for the North of Mali which includes Mohammed El Mehdi, Abacar Sidibe, Ousman Traore, Aghatam Ag Alhassane, Oumar Ag Telfi, Nokh Ag Attia and Ibrahim Ag Youssouf.

For historical reasons Mbouna was an important symbolic place for organizing the meeting. It was Baba Madiou, chief of Mbouna, who had organized the meeting of reconciliation between the Kel Antasar<sup>87</sup> and the French in Goundam in 1900. In 1923 a group of Arabs raided Mbouna, deported 52 of its inhabitants and killed many others. But the people of Mbouna immediately took the initiative to reconcile with the Arab community. Again in 1947 a conflict between agriculturists and cattle herders caused the death of many people. But the leaders in the area quickly settled the dispute before the French colonial administration got time to intervene.<sup>88</sup>

There is no doubt that the September 1995 meeting had a tremendous impact on the participants and on the entire North of Mali. It had to be protected by armed forces and there were in fact some attempts to disturb the meeting, but the organizers were able to carry through.

The reasons for the rebellion were presented by a very influential nomad leader, Mohamed El Mehdi Ag Attaher. Before the rebellion he had lived in Goundam, in a house that was destroyed by the local people when he fled. On the evening after the meeting in Mbouna, the old village chief of Goundam came to see Mohamed El Medhi together with 20 men who were members of the council of elders in the village. Then a spokesman held a speech in Songhoy, after which they all shook hands and the village chief sat down next to Mohamed El Mehdi on his mat.<sup>89</sup>

All the problems of the area could not be solved at the meeting, of course. What was important was that these people came together and reached one common decision: No more war! The public discussions and the countless private conversations, the informal night-time meetings between main leaders of various communities – all played a part. People could talk together, learning what had to be told about the past so that they could face the future together.

The Mbouna meeting took place five weeks before the start of the series of meetings that our group facilitated. It helped to pave the way, contributing to the creation of an atmosphere that made it possible to carry through our initiative.

### **7.3 Limits of Reconciliation**

In some way or other Malian society will have to deal with the past. If the peace is to be a lasting one and life be acceptable, there must be a kind of reconciliation. However, reconciliation is not something that can be decided in a treaty, nor imposed by outsiders. This is a lesson learnt from Somalia. As long as key Somali factions were not interested in a settlement, the UN operation was not making any progress in promoting reconciliation, nor was it likely to do so.<sup>90</sup>

Only those who have suffered know the cost of reconciliation, and only they can decide how far they are willing to go and what price they are willing to pay for reconciliation or for justice. It is not possible to go much further than the most reluctant groups are willing to, without once more resorting to force. And by force one can impose justice – but not reconciliation.

I met a young Arab, son of a merchant, as refugee in the village of Boni. I had known him from the time he was a boy. I told him that there was peace in the whole area which he had left and that the people there wanted the Arab merchants to come back again. He answered: 'I was hiding in the darkness, and I saw when they cut the throat of my

grandfather with a knife, just as if they were slaughtering a goat. I recognized the people who did it. They raped the women of my family and they looted our homes as we fled. These people have not been condemned for their crimes and they will not be. Do you really think that I will go back and have them as neighbours, greet them as if they were decent people?’ The personal price had been too high to permit him to forgive. For him there were only two possibilities: full justice or full hate.

But this young man was not able to see beyond that day when his world was destroyed. He has not managed to see the hopelessness of some of those who revolted against poverty and exploitation, looting and humiliating the group of people whom – rightly or wrongly – they saw as responsible for their misery.

Some people were willing to forgive what had been done against them – but if, say, the cattle that had been stolen were still in their neighbour’s herd, they wanted them back again. But unless individuals, on their own initiative, hand back stolen goods, neither the cows nor anything else will be returned. The alternative opens the door to an endless number of claims, real or faked, with consequences no-one can know.

Others say that in order to start life over again, they accept the losses, they will not argue with their neighbours over stolen items: but if the government grants a general amnesty, it will be morally obliged to pay some sort of compensation to the victims. Such a solution was considered by the government for a while, but who could decide with some reasonable justice who should have compensation and who should not? Moreover, it would be extremely expensive, and the government has so many urgent needs to take care of: improving conditions for the students who went on violent strikes on several occasions and threatened the stability of the regime; reorganizing and equipping the administration in the North, reintegrating combatants into society after demobilization; repairing the infrastructure of the country – and of course the return of some 150,000 refugees. For many years to come, all available resources will have to be used for solving urgent problems and providing basic services for the people. There will probably be no individual compensations. Innocent people will suffer heavy losses: they suffered from the war and they will suffer from the peace.

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the government’s policy among merchants in the Timbuktu region. They think that this decision hits them harder than any other community, which adds to a general feeling in the Arab community that they are losers in the peace process. They have now got their shops back – but that is all. The great majority have lost all their goods and are finding it extremely difficult to re-establish the trade without funds. And trade is the only activity they know. A minimum they require is access to cheap credit, to enable them to make a new start.<sup>91</sup> If this were granted, it would of course also have to apply to other groups who are in a similar situation. It could be an acceptable compromise, provided enough funding is available to finance it.

The same decision has been made in South Africa. No individual compensation will be paid. Instead, the resources of the nation will be devoted to building a common future for all the people.

In some cases it seems to be a good thing that Mali has decided against granting compensation. One man told me that he had lost two shops in two different villages. The houses were destroyed and the goods were stolen. It would be easy for him to prove the losses. On the other hand, I knew that this same man had tricked his own people into leaving for the refugee camps where he was a boss and could exploit them. By the use of

heavy disinformation, he contrived to get them to stay on as refugees, making money every month as long as he was able to keep them in the camps. How could I feel sorry about the two buildings he had lost? There and then I was happy that there would be no compensation. In a case like his, individual compensation would have been an intolerable injustice.

Similar questions of justice in some cases haunted the communities and individuals at the meetings. It soon became obvious that the large majority did not want to engage in legal proceedings. Either they feared for their own position, or they were afraid that if one dug deep enough, so many people would have so much to hide that there would be a great risk of a new wave of violence. What they wanted now was peace. And peace meant forgetting everything that belonged to the past. This opinion was so commonly shared that there is no doubt that it has influenced the positions of the rebel leaders and the National Assembly.

There are indications that those who most strongly advocated this point of view had good reasons for doing so. In some cases the meetings adopted formal decisions making the participants morally responsible to report all 'enemies of the peace' to the authorities. Whoever would claim his property returned would qualify as 'enemy of the peace'. This was perhaps reconciliation at its lowest point.

At least in some cases those who wanted to look for the 'enemies of the peace' had hidden weapons, and people knew that. This may have been one reason why so few dared to demand the return of stolen goods during the meetings. Let me mention one specific case. In the village of Gossi, a consolidation meeting in which I participated, was held on 22 March 1996, with representatives from all the areas of the Gourma. Two houses in the village 'happened' to burn down while the meeting was being held. In both cases explosions were heard from ammunition and grenades, and weapons were found when the fire had subsided. This occurred five days before the 'Flame of Peace' was to take place in Timbuktu. Some took it for a sign that God wanted peace.

A great majority of the refugees would like to return to Mali, but not all wish to go back to the same area where they used to live because they do not want to live together with their former neighbours until the wounds have healed. However, resources – water, pasture land and arable land – are so limited that these 'returnees' are very often not welcome to alternative places. Those who stayed on may suspect them of using the opportunity to leave a place with poor resources in order to move into places where the hard work of the local population has created better possibilities.

The only alternative is to settle in some of the few 'lungs' of Gourma. These are areas with enough grazing for cattle, but which cannot be used on a permanent basis unless deep wells are dug. This may affect the ecological balance in Gourma.

Finally, to a certain extent, we may say that the refugees, especially those who fled to Burkina Faso, are individuals who had resources to flee. The poorest people stayed behind. They also suffered from the period of insecurity, and most of them certainly had a harder life than the refugees because nobody helped them. However, it is my clear impression that the great majority of the population truly want the refugees to return home, for economic or for social reasons – either because life cannot really start again before the uncertainty related to the possible problems with return of refugees has gone, or because they wholeheartedly want the refugees back to share life with them again.

What would be seen as unacceptably unjust would be a situation where the refugees come

back to pick the best places and get support for a new start, leaving those who stayed behind without anything.

The refugees fled Mali at the most difficult times. The atrocities committed against them dominate in their memories. They have not participated in the reconciliation process at home, although some leaders were invited and most of them actually came from the camps to participate in the meetings. But most of them were not convinced, or the material advantages of the camps seemed so great that they were not willing to return to take up the everyday struggle for life against drought and poverty. Or they were not able to convince their co-refugees or their wives, who had been humiliated and suffered most. Many of them have still not returned. They represent a threat to the reconciliation process, because the only morally acceptable argument to justify that they have not returned, is the atrocities committed against them, atrocities that were real enough and that have become increasingly bitter as they have been cited again and again to justify the refugees' position.

A few thousand refugees, many of whom fled from Gossi and Rharous in the Gourma, are preparing (August 1997) to leave for some new sites southwest of Gossi. The sites will have to get a minimum of infrastructure. These refugees are people who are not ready to go back and share life with the other communities of their area. They will not go to places where they will have to take up disputes with their neighbours over usufruct rights to land. The desertification process has left very few possibilities for life in the northern part of Gourma. Even without the rebellion many people would have been forced to leave – the refugee situation made this decision easier. On the other hand, if people stay in the new sites for a long time, the land disputes will be settled without them and they will probably lose their rights for once and for all.<sup>92</sup>

#### **7.4 Possibilities of Reconciliation**

All parties involved in the rebellion and the soldiers of the national army were Muslims. Islam was not, however, used by any of the groups as a justification for the violence. To the best of my knowledge, nobody misused the religion for their own purposes.

A shared belief in Islam was not able to prevent the rebellion in Mali. Nevertheless, it was an obvious connector between all parties involved. We therefore thought that their common belief could add a positive dimension to reconciliation. So we deliberately asked that religious leaders should be represented at the intercommunity meetings among the decision-makers. To me, it seemed that if the kadis, the imams and the marabouts actually practised what was written about peace and war in the Qur'an, the result should automatically be positive. In fact, this hypothesis was borne out. In many cases the intervention of these religious leaders was mentioned as being of decisive importance.

A few words from a speech held at the intercommunity meeting in Agounni, north of Timbuktu, may illustrate this: 'The PEACE that we recently obtained, we want it to be REAL, ETERNAL and that it should be a PEACE OF THE HEART and of the SPIRIT. May GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, THE ALL-POWERFUL, THE SOVEREIGN AND THE ALL-KNOWING help us in his DIVINE GRACE TO CONSOLIDATE IT.

'Islam teaches us that it is formally forbidden for two Muslims not to talk together for more than three days. And this RELIGION that is ours enjoins us to practise TOLERANCE AND FORGIVENESS.'<sup>93</sup>

In general it seems that in addition to the widely shared will to relegate the evil things to the past and seek a common future, the religious leaders provided a religious dimension for reconciliation, that in some cases moved the audience to tears. Participants have told me of moments during the meetings when the leaders from various communities embraced each other and wept until they had no more tears, and then promised that they would never again take to arms against each other.

Before the intercommunity meetings took place, there had usually been some weeks of preliminary visits, involving the settlement of personal and collective problems between individuals and communities. And, importantly, there was a lot of bitter quarrelling that in some cases even led to attempts to kill the adversary. Fortunately nobody was actually killed. But it happened that the quarrelling continued when they came to the meeting, or that what had been said in smaller settings had to be repeated in public. In a few places some participants needed military escort in order to be able to attend the meetings.

In Bambara Maounde there was violent quarrelling on the first day of the meeting, and some thought that there would not be a second day. But some people worked throughout the night, and on the next day the meeting reached unanimous decisions on a number of tricky issues. The most important point here was not so much the decisions as it was the fact that people from all communities came together and discussed the past, the present and the future. This then was reconciliation at its best.

Muslim philosophy teaches that one should accept whatever happens as the will of God. Many times I heard people saying that things had happened as they did because it was God's will. 'But', they would then add, 'we shall do our best to make sure that it shall not happen again'. A good Muslim will not argue with God. He will adore and obey. Thereby at the same time he gets strength to bear the cruelty of life, accepting it as God's will, while he also gets the strength and inspiration to take responsibility to fight against it happening again.

The weak side of this is that it may not leave space to discuss the evil in order to liberate one's mind and leave the bad feelings behind. On several occasions the expression was used: 'we have to turn this page once and for all'. Others argued that they must at least talk enough to make sure that everybody was turning the same page. In some cases they took some time to do that, but in other cases they decided that the past was not a matter for discussion. An additional argument to stop the discussion was that 'Mali is not Rwanda'. This indicates that some people realized that the underlying feelings in some cases were so strong that they might prove uncontrollable if they were let loose.

There are two kinds of purification', said Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine the day after the Flame of Peace in Timbuktu where 3000 Kalashnikovs and grenade throwers were burned in the presence of the entire diplomatic corps: 'One is through water and one through fire. The purification through fire is the most powerful. It was my clothes as rebel that burned yesterday. All the evil things and wicked acts are burned in the fire. Now I am free to start a political fight and thus continue to struggle for freedom and justice for all'.<sup>94</sup>

The symbolism was indeed strongly felt. Why else would so many thousands of people have travelled long distances and expressed so much joy, if this ceremony 'Flame of Peace' were not an important symbol to them – a symbol of reconciliation and peace, a symbol of destroying the evil of the past and the start of a new era, a moment of mental purification, a symbol of hope.

People from all communities talked together, listened to traditional music and watched the dancers together. They bowed their heads to the sand of the desert, praying for peace together with the leaders of the Movements, the president of Mali and the Imam of the Great Mosque in Mecca. Then they watched together as the flames consumed the destructive weapons.

There was indeed forgiveness and reconciliation and purification in Mali after the rebellion.

## **7.5 Proof of Reconciliation and Mutual Trust**

By September 1995 the fighting was over in the North, but there were still armed robbers in some areas. Some areas remained under military control of the Movements, who were acting on behalf of the government. The local administration was functioning at a very low level, or it was simply not present at all in huge areas. People were not convinced that the peace was real. The communities were afraid of each other. Most shop-owners still kept their shops shut. Normal economic and social life did not function.

The most eloquent signs of reconciliation after the actions of civil society came with the reopening of market places immediately after an intercommunity meeting had been held, or when a market that had been reduced to an insignificant level, rapidly grew to something close to normal. Since merchants have to transport their goods and money from market place to market place through areas that are not possible to control, this change would not have come about so quickly if the communities did not trust each other. Nor would people, under such circumstances, dare to show that they had money enough to buy expensive items if they did not trust their neighbours.

The next remarkable sign was that case of armed robbery decreased very rapidly. The robbers realized that the communities had sorted out the problems amongst themselves, that they were able to put up resistance and that the time for organized robbery was over. This was in fact a precondition for the reopening of the market places.

The process of disarming the combatants started on 15 November 1995, a month after the first intercommunity meeting that we facilitated. We have many witnesses that tell about combatants who during the meeting became convinced that the peace was real and went to the camps to hand in their arms. In the case of Talataye we have reliable records of 82 armed combatants who made that decision.

Moreover, it was this disarmament of former combatants that made many who hesitated believe that the time had truly come for civil society to act. Quite a few did not dare to commit themselves before they felt certain that this process was well underway.

## Chapter 8

### PEACE SETTLEMENT COMPARED TO CAUSES OF REBELLION

#### 8.1 Special Status for the North

All actors in the rebellion did not always demand the same things at the same time. Nor did traditional leaders as they tried to see how they could use the rebellion. Demands would differ, from group to group, and from person to person. Very few were demanding total independence, but almost all were out for some sort of particular status. And here the actual results fall somewhat short of what was agreed on in the National Pact.

The nomad leaders demanded what would amount to autonomy in local affairs. In order to avoid a special status for the North and only the North, the National Assembly passed a law on political decentralization applicable to the whole country. This arrangement covers the needs of the population in the North. The civil society made extensive use of this decentralization during the reconciliation and consolidation of the peace process in 1995-96. The first municipal elections are planned for late 1997 or January 1998.

The transitional bodies, CTAs, were organized exclusively in the North. Their mandate was, as noted, to take care of local affairs until the municipal elections could be held.

Gao region was divided, with Kidal created as a new region. This strengthened the North in terms of administration. (See also note 79 above.)

It was decided in the National Pact to establish a Commissariat for the North with responsibility for implementing the National Pact and administering the peace process.

This body has been functioning as of 17 June 1992.<sup>95</sup> A very important tool in this process are the three EMAs, which report directly to the Commissioner of the North; in turn, the Commissioner relates directly to the President of Mali.

#### 8.2 Integration of Combatants and Representation in Administration and in National Assembly

The widespread feeling of being second-class citizens had been due mainly to the fact that Northerners were scarcely represented in the administration, in the army etc. Two Tuaregs from the region of Timbuktu had been elected members of the National Assembly back in 1964. Their number increased under the regime of Moussa Traore. The National Pact stated that the first Assembly should have four representatives of the refugees, all of whom were nomads, and one or two members representing other Malians abroad, mainly from the North. However, this proved impossible to organize.

Under Moussa Traore there had been one Tuareg and one Arab minister in the government. As of August 1997, there is still one Tuareg, but no Arab.

The First Assistant Commissioner for the North is a Tuareg, formerly a top leader of the FPLA. The Second Commissioner for the North is a Songhoy, formerly in a high position

in the MPMGK. In general, the North has slightly increased its representation at the top level – mainly because Kidal has become a separate region. But apart from Kidal, the Tuaregs had a broader representation on top level under Moussa Traore than they have now. No Arab was elected to the National Assembly during the last elections, held on 20 July and 3 August 1997.

The National Pact stipulates that all the former combatants shall be integrated into the national army or into uniformed bodies. In practise, it proved extremely difficult to determine how many soldiers there actually were in the rebel Movements, but the figures that were cited exceeded any reasonable need for the army. A compromise was reached: 1,500 disarmed combatants were to be integrated during 1995/1996 (into the army, the gendarmerie, the national guards, the police, the customs control, the forest guards) on two conditions:

- they were to hand in their personal arms
- they should fulfil the legal requirements for joining the services concerned, most of them had to undergo formal training.

The disarmament and the formal training were made part of this new integration process in order to avoid the serious problems of the first integration in 1993. Likewise, the integration process in South Africa was guided by similar considerations.<sup>96</sup>

The conditions and intentions of the Malian integration have been carried out according to plan. However, the MPMGK had not existed when the National Pact was signed. They insisted on having their share of the integration, which the MFUA blankly refused.

Finally the government agreed to take an additional number of 250 combatants from MPMGK, the recruitment of whom is completed.<sup>97</sup>

As to the sedentarists of the North, they were already represented in the army. It is true that the Malian integration also reflected a need to do something with a number of men who had learnt that the power was at the end of the gun, but for the peace it was far more important to give the army legitimacy among the Tuareg and Arab population of the North.

In Ethiopia and Uganda, the victorious rebel armies saw no need to include the defeated enemies in their ranks. What has the result been? In these two countries there still exist armed rebel Movements: Oromo Liberation Front in Ethiopia and the remnants of the Ugandan National Liberation Army. By contrast, in Mozambique the new national army was made up of 50% former FRELIMO and 50% former RENAMO soldiers. In South Africa, the new South African National Defence Force is the result of the integration of six different military forces; in order to obtain full national legitimacy for the army they recently enrolled soldiers from the troublesome KwaZulu-Natal area of the republic.<sup>98</sup>

Against the background of the effects of restructuring of the armies in the four cases studied by Adekanye and the situation of the North of Mali by the time of the rebellion, it seems that integration in Mali proceeded smoothly indeed.

In general, the Tuaregs appear very satisfied with the outcome of the integration, although some Arabs think that the number of Arabs is too low. People from the former MPMGK are not satisfied because their combatants did not get any officer positions. This, they feel, was not integration, but an ordinary recruitment of soldiers. However, they all seem to consider the integration acceptable.<sup>99</sup>

In terms of integration and national unity, there is no doubt that Mali has avoided some of the dangers and has reached a good balance between the various elements.

Another demand from the nomads was a stronger presence of Tuaregs and Arabs in important positions in the administration. 150 positions were reserved for them. The recruitment was finished by 1 October 1996.<sup>100</sup> This kind of arrangement is not particularly Malian. In fact, Adekanye states in his study of the processes in Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda that ‘the preliminary findings confirm that power-sharing was necessary to bring about the transition from armed conflict to peace, and from authoritarian breakdowns to democratic governance in all the cases under study; in fact, powersharing had been an entrenched principle wherever such transitions were facilitated by formal peace agreements or accords.’<sup>101</sup>

The concrete arrangements will vary from case to case, depending on traditions and the complexity of the situation. In the case of Mali I got the impression through a large number of interviews that Tuaregs tend to think that the Malian solution is good. Among Arabs, opinion seems more divided, some claiming that Arabs have not got as many positions as they deserved. Finally, people related to the MPMGK find it unjust that they have got no positions at all.<sup>102</sup> However, one should also bear in mind that the sedentarists from the North were already well represented in the army and in the administration.

Some people at the grass-root level in the North, from all communities, have expressed some dissatisfaction with the fact that these advantages of promotion have exclusively been given to the former combatants. ‘They have used us to improve their own situation. Nothing has changed in our situation’. I am not able to tell how widespread such dissatisfaction is. But as far as I can judge, it represents no danger for the peace.

I myself feel that it was strategic to reserve these positions for active members of the Movements. They were the ones who had been willing and able to run the rebellion for many years. This arrangement has satisfied them and included the key persons on all levels in the former Movements in the structures of the state. They have got a personal interest in the peace. Their families, in a wide meaning of the word, also see the advantages of the new situation and will favour its maintenance.

This does not mean that these people have been ‘bought’. Many of them are idealistic and will certainly react very strongly if the peace is not followed up by systematic investments in infrastructure in the North.

Obviously, it is not possible to give personal benefits to everybody. This has to be restricted to selected key persons who should thus be convinced that it lies in their own interest to support the state. The advantages of common people have to come on a more general level: one important factor is a state presence strong enough to maintain peace and order and to guarantee a reasonable degree of personal freedom and legal security, but even more important are investments that will improve the material living conditions of the population.

The combatants that were not integrated, were divided into two categories. Those who had handed in their arms – in all 1661 combatants plus an additional of 750 persons, 150 from each organization – each received about USD 210 as demobilization allowance. This corresponds to about four months’ wages for an unskilled worker. Some 5700 former combatants who had not deposited personal arms (most of them certainly did not have any) were slated to receive about USD 110. This is meant not as compensation for

demobilization, but as a modest contribution towards their reintegration in society. In order to get the money, they have to present projects for investment of the money. Most often some ex-combatants form a group for a common investment, or they associate with other people from their village or faction to organize a common project. This operation – the Programme for Support to Socio-Economic Reinsertion of Ex-combatants of the North of Mali (PAREM) – includes both categories of those who get money. The operation is to finish by the end of 1997.<sup>103</sup>

Similar schemes have been organized in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda after the end of the civil wars there. It was not done in South Africa where, as Adekanye has noted, a ‘rising wave of urban violence, in which an increasing number of ex-soldiers have been found to be involved, as well as availability of many foreign mercenary service in other conflict-torn African states (e.g. Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone), may not be unconnected with this lack of effective domestic programme of socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants’.<sup>104</sup>

All those whom I interviewed about this process stated that they were pleased with the impartiality of PAREM – that is, that all groups are treated on an equal basis. But not all were pleased with the way PAREM has functioned. PAREM has been confronted with other problems. Some ex-combatants have complained of a certain misuse of funds and lack of control. In Gao this led to a situation where armed ex-combatants came to the office in order to force a solution. In Timbuktu most of the ex-combatants have handed in their arms. In Gao, however, quite a few kept their arms; there, and the situation gives reason for concern. On the other hand, it is hardly conceivable that such a sensitive issue as that of PAREM could be carried through without incidents, nor would it be realistic to expect all PAREM projects to succeed.

The idea of PAREM and the handling of it has, as far as I can see, been mainly successful. The case of South Africa, mentioned above, indicates that such a programme is a necessary part of handling a post-rebellion situation. But the incidents that have occurred also indicate that UNDP should have tighter control over the execution of the programme.

However, a new problem, with new possible sources of friction and tension, is created by the very fact that those who once used their arms are getting money for a new start, whereas those who suffered from the rebellion and had the heaviest losses will get nothing. We have already had comments on this issue by dissatisfied victims of the rebellion in Mali.

The same thing became obvious in Ethiopia, where the number of beneficiaries was close to 500,000. It was found that targeting only on ex-soldiers operating in the community was inadequate; and that it would be better to bring civilians into any such reintegration package, since these would also require similar assistance in order to be able to embark on any small-scale ventures.<sup>105</sup>

It seems right to accord priority to the ex-combatants, but for obvious reasons the community side of PAREM also needs to be stressed. As often as possible, the money should be given for ‘joint ventures’ involving both ex-combatants and civilians. An uncomfortable fact remains: without a period of relatively comprehensive investments in infrastructure, the ‘losers’ of the peace – those who have had heavy losses during the rebellion and have received no compensation and no improvement in living conditions – will probably grow increasingly frustrated with the dangers such a situation may lead to.

### 8.3 Investments for Development

It is not easy to evaluate the volume of the present programmes of investments in the North compared to urgent needs. People in public positions tend to say that things are improving and that there actually are heavy investments in the North, a point they can back up with reliable statistics. I myself have enough knowledge of the North to know that it is true. But there are also some problems involved:

- the evaluation of the importance of the investments differs from person to person, even among those who are well informed. Some say that Kidal is a huge construction site with radio, TV, secondary school etc. Others say that nothing is changing in Kidal. Both are right. Things are changing in the regional centre of Kidal. But those who live outside that centre do not see anything that changes, nor do they see the possibilities which investments in the regional centre can provide for all of them in the long run. In the region of Timbuktu some people say that in their area they cannot notice the slightest sign of any improvement whatsoever. Investments are concentrated in specific areas, with few projects in others. In Gao people often say that the investments go to the river valley; some say that it must be so because the possibilities are where there is water.

These examples indicate that the following problems exist:

(1) Investments are unevenly distributed within each region, a fact that creates new frustration. The case of Gao is particularly dangerous because it shows that investors tend to think in terms of natural resources rather than human relations. And yet, the main reason for rebellion was lack of hope and chronic poverty due to uneven distribution of resources. Even though all communities of the North agreed on the rebellion, it was those who were hardest hit – the nomads – who started the rebellion. Surely, then, it is extremely unwise not to invest in infrastructure for production in the areas where the nomads dominate, and not only in the river valley where water happens to be abundant. In general, the volume of investments will have to be increased, diversified and given a broader geographical distribution, if people of all origins are to gain hope in the future. Otherwise the feeling of injustice will only grow. This is the main battlefield for a lasting peace in Mali. The international community must increase its participation.

(2) There is an enormous need for information. People will have to understand that the needs are so great that it is not possible to serve everybody at the same time. Many of the investments will – indirectly, or in the long run – yield benefit to areas further away from where they are initially made. Continuous efforts are needed to explain this important point to people.

Independent rural radio stations are popping up. This development should be encouraged by the government. It might be wise to offer short courses in programming for radio and in techniques of interviewing for those who are responsible for those radios and encourage them to organize an on-going debate on these issues with their listeners.

(3) Perhaps the most discouraging element is that there is very little local initiative. People may well demand that investments be made, and deplore that nothing is happening. But they also need to recognize their own responsibility in setting priorities and in participating in projects, encouraging investments by settling local disputes over ownership of land and natural resources, by a reliable promise of sharing of responsibility in implementing and running projects. The new municipalities can provide a framework

for this. But without a properly designed information and motivation campaign, most people are unlikely to understand what kind of possibilities and responsibilities the new structures will provide.

Fortunately this is not without exception. In the Gao region, for example, people have started to organize themselves in small groups to solve some common problems. This process was already underway in the Timbuktu region before the rebellion. Such tendencies must be encouraged, and should be used as examples in the information and motivation campaign. Some development agencies think that the people in some areas are so hard-hit or are so poor that they can make no local contribution; these agencies thus conclude that the population should have the new infrastructure as an outright gift. For my part, however, I strongly fear that such a policy of 'de-responsibilization' of local communities is counterproductive to development and to a lasting peace.

Popular responsibility and involvement on all levels would seem to be a key to sustainable development. It is also important to organize a balanced multisectoral development. A clear example here is the new regional hospital in Timbuktu, which was built to cover the needs of the whole region, with some more than 500,000 inhabitants. What then is the problem? - there are no roads. 'Even the French working for the construction company admitted that they were doing work of no value: There are no patients, because there are no roads. A sick person will not travel 100 kilometres on the back of a donkey!'<sup>106</sup>

In Gao region, permanent new school buildings have been constructed; there are new permanent dispensaries as well as a new, well equipped hospital in the town itself. All are visible signs of improvement. But that is all there is to it. Because of budget restrictions due to regulations set by the International Monetary Fund, most of these buildings are not staffed, even though Mali has qualified personnel. Through its agreement with the IMF, Mali is forced to keep the number of civil servants low. The new hospital in Gao has started to show signs of lack of maintenance even before it has been used. As to the schools, there are plans to recruit temporary teachers. These are urgent matters, because if the new buildings remain unstaffed, the investments risk becoming counterproductive. That international finance institutions can impose such structural adjustments in Mali's postwar situation, is an irresponsible policy which seriously endangers the peace process. In a comparative report on the postwar situation in Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda, Adekanye 'Bayo notes the inherent contradictions 'between the tasks of reconstruction or rehabilitation and the IMF/World Bank-imposed programmes of economic structural adjustment based on 'market' reforms which the countries (particularly Ethiopia, Uganda and Mozambique) have to bear at the same time.' South Africa has been cautious in its approach to the IMF because of the effects and pressures it could have on the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme.<sup>107</sup>

Turning to Central America, we may note the case of the civil war in El Salvador. Here the interdependence of peace and development has been widely recognized. If a major improvement in living conditions is not brought about relatively soon, social tensions will rise, together with the risk of a new war. And yet, as Boyce and Pastor point out, 'the government and the international financial institutions (IFIs) have pursued essentially the same macroeconomic stabilization and structural adjustment policies they would have followed had the country never been at war, partly because of a belief that if the peace process were allowed to interfere with economic policy, both might fail. We maintain, in

contrast, that unless the peace process is allowed to reshape economic policy, both will fail'.<sup>108</sup>

An article in *Le Monde Diplomatique* of June 1997 puts the problem in more general terms: '...the imposed policy of structural adjustments, of privatizations and of deregulations has so far been exclusively a source of impoverization of the great majority in the countries that are crushed by the debt and delivered to speculative capital.'<sup>109</sup> The IMF policy would indeed seem to be counterproductive to peace.

In Mozambique, IMF regulations prevented the country from taking up World Bank loans for health care and Nordic help for schools. Under pressure from the main donors, the IMF finally agreed to modify these regulations in order to help the country to cope with reconstruction after the war.<sup>110</sup>

IMF restrictions must be modified also in the case of Mali. This would enable the country to make use of the existing infrastructure and invest further, to avoid a new popular uprising against poverty and hopelessness.

One case in point concerns expectations among Malian refugees. Many of them have now become accustomed to a higher degree of public services than before, especially as regards schooling. Many nomads have come to understand that the injustice they felt was partly their own fault, because they did not let their children go to school. Today, motivation for sending children to school is considerably higher than before the rebellion. The refugee camps have provided the opportunity to make a reality of this new motivation. We may note another promising development in the refugee camps: sending girls to attend primary school. This is new, and it is happening on large scale.

In order to maintain the thrust of these positive tendencies, the North needs more schools, the schools will have to be staffed and the children should be provided with meals at school. The area is very low on local resources after years of droughts and rebellion. Parents still feel that their children are needed at home to participate in economic activities to ensure day-to-day survival. The feeling of hunger is stronger than the feeling of the value of education. School meals can make an important contribution here. Of course, Malian society cannot manage to provide all the services which the population wants – but this is not always easy to understand for those who have begun to lose hope again.

Government officials talk about commitments from the international community and seem to be confident in the future. But these commitments do not give hope to the people of Mali: only concrete action can give them confidence. Officially there is talk about 'security first': i.e. first the North must become peaceful, and then the investments will follow. What the majority of the population wants is development *now*. It may well be that actions that can create hope are necessary in order to put an end to insecurity. Unless this matter can soon find a solution through cooperation between the government, the local communities, the international organizations, the bilateral cooperation programmes and NGOs, frustrations will increase.

There has been an obvious improvement in informal NGO infrastructure when it comes to food security since the last major drought. But people seem to agree that this infrastructure in general is far from good enough. Many still feel insecure when it comes to basic food needs in a possible new crisis.

## 8.4 Problems Still Not Solved

The Malian state has certainly not yet got the strength that civil society demanded in the meetings. It has not been able to guarantee security everywhere in the North. The number of armed robberies, especially in the Gao region, has remained high. The government, even though it seems to have control at this moment, has not been able to control the whole area on a permanent basis.

In Menaka, an administrative area covering 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> with 90,000 inhabitants, the administration has only two cars at its disposal. No detail of the local administration infrastructure that was destroyed during the rebellion has been repaired. The *chefs d'arrondissement* stay in the village of Menaka, occasionally making forays to visit their administrees. The local communities have organized themselves to maintain peace and order, because the administration has proved itself incapable of doing anything.

At the intercommunity meeting in Tamalet in March 1995, the participants took decisions that were then implemented by local leaders, because there is absolutely no government presence in the area and no investments from the NGOs.

In Tamalet the security situation has improved considerably:

- the reconciliation is real
- several problems have been solved concerning cattle that were stolen during the rebellion, by compensations in cattle or in money. To this end a number of local leaders spent a month on camelback, riding from camp to camp
- they have been able to solve some disputes over land usufruct issues
- they have been able to promote understanding between communities in Niger and Mali, so people from Tamalet have started to visit market places in Niger (Tillia Alalak and Tinteburada)
- they have organized information about the decentralization.

However, people in the area remain helpless against armed car robberies and armed theft of animals. There are still serious problems between some Daoussac groups<sup>111</sup> and Fulanis from Niger. Local leaders feel uneasy because they realize that they are going further than the law allows, but because the government does not function there seems to be no other way. They are looking forward to the organization of municipalities that can provide a legal framework for their activities. To date, they have often asked the Commandant de Cercle for permission – which he has granted, because of their obvious competence and because he lacks the material means that could enable him to take charge of such matters himself.<sup>112</sup>

In the border areas, individuals have bought automatic weapons to defend themselves from intruders from neighbouring countries: there are armed rebellions in Niger and in Algeria. Plans to resolve this border problem have been made; implementation is to start in September 1997. As part of this plan a large intercommunity meeting will be held in Tamalet by the second half of September.

There are still a relatively large number of Malian refugees abroad, especially in Burkina Faso. Return has been much slower than intended. But the process is underway, and there are hopes that it will be finished by the end of 1997.

Border crossing still involves a large amount of paperwork, which makes it difficult for nomads to move within the area where their communities live. Any solution to that problem will have to be linked to economic advantages. Indeed, this now seems possible.

At present, trade between the North and the neighbouring countries, Algeria, Mauritania and Nigeria (transiting through Niger) is mainly smuggling. By its very nature this has some highly negative consequences:

- it reinforces the harsh attitude of the custom officers, police etc. of keeping strict control at the borders and even inland far away from the borders, thus contributing to the harassment of the population and to the maintenance of the stifling paperwork required when crossing borders
- this smuggling trade is so lucrative that the smugglers protect themselves by automatic arms, thus adding to the banditry, the insecurity and the repressive attitude of the civil servants
- the existence of widespread smuggling makes legal trade with those countries very difficult.

On the other hand, this unofficial trade shows the necessity and the potentials of trade with those countries, all of them considerably richer than Mali. It is probably beneficial for all the countries involved to seek solutions in order to facilitate trade, improve communication and reduce border formalities. This should make a valuable contribution towards reducing violence in the area.

Most of the illogical administrative divisions along the river Niger have been maintained, so most of the nomads and even many sedentarists still have their economic resources in two different subdivisions. This division was confirmed at a time when most of Mali's refugees were still abroad. It is clearly necessary that there be another possibility to discuss subdivision borders before the next elections in 2002.

Perhaps the most dangerous problem here is that the boundaries of the *cercles* – the constituencies – have not been altered. In the North, one member is elected to the National Assembly from each *cercle*. This is a serious problem in those constituencies that cover the river valley, as it encourages the competition and division between the two main groups of the population: nomads and sedentarists. If at least two representatives could be elected from each *cercle*, it would greatly contribute to shifting the debate away from ethnic issues and towards more political ones. This should be considered for the 2002 general election.

The question of cattle ownership remains unsolved. Indeed, so far I have not even seen the question raised.

Civil society made some attempts to define procedures to solve disputes over usufruct rights to pasture, water and arable land. In a few cases strategies have been agreed on, and in one or two instances some progress has been made in solving specific disputes. But in general the traditional ability to solve these problems has been discontinued; during colonial times, such matters became the sole preserve of the colonial power, and later of the central government. Lasting solutions were rarely found – indeed, very often the government was not even interested in solutions because the conflicts split the communities and made them easier to rule. Most of the intercommunity meetings organized in 1995 and 1996 did not even dare to touch on such matters. Instead, they referred them to the authorities, which have proved to be incapable so far. An increasing number of cases are taken to court. This involves a lengthy and expensive procedure, and the outcome is not always accepted. With few exceptions, then, the important question of

usufruct of local resources has not been solved. Plans are, however, underway to let the local communities decide on their own strategies for approaching this problem. The social organization of civil society on the intercommunity level is still non-existent in Mali. The process of peace and reconciliation has shown how important it is for civil society to be able to take action on this level. The organization of the new municipalities will probably facilitate the emergence

of civil society structures on that same level. Be that as it may, the need for a civil society with the ability to act on the intercommunity level is so important, that facilitating such a development should be a priority for the government.

## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 9.1 Importance of Trust

All the evidence on this point indicates that efficient intervention in a conflict depends on sticks, carrots or trust – or a combination of all three. The experiences from Mali and Mozambique show that the most important basis for trust is a long-term involvement with actions of solidarity and respect. It was those who were willing to risk something in periods of conflict and insecurity who were able to facilitate the intervention of civil society – or contact between the warring parties, in the case of Mozambique. I have not been able to identify any other reason that was strong enough to serve as a basis for trust. This basis was strengthened through personal qualities and a religious foundation for the involvement. But I do not feel convinced that these elements in themselves could have been strong enough to provide the necessary basis for trust.

It was also this long-term intervention of actions of solidarity which led to that international network that made it possible to draw on each other's competence and financial resources.

#### 9.2 Basic Conditions for Popular Participation

We can see from the experience in Mali that civil society on the top level in the capital city is able to act even under very difficult circumstances. But in the villages and rural areas, local civil society does not have the same level of education, the same level of information, the same level of experience, nor the same protection. Things happened in remote places that would never have been possible in Bamako without provoking a general uprising like the one in March 1991.

After the agreement in Tamanrasset, civil society felt neglected. The terms of the agreement were kept secret from the general public.

After the conclusion of the National Pact, a part of civil society – the sedentarists – felt excluded. They all were uncertain as to whether the Movements were ready for peace, they felt that the government was weak and they were not convinced that the government would be able to protect a peaceful evolution. The experience from Mali and elsewhere shows clearly that civil society or outside actors can do very little unless there is a clear commitment for peace on the part of all main actors in the conflict. In Mali in April 1992, civil society was not yet ready for broad action. But by 1994, when the MPMGK, the FIAA and the army had become very aggressive, all groups of the population seem to have come to the conclusion that the present situation could not continue; that if they did not assume their responsibility, others would fill the vacuum and manipulate them for their own purposes. It was a matter of awareness-raising. By the end of the year 1994 the government had signalled that they wanted civil society to act, and civil society felt that

the government was strong enough to be able to carry through an agreement. The Movements showed clear signs of a will to peace. With a few exceptions, civil society still needed a boost to start the process, and this came mainly from NGOs. One major problem was that civil society had no experience of action on the level that was needed. There was no intercommunity leadership on the intermediate and community level between the local society and the constituency, the *cercle*. What was needed was a strategy from people they trusted, to be sure that the option was viable and legal. In many cases outside help was needed to identify the main organizer; and in most cases, some funding was necessary, although we were impressed by the volume of local participation. Even so, all this was not always enough. People did not dare to organize intercommunity meetings or commit themselves to solutions, before they saw concrete preparations for disarming the combatants. In some cases they did not commit themselves until they actually saw the combatants hand in their arms.

Malian civil society generally lacked a recognized leadership at the appropriate level, and it needed a legal framework. As soon as these problems were remedied, however, civil society did indeed assume responsibility, taking courageous decisions and making a major contribution towards peace. It was *their* peace. They are willing to defend it, and therefore there are good reasons to believe that it will last.

In the other conflict areas in Africa which I have studied I have found no parallel to the massive and independent role played by Malian civil society. However, I feel that a similar phenomenon could be possible elsewhere, provided that the government and other main actors make it clear that they want local civil society to act, and that all main components of civil society see that their interests are best served by peace.

Why then was there no similar involvement happen in Sierra Leone and Mozambique? The contributions from civil society were important, but probably nobody saw a massive, organized and independent action as a possibility. I think that unless such a development is facilitated and organized, it will not get further than individual initiatives and a handful of better-organized initiatives.

A word on the 'outside facilitators': the cases that we have studied indicate that they could not be complete outsiders. The facilitator must have the trust of the population concerned. As far as I can see, the best way to obtain this is through a long record of service and solidarity through relief and/or development work.

### **9.3 Reconciliation**

Our analysis shows clearly that in Mali the reconciliation is real, within the limits imposed by the situation. It is a political question to decide how far a society will go in this process. Those who have suffered and who will have to carry the burdens of the future are the ones to take this decision. But a minimum seems to be that the truth must be known. In a way the intercommunity meetings and their preparation provided a setting for local 'truth commissions'. But much remains to be done.

The 1997 general amnesty solves some problems, although many Malians have difficulties in accepting the principle of impunity. On the grass-root level it seems that the decision not to pay compensation is the part of the peace process that creates most discontent. It may be wise to look for a kind of minimum solution that can reduce frustrations on this point.

Many of the refugees have not taken part in the reconciliation process, so problems may still arise here. The majority of the refugees stayed abroad for too long. UNHCR has not dealt well with the repatriation question; many refugees feel very frustrated, and with good reason. UNHCR carries a heavy responsibility for this destabilizing element in the Malian situation.

#### **9.4 Main Reasons for Rebellion – Covered in Peace Treaty and in Follow Up?**

The integration of combatants in the National Army and in other armed structures of the state has now been carried through as intended. The same is the case for integration of educated persons from the North, mainly nomads, in the government administration.

Technically this has been organized very smoothly. However, although the Tuaregs are satisfied, the Arabs seem to think that they have not got their fair share and the sedentarists express dissatisfaction because they are not really affected by these measures. On the other hand, a number of Songhoy were already soldiers and officers before the rebellion started. There is no reason to believe that the partial dissatisfaction on this point is strong enough to represent any real danger to the peace.

The reinsertion of ex-combatants in civil activities, organized by the UNDP through PAREM, has been progressing well. All groups involved were satisfied by the way PAREM shares the funds among the ex-combatants from the various Movements. But there have been complaints from individuals that the funds were not being handled properly, and this may have serious consequences.

Refugees have complained that those who used arms and thus caused all the troubles are being rewarded, but those who fled and lost everything, get nothing.

The Commissariat of the North was created to handle the situation in the North and to show that the government took the special statutes serious. The Commissioner reports directly to the President of Mali. This is a new, open style of administration that could serve as an example for the rest of the administration. This structure is an obvious success.

Another success story is that of the EMAs, which were to stand in for the administration in the North, where and when this was absent due to the rebellion. This was a brilliant idea, and the EMAs have functioned extremely well.

The local self-government is taken care of by the law on decentralization. This bill has been passed by the National Assembly, but is not yet functioning.

The intercommunity meetings gave civil society the possibility to take responsibility for their own affairs. They also got experience with subdivisions different from those they knew from the administration. But most often the transitional bodies – CTAs – do not function because of lack of funds and experience. Municipal elections have been postponed from the beginning of June to late 1997/January 1998. I have the impression that most people in the North think that decentralization covers the need for self-determination, but there is an urgent need for information and training of local leaders.

Nearly all of the intercommunity meetings demanded that the authority of the state should be restored and that its agents should be provided with the means necessary to carry through their responsibilities. For its part, the government says that the administration is restored, but this is not the case. It is correct to say that the situation has improved considerably. But in many places the *chefs d'arrondissement* stay in the larger

centres and visit their subdivision only occasionally. This is not what civil society requested and it is not what they need. The main problem is lack of funds for housing of key administrative staff, for communications equipment and equipment to run the services. This is a matter of some urgency.

The very important question of investments in infrastructure and development projects is currently under discussion. Despite some improvement, investments are still unevenly distributed and staffing is blocked by dangerous restrictions imposed by the International Monetary Fund – restrictions that are counterproductive to peace.

What is now needed is a huge information campaign to mobilize civil society to take responsibility for its own further development. I lack sufficient statistics on the volume of investments, but my impression is that the current level is not enough to meet expectations from the population. Unfortunately quite a few NGOs in the area have decided that this is the time to reduce their activities. To me, this seems an irresponsible act, showing a lack of solidarity and of understanding of what is at stake. So much has been destroyed during the rebellion that it will take some time just to re-establish the situation to what it was earlier. Today there is a urgent need for visible improvement, so that people may regain hope in the future.

A period of peace-building is necessary. The phasing out of NGO involvement should probably be postponed 4-6 years. It is now that their involvement is most needed; and because of the growing responsabilization of the local leaders, it is now that NGOs may get the best results from their investments.

Telecommunications have been improved in the North, but in Timbuktu people are demanding that a road be constructed there. A project like that would be a good signal that the government is taking seriously the needs of that region. In Timbuktu and Gao, the general opinion seems to be that the final sign of equality with the South will be the construction of the dam at Toussaye. But I also heard words expressing uncertainty as to the wisdom of that project, from people living in the river valley southeast of Toussaye. They were not convinced that they would have access to the same amount of water as before, and thus feared that they would be the ones who paid the price for an improvement for others.

## **9.5 Final Appraisal**

With all its imperfections, I think that the recent evolution of the situation in the North is mainly positive. Unless many serious problems arise or there are obvious signs of bad will from the government to fulfil its commitment, the peace in Mali will last.

There are two main conditions for this. In order to fulfil its commitment, the government needs help from the international community for investments in infrastructure. These are necessary in order to remedy the root causes of the rebellion. The international community will have to provide considerable sums to finance this. On the other hand, this will certainly be far less expensive than to have to pay for reconstruction after a *new* rebellion.

Money alone may prove as disastrous as no action at all. The heavy involvement of civil society in the peace process, the wisdom that was used to promote peace and reconciliation, the growing sense of responsibility on the part of the local leadership, the emergence of a new local leadership on intercommunity level – all these were vital

factors. They must be invited to play a similar role in reconstruction and in laying the new foundations of a society of progress and hope.

To achieve this, the government and the donors will probably have to enter into a new kind of partnership with local leaders, trusting their wisdom, their priorities and their handling of funds. The role of civil society in the peace process has given proof that this is not only possible, but very efficient as well.

There must also be a massive campaign of information and greater sense of responsibility on the part of civil society, based on its strong role in the peace process. Local communities must take responsible decisions on priorities, on local participation and on running costs for many of the investments. It is to be hoped that these new responsibilities could also lead to a situation where civil society becomes a lasting counterforce to existing structures. This could be a guarantee that the intercommunity dialogue, essential for the survival of the democracy, will continue in a context of a lasting peace in Mali.

## NOTES

- 1 Robin-Edward Poulton and Ibrahim Ag Youssouf define *civil society* as ‘those citizens who form themselves into associations to promote an interest which does not include seeking or exercising political power’, Poulton, Robin-Edward & Ibrahim Ag Youssouf, *A Peace of Timbuktu - Democratic Governance, Development and African Peacemaking*. Geneva 1997, ch. 5.1. In the case of Mali it will be useful to include village leaders, clan leaders and religious leaders as leaders in ‘Civil Society’. It also seems logical to include NGOs.
- 2 Kåre Lode, *Synthèse du Processus des Rencontres Intercommunautaires du Nord du Mali (d’août 1995 à mars 1996)*, Stavanger 1996.
- 3 In order to make this further study possible, as noted in the Foreword, the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) approached the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), who obtained funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and provided an academic setting for my research.
- 4 Between October 1995 and the end of March 1996 a large number of ‘intercommunity meetings for reconciliation and consolidation of peace’ took place throughout the entire North of Mali. An informal group, of which I was the coordinator, became facilitators for most of these meetings. This will be studied further in chapter 4 in this report.
- 5 *Etude sur la Société Civile et le Capital Social dans la Résolution des Conflits et dans le Développement du Nord: Leçons de l’Expérience Malienne* (Terms of reference).
- 6 Lode, *Synthese*, pp. 25-26.
- 7 Poulton & Ag Youssouf, *A Peace of Timbuktu*, ch.1.2
- 8 *Etude sur la Société Civile et le Capital Social dans la résolution des conflits et dans le développement du Nord: Leçons de l’expérience Malienne*. Terms of reference prepared in June 1997 by a group of researchers working with UNDP, Bamako. Here at p.1. (My translation - KL.)
- 9 The term ‘Tuareg’, commonly used in European languages, derives from the Arabic *Tawariq*. The people call themselves *Kel Tamacheck* = those who speak Tamacheck, a term also used by the other ethnic groups in the North.
- 10 Mohamed, Alhassane Ag; Cheibane Coulibaly & Gaoussou Drabo, *NORD du Mali - de la Tragédie à l’Espoir*, published by the NGOs: ACORD, NOVIB and OXFAM, Bamako, July 1995, pp. 5-21.
- 11 Frémeau, Jacques, ‘La mise en place d’une administration aux marges de l’A.O.F.’, in Bernus, Edmond; Pierre Boilley, Jean Clauzel & Jean Louis Triaud, *Nomads et commandants - Administration et sociétés nomades dans l’ancienne A.O.F.*, Paris 1993, p.25; Marty, André, ‘La répartition des terres lacustres du Gourma malien jusqu’à la fin de la période coloniale’, in Bernus et al., pp. 171-172.
- 12 See André Marty, *La division sédentaire–nomades dans le Boucle du Niger 1893–1922*, at pp. 22 and 49.
- 13 Mohamed, Alassane Ag; Coulibaly & Drabo, *NORD du Mali*, pp. 23-24 and 29; and Marty, ‘La repartition’, p.172.
- 14 Boilley, Pierre, ‘Aux dernières heures de la colonisation: le témoignage d’Ammera ag Acheriff’, in Bernus et al., p. 211.

- 15 Maymann, Ann, 'Staten og Tuaregerne i Mali - konflikt eller samarbejde?' University Center, Roskilde, Denmark, 1996, pp. 66-70, 123.
- 16 Wälzholz, Gunnar, 'La problématique touarègue au Mali: le double enjeu de l'autodétermination et de l'intégration nationale'. Presented at l'Institut d'Etudes de Sciences Politiques de Paris, 1997, p.26.
- 17 Maymann, 'Staten og Tuaregerne', pp.62,68,72. I myself worked in the area in 1987-88 and was witness to incredible things. In one case, we distributed food to a starving population – and the next day the Commandant de Cercle visited the same communities and collected large quantities as payment for taxes that were due for that year and the previous years.  
Once I heard that a forest guard had tried to fine a person for cutting bushes as fodder for his goats. The man managed to escape. The gendarmerie put his 9-year-old son in prison in Gossi in order to force his father to come back. I went to the gendarmerie and asked if it was true, which they confirmed. I told them that unless they let the boy out immediately I would drive the 1,050 kms to Bamako and visit all government offices until somebody promised to take action against the sergeant responsible for the gendarmerie unit. The boy was released there and then.
- 18 Maymann, 'Staten og Tuaregerne', pp. 54,71,117; Wälzholz,'La problematique tourague, pp. 22, 25.
- 19 Maymann, pp. 57-58.
- 20 Clauzel, Jean, *Administrateur de la France d'outre-mer*. Paris 1989,p.41.
- 21 Loiseau, Philippe, 'L'administration et les rapports nomades/sédentaires', in Bernus et al., p. 164.
- 22 Mohamed, Alassane Ag; Coulibaly & Drabo, *NORD du Mali*, pp.23, 34-35, 58-59.
- 23 Maymann, 'Staten og Tuaregerne', p.72.
- 24 International Alert, a charitable foundation with Consultative Status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, has long experience in working in the related fields of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.
- 25 'A Joint Action Peace Forum on Sierra Leone, 7 March 1995', document issued after a meeting of the Peace Forum, London 1995, p.3.
- 26 Maymann, p 44.
- 27 *ibid.* pp. 45, 62-63
- 28 Historically, 'Gourma' is the area on the right bank of the Niger from the village of Douentza in the west to the border with Burkina Faso in the south. People in the North of Mali usually use the term in this sense. Outsiders, however, often mix this up with the administrative subdivision of Gourma Rharous, which covers only the central part of Gourma. The left bank of the river is called Haoussa.
- 29 Clauzel, 'Administrateur...', pp. 178-179.
- 30 Boilley, Pierre, 'L'Organisation commune des régions sahariennes (O CRS): une tentative avortée', in Bernus et al., p.215.
- 31 Maymann, 'Staten og Tuaregerne', pp. 63-64
- 32 *ibid.*, pp. 45-47,66-70.
- 33 'A Joint Action Peace Forum on Sierra Leone', p.3.
- 34 In February 1916 a Tuareg rebellion against France broke out in Mali and Niger. At that time France had to concentrate its forces in Europe and it was easy to mobilize

- nomads for rebellion because of France's heavy requisition of camels, which meant a serious blow to Tuareg trans-Saharan trade. France suppressed the rebellion in three months, but about 30,000 Tuaregs fled to Nigeria, where they were a constant threat to the French colonial administration in Mali.
- 35 Information about Polisario received from Arabs close to the leadership of the Arabic Islamic Front of Azaouad (FIAA). See Maymann, pp.79-80
- 36 Maymann, pp. 67,78.
- 37 Information from interviews in Mali, May 1997.
- 38 It seems from the evidence that the North in many ways had been neglected and treated by the central authorities in an unjust manner. Some people still do not agree with that conclusion. But I have talked with so many people from the North that I feel certain that there was a widespread feeling of such injustice. This feeling was for many persons a hard truth that they were willing to act on.
- 39 The rebellion is commonly called the 'Tuareg rebellion' because it was started and, to a certain degree, dominated by the Tuaregs. But at a very early stage the Arabs organized an Islamic Arab Front of Azawad that played a key role during the rebellion. It will be more appropriate to call it 'nomad rebellion' or 'Arab/Tuareg rebellion'.
- 40 The rebel organizations call themselves Movement, Front or Army. In general the people in Mali refer to them by the term 'Movements'. I will use the term in that general meaning.
- 41 'Azawad' (French *Azaouad*) is a name that traditionally designates a huge zone north of Timbuktu. The way the name has been used by the Movements, it designates the three northern regions (Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu), which cover some 2/3 of the national territory of Mali. In the National Pact this area is referred to by the neutral expression of 'the North of Mali'.
- 42 'Les affrontements entre Touaregs et Armée Malienne' (July-November 1990), a non-signed and non-dated document, is considered as reliable by Tuaregs.
- 43 interviews in Mali, May 1997.
- 44 Ambéiry Ag Rhissa, *Problème du Nord - Brève Genèse Historique*, pp. 5-7. In November 1995 I myself was in Tin Aouker, where I spent the night in a camp (because there was still no house that could be used). In my conversations with the people the information given by Ambéiry was confirmed. On that occasion I also passed through Tiguerwen, which showed all signs of systematic destruction.
- 45 Mohamed, Coulibaly & Drabo, p. 9.
- 46 Appendix 1 is an English translation of a summary published in Mohamed, Coulibaly & Drabo, pp. 13-14.
- 47 *La Voix du Nord - Organe de Combat des Peuples Sedentaires*, not dated and not signed.
- 48 Drabo, Gaoussou & Alhassane ag Mohamed, *Nord Mali: Le Processus de Paix et de Réconciliation - Etude d'une Démarche exemplaire*, Bamako 1997, p.31.
- 49 interviews in Mali in May 1997.
- 50 Drabo, Gaoussou & Alhassane Ag Mohamed, *Nord Mali*, p. 33. A large number of meetings took place before the conclusion of the National Pact, many of those in Algeria. I will not go into details here; there exist two excellent publications that

- comment on each of the meetings: Drabo & Mohamed, *Nord Mali*, see esp. pp.19-27; and Mohamed, Coulibaly & Drabo, *NORD du Mali*, pp. 8-13.
- 51 The *Collèges Transistaires d'Arrondissement* (CTAs) were organized between August 1993 and October 1995, to take care of the transition between the old *arrondissement*, administered by the *chef d'arrondissement*, who was appointed by the government, and the planned municipality governed by a council elected by the people in general elections. Every CTA is chaired by the *chef d'arrondissement* and is made up of representatives who are to reflect the local diversity. Together they are to run local affairs following a general consensus method. This transitional body applied only to the North.
  - 52 The most relevant example is the meeting in Gossi - interviews in Mali in May 1997
  - 53 The West African franc is the official currency of Benin, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali and Senegal. It is linked to the French franc at a fixed exchange rate. Before the devaluation 1 French franc = 50 FCFA.
  - 54 Some leaders of the sedentarists thought that there could be no peace in the North unless the sedentarists were involved on an equal basis in the negotiations. They were also convinced that to obtain peace, the nomads would have to feel the same insecurity as the sedentarists. They would then realize that the present situation could not continue for a long time, because it would destroy for many years the possibilities of returning to normal social and economic relations. In addition to self-defence actions that were focused on publicly, the MPMGK should terrorize the nomads for four months. This could not last longer than four months because the nomad Movements had shown that it was extremely difficult to keep discipline after the first enthusiastic time of the actions and because they could not create wounds so deep that they were not possible to heal. (Interviews in Mali, May 1997)
  - 55 Poulton & Ag Youssouf, *A Peace of Timbuktu*, ch.5.3.
  - 56 Drabo & Mohamed, *Nord Mali*, pp. 34-38, for an excellent presentation of a very complex period of the rebellion.
  - 57 *ibid*, ch.5.1.
  - 58 *ibid*, ch.5.2.
  - 59 Mohamed, Coulibaly & Drabo, *Nord du Mali*, p. 21.
  - 60 Føyn, Sissel H., *Human Rights - Peace - Reconciliation*, report made for Norwegian Church Aid, Oslo 1997, p.46.
  - 61 Annan, Kofi, 'Crucible of Conflict - How Africa has shaped conflict management worldwide', *Track Two*, vol.6, no.1, April 1997, p.33.
  - 62 Poulton & Ag Youssouf, ch. 4.2.
  - 63 Clauzel, *Administrateur*, pp.160,163.
  - 64 The Union would have protested if the NCA had favoured Tuaregs when recruiting staff. But such an accusation was never heard.
  - 65 The evaluation of the role of the Malian staff members and leadership during that difficult year of 1994-95 is based on a large number of conversations and interviews I had on several occasions in Gourma and elsewhere during the period I participated in the peace process (August 1995 through March 1996)
  - 66 A Joint Action Peace Forum, p. 5
  - 67 Riccardi, Andrea, 'Sant'Egidio Rome et le Monde' - Entretiens avec Jean-Dominique Durand et Régis Ladous, Paris 1996, p.78.

- 68 The NCA activity report for the year 1992 has the following opening note:  
 ‘The year of 1992 has been the most difficult in the history of the activities of the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in Gourma. The events that hit us on May 14 when armed bandits attacked our base in Gossi, and the unjustified and unjust reprisals on May 17, will remain serious memories that none of us will be able to forget.  
 Dead on May 14:  
 - Mr. Sidi Mohamed Ag Biga, night guard at the NCA since 1990  
 Dead on May 17:  
 - Mr. Alhassane Ag Baille, community extension worker and area coordinator since 1988  
 - Mr. Inamoud Ag Amaye, community extension worker and assistant to the director since 1988  
 - Mr. Cheick Ag Bendeche, warehouse manager since 1986  
 - Abdoul Kader Ag Ibrahim, logistics agent since 1987  
 - Bijiki Ag Intikoua, warehouse assistant and driver since 1987  
 These men, committed to the service of the development of their country and their people were torn away as they were busy occupied with their work. Only God knows why.  
 We give honour to these men and their families. May their souls rest in peace.’
- 69 The two persons who were killed when the grain silo at Banguel was attacked on July 25, 1994 were:  
 - Elmouloud Ag Erzag, guard  
 - Sidi Mohamed Ag Auffen, responsible for the silo.
- 70 interviews in Mali, May 1997
- 71 The Commissariat for the North is a formal administrative structure agreed on in the National Pact. It depends directly on the President of the Republic. A commissioner is appointed for a period of five years, and his term could be renewed. He is responsible for the implementation of the National Pact.
- 72 The official name: mobile unit for combined support for the peace process and the development. There was one unit with four members in each region as of August 1993. Their main assignments were to:  
 - support the peace process and social reconciliation  
 - facilitate the return of the public administration  
 - accelerate urgent relief actions, rehabilitation and development.  
 The composition of the units should reflect the social/ethnic realities of the regions.
- 73 The Fulani are an ethnic group scattered throughout the Sahel, from Senegal in the west to Chad and the Central African Republic in the east. They are very often nomads or semi-nomads, but there are also quite a few sedentarists among them.
- 74 Committee members received no financial support for their participation. They did the work out of a genuine, strong interest in finding a peaceful solution and in promoting reconciliation. They all held positions that made extensive travel in the North possible:  
 - Abacar Sibide was advisor to the Minister of Rural Development;  
 - Zeïdan Ag Sidalamine was often in the North, organizing the disarming of his Movement;  
 - Ibrahim Ag Youssouf worked for UNDP;

- Aghatam Ag Alhassane held a top post in the Commissariat for the North.
- 75 Lode, *Synthese*, pp. 16-25.
- 76 Riccardi, 'Sant'Egidio', pp.79-80.
- 77 Lode, pp. 16-25.
- 78 I have seen no official figures on the number of casualties during the years of the rebellion. But I have lived and worked so close to the situation that I would call 6,000-8,000 a guided guess.
- 79 Kidal is different from the rest of the North. Its population is mainly Tuareg nomads, but with a different social composition than elsewhere in the North. The economy is not at all dependent on the Niger River, but is oriented towards Algeria. Thus the interests of Kidal were different from those of Gao, although it had always been administered as a *cercle* under the region of Gao. When Kidal became a region this entailed several changes: not only was it allowed to handle its own affairs, but each region has certain formal rights, including the following:
- each region consists of several *cercles*, with each *cercle* electing at least one member to the National Assembly. Kidal was divided into four *cercles*, which increased its National Assembly representation from one to four;
  - a certain minimum of infrastructure is required: secondary school, regional hospital, tele-phone, electrification and public water supply in the regional capitals;
  - there is to be full regional administration, which reduces the distance between the administration and its administrees.
- 80 Adekanye, J. 'Bayo, 'Disarming Ethnic Guerrillas, Powersharing and Transition to Democracy in Africa - Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda as Comparative Cases', Oslo, November 1996, pp.9-10.
- 81 Annan, 'Crucible', p.33.
- 82 Adekanye, 'Disarming', p.6.
- 83 Poulton and Ag Youssouf, *A Peace of Timbuktu*, ch. 5.7.
- 84 *ibid* chap. 5.2.
- 85 *ibid*, chap 4.7.
- 86 Føyn, 'Human Rights', p.64.
- 87 Kel Antesar is the name of one Tuareg 'tribe' or 'confederation'.
- 88 Macko, Abdoulaye, 'Rencontre Intercommunautaire de M'Bouna du 8 au 11 septembre 1995', report presented in Bamako, September 1995, pp.2-3.
- 89 Papendieck, Barbara Rocksloh & Touré-Diallo, Fadimata Bintou, 'Eindrücke vom Aussöhnungstreffen in M'Bouna - Kreis Goundam, Region von Timbuktu vom 8. bis 11. September 1995', report presented in Bamako, September 1995, p.6.
- 90 Annan, 'Crucible', pp.32-33.
- 91 interviews in Mali, May 1997.
- 92 interviews in Mali, May 1997.
- 93 Declaration from the Association for Reconciliation and Development of Timbuktu on March 20 1996. The manuscript is part of the official minutes from the intercommunity meeting. (Capitalization is as in the manuscript, the English translation is made by the author of this report.)
- 94 Franck-Nilsen, Øystein, 'Venter utålmodig på en fred han tror på', *Vårt Land*, 2 April 1996, p.8, Oslo.
- 95 Livre Blanc sur le "Problème du NORD" du Mali, Bamako, December 1994, p.22.

- 96 Adekanye, 'Disarming', p.12.
- 97 Rapport d'Etape no 4 de la Mise en Oeuvre du Plan d'Action des Resolutions de la Rencontre de Tombouctou, pp. 1-2.
- 98 Adekanye, 'Disarming', pp.10-13.
- 99 Interviews in Mali, May 1997.
- 100 Rapport d'Etape no 4 de la Mise en Oeuvre du Plan d'Action des Resolutions de la Rencontre de Tombouctou, p. 2.
- 101 Adekanye, 'Disarming', p.9.
- 102 Interviews in Mali, May 1997.
- 103 Rapport d'Etape no 4 de la Mise en Oeuvre du Plan d'Action des Resolutions de la Rencontre de Tombouctou, p. 3; Situation du Fonds d'Affectation Speciale (Trust Fund) as of 13 September 1996.
- 104 Adekanye, J. 'Bayo, 'Disarming', p.15.
- 105 *ibid.* p. 17.
- 106 Poulton, Robin Edward, 'Vers la réintégration des Touaregs au Mali', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 1996, p.13. (English translation by K.L.)
- 107 Adekanye, 'Disarming', p.25.
- 108 Boyce, James K. & Manuel Pastor, Jr., 'Macroeconomic Policy and Peace Building in El Salvador', in K. Kumar, *Rebuilding Societies After Civil War - Critical Roles for International Assistance*, Boulder, CO/ London 1997, p. 287.
- 109 Mbaye, Sanou, 'Fausse embellie économique en Afrique subsaharienne - Un continent à l'écart du développement', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 1997, p.4 (translation from French by K.L.)
- 110 'Mozambique: Bending the rules', *The Economist International*, 28 June 1997, p. 51.
- 111 The Daoussac are an ethnic group with a culture very similar to that of the Tuareg. But they have a different language (a mixture of the main languages spoken in the area) and they in fact claim to be of Jewish origin.
- 112 Interviews in Mali, May 1997.

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# APPENDIX 1.

## NATIONAL PACT: SUMMARY

(English translation of summary published in: Ag Mohamed, Coulibaly & Drabo: *Nord du Mali – de la Tragedie à l’Espoir*, Bamako 1995, pp. 13–14)

### Chapter 1.

#### Guiding Principles

The Pact is ‘the framework in which a just and ultimate peace in the North of Mali will be restored and a national reconciliation between all Malians will be achieved’.

Furthermore, the Pact is a ‘solemn commitment’ and the clauses of the agreement between the two parties are irreversible.

However, it is also stated that there is a disagreement between the two parties as to the appellation of the Northern part of Mali. The Government wanted to use the administrative expression ‘6th, 7th and 8th regions’ whereas MFUA insisted on the term ‘Azawad’ (French: ‘Azaouad’).

Waiting for the population to decide through the decentralized structures, the parties agreed to use the expression ‘North of Mali’ in the document.

### Chapter 2.

#### On Ultimate Cessation of Hostilities and the Settlement of Problems Caused by the Situation of Armed Conflict

A final ceasefire is to take place at 00.00 hours on the day following the signature of the Pact. In addition the following proceedings are to take place within a period of 60 days after the signature of the document:

- total integration, based on individual and voluntary acceptance and on the competence of the combatants of the MFUA, into the various uniformed bodies of the Government,
- the establishment, for a period of one year, of special units of the armed forces, made up of a majority of integrated combatants of the MFUA,
- the establishment of a local security corps (police, gendarmerie, local guards), made up of all sectors of the local population,
- the establishment of special units of the army, composed mainly of members of all sectors of the local population,
- a considerable, gradual and appropriate reduction of the armed forces in order to obtain withdrawal of the majority of troops,
- the establishment of a commission for the cease-fire,

- the starting of a programme of repatriation of displaced persons,
- the establishment of a development- and reinsertion fund as well as an indemnisation- and compensation fund for military and civil victims from the two parties signatories to the document,
- the establishment of an independent commission of investigation.
- 

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Particular Status for the North**

On the basis of a new system of administrative subdivisions, the populations will organize local and interregional assemblies. These assemblies will in particular be responsible for the organization of affairs in the rural and urban communities. They are to define and promote a programme for economic, social and cultural development, to be responsible, through people selected for this purpose, for the control of forces and of activities connected with maintaining order on the local and regional levels.

A Commissioner for the North of Mali, reporting directly to the Head of State, is to be appointed for a period of five years. The appointment may be renewed. This person will be responsible for the implementation of the National Pact.

### **Chapter 4**

#### **Public Acknowledgment of Solidarity and National Unity in the North of Mali**

The following steps have been decided:

- to launch a special programme of development in the North of Mali; this programme is to last for 10 years, organized in two consecutive programmes of five years each;
- a particular and exceptional effort from the Government in order to integrate senior members of the MFUA and other persons from the North of Mali into the central high command of the national defence and of other security structures as well as in the public and semi-public administration;
- to set aside four seats in the National Assembly for displaced persons from the North of Mali, in addition to one or two seats for representatives of the Malian population from the North, 'residing abroad'.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Subregional Cooperation for Peace and Development**

Mention is made of the efforts to be undertaken by the Malian Government towards the subregional organizations (including the organization of Saharian States), international institutions and friendly countries, in order to obtain the support needed for consolidation of the peace process and for socio-economic progress.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Schedule of Implementation of Resolutions of the Pact and of National Reconciliation**

The schedules decided upon in the preceding chapters are here summed up in detail – from the 24 hours given for the implementation of the ceasefire, to eight months for implementation of the new administrative and municipal subdivision.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Guarantee for Implementation of the Pact**

A commission for followup and implementation of the Pact is to be set up within 15 days of signature of the document. The Government and the Coordination of the MFUA will each appoint four members, and the period of function for the commission is to be one year.

Signed in Bamako, April 11, 1992

For the Government of the Republique of Mali  
The Minister of the Administration of the Territory in charge of relations with the CTSP  
and the Associations  
*Colonel Brehima Sire Traore*

For the Coordination of the United  
Movements and Fronts of Azawad  
*Zahaby Ould Sidi Mohamed*

The President of the Transitional Committee  
for the Welfare of the People

*Lt-colonel Amadou Toumani Toure*

## APPENDIX 2.

### ABBREVIATIONS

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| ACORD | Association de Coopération et de Recherche pour le Développement (Association for Cooperation and Development Research)                   |
| ADEMA | Association pour la Démocratie au Mali (Association for Democracy in Mali)  |
| AIPSR | Association pour l'Implementation de la Paix et de la Sécurité (Association for Implementation of Peace and Security)                     |
| AMSUN | Association Malienne pour la Sécurisation de l'Unité Nationale (Malian Association for the Preservation of National Unity)                |
| AOF   | Afrique Occidentale Française (French West Africa)  |
| APIF  | Association pour la Promotion des Initiatives Feminines (Association for the Promotion of Women's Initiatives)                            |
| ARLA  | Armée Révolutionnaire de Libération de l'Azaouad (Revolutionary Army of the Liberation of Azawad)   |
| CNID  | Comité National d'Initiative Démocratique (National Committee for Democratic Initiative)  |
| CPD   | Comité pour la Paix et le Développement (Committee for Peace and Development)   |
| CTA   | Collège Transitoire d'Arrondissement (Transitional Body of Subdivision)   |
| EMA   | Equipe Mobil d'Appui au Processus de Paix et de Développement Concerté (Mobile Units for Support to the Peace Process and Development)    |
| FCFA  | Franc de la communauté francophone africaine (Franc of the African Francophone Community – currency unit)                                 |
| FIAA  | Front Islamique Arabe de l'Azaouad (Islamic Arabic Front of Azawad)   |
| FPLA  | Front Populaire de Libération de l'Azaouad (People's Movement for Liberation of Azawad)   |
| GARI  | Groupement des Artisans Ruraux d'Intedaine-Ménaka (Association of Rural Artisans of Intedaine-Ménaka)                                     |
| IFI   | International Financial Institutions  |
| IMF   | International Monetary Fund   |
| IRAM  | Institut des Recherches et d'Applications des Méthodes de Développement (Institute of Research and Application of Methods of Development) |
| MFUA  | Mouvements et Fronts Unifiés de l'Azaouad (United Movements and Fronts of Azawad)   |
| MPA   | Mouvement Populaire de l'Azaouad (People's Movement of Azawad)  |
| MPMGK | Mouvement Patriotique Malien – Ganda Koy (Malian Patriotic Movement of Ganda Koy)   |
| NCA   | Norwegian Church Aid  |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| NCO   | Non-commissioned Officer  |
| NGO   | Nongovernmental Organization  |
| NMS   | Norwegian Missionary Society  |
| OCRS  | Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes (Joint Organization of the Sahara Regions)   |
| OXFAM | British development and relief agency   |
| PAREM | Programme d'Appui à la Réinsertion Socio-économique des Ex-combattants du Nord Mali (Programme for Support to Socio-Economic Reinsertation of Ex-Combatants of the North of Mali) |
| PRIO  | International Peace Research Institute, Oslo  |
| SG    | Secretary-General   |
| UNDP  | United Nations Development Programme  |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees   |



## **International Peace Research Institute, Oslo**

PRIO was founded in June 1959, originally as a department of the Institute for Social Research in Oslo. In January 1966, it became an independent foundation. Today, research activities are focused on three main programmes: Conditions of War and Peace; Ethnic and Nationalist Conflicts; and Foreign - and Security Policies. The institute has an international staff of about 45 people.

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**In 1990, rebellion broke out in Northern Mali, spearheaded by Tuareg and Arab nomads who protested against marginalization, against the militarization of the North and against the increasing gap in development between the North and the South of the country.**

**The Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) had been running a huge development project in the area. With the rebellion, two of its Malian staff-members became general secretaries of two different rebel movements, and the NCA unwittingly found itself near the centre of events. Throughout the period of rebellion, many meetings were held between rebel leaders and the government, and two formal peace agreements were reached – in Tamanrasset in Algeria on 6 January 1991, and the National Pact in Bamako on 11 April 1992. However, the government that concluded the Tamanrasset agreement was overthrown only two months later. The transitional government that signed the National Pact withdrew after a few weeks, and a democratically elected regime took over. The government lost control of military units in the North; the rebel movements also lacked inner discipline. In May 1994 the sedentarists launched a ‘self-defence’ movement which led to a brief but intense period of ethnic-related violence.**

**Civil society had long played a central role in encouraging a peaceful solution. However, it was not until late 1994, with the movements actively searching for peace and the government again in control of the army, that civil society was invited to work out a solution towards a final settlement. Although decisive in facilitating peace agreements between sedentarists and nomad rebel movements, local civil society was not able to find a way to bring about reconciliation and restore economic and social life.**

**Representatives from civil society, rebel movements and the government requested the NCA to use its connections to break this impasse. Former NCA director Kåre Lode was selected to lead the initiative. Together with highly competent Malian advisors, a strategy was drawn up for involving civil society. This in turn unleashed a unique process of reconciliation and broader grass-root influence on the final peace settlement.**

**The formal peace settlement has provided acceptable solutions to the main causes of the rebellion. However, the North of Mali is in grave need of help for development projects that can give its people confidence and hope for the future. Here the international community has a vital role to play. This, indeed, is the key to a lasting peace in Mali.**

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