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Mini
Negotiation
Simulation



MALI: PEACEKEEPING

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LAWYERING PEACE

Mini-Negotiation Simulation

Mali Peacekeeping

The purpose of this negotiation is to identify and address the complex challenges related to deploying peacekeeping missions, while also working to re-establish a state-held monopoly of force during negotiations in the context of Mali. The intention is to explore potential points of agreement or disagreement among the key negotiating parties. Through the simulation, participants will debate their positions, learn negotiation techniques, identify points of conflict, and discuss potential solutions.

The simulation will tee up the conversation in the remainder of the class time on the question of security in peace agreements, and draw from the relevant chapter in Lawyering Peace as well as the supplementary material, if any, provided on the class website.

Mali has been plagued by instability and conflict since the 2012 military coup and the subsequent occupation of the northern region by armed groups. Ethnic tensions have escalated, particularly involving the Fulani community, who face allegations of supporting Islamic militants. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has been operating under a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) since its establishment in 2013. The mission has been criticized for not protecting civilians from jihadist attacks, despite its sizable force (about 13,000 military personnel) and considerable budget (\$1.26b). Tensions became more heightened when Mali's government wanted the peacekeeping forces to become more active in fighting the Islamist threat, which was not a part of the mission's mandate. The Malian government has demanded the withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping mission, the UN is debating

whether to continue its presence under Chapter 7 principles, and the Fulani community is frustrated with both the UN and the government.

Parties

- Government of Mali
- Ethnic Fulani Group
- United Nations

Time Allotted: 45 minutes

Instructions: Prior to negotiations, each delegation will meet for 5 minutes to discuss negotiation strategies and their positions with respect to the peacekeeping mission and security concerns in Mali. You may assume that other issues are on the agenda for a later session and will be addressed in subsequent negotiations.

Agenda

- Individual Delegation Meetings (5 minutes)
- Plenary (15 minutes)
- Individual Delegation (5 minutes)
- Plenary (20 minutes)

Conflict Background

The conflict in Mali emerged in 2012 following a military coup that destabilized the country. Armed groups, including Islamist extremists, took advantage of the power vacuum and seized control of the northern region. These groups have often operated in violent ways, leading to widespread human rights abuses and displacement of civilians. The Malian government, with support from international forces, has launched efforts to regain control, leading to ongoing clashes and human rights concerns. The UN Peacekeeping mission, MINUSMA, has been operating in the country since 2013 with a ten year mandate.

- *Peacekeeping Operations and Consent:* The United Nations established the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to help restore stability and protect civilians. Concerns exist regarding the mission's effectiveness in protecting civilians and its inability to halt jihadist attacks. The Malian government desires the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers, citing public sentiment against their presence. There is debate about whether

MINUSMA should continue operating without Mali's consent under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which allows for the use of force without host state consent in cases of threats to international peace and security. Watch Video at Annex 1: [Video: Al Jazeera: Security in Mali deteriorates as UN peacekeepers pulls out](#)

- *Security Sector Reform:* The Malian security forces have been criticized for human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests and civilian deaths. Ethnic tensions have escalated, with the Fulani community disproportionately targeted by security forces due to suspicions of supporting Islamic militants. The need for comprehensive security sector reform is crucial to prevent further human rights abuses and restore public trust.
- *Regional Stability:* Mali's conflict has regional implications, as instability can spill over into neighboring countries, exacerbating existing security challenges. The spread of jihadist groups across West Africa poses a threat to regional stability. Cooperation among regional actors and international partners is necessary to prevent the conflict's escalation beyond Mali's borders.
- *Humanitarian Crisis:* The conflict has triggered a humanitarian crisis with widespread displacement, food insecurity, and limited access to basic services. The Fulani community and other vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected, facing marginalization, violence, and lack of aid. Humanitarian organizations struggle to provide assistance due to insecurity and logistical challenges.

Issue for Negotiation

The central issue to be negotiated is the withdrawal or continuation of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali. The parties must decide on a comprehensive approach that ensures lasting security, respects sovereignty, and balances international obligations, while addressing concerns about civilian protection, ethnic tensions, and regional stability.

Party Positions

For Government of Mali

- The government has demanded that the UN peacekeeping mission withdraw from the country, as it has not been perceived as effective and there is growing social unrest, with much of the public having lost confidence in the UN. Additionally, there has been support in the government to work with other groups (e.g. the Wagner Group) in tackling security concerns. Watch Video at Annex 2: [Mali gets more warplanes, helicopters from Russia](#)
- The Malian government may assert national sovereignty and the government's responsibility to maintain security to strengthen its position. They may also express concern and doubt about the limitations of the UN peacekeeping mission in addressing the evolving threat posed by extremist groups. They may also discuss alternative security measures that can be explored to assuage the concerns of the international community.
- Additionally, the government is concerned about the need to address the proliferation of non-state armed groups, and the growing presence of radical Islamist groups like the Islamic State (IS). There is belief that Fulani ethnic group has been connected with some of these armed groups and/or terrorist activities.

For Ethnic Fulani Group

- The Fulani group is frustrated with both the government and the UN peacekeeping mission for their perceived failure to protect Fulani civilians. They may request guarantees of safety, fair treatment, and representation.
- The Fulani group is deeply concerned about the potential security vacuum after the UN mission concludes and the implications for vulnerable communities like the Fulani. As a result, they may support a renewed UN peacekeeping mission with a more extensive mandate or they may highlight the urgency of addressing the specific security needs of marginalized ethnic groups within Mali in a post-UN situation.
- They are concerned about ethnic profiling and unjust treatment by government security forces. Multiple reports have emerged implicating Malian troops and foreign military personnel (allegedly speaking Russian) in civilian deaths (among other atrocities). The Fulani group may emphasize the need for accountability and justice and might even call for recognition of these attacks.

For United Nations

- The UN is deeply worried about growing terrorist activity across the Sahel as well as the growing influence from certain foreign actors in West Africa. Accordingly, they wish to continue peacekeeping operations in Mali.
- In an appeal to both parties, the UN may discuss the present limitation of the mandate of MINUSMA and its challenges in maintaining security. They may assert that their primary responsibility has always been the maintenance of international peace and security, but could explore potential modifications to the mandate to address gaps.
- The UN may also discuss invoking Chapter 7 principles to continue peacekeeping operations in the country without the consent of the government. With the UN Security Council's authorization, the mission may be extended despite the government and public outcry. They may debate over the feasibility and consequences of such an action and how this will be perceived by both regional leaders and civilians.
- The UN aims to acknowledge and address the concerns of both parties, while also evaluating the security situation in both the country and the region. They may choose to highlight the role of the international community in providing resources and expertise in addressing the ongoing security threats, but in supporting African-led efforts to do so.

Additional Resources - Not Required Reading

International Crisis Group: Mali Profile:

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali>

Amnesty International: Mali Profile:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/west-and-central-africa/mali/report-mali/>

Human Rights Watch (HRW): Mali Events of 2022:

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/mali>

European Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid Operations: Mali Factsheet:

https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/mali_en

Center for Civilians in Conflict: Mali Profile:

<https://civiliansinconflict.org/our-work/where-we-work/mali/>

Council on Foreign Relations (CFR): Violent Extremism in the Sahel:

<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel>

The United Nations Security Council: Press Release:

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15253.doc.htm>

BBC News: Mali and the UN:

<https://civiliansinconflict.org/our-work/where-we-work/mali/>

Annex 1: Al Jazeera [Security in Mali deteriorates as UN peacekeepers pulls out](#)

Annex 2: Africa News: [Mali gets more warplanes, helicopters from Russia](#)