

France to Expand Military Presence in Africa: “The Intervention in Mali is not Enough, We have to go Beyond”

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French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian says the country is to expand its military presence in Africa’s Sahel region.

“This redeployment will cover about 3000 troops which we are about to reorganize and re-deploy all over the area,” Le Drian said in an address to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. on Friday.

The Sahel spans 5,400 kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east.

“I wanted to say all this to you because we think that the intervention in Mali is not enough. We have to go beyond,” he added.

France began a major military intervention in its former colony in January, citing concerns about the growing influence of militants in northern Mali and a rebellion by Tuareg separatists that threatened the French-backed Malian government.

“We have to protect ourselves against different risks, new risks and especially, tomorrow, against the risk of a Libyan chaos,” said the French minister.

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