

Mali and Niger Break Diplomatic Relations with Ukraine Accusing NATO Ally of Involvement in Terrorist Attacks

United States proxy war against the Russian Federation continues to impact the African continent

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Since the beginning of the Russian Special Military Operation in Ukraine, the African continent has become a major battleground in the renewed Cold War between Moscow and Washington.

In recent weeks in response to an attack by rebels in the north of Mali, the military government based in Bamako has revealed that Ukrainian military forces were involved in an ambush against its soldiers and Russian security advisors.

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have formed an Alliance of Sahel States (AES) which has formerly broken with the western-backed Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Political changes in the Sahel region over the last two years have resulted in the ordering of United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) troops and their counterparts in the French Foreign Legion to leave their respective states.

All of these states, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, were utilized by Washington and Paris as outposts for imperialist military operations in the region. These West African states embody geostrategic and economic resources which are of benefit to western nations.

For example, **Niger contains one of the largest uranium deposits in the world. The uranium resources were controlled by corporations based in France, the former colonial power.**

Since the independence movements which swept the African continent from the 1950s to the early 1990s, nationally oppressed people made significant gains in throwing off the yoke of institutionalized white domination. However, there was a more nuanced form of imperialism which became dominant. **Dr Kwame Nkrumah**, the founder of the Convention People's Party of the Gold Coast (renamed Ghana in 1957 at its independence) after nearly a decade of independence struggles referred to neo-colonialism as the last stage of imperialism.

Developments in the Sahel region of West Africa since 2020 have clearly illustrated the modern-day machinations of neo-colonialism. The contradiction in these historical events is that nearly all of the leaders of the military coups which have displaced pro-western administrations, maintained close ties with AFRICOM and Operation Barkhane.

The idea behind AFRICOM and the French counterparts known as Operation Barkhane and

the G5, was to train the post-colonial military forces in the ethos of imperialism. For years many of these regimes, whether bourgeois democratic or military, provided diplomatic and political cover for the continuation of the exploitation of African resources and labor.

Imperialism Wants Africa Under Its Total Control

Ukraine's administration led by **President Volodymyr Zelensky** is a proxy political and military adjunct to U.S. imperialism and its NATO allies. The revelations emanating from Mali are further evidence of its surrogate role not only in Eastern Europe this clearly exposes the efforts to destabilize the African continent.

Mali has signed agreements with Russian military advisors often referred to as the African Corps, which is an attempt to transition the operations of the Wagner Group into a more consolidated structure under the centralized control of the government in Moscow. In addition to Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have made decisions to accept the assistance of the Russian advisors. These monumental shifts in foreign and security policies in these Sahel states have made them targets of U.S. imperialism and its NATO counterparts.

Many have suggested that the rebel activity in West Africa under the guise of "Islamic extremism" emanates from U.S. intelligence. This pattern extends back to the late 1970s and 1980s in Afghanistan when the administration of President Jimmy Carter began covert operations aimed at ending the influence of the Soviet Union in Central Asia.

In recent years the Pentagon-NATO destruction of Libya in 2011 overthrew the most prosperous state on the continent while unleashing a wave of instability throughout West Africa. The emergence of the rebel groupings complimented U.S. foreign policy under the administrations of Presidents George W. Bush, Jr. and Barack Obama.

With attacks on civilian targets by the rebels, this provided a rationale for the increased military and intelligence presence within the African Union (AU) member-states. Thousands upon thousands of AFRICOM and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel established long term and makeshift bases.

As the apparent correlation between rebel presence alongside imperialist military forces prompted a series of military coups by the very same elements who served as operatives in the neo-colonial process, the collaborators shifted to rethink the entire process of governance and foreign policy. These developments occurred as the tensions within Eastern Ukraine exploded full blown by the early weeks of 2022.

It was the response of the AU member-states within the United Nations General Assembly where many abstained from resolutions condemning the Russian Federation signaling the declining status of imperialism internationally. The AU deployed a peace delegation to Russia and Ukraine to emphasize the need for a diplomatic solution to the Ukraine war.

Africa suffered immensely due to the disruption of agricultural trade between both Ukraine and Russia. Today Ukraine is working to overthrow the government of Mali so that a pro-western regime can be reinstalled.

[An article published by the British Broadcasting Corporation \(BBC\)](#) on the significance of the July 27 terrorist attack in northern Mali utilizing a Tuareg rebel group, said that:

“The ambush at Tinzaouten on 27 July reportedly killed 84 Wagner fighters and 47 Malian soldiers. It was a painful military blow for the mercenary outfit once headed by the late Yevgeny Prigozhin, but now controlled by Russia’s official defense command structure. Just two days later Andriy Yusov, spokesman for Kyiv’s military intelligence service (GUR), said that ethnic Tuareg rebels in Mali had ‘received necessary information, and not just information, which enabled a successful military operation against Russian war criminals’. Subsequent reports suggested that Ukrainian special forces had trained the separatists in the use of attack drones.”

Meanwhile ECOWAS, even with its current leadership being thoroughly subservient to the imperialist powers, is facing enormous economic and political crises. President Bola Tinubu of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is facing rising resistance to neo-colonialism as the trade union movement and progressive youth engage in general strikes and mass demonstrations.

A similar situation is emerging in Ghana as runaway inflation and the negative terms of trade and borrowing arrangements with international finance capital has forced the administration of President Nana Akufo-Addo to impose International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditionalities upon the people. Ghanaian courts have sided with the imperialists by enacting bans on mass demonstrations against the impact of neoliberal prescriptions on the workers, youth and farmers of the country.

Patterns of Destabilization

News reports on the Ukrainian involvement in terrorist attacks in Mali will further aggravate relations with the administration of President Joe Biden in Washington. The U.S. and France are committed to retaliating for the expulsion of their troops and some economic interests in the Alliance of Sahel States.

In the aftermath of the severing of diplomatic relations by Mali and Niger with Ukraine, there has also been a rupture with Sweden, a member of NATO. [Africa News notes](#):

“Bamako’s decision to cut ties with Kyiv prompted Sweden’s minister for international development cooperation and trade, Johan Forssell, to say on Wednesday that the government had decided to phase out bilateral aid to Mali due to its ties to Moscow. ‘You cannot support Russia’s illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and at the same time receive several hundred million kronor each year in development aid,’ Forssell said on social media platform X.”

Additional developments witnessed the summoning of the Ukrainian ambassador by the new government in Senegal which came to power as a result of a popular uprising over the need for a new approach to domestic and foreign policy. After becoming aware of the propaganda praising the attacks on Malian troops and Russian advisors, the foreign ministry expressed its strong opposition to the imperialist-coordinated campaign to undermine sovereign African states.

[The Dakar-based APA news agency emphasized](#):

“The Senegalese Ministry of African Integration and Foreign Affairs has reacted strongly to a controversial publication from the Ukrainian embassy in Dakar, in connection with the recent battle of Tinzaouatène, in northern Mali.... Senegal, which maintains a

position of 'constructive neutrality in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict', strongly condemned the publication. The Senegalese authorities have declared that the country 'cannot tolerate any attempt to transfer the media propaganda underway in this conflict to its territory.' The Senegalese government stressed that 'our country, which rejects terrorism in all its forms, cannot accept on its territory and in any way, comments and gestures in the direction of apologizing for terrorism, especially when the latter aims to destabilize a country, a brotherly one like Mali.'"

These diplomatic expulsions and other forms of protests will undoubtedly further the hostility between various African states and the imperialist centers in Europe and North America. These strains in relations should be viewed positively in the sense that they provide AU member-states with the potential for a major shift in foreign policy away from the former colonial and now-existing neo-colonial powers based in Western Europe and North America.

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