



Africa Information & Monitoring Services

Mali: Reporting on Major News Developments 21 March 2022

The following report highlights major news developments in politics, economy, and security in Mali on 21 March. In this report, the Malian government regrets that it was not able to reach an agreement on the length of the transition, while an article urges the authorities to quickly come up with an acceptable calendar that will lead to the lifting of sanctions. Interim President Assimi Goita receive a warm welcome at the cotton festival in Koutiala, while transport actors decided to increase their costs. On the security front, six people died when their bus hit an IED in the Mopti region. The report includes background information to add context where needed.

POLITICS

Malian Government 'Regrets' Not Reaching Agreement With ECOWAS Envoy

The Malian government on 20 March issued a communique to the failure of discussions with an ECOWAS delegation led by former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan. The Malian authorities said that they have accepted to reduce the length of the transition from the initial 5-year proposal to a 24-month transition. Unfortunately, the ECOWAS delegation adamantly rejected the offer and stuck to a period between "12 and 16 months." The Malian side said it could not heed the call for a 12-16-month period because there is too much to do to rebuild the country's political and legal foundations and the ECOWAS should not just think "election." However, the authorities said that they remained open to further discussions with the subregional envoys.¹



Background: Malian transitional authorities and the ECOWAS have been at loggerheads since Mali failed to organize election early 2022 as planned and the regional body took heavy sanctions against the country.

Article Urges Authorities To Forgo Some Reforms and Accept ECOWAS Calendar

In an article in Maliweb, journalist Boubou Sidibe called on the Malian authorities to look at the plight the people are enduring due to the economic sanctions, including hike in prices of commodities, halting of development projects, increasing unemployment, security issues, and a diplomatic isolation, and accept the 12 to 16 months period of translation that the ECOWAS has proposed. Sidibe urged the authorities "to forgo some reforms" they wanted to unroll for the refoundation of the

¹ <https://www.maliweb.net/communique/communique-du-gouvernement-de-la-transition-a-lissue-des-consultations-avec-une-delegation-de-la-cedeao-2969561.html>

country if they want to save the country.²

Opposition Platform Threatens Demonstrations if No New Transition By 25 March

The opposition platform called Cadre d'Echange des Partis Politiques et Regroupements de Partis Politiques pour une Transition Réussie, in short, Le Cadre, on 19 March held a news conference to demand the implementation of a new transition and a new National Transitional Council no later than 25 March. According to the organizers, "on March 25, if the deplorable political situation of our country does not change, the Cadre reserves the right to use all legal means to defend the Constitution and the Republic." The Cadre criticized the government for its inability, almost three months on, to relieve the people who have been suffering the impacts of the economic sanctions taken by the ECOWAS.³

ECONOMY

Junta Leader Attends Cotton Festival in Koutiala; Urges Unity Among Cotton Growers

Interim President Goita was the super host of Koutiala residents on 19 March in the framework of the celebration of the Cotton Festival. After enjoying a crowd bath from his landing to the venue of the ceremony, colonel Goita commended the Malian Cotton Grower for the record 760,000 tonnes harvest in 2021-2022 which fielded Mali as top cotton producer in West Africa. He went on to urge all the farmers to turn their backs on dissensions and conflicts and to foster unity rather.⁴



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Prices Increase in Transport Sector

As a consequence of the increase in the price of fuel, transporters announced that effective 19 March, they would increase the cost of transportation. Trade unionists came together to agree on the new costs, signed a document and committed to exert controls in order to make sure the new tariffs are respected. They set a fine that varies from CFA20,000 to CFA100,000 for whoever contravenes the decision.⁵

² <https://www.maliweb.net/societe/chronogramme-de-prolongation-de-la-transition-malienne-endurer-les-sanctions-plutot-que-de-conceder-un-delai-de-16-mois-2969563.html>

³ https://malijet.com/communiqués-de-presse/267954-a_default_mise_place_nouvelle_transition_avant_vingt_cinq_mars_.html

⁴ <http://news.abamako.com/h/267850.html>

⁵ <http://news.abamako.com/h/267864.html>

SECURITY***Six Died as Bus Hit IED in Central Mali***

aBamako on 21 March reported that six people were killed on 19 March when a public transport bus hit an improvised explosive device on the Konna-Sevare road in central Mali. Madou Coulibaly, manager of Nour Transport Voyageur, the company that owns the bus, confirmed that besides the six dead, all men eight people sustained serious and light injuries. The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure declined to make any comment.⁶



⁶ <http://news.abamako.com/h/267826.html>