



Military Coup in Mali

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Why in News

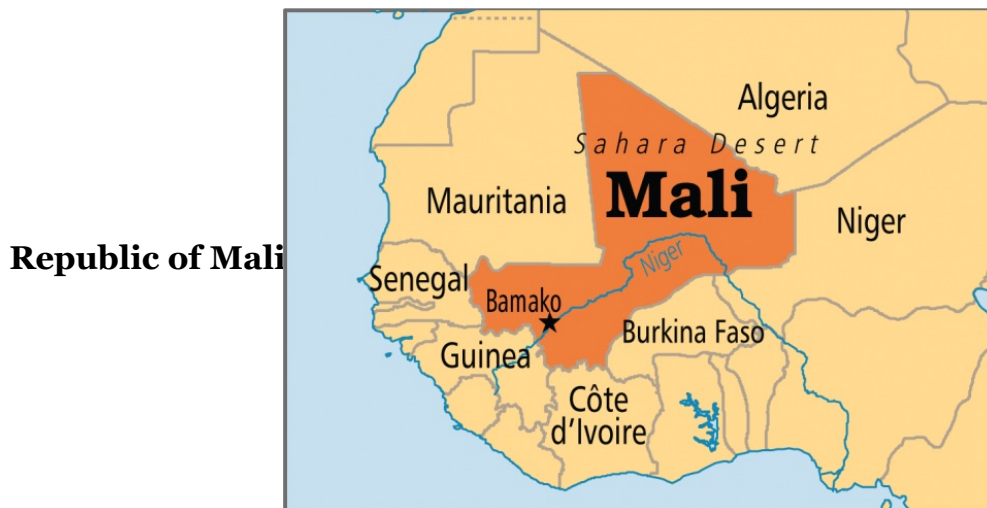
Recently, **Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has resigned** after soldiers had arrested him and Prime Minister Boubou Cisse in the capital, Bamako as part of a coup.

It has prompted its West African neighbours to threaten border closures and sanctions against the coup leaders.

Key Points

- **Background:** The **2011 crisis in Libya** led Mali along the path to chaos. **Weapons from Libya were supplied across the Sahara Desert** and fuelled a **separatist conflict** in northern Mali. This turned into an **Islamist militant offensive** which prompted a coup in the capital Bamako (Mali).
- **Reasons:** Mali has **three overlapping sets** of problems:
 - **Political crisis** that grew out of the disputed legislative elections of March 2020.
 - **Economic crisis** due to economic stagnation, corruption and further complications by the **Covid-19 pandemic**. There was dissatisfaction among the troops due to poor payments.
 - **Security crisis** due to the failure to contain **terrorism** and jihadists and the actions of the military against civilians.

- **Military Coup:** It calls itself the **National Committee for the Salvation of the People** and has **pledged to stabilise the country** by enacting a **political transition and stage elections** within a reasonable time.
 - It has imposed a curfew and closed the borders sealing the country.
 - It would respect all the past agreements, including **Mali's support for anti-jihadist missions** in the region and its **commitment to the Algiers process** which is a **2015 peace agreement between the Malian government and armed groups in the north of the country**.
 - It held that **United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)**, **France's Barkhane force**, the **G5 Sahel** (Institutional framework of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger), **Takuba** (a European special-forces initiative) will remain Mali's partners.
- **Reactions:**
 - **France has urged Mali to return to civilian rule**, saying "the fight against terrorist groups and the defence of democracy and the rule of law are inseparable".
 - **France, Mali's former colonial ruler**, has several thousand troops based in Mali fighting Islamist militant groups.
 - Various jihadist groups, some linked to **al-Qaeda** and the **Islamic State group**, are based in the deserts of northern Mali, from where they have spread to neighbouring countries, especially Burkina Faso and Niger.
 - The **African Union** had already **suspended Mali** on the account that military coups were something of the past and cannot be accepted in present times.
 - The **15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** has also **taken swift action against Mali** by closing borders, suspending financial flows and ejecting it from decision-making bodies.
 - The **UN's Security Council** has **demanded the immediate release** of all government officials and the **restoration of constitutional order**.



- Mali is a vast country stretching into the **Sahara Desert in western Africa.**
- Once home to several pre-colonial empires, the **landlocked, arid African country** of Mali is **one of the largest on the continent** and is **among the poorest in the world.**
- After **independence from France in 1960**, Mali suffered droughts, rebellions, a coup and 23 years of military dictatorship until **democratic elections in 1992.**
It has experienced **several military takeovers** and is currently battling to contain a wave of jihadist attacks and ethnic violence.
- **Capital:** Bamako.
- **Population:** Around 19 million.
- **Area:** 1.25 million sq km.
- **Major languages:** French, Bambara, Berber and Arabic.
- **Religions:** Islam and Indigenous beliefs.
- **Currency:** Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc.

Way Forward

- The latest military coup is apparently a reaction to the security challenges but also to corruption, disputed elections, and political drift. However, it itself seems unlikely to fix anything.
- It highlights a familiar truth that while foreign intervention has its uses, the key to repairing a nation like Mali lies in its own hands and with its own faltering democratic institutions.

Source: TH