

# Mali Conflict Could Refuel Algeria's Civil War

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[Press TV](#)

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Interview with Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of Pan-African News Wire

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*The French offensive against Malian militants can refuel the Algerian government's more than a decade-long armed conflict with various rebel forces which ended in 2002, an analyst tells Press TV.*

*Algeria's News Agency (APS) says that military operation by the Algerian Army to rescue hostages, held by militants at a remote natural gas complex has finished. According to a report, released by the APS on Thursday, at least four foreigners, including a Frenchman, two Britons, and a Kenyan were freed and four more hostages, including two Britons and two Filipinos were killed after the Army conducted raids on the African country's In Amenas gas facilities. The military operation ended in the evening, the report added. Earlier in the day, the kidnappers said that at least 35 foreigners and 15 militants were killed in the operation by Algerian forces. The so-called al-Qaeda-linked militants in the African country had earlier claimed to be holding 41 foreign employees of the desert gas complex hostage at the site.*

In an interview with Press TV, Abayomi Azikiwe, the editor of Pan-African News Wire in Detroit, shares his thoughts regarding the issue. The following is an approximate transcription of the interview.

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Press TV: What exactly did happen as far as this hostage drama goes? And how does this all link in with Mali?

Azikiwe: It is still not clear. All of the details are still coming out in regard to this horrendous event that occurred today that began yesterday at the In Amenas gas fields in southern Algeria. It appears as if the Algerian national army engaged on a seizure operation that lasted for some 8 hours and the reports indicated that some 50 people have been killed in the operation, however, some have denied that the casualties were in that great number.

However, we do believe that it is clearly related to the ongoing military operation, the bombings, the ground operations that is being carried out by

France in neighboring Mali. There has been close links for generations between the peoples of Mali particularly northern Mali and southern Algeria.

In regard to the situation in Algeria, there has been over the last two decades insurgencies led by Islamist forces there and it appeared as if these difficulties and conflicts had been settled some 12 years ago with the negotiated settlement between various Islamist groups and the Algerian government but with the current conflict going on right now in Mali, it could refuel these difficulties that the Algerian government has experienced over the last 2 decades.

Press TV: Mr. Azikiwe, I wanted to in fact ask about Mali. Has France in a sense woken up a monster of sorts that it will not be able to control by intervening in Mali?

Azikiwe: All of the various groups that have been targeted in northern and central Mali have said that essentially they are widening the conflict inside Mali as well as throughout the entire region of west and north Africa.

This is an operation that France has embarked upon but we do believe that it is going to be a disastrous war. France does not have a strong track record in regard to intervention. We can look back at the situation even in Algeria itself during the 1950s and early 1960s when they were fighting against the FLN [National Liberation Front] who were demanding their national independence. Even before that in Vietnam, they suffered horrendous defeats at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and even in Afghanistan recently.

They withdrew all of their combat forces last year because of the high casualty rates that were being experienced by the French forces. We believe this is going to be no different in regard to the situation in Mali and we believe that it is going to cause tremendous problems in regard to French-African relations and also relations between the overall European Union and various African states and particularly grassroots organizations are in Africa as well as in Europe.

This operation by France has been denounced by the Worker's Party of Belgium as well as the World Federation of Trade Unions. Anti-war organizations here in the United States have opposed as well the French intervention because it has drawn in the United States as well as Britain, Denmark and other NATO countries.

This is going to be a very very long campaign and one that has many many hidden and very disastrous dimensions.

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