

# THE PBF IN MALI



Portrait of a girl in Timbuktu, Mali. UN Photo/Marco Dormino

## Peacebuilding Challenges

Since 2012, Mali has faced volatile crisis as ethnic-based movements, jihadist groups and transnational criminal networks fight for control of territories in the North. Mali has been confronted by a profound crisis with serious political, security, socio-economic, humanitarian and human rights consequences. The crisis stems from long-standing structural conditions such as weak State institutions; ineffective governance; fragile social cohesion; deep-seated feelings among communities in the north of being neglected, marginalized and unfairly treated by the central Government; a weak and externally dependent civil society; and the effects of environmental degradation, climate change and economic shocks.

These conditions were exacerbated by more recent factors of instability, including corruption, nepotism, abuse of power, internal strife and deteriorating capacity of the national army.

Following negotiations between the government and two rebel coalitions, a Peace Agreement was signed in 2015. While the agreement does not envision autonomous status for Mali's northern regions, it does include some principles of decentralization. But the implementation of the agreement is challenging. Three years later, insecurity continues to spread across Mali. Ceasefire violations persist and institutional reforms are stagnant, while violent extremist and terrorist groups have increased their operations with new armed groups emerging.

## PBF Intervention

The Peacebuilding Fund has been involved in Mali since early 2014, when the peace agreement was still being negotiated. Since then, the Fund has invested close to USD \$16.5 million in the country, with projects focused on dialogue and reconciliation; support to the justice and security sectors;

### PBF INVESTMENTS IN MALI:

#### TOTAL ALLOCATION:

\$ **27.2** MILLION  
invested since 2014

#### CURRENT PORTFOLIO:

\$ **11.7** MILLION

#### FOCUSING ON:



Support to the justice and security sectors



Dialogue and reconciliation

#### PARTNERS:

UNESCO, IOM, UNICEF, UN Women, OHCHR, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, FAO, Mercy Corps in close collaboration with MINUSMA.

restoration of state authority; and community reintegration of refugees and displaced people. Recognizing that community-level engagement is a critical component of sustaining peace, PBF is programming a new USD 8 million phase of support with a focus on local governance and community-based conflict resolution in Mopti and Segou.

Sexual violence is still prevalent in Mali, and to address this problem, a gender section was established within the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, which is tasked with investigating human rights violations committed in Mali between 1960 and 2013. The PBF also supported a holistic approach to tackling gender-based violence, ensuring that gender-sensitive principles are integrated by key national institutions. To that end, the PBF supported the National Police in adopting a 2018-2020 Action Plan on gender. It also supported the National Assembly in reviewing a draft gender-based violence law, and helped with the submission to local tribunals of 329 gender-based violence cases, including 157 cases of sexual violence.

### PBF Impact

Despite the challenges in implementing the peace agreement, PBF projects in Gao and Timbuktu showed positive results. Reports to the police of gender-based violence increased from 1 to 13.7 per cent in the period 2014 to 2016, indicating women's increased confidence in the police and judicial system. Two cantonment sites, in Gao and Timbuktu, were constructed, employing local workers and improving the population's perception of the cantonment process. The cantonment camps for 1350 combatants was a confidence building measure in the context of the ceasefire and stabilization process, in line with the Ouagadougou provisional agreement. PBF support has also encouraged youth as positive change agents. Specifically, 640 young people, including 226 young women, learned about the 2015 Peace Agreement to better understand its significance for their country. They also participated in lively discussions about Security Council resolution 2250, which gives youth a greater voice in peace processes and dispute resolution. An additional 2,600 young people, including 910 young women, were trained on conflict prevention, while 36 local mediators have been recruited to promote social cohesion and reduce the risk of radicalization in 36 localities.

PBF improved equitable access to education for the most vulnerable children and promoted inclusive dialogue across

the communities they belong to. As a result of PBF's intervention, about 4,000 children who had had to stay home because of security reasons returned to school in 2016.

### Catalytic Effect

Recognizing the positive results of PBF investment and approach, the Malian Minister of National Education decided to integrate peacebuilding themes into school curricula in Timbuktu and Gao. Japan welcomed the decision and committed additional funding to expand this integration to schools in Mopti.

The Cantonment project catalyzed funds for the construction of five additional sites, and the World Bank pledged USD \$26 million for reintegration programs.

PBF provided the seed funding within less than two weeks of the request of the DSRSG for OHCHR to set up the human rights and internal humanitarian law compliance framework for the operations of the G5 Sahel Force Conjointe.

### Working across Borders

Beyond Malian borders, PBF is investing USD \$3 million to sustain peace in the region of Liptako-Gourma, which encompasses the border between Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Contributing directly to the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, this 18-month project will be implemented by UNDP in collaboration with MINUSMA.

### About the PBF

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The PBF may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations. From 2006 to 2017, the PBF has allocated \$772 million to 41 recipient countries. Since inception, 58 member states contributed to the Fund, 33 in the present 2017-2019 Business Plan. The PBF works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to political opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.