

The European Union in Mali – five years to little avail

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The Malian crisis

- An old crisis that erupted once more in 2012
- Major international interventions followed:
 - MINUSMA, France (Serval and Barkhane) and the EU
- Core objective to restore state stability:
 - Fighting Jihadi insurgents
 - Traffickers
 - Preventing migration
- Five years in:
 - Mali remains chaotic and insecure
 - The conflict is spreading south to the Central Region – Mopti and beyond
 - SSR has been at the core of EU efforts
 - Millions of Euro spent, but to little avail
 - Why?

What the EU do - EUTM

- Consists of a personell of 575, almost exclusively military, from 27 countries
- Aiming to improve FAMA (the Malian army) by providing legal and leadership skills + tactical and strategical education, training planning processing, basic military principles and International Human Law
- EUTM third mandate (March 2016 – May 2018), with a budget of 33,4 million Euro, extended the area of operation to Gao and Timbuktu, but most EUTM personell is stationed in the Koulikoro training camp or in the EUTM headquarters in Bamako
- EUTM is a non-executive mission and therefore not participate in combat or accompany trained FAMA units in operational zones
- We will return to what this leads to

EUCAP

- Assistance and advice to the national police, the national gendarmerie and national guard – thus also SSR
- Trained around 3700 officers in command structure, professional methods, human rights and gender issues
- Current mandate runs to January 2019, the first five years of operation on budget of 29,7 million Euro
- The renewed mandata (2017) more emphasis on
 - Counter-terrorism
 - Improved border control and management to prevent irregular migration and trafficking
- This is topped-up by the EU Trust Fund, where one important programme is the PARSEC (29 million Euro large)
 - Enhanced security and border management in Mopti and Gao regions

Thus, lots of money spent, but few results

- Training an army that is fully operational at war
 - A gigantic experiment that has never been attempted before, as an informant argued: Mali has become a «laboratory for EU crisis response policies»
 - This experiment becomes even more futile when considerable resources is spent without any follow-up procedures as EUTM cannot monitor FAMA in operation
- A mismatch between what Mali needs and what the EU needs
 - Brussels seems to think that its priorities are universal
 - In the case of Mali they are a) preventing migration and b) fighting jihadists
 - To achieve this Europe is building «dams» in the Sahel
 - Is this what Mali needs?
 - What does improve border management mean in a local Malian context – may just as well sound like a threat to local livelihoods

Lack of collaboration with local Malian partners

- Officially, the EU aim is a light footprint model, in close collaboration and consultation with local partners
- In reality, what we find is that the only light footprint, is the attempt to let Malian army and police do the job of improved border management and fighting Jihadists and traffickers
- The level of consultation and real dialogue with Malian civil society and other actors on the ground (local communities etc. is minimal
- Several reasons for this
 - One is how EU operates: top-down from Brussels, based on the belief that Brussels priorities are universally shared, and that European models can be transplanted to Mali
 - Another, is risk averse, this time the fear of corruption from local Malian partners
 - Current EU regulations concerning size of annual running budget of CSO, disqualifies almost all Malian CSOs

The EU footprint in Mali: not a light footprint, but the wrong footprint

- EU wanted a light footprint, but five years on, it should be warier of getting the wrong footprint
- EU as UN and France are very close to getting stuck in the sand in Mali, turning this into yet another «endless» mission
- To change status quo
 - 1) to much larger extent both design and implement programs in co-ordination with local stakeholders
 - 2) Realise that Brussel-based priorities are not necessarily shared as equally important elsewhere
 - 3) become less risk-adverse and allow EUTM to monitor trainees in operations, combat included
 - 4) conduct a drastic makeover of the training regime itself
 - 5) consider alternative ways of contributing to the restoration of state authority in Mali