

Exactions by Malian military: urgent need for an independent investigation commission

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FIDH is very alarmed by the increasing number of summary executions and other human rights violations committed by Malian soldiers in the context of the counter-attack led by the French and Malian armies against the Jihadists, and calls for the immediate establishment of an independent investigation commission to assess the scope of these exactions and sanction the perpetrators.

FIDH has learned of a number of summary executions carried out by the Malian armed forces as of Thursday, 10 January 2013, in particular in Sévaré, Mopti, Niono and other places in the conflict zones. In Sévaré, at least 11 individuals were executed in the military camp, near the bus station and near the hospital. Reliable information report close to 20 other executions in the same area where bodies are said to have been buried very hastily, in particular in the wells. In the Niono region, Malian soldiers killed two Malians of Tuareg origin. We are also being told of other allegations of summary executions in the centre region.

Our organisation also wishes to take note of the abduction of the imam Cheik Hama Alourou by Malian soldiers in the evening of 21 January in Gnimi Gnema, a village between Bore and Douentza. In Bamako, during the week of 14 January, the Malian army intimidated a dozen of Tuaregs whose homes they searched, and plundered.

The victims of these exactions are people who are accused of complicity with the jihadists or infiltrated elements, persons in possession of weapons, people who have no proof of their identity during military patrols or simply people targeted because of their belonging to certain ethnic groups, common called the "light skins".

"These series of grave exactions confirm the concerns that we have been expressing for several weeks. These acts of revenge together with the extreme tensions that exists between the communities constitute an explosive cocktail leading us to fear that the worst could happen, especially with regard to prospects for reconquering the North" said Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President.

Although the Malian and French politicians and military officials have repeatedly called for respect of international humanitarian law and human rights within the framework of the counter-attack, FIDH is concerned about the lack of investigations and public information regarding these violations, the difficulty of reaching the zones where exactions are taking place and the lack of sanctions against the perpetrators.

"These exactions undermine the legitimacy of the operation to restore territorial integrity and must be prosecuted by the national justice, and if required, by the International Criminal Court which opened an investigation on the situation in Mali on 16 January", said Sidiki Kaba, FIDH Honorary President.

FIDH urges the Malian and French authorities, as well as the international community, to immediately set up an independent investigation commission to shed light on these serious violations

of international humanitarian law and human rights committed by all the belligerents in the Mali conflict, including exactions by the armed groups in the North of the country. Our organisation will be publishing information on this area in the very near future.

FIDH strongly encourages the urgent implementation of the training on human rights for the armed forces and the operationalisation of specific mechanisms devoted to human rights documentation and protection as provided for in Resolution 2085 of the United Nations Security Council.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

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* <http://www.fidh.org/Exactions-by-Malian-military-12794>