

# **Appeal by Women of Mali: Say “No!” to the war by proxy**

Sunday 17 February 2013, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 20 November 2012).

**While the two jaws of the Malian trap - the warmongering Western intervention backed by the countries of West Africa, and the reactionary Islamism in the North - have not yet closed, an independent voice, the voice of Malian women, is trying to make heard its refusal of this war by proxy. We publish below their appeal, which is dated November 20, 2012.**

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From the dramatic situation in Mali, there emerges a terrible reality which can be verified in other countries in conflict: the instrumentalization of violence against women in order to justify interference and wars whose objective is to grab hold of their countries' wealth. African women must know this and must make it known.

Although the amputation of two-thirds of Mali's territory and the imposition of sharia law on the populations of the occupied regions are humanly unacceptable, the exploitation of this situation, including the fate reserved for women, is morally indefensible and politically intolerable.

We have, as a result, we women of Mali, a historic role to play, here and now, in the defence of our human rights against three forms of fundamentalism: religious through radical Islam; economic through the omnipotence of the market; political through formal, corrupt and corrupting democracy.

We invite all those women and men who, in our country, in Africa and elsewhere, feel concerned by our liberation from these fundamentalisms to join their voices to ours to say “No” to the proxy war that is looming on the horizon. The following arguments justify this refusal.

## **The denial of democracy**

The demand for the deployment of African troops in northern Mali, transmitted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) to the United Nations, is based on a diagnosis that is deliberately biased and illegitimate. It is not based on any national dialogue worthy of the name, either at the top or at the base. Furthermore, this diagnosis also excludes the heavy moral and political responsibility of nations, those who violated Security Council

Resolution 1973 by transforming the protection of the Libyan city of Benghazi into a mandate to overthrow the regime of Muammar al-Gaddafi and to kill him. The coalition of the separatists of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its allies, who defeated a Malian army that was demotivated and disorganized, also owes this military victory to the arsenals that came from the Libyan conflict.

Will the same Security Council approve, in the coming days, the plan of military intervention that African heads of state have approved, pretending in this way to correct the consequences of an unjust war by an equally unjust war?

Marginalized and humiliated in the management of the “Libyan” crisis, can the African Union, should it, embark on this adventure in Mali without pondering the lessons of the fall of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi?

Where is the consistency in the conduct of the affairs of the continent by the African leaders, most of whom opposed in vain the intervention of NATO in Libya, when they agree on the need for a deployment of military forces in Mali, with incalculable consequences?

### **The extreme vulnerability of women in zones of conflict**

The International Crisis Group warns, rightly, that “in the current context, an offensive of the Malian army supported by the forces of ECOWAS and/or other forces has every chance of causing more civilian casualties in the North, of worsening insecurity and economic and social conditions in the whole of the country, of radicalizing ethnic communities, promoting the violent expression of all the extremist groups and, finally, dragging the entire region into a multifaceted conflict, without a front line, in the Sahara “ [