

CADTM Africa Statement on ECOWAS and UEMOA sanctions against Mali

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After their high level meeting held in Accra, Ghana, on Sunday 9 January 2022, the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) hardened the tone against Mali. However, for the Malian government, as well as for many observers in the ECOWAS region, these sanctions are illegal, illegitimate for the Malian people and defend French geopolitical interests in particular and European interests in general with the support of their ECOWAS allies. Moreover, they fall outside the framework of the ECOWAS Additional Protocol adopted in December 2001 in Dakar. It is clear that the ECOWAS treaty does not provide for the closure of borders, the recall of ambassadors or financial sanctions. The manipulation of the BCEAO (Central Bank of West African States) and the UEMOA (West African Economic and Monetary Union) is part of this framework of sanctions not based on ECOWAS normative and political instruments. In reality, what is at stake for these heads of state is not the rules adopted but protecting the interests of the African ruling classes as well as those of French imperialism in particular and the European Union in general. ECOWAS has violated its own statutory texts and UN texts, it has never questioned despotic and corrupt heads of state in Africa. It is silent on human rights violations on the continent.

Today it is the freedom of movement and the future of African integration of peoples that are at stake. The entire West African associative and political movement is mobilising for another form of economic and political integration linked to a renewal of militant pan-Africanism. There is therefore an urgent need to break with the neo-colonial thinking adopted by the majority of the African elite, as Thomas Sankara said: 'The dominant neo-colonial thinking represents the greatest constraint we face in this country. We were a colony controlled by the French state which left behind traditions: success and happiness in life are embodied in the attempt to live as in France, like the richest of the French. The diffusion of this idea in people's minds hinders and sets limits to the changes we want to make'.

The political decision-making process of ECOWAS Heads of State has excluded any consultation of national parliaments, including the ECOWAS Parliament, which has been reduced to an institution of no real use. In reality, it is the decision-making process that gives heads of state all the prerogatives without consulting their peoples that needs to be reviewed from top to bottom, including the Charter on Good Governance. Indeed, military coups are seen as obstacles to democracy, whereas frequent constitutional coups (Guinea Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, etc.), which are sources of sub-regional instability and repression, are not so seen. It is clear that within ECOWAS, the will of the heads of state totally prevails over that of the people.

The above, including the geo-strategic battles between European, Russian and US powers, explains the threat of a disguised military intervention by ECOWAS (mainly in the service of France) in defiance of the right of the Malian people to choose their own development processes, including the management of their own resources.

Many transformations are taking place in Africa refusing repressive, arrogant and corrupt civil leaders and irresponsible debt policies, which ultimately sabotage human development and block political solutions. In addition to this, there is the French tutelage over the CFA franc, which has become an obstacle to the development of the region. This explains to a large extent what is happening in Guinea and Burkina Faso, where the military is offering political outlets in the face of blocked dialogue processes and responses needed by the people who are looking for other alternatives for the real development of their countries, to satisfy their immediate needs and to establish democratic and constituent political processes.

ECOWAS and the African Union must respect the sovereignty of the Malian people and hold serious discussions with the country in the face of the combined effects of terrorism and past bad governance and its effects.

Faced with the ECOWAS and UEMOA inability to play a role of solidarity, they submit to the interests of European Union imperialism. The CADTM Africa network condemns this external and treacherous instrumentalisation imposing unjust, unjustifiable and unwarranted sanctions against Mali.

We welcome the great demonstrations of solidarity with the Malian people that have taken place in West Africa (Dakar, Nouakchott, Conakry, Ouagadougou, etc.) showing that the peoples choose another way: For an ECOWAS/UEMOA of the peoples in rupture with imperialist domination.

The CADTM Africa network calls for:

- broadening solidarity for the reopening of the borders of neighbouring countries and the cancellation of sanctions that are harmful to the Malian people;
- the suspension of debt repayment and the initiation of an audit process of the external and internal public debt under citizen control to determine and cancel the parts of the debt that would be considered illegitimate, illegal, odious and unsustainable in order to release resources for investment in the basic social sectors and to strive towards economic sovereignty;
- the termination of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with EU countries and other free trade agreements that are harmful to the people;
- democratic transition towards future democratic elections and the implementation of policies that respond to the aspirations of Malians;
- support for the sovereign decisions of the Malian people regarding their political, economic, cultural and social choices;
- the continuity to promote actions of solidarity with the Malian people, in particular through an international day of solidarity with the peoples of West Africa;
- re-nationalisation of all privatised public enterprises, local processing of raw materials and energy and food sovereignty.

The CADTM condemns all foreign military intervention in Mali.

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