

## MALI

<b>Country name</b>	Mali
<b>State title</b>	Republic of Mali
<b>Name of citizen</b>	Malian
<b>Official language(s)</b>	French [fr]
<b>Country name in official language(s)</b>	Mali [fr]
<b>State title in official language(s)</b>	République du Mali [fr]
<b>Script</b>	French is written in Roman
<b>Romanisation System</b>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)</b>	ML/MLI
<b>Capital</b>	Bamako

### Geographical names policy

Geographical names are for the most part found in a French style and should be taken as found on official sources where possible. Maps produced by France's Institut Géographique National are a primary source. All diacritical marks (see below for details), apostrophes and hyphens should be retained.

The difficulties of representing the many different African languages which have influenced the geographical names of the country have inhibited a consistent approach to spellings on many IGN sources.

### Language/s

Prior to 1960, colonial rule by France inevitably led to French serving as the language of education and of official administration. Since independence, French has continued to be the country's official language<sup>1</sup> and is perceived as a neutral "unifying" language, but understanding of the language is rather limited to urban areas. The indigenous Bambara language<sup>2</sup> is the most widely spoken, and its intelligibility to as much as 80% of the population substantiates its position as the country's primary national language.

Due to the ethnic diversity of the peoples of Mali, more than 50 different indigenous languages are spoken. Some have orthographies based on Roman, Arabic, Tifinagh or even N'Ko<sup>3</sup> script, but despite official efforts to promote literacy in national languages<sup>4</sup>, many remain unwritten.

1 Article 25; of the 1992 Constitution

2 Also seen as Bamanankan which is the local name

3 According to <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/nko.htm>, the N'Ko alphabet was devised in 1949 by Soulemayne Kante of Guinea to furnish the peoples of West Africa with their own unique script to produce written records.

4 Demonstrated by Law no. 86 AN-RAM creating the Direction nationale de l'alphabétisation fonctionnelle et de la linguistique appliquée (DNAFLA)

13 of Mali's languages are legally designated "national languages"<sup>5</sup>; of these 6 are spoken by more than 400,000 people, namely Bambara, Macina (a Fula dialect also known as Maasina Fulfulde), Malinke (or Kita Maninkakan), Minyanka (or Mamara Senufo), Soninke, and Songhay dialects.

Other major languages include Arabic and Berber dialects, introduced predominantly through trade with North Africa.

**Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings<sup>6</sup>):**

**French** contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

À (U+00C0)	à (U+00E0)	Â (U+00C2)	â (U+00E2)
Ç (U+00C7)	ç (U+00E7)	Ê (U+00C8)	è (U+00E8)
É (U+00C9)	é (U+00E9)	Ë (U+00CA)	ê (U+00EA)
Ê (U+00CB)	ë (U+00EB)	Ï (U+00CE)	î (U+00EE)
Ï (U+00CF)	ï (U+00EF)	Ô (U+00D4)	ô (U+00F4)
Œ (U+0152)	œ (U+0153)	Ù (U+00D9)	ù (U+00F9)
Û (U+00DB)	û (U+00FB)	Ü (U+00DC)	ü (U+00FC)
ÿ <sup>7</sup> (U+0178)	ÿ <sup>7</sup> (U+00FF)		

**Administrative structure**

Mali is divided into 8 *régions* and the capital district of Bamako. The regions are sub-divided into *cercles* at the second-order level. The *cercles* are themselves divided into communes at the third-order level. The list below reflects the current structure with the recommended spelling of the regions given in bold.

<b>Bamako</b> (12°39'N 008°00'W)	Centre: Bamako (12°39'N 008°00'W)
<i>Full form in French:</i> District de Bamako	
<i>Population:</i> 1,809,106	

<b>Gao</b> (18° 00'N 002°00'E)	Centre: Gao (16°16'N 000°03'W)
<i>Full form in French:</i> Région de Gao	
<i>Alternative names:</i> Septième Région; Seventh Region; Région VII	
<i>Population:</i> 544,120	
comprises 4 <i>cercles</i> : Ansongo, Bourem, Gao, Ménaka	

<b>Kayes</b> (14°00'N 11°00'W)	Centre: Kayes (14°26'N 011°26'W)
<i>Full form in French:</i> Région de Kayes	
<i>Alternative names:</i> Première Région; First Region; Région I	
<i>Population:</i> 1,996,812	
comprises 7 <i>cercles</i> : Bafoulabé, Diéma, Kayes, Kéniéba, Kita, Nioro, Yélimané	

<b>Kidal</b> (19°55'N 001°05'E)	Centre: Kidal (18°26'N 001°24'E)
<i>Full form in French:</i> Région de Kidal	
<i>Alternative names:</i> Huitième Région; Eighth Region; Région VIII	
<i>Population:</i> 67,638	
comprises 4 <i>cercles</i> : Abéïbara, Kidal, Tessalit, Tin-Essako	

<sup>5</sup> Article 1 of Decree 159 PG-RM of 19 July 1982

<sup>6</sup> See [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)

<sup>7</sup> rarely encountered

## TOPONYMIC FACT FILE

<b>Koulikoro</b> (14°00'N 007°45'W)	<i>Centre:</i> Koulikoro (12°52'N 007°34'W)
<i>Full form in French:</i> Région de Koulikoro	
<i>Alternative names:</i> Deuxième Région; Second Region; Région II	
<i>Population:</i> 2,418,305	
comprises 7 <i>cercles</i> : Banamba, Dioïla, Kangaba, Kati, Kolokani, Koulikoro, Nara	

<b>Mopti</b> (14°40'N 004°00'W)	<i>Centre:</i> Mopti (14°29'N 004°12'W)
<i>Full form in French:</i> Région de Mopti	
<i>Alternative names:</i> Cinquième Région; Fifth Region; Région V	
<i>Population:</i> 2,037,330	
comprises 8 <i>cercles</i> : Bandiagara, Bankass, Djenné, Douentza, Koro, Mopti, Ténenkou, Youwarou	

<b>Ségou</b> (14°00'N 006°00'W)	<i>Centre:</i> Ségou (13°26'N 006°13'W)
<i>Full form in French:</i> Région de Ségou	
<i>Alternative names:</i> Quatrième Région; Fourth Region; Région IV	
<i>Population:</i> 2,336,255	
comprises 7 <i>cercles</i> : Barouéli, Bla, Macina, Niono, San, Ségou, Tominian	

<b>Sikasso</b> (10°55'N 007°00'W)	<i>Centre:</i> Sikasso (11°19'N 005°40'W)
<i>Full form in French:</i> Région de Sikasso	
<i>Alternative names:</i> Troisième Région; Third Region; Région III	
<i>Population:</i> 2,625,919	
comprises 7 <i>cercles</i> : Bougouni, Kadiolo, Kolondiéba, Koutiala, Sikasso, Yanfolila, Yorosso	

<b>Tombouctou</b> (20°00'N 003°00'W)	<i>Centre:</i> Tombouctou (16°46'N 003°00'W)
<i>Full form in French:</i> Région de Tombouctou	
<i>Alternative names:</i> Sixième Région; Sixth Region; Région VI; <i>conventional spelling</i> Timbuktu	
<i>Population:</i> 681,691	
comprises 5 <i>cercles</i> : Diré, Goundam, Gourma-Rharous, Niafunké, Tombouctou	

### Useful references

US Board on Geographic Names GEONet Names Server: <http://earth-info.nga.mil/gns/html/index.html>  
Government of Mali official portal <http://www.primature.gov.ml/>  
Mali web portals: <http://malinet.net/>; <http://www.maliweb.net/index.php>  
Loi N°99-035/ du 10 août 1999 portant création des collectivités territoriales de cercles et de régions.  
BBC country profile: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country\\_profiles/1021454.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1021454.stm)  
FCO country profile: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/mali>  
Wikitravel <http://wikitravel.org/en/Mali>  
Mali Constitution 1992: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/CAFRAD/UNPAN002746.pdf>  
Library of Congress – Federal Research Division. Country Profile – Mali. January 2005  
Ethnologue report on languages of Mali: [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=mali](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=mali)  
Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT), Mali <http://instat.gov.ml>  
International Crisis Group: *Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?* Africa Report N°92, 31 March 2005  
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of France:  
[http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere\\_817/publications\\_827/cooperation-internationale-developpement\\_3030/serie-evaluations\\_4632/evaluations-2003\\_4660/evaluation-cooperation-decentralisee-franco-malienne\\_4663/cooperation-decentralisee-franco-malienne-etat-lieux\\_11737.html](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere_817/publications_827/cooperation-internationale-developpement_3030/serie-evaluations_4632/evaluations-2003_4660/evaluation-cooperation-decentralisee-franco-malienne_4663/cooperation-decentralisee-franco-malienne-etat-lieux_11737.html)  
UNHCR report on Mali:  
<http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/897ce24a48d43c82802565f700407640?Opendocument>  
CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>  
UN Cartographic Section map of Mali administrative divisions: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/htmain.htm>  
Mali Wikipedia entries: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mali>; [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivité\\_territoriale\\_au\\_Mali](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivité_territoriale_au_Mali)  
Omniglot writing systems and languages of the world: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/haitiancreole.htm>