



**United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General**

**Inspection of
Embassy Bamako, Mali**



Embassy Bamako, Mali

Embassy Bamako has managed its limited resources well to meet U.S. goals in Mali. The embassy has also promoted democracy and successfully initiated multiagency, humanitarian, and civic-action programs along potential terrorist transit routes in the north. In addition, education, economic, and agricultural development projects underway in the south promote stability and growth. The government of Mali, a democracy, has been cooperative in advancing counterterrorism initiatives in the region. The embassy maintains good relations with the host government and has unfettered access to the highest levels of the leadership the government and civil society.

Thanks to a few key officers, mission morale has remained generally good in a difficult year of staffing gaps. Interagency coordination and cooperation are exemplary.

A challenge for the embassy will be to increase its reporting and analysis while managing a large summer staff turnover and preparing for a move to a new embassy compound (NEC) in the summer of 2006. The limited-term Diplomatic Readiness Initiative positions in the embassy's economic section and front office should be made permanent.

Security improvements in the existing embassy complex, the American Center, and the U.S. Agency for International Development building were a good start but are still insufficient. The situation will be corrected with the move to the NEC, which will house most mission elements. However, steps must be taken to ensure that the embassy can maintain and support the sophisticated new systems in the NEC.

The American International School of Bamako needs to be improved. Unhappiness with the school causes problems for the recruitment, morale, and retention of officers.

Background



Map of Mali

Mali has 11 million people. With an area of 1.24 million square kilometers, it is physically the largest country in West Africa, about the size of Texas and California combined. Mali has a history of moderate Islam.

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world – the 2004 per capita gross domestic product of \$290 million places it among the world's 10 poorest nations. Mali continues to face long-term food security problems, aggravated in 2004 by a locust infestation. Mali has surpassed Egypt to become Africa's largest cotton producer and is the third-largest producer of gold in Africa.

Mali imports food, machinery, and petroleum products, mainly from France, Switzerland, Cote d'Ivoire, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The crisis in Cote d'Ivoire has hurt Mali's economy because it disrupted traditional trade routes and reduced remittances from Malian guest workers. Mali's economy has also suffered from the increase in world oil prices, the

decrease in cotton prices, and a decrease in gold production. As a result, in 2004 gross domestic product growth was 1.7 percent, not the 4.9-percent growth predicted. Economic development in Mali is hampered by a chronic foreign trade deficit. The annual population growth is 2.2 percent down from 3.3 percent in 1998, but this decrease will be insufficient to pull Mali out of its poverty. Malaria is the most lethal disease affecting Mali. Officially, 1.7 percent of the population is HIV/AIDS positive, but experts believe the figure is closer to three percent. Latest government indicators show a literacy rate of about 30 percent and school enrollment of 64 percent at the primary level and only 28 percent at the secondary level. Unemployment in 2004 remained high. The life expectancy for men in Mali is 47; for women, it is 48.

Mali, which became independent from France in 1960, is playing an increasingly influential role in the region. It and the United States enjoy excellent relations, and there are few areas of contention between the two countries. Mali normally adheres to the positions taken by the African Union in the United Nations. Although Mali has not signed a bilateral Article 98 agreement to protect U.S. forces from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, military-to-military cooperation is expanding. U.S. trade in investment in Mali is limited.

Office of Inspector General

The Office of Inspector General conducts independent audits, inspections, and investigations to promote effective management, accountability, and positive change in the Department of State, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and the foreign affairs community.

OIG's Office of Inspections provides systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department of State, its posts abroad, and related activities. Inspections cover policy implementation, resource management, and management controls. As part of the inspection, particular attention is given to consular, security, and information technology operations.

January 24, 2006