Following the ongoing crisis in Mali, Civil Society Organisations in West Africa on Thursday, July 9, 2020, called on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to prioritise its intervention process in the country.

In a letter signed by directors of about 100 CSOs across West Africa and addressed to the President of Niger Republic, Mr. Issoufou Mahamadou, the coalition said the growing political tensions in Mali must be addressed immediately.

The coalition urged Mahamadou, who doubles as the Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government to address the political unrest in Mali which is as a result of the May legislative elections.

It also highlighted that the elections have placed the administration of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and the opposition, M5-RFP coalition on a collision course.

The M5-RFP coalition is comprised of the Coordination of Movements of Associations and Sympathisers of Imam Mahmoud Dicko (CMAS), the Front for the Safeguarding of Democracy (FSD) and Espoir Mali Koura (EMK).

Copied in the letter dated July 13, 2020, are the Presidents of France, Denmark, heads of the United Nations, European Union, ECOWAS Department of Political Affairs, ECOWAS department of Peacebuilding Affairs/Early Warning Unit, ECOWAS/AU commissioners for Human Rights among many others.

The CSOs warned that considering the multidimensional impact the escalation of this political crisis in Mali could have on the West Africa region, an irreparable security situation could manifest in countries like Burkina Faso, Niger, Cote d’Ivoire and Guinea.

The CSOs said such a crisis could have a regrettable ripple effect in the lives of 172 million people across the West African region.
Led by the Director of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Idayat Hassan, the CSOs called on President Muhammadou to engage decisively with parties involved to resolve the deadlock between the government of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and the opposition M5-RFP coalition.

According to the CSOs, it is vital, in the short term, to secure and ensure peace and good governance for the people of Mali with a sustained effort to design a solution which will ensure peace and security within the country under ECOWAS treaties, norms and principles.

“We are aware that ECOWAS has engaged with the leadership in Mali, and there are signs of receptivity to dialogue and discourse. We are also encouraged by the meaningful concessions made by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta,” the letter read in part.

“The same can also be said of Imam Mahmoud Dicko, who continues to interact with diplomats, United Nations officials and the African Union (AU) representative, as all parties seek a peaceful solution to the crisis. Nevertheless, significant work is required to reach a resolution,” it read.

It also implored ECOWAS to prioritize the quest to continue to engage in Mali, with all stakeholders. This must include civil society organizations comprising youth and women’s groups; faith-based organizations representing all faiths; traditional authorities representing all community groupings; and security sector across the political and ideological divide.

The CSOs encouraged ECOWAS to collaborate with other diplomatic stakeholders, particularly the European Union, France, Denmark etc. to proactively engage all combatants in the North and Central Mali.

It said ending hostilities in Mali can give room for negotiations on lasting peace to take place and halt the continued human suffering due to the concurrent conflict and political crises and economic hardship already exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“As the AU seeks to make progress on its campaign of ‘Silencing the Guns in Africa’ by 2020, we, as civil society and faith-based organisations, stand ready to work with ECOWAS in Mali, in any and every way possible,” the CSOs said.

Abuja, July 13, 2020
The letter was co-signed by directors of:

Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD -West Africa)
West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)
West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)
Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)
Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Ghana
Centre for Democratic Governance (CGD)
Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)
Gender Centre for Empowering Development (GenCED)
Advocacy Movement Network (AMNet)
Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)
Yiaga Africa
Global Rights, Nigeria
Partners West Africa
The Centre for Information Technology and Development, CITAD
Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training (CEDDERT) Nigeria.
Socio Economic Rights & Accountability Project (SERAP)
Nigeria Network of NGOs
Alliances for Africa
Resource Centre for Human Rights & Civic Education (CHRICED) Nigeria
Corporate Accountability and Public Participation (CAPPA)
Community Life Project (CLP)
Yar’Adua Foundation
National procurement Watch Platform
Rule of Law and Accountability Advocacy Centre (RULAAC).
Centre for Social Justice.
State of the Union (SOTU) Campaign
Asabe Shehu Yar’Adua Foundation (ASYARFS)
Policy Alert
Corporate Accountability and Public Participation (CAAPA)
Zero Corruption Coalition
Tax Justice and Governance Platform
Community Action for Popular Participation
Say No Campaign
Alliance for Credible Elections
Beautiful Eves of Africa Organisation
Oke Foundation
Confluence of Rights, Nigeria
Legal Resources Consortium; Justice for Peace and Development Initiative.
Divine Era Development and Social Rights Initiative (DEDASRI)
National Association of Nigerian traders (NANTS)
Women, Law and Development Initiative (WOLDI)
Community Outreach for Development and Welfare Advocacy (CODWA)
HEDA Resource Centre.
Foundation for Environmental Rights, Advocacy & Development (FENRAD)
Centre for Human Rights and Social Advancement (CEFSAN).
National Procurement Watch Platform Nigeria

Front Citoyen Togo Debout
Le Mouvement Martin Luther King Togo
Novation Internationale Togo
Conseil Episcopal Justice et Paix

Centre for Research and Policy Development– Gambia
African Youth Commission – Gambia
Activista Gambia
Gambia Participate

Rights and Rice Foundation & Chairman, TJWG Liberia
Namote Partners
Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD)
Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding

Association Panafricaine pour l'analphabétisme et L'Education des Adulte (PAALAE)
Association des blogueurs de la Guinée

Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL)
Mano River Women's Peace Network
The 50/50 of Sierra Leone
Girls +
Society for Democratic Initiatives (SDI)
Kids Advocacy Network
Centre for Coordination of Youth Activities (CCYA)
Women's Forum Network (50 Women's organisations)
Foundation for Rural and Urban Transformation (FoRUT)
Child Rights Coalition – Sierra Leone (105 National Organisations)
Skyy Women's World Network
Barbara Town
Kids Radio Network
Youth Forum Network
ECOWAS Youth Council – Sierra Leone
Salone Lives Matter
One Family People
Madam Planner
The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) was established in the United Kingdom in 1997 as an independent, not-for-profit, research training, advocacy and capacity building organisation.