

The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup

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Contextualizing the Current Tuareg Uprising

The latest (2012) Tuareg uprising is not new. One should consider this conflagration a continuation of a half century of conflict-promoting dynamics that, historically, have sullied relations between Tuaregs and various states which attempted to subjugate or delimit their social, political, and economic practices. Understanding the current rebellion necessitates coming to terms with this history, which started long before Mali's independence in 1960.

The following testimony—a snapshot of a rapidly evolving and complex problem set—provides this historical context while shedding light on contemporary Tuareg social, political, and economic dynamics that critically affect security in the Saharan and Sahelian regions of Africa. Of particular interest to US policy making is the complicated relationship between the Tuaregs and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Qaeda's North African affiliate—a relationship driven by a convergence of interests, not ideology. In the end, it will become evident that those seeking to promote stability in the region and confront violent extremism, including AQIM, should not ignore the Tuaregs, who play an integral role in regional security and economic growth.

*This article is based on the author's congressional testimony in 2012 (see House, *Prepared Statement of LtCol (ret) Rudolph Atallah, Senior Fellow, Michael S. Ansari Center, Atlantic Council, and Chief Executive Officer, White Mountain Research LLC, before the United State House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights on "The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup," Friday, June 29, 2012, 12th Cong., 2nd sess., <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/HHRG-112-FA16-WState-AtallahR-20120629.pdf>). Between 2001 and 2003, the author spent extensive time with the Tuaregs in northern Mali, especially in Kidal, Tessalit, Timbuktu, Gao, and several other locations across the Sahara. During this period, the first kidnapping of European tourists by an extremist named Abdel Rezak Al Para took place, and in Kidal, Pakistani activists—allegedly from Jamaat al Tabligh—attempted to recruit young Tuaregs for activities abroad, possibly including militancy. A native Arabic speaker, the author had several opportunities to interview Tuareg leaders and local imams about these issues and their perspectives on the attacks of 11 September 2001, terrorism, and tribal beliefs. Subsequent work in the region through the author's company, White Mountain Research, afforded him many contemporary insights into the rapidly evolving security dynamics in this region.*

The Tuaregs and Decolonization

The Tuaregs, a seminomadic people who live in the Saharan and Sahelian regions of southern Algeria, western Libya, northern Mali, northern Niger, and northeast Burkina Faso, number approximately 1.5 million today although actual census data is unavailable. Their worldview is constructed from a combination of Islam and traditional tribal practices inseparable from their culture. They believe in both Allah and spirits, thus differing from adherents of pure Islam, which teaches belief in a monotheistic God. All Tuaregs belong to one of three classes: the nobles (camel herders), vassals (goat herders), and black African slaves originally from southern ethnic groups (the French outlawed slavery in the early part of the last century).

When decolonization took root across Africa in the 1950s, the people of the Sahara (mainly the Tuaregs) pushed for political autonomy, often sparking conflict.¹ During the colonial era, Tuareg regions were peripheral to, and thus isolated from, influence within the capitals. Over time, colonial powers imposed a series of conventions regulating and limiting nomadic movements to specific territories for each federation, further restricting Tuareg movements and increasing their isolation from centers of power.² Tuaregs clashed with French colonialists over these issues but were subdued by French military superiority and tactics of divide and conquer, which turned Tuareg tribes against each another.

The first Tuareg uprising began in 1962, in the postindependence period. Initially, this conflict featured small hit-and-run raids, but these escalated in subsequent years to include sophisticated attacks. However, the overall Tuareg effort lacked unified leadership and a coherent strategy. Nevertheless, the Tuaregs' grievances were poignant enough to encourage some to take up arms. The sum of their concerns involved three main issues:

1. Discrimination from southern ethnic groups, which governed Mali following independence.
2. Fear that land reform would threaten their privileged access to agriculture.
3. Concern that national elites would destroy Tuareg culture under the guise of "modernization."

By 1964 Mali had crushed the rebellion, and the northeastern part of the country became a no-go area ruled by martial law. The fledgling government's heavy-handed approach alienated many Tuaregs who did not support the insurgents.³

The 1970s and 1980s, decades of extreme drought and suffering in the region, saw many Tuaregs flee Mali and take refuge in Algeria, Libya, Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso. Overgrazing, combined with drought and a lack of response by the Malian government, caused further, deepening resentment among many Tuaregs. Younger Tuaregs were also lured by jobs in Algeria's and Libya's oil industries and moved there to earn a living. However, the collapse of oil prices in the mid-1980s sent many Tuaregs back to their homes in Mali. Algeria expelled over 10,000, and Libya, which had created specialized military regiments composed of Tuareg recruits, disbanded most of them. These events set the stage for the second Tuareg rebellion, which started in June 1990 and lasted until 1992. Iyad Ag Ghaly, current leader of Ansar Al-Din ("Defenders of the Faith," a violent regional Salafist group linked to AQIM), led the second rebellion.⁴ As in the 1960s, the Tuaregs were not united as one insurgent group; this time, however, they enjoyed better organization and equipment.

To his credit, Moussa Traoré, president of Mali at the time, recognized very early after the rebellion began that a military solution was untenable and accepted Algeria's offer of mediation. In 1991, after serious discussions between the government and Tuareg leaders, the principals signed the Accords of Tamanrasset. Unfortunately, not all Tuaregs were represented at the table—especially those from Gao and Timbuktu, who felt betrayed and left out of the deal. The Traoré regime refused to publicize the terms of the accords, fearing that the south would interpret it as a surrender, and even denied on national radio that there would be any "Statut particulier" for the north.⁵ This action reflected a chronic lack of trust that remains the impetus behind today's continuing conflict. Key provisions from the accord included the following:

1. A cease-fire and exchange of prisoners.
2. Withdrawal of insurgent forces to cantonments.
3. Reduction of the army presence in the north, especially Kidal.

4. Disengagement of the army from civil administration in the north.
5. Elimination of selected military posts (considered threatening by the Tuareg communities).
6. Integration of insurgent combatants into the Malian army at ranks to be determined.
7. Acceleration of ongoing processes of administrative decentralization in Mali.
8. A guarantee that a fixed proportion of Mali's national infrastructural investment funding (47.3 percent) would be devoted to the north.⁶

As a whole, Tuaregs felt that Mali never fully met most of these provisions, giving them a reason for independence. Two months after the Tamanrasset agreement, a coup abruptly ended President Traoré's 23-year rule. In 1992 national elections took place, and leaders from all of the communities signed a national pact that addressed a wide range of issues, from integration of former insurgents into the Malian military to the allocation of resources for national development.

Significantly, the Tamanrasset Accords prompted the formation of temporary security forces to garrison the north. These forces contained a mixed percentage of Malian army and rebel combatants—both a confidence-building measure and a way to reduce the problem of unemployed, armed Tuareg youths.⁷ The government also made promises of material benefits without having the resources in place to fulfill them, resulting in a painfully slow application of the national pact.⁸

Ibrahim Ag Bahanga led the third Tuareg rebellion, which took place in 2006 and lasted until 2009. Algeria once again stepped in to broker peace by restating demands made in the national pact; however, the lack of trust exhibited by all parties kept northeast Mali in a state of uneasy peace. In 2009 Mali dispatched troops to stop Bahanga and exiled him to Libya, where he remained until his return in the summer of 2011. Bahanga's Libyan exile proved an important milestone in the recent Tuareg insurgency.

During his time in Libya, Bahanga contacted Tuaregs from his tribe who served in Mu'ammār Gadhafi's military. One of these was Mohammed

Ag Najm, commander of Gadhafi's elite desert units. In an interview with the newspaper *Al Watan* in 2011, Bahanga said that "Al-Qadhafi's disappearance is good news for all the region's Tuareg. . . . His departure from Libya opens the way to a better future and will make it possible to move forward with our political demands. . . . Now that he is gone, we can forge ahead with our struggle."⁹ Although Bahanga died in a mysterious car accident that summer, his desire to spark another uprising and gain control of northern Mali took root among many Tuaregs.

His vision unfolded later that autumn. In September 2011, when it became evident that Gadhafi's regime would collapse, Tuareg fighters began to cross into Mali after emptying several Libyan arms depots.¹⁰ In October 2011, in the oasis settlement of Zakak, Mali, near the border of Algeria, Tuareg youth, intellectuals, Malian army deserters, and Libyan-trained Tuareg soldiers merged two movements—the *Mouvement national de l'Azawad* and the *Mouvement Touareg du Nord Mali*—to form the *Movement National Pour La Liberation de l'Azawad* (MNLA) (Azawad is the name of the Tuareg homeland). The France-based spokesman for the new organization, Hama Ag Sid' Ahmed (Bahanga's father-in-law), elaborated on the significance of this new, more organized approach to Tuareg aspirations: "This year we have all the generations together."¹¹ He elaborated on this novel Tuareg approach in a subsequent statement on the MNLA's formation:

We talked about where things had gone wrong and tried to agree on a plan and on some common objectives. We created a ruling council, a military *état majeur*, commanded and coordinated by Mohammed Ag Najm and other senior officers. There are about 40 of them. And we also created a political bureau, which set about analysing and considering all the political aspects including how to raise awareness among the international community, especially the regional powers.¹²

Although this new Tuareg approach strengthened military strategy, enhanced tactical war-fighting capabilities, and generally augmented the Tuaregs' political thought, disunity remained their biggest obstacle.

Recent Developments Contextualizing the Current Tuareg Uprising

From mid-January until early April 2012, the MNLA took control of an area greater than the size of France, calling it *Azawad*, an Arabic corruption of the Berber word *Azawagh*.¹³ Geographically, this region straddles Mali, Niger, and Algeria, but in the open press, MNLA carefully defines it

as northern Mali to let neighboring states know that expansion was not in the cards and thus prevent a unified backlash from those states. Unlike the combatants in other tribal conflicts, the Tuaregs are not fighting for resources, fertile land, or geographical expansion of territory but for culture, pride, and self-determination.

When Tuareg youth saw the world rally behind south Sudan's struggle for independence, they hoped the same would happen for their people. However, history shows that the world did not react that way. To de-escalate potential retaliation against its newly formed organization and galvanize support, the MNLA publicly stated that it was not an extremist organization but a secular representation of northern ethnic groups.¹⁴ The executive committee of the MNLA then asked the international community to "recognise, in a spirit of justice and peace, the independent state of Azawad."¹⁵ This plea for support was overshadowed by the coup in Bamako and a list of plaguing questions, not the least of which were, Why now? and How did this happen?

Despite recent successes, the MNLA faces many challenges, primarily the threat of militant Islamist dominance. This threat, however, originates perhaps more from the ultrapragmatic Tuareg desire to play for the "winning team" than it does from a worldview predisposed to violent extremism. According to reports from Timbuktu, some Tuaregs have sons who joined both Ansar Al-Din and the MNLA in hopes of having a family member on a winning side. As one Tuareg said to a colleague, "They are two arms of the same body," a comment representative of wider confusion over these organizational dynamics. However, without Ansar Al-Din putting a Tuareg face on AQIM, there would be more Tuareg resistance to the Salafist presence and broader support for MNLA.

Nevertheless, Tuaregs see flirtation with militant Islamism as temporary. Tuareg society, for example, broadly resents Salafist conceptions of a Sharia ban on soccer, smoking, and unveiled women. Further, even though Timbuktu has a long tradition as a devout Muslim city, residents feel that no one should tell them how to act or practice their faith. Regardless, the grievances that comprise the latest backbone of Tuareg insurgency push some people into Tuareg Islamist factions, which share the same grievances and hatred for regional governments, especially those in Niger and Mali, but tap into a deeper Islamic frame to promote activism.

One contact who met with several Tuareg army officers last summer in Timbuktu described these grievances, which sparked the flow of Tuareg fighters coming in from Libya, and predicted a new rebellion. These officers said that the lack of jobs, economic and infrastructure development, and decent paved roads in northern Mali topped their list. All had family members connected to trade and tourism, and according to most of them, the fact that the only paved road to the north ends in Mopti embodies the government's betrayal of the people. Whether secular pragmatists or Islamists, Tuaregs do not trust the Malian government, which in their eyes has more than once sent forces to "cleanse" them. Tuaregs are quick to point out that since Mali's independence, the outside world has never conducted a full, independent investigation of the atrocities committed against them.

Despite these grievances, Tuaregs in general do not broadly support the Salafists. They see them first as foreign interlopers and second as Arabs or Moors, both of whom have long been their ethnic rivals for supremacy in the Sahara.

Iyad Ag Ghaly and Militant Islam

The uprising in 2012 saw the return of Iyad Ag Ghaly, a Tuareg leader who led the first rebellion in the early 1990s and started the second three-year rebellion from 2006 to 2009. A seasoned 57-year-old warrior who embraced militant Salafism, the unpredictable and manipulating Ag Ghaly plays a key role in promoting conflict in the Sahel. His manipulative, radical approach—not to mention his Rolodex and connectivity to AQIM—is worthy of serious examination. Ag Ghaly's biography as a militant reflects a clear desire to play for the winners. In 2007, during the middle of the second rebellion, he switched sides, leaving his cause (fighting for Tuareg autonomy) to help negotiate settlements between the Tuaregs and the government of Mali. This move still causes resentment among his tribesmen, many of whom no longer trust him. In 2008 President Amadou Toumani Toure appointed Ag Ghaly consul and sent him to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, but the Saudi government declared him *persona non grata* for his association with extremist elements tied to al-Qaeda. In October 2011, President Toure asked him to head a delegation and bring Tuareg soldiers returning from the conflict in Libya back into the fold of Malian society.¹⁶ He returned to the north to resume his old role as leader of the Tuaregs, but the

MNLA rejected him. He then formed his own group, Ansar Al-Din, and fought alongside his people until they took the territory of Azawad.

Afterward, Ag Ghaly began to show his cards, agreeing to work with the MNLA but on the condition that Azawad would follow strict Sharia. On 16 June 2012, he rejected MNLA independence and publicly announced that “Ansar Dine wants the unity of all brothers and sisters in Mali around Islam, which is the foundation of our life.”¹⁷ For now, he appears resolute in his long-term goals to capture the Tuareg leadership and institute rigid Salafism as the Tuaregs’ brand of Islam. The MNLA leadership rejected Ag Ghaly’s pronouncement of 16 June and held its claim to secularism. Despite the impasse over the fate of Azawad, some members of the MNLA favorably consider Ag Ghaly and his Ansar Al-Din members Azawadis, a perception not shared about AQIM.

Ag Ghaly has a long history of successfully playing all sides of the Tuareg conflicts. In previous years, he was easily influenced by Algeria and Libya, which successfully “managed” him. However, his patrons, if any, are unknown at this point. In this current stalemate over the fate of Azawad, Ag Ghaly seems to be methodically undermining his MNLA tribesmen—but why? Many unanswered questions remain, especially about the source(s) of his funding. Further, did Ag Ghaly know about the rebellion and plan to undermine it? Is a state, organization, or individual behind his success? Indeed, the MNLA has no money or outside support, other than Tuaregs living abroad who want an independent Azawad. Ansar Al-Din, on the other hand, has funds and equipment, as well as the ethnic and tribal makeup necessary for success. Ag Ghaly, no stranger to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)/AQIM because of his initial involvement with the group in 2003, also seems to have the full support of Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, one of AQIM’s leaders in northern Mali.¹⁸ Taken together, Ag Ghaly’s streamlined success does not square.

In sum, against the backdrop of the current crisis, Ag Ghaly has positioned himself very well. He managed to provoke bickering in MNLA and now formally has AQIM’s southern fighters and resources under his command.¹⁹ His approach to undermining Tuareg leaders opposed to his rule began in April, after MNLA declared the independence of Azawad. Looting, rape, and abductions in Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu broke out, and according to Human Rights Watch reports, MNLA rebels were responsible

for the crimes. However, the organization denied those accusations, blaming escaped prisoners and criminals. Eyewitnesses said that Ansar Al-Din responded by taking protective measures to insulate the population and curb crime. Since then, it has been proselytizing door-to-door and implementing Sharia on the population. Overall, Tuaregs are confused about Ansar Al-Din, but are quickly learning the truth about the organization. On 26 June, a friend conveyed a report from a Tuareg family in Timbuktu:

Ansar Al-Din is recruiting local boys as young as 11–12 years old with promises to give them food and cash if they work in their camp at Fort Bekaye, the old Malian base inside the city. The boys are being told to do odd jobs. One Tuareg man found out that his 13-year-old son had gone to the camp to work, so he went there to talk to his son at the base. He asked him why he had joined Ansar Al-Din, and the boy told his father that he was only supposed to work for one month. So the man went to the Ansar Al-Din leader in charge of the base and said respectfully that he would like his son to leave with him, that he was needed at home. The head of the base told the father that his boy couldn't leave, that he was now permanently part of Ansar Al-Din and that the family could have his body back after he had fulfilled his duty to Allah and that he should be proud of him for bringing Muslim honor to his name.

Evidently this is not an isolated case. Two other families have relayed similar stories. People without money rely on handouts from Ansar Al-Din, which in return demands that they send their sons to newly militarized madrasas (Islamic schools). One man described how his old mosque is now home to one such madrasa where all the boys are forced to dress exactly alike, learn to fire Kalashnikovs, and undergo indoctrination in a harsh interpretation of Islam. In sum, Ag Ghaly's determination seems to be slowly forcing the population to submit to his rule, leaving the future of northern Mali in the hands of extremists and the fate of the Tuaregs in question.

AQIM in Northern Mali

AQIM remains active in northern Mali, despite a tenuous relationship with the Tuaregs. Algerian nationals run the organization, but its fighter composition includes Mauritanian, Moroccan, Libyan, Malian, and Nigerian nationals. From 2003 until the present, AQIM gradually took advantage of Mali's weak security infrastructure to establish itself in the northern part of the country. This created an economic-development shift in which tribal elements (particularly the Arab tribes and, to a lesser degree, the Tuareg) had no alternative other than do business or join the organization since it is

flush with cash (estimates vary from 70 to 150 million euros in total). This money originates from ransoms paid for the release of kidnapped Westerners.²⁰ Over the years, the local Arab-Tuareg population has slowly learned to tolerate its presence, in part due to AQIM's ability to develop the local economy and provide basic services in an impoverished region that felt abandoned by its host government. Local leaders forged mutually beneficial business relationships with the organization—relationships cemented through marriages to local women. For example, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, an influential AQIM leader from the southern zone katiba (battalion), took a Tuareg wife from Timbuktu.

Although AQIM seems to affect the local population for the better with respect to quality of life, over the long term it exerts a negative influence on the economic development of the region and promotes the growth of organized crime, especially among the Tuareg and Arab people. AQIM is responsible for spreading violent extremism to countries like Nigeria, where the radical organization Boko Haram dramatically stepped up its attacks in 2011 against Christians and government targets. Over the years, the government of Mali's feeble response to AQIM's attacks and kidnappings decimated even the smallest economic developments in the poorest region of a country where 77 percent of the population lives on less than two dollars per day.²¹ Violence and insecurity deterred nongovernmental organizations, outside investors, and tourism in critical areas plagued by chronic underdevelopment, drought, and extreme poverty.

Despite AQIM's gains, the Tuaregs remain traditionally moderate, not lured by the Salafist brand of Islam. Their identity lies with their Tamashek language rather than in religion. The autumn of 2006 saw multiple clashes between Tuareg and AQIM fighters, resulting in distrust and animosity between the two sides. Some MNLA members continue to discuss the idea of driving AQIM out of the region because it is considered an outside influence that corrupts the Tuaregs' traditions and way of life. For this reason, Ag Ghaly took center stage and now has AQIM's undivided attention and support. His ethnic makeup as a Tuareg allows AQIM to operate while he manages the negative Tuareg rhetoric. Despite significant differences and a history of animosity towards radical Islam, Tuaregs are opportunists. The allure of money, which would keep them relevant in the region, is their sole attraction to AQIM.

Because of the Tuaregs' vehement opposition to Salafism and the desire to win popular support, Abdelmalek Droukdal, the emir of AQIM, told his followers to gradually impose Sharia on the people of northern Mali and create the first Islamic state in the region.²² Like Ag Ghaly, he does not want to lose control of the situation. Maintaining a strong grip on northern Mali provides AQIM the resources it needs to remain effective and expand.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Implications for the United States

Although the international community likely would never entertain the idea of Azawadian independence, it should make an effort to support MNLA and Tuaregs who oppose militant Salafists in the region, including AQIM. Tuaregs are masters of their environment; they can play a key role in stabilizing the Sahel by driving out violent extremist groups. They have the will to do so—but not without assistance.

Unfortunately, the present situation in the region is bleak. Time is not on the Tuaregs' side, and northern Mali is becoming a magnet for foreign Islamist fighters who now help train recruits. Further, violent extremists have an ideal environment in which to move weapons, bring in more foreign fighters, and make money from drugs and other contraband, given the large quantities of Gadhafi's arsenal in their possession and control over airstrips near the towns of Gao, Timbuktu, Tessalit, and Kidal. This region is becoming a strategic nightmare for the United States and its European allies.

What is the end game for Ansar Al-Din and AQIM? According to regional experts, Ag Ghaly wants to become the leader of the Tuaregs, and he will use any means necessary to obtain this position. AQIM's long-term goals, though, are different and more in line with al-Qaeda's plans for North Africa. Analysis by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center of the declassified Abbottabad letters shows that al-Qaeda's leadership desires to take advantage of the "Arab Spring" to convert jihadi activities into missionary activities, with the primary objective of regrouping and coming after the United States.²³ To attain this goal, it has to rely on AQIM, its regional affiliate. AQIM, however, has suffered significant setbacks over the last few years and has seen its ability to recruit from North African countries disappear. Internal ideological disagreements that started in 2006 when it swore allegiance to al-Qaeda continue to vex the organization. Furthermore, effective counter-

terrorism measures taken by the United States and its allies have proven very damaging. To survive and remain effective, AQIM needs money and soldiers. The Sahel has become an ideal ground for both, and the Tuaregs function as collateral. In a way, AQIM has hijacked the heart of the great Sahara trade routes—the indispensable lifeblood of economic growth in a vast 3,400-mile region, where goods and commodities move between Europe, the Middle East, and the subcontinent. Left unchallenged, terrorists and drug dealers will exploit these routes for their long-term gains, using the only people who know how to navigate the harsh terrain—the Tuaregs.

Until now, Mali's military has been ineffective—unable to control the north and drive out AQIM. The international community and Mali's neighbors should not support any plan by the current Bamako regime to conduct a military intervention in the north, which would prove counterproductive and alienate local support against Ansar Al-Din and AQIM. Instead, regional governments need to work together to address economic and social needs across the Sahel, thereby protecting livelihoods and creating opportunities that will keep Sahelian communities from falling victim to Salafist groups—especially the Tuaregs.

The best approach to counter the present crisis in northern Mali involves creating a buffer zone around the areas where the Salafists operate. This zone should restrict movement by air or ground of illegal goods entering the area. On a larger scale, a systematic regional approach aimed at targeting illegal drug trafficking, tobacco, and weapons should be addressed to curb terrorists' access to money. A diminishing cash flow will dry up funds to recruit and expand.

Moreover, an effective information operations campaign is indispensable to discrediting AQIM and Ansar Al-Din and to reinforcing local distrust of their motives. Such a campaign should include not only northern Mali but also the Sahel as a whole, disparaging all militant Salafist groups and activities. But direct intervention by Western states will only reinforce the extremists' *raison d'être* and exacerbate the crisis; consequently, regional actors must broker a solution, and regional experts must guide it.

Border control and counterterrorism programs for Niger, Mauritania, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria also require greater support. These states still lack sustainable, effective coordination on these matters, and regional intelligence collection and sharing need significant improvement. Further,

because Sahelian states cannot respond to security threats in remote areas distant from the capitals, Mali's efforts to maintain control of the north have proven ineffective. Although AQIM's southern-zone katiba is no more than 300 strong, the absence of regional state collaboration makes it very difficult to find and target individuals in the vast operational area.

The international community must also address poor governance, corruption, and poverty issues, especially among the Tuaregs and people of the Sahel. Initiatives that improve food and water security, health care, education, and employment will give the population incentive to resist militant Salafist groups and refrain from working with them. In the case of the Tuaregs in northern Mali, better infrastructure and effective security remain at the heart of their grievances. If the international community wishes to support their economy and preserve their way of life—a culture at odds with militant Islam—it must deal with these issues directly. Finally, the community must make a top priority of effective Western and local intelligence sharing and regional coordination to root out Salafist activities and thereby reverse the threat that plagues this region.

Notes

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