

French-led troops clash with Mali militants

Malian troops are searching the northern town of Gao after a surprise attack by Islamist rebels. The weekend raid has raised fears of French forces becoming embroiled in a prolonged guerrilla war in Mali

FORCES IN REGION



France

4,000 troops backed by armoured vehicles, helicopters and fighter jets. Paris wants to begin pulling troops out in March



AFISMA

African-led International Support Mission to Mali

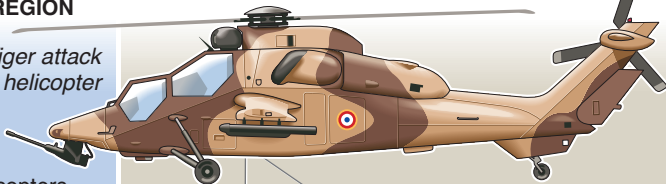
African force of 8,000 troops organized by ECOWAS and backed by UN, will gradually take over from France. Includes 2,000 troops from Chad and 1,200 from Nigeria



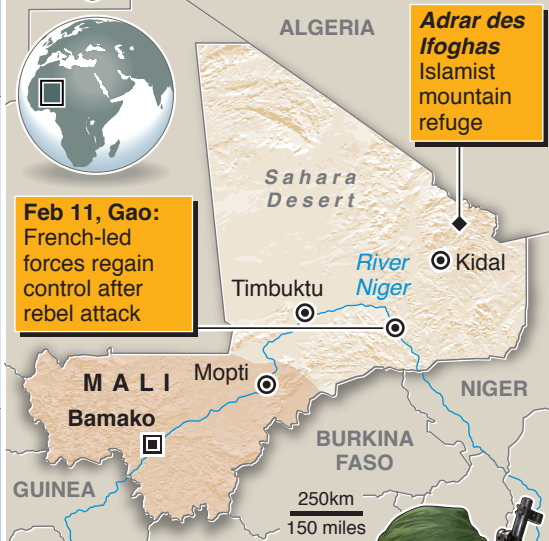
Mali: Army

has 6,000-7,000 troops, to be trained by European Union

Tiger attack helicopter



Feb 11, Gao:
French-led forces regain control after rebel attack



REBEL GROUPS

■ **Ansar Dine:** Tuareg-dominated group seeks to impose Islamic law across Mali. Numbers 5,000-10,000 fighters

■ **Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)**

Al Qaeda's North African wing. 1,000 fighters

■ **Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO):** AQIM splinter group. 500 fighters

■ **Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA)**

Secular Tuareg group seeks independent homeland. Former allies of Ansar Dine, now anti-Islamist

ECOWAS = Economic Community of West African States

Picture: Getty Images

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