

I. INTRODUCTION

The complex nature of the Malian political impasse exacerbated by the intricacy of insurgency in the north has received global attention with divergent explanations and dimensions to the conflict. It is however generally agreed that it has become a cause of grave human insecurity all over the country and beyond as a threat to stability in West Africa since the Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo-led military coup of March 22, 2012.

Prior to the coup the wives and relatives of the Malian soldiers fighting insurgent groups in the north marched to the presidential palace to demand better care and condition for the soldiers fighting the rebels in the northern regions. According to them (the soldier's wives), the soldiers were fighting with very poor arms and ammunitions and therefore vulnerable.

The indicators to the instability through the early warning signs were very evident. Amongst these signs were allegations of widespread corruption in public offices especially around the government circle and nepotism, mismanagement of resources within and among few elites. There was also gross dissatisfaction of the population over deterioration in the socio-economic sphere, obscure and vague information concerning the situation of the conflicts in the north and discrediting of the ousted president, Amadou Toumani Touré, and his government by high ranking military officials. Another source of discontent was disagreement among political parties over the organization of the presidential elections (scheduled for April 2012), growing insecurity in the north trickling down to other regions and the capital city, proliferation of arms which worsened following the "end" of the Libyan crisis, the student union's protests over the state of affairs, the seeming government laxity /lack of proactive measures in addressing the heightened insecurity especially delayed reaction in addressing the rebels issues in the north and letting the ex-combatants from Libya enter Mali without appropriate disarmament/demobilization. All these pointed to a country sitting on a timed bomb and waiting to explode.

In an effort to respond to the early warning information, ECOWAS and the AU convened a joint extra-ordinary meeting of heads of state between the 20th and 21st of March 2012 in the Malian capital to discuss and develop a way forward towards addressing the growing crisis in Northern Mali.

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