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Mali Turns 65 With Russia at Its Side

Goïta cites a future gold plant built with Russia as Mali turns 65, and Moscow answers with Soviet history and five Putin calls. Also here: Mali's drone case against Algeria at the ICJ, Guinea's referendum and the Nile dam dispute.

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On Mali's 65th Independence Day, Assimi Goïta counted a future gold processing plant built through Russian partnership among his administration's achievements. Russia's Foreign Ministry answered with a reminder of Soviet aid, over one hundred facilities and thousands of Soviet engineers, doctors and teachers, and a tally of the present: five telephone conversations between Vladimir Putin and Goïta since 2023 and three agreements signed during his June 2025 visit to Moscow. Russia-Mali relations open this issue.

The *Africa Now* bulletin of September 22, 2025 brings together 11 stories, drawn from official statements, foreign ministry communiqués and regional media.

Scope

Mali's quarrel with Algeria has reached the International Court of Justice. Bamako filed suit on September 16 over the destruction of a Malian drone near Tinzaouaten, and Algeria's Foreign Ministry announced it would refuse to take part in what it called a "manipulative procedure." Next door, vote counting began in Guinea's constitutional referendum, held after three main opposition parties were suspended and the opposition called for a boycott.

Along the Nile, Ethiopia told the UN Security Council it had given "sufficient explanations" on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, while Egypt reserved the right to take measures to protect its interests. Russian-Ethiopian trade more than doubled in the first half of the year to \$191.2 million, and António Guterres warned that El-Fasher has been under Rapid Support Forces siege for over 500 days.

The issue also follows Ambassador Andrey Chernovol's offer of Russian investment in Sudan's ports, railways and aviation, Sergey Karjakin's chess clubs for Egypt, Zambia, Tanzania and Mauritius, renewed clashes in Janzour outside Tripoli, and Nigeria's foreign reserves reaching \$42 billion.

Excerpt

“ Russia's Foreign Ministry congratulated Mali on Independence Day, noting the high level of bilateral relations and emphasizing continued cooperation expansion. The ministry recalled that modern Mali was historically part of major African empires including the Mali Empire and Songhai Kingdom. Despite French colonization and suppressed uprisings, Malians continued fighting for independence achieved by 1960, with USSR support for national liberation movements.

Official diplomatic relations were established on October 14, 1960. The Soviet Union provided massive assistance to the young African republic, constructing over one hundred facilities with thousands of Soviet engineers, doctors and teachers working in Mali. Current relations continue developing, with Presidents Putin and Goïta conducting five telephone conversations since 2023 and signing three agreements during Goïta's June 2025 Moscow visit, including energy sector cooperation.

*Sergey Konyashin, Mali Turns 65 With Russia at Its Side
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ABOUT

I am Sergey Konyashin, a former Russian diplomat. I spent nearly a dozen years in the Russian Foreign Ministry, with postings in Yemen (2010–2013), Sudan (2014–2018) and Algeria (2019–2021), and left Russia in 2022, after Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Démarche is my independent journal on Russian policy in the Middle East and Africa: analysis from inside the system, for readers outside it. I also write for *The Moscow Times*, *Republic*, *The Insider* and other independent outlets; see konyashin.com/elsewhere for that work.

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