

# FRANCE TO WITHDRAW TROOPS FROM MALI AFTER 10 YEARS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Emmanuel Macron LUDOVIC MARIN | Photo Credit: LUDOVIC MARIN

France announced on Thursday that it would withdraw its troops from Mali over a breakdown in relations with the country's ruling junta, after nearly 10 years of fighting a jihadist insurgency that still poses a major threat to the West African nation and beyond.

The deployment has been fraught with problems for France — of the 53 French soldiers killed serving in West Africa's Sahel region, 48 died in Mali.

"Multiple obstructions" by the military junta that took power in August 2020 meant the conditions were no longer in place to operate in Mali, said a statement signed by France and its African and European allies.

The decision applies to both the 2,400 French troops in Mali, where France first deployed in 2013, and a smaller European force of several hundred soldiers, called Takuba, that was created in 2020 with the aim of taking the burden off French forces.

"We cannot remain militarily engaged alongside de facto authorities whose strategy and hidden aims we do not share," President Emmanuel Macron said.

While announcing the decision, Mr. Macron made his strongest condemnation yet of the shadowy Russian mercenary group Wagner whose alleged arrival in West Africa has infuriated Paris.

In Mali, they were "essentially there to secure their own business interests and protect the junta itself," Mr. Macron added.

The announcement comes at a critical time for Mr. Macron, just days before he is expected to make a long-awaited declaration that he will stand for a second term at elections in April.

France first deployed the troops at Mali's request in 2013.

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