



## Can Malian Jihadists Negotiate Peace?

**OE Watch Commentary:** Amadou Koufa is the leader of the Mali-based jihadist “Group for Support of Islam and Muslims,” which is known by the acronym JNIM. Aligned with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), JNIM has been responsible for numerous attacks throughout Mali, according to the accompanying passage from the French-language news source *MaliJet*. The article reports that Kouffa may entertain negotiations, having recently released an audio message on social media, mentioning a possible ceasefire agreement. This represents the first time Kouffa has publicly considered reducing hostilities.

The ceasefire agreement would be with an ethnic Dogon militia called Dana Ambassagou. The article suggests Kouffa used this message to portray himself as defender of ethnic Fulanis. This is because Kouffa’s condition for the ceasefire was that the Dogon militia, which consists of traditional hunters, would have to stop attacking Fulanis. The article is not optimistic about prospects for the ceasefire, however. First it is unclear if Kouffa, a Fulani himself, will live up to the ceasefire if it is declared, given his group’s history. Second, he may simply be using the audio as propaganda to portray himself as a defender of Fulanis. And, third, the Dogon militia has a political wing, which is open to negotiation, but also a militant wing, which rejects negotiation. This militant wing is loyal to the Malian government fighting JNIM and will not abandon that effort.

While the prospect of a ceasefire is now on the table, the security situation in Mali remains complex, due to the many actors including ethnic militias, jihadists, and the government. There are also other actors not mentioned in the article, such as regional and international forces. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

***“But this cessation of hostilities is totally rejected by the military wing of Dana Ambassagou.”***

**Source:** “Amadou Koufa pose des conditions pour négocier avec une milice dogon (Amadou Koufa sets conditions to negotiate with a dogon militia),” *Malijet.com*, 6 October 2019. <https://malijet.com/actualite-politique-au-mali/flash-info/233835-mali-amadou-koufa-pose-des-conditions-pour-negocier-avec-une-mil.html>

*In Mali, Amadou Koufa, the Fulani leader of the jihadist group JNIM [Group for Support of Islam and Muslims], broadcast a new voice message on social networks in which he mentioned a possible ceasefire agreement with the Dogon militia Dana Ambassagou. “Traditional hunters must stop attacking members of the Fulani community,” says Amadou Koufa. For several years, fighting between the Fulani and Dogon communities has been disturbing localities in central Mali in Dogon country.*

*In a document dated September 24, the political wing of the self-defense group Dana Ambassagou also reported on the mediation. But this cessation of hostilities is totally rejected by the military wing of Dana Ambassagou.*



Hunter in Dogon region, Mali.

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