

Mali

Estimated population 12.3 million

The former French Sudan became independent in 1960 and included the present Mali and Senegal as one country known as Federation of Mali. This arrangement collapsed within the year and Mali became an independent state on its own. A period of instability was followed by a slow process towards democracy. Almost two thirds of Mali is desert making it one of the poorest countries in the world. There is some economic activity in the food-processing sector and a small number of adventurous tourists visits the country annually. Mali is 175th in the UN Human development index making it the third worst country on earth in which to live. Its GDP per capita in 2005 was \$434. Live expectancy for females in 2004 was 50 and for males 46.

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