

Algeria, Mali: Another Chapter in the “Global War On Terror”?

Saturday March 9th at 4:30pm, Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG



As the dreadful hostage crisis at the BP-operated In Amenas gas plant in Algeria came to an end on January 19th, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron claimed, like George Bush Jr and Tony Blair before him, that the country faced an "existential" and "global threat" to "our interests and way of life".

Ten years after the devastating war against Iraq and following the NATO onslaught on Libya two years ago; Western troops are again intervening in Mali to “fight Islamist extremists”. These tragic circumstances seem to constitute a prelude for another calamitous front in the “Global War on Terror” in North Africa and the Sahel.

Are French military forces intervening to really liberate the Malian people from obscurantism or are these operations a pretext to safeguard and expand France’s influence and geopolitical and economic interests? Are we witnessing a new scramble for Africa as some observers suggested, to plunder the rich natural resources of the region?

Our panellists will examine the potential motives of the French intervention in Mali and place the Algerian hostage crisis in the context of the disastrous legacy of Western interventions in the Middle East and Africa. They will also attempt to analyse the situation in the light of the geopolitical ramifications of the “Arab Spring” uprisings and will explore what alternatives the people from the global south have, away from imperialist interventions and the status quo.

Panellists:

Sami Ramadani is a senior lecturer in sociology at London Metropolitan University. He writes and speaks widely on Middle East issues and is a Guardian contributor.

Explo Nani-Kofi is the Director of Kilombo Centre for Civil Society and African Self-Determination in Ghana and the Coordinator of Another World Is Possible Radio Programme on GFM in London.

Oualid Khelifi is an Algerian activist and journalist specialised in the Sahel, North and West African affairs. He writes for Ceasefire and African Energy.

Kevin Bismark Cobham is a Criminal law solicitor advocate, a community activist, member of the National African People's Parliament Legal and Constitutional sub-committee, broadcaster: member of the Another World Is Possible Radio Collective.

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