

# Malian special forces storm luxury hotel under attack

From [Al Jazeera](#)

Special forces have stormed a five-star hotel in the capital Bamako after gunmen attacked on Friday and took 170 people hostage. "Right now there is action by Malian forces ... in order to solve this crisis," France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said. So far 80 hostages have been released with commandos going floor to floor inside the Radisson Blu Hotel, Mali's state broadcaster reported.

"The attackers are still inside. We're hearing gunfire from time to time," a witness outside the Radisson told the Reuters news agency.

Gunman shouting "Allahu Akbar" earlier opened fire outside the luxury hotel in the centre of the capital before storming it.

Idrissa Sangare, a local journalist at the scene, told Al Jazeera that Malian special forces, French troops and UN soldiers were working together in front of the hotel. "We don't know who carried out the attack because the operation is still going on," Sangare said. "We're hearing sporadic gunfire. There are a lot of injured people inside the hotel, I'm being told – more than 40 people." UN officials were holding a function at the hotel, he reported.

Reuters reports that a hostage freed from the hotel in Bamako said he heard attackers speaking English. A famous Guinean singer who was among 170 people taken hostage said he heard attackers in the next room speaking English. "I heard them say in English 'Did you load it?', 'Let's go'," singer Sekouba 'Bambino' Diabate, who was freed by Malian security forces, told Reuters in Conakry.

if the reports about 80 people released from the hotel are true, and three are confirmed dead, that means as many as 90 remain unaccounted for.

The attack comes just days after Iyad Ag Ghaly, the leader of the militant group Ansar Dine, one of five Islamic movements in Mali, called for attacks on France and its interests in Mali. In September, foreign journalists, French in particular,