



Association TAMOUDRE- PRESIDENT REPORT November 2012

The association “Tamoudré” was born somewhere in Northern Mali, between Tessalit, Aguelhoc and Borj, where Tuaregs and “toubabs” met. It is a tale of friendship and trust. We have been crisscrossing the Sahel since 1987 but reached our cruising speed in 2005, when we established relationships so close that we now are part of the “Family”: Ifoghas, Kel Ghela, Iraganatene or Kel Ansar, as well as the Nigerien Tuaregs of Air.

1-EXCHANGES & ISSUES

1-1 THE TERRAIN AND THE PEOPLE

From 2005, after one or two yearly visits in Aguelhoc, in a family encampment in Tataramat or in the bush in the communes of Kidal and Timbuktu regions where we engaged in an inventory of wells, health centers and schools, undertaking a joint study designed to create digitized maps of the area by the Agence de Développement du Nord-Mali and the University of Saint-Étienne, in France.

- **acquiring knowledge of the terrain, the communes and the remote encampments**
- **sharing with the local populations**
- **reinforcing links with key resource-persons and friends**
- **establishing networks based on trust**

1-2 IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS

From 2009 onwards, several visits allowed us first to **establish special contacts with the people in Tessalit** so that during the following years we were able to identify what was needed and to finalize some of our projects.

- March 2009: the Tuareg rebellion gave up their weapons in the Timetrin area, in Enabag, in the Tessalit cercle. We are met by a strong delegation from Tessalit and we are the only Europeans there. From then on, these special circumstances opened the way to tokens of friendship and deep mutual respect.
- August 2009: several weeks in Tessalit and Aguelhoc.
Projects to reintegrate rebels, managed by the Agence de Développement du Nord-Mali, are in the cards in the cercles of Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu. Together with the Tessalit youth and the GIE “Afous N’Tamadrit”, we organize several meetings in order to identify priorities for the area. Elected representatives and key resource-persons, the Mayor and his deputy, the president of the cercle, teachers, and many more partook in the talks.
Two projects emerge: “*Developing husbandry*” and “*Initiate a cyber café*”. These projects were sent to the ADN for consideration alongside 40 others but they failed to be selected.
- January 2010: 3 weeks in Tessalit, when we developed our contacts and networks.

2-BUILDING THE ASSOCIATION TAMOUDRE

In 2010, a warning of a frightful famine in Northern Mali is issued for March-April. With the help of the band Tinariwen, from Tessalit, and their international network, we launch an Internet campaign for donations. Three months later, we had received close to **11 000 Euros**. This was so much money that we had to consider creating an association so as to fit future actions within a legal framework. This is the reason why we **officially created Tamoudré**.

1-1-ESTABLISHING THE ASSOCIATION

The founding team is made up of 3 Tuaregs, the president from Agadez, another from Kidal, a third from Diré (Timbuktu area), plus 3 French persons who have been roaming the area for 20 years.

We feel what is needed is diversity and reliability. Together with our friends, field players and witnesses, from Northern Mali (Tombouctou, Kidal, Tessalit, Gao), Northern Niger (Aïr), Southern Algeria (Tamanrasset) and France, we have long been pondering the recurring issues of the area: isolation, droughts (when the animals of these nomadic breeders die), reshuffling of the regional and international order after the fall of Khaddafi's Jamary, latest rebellion as of January 17th 2012, spreading chaos in Mali and the rule of Muslim fundamentalists.

The founding of the association was published in the French Official Bulletin on the 10th of July 2010.

Informing, reflecting and acting, all focused on DEVELOPMENT issues and closely linked GEOSTRATEGIC issues, those are the purpose of the association "TAMOUDRE":

- **to support and accompany the Tuareg populations in pastoral areas in their fight for survival and help them secure a living in a perspective for social, economic and cultural development,**
- **to promote exchanges between each and every partners,**
- for the moment, the main areas concerned by the actions are Tessalit-Adielhoc-Kidal-Borj, south of the Algerian border, spreading in future projects to Timbuktu-Diré on the Niger river, and the Aïr, in the Agadez region.

1-2-ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE ASSOCIATION

"TAMOUDRE" has four achievements to its credit:

1. **An Internet website, <http://www.tamoudre.org/>, is online since January 2012.** The number of visits is on a regular upward curve, currently c. 400 visitors per day. Articles on the Tuareg people are posted each day on the website, from African, Malian, Nigerien, Algerian, Mauritanian, Burkinabe and European media sources, some in English. **Our database currently contains over 2,600 articles:** history, society, culture, religion, politics, economics, environment, geostrategy, rebellions, maps and bibliography.

2. **The famine** was severe in May-June 2010 in the Sahel region. With the help of the Internet network of our partners, and that of the friends of the Tinariwen band, and the association Kel Tina, from Soueloum Diagho, in Mons, we raised **10,850 euros, or 7,117,135 FCFA**, between April, May and June 2010 distributed as follows:

- 2 500 euros (1 639 892 FCFA) for veterinary care in the bush in the Kidal region
- 2 815 euros (1 846 846 FCFA) to pay for transport of 10 tons of animal feed sent to remote areas around Tessalit and distributed to the poorest families.
- 5 535 euros (3 630 721 FCFA) to buy animals for the hardest hit families, women and old people so as to help them restock in breeding animals. This action involved 30 families in the bush in Tessalit et Aguelhoc, chosen after consultation with local resource-persons.

3. Tessalit Multimedia centre

- Following up on discussions we held in Tessalit from 2009, we had managed after various ups and downs, as can be expected in those far away areas abandoned by the centers of power, **to buy equipment and to establish a multimedia center**. The Belgian association “*Kel Tina*” set up by a native of Tessalit was a great help.

- We had bought equipment for **668,680 FCFA, or 1,020 euros**. Computers, software, one laser printer, one multifunction printer (photocopier and scanner), a camera, inverters, small equipment, spare ink cartridges, paper reams, Ethernet cables and a Switch 8 port were bought in Bamako by « Tamoudré » and « Kel Tina » and transported to Tessalit by the youngsters of the GIE in February 2011.

One person was in charge of maintenance and had to cope with virus problems or all sorts of breakdowns which were managed by our local partners. We had hoped to obtain Internet links in a near future or later, depending on the volatile political and economic situation. The project was first to link Kidal to Tinzawatene by optic fibers and then Tessalit.

For 10 months, the equipment allowed the local people to make photocopies, to scan and to take identity pictures, thus saving a trip to Kidal each time.

The person in charge of the equipment in Tessalit had been enrolled in a training course for computer maintenance in Bamako, organized by the association « *Swiss Technology Center* », from December 2011 until the start of the rebellion, on January 17th 2012; more training sessions in maintenance and accounting were to be organized.

- **The town of Tessalit has been totally pillaged in mid-February 2012 after the rebellion had started. All the equipment was stolen and sold.** The islamists of Ansar Dinne have since burnt all identity papers and school manuals, and all 9 year olds learn to read the Kuran and to handle weapons...

We are waiting for a semblance of peace to be restored to continue.

4. Help for the refugees

- Right from the beginning of the January 17th 2012 rebellion, some of the Tuaregs known to us took refuge in the camps, around Tessalit, Kidal, the Algerian border in Inhalil, Borj and Timeaouine. At the end of April, c. 268000 people had fled their villages. At the end of August, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated their numbers at 460,000.

To this day, we have raised close to 9,000 euro, or 5,900,600 FCFA. Some of that money was sent informally through safe networks we know personally. Several foreign association know what we are doing and have shown their trust in us by sending large sums from Australia (*Saharan Tuareg Refugee Relief Inc.*), Denmark (*Gtu Genvej Til Udvikling*) and Niger (*Tchinagen*).

- **This allowed us to send rice, tea, sugar, blankets and medicines to Kidal as well as semolina, pasta, cooking oil and fuel oil to Algeria,** transported by trucks. From mid-April, it has been impossible to do anything in Kidal, so all our actions focused on Tamanrasset, Borj, Timeaouine, Reganne : get the cash, buy goods, and fill the trucks with food for those camps north of Tessalit and near the border that had not been reached by the Belgian organization Médecins sans Frontières (centre de santé de Tessalit) or the Algerian Croissant Rouge.
- New problems arose with Ansar Dinne's rule in the region. We cannot send money through official channels since nothing goes through. The only way is to send cash anonymously to our contacts on site with whom we have been working since 2009 in Tessalit.
This is how we do it, bearing in mind that telephone communications have been cut off from the onset of rebellion: as soon as our friends travel and reach a telephone network, whether in Borj, Timeaouine, Kidal, Gao, Tombouctou, Niamey, Nouakchott or Ouagadougou, they call us and update us on the situation. We send or give money (for instance we gave the Tinariwen cash at the end of their European tour in August 2012) and we inform all partners as to the amount given, and to whom. In this way, everybody (5 or 6 persons) knows and they all share the responsibility for how the money is spent.
- **The rest of the money was to be used for minimal local development in a dangerous and volatile context: restocking livestock, microcredit for women projects. Unfortunately, the situation has dramatically worsened and we are faced with military intervention. All these funds will be used to buy urgently needed food (pasta, rice, cooking oil, sugar) for the refugees fleeing combat zones.**

It's a risky gamble but in such chaotic times we have no choice. Our networks based on trust are precious, and even more the practical means to survive

3-PERSPECTIVES

Mali's democracy is not mature and the Kel Tamashek have not shown a capacity for unity around a common and reasonable project. Where dissociation wins, criminal acts, be it of drug cartels or terrorist islamists, also win. The sound of marching boots is frightening to populations in the bush, those that can only expect despair and feel forsaken.

The association Tamoudré will abide by its commitment and will continue its efforts.

3- 1- CURRENT CONCRETE ACTIONS

- **Seydrik and its label « Reaktion » have finalized a CD Rom, “Songs For Desert Refugees”**, a charity album aimed at raising funds for refugees from rural communities of Aguelhoc and Tessalit. It is a superb mix of desert music including rare or original titles of the most famous Tuareg bands in Mali (Tinariwen, Tamikrest, Terakaft, Tartit), Niger (Bombino, Toumast, Etran Finatawa) or Algeria (Nabil Baly Othmani, Faris).
These artists have all accepted to participate for no reward. The proceeds from sales will be given « TAMOUDRÉ », and « ETAR », an association which has been working with the commune of Aguelhoc for many years.
[Songs for Desert Refugees](#) has reached n°5 in [World Music Charts Europe](#) in September 2012, and it is a big hit.
- **Participation at the Würzburg Festival**, in May 2013, the most important European festival of African music. Tamoudré will have an exhibition stand.
- Preparing **10 panels for the Tuareg exhibit** for the Würzburg Festival.

3- 2- CONCRETE ACTIONS IN THE CARDS

- Refine institutionalization of Tamoudré as an association and find friends, sympathizers, networks and partners.
- Widen our scope of action to refugees in Mauritania and Niger.
- Find other means for sending funds on site, in towns, in the bush or in the refugee camps.
- Keep the link with the population and our networks whatever happens.

The Secretary, J.Dupuis



Pouzols, le 5 novembre 2012

For security reasons we cannot identify those people, militants, friends and partners working with « Tamoudré ».

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