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Mali Junta Leader Discusses Security, Economy with Putin

By AFP

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Colonel Assimi Goita **Hadama Diakite / EPA / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin and the head of Mali's junta, Colonel Assimi Goita, discussed security and economic relations between their two countries, both sides reported on Wednesday.

During the phone talks, "at the initiative of the Malian side," the two leaders paid "particular attention" to trade and economic relations, including the delivery of cereals, fertilizers and fuel from Russia to Mali, the Kremlin said in a press release.

Colonel Goita thanked Putin "for the humanitarian aid provided, as well as for the help given to ensure security, neutralize the terrorist threat and stabilize the situation" in his country, the Kremlin added.

The landlocked Sahel state has been battling a security crisis since jihadist and separatist

insurgencies broke out in the north in 2012.

It has since August 2020 been ruled by a military junta, which broke a long-standing alliance with France and other Western partners in the fight against jihadism and turned to Russia for political and military assistance.

Mali received shipments of Russian military supplies in March and August 2022, and again in January 2023.

In March, the Malian army received several aircraft from Russia.

"Very satisfied with my telephone conversation" with Putin, Goita said on Twitter.

"We had direct and sincere exchanges on subjects of common interest and on our desire to strengthen our diplomatic, economic and security relations," he added.

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