

# FALEA MALI

WEST AFRICA

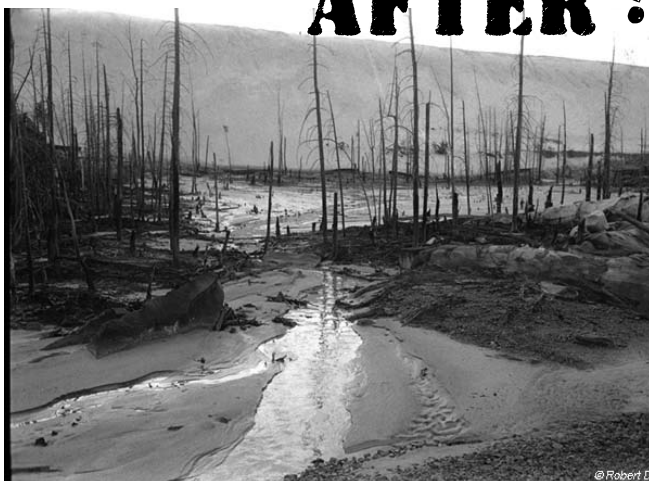
## BEFORE



Bucket to extract uranium

photo by Robert del Tredici

## AFTER ?



Mountains of uranium contaminated waste will destroy the region for thousands and thousands of years

Photo Robert del Tredici

# THE MENACE OF URANIUM MINING .....

# FALEA MALI

## WEST AFRICA

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The Municipality of Falea is located in the Western part of Mali and borders Guinea and Senegal. ....

The population is estimated at 17,000 inhabitants.

Most of the population is young (between 15 and 40 years old) and female (approximately 62%), comprising the ethnic groups: Djalonkes, Mandinka, Fula and Diakhanké.

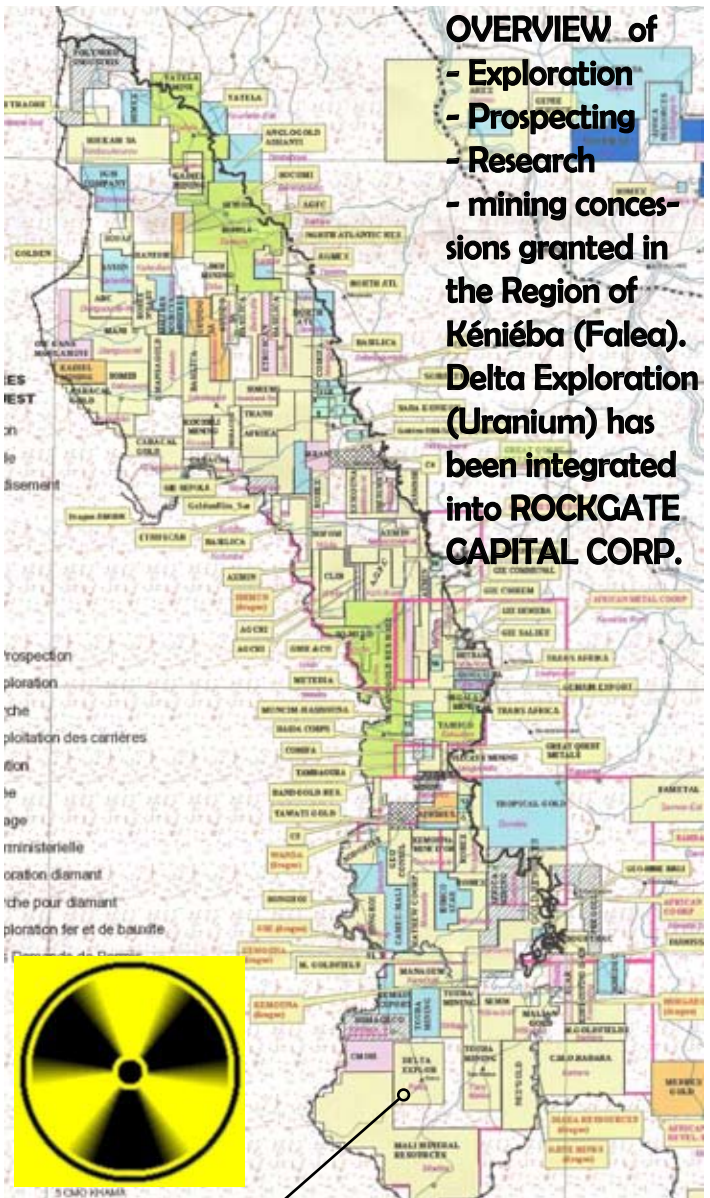


See table  
number 2



# FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA

The Berlin conference held in 1884/1885 drew the borders and organized the distribution of the African continent as we currently know it. Today **MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS** hold the rights to and collect the riches of Africa's arable land and resources, including the uranium of Falea which is to be exploited by **ROCKGATE CAPITAL CORPORATION**.

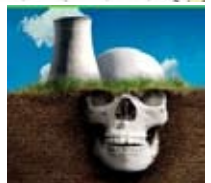


## Surfaces :

Falea	400 km <sup>2</sup>
Rockgate Cap Corp Uranium	150 km <sup>2</sup>
IAMGOLD Touba , Gold	300 km <sup>2</sup>
CAMEC Bauxite	88 km <sup>2</sup>

## Population

? km<sup>2</sup>





# FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA

About twenty years ago the French multinational COGEMA – today AREVA – discovered deposits of uranium, copper and bauxite in Falea. In 2007 the government of Mali concluded an agreement with the Canadian company Delta Exploration, now Rockgate Capital Corp, concerning the future exploitation of its primary resources. The conditions of the contract have not been made public.

Extract of the Falea mission report\*:

**Access to official documents proves to be very difficult. This means that obtaining geological and regional maps, as well as viewing the proposed plans and programs of infrastructure and road construction necessary for the transportation of minerals is facilitated for potential investors, but complicated and quite expensive for civilians.**

Neither the Council of the Wise nor the “modern” municipal council, in place since 1995, nor the population were officially informed or consulted. In 2008 an airstrip was built within 50 meters of the primary school.



Falea, airstrip  
Photo Rockgate

\*) Official ARACF Delegation made up of 12 persons May - June 2010

# FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA

In Mali about 60 exploration or exploitation licences are issued to foreign mining companies each year. In this race for the extraction of mineral resources encouraged by the Malian government, uranium and bauxite are the most sought after. The highest potential for uranium is in the community of Falea, endowed with extraordinary biodiversity and cultural richness.



Aerial Falea and airstrip  
Photo Rockgate

Traditionally, land in Mali belongs to no one. The «Maitre de la terre» «Chief of the soil» hands over the land to those cultivating it. Those who are digging a well or planting a tree on a piece of land granted to them by the “Maitre de la terre” are recognized by common law as the cultivators of the land upon which he generates value.

The traditional system is based on the ancient wisdom of refusing to allow land to become a commercial good or private property. Land is considered common to all and is not a commercial merchandise.



Boukari Keita, traditional  
village head Falea

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### **Land: a common and not a commercial good**

Short-term speculation has replaced traditional wisdom. The Malian government, influenced by the institutions inherited from its French colonial past, is selling the country's wealth and traditions. All land not protected by ownership titles is state-owned.

The mining code of Mali, adopted in 1999, gives the mining Ministry the right to issue mining permits for extracting fossil and mineral substances.

This new administrative body was put in place by the central authorities. Traditional institutions attempt to co-exist with modern law.

The mayor and his municipal council have been elected since 1999. Common law which did not recognize ownership titles has been replaced by costly and long procedures for accessing land: numerous public inquiries, permits to be obtained and mandatory waiting periods.

**« Behind the facade of a modern  
democracy a unilateral power  
rules over a population  
that is totally cut off from  
decisions concerning them. »**

Arlette Senn Borloz, Jurist and Anthropologist

# FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA

## Understanding a foreign culture.

### Cultivation methods



Slash and burn is the typical method of clearing the forested savanna. In accordance with the agricultural calendar the fields are prepared in this manner before the main rainy season,

Plants considered of no use are chopped down and burnt. Dried wood is gathered for home fires. Edible plants as well as those used in traditional medicine are collected. Land prepared in this manner is cultivated on average for 3 to 5 years before being allowed to rest, returning to fallow, at which point the farmers turn towards other land, rendering it arable for the next years' crops. This agricultural style - barring the presence of trunks from cut trees - makes use of annual bush fires to protect both the habitats and the people moving between villages against wild animals, snakes and the tse tse fly. These fires, set early in the year, do not impact in any negative way on the cover vegetation.

### The sacred



The Sacred Canari is a small clay jug doted with magic and power buried in the soil and gravel. The spout is above ground, open to the air. In this photograph the Canari is receiving a libation accompanied by a spoken evocation by Boukari Keita, the traditional village head of Falea. By this ritual he eases the hearts of the inhabitants, wipes out internal conflicts and the fires that breed them, calms the torrents of tension between neighbors and reaffirms and consolidates the unity and solidarity so desired by the ARACF mission (Association of Citizens and friends of the Municipality of Falea).



# FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA

The sacred... a heap of stones ?



«Kalaagana», the cemetery of the Dialonké heros of Faléa, is within the walls of the village. The tomb is a cairn of stones covering the skull bones of the manga - sovereign - Dali Daga Keita, the famous defender of the Fontofa (Falea in the Dialonké language) against the attacks of neighboring Foulawa (land of the Peulhs in Dialonké). Dali Daga Keita succeeded his father, Dali Sanga Keita, co-founder and first village head of Falea. The cemetery is now a religious site where ancestors may be invoked to protect the community from external aggression (raids, invasion) and its inhabitants from bedevilment. Prayers for good health and luck are also offered up here. These rituals are marked with oblations.

The «Gankhouran» dance ceremony celebrating the two worlds of the cosmos and universal reality as one and inseparable. The Falea community Gankhouran ceremony is



the most representative and popular celebration of the Mandingue culture of the circle (Malinké, Diakhonké and Dialonké).

useful and sacred ...



The small calabash filled with seeds from the peasant Sory Mané has two functions : it bears life and symbolizes fertility, reproduction and renewal.



# FALEA MALI

## WEST AFRICA



A village square and well in Falea

Since 2009, core soil samples are collected from 300 meter deep holes drilled every 200 meters and flown by an Antonov plane to a South African laboratory with the goal of establishing a map to facilitate the exploitation of the surface as well as the ground beneath it.



Once more: airstrip in Falea

Extract of the mission report to Falea:  
**The extension of the Falea airstrip by Rockgate was realized with the authorisation of the Ministry of Transportation and Equipment but without the permission of the Ministry of Environment, who according to Malian Law, would need to pass it as well...**

# FALEA MALI

## WEST AFRICA



Drilling machine for core drilling in Falea  
Photo Rockgate

Extract of the Falea mission report :

**The screening of a documentary « Uranium, the Poisoned Legacy », on the situation in Niger, after forty years of uranium mining. An unprecedented event for Falea, a village that knows neither the cinema, nor cell phones nor electricity. It provoked a heated debate and a wave of complaints**



An unsealed drilling hole doubles a watering hole  
for a cow in Falea

**from the population. An example of the numerous failures to guarantee safety: a farming family lost four pregnant cows grazing in the vicinity of an unsealed borehole. It is incomprehensible that the core drilling holes were neither fenced off nor sealed.**

# FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA

Extract of the Falea mission report :

**The delegation discovered that no borehole sites were secured according to international environmental norms. The ARACF has interpreted this behaviour as a conscious decision on the part of the mining companies to contaminate the land designated for future surface mining concessions as quickly as possible and thus impose the expulsion of the peasants from their land. How else can one explain these unprotected and unsealed boreholes ?**



An unprotected drilling hole from which groundwater is leaking



This land, an area of 150 square kilometers, will be dug out by gigantic excavators and transformed into powder in the crushing mill, whereupon the raw material will be extracted with groundwater and caustic poisons.



# FALEA MALI

## WEST AFRICA



The Falea countryside .... turned to dust ?

Millions of tons of  
powdery dust must be  
stored in such a way



An excavator in a mine in Niger



that the waste rock  
and low grade ore  
containing unex-  
ploited uranium  
content do not  
affect the environ-  
ment or leach into  
the ground water  
table – should there  
be any left after  
the intensive water  
use by the mining  
operation.

**« Instead of leaving the uranium ore sealed underground, entire regions are polluted and destroyed. At the heart of our *slow fuse bombs* - nuclear power plants - we transform uranium into electricity, leaving to our descendants their waste for millions of years. »** Michel SELOUI

# FALEA MALI

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Intensive uranium mining in Niger by AREVA and Rockgate uses up fossil water reserves which can never be replenished.



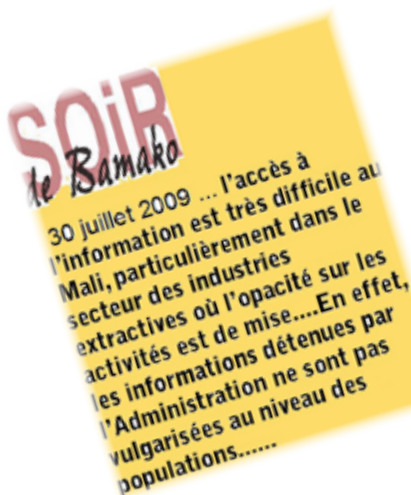
# FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA

## AVOID THE WORST

In Bamako the Association of Citizens and Friends of Falea – ARACF – fights for the rights of Falea's population. The association attempts to bring independent expertise and international attention to Falea; with partners such as the city of Geneva, the European Civic Forum, the CRIIRAD in France, and the OEKO Institute in Germany.

Translation of the newspaper clipping :

.... getting access to information in Mali is very difficult – even more so with regards to the mining industry where there is little, if any transparency on their activities ... information held by the government is not shared with the population.....



To obtain an exploitation permit, the Mali mining code requires companies to produce an environmental impact study – ESIA – containing the description of the project and an evaluation of the effects on people, nature and wildlife, soil, water, air, countryside and national resources.

Advice to ARACF from Gerhard Schmidt of the OEKO Institute ([www.oeko.de](http://www.oeko.de)) :

**« To reduce the devastating effects on the environment, the procedure for obtaining permits must require proof of independent and sufficient funding to cover the costs of rebuilding the land once the mine is shut down, as well as a plan and financing for the safe storage of the wastes produced by the mine for at least 200 years. »**



# FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA

## AVOID THE WORST



Baseline Study training with Bruno Chareyron (CRIIRAD)\*  
for ARACF

### Baseline study

Before beginning to mine uranium, a natural radioactivity map must be drawn up. The nuclear lobby would like us to believe that the occurrence of birth defects and cancers is a normal event due to the presence of large underground uranium deposits; that the millions of tons of highly radioactive soil unearthed by the mining operation is not a contributing factor.



Professor Many Camara (ARACF) in Falea, his hometown,  
training 12 inhabitants and noting grievances

\*) CRIIRAD: Independant Commission for research and information on radioactivity  
France

# FALEA MALI

## WEST AFRICA

### AVOID THE WORST

Extract of the Falea mission report :

« To put in place a detailed study of the impact area (10.2 km X 13.3 km), a major hurdle must be overcome: limited access of the local population to the land Rockgate is prospecting, in spite of Malian law which specifies that only the underground mineral rights have been ceded to the corporation, not overland rights. For example, the military has been brought in to expel farmers from their traditional lands bordering the Falea based Kondoya gold mine in deference to the mining company and thus outside the land specifically designated for mining ».



ARACF Mission in Falea May – June 2010

This study is sponsored by the city of Geneva with technical support supplied by the French Independent Nuclear Research and Information Center (CRIIRAD).

Geneva «the guardian city» of the Falea baseline study, keeps the data of the study in a sure and neutral place.

With the support of the City of Geneva Switzerland  
Avec le soutien de la Ville de Genève Suisse



# FALEA MALI

WEST AFRICA

## AVOID THE WORST

### Citizen expertise: An environmental and social impact study EIES

The Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) will be all the more convincing if it is conducted independently of the mining companies.

In April 2010 Rockgate Capital Corporation handed this job to Golder Associates, environmental experts and consultants with nearly 7000 employees based in over 150 offices worldwide.



Transmission of independant knowledge in Falea

The aim being notably to «*identify the sensitive issues in play - the keys that would affect the realization of this project.*» (Rockgate press release, 26, April 2010)

Is this a stroke of luck for Falea?

***Golder Associates: Corporate social responsibility  
...ethical business practices ...transparency in corporate  
operations and governance ....engagement and outreach  
to stakeholders affected by our operations and our projects  
....philanthropy to support important causes .... preserving  
Earth's Integrity...***

[www.golder.com](http://www.golder.com)



# FALEA MALI

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### AVOID THE WORST

If it is to determine and prepare citizen expertise within the time framework given, ARACF has, however, not received information concerning the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment schedule (ESIA). Officially, Mali's central government adheres to the «Environmental impact assessment and environmental audit capacity building in both public and private sectors» program set up by the International Resources Group (IRG - USAID).

The only reliable sources for the moment are statements published by Rockgate on its Internet site.

The ARACF strongly wishes greater access to government information.

**Enable the local radio  
to broadcast  
independent information  
for the inhabitants of Falea  
in their own dialect.**



In a Radio Kayira network studio - the voice of the voiceless

# **FALEA MALI**

## **WEST AFRICA**

### **AVOID THE WORST**

**Strengthening institutional actors  
such as AMARAP**

Extract of the mission report to Falea:

**Rockgate's refusal to cooperate with the local actors (the village elders and those designated by their peers to speak for them), as well as their threatening stance towards anyone who questions their activities, has led the ARACF (Citizens and Friends of the municipality of Falea) to seek the assistance of the Malian Agency for Radiation Protection - AMARAP.**

**This institution is empowered by law to demand and receive specific information concerning mining companies. AMARAP is authorized to spot check the exploration perimeter, and more specifically, take radioactivity measurements without prior notice to the mining company. AMARAP's powers extend to forcing Rockgate to cease all offending practices immediately. With the goal of strengthening this major institutional actor in Mali, ARACF has established a partnership with AMARAP.**



The airport runway in the village of Falea

# **FALEA MALI WEST AFRICA**

## **AN INTERNATIONAL SURVEILLANCE NETWORK CAN HELP TO PREVENT THE WORST**

**Find correspondents in solidarity  
with the Falea community in approximately  
fifty regions throughout the world.  
Create a solidarity network of villages  
and cities, such as Geneva.**

### **This will permit:**

- placing limits on Rockgate Capital Corporation, imposing true and exemplary transparency and obliging it to provide complete information to the population;
- gathering enough funds to finalize the baseline study ;
- financing an outside study and citizen's expertise in collaboration with OEKOINSTITUT in Darmstadt (Germany);
- creating a show of strength and information that will give the Falea population the guarantee that the exploitation of their local resources will respect international ecological criteria;
- healthy and sustainable treatment of waste throughout the mine excavation period;
- a rapid installation of a local radio to inform inhabitants in their own dialect;
- providing the state-based Association of Radio protection of Mali AMARAP with further means. According to current law AMARAP has exceptional rights to interfere.



# TO AVOID THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FALEA COMMUNITY A MULTIDISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY ANTENNA SUPPORTED BY NUMEROUS UNIVERSITIES IS TO BE CREATED

This Falea-based university antenna will welcome students, post-doctoral researchers and graduates to spend a few weeks to a few months as guests of Falea to help analyze and study the changes occurring geologically, geographically, ecologically, ethnologically, economically, sociologically, culturally and historically.

Grants for students and a minimal satellite communication infrastructure will connect Falea to the world and give interns, students and doc-



toral candidates the means to effectively study on site and to put into place an exemplary code of conduct for mining corporations to exploit raw materials in a manner that respects the local inhabitants, democratic procedures, local autonomy and the interests of the country.

## CONTACT

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