



Africa Corps: Russian cluster munitions found in Malian village despite national ban

Description

default watermark

Africa Corps

Russian [cluster munitions](#) have been found in a Malian village. Mali is a signatory to the cluster bomb convention, though Russia is not. Russia's mercenary group Africa Corps is currently operating in the west African state where a civil war is taking place.

Investigative group *Bellingcat* [identified](#) the munitions in a 26 May report:

Unexploded Russian-made cluster munition bomblets, as well as damage consistent with bomblet impacts, have been found in a village in northern Mali — despite the West African country being a state party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) which prohibits their use.

Radio France International first [reported](#) the story, but *Bellingcat* sought to verify further through social media analysis:

social media footage posted on May 17, and since analysed by Bellingcat and our publishing partner, Jeune Afrique, shows unexploded Russian manufactured ShOAB-0.5 submunitions (bomblets).

Africa Corps — Wagner 2.0 on the ground

Russia's paramilitary group Africa Corps, which replaced the Wagner Group, is operating with the Malian government.

The outlet [said](#)

The footage geolocated by Bellingcat shows the unexploded submunitions near buildings, alongside multiple small craters, consistent with submunition explosions.

The buildings and landmarks visible in the footage allowed us to geolocate where it was taken.

The Arms Control Association (ACA) [says](#)

Cluster munitions, also called cluster bombs or CBUs, are gravity bombs, artillery shells, and rockets that fragment into small bomblets or grenades.

According to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, "Cluster munition" means a conventional munition that is designed to disperse or release explosive submunitions each weighing less than 200 grams, and includes those explosive submunitions.

Russia has also been [accused](#) of using cluster munitions in Ukraine. Israel has [used](#) them in Lebanon. Russia is not a signatory to the cluster munition ban, but it is a signatory.

The bombs are dropped by Russian-made aircraft. Mali has had no such aircraft in service since 2023. [However](#)

An Su-24M model has since appeared in satellite imagery captured at Modibo Keita International Airport in Bamako. The imagery was first published by France 24 in April 2025, although it was unclear if this aircraft was, or has been, operated by Africa Corps or Malian forces.

Human rights lawyer Brian Finucane [told](#) *Bellingcat* that Mali is:

subject to its prohibitions and requirements. These include not only prohibitions on the use of cluster munitions, but also obligations to clear and destroy such munitions on its territory.

Russia's private military are clearly deeply embedded in Mali's civil war. There is more than an echo of [the UAE's role in Sudan](#) on the other side of the continent and a sense of a new foreign carve-up of Africa. And once again, the ultimate losers will be Africans.

Featured image via [the Africa Report](#)

By [Joe Glenton](#)

[Source link](#)

CATEGORY

1. News

Category

1. News

default watermark