

Be Honest Be Brave

UNSC

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BACKGROUND GUIDE

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AGENDA

Reviewing the Rise of Communal Terrorism with Special Emphasis on Sahel Region

Letter from the executive board

Greetings, Delegates!

In today's era, where days are marked by raging fires in the history of human rights and national security is threatened every second, where youth has become the unstoppable leader and global citizens can no longer be kept in the dark, we must realize the utmost importance of protecting the rights of each and every individual of the globe; and this is what we aim at achieving through this UNSC simulation.

We want all of you to understand that in the capacity of the Executive Board, we neither wish to intimidate or dominate. This is as much of a learning experience to us as it is to you. Thus, we advise you to not bring any preconceived notions of omniscience about us in the committee room. We will make mistakes as will you. We aim to learn, teach, and create a safe space where each one of us can learn without fear of judgement. This is the true spirit of Model UN- learning without judgement.

We do not expect you to know everything. We expect you to come well-prepared. We expect you to come well-prepared. We do not expect you to pretend we live in a utopian world; we

expect realism. The spirit of compromise and mutual agreement is welcome and accepted, but in the real world, it is always secondary to national interests and your actions should be such that they tend towards compromise but always remain within the horizon of your political and diplomatic leanings. All in all, we expect real world diplomacy condensed and mirrored in the committee room. Focus on the solutions you can conceive within the constraints of your diplomatic policy. Make sure that the same is reflected in your speeches. For this, research is essential. Most importantly, remember that real world problems require real world solutions.

Please consider that this background guide serves only as an introduction to the diverse and wide-spanning agenda that awaits your research; it is meant to serve solely and only as a directing document and is not sufficient in itself to supplement committee discussions. The idea is to direct, not dictate. Our style of moderation will be such that we will only be mute listeners unless interference is absolutely needed. Thus, we intend to leave the flow of debate solely in your hands. We will always maintain verbatim and our marking criteria will be released in the beginning to ensure transparency. Please ensure that you are well-versed with the Rules of Procedure. While we will not be extremely strict with the same, we do expect a certain degree of understanding of committee proceedings. Each one of us brings a different point of view



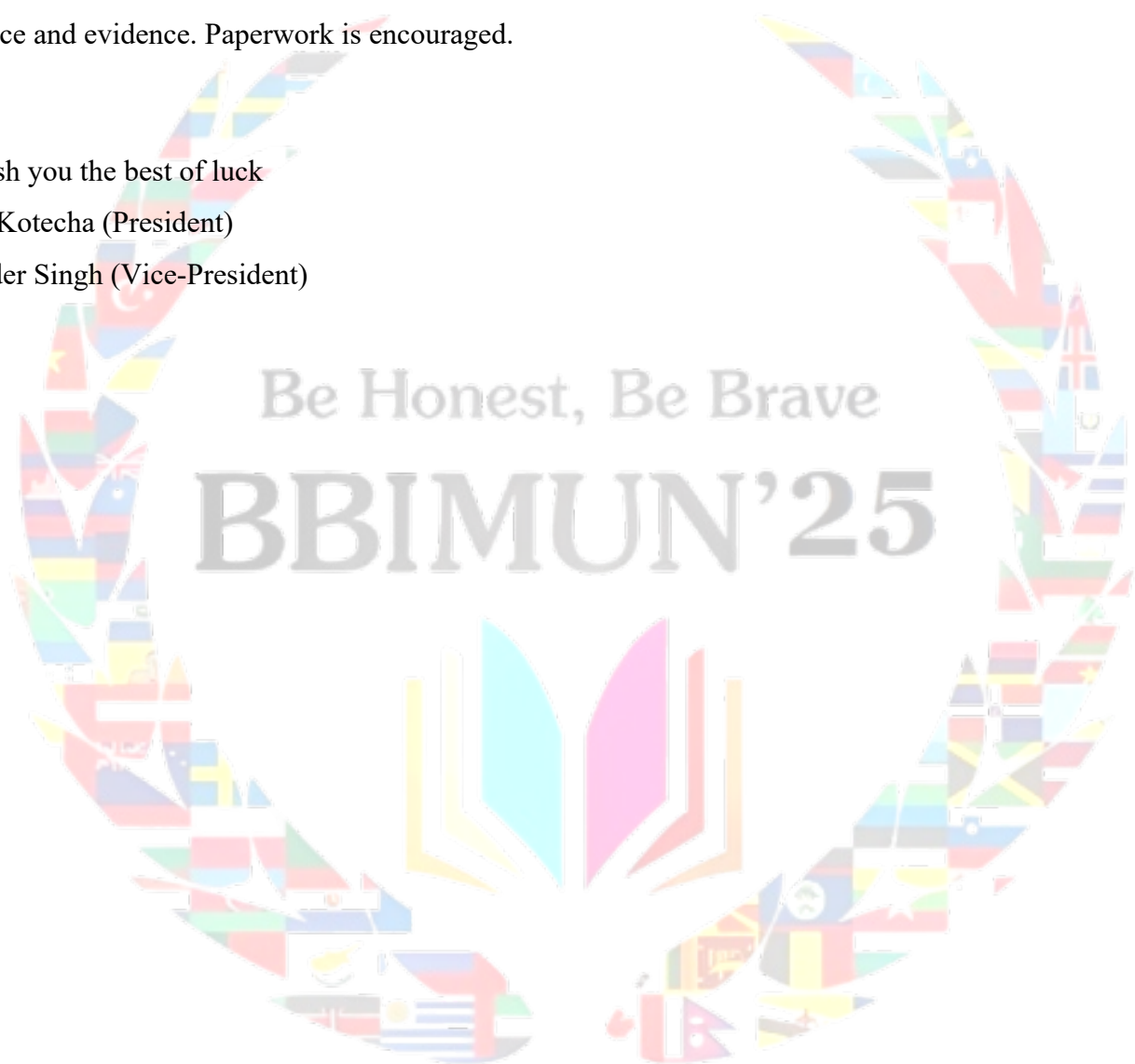
to the committee room but our aim is to moderate without bias and with neutrality. However, we will be more than happy to engage in intellectual discussions with the delegates on a more candid, opinion-centric, and informal note if we are not bound by time constraints. This will ensure a wider and more holistic learning experience for you at MUN. Rest assured that digression from our personal political opinion will not result in disadvantages of any sort to you.

The Executive Board has endeavoured to make this guide as delegate-friendly as possible. Please note that only Reuters, Al Jazeera, and official UN reports will be accepted by the Executive Board for reference and evidence. Paperwork is encouraged.

We wish you the best of luck

Aman Kotecha (President)

Baljinder Singh (Vice-President)



ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The Charter of the UN is the UN's governing document. It came into force on 24 October 1945 and established six principal organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the UN Secretariat.

The main chapters pertaining to the Security Council are Chapters V, VI, VII and VIII. Chapter V deals with its composition (Article 23), functions and powers (Articles 24-26), voting (Article 27) and procedure (Articles 28-32). Chapter VI addresses Security Council action for the pacific settlement of disputes (Articles 33-38), while Chapter VII covers Security Council action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression (Articles 39-51). Chapter VIII addresses Security Council interaction with regional arrangements or agencies (Articles 52-54).

Composition of the Security Council

The Security Council consists of 15 members:

- five permanent members (the People's Republic of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States); and
- ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for a two-year, non-renewable term (Article 23).

(For details on how members are elected, refer to the General Assembly section in Part IV.)

The Mandate of the Security Council

The core mandate of the Security Council, contained in Article 24 (1) of the UN Charter, gives it "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security".

The Charter envisages several means for the Council to fulfil this mandate:

- calling upon parties to settle their dispute by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means (Article 33);
- investigating any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute (Article 34);
- recommending appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment (Article 36);
- recommending such terms of settlement as it may consider appropriate (Article 37);
- making recommendations to parties with a view to a pacific settlement of the dispute (Article 38);



- determining the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and making recommendations to maintain or restore international peace and security (Article 39);
- calling upon the parties concerned to comply with such provisional measures as it deems necessary or desirable (Article 40);
- deciding what measures not involving the use of force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions and calling upon UN member states to apply such measures (Article 41);
- taking such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security (Article 42);
- negotiating and concluding special agreement(s) for armed forces, assistance and facilities with UN member states (Article 43);
- making plans for the application of armed force with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee (Article 46);
- encouraging the development of pacific settlement of local disputes
 - through regional arrangements or agencies (Article 52);
- utilising such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority (Article 53); and
- formulating plans for a system for the regulation of armaments (Article 26). The Council is aided in fulfilling its Charter obligations through:
- establishing such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions (Article 29); and
- adopting its own rules of procedure (Article 30).

Under the UN Charter, UN member states confer primary responsibility for international peace and security on the Council and “agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf” (Article 24 [1]). They also “agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter” (Article 25). In other words, the Security Council acts on behalf of the entire UN and has the authority to bind all members of the organisation.

The Charter also stresses that “in discharging these duties the Security Council shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations” (Article 24 [2]), thus conditioning the powers of the Council.

The Powers of the Security Council: Chapter VI, VII and VIII



1. The Charter establishes three sets of powers for the Security Council:
 - adjustment or settlement powers (Chapter VI);
 - enforcement powers (Chapter VII); and
 - regional arrangement powers (Chapter VIII).

Although separated into distinct chapters, in practice the provisions in these chapters are procedurally inter-connected. At times, the Council moves from one to the other(s) or employs more than one at the same time: it need not specify under which article of the Charter it is taking a decision. The Council has at times explicitly invoked a chapter (or article) but has also done so implicitly or altogether ambiguously. Different chapters are also applied in a single decision.

How Are Issues Brought to the Attention of the Security Council?

The Charter provides multiple channels for bringing a matter to the Security Council:
Parties to a Dispute

- Article 33 (1): This article places the primary responsibility for peaceful settlement of disputes with the parties to the dispute. After exhausting Article 33 (1) procedures, parties may bring the dispute to the Council.
- Article 94 (2): According to this article, if a party fails to perform the obligations upon it under a judgement rendered by the ICJ, the other party may have recourse to the Council.

Member States

- Article 35: This article allows member states, not just parties to the dispute and members of the Council, to seize the Council. It also provides an alternative route to Article 33 (1). It is

the most frequently used avenue to seize the Security Council of a dispute or situation that is, or is likely to, endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. It was first invoked by Iran on the Iranian Question through its letter to the Security Council of 18 March 1946. Letters requesting a meeting of the Council to address the situation in Sierra Leone is a typical example of the use of Article 35.

The General Assembly

- Article 11 (3): This article allows the General Assembly to call the Council’s attention to “situations which are likely to endanger inter- national peace and security.” However, Article

12 (1) states that on disputes or situations that the Council is seized of, the General Assembly should not “make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests.”

The Secretary-General

- Article 99: According to this article, the “Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.”

Chapter VI: Settlement and Arrangement Powers

Chapter VI powers are largely related to recommendations for adjustment or settlement of a dispute or situation that in principle does not yet pose a threat to international peace and security. It deals largely with non-coercive measures aimed at peaceful settlement.

Settling a Dispute by Peaceful Means: Article 33

- Article 33 (2): The Security Council can call upon the parties to a dispute to first settle their dispute through “negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement,

resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means”. This article provides the option for the Council to recommend that the parties abide by their obligations under the Charter and refers responsibility for the settlement of the dispute back to them. Over the years, the Council has implicitly referenced Article 33 many times in its decisions. Explicit

references are rare but can be found in early resolutions: resolution 144 (1960) on the Complaint by Cuba; resolution 211 (1965) on the India-Pakistan Question; and resolutions 377 (1975) and 380 (1975) on the situation in Western Sahara.

Implicit references include recommendations to parties to resolve their differences through various means. For example, on the day of the Iraqi aggression in 1991, the Council called on Iraq and Kuwait to begin immediate negotiations. Resolution 502 adopted on 3 April

1982 urged Argentina and the UK to strive for a “diplomatic solution” to their conflict concerning the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. The Council may also call upon parties to an agreement to abide by the arrangements for a cessation of hostilities, as it did in resolution 2432 adopted on 30 August 2018 on the situation in Mali.

Investigating a Dispute: Article 34

- Article 34: The Security Council can investigate any dispute, or any situation that might endanger international peace and security. This has led it to establish fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry.

Recommending Specific Means to Settle a Dispute: Article 36

- Article 36 (1): The Security Council can recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment taking into account any procedures for the settlement of the dispute which have already been adopted by the parties under Article 33.
- Article 36 (3): The Security Council may refer a legal dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). This has rarely been used. The only example of the Council recommending two parties to settle their dispute before the Court was the Corfu Channel incident. On 22 October 1946 two British destroyers struck mines in the Corfu Channel off the Albanian coast. The UK charged that Albania had unjustifiably laid the mines and submitted the dispute to the Security Council. On 9 April 1947, having failed to resolve the issue, the Council in resolution 22 recommended that the dispute be referred to the ICJ. The Court eventually ruled that the UK had the right of innocent passage.

Making a Recommendation when Parties Fail to Agree: Article 37

- Article 37 (2): In a situation where the parties to a dispute have been unable to settle their differences by the means recommended in Articles 33 and 36, they shall refer it to the Council. At this point the Council may intervene by taking action under Article 36 or recommending terms of settlement it considers appropriate.
- Article 38: If requested by all the parties to a dispute, the Security Council may make recommendations to the parties with a view to a pacific settlement of the dispute. Article 38 has never been used.

Chapter VII: Enforcement Powers

The Egyptian Question On 8 July 1947, Egypt wrote to the Council stating that British troops were being maintained on Egyptian territory contrary to the principle of sovereign equality of UN member states. The

letter also indicated that a dispute had arisen between the two countries and attempts at reaching a settlement in conformity with Article 33 had failed. It therefore said that it was bringing this dispute before the Council in conformity with Articles 35 and 37 of the Charter.

Chapter VII powers are recommendations or decisions for the enforcement of an adjustment or settlement of a dispute that threatens international peace and security. The Security Council can decide to act under Chapter VII, Article 39, if it determines the existence of a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, to make non-binding recommendations or binding decisions on measures to be taken. Once the Council has made a determination under Article 39, it may: call upon the parties to abide by such provisional measures as it deems necessary (Article 40);

TERRORISM

Terrorism is commonly understood to refer to acts of violence that target civilians in the pursuit of political or ideological aims. In legal terms, although the international community has yet to adopt a comprehensive definition of terrorism, existing declarations, resolutions and universal “sectoral” treaties relating to specific aspects of it define certain acts and core elements. In 1994, the General Assembly’s Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, set out in its resolution 49/60, stated that terrorism includes “criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes” and that such acts “are in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them.” the Security Council, in its resolution 1566 (2004), referred to “criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act”.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND TERRORISM

A recurring feature of discussions, debates and political sensitivities regarding terrorism during the post-1945 United Nations era have related to issues of terror-violence by so-called “liberation fighters” claiming to be utilizing “direct action” to pursue their right to the self-determination of peoples, as they argued is provided for in the United Nations Charter (Treaty Series, vol. 1, no. XVI), articles 1(2) and 55 (see also 1941 Atlantic Charter). The Charter contextualizes the Organization’s obligation to “develop friendly relations” among nations (not “States”) based on the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of “peoples”. Difficulties with and controversies regarding the practical operation of equal rights and self-determination soon arose, including where national liberation agendas stretched far beyond the narrow confines of the League of Nations mandate



system and the protection of minorities. As a consequence, conflicting interpretations of relevant Charter principles and provisions surrounding self-determination quickly arose and have remained ever since.

In terms of the use of violence and force by terrorists, this also ranges across a wide spectrum, from individuals with military training and experience, to what Whittaker has termed “throw away” operatives, who are effectively sent untrained on suicide missions. Their use of violence also illustrates the slow evolution of terrorist tactics and strategies, including traditional assassination, bombings, arson, hostage-taking, hijacking, kidnapping, sabotage, the perpetration of hoaxes and suicide bombings, to name but a few (see, for example, Global Terrorism Index 2017). More recent tactics can include unconventional forms of terrorism, including nuclear terrorism (for example, fabricating a dirty bomb, attacking a nuclear reactor, etc.), high-tech terrorism involving cyberattacks, ecological terrorism (for instance, the threat of destruction to the environment) and terrorist attacks aiming at destroying cultural heritage, as perpetrated by ISIL.

UNITED NATIONS DESIGNATED TERRORIST GROUPS AND TARGETED SANCTIONS

There are two primary non-State groups, namely the Taliban and Al-Qaida, which have been designated “terrorist” organizations by the Security Council. In 1999, following the refusal of the Taliban to surrender Osama Bin Laden and his associates for their roles in the August 1988 attacks on United States Embassies in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, under its resolution 1267 (1999) the Security Council designated as terrorist groups the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, through targeted travel and arms embargos, and financial/ assets sanctions. In 2011, under Security Council resolution 1989 (2011), the Council divided the so-called “Consolidated List” of individuals and entities associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida into two separate lists: the “Al-Qaida, or 1988 List”, and the Taliban List, which contains those individuals and entities associated with the Taliban who are deemed to present an ongoing threat to the peace and security of Afghanistan. Finally, under Security Council resolution 2253 (2015), the Al-Qaida List was further extended to include ISIL and Al Nusrah Front (ANF). In countering the financing of terrorism, States are obliged under Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), operative para. 1(c), to freeze, without delay, funds, other financial assets or economic resources of persons who commit, or attempt to commit, terrorist acts or participate in or facilitate the commission of terrorist acts; or of entities they own, control or direct, as well as of persons and entities acting on their behalf or direction, and to prohibit their nationals or any persons and entities within their territories from making any funds, financial assets or economic resources or financial or other

related services available, directly or indirectly, for the benefit of persons who commit or attempt to commit or facilitate or participate in the commission of terrorist acts (operative para. 1(d)). As a result, many States have in place, at a national level, legal and institutional frameworks for the designation of individuals or



groups their governments consider to be terrorists, that are on the United Nations list, or are designated for national or multilateral (e.g., European Union) purposes. The use of such designation mechanisms potentially raises a number of implementation challenges for States, and rights-based concerns.

COMMUNAL/RELIGIOUS TERRORISM

Terrorism in the name of religion has become the predominant model for political violence in the modern world. This is not to suggest that it is the only model because nationalism and ideology remain as potent catalysts for extremist behaviour. However, religious extremism has become a central issue for the global community. In the modern era, religious terrorism has increased in its frequency, scale of violence, and global reach. At the same time, a relative decline has occurred in secular terrorism. The old ideologies of class conflict, anticolonial liberation, and secular nationalism have been challenged by a new and vigorous infusion of sectarian ideologies. Grassroots extremist support for religious violence has been most widespread among populations living in repressive societies that do not permit demands for reform or other expressions of dissent.

MODERN ARAB ISLAMIST EXTREMISM

The Arab world passed through several important political phases during the 20th century. Overlordship by the Ottoman Empire ended in 1918 after World War I. It was followed by European domination, which ended in the aftermath of World War II. New Arab and North African states were initially ruled primarily by monarchs or civilians who were always authoritarian and frequently despotic. A series of military coups and other political upheavals led to the modern era of governance. These phases had a significant influence on activism among Arab nationalists and intellectuals, culminating in the late 1940s, when the chief symbol of Western encroachment became the state of Israel. Post-war activism in the Arab Muslim world likewise progressed through several intellectual phases, most of them secular expressions of nationalism and socialism. The secular phases included the following:

- Anticolonial nationalism, during which Arab nationalists resisted the presence of European administrators and armed forces
- Pan-Arab nationalism (Nasserism), led by Egyptian president Gamel AbdelNasser, which advocated the creation of a single dynamic United Arab Republic
- Secular leftist radicalism, which activists often adopted to promote Marxist or other socialist principles of governance, sometimes in opposition to their own governments



CASE: MYSTICISM AND REBELLION IN UGANDA

Uganda in 1987 was a hotbed of rebellion, with several rebel groups opposing the new government of President Yoweri Museveni. One such group was the Holy Spirit Mobile Force, inspired and led by the mystical Alice Auma Lakwena. Lakwena claimed to be possessed by a spirit called Lakwena and preached that her movement would defeat Museveni's forces and purge Uganda of witchcraft and superstition. Because her followers championed the Acholi tribe, the Holy Spirit Mobile Force attracted thousands of followers, many of whom were former soldiers from previous Ugandan government armies. In late 1987, she led thousands of her followers against Museveni's army. To protect themselves from death, Holy Spirit Mobile Force fighters anointed themselves with holy oil, which they believed would ward off bullets. When they met Museveni's forces, thousands of Lakwena's followers were slaughtered in the face of automatic weapons and artillery fire. Alice Lakwena fled the country to Kenya, where she lived until her death in January 2007.

Josef Kony, either a cousin or nephew of Alice Lakwena, reorganized the Holy Spirit Mobile Force into the Lord's Resistance Army. Kony blended Christianity, Islam, and witchcraft into a bizarre mystical foundation for his movement. Kony proclaimed to his followers that he would overthrow the government, purify the Acholi people, and seize power and reign in accordance with the principles of the biblical Ten Commandments. From its inception, the Lord's Resistance Army was exceptionally brutal and waged near-genocidal terrorist campaigns—largely against the Acholi people it claimed to champion. The movement destroyed villages and towns, killed thousands of people, drove hundreds of thousands more from the land, abducted thousands of children, and routinely committed acts of mass rape and

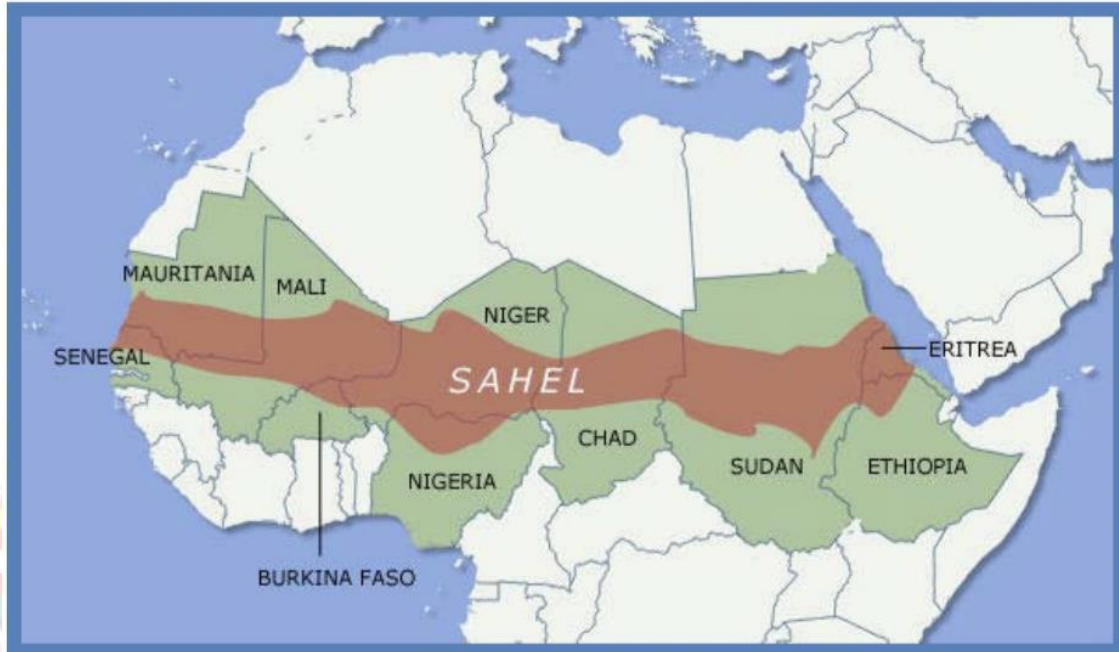
banditry. With bases in southern Sudan, the Lord's Resistance Army proved extremely difficult for the Ugandan government to defeat in the field. An estimated 30,000 children became kidnap victims, and 1.6 million Ugandans were displaced into refugee camps. These camps became regular targets of the Lord's Resistance Army, which raided them for supplies, to terrorize the refugees, and to kidnap children. Among the kidnapped children, boys were forced to become soldiers and girls became sex slaves known as bush wives. There has been some hope of ending the conflict. In 2005, a top Lord's Resistance Army commander surrendered, the government claimed a temporary cease-fire, and Sudan began to stabilize its border with Uganda after its own southern civil war ended. Unfortunately, the Lord's Resistance Army continued its pattern of violence and abductions, and in 2008 and 2009, the group conducted destructive raids into the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo.



SAHEL GEOPOLITICS

Sahel is a region which crosses Africa from East to West. South of the Maghreb, it includes countries such as Senegal and Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Chad, Southern Sudan and Northern Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

MAP 1: Sahel–Geography



This is a particularly wide area inhabited by different peoples and cultures, making it rather difficult to analyse. There are common features, such as: instability in political borders,

significant increase in violence and the fact that national governments seem unable to control the activities of organized crime - either because they are unstable, corrupt or because they are badly prepared to fight terrorism in terms of logistics.

The Berlin Conference (1884/85) was a historical milestone in this context because it created a border issue in Africa. The powers which participated in the conference (13 from Europe, plus the USA and Turkey) focused on negotiating a peaceful agreement for the balance of powers at the time. However, it did not take into consideration the political and social reality of each area, leading to nations being separated and rival peoples being united, regardless of the consequences and long-term impact of these decisions, besides the fact that it led to mass exploitation of the peoples living in those areas. Sahel was mainly ruled by Great-Britain (Nigeria, Southern Sudan and Northern Sudan) and France (Mauritania, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad). Italy rather influenced the eastern part of the territory (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia).

At the end of World War II, Great-Britain, France and Italy were half destroyed and no longer could keep their economic and military power over Sahel. Ethiopia participated in the Bandung Conference in 1955. It wasn't long before the several countries became independent, especially during the 1960s. The Non-Aligned Movement developed and held regular meetings. Curiously, a certain consensus was reached to maintain the borders established during the colonial period and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was a great supporter of this strategic decision. The new independent States seem to have concentrated their efforts in terms of military and administrative control in the capital cities and left the rest of country in the lurch. This leads to huge migration movements and exodus of people from rural areas, particularly evident in dry and semi-dry regions near the Sahara desert because of the low level of fertility and lack of population .

Sahel includes dry and semi-dry regions in the confluence of the Sahara desert. It has gone through regular dry periods, which conditions territories with low agricultural capacity and which have little food for cattle, where peoples' economic activity is pastoralism. This means that the populations' activities are in the primary sector but under precarious conditions; unemployment rates are high and people live in an area in which the population is very sparse (Chad has an average of seven inhabitants per Km² and Mauritania two; in the ten countries the average is 32 inhabitants per Km²). Therefore, the region includes wide spaces with

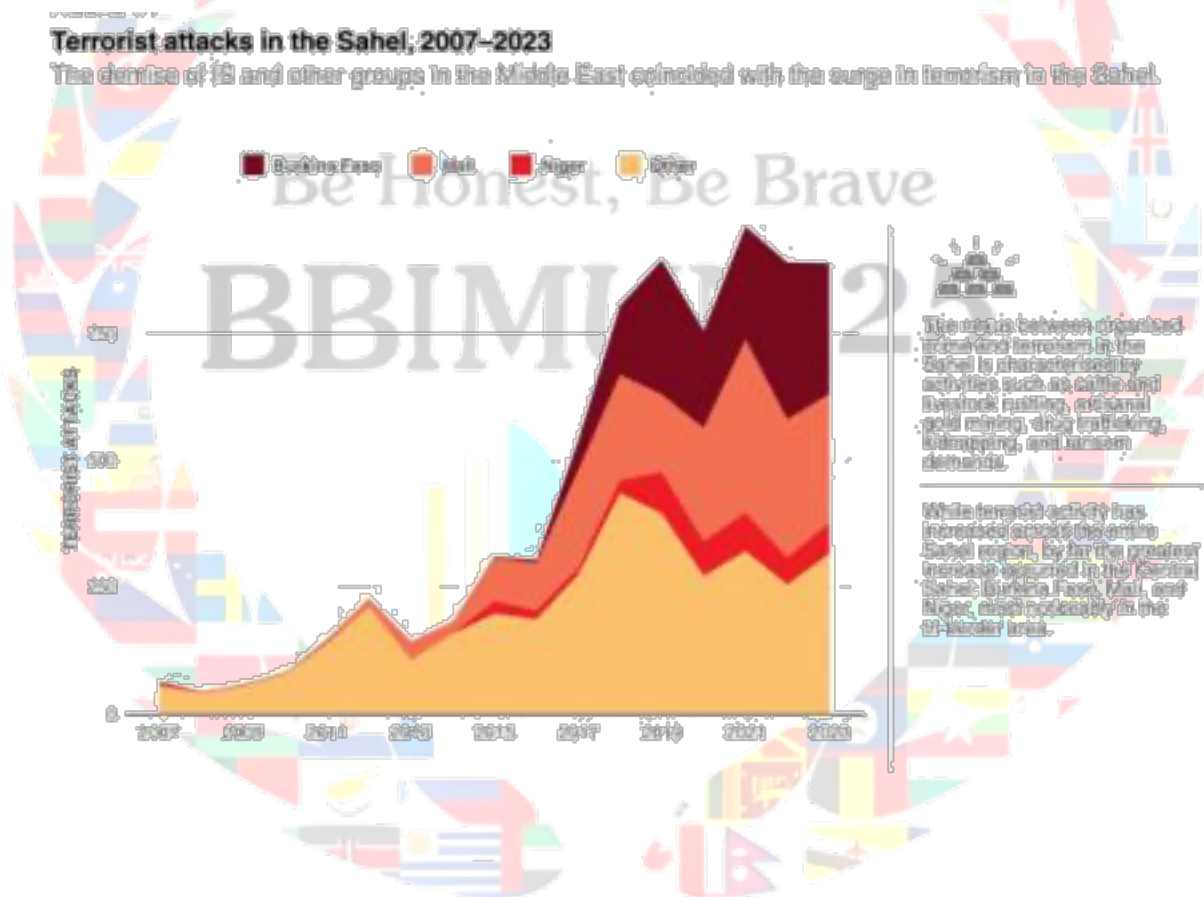
sparse population, where it is possible to circulate without much state supervision, providing an opportunity for terrorism and international networks of organized crime. The highest numbers are found in Nigeria and Sudan, but still there are not high; they are due to the high revenue of the oil sector, which is badly distributed among the population. On the other hand, these States are at the top (especially Chad and Sudan) of the Failed States Index for the African Peace Facility (2012). Bad governance and corruption prevent economic development and, consequently, the implementation of measures to efficiently fight terrorism.

TERRORISM AND ORGANISED CRIME IN THE SAHEL

The strength of the link between terrorist group activity and organised crime varies from region to region. The connection is strongest in sub-Saharan Africa, most notably in the Sahel region, where almost every aspect of organised crime is strongly correlated with terrorism. The Sahel is also a region where the countries with the biggest deteriorations in Positive Peace have seen the largest increase in the impact of terrorism, as terrorist groups compete for influence in areas where the state has little or no control. This increase in terrorist activity means that the Sahel is now the site of almost half of all deaths from terrorism globally. Violence tends to be more intense in areas where different groups – including the state, non-state actors, rebels, and



extremists – compete for control. In contrast, areas where one group has established control usually experience less competition and, as a result, might see less visible violence. However, these areas can still have a lot of illegal economic activities and exploitation by the dominant group. This situation is clearly seen with JNIM in the Sahel. They use violence in various ways, escalating attacks when they are expanding or competing with other extremist groups, the state, or pro-government militias. In areas where they have more control, violence tends to decrease as part of a strategy to gain popular support. This approach is believed to be associated with Al Qaeda and its affiliated groups, which have evolved since Osama Bin Laden's leadership. Al Qaeda's affiliated groups in South Asia and Somalia, for example, align with the global ideology of Al Qaeda but mainly focus on local conflicts and communities. In areas of Central Mopti in Mali where JNIM has entrenched its influence, livestock theft is significantly lower than neighbouring districts where multiple armed actors are also active and in competition for territory.



TYPE OF ILLICIT ACTIVITIES

While terrorist groups are involved in a wide range of illicit economic activity, from human trafficking to poaching to illegal logging, there are four key areas in which they play the biggest role in the Central Sahel:

- Cattle and livestock rustling
- Artisanal gold mining
- Drug trafficking
- Kidnapping and ransoms.

Most of the time, terrorist groups in the Central Sahel don't directly extract, trade, or smuggle illegal goods themselves. Instead, they control the areas where these illegal activities happen and collect taxes from them. These illegal economies have often existed for a long time in places with weak governance. Both state and non-state groups have benefited from, and even coordinated, these activities.

Gold Mining - Many forms of conflict, including terrorism, have been strongly linked to artisanal gold mining and smuggling in the Central Sahel ever since the discovery in 2012 of

a rich vein of gold spanning much of the Sahel. The rapid expansion of gold mining operations following this discovery has led to strong competition to control these operations. In Burkina Faso alone, artisanal gold mining produces up to 20 tonnes of gold per year,⁹ with an estimated annual value of up to 1.5 billion dollars. Even controlling a small percentage of these operations would greatly expand the resources available to armed extremist groups.¹⁰ Controlling the territory in which gold mining occurs also allows these groups to have much greater influence over the local population.¹¹ As a result of the strategic importance of this territory, there has been a large increase in attacks against gold mining operations in the past three years.

Cattle Rustling - Pastoralism is a key part of life and the local economy in the Central Sahel region. Cattle are a highly valuable commodity in many areas of the Sahel with consistently high prices per head of cattle.¹⁶ Different groups have been involved in cattle grazing and trade for a long time, but this has also led to conflicts and crime. Cattle rustling and livestock theft are common illegal activities in the Sahel as they are in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and often linked to long-standing disputes between various

ethnic groups. Semi-nomadic pastoral groups frequently have conflicts with farming communities over land and resources.

Drug Trafficking - Drug trafficking is one of the most financially lucrative illicit activities in which terrorist groups participate. Terrorist groups are more likely to engage in drug trafficking when they operate in areas with historically active networks for drug production or transit. Terrorist groups are also more likely to engage in drug trafficking where they hold territory and are thus more capable of delivering security to traffickers.

Kidnapping And Ransom - Groups in the Sahel have generated significant revenue from kidnapping and ransom in the past two decades. Al Qaeda in the Greater Sahara, the forerunner to JNIM, financed much of its operations through kidnapping and ransoming foreign nationals in Mali and Algeria. The activity is now at the core of the economic operations of JNIM, with civilians who have some role in business or politics across Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger being the most common targets. It is estimated that kidnappings and ransoms accounted for 40 per cent of JNIM's annual revenue in 2017. Kidnapping is also

used for strategic purposes with individuals taken for political purposes and to gain strategic advantages or intelligence.

BOKO HARAM: A NEW THREAT IN WEST AFRICA

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Boko Haram is the most active terrorist group in Nigeria. The jihadist organisation threatens not only the stability of Africa's largest oil producer, but also the political, economic and security interests in Africa (Pham, 2012). Recent events seem to indicate that the group is expanding its activities into Niger, and may be active in Cameroon and Mali. Poor social and economic conditions in the north, weak state control and heavy handed security measures have enabled Boko Haram to flourish, recruit and built its support base. But an additional factor behind its rise has been its increasing interconnectedness to foreign terrorist organisations like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The rise of Boko Haram illustrates how local radical Islamist groups, once internationally networked, can rapidly transform into a major threat in regions where governance is weak. These dynamics demand to be analysed if West African nations are to counter this new threat to regional security, stability and development. Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen and most recently Mali, illustrates how radical Islamist organisations combine terrorism with social justice narratives to challenge and erode the authority of the state. Boko Haram originated as an Islamist sect founded in 2002 by a self-professed scholar, Mohammed Yusuf, in Maiduguri, Borno state. The group calls itself Jama'atu



Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad, which roughly translates as “People Committed to the Prophet’s Teachings for Propagation and Jihad”. In the local Hausa dialect, Boko Haram means “Western education is prohibited”.

CAUSES AND DRIVERS OF THE INSURGENCY

Boko Haram’s message has resonated with a small number of Muslims in northern Nigeria. A mixture of social, economic and historical factors preceded its emergence (those often cited include socio-economic grievances, such as income inequality, and political marginalisation). Others believe corruption, inadequate public services, a mistrust of the security forces, and a

sense of alienation from the central government contributed to an environment conducive to terrorist radicalisation and recruitment. Although there is not enough evidence to say there is a direct correlation between the economic disequilibrium in Nigeria and the rise of Boko Haram, there appears to be a causal link between the two. There is little hard evidence that Boko Haram – like other Islamist militant groups – pay its members a wage. But some Nigerians interviewed said the group pays fighters around NGN 40 000, nearly double the average monthly salary. If true, financial rather than ideological motivations may further explain the group’s attractiveness to impoverished individuals in the country’s Muslim heartland. A lack of economic prosperity and development seems to have contributed to Nigeria’s national security issues. The lack of state control and the development of cross-border arms, drugs and contraband trafficking are other causal parameters, although not much is known about the role these may have played. Nigeria is a major transshipment point for narcotics but the group’s involvement in the drugs trade remains poorly documented.

IMPLICATIONS AND LINKS TO FOREIGN TERRORIST NETWORKS

Analysing the influence of transnational terrorist organisations and their links to the group seems to be central in understanding its escalating and spreading violence, growth and future path. In July 2010, Boko Haram declared its allegiance to Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, which marks a critical turning point. Converging information suggests that Boko Haram has deepened its links with AlShabaab and AQIM, which operates across the Sahel and has bases in Mali. One of the earliest signs of such a relationship came in October 2010, when Boko Haram used AQIM’s media division to release an Eid message that praised Al-Qaeda’s affiliates in Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen, and rejected the legitimacy of the Nigerian government. Although there is little hard evidence that Boko Haram has converged organisationally with any other groups, reports suggest Al-Shabaab and AQIM have helped train the organisation and AQIM has helped finance it. This linkage has contributed to Boko Haram’s transformation, from a closed sect to a major



terrorist threat. The group's most-high profile attack to date occurred on 26 August 2011, when a suicide bomber rammed a vehicle laden with explosives through the gates of the United Nations headquarters in Abuja. This was its first major attack on a high-profile international target. The timing of the UN attack

and manner in which it was claimed suggests Boko Haram has evolved from a local issue group, to one whose tactics, rhetoric and ambitions had become more in line with Al-Qaeda and the wider jihadist movement.

IMPACT ON REGIONAL STABILITY

Boko Haram poses a real and serious challenge to security, stability and development in Nigeria, and for Nigeria's neighbours. The temporary closure of Nigeria's borders with Cameroon and Niger in 2012 – following suspected Boko Haram activity in border towns – had a negative effect on these economies. The Islamist insurgency in Nigeria has displaced hundreds of thousands of people and had a significant effect on the North's already stagnant economy. Measures brought in to contain the violence, such as roadblocks and curfews, have further damaged northern local economies. Escalating violence has discouraged private sector investment and hindered humanitarian operations. In 2012, some Western governments barred their delegations from travelling due to the deteriorating security environments.

At a regional level, policy responses will require a paradigm shift in how countries work together to understand the threat and respond to it. Transnational risks are inherently complex and require regional co-operation, trusting relationships of interest, and shared investment to manage, in particular security and development issues. At a minimum, joint border security initiatives will help stem the proliferation of weapons and reduce the ease with which terrorists can move across the region. Some initiatives already exist, as well as Joint Committees on Security. Improving intelligence gathering, analysis, expertise and information sharing will also be critical, as will learning from the experiences of other countries, like Algeria, in informing responses. As Boko Haram transitions from a localised insurgency to a wider regional threat, only intelligence sharing and co-operation among nations where it operates will help prevent its advance. The Nigerian experience shows that heavy-handed security responses are often counter-productive. Countering Boko Haram, and groups like it, requires a measured response that separates the extremists from the communities they seek to dominate. Local communities and stakeholders must be part of the process to genuinely undermine extremist discourse. In this respect, development that furthers long-term political, social and economic inclusion may go some way in restoring

trust with vulnerable communities, and serve as a powerful “antidote” to the new threats the region now faces.



UNSC'S RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

The UNSC established the Counterterrorism Committee (CTC) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to monitor the implementation of these binding resolutions and to develop technical recommendations and guiding principles to facilitate their transposition at the national level. In adopting these Chapter VII resolutions on counterterrorism and expanding criminal liability for “terrorism”, the UNSC has created a potential overlap with obligations under IHL. This is due to four main reasons:

- (1) the UNSC has requested the criminalization of broad “support” and “indirect financing” of terrorism;
- (2) the UNSC has not legally defined the constitutive elements of terrorist offenses;
- (3) the UNSC has extended application of these offenses to situations of armed conflict and designated certain NSAGs as terrorists; and
- (4) the UNSC has adopted these resolutions without providing any explicit IHL exclusion clause or a sectoral humanitarian exemption. These decisions can thus have important judicial repercussions for protected individuals in situations of armed conflict, including impartial humanitarian actors.

UNSC has extended the application of these terrorist offenses to situations of armed conflict and has designated certain NSAGs as terrorists, which can further create overlaps with obligations under IHL. In particular, direct references to “armed conflict” in Resolutions

2178 and 2396 pertaining to the definition of “foreign terrorist fighters” may allow States to interpret these provisions in a way that could extend and criminalize related terrorist offences in situations of armed conflict. The UNSC resolutions clearly require States to prosecute such offences, which would not be contrary to IHL as it is States’ prerogative to prosecute members of NSAGs for their participation in hostilities and actions undertaken in non-international armed conflicts (NIACs), regardless of their lawfulness under IHL.

UNITED NATIONS INTEGRATED STRATEGY FOR THE SAHEL

The United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel is built around three broad areas of support formulated as strategic goals and organized according to key themes. The strategic goals are aimed at supporting and strengthening continuing initiatives and addressing previously identified gaps. A series of specific objectives and indicative actions are proposed to achieve these goals. The three areas of support are



complementary and form an integrated response to the Sahel crisis. In particular, the approach is premised on the integration of humanitarian and development interventions, ensuring that lifesaving activities meet immediate needs while building the resilience of people and communities as part of a long-term development agenda.

Strengthen institutions to foster democratic practices, including political dialogue, free, fair and transparent elections, and broad-based participation

Indicative actions:

- (a) Support programmes aimed at empowering political parties in Sahelian countries to promote peaceful politics and the political participation of women, including through the establishment of inclusive inter-party dialogue frameworks (Department of Political Affairs, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women));
 - (b) Promote the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of experiences among electoral management bodies in the Sahel on issues pertaining to the prevention of election-related conflicts, including gender-based violence (Department of Political Affairs, UNDP, UN-Women);
 - (c) Support the establishment of national early warning mechanisms to prevent, respond to and mitigate potential conflict throughout the electoral process (Department of Political Affairs, UNDP);
 - (d) Foster the active, meaningful and free participation of civil society members, including young people, women and minority groups, and the media, in the political life of the respective countries (UNDP, UN-Women);
 - (e) Support the development of programmes to build the capacity and oversight functions of parliaments and enhance the capacity of parliamentary committees (UNDP);
 - (f) Promote greater participation of women from the Sahel region in all international forums and peace talks to resolve the crises in the Sahel, building on the European Union/United Nations high-level conference on women's leadership in the Sahel, held on 9 April 2013, and
- on other relevant international and regional frameworks (UN-Women, Department of Political Affairs);

(g) Build the capacity of governmental and non-governmental national and regional actors, including regional economic communities, on issues relating to facilitation, dialogue and mediation, to foster peace and reconciliation, manage political risks and promote collaborative processes (Department of Political Affairs, UNDP, UN-Women).

Support local governance and the extension of government services throughout national territories

Indicative actions:

(a) Promote and support the drafting and implementation of legislation on decentralization and deconcentrating in the Sahelian countries (UNDP);

(b) Build the capacities and accountability mechanisms of national and local institutions to deliver quality basic social services, which include health care, education, water and sanitation, promote equitable access to such services and enhance resilience at the local level

(United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA));

(c) Build the capacity of local authorities and institutions to establish and implement mechanisms for broader and more inclusive participation of the community and vulnerable groups, including women, in local development (UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women).

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

WITHDRAWAL OF OPERATION BARKHANE

The 2022 withdrawal of French forces under Operation Barkhane significantly impacted regional security. The responsibility for providing security transitioned from French to Malian Armed Forces, supported by pro-government militias and the Russian Wagner Group. Although Barkhane's overall effectiveness in securing Mali was limited, it did manage to maintain control around key urban centres, in collaboration with UN MINUSMA peacekeepers. Many of these areas are now under siege from JNIM and IS-Sahel. The Wagner Group has been less effective in providing security, and has been involved in mining and extractive industry exploitation. Some observers have suggested that their operations in Mali are part of a broader pattern observed in Sudan and the Central African Republic, where smuggling of materials like gold and



diamonds helps Russia bypass sanctions related to the 2022 Ukraine invasion. The Wagner Group's operations in Mali have been marked by a disregard for civilian protection, including the alleged involvement in the massacre of civilians in Moura alongside Malian forces.

WITHDRAWAL OF MINUSMA

In June 2023, the UN Security Council terminated MINUSMA's mission in Mali after the Malian government withdrew its support. Established in 2013, MINUSMA struggled with security provision outside its base areas, burdened by a massive operational area and infrastructural challenges. The phased withdrawal of peacekeepers, set to complete by December 2023, directly escalated violent conflict in areas previously under UN control. Figure 4.7 shows the location of MINUSMA bases, as well as all conflict events in Mali since the withdrawal of UN forces. Fierce battles for control of former UN bases emerged, involving Malian forces, Wagner Group mercenaries, Tuareg rebels, and JNIM. The violence in Kidal in November 2023 was some of the most severe fighting between government and

rebel forces since the 2015 peace deal. The deal collapsed completely in January 2024 with fighting likely to intensify. The current Malian government, which came into power in two successive coups in 2020 and 2021, faces security threats from jihadists who have become entrenched across the country and a resurgent rebel conflict in the north.²⁶ In August 2023 the UN panel of experts on Mali declared that IS-Sahel had doubled the amount of territory they controlled in the country, while JNIM had continued to expand operations.²⁷ Collaboration between jihadist groups and Tuareg rebels could be possible. The deteriorating peace agreement and the rise in violence, particularly in urban areas of Central and Northern Mali, could provide jihadist groups with more opportunities to expand and strengthen their control in the region. This could also help them consolidate gains in other areas. Given the importance of territorial control in Northern Mali for all parties involved, especially in the context of drug smuggling and conflict, instability in this region could have significant implications for the wider conflict in Mali.

THE COUP IN NIGER

In July 2023, Niger experienced a military coup, with the presidential guard overthrowing President Mohamed Bazoum and General Adourahmane Tchiani assuming power. The justification centred around Bazoum's inability to counter jihadist threats, although this reasoning was seen as a pretext, especially considering the low terror attack frequency prior to the coup. The coup led to a diplomatic crisis, with regional powers threatening intervention and risking an interstate conflict. By the end of 2023, Niger



distanced itself from Western allies, ending security cooperation with the EU and began exploring ties with Russia. Niger and Burkina Faso also withdrew from the G5 Sahel following Mali's departure, significantly weakening the alliance.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What are the main drivers of communal terrorism in the Sahel—ethnic, religious, political, or economic—and how do they interact?
2. How have weak state institutions, porous borders, and limited governance capacity contributed to the rise of terrorist groups in the Sahel?
3. To what extent do climate change, desertification, and competition over natural resources exacerbate communal tensions and terrorism in the region?
4. How have groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), ISIS affiliates, and local militias exploited communal divides for recruitment and influence?
5. What role does the illicit economy (arms smuggling, narcotics trade, human trafficking, illegal mining) play in sustaining communal terrorism in the Sahel?
6. How effective have UN initiatives, such as MINUSMA in Mali, and regional mechanisms, like the G5 Sahel Joint Force, been in addressing terrorism and stabilizing the region?
7. How have external actors (France, Russia's Wagner group, US, EU) influenced counterterrorism efforts, and what implications does this have for regional sovereignty and UNSC's role?
8. What measures can be taken to balance counterterrorism operations with the protection of civilian populations in conflict zones?
9. How can the UNSC strengthen coordination between humanitarian assistance and security operations in the Sahel to prevent further radicalization?



10. Should the UNSC push for new binding international frameworks or rely on reinforcing existing resolutions and mechanisms to counter communal terrorism in the Sahel?
11. What are the risks of spillover from the Sahel into West Africa, North Africa, and beyond, and how should the UNSC prepare for potential regional destabilization?
12. How can inclusive governance, dialogue, and community-based peacebuilding reduce the root causes of communal terrorism in the Sahel?

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