



General Assembly 1

Combating the Rise of Terrorism in the

ATLANTIC
OCEAN

Sahel Region

1.





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Combating the Rise of
Terrorism in the Sahel Region

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Introduction

The Sahel region of Africa depicted in the map below has been experiencing a rise in terrorism in the past few years. There are many causes related to the rise in terrorist activity such as poverty amongst the population and political instability. Terrorist groups have taken this opportunity to recruit fighters among the unhappy groups. This rise in terrorism has proven a major danger to the population in the Sahel region. It has led to a lack of both security and stability in the Sahel region. Additionally, the terrorist attacks have led to a humanitarian crisis, displacing millions of people from their homes.





Definition of Key Terms

Radicalization

The process of adopting extremist beliefs and attitudes, often leading to violence. In the Sahel region, radicalization has been fueled by the aforementioned struggles amongst the population, a phenomenon largely utilized by terrorist groups to expand their forces.

Counterterrorism

The use of military and political measures to combat terrorism. Counterterrorism in the Sahel region has been seen in military operations against terrorist groups and governmental efforts to address the root causes of the radicalization in the region.

General Overview

A growing crisis

The vast Sahel region stretching across the continent of Africa has seen the rise of terrorism in the past years. The past 15 years have seen deaths due to terrorism in the Sahel region spike by 2800%, with 46% of the global deaths due to terrorism being in the Sahel region in 2023. This has led to the further escalation of radical groups due to growing discontent in the region. Terrorist groups have resorted to violence and intimidation in order to gain control of the region and implement their extreme ideologies. Certain areas have been impacted more than others due to the rise in violence. Northern Mali has been considered one of the worst off areas but several other regions in Mali and Burkina Faso, as well as the Tillaberi region in Niger have also been hurt.

Impacts on the Sahel region

This rise in terrorism across the Sahel region has had devastating impacts on the population. The region has seen widespread violence from terrorist organizations has caused casualties, injuries, and displacement of millions of civilians. Furthermore, the region's already weak economic state has only further deteriorated, leaving many in poverty and creating a humanitarian crisis. Many have been displaced due to the conflicts, with 4.2 million people being displaced and 3.7 million internally displaced as of 2023. A vicious downwards cycle has proven to be the consequences of the conflict in the region. The population's discontent with poor living conditions is on the rise, making it easier for terrorist organizations in the Sahel region to recruit new members. The humanitarian crisis has also grown to a concerning level, with over 10 million children in the area being in dire need of humanitarian aid.



The role of climate change

Climate change's spreading impacts have shown no mercy to the Sahel region. The region's struggles are only being worsened by droughts on floods, not only becoming more frequent, but also more severe. The Sahel region has had a history of droughts since the 17th century, with the most recent occurring in 2012. Furthermore, floods have been a sustaining issue in the region, with a 2024 flood displacing a further 50,000 people in northeast Nigeria. These natural disasters amidst a time of regional struggle have already ill-managed governments unable to provide civilians with the necessary aids. This has led to worsened food anxiety and shortages along with displacing more people. These detrimental impacts have left more people unhappy with the state of their region, facilitating the recruitment of more members for terrorist organizations.

Major Parties Involved

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

AQIM is a terrorist group operating throughout North and West Africa. They have been held responsible for many of the attacks taking place in the Sahel region. Formed in 2007, they have attempted to spread their ideology in the region based on a radical interpretation of the Islamic religion.

Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)

ISGS is another terrorist organization which emerged around 2015. Their primary areas of operation are Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. They aim to expand the declarations of the Islamic State. They are known for the extreme violence in their حملات (hamalat - Arabic for "campaigns") targeting both security forces and civilian members of the public.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram is a Jihadist group based in Nigeria. They are infamous for their brutality around the Lake Chad region. They have also conducted attacks in neighboring countries in the Sahel.



The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)

The UNOWAS have made sustained efforts involving peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts for many years. This has involved peacekeeping missions in Mali and other countries within the region.

The African Union (AU)

The AU has been involved in both security and peacekeeping efforts in the Sahel region. They also deployed troops to Mali and neighboring countries.

France

France has been involved in the Sahel region for a period of time. They have been providing both financial and military assistance to the countries in the Sahel region, aiming to return peace. They have also deployed troops in Mali as a part of the UN peacekeeping mission in the Sahel area.

The G5 Sahel Joint Force

This military group is composed of troops from five countries in the Sahel region. Namely: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The G5 Sahel Joint Force is making continued efforts to combat terrorism in the Sahel region.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
2002	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is formed.
2021	AQIM and other groups take control of northern mali
Jan 2013	Start of the French Military intervention in Mali
Mar 2014	Boko Haram (a Nigerian terrorist organization) pledges their allegiance to ISIS
Jul 2015	Formation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force
May 2017	The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara is formed
2020	Violence escalates in Burkina Faso and Niger
Aug 2021	French military begins to exit Mali



2022	Further rises in violence across Sahel region
Feb 2022	France and other European forces announce official withdrawal
2023	Continued attacks by Boko Haram and AQIM causing instability and damage

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions

- UN Security Council Resolution 2359 (2017)
 - This resolution was the authorization of the deployment of military forces by the G5 Sahel Joint Force
- UN Security Council Resolution 2391 (2017)
 - This resolution was in further support of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. It also called for other member states to provide both financial and logistical aid to the G5 Sahel Joint Force
- UN Security Council Resolution 2531 (2020)
 - This resolution further extended the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) calling for increased efforts to combat terrorism and protect the population in the Sahel region
- UN Security Council Resolution 2659 (2022)
 - This resolution added to the UN Security Council Resolution number 2531 passed in 2020. It authorized an additional 3000 troops in Mali in attempts to stabilize the country.
- UN Security Council Resolution 2675 (2023)
 - This resolution authorized a new United Nations peacekeeping mission in Burkina Faso. It also aimed to combat terrorism and protect their population.



Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Both the United Nations and individual governments have made attempts in the past to help the Sahel region from the rising terrorism plaguing the area.

Military interventions by not only the UN but also France and the USA have been attempted in the form of deployed troops in the Sahel region in order to fight the terrorist groups. These attempts had some success in disrupting the plans of terrorist organizations, negative effects also occurred such as the harming of civilians in the area. Furthermore, military interventions failed to address the root cause of the radicalization of the Sahel region.

Security cooperation has also been attempted in the past. These include organizations being formed within the region such as the G5 Sahel. This was proposed to encourage further cooperation between states in the area. This plan however failed to live up due to political instability as well as a lack of resources.

One previous attempt at addressing the root causes were developmental assistance from international donors. These donations were aimed to support economic development in the region and instigate social programs. Unfortunately, due to corruption and mismanagement of these resources, the donations weren't able to reach those who needed the aid.

Possible Solutions

By addressing the root causes of the radicalization of the region, the terrorist organization may experience a decrease in support and new forces. Extremism due to weak and illegitimate governance, economic decline, and the worsening effects of climate change, have led to an incline in violent crime and terrorism in the region, particularly in organizations with extremist views. .By investing in beneficial causes such as education, healthcare, and economic development, the quality of life in the region may improve.

Another problem that has diminished the success of previous attempts to solve the issue has been the corruption in the region. Particularly the countries of Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Mali have seen a rise in discontent with government corruption. By battling the weak governance and corruption in the region, it may disrupt the actions of the terrorist organization. This would allow states to focus on the rise of terrorism in a more stable environment.

By further increasing communication and cooperation between states in the region, they may be able to better disrupt terrorist networks acting in multiple countries to prevent attacks. This could be improved by sharing intelligence, creating joint military actions, and better coordinating border security.



Recently, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have all announced their withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), increasing tension between member states. By promoting reconciliation between states in the Sahel region, tensions may diffuse, also allowing for improved cooperation. Bringing together delegates from said member states may improve the relationship between member states.



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