THE SAHEL: EUROPE´S AFRICAN BORDERS

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Foreword

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Over the last decade, the EU's engagement in the Sahel region has dramatically increased and is now more than ever focused on security. The Sahel has been suffering from a multidimensional crisis, such as poor governance, corruption, structural weaknesses and underdevelopment, while challenges such as droughts and famine affect all levels of society and can lead to strikes, revolts and violence. One must also add criminality, illicit trafficking and the rise of Jihadism. As a result, the Sahel is a source of high instability for the Maghreb and by extension for Europe.

The security concern is very acute in the EU. Jihadist groups have been attacking European interests, as shown by the recent attack (2 March 2018) against the French embassy in Burkina Faso, and several others on hotels and resorts that led to the death of European nationals, among so many other locals. The abduction of European citizens by Jihadist groups is also a security threat that European countries need to consider. Moreover, there is also the important flow of people who travel from the Sahel to Europe in search of a better life, which increases the pressure on the EU.

Moreover, the EU has economic interests in the Sahel. The latter is, for instance, the EU's top ore and mineral provider with some 24% of its imports coming from Mauritania. Niger's uranium is, for example, a crucial supplier to France's 58 nuclear reactors, which generates 75% of France's electricity.

To protect its interests, the EU has been fostering bilateral and multilateral initiatives with Sahelian countries and tried to improve the dire socioeconomic conditions and the security situation. The EU has put in place three missions in the context of its Common Security and Defence Policy: EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Sahel Mali, and EUTM. These mechanisms aim to help local police, gendarmerie, national guards and security forces in the fight against terrorism and organised crime by providing expertise, training and guidance on command, logistical chains and human resources. More recently, the EU engaged with several Sahelian states (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) and established the Sahel G5 for the harmonisation of regional collaboration in security matters as well as in development policies.

Despite all these efforts, the Sahel remains a quagmire and is likely to continue to be for the next decade. To stop the dangers coming from the Sahel, the EU must harmonise its multiple approaches to the region and ensure the ownership of Sahelian states over what happens and what is being undertaken, notably through the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States. Moreover, the EU has to treat regional partners such as Algeria like fully-fledged partners in Sahelian affairs.

This volume comprises four chapters: the first assesses the Jihadist threat in the Sahel; the second the impacts of foreign interventions; the third weighs the importance of including Algeria, an indisputable military power and peace broker; and, finally, the fourth assesses climate and demographic challenges for Sahelian security. All four chapters provide EU policy-makers with a set of policy recommendations to better approach what have become Europe's African borders.

Jihadism in the Sahel: It Will Be a Long War

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Introduction

Armed Jihadist groups have been active in the Sahel region – a vast area of about five million square kilometres – since the 1990s. The region – which extends from northern Senegal, through southern Mauritania, central Mali, northern Burkina Faso, and the extreme south of Algeria and Niger, central Chad, southern Sudan and northern Eritrea – has recently been shaken by numerous Jihadist attacks. There is no doubt that Jihadism is a serious threat to the region. Jihadist violence is also changing, evolving and adapting. It represents a persistent threat to the Sahel, North Africa and by extension to Europe (Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2017c). Why? Armed Islamist groups such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), now known as *Jama'at Nusrat El Islam wa El Muslimin* [Group for the Victory of Islam and Muslims] (JNIM) are taking advantage of the vast plains and Sahelian topography, with its prevalence of caves and canyons, as well as the porous borders that make counterterrorism operations hard to conduct. Also, these groups are pragmatic actors who exploited and continue to exploit the region's extreme poverty, the lack of education, political, social and economic marginalisation, bad governance, lack of opportunities and the incapacity of the central Sahelian states to provide their impoverished local communities with basic needs, security and protection. The reasons that have made it possible for such groups to thrive in the first place persist today and are likely to continue. The disorder and instability in the Sahel are benefiting extremist groups.

This chapter aims to assess the Jihadist threat and attempt to suggest policy recommendations to address it. The danger varies from country to country. Some states have been hit in the heart of their capitals, such as Burkina Faso in August 2017. Others were not able to protect their territorial integrity and have seen entire regions fall under Jihadist control. This was the case with northern Mali under AQIM and with northeastern Nigeria with Boko Haram (BH). It was the first time in the history of the Sahel that armed Islamist groups were able to seize whole parts of countries. It was also the first time that the French army intervened directly since African independence from colonial forces (except for Chad in 1983-1984 during the Chadian-Libyan conflict) (Tchangari, 2017).

Several groups and organisations are operating in the region, including the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), BH, Ansar Dine, Islamic State (IS) and AQIM. They do not all share the same motivation but together they have been responsible for the security crisis that has been shaking the region and hindering efforts for development. It is hard to map Jihadist groups in the area because organisations such as JNIM (formerly AQIM) are often composed of several factions, which are themselves

divided into semi-autonomous brigades, battalions and sub-battalions. Furthermore, armed Islamist groups operating in the Sahel adapt depending on different countries' counterterrorism strategies. Armed Islamist groups in the Sahel are not monolithic. Groups under the umbrella of "Jihad" are numerous and diverse, and some of them are "Salafist-Jihadist" by convenience, meaning that despite ideological incompatibilities alliances are made based on personal and group interests as was the case for the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), which was losing speed and popularity and decided to unite with Iyad Agh Ghali's group, Ansar Dine.

Their ideologies, strategies, targets and methods of recruitment are diverse. In addition, the Jihadist scene in the region is highly fluid, especially as there are regular alliances and splinters. The mutation is so rapid that it is plausible that, as these lines are being read, the situation on the ground would have already changed. The groups have an amorphous nature, fluid memberships and alliances. Groups of different ideologies frequently cooperate for only one specific mission but not beyond. Groups fall out and then return to the mother organisation after a period. However, these numerous Jihadist groups share some commonalities: a) they all want society to return to a purer form of Islam; b) they all allow and even call for the use of violence to achieve the aforementioned purpose; c) they are highly mobile and can quickly move from one region to another.

This article will focus on one actor: JNIM (formerly AQIM). The research will not dwell on an in-depth analysis of other groups such as BH, as many studies, reports and articles have already covered this terrain. Despite this focus, this article can only offer a snapshot of what the Jihadist threat represents in/for the Sahel.

First AQIM, Then JNIM… The War Is Not Over

AQIM has been a dominant player in the region. It proved capable of adapting to new regional realities and has been responsible for several crises in the region. Even if AQIM was ousted from northern Mali after the French intervention, Operation Serval, it is a group with an old lineage, pragmatic leadership, sophisticated recruitment tactics and a sturdy base that allowed it to extend across the Sahel and move from its original target in northern Algeria to its southern flanks, to the Sahelian hinterlands.

AQIM is a group that has its roots in the days of the civil war in Algeria in the 1990s. It was formed from the ruins of the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), itself a splinter of the prominent Armed Islamic Group (GIA) that fought the

Algerian regime for years and called for its overthrow and the establishment of an Islamic State in Algeria. In the late 1990s, when the local Algerian Jihadists lost momentum, Hassan Hattab, a GIA veteran, decided in 1998 to create the GSPC. The latter sought to distance itself from the indiscriminate and extreme violence of the GIA against civilians and tried to regain the support of the populations. In 2007, the GSPC announced its allegiance to al-Qaeda and became al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. AQIM's leader, the Algerian Abdel Malek Droudkel, called for a rebellion against what it deemed "apostate" and "impious" governments that included Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Mali and Mauritania.

The group kept a "north Front" in Algeria that directed several attacks in 2007, notably the 11 April coordinated attacks against Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem's headquarters in Algiers and a police station in the east of the capital. The attacks killed at least 30 and wounded dozens. However, in 2009 AQIM leadership decided to shift from local to regional Jihadism and began a Sahelisation strategy, even if this Sahelisation was ongoing and started as far as 2003 (Lounnas, 2014). The choice was as pragmatic as it was opportunistic. The counterterrorism activities of the Algerian security forces pushed the group outside the northern regions away from the capital and the eastern mountains. The group retreated to the south and found shelter in neighbouring countries, primarily in Mali as shown by the 2003 hostage-taking of the 32 Western tourists. The vast spaces left ungoverned, the loosely-patrolled borders and understaffed military forces presented AQIM with excellent opportunities to extend the scope of its actions to new geographies. AQIM's leader, Droudkel, opened several Sahelian *kataib* (battalions): Mokhtar Bel Mokhtar served as the emir of the western part, Abdelhamid Abou Zeid of the eastern part, and Yahia Djaoudi of the north.

On the one hand, Droudkel tried to unify several Jihadist groups operating in the Sahel, such as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group. The group showed a disposition and ability to cooperate with other armed extremist groups. For instance, several members of BH were recruited by Khalid Al-Barnaoui, who was trained in the Algerian desert with AQIM in the mid-2000s (Zen, 2013). Many roads that were previously inaccessible to AQIM were open thanks to such collaboration. In 2012, Bel Mokhtar with his then-battalion "the ones signed with blood", allied with the MUJAO, then led by Ahmed Ould Amar, attacked the Algerian gendarmerie headquarters of Tamenrasset, wounding 23 people. Finally, the attack on the Algerian gas facility of Ain Amenas on 16 January 2013 in southeast Algeria, on the borders with Libya, which led to the death of 39 foreign hostages, was carried out by a regional commando composed by Algerian, Egyptians, Libyans, Tunisians, a Malian and even a French

national. If anything, it proved the transnational nature of the security threats posed by armed Islamist groups in the Sahel.

On the other hand, AQIM made sure to secure the loyalties of tribes and local communities. To do so, its battalions used a calibrated combination of threat and persuasion toward the locals. As a result, locals helped the Jihadists to travel safely, change camps and find shelter and caches in the desert. AQIM's leadership also used marriages and kinship (Courrèges, 2013) to strengthen its ties with local populations and tribes. For instance, Bel Mokhtar, a veteran of the Algerian Jihadist scene and one of AQIM's most prominent figures, spent a decade forging relationships, building influence with the communities in the Azawad desert, proselytising especially among the Arabs and intermarrying. In fact, he married three times ("Une des épouses de Mokhtar Belmokhtar", 2016). His first wife was a noble Malian woman from the Arab tribe of the Barabiches. His second wife was from the Malian tribe of Al Amhar (northeastern Mali), and his third wife was Tunisian. Marriage works as a powerful antidote to defections and helps build and widen alliances and protection as the local customs expand protection to those who are wedded to members of local tribes (Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2017b).

To finance its activities and until recently, AQIM's principal source of finances was kidnapping. This was a continuation of the GSPC's strategy that started kidnapping as far back as in 2003 with the abduction of 32 Europeans in Illizi (east of Algeria). Some hostages were released in 2003 and others in 2005 after being moved to the Malian borders. The GSPC is believed to have received €5 million as ransom. Since then, the prices of abduction raised to reach €100 million (Bouazza & Cherruau, 2012). According to a New York Times investigation, AQIM and its affiliates received at least $125 million in revenue from kidnapping between 2008 and 2014 (Callimachi, 2014).

Smuggling activities constitute an additional source of income. AQIM's leadership took advantage of existing smuggling networks in the region to enhance its finances and capacities to buy weapons, loyalties and recruit among the local pool. It is important to note though that AQIM is not believed to take direct part in the smuggling activities, but rather levied taxes from the smugglers to let them pass and protect their convoys. Undoubtedly, there is a certain degree of connivance between the smugglers, the Jihadists, and some state officials. Cigarettes are one of the most important goods to be smuggled in the region with an estimated 80% of cigarettes on the market in southwest and northern Africa being illicit (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2009). The same smuggling routes have been used more recently for cocaine trafficking from South America to West Africa, the Maghreb and finally to Europe. The hubs of drug

trafficking are mostly in West Africa (UNODC, 2009) from where cocaine is transported to Europe via commercial air carriers or via land passing through northern Mali, Morocco, Algeria or Libya. However, it is very important to stay away from the myth of the Drug-Terror nexus. As Lacher writes (2013), "[…] The rise of AQIM and MUJAO has been closely related to their involvement in criminal activities – particularly kidnap-for-ransom, but also drug trafficking. Yet, reducing the narcotics smuggling problem in the Sahel-Sahara to a 'narcoterrorism' phenomenon is misleading – and counterproductive. […] When searching for the sources of extremist financing in the Sahel, the kidnapping business provides a more plausible answer."

Additionally, there is an essential network for arms trafficking. It is believed that there are around 8 million small arms and light weapons in West Africa (Vignard, 2008). Since the fall of Gaddafi, it has been rumoured that a considerable number of weapons came from Libya. In 2011, the Algerian security forces intercepted a convoy with 200 machine guns and ammunitions at Debdeb (In Amenas) near the Libyan borders (Ouazani, 2011). Since then, the Algerian security forces have intercepted a considerable amount of weapons and ammunition on a regular basis (See table below).

Table 1. Firearms & Amunitions Seizures Reported by Algerian Authorities (2013-2017)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	65	2	198	68	63
February	717	4	40	96	73
March	0	0	19	51	69
April	0	202	1990	481	45
May	3	207	2424	79	39
June	0	0	35	88	25
July	0	2	8	37	23
August	0	0	77	40	92
September	26	0	13016	84	56
October	0	3	4127	52	42
November	2	11	519	36	55
December	7	10	10247	49	97
Total	**820**	**441**	**32700**	**1161**	**679**

Source: Algerian MOD Press Releases and Reuters

Due to these lucrative activities, AQIM and its affiliates were able to step up their reputation in some Sahelian regions as "generous providers." AQIM can deliver basic

goods to the populations and exploit genuine local grievances against the central government to rally the population around it. Having learned from the mistakes of the GIA, AQIM adjusted its doses of coercion and co-optation to avoid alienating local communities. A good example of this pragmatic dosage is Droudkel's letter to his brigades deployed in the Sahel commanding them to avoid a harsh application of the Sharia and to refrain from demolishing Sufi shrines (Lounnas, 2014). In functioning states, a group such as AQIM would hardly be considered a reliable or even a credible alternative. But in many areas in the Sahel, AQIM has been able to deepen its ties with local communities by providing "adequate" and "acceptable" models of governance.

Since the French intervention in Mali in 2012 and due to counterterrorism operations, AQIM suffered heavy losses, as many as 500 Jihadists (Guibert, 2013). Among the dead were several senior figures: Abdelhamid Abou Zeid ("Al Qaeda Groups Confirms the Death of Abou Zeid", 2013), Abdallah Al Chinguetti, Mohamed Lemine Ould El-Hassen (Mémier, 2013) and Abu Abdelhamid al Kidali (Mémier, 2013). The group was dislodged from significant towns it had seized in Mali, and it also lost its sanctuary located in the Adrar des Ifoghas (Kidal region and reaches part of Algeria). Weapons caches, as well as training camps, were destroyed. Nevertheless, AQIM remained resilient and adaptive. The group took advantage of the chaos in Libya to move its sanctuary to the southern parts of the country (Ubari and Ghat). It also capitalised on the bad socioeconomic conditions in the Sahel region to secure the loyalty of local tribes and communities and attract recruits from the local pool (Lebovich, 2013). In late 2015, AQIM, Al Murabitun[1] and Katibet Macina[2] merged to form a group called Jama'at Nusrat El Islam wa El Muslimin (JNIM). The new entity is believed to be led by a veteran Tuareg fighter called Iyad Ag Ghali from the powerful Ifoghas tribe. The latter's appointment to this leadership position is likely to galvanise locals and especially Targi populations and boost recruitment among them.

JNIM's operational capacities appear to be growing. Indeed, AQIM perpetrated 45 attacks on Malian territory from 2009 till 2016, killing 168 people.[3] Since the merger and the birth of JNIM, the group has carried out almost double in a single year (2017) with 77 attacks in Mali[4] against 45 attacks in six years of activity (between 2009 and 2016). JNIM claimed direct responsibility for these 77 attacks that led to the death of 149 people.[5] It should be noted that the numbers of attacks are more critical when one considers those led by JNIM and its other allies. According to the *Long War Journal,* this number can reach 276 attacks in Mali and West Africa in 2017 (Weiss, 2018). Moreover, 146 UN peacekeepers from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) have been killed since the beginning of the UN

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1 A Jihadist group formed in 2013 by Algerian veteran of the GIA, Mokhtar Bel Mokhtar, who decided to merge his organisation called *Al Mulathamun* (The Covered) with the MUJAO.

2 A Jihadist group seeking to establish an ethnically Fulani Caliphate in South Mali. The group was led by Amadou Koufa.

3 Data on AQIM's attacks in Mali compiled from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) website. File entitled: ACLED ALL Africa File 20170101 to 20171202.

4 Data on AQIM's attacks in Mali compiled from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) website. File entitled: ACLED ALL Africa File 20170101 to 20171202.

5 Data available until 27 November 2017.

peacekeeping mission in Mali in 2013 (MINUSMA fact sheet). It is likely that such attacks will continue in the upcoming years despite the constitution of the G5 and MINUSMA's ongoing efforts.

Why Do Individuals/Communities Join and Support Armed Islamist Groups in the Sahel

The reasons why people join extremist groups in general and Jihadist groups in particular are too complex and too numerous to examine comprehensively in this article, but a few are worth mentioning and analysing to draft policy recommendations. Radicalisation is a "process of adopting for oneself or inculcating in others a commitment not only to a system of radical beliefs, but to their imposition on the rest of society" (Jenkins, 2009). Radicalisation is a complex process that varies from country to country, town to town, village to village and from individual to individual as every life story is unique. Indeed, a young boy who decides to spy on the MINUSMA has a different motivation than the one who chooses to attack a hotel and kill people. Similarly, the reasons a young individual agrees to work for a Jihadist group and vandalise a public building might be different from the reasons that compel another member to participate in the kidnapping of a foreigner.

As a result, each armed Islamist group is locally rooted (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2016). However, Sahelian youths share some common conditions, namely: social and economic marginalisation, a high level of illiteracy, a lack of religious knowledge, no access to decision-making even at a local level, limited prospects in life, bad governance and high levels of corruption, absence of avenues for peaceful political expression, distrust towards governments and leaders, the indiscriminate violence of the security forces… All these contribute to their violent radicalisation and their engagement in extremist groups, hence to the expansion of the Jihadist threat. In this section, the author decided to focus on some of them, those that in her opinion constitute the primary drivers for youth radicalisation in the Sahel, notably: extreme poverty, unemployment and lack of prospects, high levels of illiteracy and education issues, thirst for justice and, finally, indiscriminate violence of the security forces and foreign military interventions.

Armed Islamist Groups as "Generous Providers"

As explained by Lounnas (2014), the Sahel was a much more complex environment for AQIM than Algeria regarding the appeal of religion. Indeed, the group had no ideological

appeal for a population that was composed of a majority of Sufi Islam followers. It is the dire socioeconomic conditions in the Sahel that have created resentment against the respective central states that contributed to AQIM's rise. AQIM and others such as BH and the MUJAO stepped in as a "generous provider", an attractive employer and a source of income for communities that felt that the state has forgotten about them and has failed to integrate them because it was too focused on the centre.

Poverty, Illiteracy and Unemployment

Economic motivation alone cannot explain why youths join radical groups. Indeed, Africa has been for a long time one of the weakest economies in the world; following that logic, it should have been the centre of violent Islamist extremism a while ago. Moreover, many equally economically-challenged populations did not follow and support Islamist groups in their call for Jihadism and violence. Nonetheless, in some places in the Sahelian states, the extreme poverty, unemployment and lack of prospects, especially for youths, have significantly contributed to their path towards armed Islamist militancy.

AQIM and others such as BH and the MUJAO exploited and continue to utilise the poverty, unemployment and incapacity of the central Sahelian states to provide their local impoverished communities with basic needs, security and protection. This problem is further aggravated by a growing population. According to the latest World Bank figures, the poverty rate at the national level for countries such as Mali, Niger and Mauritania were 43%, 48% and 42%, respectively (The World Bank, n.d). Even if poverty and unemployment are not the only factors, and there is no direct link between them and Jihadism, there is little doubt that they contributed significantly to a feeling of exclusion and marginalisation of many communities, especially those in rural areas where the poverty rate stood at 51% (Banque centrale des états de l'Afrique de l'Ouest [BCEAO], 2012), 65% (BCEAO, 2012) and 74% (Faujas, 2017) in Mali, Niger and Mauritania, respectively.

As for education, the adult literacy rate stood at the national level at 33%, 19% and 52% in Mali, Niger and Mauritania, respectively. The secondary school attendance in these three countries stood at 20%, 9%, and 14%, respectively. Schooling is facing real, deep issues. In a country such as Niger, 51.9% of people aged 15 to 24 are neither in the education system nor formal employment structures. Rural populations are the least integrated, with 55.6% outside the education system and employment structures (Arnaud, Ray, Tehio, & Grunewald, 2015). According to a 2014 UNESCO report, the rate of literacy of young girls in Sahelian states will be over 97% in 2078 for the richest and 2130 for the poorest (United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2014).

The GSPC, the predecessor of AQIM, understood the level of desperation of local populations as far back as 2005. The group started recruiting young men among the most marginalised, notably the Tuareg communities, and used ransom money for their salaries and to secure their allegiances. Joining a Jihadist group becomes a good (sometimes the only) way for many young people to ensure a livelihood and have a guaranteed substantial monthly source of income. As a result, AQIM has been recruiting locally in Mauritania, Morocco, Libya, Mali and Niger. The group and its allies rely on local recruits to subcontract the kidnapping of people in the region and to provide information that can be used for attacks (Barber, 2013). For instance, a young Malian recruit who provides intelligence to target the MINUSMA convoys can earn up to $800 (Boeke, 2016). In a country such as Mali, where the minimum wage is $45, an amount such as $800 is an opulent sum. AQIM's ally, the MUJAO, Ansar Dine for instance used to offer a substantial amount of $47 for each public institution façade painted with the MUJAO logo. The MUJAO-Ansar Dine provided many locals with a chance to have a better job and secure a decent life and even get married as the groups used to pay for the weddings of its recruits. These "employees" were, in turn, useful tools to provide their friends and siblings, sometimes as young as pre-adolescents, with opportunities within the group and facilitate their enrolment (Bacchi, 2014).

Sahelian governments continue to "fight extremism" with the same economic policies that contributed to the radicalisation of many. A good example of that is the war against the informal sector in Mali and Niger. Their governments sought to dismantle the informal sector but did not provide any alternatives to the thousands of families who depended on it for their survival. This led many trying to secure a livelihood by working for the local militias or armed Islamist groups. Similarly, in Niger and Mali, the central authorities shut down little "kiosks" without giving any other solution to their owners ("Aqmi recrute de plus en plus de jeunes en Afrique de l'Ouest", 2016). Moreover, counterterrorism strategies such as the lasting "emergency state" are likely to have a terrible impact and impede the economic activities of a given community. Such was the case in Diffa (Nigeria) where 13,000 jobs were lost ("Niger's Diffa Suffers Under Boko Haram Violence", 2016) because of the restrictions on movements, the ban on motorbikes and limited access to professional activities. The "emergency state" was extended in 2017 in other regions such as Tahoua, Tillabery and also had an impact on economic activity. No alternative was offered to the affected communities. In the same way, the evacuation of several islands in Lake Chad led many people to lose their jobs in several activities (i.e., agriculture, fishing and stockbreeding) that were severely affected by this counterterrorism strategy (Sissons & Lappartient, 2016). As a result, when some armed Islamists stepped up in the region and were able to offer an alternative to these underprivileged communities, radicalisation became their first employer.

In Search of Basic Services and a Thirst for Justice

The support of some Sahelian populations to AQIM first and now JNIM does not stem from an ideological motivation; instead it seems to be motivated by economic opportunism and a thirst for material gratification and justice due to poor socioeconomic and socio-political conditions. In fact, Jihadist groups have the means for their "generous" policy due to their involvement in smuggling activities, black market, drug and arms trafficking across the Sahara-Sahelian band. This traffic is intrinsically linked to large-scale corruption in the countries of the region. According to Transparency International's 2016 Corruption Perception Index, Mali ranked 116, Niger 101 and Mauritania 142 out of 176 countries worldwide. As a result, AQIM and other groups have been able to fill in the void left by states that are incapable of providing any alternatives or even providing their populations with essential services and governance mechanisms.[6]

In some parts of Mali, AQIM has proved a "capable" ruler, especially with regards to the terrible and extreme conditions, violence and collapse of the Malian state. The group has been providing locals with basic needs, such as water, medicines, fuel, electricity and even food. In fact, food insecurity is a crucial factor of frustration towards the social inequalities that characterise the Sahelian states, in which two different societies within the same country exist: a society where there is an abundance of food and another that is more rural or peri-urban, extremely poor and living in precarious conditions. According to the Global Food Security 2017 Index, Mali ranked 91, Nigeria 92 and Niger 106 out of 113 countries worldwide. As explained by Moussa Tchangari, "Food insecurity represents for millions of people extreme violence that is accompanied by other forms of blatant and glaring injustices and breach of basic human rights and human dignity" (Tchangari, 2017).

Armed Islamist groups have been able to deliver goods and even protect local populations. The MUJAO, for instance, levied a tax on local communities but, in return, it provided them with security on the roads while the state security forces used to racket the populations. Similarly, AQIM protected pastoralists and their herds in Mali ("Forced Out of Towns in the Sahel, Africa's Jihadists Go Rural", 2017), and prevented chiefs and governments from collecting taxes from the communities. In certain parts of northern Mali, some people are "nostalgic" about AQIM's governance capabilities, which appeared to be better than the central state as there is currently less electricity available than during AQIM's control (Boeke, 2016). Not only did these bad socioeconomic conditions enable AQIM and others to seize territories but also to gain the support of some communities that see them as "better alternatives." One must imagine what dire conditions the populations are living in to be able to accept AQIM as a more viable alternative than the state.

6 This inability to deliver is a form of "passive violence" as eloquently described by Patrick Chabal: "it is by default a form of violence, committed only because the state is unable to govern efficiently, unable to face its responsibilities, namely manage the patrimony that its controls." Chabal, P. (1991, June). Pouvoir et violence en Afrique postcoloniale, *Politique africaine, 42.*

In some Sahelian countries such as Mali and Nigeria, the failed state was replaced by another "parallel state" in which the Jihadist group also provides the population with justice. The judicial system imposed is perceived as easy to understand (expressed in simple terms), quick and strict. On the other hand, the government's legal system is considered incomprehensible, time-consuming, ineffective and corrupt (as judges can be bribed). It is interesting to note that the populations of northern Nigeria asked for the application of Sharia law. The official judiciary lost its power as the mechanism of conflict resolution. Indeed, people believe courts are not independent and are controlled by the executive at the local and national level. As a result, people no longer have recourse to the justice system to solve their issues because they do not trust it. In Nigeria, only 38% of people trust courts (Kazeem, 2017). In Niger, some 67% of people think that corruption is high in the judiciary system. In Mali, according to a 2015 poll conducted by Friederich Ebert Stiftung, Malians rated the police, justice and city council as the most corrupt institutions in the country with 52%, 44% and 36%, respectively. It is this mistrust and fear of the system that led many citizens to engage with more traditional forms of justice.

But, here again, the traditional and religious leaders who were able to resolve conflicts were no longer trusted by the people who accused them of a certain proximity to central powers, even though they do not go as far as accusing them of being co-opted and corrupt. As a result, reaching out to other actors such as the extremist leaders or Jihadist groups for justice became an alternative. The strict application of the Sharia in some regions of the Sahel is favoured by some segments of the populations because it is a system that they perceive as harsh, quick, efficient and fair by comparison with a state system that is regarded as corrupt and serving the political elite rather than the rights of citizens. The lack of reforms and prospects for them contribute significantly to this anti-establishment sentiment and give credit to Jihadists' condemnation of "corrupt" and "impious" local regimes. Unfortunately, there is nothing to indicate that Sahelian states are ready to adopt the necessary reforms to improve the situation of their population and curb the influence of Jihadists on the ground.

As a result, Sahelian youths are inclined to become "masses of human meat prone to violence, sickness, North American evangelism, Islam's crusaders and various phenomena of witchcraft and illuminations" (Mbembe, 2010). The dynamic of exclusion and marginalisation is self-perpetuating, and one can expect that youth radicalisation, whether it is Salafist-Jihadist or in militias, is likely to continue.

Indiscriminate Violence of the Security Forces and Foreign Military Interventions

The random violence of the security forces against their populations does not create allegiances to the state nor its security apparatus. Bombing villages and driving hundreds of people out of their homes, impeding their economic activities with counterterrorism strategies, such as a curfew and motorbike ban, is more likely to create a profound sense of injustice and a thirst for revenge. Joining an armed group allows the victims to act and rectify the grievance they have suffered. Carrying weapons and working for a feared organisation enables them to respond, stop being a victim, get the needed protection for themselves and their families and ultimately gives them agency. The case of Nigeria is enlightening as many youths and entire regions pledged allegiance to BH because of the harsh and indiscriminate violence of the Nigerian security forces and their allies (self-defence militia) against the population. Ultimately, the engagement within the group is more the result of a need for protection and thirst for revenge than a zeal for religiosity (Amnesty International, 2012).

The 2009 crackdown in Maiduguri, in which 200 BH combatants died ("Hundreds Dead as Boko Haram Clashes with Nigerian Army in Maiduguri", 2015), including their leader Mohamed Yusuf who died in police custody ("Nigeria Sect Head Dies in Custody", 2009) contributed to a further radicalisation of the group, galvanised its followers and boosted its capacities to recruit locally. The chaos in neighbouring Libya with the fall of Gaddafi and the arrival of experienced fighters and weapons helped the movement mutate from an isolated sect to a full-blown insurgent Islamist movement. Also, the political and economic marginalisation of northern Nigeria and the structural violence led people to ask for a fairer and less corrupt mode of governance that was supposed to be found in the Sharia. Thus, in many ways, it is the violence of the state that contributed to the radicalisation of individuals and the group. However, it should be said that some efforts have been made since then.

As explained by a 2016 ICG report, "this pattern – Jihadist's exploitation of chances created by war and state collapse, their rise facilitated by the violence and mistake of others – is common." Indeed, Jihadist groups take advantage of the mistakes of the security forces during times of crisis to radicalise people. The latter engage or support Jihadist groups in search of protection rather than in quest of/conviction for their ideology. It is one of the armed groups' most significant assets.

Similarly, foreign military interventions represent another factor that contributes to the radicalisation of a young population that wants to keep a jealous watch over the integrity

of their country. Military intervention and foreign boots on the ground that are not familiar with the traditions and norms of local populations are likely to do more harm than good. This is the case mainly when indiscriminate violence is used against non-combatants, which fans the flames of anger and frustration and anti-Western sentiment. Jihadist groups capitalise on that and use foreign military interventions to fuel their propaganda that claims Western powers are colonisers. The French military Operation Serval and Operation Barkhane in Mali did not only have positive consequences such as dislodging Jihadist groups from northern Mali but also had negative consequences on the ground. While it is true that they helped to oust the Islamist militant groups from northern Mali, their ill-advised use of violence and the lack of a long-term strategy left another space open for AQIM and now JNIM to fill once more. There are regions today in Mali, such as Kidal, where the influence and support of the populations for Jihadist groups such as Ansar Dine are growing because of their aversion to the French Operation Barkhane forces. Recently, several demonstrations broke out in Kidal (Richard, 2017), where one could read on the walls "France is the terrorist... Barkhane soldiers are thieves... France violates human rights... Enough is enough… Macron your army is terrorising us" ("Mali : Barkhane, la force française, entre le marteau et l'enclume", 2017). Not only did the military intervention not allow the country to recover its territorial integrity but it failed to contain the spread of violence to other localities and even other countries.

What's Next?

AQIM, and now JNIM and other armed Islamist groups will continue to adapt to new local and regional realities, exploit local grievances, and no military intervention will get rid of the Jihadist threat in the Sahel. Sahelian states must understand that to eliminate these groups force alone is not enough. They need to avoid repeating the mistakes that enable the rise of such groups in the first place.

AQIM has been dislodged from northern Mali. Counterterrorism operations have inflicted severe damage on the group as AQIM lost many soldiers, senior figures, territory, training camps and weapons. The military intervention contributed to AQIM's regionalisation and to its merger with others. The group has a foot in southern Libya and has capitalised on the adverse conditions that make the Sahel a fertile ground to expand its activities to Tunisia, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan. Despite an apparent political will to combat armed Islamist groups and the desire of Sahelian states to cooperate, as proven by the G5 Sahel joint force (FC-G5S), the problems that at the beginning enabled AQIM and other armed groups to appear and to infiltrate the local social structures

persist and the new organisation (JNIM) will continue to feed off them (ICG, 2016). To fight these groups without the cooperation and support of the local population is impossible. It is for this reason that not only this force (the FC-G5S) but also the local and political leadership must (re-)gain the trust of its populations.

Recommendations

It is beyond argument that the violence of extremist groups, be it Jihadist or separatist, is echoing the violence of the state, whether it is physical and active or symbolic and passive. Sahelian countries need to regain legitimacy in the eyes of their populations. The security/military option alone is not enough. In fact, alone, it has contributed significantly to the lack of trust between the people and the central state because of its violence.

A one-size-fits-all strategy is not possible. The diversity of groups, the terrain in which they operate and their relationships with the local communities, as well as the disparities between Sahelian states themselves regarding military and development capabilities, makes it hard to have one solution. Instead, a case-by-case approach is recommended. It is crucial to understand the local dynamics and to tackle the problem separately for each country. Therefore, any solution to the Jihadist threat in the Sahel needs to include a two-pronged strategy: a military one and a development one.

On the Military Level

Better Cooperation, Capacity-Building Activities and CM Activities
- Sahelian states and their Western allies, especially the European Union (EU), should cooperate more and better by sharing intelligence, information and expertise. The G5 Sahel, for instance, must coordinate its work with other regional actors, and the fact that a pivotal actor like Algeria has not been part of this orgnaisation might constitute an obstacle, among others, to its effectiveness.
- Security sector reform is needed in most Sahelian countries that have neither the logistical nor the financial resources to build serious military capabilities. For instance, Mali has only 6,900 troops in the army, and 4,800 paramilitaries including the gendarmerie, the national police and the Republican Guard and none are trained and experienced to fight the plethora of Jihadist groups that are operating in the region. Burkina Faso, on the other hand, has only between 11,000 and 12,000 troops. Chad's army, reputed to be one of the best of the region, has only 30,000 soldiers.

- The EU, the United States (US) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) should avoid a direct military presence and intervention and cooperate more with Sahelian states and strong regional actors in the region (for example, Algeria) in capacity-building strategies. The EU, the US and NATO should help Sahelian states modernise and professionalise their armed forces and have full control of their territories. It is crucial to have a rule of law component in each type of training to enhance civil-military relations. It is, for instance, essential for the security forces to have a code of conduct, avoid abusing their power, respect human dignity and so on. Sahelian populations are distrustful of their security forces and perceive them as the "enemy". Even if such perceptions will require time to change, it is crucial to work on civil-military relations so that citizens of any Sahelian state understand that the police or the military are not enemies but are there to protect them.

Negotiations and Dialogue with the "Other" When Possible

When a group is utterly opposed to consultation, it will make it clear (the case of the GIA in Algeria or IS today in Syria and Iraq). However, when a group is open to dialogue discreet lines of communications must be opened. The Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) in Algeria is an excellent example of a successful Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR).

In Mali, for instance, opening lines of negotiations (when it was still possible) with Ansar Dine (led by Iyad Ag Ghali) would have been challenging, yet peace without him, especially in Kidal's region, is unobtainable (ICG, 2016). A group such as BH, which has national goals, should be engaged. Governments should be pragmatic: it is impossible to continue to ignore negotiating with these groups given their role, their importance and their ties to local communities. Offering peaceful political participation could be an alternative for the group to abandon violence. Opening avenues for peaceful political expression is crucial. People from the whole religious spectrum should have a non-violent space in the political arena. Indeed, labelling groups as "extremists" and "terrorists" is also a way to reject their right to exist and hence refuse any dialogue. That is very dangerous because this strategy can antagonise them and lead them to adopt a more extreme tactic and go underground. This is particularly true when violence is used against peaceful Salafist groups.

Rehabilitation of Former Fighters

It is crucial to think about transitional justice. People from both sides (security forces and militants/rebels) who have been responsible for atrocities should be tried and sent to jail for the acts they committed. In Nigeria, the government missed an opportunity in 2009

when BH was open to dialogue and the group asked for the person responsible for killing their leaders to be held accountable.

Moreover, DDR has become an integral part of post-conflict efforts. Instead of an "all security" strategy, DDR should be a requirement as it is a crucial component of the stabilisation of a post-conflict society and sustainable peace. What the Nigerian government has been doing lately by rehabilitating former BH members is a good step to follow. Former fighters (when willing to participate) need to be empowered through entrepreneurial training. Rehabilitation procedures to reintegrate them into society and in their communities are essential. Social enterprises, industries and public companies should help in their rehabilitation. Giving these former fighters a purpose in life, a meaning and a sense of pride and dignity is crucial to their demobilisation and reintegration. The Algerian and Indonesian initiatives proved decisive. Former extremist detainees were rehabilitated and had been offered jobs and hence became fully-fledged members of their societies (Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2017d).

Rethink Targeted Killings

Even if targeted killings can be useful in some places and at certain times, they also feed the propaganda of Jihadist groups and leave local populations resentful (ICG, 2016). Targeted killings are not going to defeat these groups. They could radicalise them even further and thus increase their threat. Indeed, an acephalous organisation can lead to the emergence of hardliners. The death of a leader such as Bel Mokhtar should not be considered (if it happens) as a victory. AQIM's second-in-command after Droudkel is the one who is holding the group together. The death of such a figure will not help reduce the threat coming from AQIM; it might on the contrary lead to the atomisation of the group, which will lead to several splinter groups or maybe to the overtaking of the group by another hardliner organisation such as IS, which is now trying to gain a foothold in the Sahel.

On the Development Level

On the development level, there are several angles to tackle and here especially a one-size-fits-all strategy is not possible. Local specificities should be taken into consideration while development plans are designed. But development plans must all strive for:

The Integration of Peripheral Communities

Poor rural communities should be better integrated and represented on the local and national level to strengthen their attachment to central states in all Sahelian countries.

Central states should better protect their populations by providing them with security but also by fighting corruption and poor governance. This integration should especially target youths that are more prone to violent extremism than other categories and governments should promote access to education for these vulnerable and excluded populations. Free and compulsory primary and secondary school should be more than a political statement and should be translated on the ground.

A Well-Designed Focused Youth Policy

Vocational training should be part of a national youth policy that would give youths the means to self-employ instead of counting on the public sector to absorb the workforce. The Sahelian state should invest in a youth policy that would provide young people with better professional opportunities, career advice, start-up funds and alternatives for those who dropped out of school. Articulating the acquisition of skills and vocational integration, developing training/integration schemes adapted to the rural environment and, finally, encouraging the social and political integration of young people are all reasonable steps to start countering violent extremism.

Invest in Tourism and Infrastructure

Investing in towns such as Kidal, Timbuktu and Tamenrasset would benefit locals and tourists while security would be improved. The insecurity in Mali, for instance, had a terrible impact on the tourism sector, and hence smuggling activities increased as populations lost their sources of income. If tourism is developed, it starts benefiting Tuareg guides, hotels and local communities who would have too much to lose by letting kidnappings and smuggling activities develop and ruin their businesses.

Conclusion

Development activities take decades to progress. In the meantime, JNIM and its allies will continue to adapt to local situations and exploit the fragile political and socioeconomic conditions that have been prevailing in the Sahel to better anchor their actions in the region. We are going to continue to hear about Jihadist groups, whether they are JNIM, IS, BH and Ansar Dine in the Sahel, as long as we continue to have fragile states and societies in which social contracts between populations and leaders are broken. "Jihadism offers easy, 'grab-and-go' solutions to complex problems; it is an equal employer that provides a brotherly community, a glorious cause, and a thrilling adventure" (Ghanaem-Yazbeck, 2017a). As a result, JNIM and its allies will remain a regional threat, especially since this new organisation might lead to a higher coordination on the ground

and hence more attacks and more sophisticated ones not only in Mali but throughout most of West Africa. And even if these groups do not seem to have the will to attack the US and Europe, they will continue to strike their interests within the region.

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Reaching the Root Causes of Fragility?
An Assessment of Foreign Interventions in the G5
Sahel*

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Introduction

This chapter analyses ongoing foreign interventions in the Sahel and describes the main challenges and opportunities for a better operational link between the goals of promoting sustainable development, providing humanitarian assistance and implementing political and security measures in support of long-term stability in a region characterised by growing threats and violent extremism. Specifically, the chapter appraises the implementation of an integrated approach towards achieving stabilisation, conflict prevention and peace-building and the prospects for the regionalisation of Sahelian strategies.

The Sahel is a complex geopolitical space. On the one hand, the topography of the region and a history of de facto autonomy in some areas of Mali, Mauritania and Niger made government control hard to exercise. Sovereign functions of the state, such as providing assistance, security and protection, development and public services, have been in most cases insufficient and led to a marginalisation of populations, short of education and employment opportunities. This led to tensions with the central governments and contributed to the radicalisation of youths. On the other hand, the international community's capacity to "reach the root causes" has been very limited through a complex interplay of conflicting geopolitical interests, lack of capacities to execute and monitor projects, problems of coordination among international organisations and countries providing assistance and lack of financial and logistical resources.

As the chapter will show, the principles of integration and regionalisation, which appear in nearly all strategic documents produced by international actors, failed to translate into practical coordination in the field. A Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) study calculated that 17 international strategies linking short-term security with long-term development objectives have been produced by organisations that are active in the region (Tobie, 2017, p. 1). Foreign actors are rhetorically implementing integrated strategies but practical coordination on the ground remains limited (Helly, 2015), with development initiatives often blocked by a lack of access to the most insecure (and more in need of aid) areas. Intertwined layers of vulnerability, conflict, corruption and competing interests characterise an entire region in which local communities are easy prey to criminal networks and terrorist organisations. Furthermore, while strategic frameworks for intervention in the Sahel all imply a regional dimension (see, for instance, the EU Strategy for the Sahel) and a strong emphasis on transnational threats, responses in the field remain embedded in national contexts or framed in bilateral agreements for security assistance. While new initiatives such as the G5 Sahel or the launch of the Alliance for

the Sahel should be welcomed as important steps towards a logic of regional interventions, they have yet to translate into concrete commitments and outcomes. Finally, despite the call for comprehensive responses, military engagements remain predominant, overshadowing a truly developmental approach. In addition to France, which is a major security player in the Sahel through Operation Barkhane, the engagement of the United States (US) has been growing in the past years and has been characterised by a stark increase in military deployments for counterterrorism operations (Sy, 2014).

For these reasons, the Sahel is a test case and a hard case for the nexus between security and development. By taking a closer look at the main types of foreign interventions, this chapter makes the case for the implementation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus in the Sahel and how it can affect the regional pathways towards peace. The chapter takes the geopolitical definition of the Sahel as G5 countries, including Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad.[1] Accordingly, the first part of the chapter outlines the main drivers of vulnerability at the regional and country levels and presents a multilateral framework for integrated responses, introducing the HDP nexus. Subsequently, the chapter takes stock of the main interventions carried out by security, development and humanitarian actors in the region. The third part of the chapter describes the main gaps and lessons learned for the implementation of the HDP framework. Finally, the conclusion offers three practical recommendations to implement integrated actions based on concrete, actionable priorities that may restore the credibility and effectiveness of foreign interventions.

Drivers of Fragility and Integrated Frameworks for Intervention in the G5 Sahel

Drivers of fragility in the Sahel are manifold, interrelated and multifaceted, making it one of the most vulnerable regions in the world. Sahelian countries perform very poorly in almost all vulnerability indicators, with Niger, Chad and Mali languishing at the bottom of the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI) (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2016). Over the years, violent extremism has been fuelled in local communities by a long list of structural drivers, including pressures for land and resources, unemployment, recurrent political crises, high child and maternal mortality, low levels of education, environmental degradation, governance deficits. The Sahel's population is growing rapidly (Bruce & Bongaarts, 2009). It is heavily dependent on agriculture, pastoralism and livestock farming, which are particularly sensitive to climate change and violent shocks, such as wars (Cooke & Sanderson, 2016, p. 5), and hence

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1 Therefore, the chapter deliberately leaves out other important dimensions and players, such as the evolving dynamics of the Lake Chad Basin and counter-insurgency operations to defeat Boko Haram, undertaken by Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria. This analytical choice allowed the author to narrow down into the evolving trends and interventions in the G5, leaving the LCB analysis to future research.

prone to humanitarian crises. Because of these particularly challenging operational conditions, the Sahel has been at the forefront of attempts by the international community to implement integrated approaches, coordinating between humanitarian, development and security interventions.

Main Drivers of Fragility in the Region

An unstable political environment and weak institutions have exacerbated the situation in the Sahel, widening the gap between corrupt political leaders and citizens, with almost all states (Chad, Mali, Niger) undergoing long periods of military rules, at the end of which democratic norms have struggled to emerge. As government authorities seek to protect their sources of wealth and richness, in the upper part of the region armed groups have taken control of territories, establishing ad hoc alliances with local leaders and among different groups (insurgents, ethnic militias, criminal gangs, smugglers, and so on).

As political leaders failed to reform national institutional foundations and struggled to retain their privileges, transnational criminal networks have emerged as a prominent geopolitical and economic factor in the region. These networks are more than a driver of fragility: they are an extremely successful business, characterised by growing revenues and flourishing smuggling enterprises, which de facto erased territorial boundaries. This thriving criminal economy has expanded dramatically in the last 15 years. Two types of trafficking are particularly disruptive for stability in the region: arms and humans. The fall of the regime in Libya (2011) reinvigorated a flow of small arms and light weapons into the region, with a surge in trade of assault rifles, machine guns and grenades, according to United Nations (UN) reports. Human trafficking has exploded in the last five years, with migrants across sub-Saharan Africa fleeing towards European coastlines through open routes in the Sahel and Libya (Cooke & Sanderson, 2016).

Core violent extremist groups and Jihadist movements have been exploiting these vulnerabilities to mobilise adherents, trigger upheaval and subvert national institutions. Boko Haram and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) are the most prominent of these groups. AQIM, in particular, is among the wealthier and more robust al-Qaeda affiliates, with a regional focus that shifted in time from Algeria (where it began) to the broader Sahara-Sahel region, recruiting volunteers from Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal. The fact that AQIM and its allied groups in the Sahel face a deteriorating political context is an advantage to push back the military campaign against them and hold authority over certain areas thanks to an agile network of alliances. In particular, the deterioration of security in the northern and central parts of Mali, including inter-communal

tensions, economic hardship and a prolonged political crisis, will offer new opportunities to scale up activities.

Country-Specific Trends: Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mauritania

Moving from the regional trends to country-specific dynamics, Mali shows the greatest risks, given the obstacles to achieving a sustainable peace, recurrence of crises and growing security threats since the secession of northern Mali, renamed Azawad by allied radicalised and armed Islamist groups in 2012. Notwithstanding the signing of the Algiers Agreement (15 May 2015) by the Malian state and by regional and international mediators (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, African Union [AU], France, the UN, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), OIC and the European Union [EU]) and by the Coordination of Movements for Azawad (CMA) (20 June 2015), peace is struggling to be consolidated. In May 2017, newly-elected French President Emmanuel Macron backed a joint force of the G5 Sahelian countries as the main counterterrorism force, paving the way for a gradual exit of French troops. Currently, the coexistence of different security missions in Mali, under multiple commands, has not made the security situation any better, with multiple armed groups still running around Mali and the threat environment remaining precarious.[2]

Niger and Chad have been making "heroic efforts" to cope with turmoil in the region, in terms of handling conflict-inducted displacements, reducing permeability to security and terrorist threats, thereby appearing as "fragile islands of stability in a region torn by conflicts" (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2015). At the same time, the inability of the international community to adequately address growing humanitarian pressures and security threats, combined with rising violent extremism and a spike in terrorist attacks, has contributed to weakening the states' capacity to detect, deter and contain violence within and across borders. Niger is surrounded by the Jihadist threat of the Tuareg Malian rebellion and the Salafist insurgents of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Its porous borders are regularly crossed by armed groups and smugglers. Against a backdrop of massive refugee flows, which increased the number of Niger village inhabitants from 3,000 to 14,000, Niger suffered from repeated attacks by Boko Haram on the islands of Lake Chad targeting military and civilians (2 March, 29 April 2015, 4 June 2016). Chad has a frontline military engagement to contain and fight Jihadist and Islamist expansion in the region. Since 2015, Chad military units have been engaged in an intensification of combats with Boko Haram at the border between Nigeria and Cameroon. Chad and Cameroon also aimed at protecting the vital axis between Douala and N'Djamena. Chad's military engagement is

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2 MINUSMA is the UN's deadliest ongoing peace operation. In the past four years, 118 peacekeepers have been killed. See Sieff, K. (2017, February 17). The world s most dangerous U.N. mission. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2017/02/17/the-worlds-deadliest-u-n-peacekeeping-mission/?utm_term=.98acf30a2ac8

part of a regional and international initiative supported by the G5 and French military, which was reinforced by President François Hollande at the second summit dedicated to the fight against Boko Haram in Abuja (14 May 2016) and at the Paris Conference (17 June 2016).

Burkina Faso's democratic transition following the ousting of President Blaise Compaoré (31 October 2014) exposed itself to the ongoing Jihadist threats in bordering countries, witnessing a spike in terrorism. President R. C. Kaboré was confronted with another terrorist strike by AQIM in Ouagadougou in January 2016 and August 2017 due to Burkina Faso's support to French Operation Barkhane that killed almost 50 people. The Jihadist security threat, the spread of terrorist violence in Burkina Faso territory and the porous nature of the 1,000 km long border with Mali, led President Kaboré to deploy a part of the military contingent to north of the country where the al-Mourabitoun group (Moktar Belmoktar) and Macina Liberation Front (Amadoun Kouffa), both affiliated to AQIM, attacked security outposts in Koutougou and Intangom (May 2016).

Finally, Mauritania has been confronting a terrorism threat since 2005. AQIM launched a series of attacks in Mauritania between 2005 and 2011, murdering foreign tourists and aid workers, attacking diplomatic and government facilities and ambushing Mauritanian soldiers and gendarmes. A successful strategy against terrorism that combines dialogue with the terrorists and military actions has prevented the country from further terrorist attacks since 2011. At the same time, Mauritania's economy has experienced significant reduction in poverty, in particular during 2008-2014, as the poverty rate dropped from 44.5% to 33%. In the same period, extreme poverty halved, with the rate declining from 10.8% to 5.6%, based on the international absolute extreme poverty line of $1.90. Poverty reduction has been reinforced by positive dynamics in terms of inequality and vulnerability (The World Bank, 2017). This has to a partial extent alleviated the fragility and vulnerability of the country to tensions, conflict and radicalisation.

Integrated Foreign Responses: Towards the Implementation of the HDP Nexus in the Sahel

The HDP can be defined as a "new way of working" in fragile settings, emanating from the 2016 Agenda for Humanity.[3] It is a promising framework to address the challenges of the Sahel. By recognising that the problems of poverty, conflict and forced displacement are deeply interlinked and must be addressed in a comprehensive way, the nexus establishes operational linkages between sustainable development,

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3 See https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/5358

humanitarian action and conflict prevention and peace-building, while at the same time stressing the importance of diplomatic and political solutions to support peace and security. More specifically, the HDP nexus aims to promote, at the earliest opportunity, coherent ways of working among actors, including local and national capacities to address risks and vulnerabilities, enhanced responses for stabilisation and early recovery, as well as conflict prevention measures. The approach has four main principles of engagement, which are highly relevant to address fragility in the Sahel: (1) work collaboratively on the ground, reducing the gap between humanitarian and development interventions while accelerating peace; (2) enhance complementarity across institutional boundaries; (3) leverage the comparative advantage of each community of actors; (4) seek the convergence of mandates, in full respect of the humanitarian principle of neutrality.[4]

Integrated Approaches to Conflicts: Origins and Evolution

Conceptually, the HDP nexus emanates from a long process of norm diffusion, triggered by the peace-building agenda to address the multi-dimensional nature of insecurity and conflicts through coordinated responses beyond just military means and a system-wide approach overcoming barriers between sectors of interventions. The concept of peace-building entered the international politics lexicon in 1992, with the report *An Agenda for Peace* released by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (United Nations, 1992) and raised international awareness of the need for comprehensive missions to consolidate peace and prevent the recurrence of conflicts. Actors developed their own concepts of a comprehensive approach (Barnett, Kim, O Donnell & Sitea, 2007). For instance, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) adapted its operational planning to better support civilian reconstruction and development, defining a comprehensive approach as civil-military coordination (NATO, 2010). The EU developed the concept of a comprehensive approach (EU CA), understood as the strategically coherent use of EU tools and instruments for external action in crisis or conflict situations, implying the joined-up deployment of EU instruments and resources (European Commission, 2013; Pirozzi, 2013); and, more recently, it expanded it into the concept of an "integrated approach", which extends the scope and ambition of the EU CA and strengthens the way the EU brings together institutions, expertise and instruments, working with member states in prevention, peace-building, crisis response and stabilisation (European External Action Service [EEAS], 2017a; Tardy, 2017). Since the 2011 World Development Report, the World Bank has promoted a differentiated and risk-based approach to interventions in fragile and conflict situations, promoting early recovery through a coherent, joined-up approach using all instruments available and breaking the silos between internal units. States also

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4 See also "Advancing the new way of working", background paper prepared by OCHA and UNDP, Istanbul, 18-19 May. Retrieved from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/istanbul_nwow_background_paper.pdf

developed their own "whole-of-government" approaches (in particular, the United Kingdom (UK), the US, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands), establishing greater synergies between diverse ministries and agencies to address common peace-building challenges.

The HDP Nexus as a Framework for Interventions in the Sahel

Notwithstanding these institutional and largely capital or HQ-based developments, the growth in volume, cost and length of humanitarian assistance provision in the past ten years, combined with an increase in fragility and volatility around the globe hampering development interventions, recurring humanitarian crises and a deteriorating security environment, has given new urgency to the long-standing discussion on integration. In the wake of the crises in Mali and the fallout of the civil war in Libya, the Sahel region has been put at the centre of this debate, being identified by international actors as a priority, although according to their specific needs, interests and perceptions. This makes the HDP nexus a compelling framework to harmonise and coordinate interventions in Sahelian countries.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the conclusions of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 provided the conceptual framework and identified the need to strengthen the HDP nexus around the notion of "collective outcomes", "comparative advantage" and "multi-year timeframe", which are at the core of the new way of working. A collective outcome is a "commonly agreed quantifiable and measurable result or impact in reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities, and increasing their resilience, requiring the combined effort of different actors." A comparative advantage is the "capacity and expertise of individuals, groups or institutions to meet the needs and contribute to risk and vulnerability reduction, over the capacity of another actor." Finally, multi-year timeframe refers to analysing, strategising, planning and financing operations that build over several years to achieve context-specific and, at times, dynamic targets.[5]

By analysing the implementation of foreign interventions in the Sahel, the remaining sections of this chapter will assess the extent to which the integrated strategies concretely translate into integrated actions, the degree to which the comparative advantage is leveraged, and whether collective outcomes are being achieved or not. Conclusions will show that whereas the international community has been successful in setting multi-year timeframes for joint analysis and planning, progress has been limited in fostering the harmonisation and convergence of mandates, and initiatives are falling short of achieving collective outcomes.

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5 The three definitions are drawn from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2017). New way of working. OCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch.

Mapping Foreign Interventions in the G5 Sahel

Attempts by the international community to link the provision of security with development assistance, particularly in the framework of post-conflict peace-building and conflict prevention, have often fallen short of expectations or encountered different challenges, in the field as well as in the coordination and implementation of policy instruments, due to institutional constraints, different organisational cultures or concerns and competition for funding. Despite being explicitly integrated into the international agenda through repeated commitments by states and international organisations, the gap between security and development in foreign interventions is still wide, exacerbating internal and external drivers of country fragility. The gap is widened by a growing incoherence of political demands in donor's domestic politics, as the public debate on migration and refugee flows in the EU and the US easily falls prey to populist arguments, making it difficult for decision-makers to privilege long-term policies and investments to reduce fragility in third countries over short-term needs in their own constituencies.

That said, international efforts in the Sahel have increased in the past years, led by France, the US and the EU. There are at present two core security deployments in the Sahel: (1) France's Operation Barkhane, which is the core military deployment and the main security umbrella to ensure a minimum level of stability allowing other actors (development, humanitarian) to operate; (2) the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which is the other core security provider, tasked with supporting the political process in Mali and carrying out a number of security-related assignments. Furthermore, from a political standpoint, the regional institutional framework for coordination and cooperation in development and security affairs (including counterterrorism) is provided by the G5 Sahel, formed in February 2014 and whose headquarters are in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The G5 deployed a joint security force (*Force conjointe du G5 Sahel, FC-G5S*) in June 2017 to address terrorism and the challenges posed by transnational organised crime in the region, endorsed by the UN Security Council resolution 2359 (United Nations, 2017d); and recently by the Alliance for the Sahel, established in July 2017 (Conseil des Ministres franco-allemand, 2017) as a joint initiative of the EU, France and Germany, in cooperation with the World Bank, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to enhance the stability and development of the region. The initiative focuses on rural development, job creation for youths, energy infrastructure, good governance and security with the support of the EU's integrated approach framework to address security and development.

Operation Barkhane, MINUSMA, the G5 and the Alliance for the Sahel form the four pillars of current regional responses to extremism and violence.

Table 1. The four pillars of responses to extremism and violence in the G5 Sahel

	Year launched	Type of initiative	Budget	Strength	Contributing countries
BARKHANE	2014	Military operation	€ 700 million (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2017)	4,000 (Ministère de la Défense, 2017)	France
MINUSMA	2013	Peacekeeping mission	$1,048,000,000 (2017/2018) (UN, 2017a)	14,445[6]	UN
G5 SAHEL	2014	Political framework for cooperation	€ 430 million (for the Joint Force[7] only, pledged)	5,000 (Joint Force)	Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad
ALLIANCE FOR THE SAHEL	2017	Development platform for cooperation	N/A	N/A	France, Germany, EU, World Bank, UNDP, ADB

The European Union in the Sahel

Considering the geographical proximity of the Sahel to the southern neighbourhood, the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel aimed to prevent the potential spill-over effects of terrorism, illicit trafficking, radicalisation and extremism spreading in West Africa since 2011. Adopted on 21 March 2011 and encompassing Mauritania, Mali and Niger, the EU comprehensive approach was extended to Burkina Faso and Chad on 17 March 2014. The regional stability of the Sahel, the prevention and countering of radicalisation, the creation of appropriate conditions for youth, the regulation of migration flows, the border management and fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime were all priorities set out in the EU Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020, which implements the EU comprehensive approach. Considering the interconnection of poverty, domestic instability, state fragility, demography, food crises, fragile governance, trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants and radicalisation, EU priorities are carried out by three EU Common Security

6 Including: 10,891 troops, 35 military observers, 341 military staff officers, 1,679 police officers, 1,350 civilian staff (702 local staff), 149 volunteers. United Nations Peacekeeping. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics /factsheet.shtml#MINUS

7 Financing and material support for the Joint Force is in progress. As of January 2018, the EU has allocated € 50 million under the African Peace Facility. The five Sahelian states will contribute € 10 million each. The French effort amounts to € 8 million in the form of logistical support, to which must be added operational support. The US has earmarked $60 million for the states of the Joint Force. New support from European states has been recorded, as well as pledges from Middle Eastern states (Saudi Arabia for € 100 million, the United Arab Emirates for € 30 million). Additional bilateral contributions are expected during the Partners' Conference provided for under resolution 2359. French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2018). G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Sahel Alliance. Retrieved from https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/defence-security/crisis-and-conflicts/g5-sahel-joint-force-and-alliance-for-the-sahel/

and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions, three main EU development funds and one EU humanitarian assistance instrument in the Sahel.

CSDP Missions

Given the importance of irregular migratory movements from Niger through the Sahel, the Council Decision 2012/392/CFSP (16 July 2012) launched the civilian CSDP mission EUCAP SAHEL Niger in Agadez and Niamey. Gathering 50 international experts, EUCAP SAHEL Niger aims to manage border and migration flows, supporting the interoperability of the Nigerian Police, Gendarmerie and National Guard, strengthening the technical competences of Niger's security actors and Nigerian security forces' training policies, management of human resources and logistics for fighting terrorism and organised crime. EUCAP Sahel Niger expenditure was intended to be covered by about €24,355,000 between 16 July 2012 and 15 July 2015 according to Council Decision 2014/482/CFSP (22 July 2014). Council Decision 2016/1172/CFSP (18 July 2016) extended the mission mandate until 15 July 2018 and agreed on a budget of €26.3 million for the first-year mandate.

Considered as a root of the ongoing Malian domestic crisis with cross-borders and regional repercussions, the need to improve governance practices was tackled by the civilian CSDP mission EUCAP Sahel Mali launched by Council Decision 2014/219/CFSP (15 April 2014). Based in Bamako, EUCAP Sahel Mali aims to enable Malian authorities to restore and maintain the constitutional and democratic order as well as the conditions for a lasting peace in Mali and to restore and maintain the authority and legitimacy of the state throughout the Malian territory through an effective redeployment of its administration. The mission provides experts in strategic advice and training to the Malian Police, Gendarmerie and National Guard and the relevant ministries in order to support reform in the security sector. After benefiting from a budget of €36,675,000 between 15 April 2014 and 14 January 2017 (Council of the European Union, 2017), Council Decision 2017/50/CFSP (11 January 2017) extended the mandate by two years to 14 January 2018 with a budget of €29.7 million for the first-year period.

In order to continue providing military training and advice to the Malian armed forces, the "non-executive military mission" EUTM Mali was launched on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution, such as S/RES/2085 (20 December 2012), by Council Decision 2013/34/CFSP (17 January 2013). Deploying 580 servicemen and women from 23 EU member states, EUTM Mali aims to contribute to the restoration of their military capacity with a view to enabling them to conduct military operations to restore Malian territorial

integrity and reduce the threat posed by terrorist groups without being involved in combat operations (Council of the European Union, 2013). Given the Malian army's failures when faced with northern radicalised armed groups and the recrudescence of terrorist attacks, the mandate of EUTM Mali was extended three times and benefited from a €12.3 million budget between 17 January 2013 and 15 April 2014 (Council of the European Union, 2013), €27,700,000 between and 19 May 2014 to 18 May 2016 (Council of the European Union, 2014) and €33,400,000 between 19 May 2016 and 18 May 2018 (Council of the European Union, 2016).

Global and transborder threats are also tackled by the EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) supporting security initiatives and peace-building activities in partner countries and focusing on drugs, landmines, uprooted people, crisis management, rehabilitation and reconstruction (European Commission, 2018a).

EU Development Funds and Humanitarian Assistance to the Sahel
The interconnection between security instability and socioeconomic failures in the Sahel led the EU to supplement its CSDP missions by providing financial assistance to Sahelian countries in order to tackle challenges the region is faced with, such as demographic pressure, institutional weaknesses and governance, weak social and economic infrastructures, environmental stress and insufficient resilience to food and nutrition crises (European Commission, 2018c). The EU Trust Fund for Africa launched at the Valletta Summit on Migration in November 2015 approved a budget of about €1,001.8 million for the Sahel and Lake Chad area, although only €228.5 has been paid (11 September 2017) (European Commission, 2018b).

Under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF),[8] created by an intergovernmental agreement (June 2013) outside the EU budget, the National Indicative Programmes (NIP 2014-2020) allocated, for instance, €623 million to Burkina Faso divided between governance (€325M), health (€80M), food security (€190M), civil society (€21M) and other (€7M) sectors for the period (European Commission, 2014). Under the 11th EDF, the Regional Indicative Programmes (RIP 2014-2020) allocated €1.15 billion to West Africa and mandated the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and ECOWAS with the implementation of the 11th EDF in order to address peace, security and regional stability, regional economic integration, resilience, food, and nutritional security issues in the Sahel (European Commission, 2015).

Food insecurity chronically affected the Sahel, paving the way for the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR) launched on the initiative of Kristalina Georgieva,

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8 The total financial resources of the 11th EDF amount to €30.5 billion for the period 2014-2020. https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments/european-development-fund_en

Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, and Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner for Development (June 2012) (European Commission, 2013). Benefiting from a €1.5 billion budget under the 11th EDF (2014-2020), AGIR aims to address four priorities consisting of restoring and strengthening the livelihoods and social protection of the most vulnerable populations, strengthening health and nutrition, strengthening food production and incomes of vulnerable households and their access to food, and strengthening governance in food and nutrition security.

Coordination between Strategies on the Sahel

The presence, activities and role of the EU in the Sahel are not exclusive and take into consideration the presence of multiple international and regional stakeholders in the region. The EU specified that the implementation of its Regional Action Plan (RAP) will be carried out with the full ownership and under the primary responsibility of the countries concerned and in coordination with key international and regional partners (Council of the European Union, 2015). This coordination may take place informally four times a year between the European External Action Service (EEAS) geographical departments focusing on Western Africa and units in charge of logistical and technical aspects in order to coordinate the activities conducted on the ground by the different EU missions in the Sahel. The presence of the EU High Representative, the EEAS General Secretary and the EU Special Representatives for the Sahel in New York for a G5 side meeting at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is also a way to informally coordinate with UN missions. The newly launched Sahel Alliance (14 July 2017) aimed at enhancing the stability and development of the region is also important in this regard to improve the coordination of the international assistance to the Sahel.

There is also coordination in the Sahel between the EU missions themselves and other regional and international actors present in the region. The case of Mali may be taken as an example. UNSC Resolution 2100 (25 April 2013) welcomed the establishment of a Joint Task Force for Mali by the AU, ECOWAS, the EU and the UN in order to coordinate actions and responses to terrorist threats spreading in northern Mali. This coordination mission was entrusted to MINUSMA (S/RES/2085, S/RES/2164) and formally respected in article 7 of the mandate for EUTM Mali (2013/34/CFSP). The leadership of international military missions to Mali (MINUSMA, EUTM and Barkhane) meets at the operational and national military level on a biweekly basis and established an exchange of liaison officers (MINUSMA, EUTM) to ensure cooperation at all levels (Dijkstra et al., 2017). The leadership of international police missions to Mali (EUCAP, MINUSMA) meets on a quarterly basis for strategic purposes, while a EUCAP Head of Operations and MINUSMA Deputy Police Commissioner meet on a monthly basis (Dijkstra et al., 2017).

France in the Sahel

Operation Barkhane

Named after a crescent-shaped dune in the Sahara Desert, the French military Operation Barkhane took over Operation Épervier (since 1986) and Operation Serval, which was triggered in 2013 at the request of the Malian government in order to contain the northern Jihadist raids threatening Bamako. After transferring the stabilisation mission of the country to Malian partners and UN forces, such as MINUSMA, Operation Barkhane (31 July 2014) aims to counter terrorism, fighting the Salafi Jihadist armed groups throughout the Sahel region and becoming the "French pillar of counterterrorism in the Sahel region." Unlike Operation Serval, which was limited to Mali, the theatre of intervention of Operation Barkhane was extended to G5 Sahelian countries (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad).

Due to the cross-border nature of the terrorist threat, Operation Barkhane is based on three permanent support bases in Mali (Gao), Niger (Niamey) and Chad (N'Djamena). These three permanent bases are supported by three detachments of the operational military partnership (DIA OMP) based in Mali (Ansongo, Timbuktu) and Niger (Tilabéry), contributing to the flexibility of Operation Barkhane's military units, which do not intend to establish a permanent base. The aerial coverage of the area is ensured by seventeen combat and manoeuvre helicopters, eight Mirage 2000 C/D/N, from six to ten tactical and strategic airplanes and five drones, which are spread over two military air bases in Chad (N'Djamena) and Niger (Niamey) (Ministère de la Défense, 2017).

With a terrestrial, air-land and air component, Operation Barkhane develops the capability to conduct operations simultaneously throughout its area of operation. Since 27 July 2017, 4,000 soldiers have operated from a single Joint Theater Command stationed in N'Djamena (Chad) under the command of Major General Bruno Guibert. The land area to be covered combined with the cross-border terrorist threat to be fought pose a logistical challenge to Operation Barkhane. "Since the beginning of the operation: over 50,000 hours of flights (JFAC) were conducted, more than 30,000 tonnes of freight were transported, nearly 800,000 rations were delivered and more than 230,000 m3 of fuel were consumed" (Ministère de la Défense, 2017, p. 14).

Operation Barkhane is part of the French Sahel strategy aimed at ensuring that partner states acquire the capacity to ensure their security autonomously. With a view to coordination and coherence between regional and international responses tackling terrorist and security issues in the Sahel and actors engaged in the stabilisation process

in Mali (UN, EU, G5 Sahel Armies), Operation Barkhane is based on a partnership approach with the main Sahelo-Saharan (BSS) countries. Operation Barkhane is not intended to be established but to transmit the control of the fight against the armed terrorist factions of the BSS to its G5 partners (Ministère de la Défense, 2017). Operation Barkhane's coordination with G5 Sahel is ensured by the invitation to France to attend some of the semi-annual meetings of the G5 Chiefs of Defence Staff while MISNUMA has the presence of almost 20 French soldiers in its units (Ministère de la Défense, 2017).

French Development Aid

Implementing the policy of the French Sahelo-Saharan strategy, the French Development Agency (AFD) acts as the development counterpart of Operation Barkhane. In 2015, the AFD released a plan of action until 2020 aimed at renewing its commitment to the six countries (Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad) of the Sahel belt also selected by the French Sahelo-Saharan strategy.

Acting on the same geographical perimeter as the French government, the AFD aims to tackle three priorities set out in its action plan, which are the promotion of growth in economic activity and employment opportunities for youths located on the outskirts of cities and in agglomerations, responding to demographic challenges and contributing to balanced territorial development and food security (Agence française de développement, 2015, p.15-20).

After having increased from €300 million a year between 2008 and 2010 to about €500 million a year between 2012 and 2014, the commitments of the AFD, on 31 December 2014, reached €1,687 million, three quarters of which would be divided between Senegal (34%), Mali (21%) and Burkina Faso (20%) (Agence française de développement, 2015, p. 22).

AFD promotes the search for synergies between its actions and those of all French actors intervening in the Sahel in order to provide a global and coherent response to the shortcomings in terms of development, humanitarianism and security in the Sahel. AFD wants to move away from silo approaches by proposing transversal axes of intervention and by working better with a plurality of actors such as local authorities, companies or civil societies (Agence française de développement, 2015, p. 5-6).

The United Nations in the Sahel

The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel offers an integrated response to the Sahel crisis by being built around three strategic goals that mobilise different UN actors in the region. The first priority set out in the strategy in the "inclusive and

effective governance throughout the region" relies on the UNDP, UN-Women, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The second tackles "national and regional security mechanisms to be capable of addressing cross-border threats" and involves the action of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), UNODC, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the 1267 Monitoring Team and OHCHR, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) and MINUSMA. The third addresses "humanitarian and development plans and interventions to build long-term resilience" and calls upon UNICEF, UNFPA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (United Nations, 2013).

A major player in the resolution of the conflict in northern Mali and one of the privileged partners of France, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is the core component of the UN presence in Sahel. Established by UN Resolution 2100 (25 April 2013), MINUSMA'a peacekeeping mission succeeded the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) (1 July 2013), which was established after the deployment of French Operation Serval triggered by the attack on the city of Konna by Islamic insurgents. UN Resolution 2364 (29 June 2017) renewed the mandate of MINUSMA for the fourth time and extended it until 30 June 2018. Based in Bamako and deploying around 20 military units across Mali, MINUSMA has 15,209 uniformed personnel, including 13,289 military personnel and 1,920 police, and a civilian component operating under the command of Belgian General of Division Jean-Paul Deconinck (S/RES/2364).

The number of staff required (12,640) by the initial UN Resolution 2100 was found to be higher by 649 uniformed personnel under an approved budget of $1,048,000,000 (07/2017-06/2018, A/C.5/71/24) (United Nations, 2017b). Under the terms of UN Resolution 2364, MINUSMA aims to support the implementation by the government of Mali of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (20 June 2015) with the northern armed insurgents "focusing on major population centres and lines of communication, protecting civilians, human rights monitoring, the creation of conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced persons, the extension of State authority and the preparation of free, inclusive and peaceful elections" (United Nations, 2017c).

UN Resolution 2364 encouraged cooperation and coherence between MINUSMA and regional and international actors present in the Sahel tackling security and humanitarian issues in the region, namely FC-G5S and the French forces through the provision of relevant intelligence to increase MINUSMA's situational awareness (Point 42 of S/RES/2364).

The United States in the Sahel

Publicly, the scale of American efforts is more limited than other actors (France, the EU), as the Sahel is not considered a foreign and security policy priority and has received little attention in media debates and from decision-makers in Washington, DC. The prevailing public view in the US is that Europe should take the policy lead in its own "backyard" (Alcaro & Pirozzi, 2014, p. 46). However, growing threats posed by terrorism in West Africa have pushed the US to boost its engagement, particularly military and security assistance to countries, and special operations. *Politico* estimates that the US military presence in the Sahel has grown to at least 1,500 units,[9] a figure that is triple the official number of American troops in Syria. The level of US-French cooperation in the Sahel is remarkably high: the two nations are working together on combating perceived enemies in the region and cooperating to strengthen the military capabilities of countries like Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Mali. Cooperation between Paris and Washington at the tactical level contrasts with disagreements at the strategic level, particularly the clash over the French-sponsored resolution calling for the creation of the 5,000-man joint security force of the G5 Sahel. The US (and the UK) opposed the resolution, a decision that reflects the US administration's scepticism regarding the efficacy of multilateral operations in Africa, and the preference for unilateral or bilateral interventions.

The US military presence in the Sahel is widespread, although the only official military base of the US Africa Command (Africom) is located in Djibouti. Cooperative security locations provide outposts for US intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance activities and special operations missions, and are located in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger (Turse, 2015). Capabilities have been expanded in the past two years. The US military is moving its drone operation from Niger's capital, Niamey, to Agadez. From 2018, at the behest of Niger's government, Africom will station drones with advanced intelligence gathering capabilities from the base located just outside the city, increasing the capability to surveil the area (Damon, Swails, & Laine, 2017).

The capacity-building element is also a prominent factor in the US security policy toward the Sahel (similarly to the EU's approach) to create the conditions in the longer run for

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9 Deployed personnel include Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Raiders and Air Force personnel managing surveillance flights and unmanned aerial vehicles. Morgan, W., & Bender, B. (2017, December 10). America's shadow war in Africa. *Politico.* Retrieved from http://www.politico.com/story/2017/10/12/niger-shadow-war-africa-243695

African security forces to take responsibility and deal with their own crises. Several bilateral and multilateral efforts exist between the US and Sahelian countries, under programmes such as International Military Education and Training and the Global Peace Operations Initiative. Annual exercises such as Flintlock in the Sahel bring African states together to work on counterterrorism, border security, battlefield medicine, peace-keeping and disaster response, among other activities (Alcaro & Pirozzi, 2014, p. 49). In Mali, the US has deployed three advisors of the Department of Justice, via the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) to reinforce the human resources and recruitment capacities of the national police.

In recent years, the US has also tried to develop a "whole-of-government" approach to tackle the region's multifaceted problems through the 3Ds of defence, diplomacy and development, at the core of which are capacity-building efforts. The Department of State-led Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) was established jointly by the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense to assist partners in West and North Africa to increase their immediate and long-term capabilities to address terrorist threats and prevent the spread of violent extremism. TSCTP Sahel partners include Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria. In addition to training and equipping security forces to more effectively combat terrorist threats, TSCTP targets groups in isolated or neglected regions that are most vulnerable to extremist ideologies by supporting youth employment, strengthening local governance capacity to provide development infrastructure, and improving health and education services (US Department of State, n.d.). Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) is the Sahel Regional Office-led resilience initiative that aims to address the root causes of persistent vulnerability. Based on joint analysis and planning between USAID development and humanitarian professionals and in collaboration with a multitude of partners across the region, this initiative brings together humanitarian and development assistance programming to build resilience in a targeted zone of intervention in Niger and Burkina Faso. Programmes include Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhanced Resilience (REGIS-ER), a multi-sectoral resilience project; Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Accelerated Growth (REGIS-AG), a focused value-chain project; and the Sahel Resilience Learning Project (SAREL), which bolsters collaboration, learning and adaptation across the entire RISE platform, for an estimated investment of $1.9 million (United States Agency for International Development, n.d.).

Overall, it can be concluded that the US involvement in the Sahel has grown progressively stronger, starting from the limited support given by the Obama

administration to France in the aftermath of the January 2013 intervention in Mali, consisting of training and logistical assistance to local military personnel. The increase of development aid and capacity-building projects for Sahelian countries (funded through TSCTP and RISE) has characterised a second phase (2014-2016) of expanded engagement, which however never translated into a fully-fledged comprehensive or whole-of-government strategy. Finally, under the Trump administration, the US approach is shifting towards an increased military presence, and preference towards unilateral and bilateral engagement with selected partners (e.g. France), with a low appetite for comprehensive and multilateral frameworks for intervention. While a larger US military presence, along with that of France and other allies, may help fight Jihadists, the lack of adequate and synergic interventions on the development and humanitarian side may exacerbate vulnerabilities in Sahelian countries, prove ineffective and even dangerous should local population reject a foreign military presence and become more prone to extremist messages.

Other Bilateral Foreign Actors

Germany has been increasing its role in the Sahel and particularly in Mali in the past few years. Germany's contribution to MINUSMA has been expanded by raising the ceiling on troops from 650 to 1,000, following a government motion approved by the Bundestag in February 2017. The contribution includes the deployment of German personnel in the staff units of the mission, the provision of liaison officers, tactical air transport capabilities and support with mid-air refuelling. The possibility of deploying transport and combat helicopters was authorised in March 2017. With regards to the EU training mission for the Malian army, Germany has provided about 350 soldiers based in southern Mali. The Bundeswehr provides a mix of surveillance and reconnaissance forces to protect specific sites, as well as other forms of military support in the fields of command support, logistics and medical service. Development cooperation and political support are also at the centre of Germany's action to back the peace process and bring stability to the region. The German government is financing crisis prevention measures and providing humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

Italy's presence in the Sahel has grown recently, with a specific geopolitical interest in Niger, given the strategic importance of the country for the fight against illegal trafficking of migrants that reach the Mediterranean through Libya. The fight against criminal networks and stabilisation of the entire Sahel region are top priorities for Italy, particularly as the effects of instability in the Sahel are visible in the Mediterranean and threaten Italian national security. In this respect, Italy's contribution has been centred on

development initiatives and political support, with a general reluctance towards deploying troops on the ground. The Italian contribution to multilateral missions (MINUSMA, EUTM) has in fact been relatively small. Italy deploys seven soldiers in MINUSMA (Ministero della Difesa, 2015a), twelve in EUTM Mali (including military instructors) (Ministero della Difesa, 2015b) and four in EUCAP Sahel (Ministero della Difesa, 2015c). This orientation was changed in December 2017 with the decision of the Italian Government to launch a non-combat military mission to Niger. The mission was formally launched on 27 December 2017 and comprised 470 soldiers, whose mandate will be to train and build the capacities of Niger military personnel that will participate in the G5 Joint Force, as well as facilitate the control of borders between Niger and Libya. The mission's framework is a bilateral agreement for military cooperation between Italy and Niger, signed on 26 September 2017 (Ministero della Difesa, 2017), and was first announced during the G5 Sahel summit in La Celle Saint-Cloud on 13 December 2017.

Politically, Italy supported the creation of the joint force of the G5 Sahel (within the EU and UN frameworks) and played a key role in the definition of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, also known as the Prodi Initiative, from the name of the UN Special Envoy Romano Prodi. A sign of Italy's growing attention to the Sahel has been the opening of the Italian embassy in Niamey, Niger, on 3 January 2018. The embassy is Italy's first in the Sahel region and will focus specifically on security, migrant flows and partnership for development ("Niger 'Strategic' for Italy", 2018).

The Italian contribution to development aid amounts to €50 million for Niger, €10 million for Chad, €5 million for Burkina and €5 million for Mauritania. The Italian approach to foster development in the Sahel focuses mostly on initiatives in the fields of the fight against desertification, training programmes for the health sector, emergency and relief interventions, and the food sector, considering the high vulnerability of Sahelian countries for structural reasons, such as climate conditions, high population growth, chronic poverty, drought and lack of pasture, and few instruments to fight child malnutrition (Cardarelli, 2017, pp. 30-32).

Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK are other important actors providing development assistance and contributing in the fields of security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), transitional justice, and reform of the *Comités consultatifs locaux de sécurité* (CCLS). A concrete example is support for border management in the regions of Liptako Gourma (Mali, Bourkina Faso and Niger) implemented by the Danish Demining Group (DDG), which covers the strengthening of police capacities and border authorities through technical expertise. Denmark and the

Netherlands have also supported the governance of the security sector by assisting the Security and Defence Commission of the Malian Parliament.

The World Bank: Increased Development Aid to Tackle Fragility, Conflict and Violence

The Sahel Initiative launched by the World Bank in 2014 is the main regional framework for development interventions aimed at helping Sahelian countries tackle political, food, climatic and security vulnerability (The World Bank, 2013). The pledge is worth $1.5 billion and is structured as a regionally coordinated approach to build resilience and promote economic opportunity. This initiative adds to the other multi-country and national programmes in the region, which are worth several million dollars. The pledge was announced during a visit to the Sahel by development leaders led by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in November 2013, including the World Bank, the EU and the ADB.[10]

Recently, the World Bank has put engagement in fragile, conflict-affected and violent settings at the centre of its action, developing a differentiated approach to address the full spectrum of situations, from prevention to crisis response, recovery and transition. IDA18, the last replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA), achieved a record $75 billion, with doubled core allocation for Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) that amounted to an increase of 19% of funds to a total of $20.8 billion to be allocated in the fiscal year 2018, hence marking an unprecedented strategic shift in the World Bank's commitment to tackle fragility globally. IDA18 seeks to respond to heightened global challenges and escalating risks that threaten progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, as part of the replenishment, two new tools have been created: an IDA regional sub-window on refugees and host countries, whose purpose is to help advance policy and institutional reforms to scale up global responses to forced displacement and the IFC-MIGA private sector window to support direct private investments in IDA FCS countries, worth $2.5 million. The replenishment has implied more available resources and a deeper focus on the nexus between security and development in the Sahel, which is one of the priority areas of interventions, with $3 billion of the total IDA18 being allocated to the G5 countries. The World Bank has also been invited by France, together with other partners, to create the Alliance for the Sahel, the donor coordination platform based on shared analysis of the region's vulnerabilities.

Although the Bank has scaled up efforts to build resilience and create the conditions for sustainable development interventions in the Sahel, the main challenges for the delivery

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10 On this occasion, the EU also committed €5 billion in development aid for a seven year period.

of IDA18 in this region are first and foremost to do with access and logistics for development actors operating in Sahelian countries, where security conditions to implement projects are shrinking.

Humanitarian Interventions in the Sahel

Humanitarian challenges and needs in the region are, and will continue to be, paramount. The number of food insecure people in 2017 amounted to $30.1 million, including $12 million in urgent need of food assistance. One in five children under the age of five suffers from acute malnutrition, whereas 4.9 million people are reported to have fled from their homes. As ongoing instability and violence continue to displace people and exacerbate humanitarian issues, the need for humanitarian support and funding is set to increase in the years to come. For 2017, the humanitarian community required $2.66 billion to help 15 million people across eight countries (OCHA, 2017a). Against this backdrop, characterised by intersecting challenges of extreme poverty, armed conflict and insecurity, joined-up action by development, political and security actors would be critical to stabilise the region and create the conditions for humanitarian responses to pave the way for more sustainable, long-term development. Yet it has not happened systematically.

Between 2014 and 2016, the humanitarian action in the region was guided by a regional framework, the Sahel Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). This triennial strategy was set out in close collaboration with development actors, to shift from "delivering aid to ending needs," hence integrating life-saving assistance with improved risk and vulnerability analysis and livelihood support to vulnerable populations to better cope with shocks and build resilience. Humanitarian priorities under this framework include nutrition, conflicts (particularly the impact of conflict on IDPs and refugees), epidemics, food security and natural disasters.

In Burkina Faso and Mauritania, the adoption of this framework led to a full alignment with resilience and development frameworks. Burkina Faso suffers from chronic structural vulnerabilities (droughts, floods, epidemics) that have eroded household and community resilience. Prolonged displacement put additional stress on communities hosting more than 32,000 Malian refugees since 2012. Burkina Faso received $45 million of funding inside the HRP, against the $91 million required, with 27 organisations operating in the country and 55 projects implemented (OCHA, 2016a). The key drivers of the humanitarian crisis in Mauritania are food insecurity and malnutrition, resulting from recurring natural hazards and scarcity of resources, with 1 million people food insecure; the hosting of 42,000 Malian refugees; and the increasing number of diseases, resulting

from poor access to health structures, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Funding inside the HRP for Mauritania amounts to $16 million, against a requirement of $89 million, with 17 organisations operating in the country and 41 projects implemented (OCHA, 2016c).

The situation is more critical and coordination with development actors to date less effective in Mali, Niger and Chad, partly justified by the higher intensity of conflict and violence. In these countries, the deterioration of livelihoods as a result of structural vulnerabilities has been increased by the absence of the state administration and insecurity and inter-community conflicts, preventing the return of displaced persons. Funding allocated for Mali inside the HRP amounted to $104 million in 2016, against a figure of $354 million required (OCHA, 2016d), whereas the HRP for Niger amounts to $112 million, against a required sum of $260 million (OCHA, 2016e). In Chad, food insecurity affected 3.8 million people, aggravated displacement caused by conflicts in neighbouring Central African Republic, Libya, Nigeria and Sudan. Chad received $171 million of funding inside the HRP in 2016, against $541 million required (OCHA, 2016b).

Main Operational Gaps and Lessons Learned

What does this mapping of foreign interventions tell us about the prospects and challenges for the implementation of the HDP nexus in the G5 Sahel? The inflow of security, development and humanitarian actors has posed a variety of operational challenges, which are linked to three overarching factors: (a) sustainability of international commitments and efforts in the long term; (b) coordination among actors; and (c) their capacity to build trust and support from local populations. These challenges, in turn, define the criteria for a successful implementation of the HDP nexus in terms of multi-year planning, which relates to the overall sustainability of efforts; comparative advantage, which affects coordination of actions; and collective outcomes, which are related to local trust, ultimately determining impact on beneficiaries.

Starting from the issue of sustainability and multi-year, integrated analysis and planning, international actors have proposed a variety of strategic approaches to solve multi-dimensional challenges in the region.[11] A comparative analysis of those strategic doctrines has shown that the identification of Sahel issues is broadly shared and converges in establishing a nexus between security, development and resilience (Helly

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11 Organisations that have developed strategic frameworks with a regional perspective include, among others, the World Bank, ECOWAS, the UN, the EU, the AU, as well as bilateral actors such as France, the US and Denmark.

et al., 2015, p. 2). It is also common for certain organisations to plan and act in partnerships or synergy with others, in some cases with internal coordination mechanisms and incentives – for instance, the UN has created regional working groups that meet with the AU, ECOWAS and the EU to discuss priorities and possibilities for joint programmes, while the EU, the UN and the World Bank have coordination and information-sharing mechanisms when field missions are carried out. The main limits of these strategic frameworks have to do with competition among organisations in obtaining financial resources to implement the action plans and the shortage of expertise and operators for execution and monitoring. That said, the consensual views on the areas of interventions, the need for cross-sectoral solutions and the regional scope (beyond country-specific measures) show that international actors have acknowledged at the strategic level the need to act according to a comprehensive, wide-ranging framework of intervention, avoiding overlap and seeking joint work with other players.

The results in terms of coordination among international actors are more questionable, especially as competition for resources (human and financial) has so far constituted a major limitation in the execution of the strategic frameworks. Each organisation defines the geographic and thematic priorities for intervention according to their own needs, interests and perceptions. Cooperation between the EU and its member states, for instance, has been complex due to strong interests maintained by some actors in the region (e.g. France, Italy, Spain) and the reluctance of other states to support the deployments of EU CSDP missions (such as Poland and the Nordic countries). While almost all frameworks include initiatives for greater collaboration with external partners, redundancies and inconsistency often emerge in the field interactions among authorities that are responsible for managing technical projects, where the incentives for the agents on the ground lie in their interaction with the principal rather than the partners. For instance, the presence of multiple security providers (e.g. MINUSMA, FC-G5S, Barkhane, EU CSDP missions) make collaboration difficult in concrete terms, given that transaction costs grow exponentially as multiple chains of command, mandates and military/security personnel overlap in the same theatres, as it happens in Mali. On the development aid front, the capacity of state structures in the region to coordinate and manage available resources is a significant challenge as donors and multilateral organisations pour money and projects into areas of the countries where access is limited for security reasons (such as central and northern Mali) or where the administration does not have the means to meet implementation requirements (as in Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad) set by international actors. The situation is similar in the humanitarian field, where

ineffective coordination and prioritisation of needs among different providers, competition for resources and limitation of access imposed by security reasons have in many cases prevented effective responses and the capacity to save lives, as in the case of the humanitarian response to the conflict in Diffa, Niger (Edwards, 2016). The "comparative advantage" is therefore set in strategic frameworks but falls short of being implemented in concrete projects, where the principle of "competitive advantage" dominates relations among actors.

Finally, the most critical gap is the inability of international actors to achieve "collective outcomes". Building and supporting resilience, including by addressing the underlying drivers of crises in G5 Sahelian countries, has been challenging. A common understanding of risks and vulnerability has emerged but combined or coordinated assistance struggles to happen, for instance as regards the linkage between food security and national/regional security. Resilience-building outcomes such as strengthening livelihood or boosting water harvesting and immigration are not yet delivered systematically; the reinforcement of national security and judicial systems for the fight against terrorism and organised crime and greater local ownership in fulfilling those tasks are a long way from being achieved. Niger is an important example, where the lack of a mutual reinforcement among different activities (such as efforts to tackle food security and child malnutrition and technical assistance missions to reinforce the capacities of local actors) prevents international actors from reaching beneficiaries more effectively and increasing/strengthening the provision of services. Lack of reconstruction, recovery and the ineffectiveness of security actors to contain threats have also become main concerns in the local populations, which undermines the perception – and the trust – of communities towards foreign interventions. For instance, civil society in Mali sees the presence of foreign actors operating in the security domain, including for SSR and DDR programmes, as problematic, and questions the effectiveness of foreign NGOs in implementing projects that can benefit the population (Tobie, 2017, p. 10). A survey of civil society actors in Mali showed a widespread call for developmental and political answers to fragility to go hand in hand with hard security approaches. As a matter of fact, robust military engagements by France and the US may undermine trust and contribute to radicalising part of the population if not accompanied by reconstruction and recovery measures (International Crisis Group, 2015). The *Plan de sécurisation intégré des régions du centre* (PSIRC) in Mali (Segou and Mopti), launched in April 2017, constitutes a good step towards opening a dialogue on the links between security and development interventions that includes local authorities and international actors but is still a drop in the ocean. Overall, the impact on beneficiaries keeps suffering from the persistence of divergent needs, interests and mandates among intervening foreign actors.

Conclusion: Recommendations for the Implementation of the HDP Nexus in the Sahel

Despite a growing international presence, insecurity and violent extremism have not decreased in the Sahel. The cost of humanitarian assistance has soared, development aid has stalled and military engagements have been expanded. Security and development strategies have acknowledged the need for a broader regional focus of interventions but implementation is still predominantly limited to national programmes and informed by sectoral/geographical priorities or preferences dictated by donors. Meanwhile, many areas are falling apart due to growing competition for resources, resulting from population growth, circulation of weapons, lack of authority when leaving cities and day to day security not being provided in rural areas. Employment is also a problem, given the huge gap between job opportunities and a growing population. Against this backdrop, a "mini roadmap" with three practical recommendations can be made to boost the implementation of the HDP nexus towards a deeper impact on the ground:

1. **Strengthen the link between SSR-DDR programmes as enablers of HPD's collective outcomes.** Foreign military intervention cannot be expected to solve the security problems in the region; foreign forces are seen as occupying forces by the local communities and in the medium term also by part of national authorities. Even the effectiveness of training and capacity-building programmes is questionable, and a thorough assessment of their impact in terms of overall outcomes (e.g. enhanced capacities of Sahelian countries to provide better security to their populations) is missing. In consequence, security requires a reconstruction of the whole security system and more precise mandates for aid agencies, in greater synergy and collaboration with security actors operating in the terrain. At the same time, fragile countries cannot afford the needed level of security expenditure, whereby a significant proportion of tax income goes into security. For instance, Niger had to cut budgets for social services and the economy to meet the demands of the international community for strengthening its security capacity following the Mali coup. Given that President Issoufou took office on a platform of governance and development, diversions of this sort are unlikely to establish or reinforce a bond of trust between the state and the people (Reitano, 2014, pp. 1-6). In the majority of cases, increased security spending goes to the detriment of social, education and health expenditures, as well as job creation policies, which are an essential component of sustainable economic growth and a main factor preventing radicalisation. In consequence, given that local authorities cannot afford the costs of increased security, the international community should consider new forms of

support to the security system, including a higher financial commitment towards strengthening the security sector. This should go hand in hand with a more systematic involvement of development institutions (World Bank, UN agencies) to provide security sector expenditure assistance in order to examine effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of public spending, analyse financial transparency and oversight, and manage corruption risk. Therefore, reinforcing SSR and DDR, making them more inclusive and sustainable, is a first area of implementation of coordinated security-development interventions, which may also help reduce the burden for humanitarian assistance to parts of the population.

2. **Use Information and Communications technology (ICT) and geo-enabling tools to build shared information systems, bringing mutual benefits to HDP actors.** Aid agencies are doing a poor job in fragile, conflict-affected settings. The reasons are manifold and systematic. The impossibility of or limitations to accessing high-risk insecure environments are just one major problem. Another obstacle to the delivery of development programmes is in risk assessments, which makes it less appealing for aid agencies to invest in areas where conflict may have a disruptive effect on the implementation and completion of programmes, as well as on the safety of staff operating in the field. Therefore, there is a need to find new instruments and tools for development actors to access, operate and collaborate with other organisations on the ground, exploiting division of mandates and agreements with security/humanitarian actors for third party execution and monitoring.

A more systematic use of ICT tools could help in this regard, for instance through better geo-enabling of aid data, overlapping with humanitarian and security data, and shared information management systems between actors. Field-appropriate ICT and geospatial analytics can help facilitate early warning and proactive risk management, effective programming and targeting, remote project supervision, third-party monitoring (TPM), M&E, and citizen engagement in areas with limited access. Geospatial analytics can support systematic and criteria-based targeting of implementation areas according to the principles of impact proportionality and impact maximisation. For instance, correlating geographic data layers on Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) levels, measuring the severity of food emergencies or agricultural stresses with socioeconomic indicators and population density can inform gap analyses and help determine priority areas in terms of specific needs for individual interventions. Moreover, systematic monitoring of the geographic footprint of projects can serve to facilitate coordination and to identify potential geographic overlaps with ongoing and proposed projects and programmes by development and humanitarian partners, as

well as ongoing security (civilian and military) missions, particularly in areas where the density of foreign actors is growing, such as Central Mali.

3. **Expand research on countering violent extremism to support the design of joint HDP programmes.** Research aimed at finding practical solutions to counter violent extremism should be expanded, investigating context-specific push and pull factors that lead to local radicalisation and recruitment (Zeiger, 2016). As security and development interventions show important limitations in terms of execution and coordination, and donors are compelled to urgently find multi-sectoral solutions ranging from institution building to demographics, an "expectations management paradox" is emerging: as recent research has shown, investments in better education and jobs create stronger aspirations in the local population, which may reinforce radicalisation and the grip of violent extremism if not adequately met by state authorities (Bhatia & Ghanem, 2017). A key challenge here is to secure development in the short-medium term, while at the same time avoiding the rise of a sense of inequality and social exclusion in new generations by effectively managing people's aspirations. This paradigmatic shift from "opportunity" to "expectations" is a key factor to prevent violent conflict in the future. It requires international actors to explore innovative tools and rely on creativity and context-specific solutions that are adapted to local and community level needs. This also applies in contexts where DDR policies are needed (such as Mali) and is particularly important in countries where the population is booming. The literature (Raineri & Rossi, 2017) has demonstrated that higher levels of economic and human development do not automatically result in a reduction of migratory flows; rather, they are associated with higher overall levels of migration, which is then linked to economic or social expectations, rather than their actual status or wealth. Development should therefore focus not only on the reconstruction of state institutions and infrastructure but also on the appropriate tools to manage expectations.

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Algeria and the Sahelian Quandary:
The Limits of Containment Security Policy

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Introduction

Various analysts have provided different interpretations as to Algeria's role in the Sahel. For instance, one researcher argues that "Algeria is reluctant or unable to take a leading role in regional security now that its Libyan rival is currently unable to. Suspicion of a hidden Algerian agenda complicates the coordination of an effective response to the conflict" (Boukhars, 2012). Notwithstanding similar criticisms regarding Algeria's role in the Sahel, it is necessary to analyse that role from an objective perspective and attempt to decipher the underpinnings of Algeria's policy in the region. Very often, statements such as the one above reflect the difficulty in understanding Algeria's foreign policy principles; they also ignore how Algerian policy-makers perceive their actions in the Sahel. This chapter will thus analyse some of the fundamentals of Algeria's foreign policy, such as non-interference in others' domestic affairs, non-intervention of the armed forces beyond Algeria's borders, and opposition to foreign intervention in the region, suggesting that regional states are responsible collectively for their regional security. This might elucidate some of the seeming shortcomings of Algeria's policy in its southern neighbourhood.

The Geopolitics of the Sahel

The United States (US), the European Union (EU), Algeria and other states have considered the Sahara-Sahel region[1] as a "security threat" ever since the US invasion of Afghanistan in reprisal for the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. Indeed, soon after 9/11, in 2002, the US had already anticipated that al-Qaeda's forces, overpowered in Afghanistan, would relocate in the Sahel because this region could offer a "safe haven", a notion that has become prominent in US foreign and defence policy (Lamb, 2008; Walt, 2009). Due to the particularity of the terrain and the fragility of Sahelian states (Cooke & Sanderson, 2016), in 2002 the US launched the Pan-Sahel Initiative and, in 2005, the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) to counter the alleged new menace (Zoubir, 2009). This immense region has porous borders, which tradesmen (from Timbuktu) but also traffickers of all kinds have historically crossed at will. However, it would be erroneous to view this region simply as an area of trafficking and a gate to illegal migration. It is also a zone of interaction between "Arab Africa" and "Black Africa" in which all kinds of human, financial and religious exchanges take place. Yet in recent years there has been greater focus on the insecurity that has characterised the Sahara-Sahel. Since 2007, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Harmon, 2010; Filiu, 2009) has progressed in the region and established

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1 The Sahel region is an ecoclimate zone located on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert; it is practically a transition zone between the Sahara, the greatest desert in the world where it is hardly possible to cultivate the land, and the savannah, which boasts a rudimentary agriculture because of relatively good rainfall.

ungoverned spaces for violent extremists and traffickers; Algerian security forces' successful counterterrorism policies inside the country drove AQIM (formerly the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat [GSPC]) forces beyond the country's borders, into northern Mali. Later, the spawns of the collapse of the Libyan regime in October 2011 (Zoubir, 2012) and civil war further strengthened AQIM's capabilities due to the dispersion of the weapons appropriated from Libya's stockpiles and the debacle of Gaddafi's troops in 2011. Many of these weapons have fallen into the hands of AQIM and other groups that have consolidated their arsenal with sophisticated weapons, including missiles, thus destabilising even more the already fragile Sahelian states (Carment, 2003). The return of heavily armed Tuareg, who had served alongside Gaddafi's forces, to northern Mali, where they declared the independent state of the Azawad in April 2012, aggravated already complicated conditions, for the persistent crisis in northern Mali is only one of the consequences of the Libyan civil war. For neighbouring Algeria, also a Sahelian state,[2] this enduring crisis represents the most serious threat to national security, which the authorities have endeavoured to contain to protect the territory and stem the potential influx of violent extremists, the growing inflow of transiting migrants to Europe, the spread of drugs, and human trafficking.

Algerian policy-makers consider the Sahel as Algeria's "soft underbelly" (*ventre mou*), the most perilous for its national security [Interviews].[3] The poverty that characterises Sahelian states, except Algeria, constitute another form of security threat to Algeria because of the potential influx of illegal migrants, as has happened in recent years. Sahelian states are the poorest in the world, figuring in the Low Human Development grouping of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). On the UNDP Human Development measure, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger rank 157, 175, 185, 186 and 187, respectively. All the development indicators (literacy, nutrition, health…) are considerably low (UNDP, 2017). This poverty and the dire socioeconomic conditions, such as high unemployment, weak educational and social infrastructures, and precarious agricultural resources, have created a propitious terrain for the expansion of illegal trafficking, such as drugs, irregular migration, cigarettes, petrol, medicines, light weapons, vehicles, automobile spare parts and, more recently, the recruitment of young men by Violent Extremist Organisations (VEOs). The absence of tangible development, bad governance and the persistence of poverty are thus important factors to consider when analysing the security of the Sahel, whether from an international perspective or from Algeria's.

2 The United Nations considers Sahelian countries as: northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, central Mali, northern Burkina Faso, the extreme south of Algeria, Niger, the extreme north of Nigeria, central Chad, central and southern Sudan, the extreme north of South Sudan, Eritrea, Cameroon, Central African Republic and the extreme north of Ethiopia. See, for instance, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (31 January 2013). Sahel: $1.6 billion appeal to address widespread humanitarian crisis. Retrieved from http://www.unocha.org/country/top-stories/all-stories/sahel-16-billion-appeal-address-widespread-humanitarian-crisis
3 The author conducted interviews with Algerian diplomats and security officials, who speak on condition of anonymity with regard to place and date. The author conducted the interviews in Algeria and abroad.

Algeria's Perception of the Sahel: "The Corridor of All Dangers"

The quagmire in the Sahara-Sahel has confronted Algeria with challenges the country has not experienced since the war in the Western Sahara in 1975-1991 and the quasi-civil war in the 1990s, which almost brought down the regime and destroyed the state. It would be a fallacy to think that this concern is a recent development. In fact, the Sahel has always been an area of concern for Algeria's policy-makers, who have sought to mediate between the Malian state and the recurrent Tuareg insurgencies since the 1960s; that is, soon after Algeria's independence in 1962. The various illegal activities previously mentioned as well as the weakening of the bordering states and the dire socioeconomic conditions, pose serious challenges to the state. However, the conditions of the last decade have raised much more serious security concerns for the country, which shares thousands of kilometres of borders not only with Sahelian states, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, but also with Libya and Tunisia. The upheavals in Tunisia and Libya that broke out in late 2010 and rippled throughout the region in 2011 have resulted in destabilisation, which poses a threat to Algeria. Algeria also shares a border with Morocco, its traditional rival in the region,[4] and the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Except for Algeria, the other Sahelian states are "fragile states" or even "failed states," (Cooke & Sanderson, 2016), which cannot control the entirety of their territories, thus allowing the emergence of sanctuaries for VEOs to conduct their activities. The fall of the Gaddafi regime, following the questionable intervention by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which Algeria totally opposed,[5] destabilised the Maghreb-Sahel region significantly. While the Libyan civil war that ensued after the fall of the Libyan regime is not responsible for the conditions in Mali or Niger, it has undoubtedly exacerbated already intricate circumstances.

In an interview, a senior Algerian official once told the author that the Sahel is "*le couloir de tous les dangers*" (the corridor of all dangers), with serious risks particularly for Algeria. While there are many definitions of the Sahel, Algerian security officials see the Sahelian corridor as the strip crossing Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad, Libya, Mali, Niger, extreme southern Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Senegal and Nigeria.

From a security perspective, Algerian defence officials see the field of operations as extending over a desert strip of a length of 1,956 km and a depth of 933 km. Since the 1990s and early 2000s, when violent extremist groups began settling in northern Mali, their conviction was that the "Corridor of all dangers" has become the Achilles' heel of Algeria's security (Y. Zoubir, personal communication, 5 September 2011). Having

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4 The two countries fought a short war in 1963 and have been in a cold war since the 1970s following the breakout of the war in Western Sahara. Until the last decade or so, most of Algeria's troops were stationed along the border with Morocco. See Zoubir, Y., & Dris-Ait-Hamadouche, L. (2013). The Maghreb: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. Global Security Watch. Praeger.

5 Author's interviews with senior officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, Algiers, May 2011. Many foreign officials, including high-level US diplomats, told the author subsequently that Algerian policy-makers were correct about their prediction as to the consequences of the intervention.

defeated the armed groups inside the country, pushing the most important, the GSPC beyond Algeria's borders, mostly into Mali, security officials endeavoured to gradually safeguard Algeria's borders with its Sahelian neighbours and, later, with Libya and Tunisia.

In the early 2000s, the region witnessed the multiplication of kidnappings; while Westerners were the main target of Jihadists and narco-traffickers, Algerians were also the victims of abductions that aimed to collect funds to purchase weapons and other lethal equipment, and perhaps to dissuade Algeria from supporting the Malian government in its fight against the groups. In April 2012, for instance, the Movement of Unicity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)[6] militants kidnapped seven Algerian diplomats, including the general consul, in Gao, northern Mali. They released three of them in July but two remained in captivity until August 2014; the kidnappers executed one of the hostages because Algerians still refused to pay the ransom, while another one died from illness. The refusal to pay ransoms to kidnappers has been an official sine qua non of Algeria's antiterrorist principles.

Insecurity in the Sahel has been such that the area has been dubbed "Sahelistan" (Laurent, 2013), a far-fetched appellation given the geopolitical differences between Afghanistan and the Sahel. What is true, however, is that because of the difficulty of completely controlling the Sahelian region, VEOs, including the Nigerian Boko Haram, can train and prepare operations against governments regionally and internationally.

The fight against extremism and illegal activities is not the only issue that Algeria has faced. The question of the Tuareg, the minority populations in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, and Niger, has also been of salient importance to Algeria's security priorities.

Algeria and the Tuareg Question

In recent years, Algeria has been quite concerned about the turn of events regarding the Tuareg issue. This is not new but the question has grown more complicated since the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA)'s proclamation of independence in 2012. Colonial France's redrawing of African borders resulted in the dispersal of the Tuareg population throughout the Maghreb and Sahel regions (Raffray, 2013). However, as scattered as they are, the Tuareg have been able to maintain some links across borders owing to the seasonal movements (transhumance) in the region. The Algerian government was resentful of Gaddafi's support for the creation of training

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6 The MUJAO is an offshoot of AQIM; Mauritanians and other sub-Saharan Africans constitute the bulk of the organisation.

camps and encouragement of the emergence of a Tuareg independence movement and even the establishment of an independent Tuareg state as a way of exerting leverage over rival actors in the region, especially Algeria. One of the major consequences of the civil strife in Libya was the massive return of the well-equipped and highly experienced Libya-based Tuareg to Mali and Niger after the collapse of the Libyan state. Algiers has always opposed Tuareg aspiration for statehood in its neighbourhood. While Algerian policy-makers empathise with Malian Tuareg and are fully aware of the way General Charles de Gaulle dealt with the question (Oulmont & Vaïsse, 2014), they generally view Tuareg claims for autonomy and irredentism suspiciously. Ever since its independence, Algeria has remained attached to the inviolability of the borders inherited from colonialism; this, in fact, is one of the sacrosanct principles of its foreign policy, which Algeria has strongly supported at the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU) (Zoubir, 2015). Unsurprisingly, regardless of this empathy for the Malian Tuareg, they reacted negatively in April 2012 to the proclamation of the MNLA of an independent state in northern Mali. This attitude is consistent with Algeria's policy principle against secessionist movements and any political, social or ethnic categories that could threaten the internationally recognised national unity and territorial integrity of a state. Policy-makers in Algiers perceive any secessionist desires in Africa, in general, and in the Sahel, in particular, as a threat to Algeria's own national security and territorial integrity. Therefore, they have consistently mediated between the Tuareg in northern Mali and the central government in Bamako in 1990, 2006 and since 2012.

After Gaddafi's seizure of power in 1969, Algerians worried about Gaddafi's manipulation of the Tuareg question (Dris, 2009).[7] However, they have been as fearful that France could someday, should the opportunity arise, provide backing to ethnic minorities (Tuareg, Mouzabite…) seeking autonomy in Algeria to weaken Algiers' control over the vast, rich territory, particularly the Sahara (Y. Zoubir, personal communication, 14 January 2016). Colonial France's struggle to keep the Algerian Sahara as part of France during the 1961 Evian negotiations remains anchored in the Algerian collective memory.

In Algeria, the Tuareg question remains a complex issue, which emerged soon after the country's independence.[8] The Tuareg aspiration for statehood has always been of great concern to Algeria as the dissemination of this population throughout the North African and Sahelian countries renders its management quite complicated. Algerian security officials viewed the Tuareg claims suspiciously in 1963-1964, when the first rebellion broke out in Mali. This explains why President Ahmed Ben Bella granted permission to Malian troops to pursue the rebels who had crossed into Algerian territory. This episode

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7 Gaddafi had encouraged the political and social promotion of the Tuareg as part of his campaign to create a Targui (singular of Tuareg) state, comprised of the Tuareg from Algeria, Mali and Niger under the influence of Libya. To this end, he tolerated the setting-up of training camps and encouraged the emergence of a Tuareg movement as a way of leveraging rival actors, Algeria in particular.

8 Even before the country's independence in 1962, there were concerns within the Algerian nationalist movement about the Berber question, which had erupted in 1949.

and others, such as Biafra in the early 1970s, highlights Algerian policy-makers' attitude toward secessionist movements: they mistrust any political, social or ethnic category whose contentions could jeopardise the national unity and territorial integrity of any state and violate the OAU/AU charters on the inviolability of internationally recognised borders. To avoid a similar scenario as had happened in Mali and after many tergiversations, in the late 1960s, under Houari Boumedienne's rule, the government decided to grant rights to the Tuareg (Zoubir & Dris-Aït-Hamadouche, 2013), thus marking a noticeable change in attitude toward them. Not only did the government grant them rights but also incorporated them into the political system through the appointment of some notable Tuareg figures in parliament and in the then single ruling party, National Liberation Front (FLN). The Algerian regime reckoned that the best approach to dissuade the Tuareg from striving for independence rested on their social and political integration. Algerian authorities were, and still are to this date, very cautious about any cross-border solidarity among the Tuareg that might have a negative impact on the efforts made to assimilate the Tuareg living in southern Algeria. To eschew any temptations for self-rule or nationalistic sentiments, like the Kurdish question, Algiers carried out many processes. The authorities have treated the Tuareg community as part of the Berber (Amazigh) national identity, helping the Tuareg settle in Algeria's southern cities and providing them with modern means to improve their basic living conditions. The government has consistently been prompt in brokering peace agreements between the Tuareg rebels and the central governments in Mali and Niger (Iratni, 2008). In 2006, for instance, Algerians brokered an important agreement between the Malian government and the Tuareg. The non-compliance of Malian President Amadou Toumany Touré [aka ATT] not only caused the events of early 2012 but it also prompted a military coup. This kind of occurrence highlights the regional dimension of the Tuareg question; it also shows how difficult it is to contain this problem within a national dimension. The recurrence of the conflict in northern Mali since the 1960s confirms this hypothesis. The issue is very sensitive for Algeria's national security establishment for whom an enduring status quo will render the management and resolution of this conflict quite complicated. Algerian mediation in the 1990s and since 2012 to resolve the Tuareg problem shows how important securing the country's southern borders is for Algeria's national security. Algerian authorities fear that the return to the status quo of the pre-1990s could jeopardise the efforts made since the beginning of the last decade to secure the southern borders. Mediating the conflict opposing the Tuareg rebellion to the Malian government rests on a strategy derived from the necessity to prevent a spill-over effect of this conflict onto Algeria's territory proper. The presence of Tuareg populations in Algerian provinces (Tamanrasset, Illizi, Djanet and In Salah) is one of the key elements

of this equation: Algerians fear that the success of Malian and Nigerien Tuareg to create their own political entity could encourage those living in Algerian provinces to make similar demands for self-rule. Avoiding such a domino effect is thus of paramount strategic importance. The agreement signed in Algiers in 2006 between the Malian government and the Tuareg rebels in northern Mali was conceived in such a way as to thwart any secessionist temptation. It did that by promoting decentralisation as a mode of governance. The Malian government virtually reneged on the measures contained in the agreement. That failure to fulfil the commitment is one of the main reasons why the Tuareg resumed hostilities. Algeria's mediation efforts, which had arranged a meeting in Algiers in February 2011, failed to produce any tangible results. However, what made matters worse in reaching agreement between the contending parties was the military coup in Mali on 22 March 2012 carried out by Captain Amadou Sanogo. Algerians condemned the coup but understood the fact that one of the main reasons for the coup was the Malian government's ineffective fight against AQIM and the mismanagement of the Tuareg question. For Algerian policy-makers, the MNLA's proclamation of the independence of the Azawad was quite a dangerous development; their reaction was to avoid a domino effect that the Azawad's independence in northern Mali could have on the other Tuareg populations scattered in Niger and Algeria.

The political change in Libya had resulted in the extension of the arc of crisis in the region. Sharing 980 kilometres of borders with Libya and more than 1,300 kilometres with Mali, Algeria's capacity to protect itself against the consequences of the instability in Mali and Libya has no doubt represented a challenge. Thousands of Malians, including troops fleeing the slaughter by the better-equipped Tuareg troops, fled to Algeria to escape the fighting and to seek refuge. The capture of three major cities in northern Mali – Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu – by the MNLA, a purportedly secular movement, and Ansar Dine, an Islamist group, and other armed groups, coupled with the severe food crisis, provoked an even greater exodus from Mali to Algeria. Algerians feared that these events would prompt autonomous reflexes among some Algerian Tuareg; they also worried about the proliferation of small arms. The unholy alliances between Tuareg factions and VEOs, like that between Ansar Dine and AQIM, are major destabilising factors in the Sahel, particularly for Algeria. The latter's strategy has consisted not only of deploying forces along the border and increasing surveillance but also of breaking the potential and existing links between the Tuareg and VEOs. Obtaining the Tuareg's support against AQIM, MUJAO and other VEOs, including those affiliated to the organisation of Islamic State (IS), in the region is one of the pillars of Algeria's strategy on its southern border.

Algeria's Mediation in the Tuareg Conflict and the Algiers Peace and Reconciliation Agreement

After many attempts and mediations, in May 2015, the warring parties finally signed the agreement that resulted from the mediation that Algerians had led between the Malian government and several armed Tuareg factions in northern Mali. The "Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, resulting from the Algiers Process" (the "Bamako Agreement") [Accord pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Mali Issu du Processus d'Alger, 2015] aimed at ending the conflict in northern Mali, a conflict that continues to destabilise the entire region and had resulted in France's military intervention Operation Serval in Mali, which Algeria supported,[9] to stop the advance southward of Ansar Dine Tuareg forces together with AQIM and MUJAO fighters. This Agreement, which suggested a kind of federalism, granted the Tuareg their recognition by the Malian state of their identity and the Azawad as a "sociocultural reality" and "human reality".[10] As lead-mediators, one of the principal points that Algerians succeeded in obtaining was the "respect for the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the State of Mali, as well as its republican form and secular character," issues dear to the authorities in Algiers. The eventual formulation of a Charter for Peace, Unity and National Reconciliation contained in the text was a reflection of Algeria's experience, namely the initiation of major measures taken in 1994 (*Rahma*), 1999 (Civil Concord) (Zoubir & Dris-Aït-Hamadouche, 2004) and 2005 (National Reconciliation). All these policies had aimed at ending the gory conflict that had opposed Algerian security forces with armed militants. Algeria has sought to promote this model as one of the most successful approaches to ending conflicts and has thus pushed for its implementation in its neighbourhood, namely, in Libya and Mali. The other objective in executing such a model is also to prevent foreign intervention in conflict zones in the region.

The Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Mali contained important elements, such as the creation of local assemblies with very broad powers and greater representation of the populations of the north within national institutions, and the integration of ex-rebels into the Malian army. Even though it was probably only minimal (International Crisis Group, 2015), this agreement considered several acceptable claims by the parties involved in this process.[11] By stabilising the security situation in the region, the underlying idea was to cut off local populations from Jihadist groups and to integrate the armed

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9 This is one of the few instances in which Algeria supported a foreign intervention. From Algeria's perspective, this was legitimate because the Malian legal authorities requested it to save the country. Thus, Algerians opened their airspace to French warplanes, closed the border with Mali, and provided fuel to French forces.

10 The text stipulates that "the Azawad denomination refers to a socio-cultural reality, both commemorative and symbolic, shared by the different populations of northern Mali, which are constituent components of the national community. The necessary consensus shall be based on a common understanding of this denomination, which reflects a human reality, while respecting the unitary character of the Malian state and its territorial integrity."

11 For instance, the agreement projected the creation of a Regional Assembly elected by direct universal suffrage, to which a large number of competences shall be transferred, as well as resources and appropriate judicial, administrative and financial powers. The Malian populations "particularly those of the Northern Regions shall manage their own affairs." At the national level, the agreement envisaged the setting up of a second chamber of Parliament.

factions into a political process, thus establishing legitimate institutions that, in the end, could lead the fight against Jihadist movements. In addition, although this agreement was not inked by all the factions, including the MNLA, it was nevertheless perceived, overall, as the beginning of a stabilisation process. Unfortunately, the agreement has not put an end to the conflict in Mali; witness the attack in Bamako itself in June 2017 or against United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) personnel in October 2017, or the attacks in Niger and Burkina Faso over the past three years (Boutellis & Zahar, 2017). Neither France's 4,000-strong Operation Barkhane counterterrorism force, established in August 2014 as a sequel to Operation Serval, nor the 10,000-strong MINUSMA, have been able to reduce the instability prevalent in the Sahel. The French Operation Serval killed 600-armed Jihadists, including several important leaders, like Abu Zeid, who commanded one of AQIM's main phalanges and Operation Barkhane neutralised dozens of Jihadist leaders, including Omar Ould Hamaha, the right arm of notorious Mokhtar Belmokhtar, Abu Bakr Al Nasr and Ahmed al-Tilemsi, the military leader of the MUJAO. However, these two forces failed to eradicate VEOs in the region. The EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM), the EU Capacity-Building Mission (EUCAP) present in Niger, and the United States' Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara (OEF-TS) in place since in 2007 have not changed the reality on the ground. In addition to AQIM, MUJAO, Al-Mourabitoune, other extremist organisations, such as *Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin* (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims), or Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, who killed four US servicemen in an ambush in Niger (with the complicity of the local population), continue to emerge. In sum, these military operations have not resulted in the establishment of a strong state, extending the Malian state's sovereignty to the north or solving the persistent socioeconomic problems. Clearly, although the activity of the armed groups has weakened, it is far from having disappeared. The redeployment of AQIM and other groups led Yahia Abu Hammam el-Maghribi, head of AQIM in the Sahel, to declare in January 2016, during an interview with the Mauritanian news agency *Al-Akhbar,* that "French operations in Mali had failed and that today we are present from the borders of Mauritania to the west to Burkina Faso to the east, from Algeria to the north and from Mali to the south" ("Interview de Yahia Abou Hamam", 2016). Furthermore, trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings persists, creating a prosperous criminal economy.

The Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Mali is still in place but it has yet to be implemented.[12] It has not collapsed because, as Boutellis and Zahar (2017) put it, "there

12 The Tuareg are worried that once they lay down their arms like they did under previous agreements, they will be slaughtered by the Malian army, as happened before. A Targui pointed out that "The Tuareg do not intend to lay down their arms [this time], not in the current conditions because it is the only pressure they have to enforce the peace agreement, especially with regard to the political points that the Malian government or the mediation refuse to address". In Africa, where the culture of a democratic dialogue does not exist, the Tuareg are not yet ready to take this risk because the experiences of the previous agreements which never succeeded (national pact of 1992, agreement of 2006 and last in June 2015) are sobering. The presence of the international community, which does not play its full role, is not a sufficient guarantee "to stay naked and then be massacred by the Malian army and the terrorists," as some Tuareg officers assert. Posted by Hama Ag Sid'Ahmed on Facebook on 18 January 2018, https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=hama%20ag%20sid'ahmed

is realisation among southern Malians that there is no military solution to the crisis in the north and that the agreement is still the best chance to stabilise that part of the country." However, there have been unfounded fears that Algeria may not continue to support the peace process. Perhaps this explains why during his visit to Algiers on 13 January 2018, the new Malian Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga stated that the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement is "la pierre angulaire" (the foundation) ("Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga à Alger", 2018) of Mali's domestic policy and that his visit confirmed Algeria's availability in supporting the 2015 agreement. Such continued support is consistent with Algerian foreign policy because a negotiated political solution is preferable to foreign intervention. Algeria's opposition to foreign intervention[13] derives from the position of its foreign policy as well as fears that intervention may strengthen not only Jihadist ideology but might also consolidate secessionist sentiments. Algeria is wary of interventions similar to the one in Libya, which could result in the collapse of the states in its neighbourhood. The ideal scenario for Algerians is a political solution based on separating the Tuareg groups from AQIM, the MUJAO and other VEOs. The rationale is that the distinction would be twice as effective as addressing the Tuareg demands and would help in the fight against the terrorist groups, possibly with Tuareg assistance. Furthermore, foreign intervention has the potential of destabilising an already volatile region astride Algeria's southern borders. One of the premises of the state's policy toward the Tuareg is that governments in the region should address the socioeconomic, political and cultural demands of their respective Tuareg minorities. In fact, Algerian officials argue off-the-record that former Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré's largely non-compliance with the Algiers-brokered agreements between the Tuareg and the Malian government were some of the factors that led to the events of 2012, which resulted in the debacle of the Malian army in northern Mali and the military coup that overthrew the president. Certainly, the coup that plunged Mali into a political crisis compelled Algeria to reassess the management of its security along its southern borders, deploying tens of thousands of troops, and to seek a political resolution to the conflict. The priority was essentially to contain the effect of the Azawad's search for independence on other Tuareg populations in the region, including Algeria. In addition, there is fear that foreign intervention could lead to yet another influx of Malian refugees into Algeria, which already hosts thousands of Malian refugees that have escaped the conflict.

Ever since France decided that military intervention was necessary to preserve its presence in the Sahel region (Lasserre & Oberlé, 2013; Galy, 2013) and to preserve its economic interests (Rigouste, 2017), Algeria has sought to convince its African partners to re-establish Mali's territorial integrity through dialogue with the Tuareg. Assisting France to rescue the Malian regime is one thing; however, having France play a dominant

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13 Algeria is not always opposed to foreign intervention. For instance, it supported France's intervention in Mali in 2013 or Russia's intervention in Syria because the governments in place called on their friends to intervene to save their states.

role in the Sahel near the Algerian Sahara, is another matter. Algerian policy-makers are quite suspicious about France's role in the Sahel and are convinced that a weakening of Algeria will provide the excuse for France to intervene in the Algerian Sahara. Furthermore, they fear that France's presence and actions in Mali, which have caused collateral damage to civilian populations, will increase the population's support for VEOs.

Fighting Terrorism in the Sahel under Algeria's Leadership

While Algerian authorities recognise the paramount necessity of resolving the Tuareg conflict, they have also taken into consideration the development of VEOs and other illicit activities in the region. The activities of AQIM, MUJAO, which has launched attacks in southern Algeria, and the organisation of IS, which is seeking a solid presence in the Sahel, is a matter of high concern. The attack, in January 2013, against the gas plant in Tinguentourine in Algeria's deep south has had serious repercussions on Algeria's national security policy and doctrine (Lounnas, 2017). Algerian policy-makers recognise that the terrorist threat is exaggerated but, at the same time, they insist that it is nonetheless a reality that the country cannot elude, particularly with the emergence of new transnational actors (narco-traffickers and VEOs) and the ties between some of them.

The national security establishment believes that the Sahel is now the paramount concern for the country's national security; Algerian officials also believe that Algeria is the natural leader in the region, a status recognised by regional actors, albeit resentful of Algeria's power and over-bearing, whose armed forces and wealth cannot compare to that of Algeria. External powers, such as the EU and the US, largely acknowledge this status.

International and Regional Cooperation

The preference for Algerians is to handle national security on their own. As a Maj.-Gl. in the national security establishment told the author, "we prefer to fight our own fights without external interference. And, we don't wish to be part of any coalition against anyone" (Y. Zoubir, personal communication, 2012). In addition, evidence shows that Algeria has cooperated quite closely with other states as well as regionally and internationally. Unlike what is often erroneously argued, US officials, who have collaborated with Algerian security forces in antiterrorism, argue on the contrary that "Algeria has been a critical security partner in countering regional violent extremist organisations… its long history combating domestic terrorism and violent extremism

makes Algeria a linchpin in the struggle against AQIM and its affiliates and bringing stability to the region" (United States Committee on Foreign Relations, 2013). The US government considers Algeria a "key partner" in the global fight against terrorism. For instance, the US Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 (US Department of State, 2016) provides an extensive list of the actions that the Algerian authorities have taken to fight terrorism. US officials have virtually not missed any opportunity since 9/11 to praise Algeria for its efforts in combating terrorism and trafficking in the Sahel. They have also urged Algeria to share its counterterrorism experience with other countries ("US Seeks Algeria's Help", 2017). In his testimony on 6 March 2018 before the House Armed Services Committee, Marine Corps Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser, Commander of AFRICOM, declared that "Algeria is another highly capable partner in North Africa, which continues to implement an effective counterterrorism program against local extremist groups. Further, U.S. Africa Command and the Algerian People's National Armed Forces hold regular dialogues to advance cooperation on shared security interests" (United States Africa Command, 2018).

Both the government and the people in Algeria remain resentful of the attitudes of the outside world during the 1990s, feeling that they fought terrorism without external support. The common expressions are: "we fought terrorism alone,"[14] "where was the rest of the world when we were being slaughtered by terrorists" and "it's only when the United States was attacked and when terrorism spread to other places that they realised what terrorism really is and they came to us for advice." Soon after 9/11, Algerian authorities shared critical information with the US regarding terrorist groups on the loose (Zoubir, 2002). In many ways, Algerians felt vindicated with respect to the bloody 1990s; they endeavoured to dispel the accusations that it was not the Jihadists but the security forces that were behind the atrocities. After 9/11, the government offered to help under Algeria's own terms and philosophy. To fight terrorism, Algeria took important decisions regarding the Sahel. Primarily, the authorities consolidated the long borders with the neighbouring states, especially Libya, Mali and Tunisia, three countries where VEOs are very active and threaten Algeria's security. In this regard, they engaged in international and regional cooperation to thwart the threats on its southern borders.

International Cooperation

To argue that Algeria does not cooperate with external powers is fallacious. Undeniably, Algerian policy-makers have reservations regarding security relations with the former colonial power or with the US. This derives from historical, psychological and ideological reasons. These two powers' privileged relations with Morocco, its major rival in the region, often to the detriment of Algeria's perceived national interests, partly explain Algerians'

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14 An article in the Algerian magazine of the armed forces highlighted this point: "The international community misunderstood the scope of the problem [terrorism] and left Algeria to fight alone against terrorism during the black decade [1990s]. Algeria was under a very hard international embargo at the political, economic and military levels. Despite this, it has taken up the challenge of protecting its territory that spans more than 2 million square kilometres for a population estimated at 34 million. She kept the pressure on the terrorist horde and she will keep it until the total eradication of this scourge" (Goubi, 2011).

reluctance to engage more decidedly with them. This attitude also applies to alliances; indeed, Algerian nationalists, under the wartime FLN leadership, have subscribed to non-alignment since 1955 and have never strayed away from it. Therefore, regardless of their determined fight against terrorism, they refuse to join the Saudi-led coalition against IS, which Algerians are convinced targets Iran. Nevertheless, as the US State Department (2016) put it, "Algeria is not a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS; however, Algeria actively supported the effort to defeat ISIS in other ways, such as counter-messaging, capacity-building programs with neighboring states, and co-chairing the Sahel Region Capacity-Building Working Group (SWG) of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)." Indeed, Algerians have cooperated at the multilateral level against violent extremism. For instance, Algeria lobbied intensely against the funding of terrorism through the payment to free hostages detained by terrorists; Algeria has pursued a strict "no concessions" policy, which it also applies domestically. In September 2010, its role in obtaining the adoption of UN Resolution 1904, which criminalises such payments to terrorists, was indisputable. It might be useful to list a few aspects of international cooperation in which Algeria has taken part, by no means an exhaustive list that the US published in 2016.

- Algeria is an active member and participant in the AU, the GCTF, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the Arab League;
- Algeria participated in counterterrorism-related projects implemented by the UN Office on Drug and Crime's Terrorism Prevention Branch;
- Algeria also provides significant funding to the AU's Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa;
- Algeria sits on the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre's Advisory Board and hosts the headquarters of the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), a pan-African organisation to foster police training and cooperation. As a founding member of the GCTF, Algeria served as co-chair of the SWG, which promotes regional and international cooperation and provides a venue for experts to discuss capacity-building gaps specific to the Sahel region and identify solutions;
- Algeria chaired the implementation committee for the peace accord in Mali. Algeria continued to press publicly and privately for groups and stakeholders to support the UN political process in Libya. Algeria also participated in various Sahel-Saharan fora to discuss development and security policies, the evolution of regional terrorism, and donor coordination;
- Algeria is an active member of the TSCTP, a US multi-year interagency regional programme aimed at building the capacity of governments in the Maghreb and Sahel to confront threats posed by violent extremists (US Department of State, 2016).

Despite all this involvement, Algeria is not part of the recent France-led security architecture, nor part of the UN, which regroups Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, known as the G5. However, before explaining the reasons for such disinclination to join the G5, it is necessary to look into the initiatives that Algeria has undertaken at the regional level.

Regional Cooperation

In March 2010, Algeria organised a ministerial coordination conference of Sahelian countries. In April 2010, the Common Operational Joint-Chiefs of Staff Committee (CEMOC) and its intelligence arm, the Union of Fusion and Liaison (UFL) became the essential part of a regional architecture. The Countries of the Field Initiative (Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) aimed to coordinate security efforts to fight violent extremism and organised crime. This was the first regional security architecture in the Sahel with an operational dimension, including the CEMOC with headquarters in Tamanrasset and an intelligence-sharing mechanism. The UFL has its headquarters in Algiers, in the same building as the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), which serves as the think tank for the CEMOC and the AU. The UFL now includes eight countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Mauritania Niger, Nigeria and Chad. The doctrine of the Countries of the Field, as Algerian authorities conceive it, consists of the development of the capacities of the states involved to manage the region's security challenges without recourse to external actors. This does not preclude cooperation with the US and the EU, but the role of the latter must be limited to specific aid (training, logistical support and intelligence). The problem, though, is that this doctrine stumbles on the divergence between the Countries of the Field about the role and the question of the intervention of extra-regional actors. Algerians are cognisant of the fact that most of the Countries of the Field rely on external powers' assistance and have thus accepted that their partners seek such assistance, while insisting that they should find endogenous solutions for Sahelian affairs. Furthermore, Algerians believe that a resolute fight against terrorism requires structured regional and operational cooperation as well as a shared political will to succeed in defeating terrorism. During the rule of ATT in Mali, Algerians were quite annoyed with his inertia in northern Mali, where AQIM and other groups had established sanctuary (Y. Zoubir, personal communication, 10 June 2012). The CEMOC command rotates operational Joint-Chiefs with land and air forces in alphabetical order. The Joint-Chiefs has four cells (operations, intelligence, logistics and communications). The four cells had definite missions. For instance, the operation cell's mission is the planning of combat operations. The CEMOC also has a civilian dimension; the intelligence cell is responsible not only for collecting information on the activities of the VEOs but also for sensitising the populations of the Countries of the Field about the

misdeeds of violent extremism. Despite its shortcomings, and to fight terrorism more effectively, the CEMOC did envisage tackling the question of development. Algerian authorities promoted the notion of local micro-projects to benefit the local populations to fight poverty and to set up major structuring projects (*Grands projets structurants*) for development, whose lack thereof, they believe, is one of the root causes of violent extremism.

Among the first major actions of the CEMOC, one can cite the joint exercise on 2 June 2011 between Algerian, Malian and Mauritanian forces near their common borders. The risks spilling over from Libya were at the origin of this first action on the ground. Six months later, Algeria sent military instructors to northern Mali. While the authorities have not announced it, Algeria had in fact supplied two Malian brigades with military gear. In November 2017, Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia disclosed during the EU-Africa Summit in Abidjan that "over seven or eight years, Algeria has spent more than $100 million in aid to five countries (Chad, Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Libya) in the Sahel sub-region to train dozens of special forces brigades, providing them with a huge amount of equipment"[15] ("Lutte antiterroriste", 2017).

In the field of development, Algeria forgave the debt of several Sahelian and sub-Saharan African countries and provided development aid to Mali. Algeria has also developed strong bilateral relationships with Mali and Niger, where it has considerably improved surveillance of the border between the two countries. The military have established close cooperation, through bilateral border committees, to disrupt the flow of fighters, drug traffickers and migrants in Niger's northernmost areas (Cooke & Sanderson, 2016). It has offered to do the same with Libya. In October 2017, the government reiterated its "availability" to strengthen its border and police cooperation with all countries in the region ("Terrorisme: l'Algérie maintient un haut niveau de vigilance", 2017). In this regard, the UFL has been active on the question of borders. In May 2014, for instance, the UFL organised a workshop in partnership with Spain's Guardia Civil for the benefit of 20 officers from UFL member countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Chad), as well as experts and analysts from several regional security mechanisms. Experts from UFL member countries participated in this workshop, as well as representatives of the ACSRT, and the African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), which was replaced by MINUSMA. Representatives of the EU and the US among others also took part in this workshop. Algerians are quite concerned about the permeability of borders, which allows for the circulation of VEOs, drug traffickers and migrants. Algeria increased border security through the closure of military borderline areas, the establishment of new observer posts near the Tunisian and Libyan frontiers,

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15 This was not groundbreaking news, for informed researchers knew about this aid. During interviews with senior Algerian officials, the author was told repeatedly that Algeria was doing just that. When asked why they do not make it public, the quasi unanimous answer was that "it is not part of our culture to brag about what we give to others." Therefore, one can interpret Ouyahia's declaration in November 2017 as exasperation with accusations that Algeria was not doing enough to help in the Sahel ("Terrorisme: l'Algérie maintient un haut niveau de vigilance", 2017).

strengthening of the defence of energy facilities, supplementary permanent services for border control management, new aerial based surveillance technologies and upgrades to communication systems. The government disclosed that it had created a modernised database regarding foreign extremist combatants. The database exists at all border stations and Algerian diplomatic missions abroad (US Department of State, 2016).

The failure of the CEMOC deserves serious analysis. The building of a collective security mechanism in the Sahel was an important initiative. However, this initiative faced two serious obstacles. The first one derives from Algeria's principle of non-intervention beyond its borders. This principle is rather outdated and does not allow for an effective collective security strategy. The CEMOC showed its limitations when Algeria refused to intervene directly in Mali to stop Ansar Dine and AQIM's advance into southern Mali in 2013, which resulted in France's intervention. From 2010 until the coup in 2012, ATT had asked Algerians to intervene in northern Mali. However, the security establishment in Algiers refused: "ATT told them, 'please come in and destroy the terrorists in Mali's north. You have carte blanche.' But, Algerians refused to intervene" [Y. Zoubir, personal communication, January 2016). Algerians refused because they worried about "being bogged down in the sands of northern Mali" (Y. Zoubir, personal communication, March 2014). Algerians have been suspicious of Mali, "the weak link" in the security architecture. In 2010-2012, senior Algerian intelligence officers admitted off the record that they could not always trust Malian security officials because of the ties some of them had with AQIM and narco-traffickers and because Malian officers could not be trusted with information provided to them by Algerian intelligence services. Worse still, Malians facilitated the payment of ransoms to terrorist kidnappers, payment that Algerians reject categorically. The fragility of Sahelian states, the unreliability of some Sahelian countries' officers with respect to intelligence sharing, and the closeness of most Sahelian countries to France, which, according to Algerians, thwart Algeria's policy and influence, partly explain the shortcomings of the CEMOC. Furthermore, given the fragility of Sahelian states, which cannot exercise hot pursuits (the right to pursue aggressors beyond one's borders) because of their limited capacities, Algerians are reluctant to do so on their behalf. There is also some misunderstanding regarding Algeria's position, which consists of building regional security architecture to pre-empt foreign interventions, whereas its neighbours still rely more heavily on their former colonial power; Algeria's brand of nationalism and its foreign and defence policy principles have changed little since the country's independence. Another explanation is that Algerians refuse to serve as proxies for Europe or the US to guarantee the security of the Sahel. While they do cooperate with both at many levels, they allege that they do not wish to be their proxies in the Sahel.

The ambitious regional strategy has faced major hurdles among the CEMOC partners, due to the strong relations between countries like Mali, Mauritania and Niger with France, which partly explains the suspicions among the core countries. The reservations and double-dealings that have long characterised Algeria's relations with its weak Sahelian neighbours have prevented the CEMOC from being a more effective collective defence group. The involvement, under France's influence, and war-mongering attitude of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)-alienated Algerians, who nevertheless have accepted the principle of military action in northern Mali as a last resort but not before the separation of the Tuareg from terrorist and narco-trafficking groups. Although Algerian policy-makers have not rejected the principle of wider regional cooperation, they have viewed attempts to bring in Morocco into the CEMOC or other non-Sahelian organisations suspiciously, asserting that Morocco is not a Sahelian state and fearing that recognising Morocco as a Sahelian state would go against Algeria's stance on Western Sahara, which borders the Sahel. Furthermore, Algeria and Morocco compete over regional leadership; their tense relations over a variety of issues, including the question of Western Sahara, hinder close security and military cooperation between them. Nonetheless, Algeria and Morocco collaborate at several levels in the antiterrorist fight, especially in exchange of intelligence.

In sum, to fight violent extremism Algiers undertook several diplomatic and military actions and sought to share expertise in antiterrorism with other nations facing this transnational phenomenon. With respect to the region, the authorities continue to strengthen bilateral and regional cooperation in the areas of security and development. However, Algerian policy-makers believe that the multiplication of security initiatives, especially those led by outsiders, is detrimental to the fight against terrorism, which explains opposition to the G5.

The G5: The Reasons for the Absence of a Key Player

Some analysts have correctly pointed out that the Sahel is a "regional security traffic jam" (Cooke & Sanderson, 2016) because of the plethora of security arrangements. While the G5 has been in existence since 2014, more as a development entity, President Emmanuel Macron gave it a military-security dimension. The G5, whose main purpose is to relieve France from its entrapment and financial burden (close to $1 billion a year) in the Sahel, where it has a 5,000-strong military force, is the new addition to the various security structures in the Sahel. According to the French, this force needs €500 million annually to be effective (Al Mouahidi, 2017). The five members are among the poorest

countries in the world but they must each contribute €10 million. According to news reports, France, half-heartedly, invited Algeria to join but the authorities in Algiers declined. Beyond the question as to whether such a force, which purportedly will be fighting alongside French and other African troops (MINUSMA), will be successful, it is necessary to understand the main reasons why Algeria has rejected the offer to be part of it.

Without a doubt, Algeria's response was to be expected. A specialist of Algeria's security policy pointed out that Algeria's reaction to the G5 "is very negative for two reasons: the first is that the feeling of having been double-crossed by France, especially after having created and financed the CEMOC and certain regional initiatives; the second is that it allows the lasting installation of foreign bases in the Sahel and blurs the cards by mixing up the armies of the region" (Y. Zoubir, personal communication, 25 January 2018). For Algerian policy-makers, not only is France-sponsored G5 a non-African initiative, despite its depiction by international backers, France in particular, but it is also inconceivable that Algeria would join a force "sponsored" [*parrainée*] by a non-African entity, France, Algeria's former colonial power. Algerians are very averse to alliances, especially military ones. While it pursues an incontestable fight against VEOs, Algeria prefers diplomatic action to a political solution to the crisis in the Sahel and to link security issues to development, a lesson that Algerian authorities learned at high cost from their own civil strife in the 1990s. Algiers is averse to the idea of collaborating with foreign troops, especially French, in the fight against Jihadists. This could substantiate Jihadist ideology and propaganda of a war of "infidels" against Muslims and thus embolden the dormant VEOs in Algeria.

Moreover, not only does its unwritten doctrine forbid direct intervention beyond its borders but, in this case, Algeria is concerned that such intervention may inadvertently target Tuareg organisations, resulting in an intensification of the nationalist feelings and solidarity of the Tuareg across the region, thus jeopardising the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Mali. Through the G5, the French give the impression of wanting to double-cross Algeria in the Sahel region and impose France's own rules. With respect to the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Mali, Algerians feel that they are its sponsors and it is not France's role to interfere in the process (Métaoui, 2017). Algerian policy-makers are also concerned that a major French offensive in northern Mali could result in an incursion of terrorist groups into Algeria, compelling Algeria to become militarily involved in the Sahel. There is suspicion that this is perhaps France's main objective to destabilise southern Algeria with all its unpredictable circumstances.[16] A well-informed Algerian journalist on security matters correctly points out that "without

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16 In September 2011, during the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) uprisings, a former prime minister asked the author: "don't you think that they will wish to destabilise Algeria, as well"? The feeling among policy-makers that Algeria is targeted by outside powers to destabilise the regime has not dissipated.

Algeria, with its diplomatic, military and political weight in Africa, the G5 Sahel will do nothing." In his opinion, which reflects the view of some policy-makers in Algiers, "in addition to the permanent security threat, there is the troubled game that Paris plays with which it is now necessary to count as a destabilising factor with a new French president whose vision of international relations is still unclear. Paris seems to embark on a dangerous path by wanting to play the card of one country against another or a political approach against another in a dossier considered very sensitive by the Algerian authorities" (Métaoui, 2017).

In sum, Algiers rejects another structure that ignores the necessary in-depth political treatment of the problems in the region from an Afro-African perspective. The preference would have been simply the integration of the G5 into the 11-nation, Algerian-led (but AU-coordinated) Nouakchott Process. To the policy-makers in Algiers, the G5 is an extra-African grouping, which cannot operate without France or other foreign troops, at Algeria's borders. However, one can surmise that, regardless of Algiers' reservations about the G5, Algerians will cooperate with this organisation through intelligence sharing and logistics, as it has done with Operation Serval and Operation Barkhane. Furthermore, Algeria already has military agreements with three of the five Sahelian states (Mali, Mauritania and Niger) in the G5.

Conclusion

Algerians are concerned about foreign military intervention in Mali because, from their perspective, it would further destabilise the already explosive conditions in the Sahel. To them, separating the VEOs from Tuareg groups, who have legitimate demands, is vital. They also believe that dialogue must exist between all the Tuareg, mainly Ansar Dine and the MNLA, on the one hand, and among central government authorities in Bamako, on the other. In the dominant view in Algiers, this policy will isolate terrorist groups and facilitate the war against narco-trafficking. They insist on Mali's territorial integrity and unity and demand that the authorities in Mali should resolve their internal difficulties through peaceful dialogue. It would be wrong to assume that Algeria is opposed to military intervention or that it is soft on terrorism; quite the contrary. Algerians argue convincingly that they have been the main victims of terrorism for years. However, they prefer political solutions to a war that would destabilise not only Algeria and Sahelian states but also countries like Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, which are undergoing complicated transitions. They also fear that the interests of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, albeit limited to financial support to the G5, adds to the multitude of interferences in the

Sahel region. These foreign interferences intensify the VEOs' ideological justification for the war against Western interests and United Nations peacekeepers of MINUSMA, who have come under regular attacks. The fight against VEOs in the Sahel requires a dual approach; that is, an implacable fight against the VEOs and genuine strategies of development. In northern Mali, VEOs had established a state within the state precisely because they became a substitute for the government authorities in providing a livelihood to the destitute populations. The EU has assisted Sahelian states in many regards. However, what the Sahel needs is genuine sustainable development policies not over-securitisation, which local Sahelian populations perceive as a return of colonialism, a perception that benefits VEOs. About the G5, for instance, one can ask the question: how can France expect the five destitute Sahelian states to provide €10 million each to the G5? Thus, the G5 has little chance of succeeding unless genuine development policies are set in place. The EU, whose security depends on the stability of the Sahel, can and should play a constructive socioeconomic role.

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Climate Change and Demographic Trends: Security Challenges in the Sahel

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Introduction

Recently, the former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon affirmed that improving the current situation in the Sahel was among the UN's top priorities. He identified a "triple peril" in the region: environmental degradation, poverty and insecurity,[1] all of which are referred to as "multiplier threats". Similarly, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to the Sahel, Romano Prodi, warned that "the Western world has no idea what the Sahel was because history has taken the attention of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Western countries to Iraq and Afghanistan, but the Sahel is potentially more dangerous than Afghanistan" (Prodi, 2013).

This paper aims to analyse the security implications behind changes in both demography and climate in the Sahel region[2]. The countries constituting the Sahel are the poorest in the world, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and are facing increasingly pressing political, economic and social challenges. Indeed, the region is afflicted with conflicts, unresolved internal tensions, political instability, state fragility, widespread power vacuums, vast uncontrolled and permeable frontiers, institutional weaknesses,[3] corrupt regimes, illicit trade (drugs, humans, weapons and raw materials, such as precious stones, ivory, gold, platinum, wood or oil), violent extremism and terrorism or migrant smuggling mafias (Barras & García, 2016).

Today, there is a strong and unarguable correlation between demographics and climate. This chapter focuses on this relationship and aims to highlight the extent to which the latter has an impact on human security. The first part of the chapter focuses on population facts and trends analysis, urban and rural population ratios and human security in the Sahel. The next part discusses the important security implications of climate change.

This paper aims to discern tangible options and capabilities that Sahelian countries must consider implementing in order to improve their situation in both the near and distant future. It is worth noting that not all Sahelian countries share similar, homogenous preconditions: some of them must prioritise their humanitarian situation first, while others must hierarchise violent extremism and potential conflicts. Taking into account this extremely complex framework, this chapter anticipates trends and future living conditions in the Sahel and aims to put forward some recommendations to effectively address the region's impending socio-political situation.

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1 Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Mauritania in March 2016.

2 The Sahel region includes parts of northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, central Mali, northern Burkina Faso, the southernmost part of Algeria, Niger, the northernmost region of Nigeria, central Chad, central and southern Sudan, the extreme north of South Sudan, Eritrea, Cameroon, Central African Republic and the northern reaches of Ethiopia.

3 The Sahel governments' situation is not the inexistence of the state. The problem is that there are sophisticated systems of informal relations and influences, which operate outside the formal state structures. In this respect, states' capabilities are limited by corruption and the presence of non-state actors (armed groups, insurgent movements, ethnic militias, organised crime groups, contrabandists, traffickers and extremist religious groups).

Demography in the Sahel

Facts and Trends

This part assesses the demographic trends in the area in order to understand why the Sahel is now one of the most critical regions in the world.

The Sahel has the most rapid population growth in the world. Between 1950 and 2015, the region's population grew from 73 million to 370 million people. There are now 150 million people living in West Africa's cities, which is 25 times more than in 1950 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016a). For the coming years, children and adolescents will constitute the population's majority in Sahelian countries (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2016). The demographic predictions for those countries by 2030 are disturbing: the Sahel's total population is likely to rise to 700 million people (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2016).

Graph 1. Population in 2030
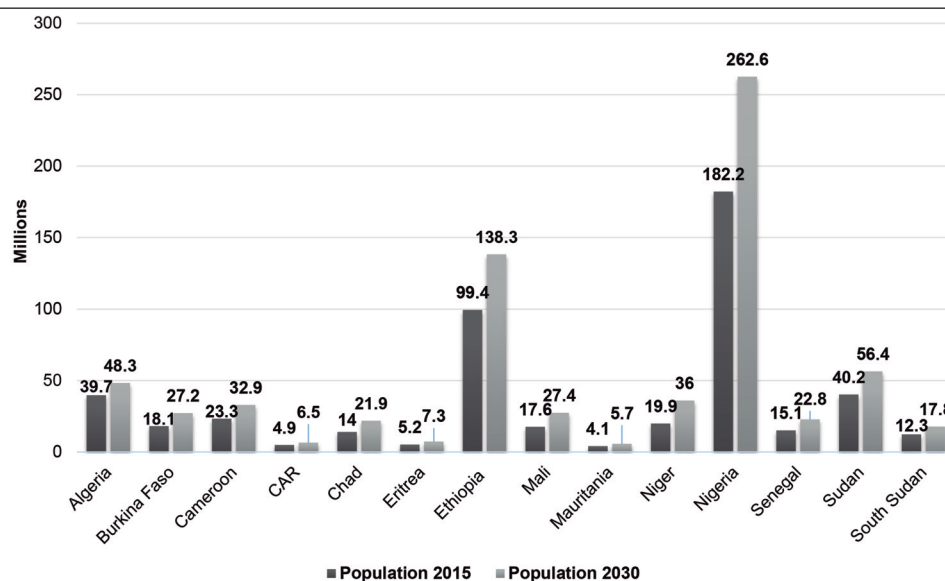
Source: UNDP, 2016

According to the current fertility rates, the Sahel's population will grow beyond the region's capabilities. This growth will have occurred because of two main factors: rapid

decreases in infant and child mortality, and stable levels of fertility. The age structure of most Sahelian countries will remain predominately young: the number of people under the age of 20 will double by 2050.

Demographic growth is putting pressure on the inadequate and insufficient infrastructures in the Sahel. Another major problem is access to services: not only health, education or social services but also infrastructure, lack of vital resources such as water, and scarcity of animals, food and fuel.

The convergence of demographic growth and climate change is a serious security challenge to the Sahel, which has potential spill-over effects beyond the region, including Mediterranean countries from both seashores. The Sahel can partly be defined as a region experiencing rapid population growth in an ecologically vulnerable area with weak governance. By 2020, an estimated 60 million people could be forced to move from the deserted regions of sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa and Europe (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2007).

An extremely young population without prospects greatly contributes to the region's instability. Young people moving to cities and capitals, leaving rural areas behind, will contribute to saturating already scarce resources in the urban centres of bigger cities. This may create tensions between urban and rural populations. The management of this situation in the Sahel will not only determine the economy's future but the region's societal and political fabric as well.

Population Distribution in the Sahel: Urban and Rural Population

To understand the region's idiosyncrasy, it is important to analyse what kinds of societies inhabit the Sahel. Sahelian countries vary in terms of population distribution. For instance, Mali and Niger, the Sahel's largest countries, contain extensive desert plains and have low population densities of less than 20 people per square kilometre. Other geographically smaller countries, such as Senegal, which boasts access to the sea, have population densities of 50 people or more per square kilometre. Landlocked Burkina Faso has a population density of 65 people per square kilometre (May, 2015).

The Sahel's population is currently mostly rural and is supported by agriculture, animal husbandry and other primary sector activities. To re-address the relationship between rural and urban spaces in the Sahel, it is important to underline some particular problems regarding methodology in this field. First, there are different definitions and criteria at the

national level, creating a "census chaos" about data, particularly regarding rural populations and rural space. Secondly, there are different indicators between urban and rural environments, such as child mortality, life expectancy, birth rates and dispersed habitats. Thirdly, rural population decreases in relative terms although it retains a natural growth, and is superior to that of the cities.

Taking into consideration the nature and issues specific to rural populations, it is necessary to study and understand the circumstances surrounding the exodus from rural areas to cities. Despite a strong tendency towards concentration in rural areas, living conditions are deplorable regarding health or schooling services. The displacement from rural to urban spaces in the Sahel region is also caused by unemployment in rural areas, as weather circumstances have a negative impact on soils, leading to lack of resources, poverty, malnutrition and, sometimes, famine. Populations move to urban centres with hopes of a better future and economic prosperity.

The urbanisation process is inexorable in the Sahel region. All of its countries are experiencing a decrease in population in rural areas. Only four countries will be left with an urbanisation rate exceeding 50% of the rural population in 2050: Chad, Ethiopia, Niger and South Sudan (see Graph 2).

Graph 2. Ruralisation Prospects
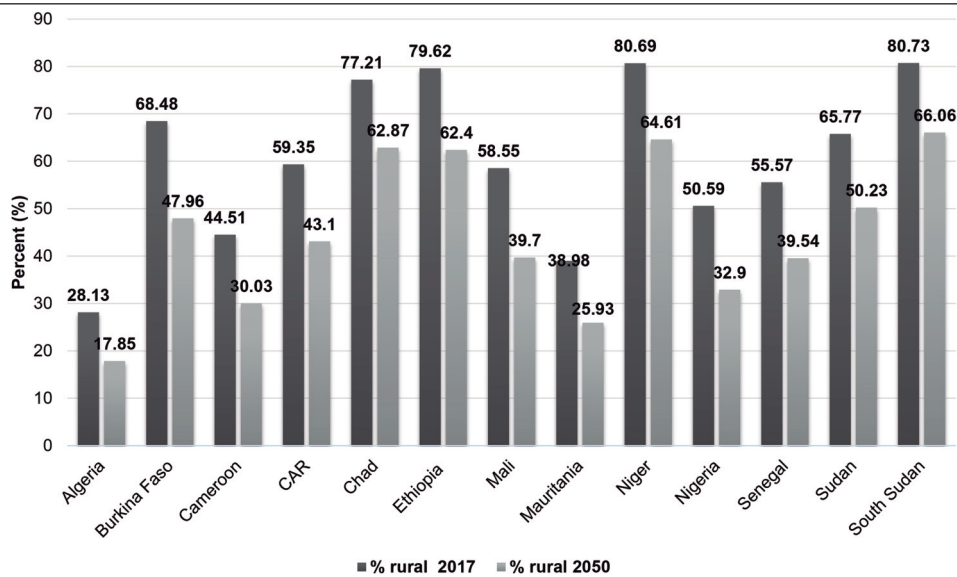
Source: World Bank, 2017

The infamous "urban crush" will become a reality in the coming years (UN, 2014). Urban populations have increased in the region, giving rise to many opportunities but also many challenges. The creation of spontaneous major urban centres around large cities as a result of the rural exodus reveals important demographic challenges that will determine the future of Sahelian countries in economic, social and security terms. By 2020, the urbanisation ratio will be close to 60% in the majority of Sahelian countries, leading to an unprecedentedly large urban population. The impending situation suggests that in 2040 there will be even more urban centres: six cities with 1 to 5 million inhabitants will eventually have 5 to 10 million people, in most Sahelian countries.

By 2050, the average urban population in the Sahel will increase in all of the region's countries. Only Chad, Ethiopia, Niger and South Sudan will have an urban population nearing the 35% rate. Others countries, with the exception of Sudan (50%) and Burkina Faso (52.03%), will exceed 55% of urban population. As shown in Graph 3, all Sahelian countries except Eritrea will undergo a major urbanisation process. This fast urbanisation will result in increased pressure on natural resources and dramatically increase pollution, proving the link between population increase and climate change.

Graph 3. Urbanisation Prospects
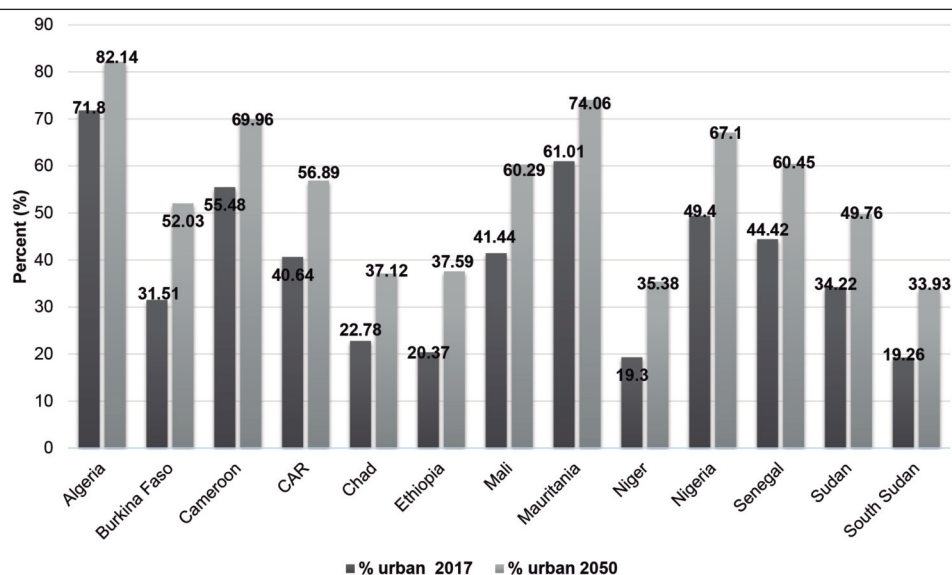
Source: World Bank, 2017

This fast urbanisation rate will lead to the creation of new urban and more heterogeneous environments. Tensions may arise between old communities and "newcomers" from more disadvantaged rural backgrounds. Increased pressure on essential social services may also lead to considerable tensions. Cities and their infrastructures cannot grow at the same rhythm as the population, leading to an increase in poor, overcrowded and marginalised slums, where access to health, education, social security, decent housing and functional roads is scarce.

Urbanisation processes, coupled with population changes, will be transformative forces in the Sahel. This situation will put both the capacities of Sahelian states and international society's scope to deal with major forthcoming migrant waves under stress. Currently, migration presents itself as the only solution to escape the misery of rural areas. People are faced with the option of moving to Europe via the Sahara Desert on a quest for a better life. Migration has become a major economic driver, and smuggling networks are benefiting from this reality by generating hundreds of millions of dollars. The central Mediterranean route, used by mixed migrant communities, is also the most dangerous one. Indeed, the Maghreb and the Sahel have both registered a major increase in human trafficking. These routes are also used by transnationally organised crime groups, which routinely conduct illegal activities such as gun trafficking, money laundering and illicit trade.

Therefore, to prevent those processes from developing, it is imperative that Sahel governments develop and improve the standards of social services in both rural areas and urban cities. If governments invest in strengthening their countries' existing infrastructure, these processes could be overturned.

"Human Habitat" and "Human Security" in the Sahel

Population distribution in the Sahel region presents a specific "human habitat". This concept is used in the fields of human ecology and urbanism. The concept of human habitat takes into account material and institutional factors, which determine the existence of a localised human group of people in a specific place (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2006). However, classification and hierarchy fluctuate from one country to another depending on size, ecosystems, communications and even infrastructures. It should be noted that this concept has evolved according to the changes that have occurred in societies within types of settlements: housing, establishments and communities, economic activity, and social structure themselves. This term includes many other correlated characteristics, especially ecosystems, urban environments and social environments.

According to the UNDP Human Development Index (2016), all countries in the Sahel except Algeria are in the Low Human Development ranking. The four countries ranked last are part of the Sahel region: Burkina Faso (185), Chad (186), Niger (187) and the Central African Republic (188). Nigeria leads Sahelian countries in the index (152), followed by Cameroon (153), Mauritania (157), Senegal (162), Sudan (165), Ethiopia (174), Mali (175), Eritrea (179) and South Sudan (123).

The concept of "human security" refers to much more than just security, whether it is concerning violence or crime. It encompasses the security of people's livelihoods (economic, food, environmental or health related), as well as community and political security (Gomez & Gasper, 2013). The concept of "human security" has very often been used inappropriately on official military and civil levels, without defining its real significance or context (Marquina, 2009). There are over 40 definitions that make it non-operational and often mistake safety with well-being and dignity. It is therefore necessary to take a new approach to the meaning of "human security" in order to highlight that the term refers to security matters in intersectional ways. Without adopting this flexible approach, "human security" might not be an adequate tool to deal with the multiple threats that exist today in the Sahel.

The Sahel is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world. Some Sahelian countries experience severe famine risks, such as Mali, Nigeria and Chad. More than 30 million people struggle with food insecurity across the region, one in five children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition, and 4.9 million people have fled their homes due to such dire circumstances. (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2016a). According to the European Commission (EC), in 2017, more than 42 million people in the region were severely or moderately food insecure. To make matters worse, it is predicted that over 9 million will need emergency food assistance. Another example of environmental degradation is the drought of Lake Chad, which has wreaked havoc and led to a spike in population exodus. All these aspects have an impact on the Sahel, creating a particular "human habitat".

Scarcity, climatic conditions and violence create a spiral of insecurity, famine and lack of job opportunities, which then leads to an unbearable context and an eradication of opportunities for inhabitants of the Sahel, as well as severe disruption of markets and agricultural and pastoral activities, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to leave their homes. According to the data, almost 5 million people are displaced by force: there were 3.5 million internally displaced people (IDP) and 1 million refugees.

Food and nutrition, insecurity and population crisis are interlinked. Most Sahelian countries are included in the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) of the European Commission (EC). According to the EC, the Sahel is "reeling from aftershocks of four consecutive food and nutrition crises since 2005" that have "severely eroded resilience by the poorest families who now struggle to cover their basic food needs year after year, especially during long periods between harvests" (EC, 2016).

However, humanitarian assistance does not only include life-saving food security interventions but also protection from conflict and violence, strengthening household and community coping mechanisms, supporting longer-term solutions for IDP as well as refugees. Over 60% of human trafficking victims detected in this region are children (OCHA, 2016a). Therefore, insecurity may also be a result of the interaction between the region's acute refugee crisis and short-term climate variability (Crawford, 2015).

Closer coordinated action by foreign sectors, such as governments, donors and humanitarian and development organisations, builds up people's resilience and provides them with essential social services. Regarding resilience was created the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR) in 2012. "This framework seeks to address the causes of this region's chronic food insecurity and to achieve 'Zero Hunger' in the Sahel by 2032" (EC, 2017) to break the cycle of food and nutrition emergencies.

Nowadays, resilience must not be assumed as the new "panacea" against all problems concerning security, poverty or radicalisation. The "resilient societies" concept was introduced in 2016 in the European Union Global Strategy. Resilience now coexists with other modern concepts and has become fashionable but, then again, it does not have a mechanism within itself that society can count on. The problem regarding resilience is that it has become a diplomatic way to recognise governments' incapacities. In other words, this concept realises society's capacity to absorb threats and, at the same time, assumes that no other mechanisms are more proactive or preventive in dealing with new challenges to security.

The humanitarian situation in this region needs to be tackled. The international community and all the region's countries must now deal with the humanitarian situation because it is directly linked with population growth and the current worrying climate trends. The Sahel is becoming an area of multiple interests, meaning that the United States (US), China, Russia or European Union (EU) consider it a fundamental actor regarding international security.

Consequently, it is necessary to achieve a more comprehensive concept of "freedom" (Kofi Annan), which is understood as a balance between development, security and human rights, and to instil a peaceful and stable environment. First, emergency situations must be solved, such as food crises and epidemics, as well as more pressing matters regarding security. Secondly, it is important to recover physical spaces for people facing violence situations, with the involvement of all Sahelian states. Thirdly, the promotion of adequate living conditions is essential because it is the only way to give a real chance to the communities living in this region and to stop immigration fluxes.

Climate Change in the Sahel

Evolution Facts

The Sahel's extreme climatic conditions determine its societies' future and life opportunities. Indeed, "climate change, natural disasters, water, and food scarcity will contribute to failed states' proliferation and authoritarian regimes" (Marquina, 2010).

The Sahara is the largest hot desert in the world. Arid regions are perceived as bare and rather homogeneous areas, yet somehow this vast extension has extraordinary topographical and climate differences. The Sahel area has recently experienced strong weather oscillations that have importantly shifted the biodiversity distribution.

Africa is one of the continents most vulnerable to climate change, and the Sahel is one of the world's climate change hotspots. Meteorological data recorded in the last 100 years show that there is no other region on the globe of this size with such spatially and seasonally averaged climatic anomalies. This part of the chapter examines an evolution in the past 100 years of the aspect regarding climate: drought, climate variability, temperatures, degradations, desertification, and so on.

In the late 1960s, the Sahel suffered one of the most dramatic recent cases of climate variability. The 1968-73 drought caused the deaths of not only a large part of the population but also of most of the wildlife (Reij, Tappan, & Smale, 2013). From then until 1993, the region has experienced 20 years of severe drought. Since the early 1980s, the Sahel has been suffering from drought on a regular basis. Currently, the frequency and severity of droughts and floods have increased over this period, and over 80% of the region's land has degraded. Indeed, by 2050, with greenhouse gas emissions rising, temperatures will be warmer and extreme weather events will have become more common.

The region has four climatic characteristics: seasonal floods, sporadic rains, desertification and poor conditions of water infrastructures.

Seasonal floods contribute to land degradation, damaging farming and agriculture as a whole. Occasional rain generates more difficult environmental conditions; the existence of strong north-south rainfall high inter-annual variability is normal. Additionally, in the region, rainfall is scattered and takes place in summer (from July to September), with an extremely dry winter.

There is a real growing problem with desertification. The desertification process has a double component. On the one hand, it is caused by an increase in population, severely impacting the soil. On the other, the growth and expansion of cattle has also affected grassland, which is grazed more intensively with increasing demand for fodder crops and even a slowing down of transhumance practices. In these conditions, less vegetation means less protection from the weather.

Finally, in the case of devastated water infrastructures, "unsafe drinking water, lack or inadequate water for hygiene, lack of sanitation and poor vector control dramatically increase the risks of epidemic outbreaks and contributes to a high prevalence of water-related diseases, exacerbating malnutrition" (OCHA, 2013).

Poor harvests, rising food prices, overgrazing, over-farming and overpopulation have all contributed to land degradation in the Sahel. Biodiversity is threatened by increased human activities, including overhunting and natural resources' prospection and also in the future by predicted global warming (Brito, et al., 2013). For instance, the impact of climate change in the region will have an extraordinary effect on cereal productivity by 2080 (UNDP, 2006).

Although this area generates one of the lowest levels of carbon emissions, it is one of the regions to most severely suffer from the effects of climate change. Thus, there are increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. Experts identify Chad, Niger and Nigeria as "extreme climate risk" countries and other states in the region as "high risk" countries (OCHA, 2016a).

All these changes will have an impact on the Sahel's economic activity. Nowadays, the economies of the Sahel are based on agricultural activity. The incidence of orography and habitat in the economy is significant because it is geography that determines agricultural conditions, as well as water resources, livestock, ecosystem or fisheries.

Adverse weather conditions combined with population growth highlight the importance of access to natural resources, which are the reasons for local conflicts and tensions in cross-border areas of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

The Sahel has a "long history of population movements and represents a multitude of migration patterns and trajectories. For a few years now, internal and international migrations have increased in the region. However, causes and motives for migration are several, and the relationship between ecosystem changes and population mobility is complex" (Hummel, Doevenspeck, & Samimi, 2012). It is important to focus on a phenomenon created by climatic conditions, called "environmental migrants": "persons or groups of persons who, for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently and who move either within their country or abroad" (International Organisation for Migration [IOM], 2007). In this context, it is important to value the efforts made by the Organization of African Unity (OUA) in the 2012 Addis Ababa Convention on Refugees, which consolidated the legally binding First International Convention to protect and assist people's internal displacement. Countries such as Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad signed this convention.

There is also another issue related to the climatic situation in the Sahel: pastoralist conflicts. This issue is often a "manifestation of broader conflicts in the region's 'peripheries' and overlaps with tensions over power, wildlife conservation, land and water" (Control Arms, 2017). In Nigeria, over 60,000 people have died in violent acts related to grazing since 2001. In the same year, in a matter of days, 913 Fulani people died due to herdsman-farmer violence in Jos, Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Uganda and South Sudan have also seen violence related to grazing.

The problem of pastoralist conflicts has been present for the last 30 years. Fulani communities from Niger and the Daoussahaq from Mali's Menaka region are in conflict because of the excessive exploitation and degradation of natural resources in the Sahel. There is also another important issue related to Fulani: the link between herdsmen and Jihadists. This is not a symbiotic relationship, but perceptions favour that impression because of anti-state, anti-elite as well as anti-status quo narratives. It is important to note that the international community does not know how to face the priorities of peasant communities in Sahelian countries. For instance, in Mali, since 2015, the uses of the land in the armed conflicts, particularly at the local level, have created a materialistic logic, which explains why herdsmen are joining armed groups. Fulani elites seized the opportunity to reinstate their

social pre-eminence by stigmatising potential outbreaks of rebellion as promoted by individuals aligned with a Jihadist agenda (Raineri & Strazzari, 2017).

Another example of approaches to terrorist groups is the Macina Liberation Front (Front de Libération du Macina, FLM).[4] The FLM is "targeting one of Africa's largest ethnic groups, a primarily cattle-raising community of some 20 million people spread across nearly 20 nations in West and Central Africa" (Fulton & Nickels, 2017). In this respect, FLM uses the same strategy as Fulani, being exceedingly disrupting: they are trying to link pastoralist historical grievances with terrorist violence.

"While herder-farmer tensions will undoubtedly persist in Africa, they will be worsened through association with terrorists who actively aggravate hostilities and manipulate ethnic and religious differences" (Fulton & Nickels, 2017). In both cases (Fulani and FLM) jihadists are generating empathy within society, and sometimes involving local communities, allowing control over vast territories in the region. This could mean that terrorist phenomena would be almost impossible to eradicate from the Sahel region.

In conclusion, climate evolution in the Sahel presents a very worrying overall image. "Climate vulnerability is compounded by the region's high dependence on rained agriculture and its natural resources to support food security and livelihoods, rapid population growth, and chronic humanitarian crises due to recurrent drought, flooding, food insecurity, epidemics and violent conflict" (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2017). Therefore, when climate change is combined with political and economic instability, poverty, inequality and historical grievances, it exacerbates tensions or triggers conflict. At the same time, poor governance, weak institutions, capacity constraints and corruption restrict the ability of Sahelian states to address climate change (Crawford, 2015).

In order to tackle this, some initiatives have begun in the region. Actors are developing agriculture in the context of climate change with the main goal of rehabilitating the fragile ecosystem. "It is also important to mainstream climate change adaptation into national development planning and to make sure that national priorities such as poverty reduction and sustainable development are part of the global negotiation agenda" (Osman-Elasha, 2015). Other initiatives focusing on sustainable agricultural practices created to paralyse land degradation and desertification have been developed. "Sahelian farmers achieved their success by ingeniously modifying traditional agroforestry, water and soil-management practices" (Reij, Tappan, & Smale, 2009). Furthermore, in order to support local communities to adapt to climate change, there are some sustainable agricultural practices as well as soil and water conservation programmes that boost food security.

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4 Front de Libération du Macina (FLM), also known as Katiba Macina, is an armed Salafist group that operates in Mali, founded in 2015 by Amadou Kouf. The group is linked to former MUJAO fighters.

What could Sahelian countries do about climate change? Nothing besides increasing their adaptability to changing climatic conditions, they can try to accept the situation and do everything possible to make it less threatening. Regarding security, institutional interventions need to pay attention to climate aspects and, at the same time, responses to climate change must consider conflict.

Conclusion and Recommendations

New conflicts will result from climate change effects on different parts of the planet. Unfortunately, the Sahel is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world. Climate change effects will generate more poverty, as well as less agricultural production; this will lead to new migration movements directly linked with lack of resources.

The main problem is enormous population growth combined with the pernicious effects of climate change in the Sahel. Undoubtedly, this combination will be a breeding ground of conflict in the following years due to the scarcity of both natural and material resources to deal with high demands in places that will double in population.

As we saw above, it is necessary to break this vicious cycle and obtain conditions for sustainable progress and enduring development in the Sahel region. Usually, governments and their partners work on only one or two aspects at any given time. The Sahel must be a sustainable region from all diverse perspectives: economic (broad-based economic growth), climatic, demographic, humanitarian (reducing to zero the humanitarian crises that occur cyclically). Indeed, given the Sahel's formidable demographic and climate challenges, the time for action is now. There are possibilities to change the situation of the Sahel regarding demographic trends as well as climate change. If the situation changes, the Sahelian population will be able to change its future, so problems linked with living standards, such as immigration, radicalisation and poverty, could also be changed. All that is needed are joint efforts and an understanding of the sustainability of this part of Africa; it also means a better future for the entire world.

On the Institutional Level

Overcome historical rivalry among nations:
- Any analysis of the Sahel must take into account that the problem crosses national borders. Therefore, different countries should join efforts to deal with the challenges.
- It is necessary to generate trustfulness, cooperation and confidence. For instance,

important countries like Morocco and Algeria, leading actors in the region, must improve their cooperation in security matters, which to this day is non-existent. Therefore, greater regional integration is decisive to scale opportunities.

Improve cooperation among non-governmental actors:
- International cooperation is crucial for supporting national mainstreaming efforts, capacity-building, technology transfer and monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of initiatives. Challenges facing the Sahel require a realistic approach by all the initiatives launched by different institutions at the different levels (regional and local).

Sharing know-how:
- There are a lot of regional and multi-sectorial strategies focused on the Sahel. Dangers in the Sahel come from different interlinked areas, so it is necessary for environmental initiatives and programmes to encourage all the common efforts in different sectors. Realistically, this is difficult because all the organisations want to justify themselves but the importance of the issue requires different actors working together.
- Institutions do not have a common agreement on the number of countries or the areas to cover that make up the Sahel. Therefore, it is possible that the Sahel is missing out on a great opportunity because institutions and countries do not share information or solutions to face the regional challenges.

Develop a multidisciplinary but also trans-disciplinary approach:
- Integrate different policies under an umbrella of economic and human development; a complex human-environment-security approach is needed.
- Achieve comprehensive development strategies and national policy coordination, extending beyond security responses, including human security, human habitat and food security perspectives.
- Integrate climate change into national development strategies as a valid instrument for promoting peace and security.
- Work towards the pre-existing local initiatives and organisations.

On Demographic Behaviour

Family planning policies:
- To decelerate fast population growth, to take some actions are possible. Firstly, inform the population about another kind of family size; secondly, facilitate access to contraceptives; thirdly, review legal marriage age.

Female education:
- The role of women in the region must be transformed from different perspectives: education, economy, family and civil society. For instance, if girls extend their school life, marriage age can be held back.
- Improving women's autonomy in society is important.

Regional economic development and employment plans:
- It is necessary for the economies of the Sahel to become sustainable. Regarding employment, both the formal and informal sectors must be appointed to increase employment.
- Promotion of sustainable livelihoods: improving agriculture and livestock production
- Increase access to financial services: facilitate access to credit and savings by microfinance, savings groups as well as warranty systems.

Strengthen local potential of populations:
- Promote local cities to decrease fast urbanisation processes in the region. Prioritise investments in mid-size cities to develop medium towns rather than big ones.
- If there is a small-scale urban development, these urban centres could become more sustainable and at the same time could provide release for big cities.

On Climate Change

Improve planning and water resources management and water infrastructures:
- To fight water resources deterioration, it is necessary to build water infrastructures in two directions: for people (wells) and for agriculture (dams, irrigation canals and hydropower systems).
- Design programmes for water treatment and collection and prepare it for agricultural uses. At the same time, establish a better water usage programming, such as crop preparation, to be sustainable with the alteration of rain periods and water conservation in small-scale irrigation.
- Establish an adequate legal and institutional framework regarding water, principally within each trans-boundary basin: legal status of rivers, its tributaries and distributaries.
- Enhance the existing institutional framework regarding the environment, such as a Water Charter or an Environmental Code.

Improve current seasonal forecasting capacities:
- Share information between national meteorological centres, between countries and also at the regional level.

- Open access to data to all Sahelian countries, especially to available international data.

Adapt farming and pastoralism to climate change:
- Ensure sustainable and equitable management of their resources and protection of the environment. This is difficult because all other developed countries have been growing without taking any care of the environment. Today, the international community demands a great effort in this area.
- Promote natural regeneration managed by farmers.
- Avoid conflicts between indigenous farmers, creating conditions of peaceful coexistence between rural rivalry communities by reorganising spaces, animals, lands or grazing contracts.
- Surveillance of problematic zones.

Re-greening, reforestation, afforestation:
- These practices are having a positive impact on the semiarid regions. It is important to know the location of these practices well because they could also have severe implications for global warming.
- Create a "buffer zone" between extreme desert areas and more productive agricultural areas, maximising the use of a variable resource base while reducing large-scale vulnerability to drought.
- Improve soil fertility and agricultural production through agriculture conservation.
- Rehabilitate biological degradation of degraded lands as well as the construction of erosion prevention structures.

Local community empowerment:
- For instance, farm workers support self-promotion organisations at the local level to promote better practices for shepherds as well as identifying a clearer and secure pastoral area.
- In areas where different countries share cross-borders, ensure secure transhumance paths and corridors.

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EuroMeSCo

Founded in 1996 and comprising 106 institutes from 32 European and South Mediterranean countries, EuroMeSCo (the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission) is the main network of research centres on politics and security in the Mediterranean, striving at building a community of research institutes and think tanks committed to strengthening Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The objectives of the network are to foster influential quality analysis and reflection on Euro-Mediterranean politics and policies; to serve as a platform for dialogue between the members of the network and key stakeholders to discuss the key trends and challenges on the region´s agenda; to increase the impact of think tanks and research institutes and to actively contribute to policy-making through dissemination of research outputs of the network to experts and national, European and international institutions linked to Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The EuroMeSCo work plan includes a research programme with five publication lines (Joint Policy Studies, Papers, Briefs, Spot-Ons and reports), as well as numerous activities, including annual conferences, seminars, workshops, presentations, formal and informal meetings with policy makers on the key political and security dynamics. It also includes   communication and dissemination related activities (website, newsletter and targeted institutional dissemination) to raise awareness and promote the work of the network and to stimulate debate on Euro-Mediterranean affairs.

IEMed.

The European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), founded in 1989, is a consortium comprising the Catalan Government, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and Barcelona City Council. It incorporates civil society through its Board of Trustees and its Advisory Council formed by Mediterranean universities, companies, organisations and personalities of renowned prestige.

In accordance with the principles of the Euro-Mediterra nean Partnership's Barcelona Process, and today with the objectives of the Union for the Mediterranean the aim of the IEMed is to foster actions and projects which contribute to mutual understanding, Exchange and cooperation between the different Mediterranean countries, societies and cultures as well as to promote the progressive construction of a space of peace and stability, shared prosperity and dialogue between cultures and civilisations in the Mediterranean.

Adopting a clear role as a think tank specialised in Mediterranean relations based on a multidisciplinary and networking approach, the IEMed encourages analysis, understanding and cooperation through the organisation of seminars, research projects, debates, conferences and publications, in addition to a broad cultural programme.