

SECURITY COUNCIL

TOPIC B:

The question of instability in the Sahel Region within Sub-Saharan Africa



i. Introduction of Topic

This research paper will cover the topic of instability in the Sahel region within Sub-Saharan Africa. Involved and affected countries and groups, conflicts and issues caused, relevant resolutions and current situations will all be taken into consideration when researching all of the possible solutions for this issue. Therefore, this paper will aim to define the issue, the causes and examples involved, and furthermore all the possible resolutions.

ii. Definition of Key Terms

Sahel: a vast semi-arid region of western and north-central Africa separating the Sahara Desert to the north and tropical savannas to the south, that includes the countries of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Sudan (Britannica)

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (IDMC)

iii. Background Information

The Sahel region is the location of a large-scale humanitarian disaster that is complex and prolonged. The main countries affected by this instability are Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, which are facing one of the fastest growing displacement crises in the world and in which whole communities are suffering from starvation: more than 2.7 million people have been forced to flee their homes and at least 13.4 million are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. (UNCHR)

People began fleeing the central Sahel region in 2011 after an outbreak of violence in Northern Mali, which has rapidly expanded, spreading violence to central parts of the country and to the neighboring countries of Burkina Faso and Niger. In recent years, the conflict, aggravated by armed groups like Boko Haram, has already expanded to Mauritania and Chad and risks spilling over into coastal countries.

Poverty, unemployment, economic insecurity, hunger, displacement and escalating armed conflict are some of the biggest challenges affecting the region, exacerbated by the severe impacts of climate change and COVID-19, which has furtherly deteriorated living conditions in host communities for and in refugee camps.

Indiscriminate attacks against civilians and public infrastructure, including schools and health facilities, and consequences of climate change, such as but not limited to droughts, floods and desertification, have threatened the lives of millions of people and jeopardized agriculture and livestock activities: as a result, some migrate in search of jobs and food, while others consider joining terrorist groups, increasing local competition for natural resources and threatening to exacerbate conflict and instability in the region.

Furthermore, the Lake Chad area of the Sahel has seen its primary water source shrink by nearly 90 percent in the past 50 years, and armed conflict has become prevalent, strangling trade flows and triggering displacement.

The conflict's impact on women and children has been devastating: episodes of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), violence against children, exploitation, trafficking, forced recruitment and early marriage have experienced a sharp rise, due to COVID-19 restrictions, which have forced more than a million children out of school, causing more SGBV incidents in the house, including forced marriage, physical and sexual violence or sexual exploitation.

iv. Major Countries and Organisations Involved

Mali: Mali suffers from severe issues of politic instability, since the military coup of March 2012, terrorism and violence. Since 2013 foreign troops—including French troops and those under the banner of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) and a UN peacekeeping operation, the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)—were present in the country to fight the Islamic terrorist and maintain security while the country recovered from the 2012 coup. (Britannica)

Niger (in the Security Council): Niger is currently serving a 2 year term as a non-permanent member on the UN security council. The General Assembly in January of 2020 voted for Niger as a “strategic partner” and key state in the “stabilization of the Sahel Region”.

G5 Sahel: G5 Sahel is a regional, intergovernmental organization founded in 2014 in order to provide an institutional framework to promote development and security within its five member countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. It created the Joint Task Force in 2017, structured around Military and Police Components and connected through the national and regional Security Cooperation Platforms (PCMS) in order to strengthen the fight against threats to peace and security and support development. Its main aims are to collect, process, exploit and share relevant criminal information among a diverse range of actors in a complex environment. (Interpol)

France – Operation Barkhane: France has been military present in the Sahel region since August 2014 when it launched the Operation Barkhane in order to counter with terrorism in the Liptako-Gourma region (the area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso). In the last G5 Sahel summit held in N'Djamena (capital of Chad) in February 2021, France emphasized the key role of Sahel actors and the importance of bolstering regional military, political, diplomatic organization, while also announcing a downsizing of his military presence in the Sahel, which President Emmanuel Macron said would undergo a “profound transformation”. (Casola)

Takuba task force: Takuba task force is a military operation launched on 27 March 2020 by eleven European States together with Mali and Niger. It will be brought under the command of Operation Barkhane to fight terrorist groups in the Liptako region (border region between Mali and Niger) and to ensure the autonomy of local armed forces, working in cooperation with other operations present in this region. (Sahel Coalition)

v. Timeline of Events

2012 (March 21) Malian military coup: a mutinying group of the State army seized power and suspended the constitution, replacing the democratically elected government with the National Committee for the Recovery of Democracy and Restoration of the State (Britannica)

2012 (April): the African Union and the the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) imposed sanctions on Mali, which led to food and energy shortage and rising prices (Britannica)

2012 (Apr. 6) independent State of Azawad: the Tuareg rebel group National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) declared that the Northern part of Mali was now the independent State of Azawad (Britannica)

2012 (Dec.) African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA): the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of this international force to help Mali reclaim the Northern part of the country (Britannica)

2013 (Apr.) African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA): the UN Security Council approved the creation of this mission in order to maintain security in the country (Britannica)

2014 (Feb.16) G5 Sahel: during a summit of the five Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger was formed the G5 Sahel (see organizations involved and relevant events)

2014 (Aug. 1) Operation Barkhane: France launched this military operation in order to counter with terrorism in the the area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso (see major countries and organisations involved)

2017 G5 Sahel Joint Force: the G5S with the support of the UN, the African Union and the European Union created the Joint Force in order to better counter with terrorist organisation in the area (see organisations involved)

2019 (July) Stabilization Facility for Lake Chad: the UNDP launched a \$ 100 million stabilization facility to stabilize the area of the Lake Chad Basin (see relevant UN treaties and events)

2020 (March 27) Takuba Task Force: eleven European States together with Mali and Niger launched this military operation to fight terrorism in the border region between Mali and Niger (see organisations involved)

vi. Relevant UN Treaties and Events

G5 Sahel: G5 Sahel, commonly known as G5S, is an institutional framework for regional collaboration in development policy and security issues in West Africa. It was formed on February 16, 2014, in Nouakchott, Mauritania, during a summit of five of the Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger (G5 Sahel). G5 Sahel was initially established to respond to the exponential growth of armed and violent extremist organizations, as well as the region's worsening security situation. The G5 Sahel countries' heads of state launched an initiative to improve the security and safety of their citizens to create a favorable environment for Sahel's socioeconomic development by joining their national efforts to combat common security threats (OHCHR).

The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD): The community of states includes various african countries and aims for the consolidation of political, cultural, economic, and social fields. The Treaty Establishing the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, have the following objectives:

- (a) The Establishment of a thorough Economic Union based on a strategy conducted in line with a development plan that would be integrated into the member states' development plans
- (b) The elimination of all obstacles impeding the unity of the states by:
 - (i) Facilitating the free movement of individuals
 - (ii) Allowing the freedom of residence
 - (iii) Allowing the freedom of the movement of goods
 - (iv) Encouraging foreign trade
 - (v) Enhancing the improvement of land
 - (vi) Consenting the member states the same rights.
- (c) Coordination of pedagogical and educational systems with the objective of deepening cooperation in:
 - (i) Regional Security
 - (ii) Sustainable development (PACCI).

The Stabilization Facility for Lake Chad: In July 2019, the UNDP launched the \$100 million Stabilization facility to stabilize the area of the Lake Chad Basin, which includes Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. They help local authorities contain the effects of Boko Haram, a terrorist organization. Local authorities are attempting to break the cycle of instability and forced relocation caused by conflict. They also strive to lay the groundwork for long-term recovery and development. Simultaneously, the regional facility integrates civilian and military techniques, with a significant emphasis on livelihoods and resilience (UNISS).

vii. Main Issues

The issue of instability in the Sahel region led to a number of challenges which include the growing threat of terrorism and organized crime, climate change and demographic growth. The issues above have led to Institutional fragility in the region. The issue must be faced from the political, military, and development perspectives. It has resulted in the abuse of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law (FD - MEFA).

Furthermore, the security situations in the sahel regions, particularly in Burkina Faso resulted in widespread poverty, a lack of basic services, and limited resources to combat violent extremism have created a complicated situation in which neither national nor international measures appear to be capable of protecting civilians. The bleak situation in the Sahel region is only expected to deteriorate in the upcoming years (Aspenia).

Ineffective solutions to the issue may result in the unsustainable development of the region, leading to further issues. Solutions must address the issue of food shortages, terrorist-related security threats to the negative impacts of climate change, which as

said by the Security Council speakers, has the capacity to change for the better with a continued focus on sustainable development.

viii. Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

S/RES/2480 - 28th of June 2019

The resolution was put forth to address the concern for the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Mali, the violations and abuses of international humanitarian law, and their emphasis on risk management in Mali for the stability of the Sahel region. Clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, outline measures for the resolution of issues such as decentralized state services, the incompleteness of the constitutional reform, and for the general formation of stable security plans (OHCHR)

S/RES/2391 - 8th of December 2017

The resolution was put forth to emphasise the strong commitment for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the G5 Sahel countries: Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Chad. The resolution highlights common threats such as terrorism and organized crime. The resolution also mentions the concern for the lacking resources for the civilians. Clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 include collaboration means for the G5 Sahel countries to operate on the issues at hand; Clauses 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 involve international cooperation and the option to contribute or donate to support G5 Sahel. Other clauses address international law and human rights, as well as the implementation of Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (OHCHR).

ix. Possible Solutions

Peace-Keeping Entities: The deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Mali is also a threat to the rest of G5 Sahel. A possibility could be the development of a peace-keeping entity under the UN Security Council, to combat threats such as terrorism and organized crime. The solution could be effective in the protection of civilians in G5 Sahel, and particularly in Mali. Their presence can be in various terrorism hotspots throughout G5 Sahel to minimise damages to civilians and infrastructure.

Guaranteeing Human Rights: The issue of instability in the Sahel also addresses the precarious living standards in the Sahel region (OHCHR). A possible solution could include international donations through the UN Human Rights Office, in order to support victims of terrorism who need particular attention in terms of: nutrition, sanitation, healthcare, etc. The guarantee of human rights can be further supported through the emphasis of Human Rights Protection, therefore with the support of Peace-keeping entities for conflict containment.

Bringing Awareness to the Issue: The issue at hand requires urgent aid, and awareness could bring to the more involved close-collaboration with nations outside of G5 Sahel. MEDCs would have the possibility to support the issue of instability in the Sahel through donations, the establishment of possible support organizations, technical assistance, and the identification of needs.

x. Bibliography*

- List all sources that you used in APA format (you can use www.easybib.com) - Please footnote your information through the document as well.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica “ Sahel | Location, Facts & Desertification”, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sahel/additional-info#history>

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) “Who are internally displaced people?”, *Internal Displacement*, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/internal-displacement>

UNHCR “Sahel crisis explained”, *USA for UNHCR*, 29 Oct. 2020, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/sahel-crisis-explained/>

World Food Programme USA “You should know about what’s happening in the Sahel and why it’s spiraling out of control”, 18 May 2021, <https://www.wfpusa.org/articles/a-snapshot-of-life-in-the-african-sahel/>

Plan International “ Central Sahel facing crisis as violence against girls continues to rise”, 11 Dec. 2020, <https://plan-international.org/news/2020-12-11-central-sahel-facing-crisis-violence-against-girls-continues-rise>

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica “Mali | Security”, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mali/Political-process#ref279095>

Aissa Ibrahim “With its key geo-strategic position, Niger can use its term to help stabilise the Sahel”, *Institute for Security Studies*, 24 Oct. 2019, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/niger-in-the-hot-seat-at-the-un-security-council>

Casola “What’s next for Operation Barkhane in the Sahel?”, *ISPI online*, 3 March 2021, <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/whats-next-operation-barkhane-sahel-29332>

Coalition Sahel “The Takuba Task Force is launched”, 3 June 2020, <https://www.coalition-sahel.org/en/la-task-force-takuba-est-lancee/?lang=en>

Interpol “G5 Sahel”, <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Terrorism/Counter-terrorism-projects/G5-Sahel>

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica “Mali | 2012 coup and warfare in the north”,
Encyclopædia Britannica,
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Mali/2012-coup-and-warfare-in-the-north>

“G5 SAHEL.” *W*www.g5sahel.org, www.g5sahel.org/.

“G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Sahel Alliance.” *France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs*,

www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/security-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/crises-and-conflicts/g5-sahel-joint-force-and-the-sahel-alliance/.

“Instability in the Sahel Region and Security Concerns in Burkina Faso.” *Aspenia Online*,
aspensiaonline.it/instability-in-the-sahel-region-and-security-concerns-in-burkina-faso/.

Accessed 18 Dec. 2021.

Ngom, Mabingue. “United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.” Mabingue Ngom, 2018.

“OHCHR | G5-Sahel.” *W*www.ohchr.org,

www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/G5-Sahel.aspx. Accessed 18 Dec. 2021.

“OHCHR | Sahel-UN-Security-Council-Resolutions.” *W*www.ohchr.org,

www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/Sahel-UN-Security-Council-resolutions.aspx. Accessed 18 Dec. 2021.

The Community of Sahel-Saharan States- CEN-SAD – PACCI.

www.pacci.org/the-community-of-sahel-saharan-states-cen-sad/. Accessed 18 Dec. 2021.