

Special Edition

African Journal on Terrorism

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ACSRT



Implications of Coups d'Etat
and Political Instability
on Terrorism and Violent
Extremism in the Sahel

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Special Edition on

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and Political Instability on Terrorism
and Violent Extremism in the Sahel**

October 2022

**A JOURNAL OF THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY
AND RESEARCH ON TERRORISM**

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African Journal on Terrorism aims to create space for robust, rigorous and innovative research and policy-related papers on terrorism and violent extremism, and encourages fruitful intellectual engagement between policy practitioners and academia. In particular, the Editors are looking for empirical, theoretical and policy-oriented articles that recognize the inherently problematic nature of terrorism on the African continent and employ a critical-normative perspective on the subject.

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African journal on Terrorism is a continental, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal. The journal seeks to publish quality grounded research on all aspects of terrorism, counter-terrorism and violent extremism. The journal seeks to provide a platform that encourages critical analysis and sustained reflection of terrorism and violent extremism on the continent.

Procedures

All submitted manuscripts are subject to an initial blind peer-review by the Editors, and, if found suitable for further consideration, to a second peer-review by at least two independent, anonymous expert referees. The Editor In Chief and Editors review the comments from reviewers, and where appropriate communicate them directly to the author. The Editors will inform the author if the original or revised paper has been accepted for publication in the journal.

Length and Format

Authors submitting papers for the consideration of the journal should limit their works to between 5000 and 6000 words, including references, text, all tables and figures. They are encouraged to support their arguments with relevant statistics, pictures and graphical illustrations. The preferred referencing format of the journal is the electronically generated endnotes. The referencing style however, is the Harvard referencing style. Abstract should not exceed 300 words with at least five keywords.

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Editorial

Why this edition on military coup?

This special edition of the African Journal on Terrorism is on the re-emergence of military coup in Africa. The affected states include Burkina Faso, Sudan, Guinea, Chad and Mali. We are attracted to this issue by three factors. The first is that most of the implicated countries also experience ongoing terrorism campaigns and insurgency and are therefore expected to have been more focused on dealing with those problems than adding new ones. The second is that some of the coup leaders cited poor management of terrorism and violent extremism as one of their grievances for changing the political order. The third factor has to do with how the frosty relationship between the military juntas and the international community is having corrosive effects on efforts at preventing and countering terrorism multilaterally, most especially in the West African sub-region that is having most of the cases.

The third point above, namely the political and legal costs of coup making, is probably the most strategic for this special edition of the journal. This needs more nuanced explanation and the first point to make in this direction is that terrorism is better prevented and countered through multilateral and bilateral than unilateral actions. In other words, no state defeats terrorism on a sustained basis acting alone as terrorists are themselves connoisseurs in the use of organized cross border criminal networks. This emphasis on multilateralism in counterterrorism is best epitomized by the letters of all the Resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations on the management of terrorism since the September 11 2001 attack of the United States of America. Each of them call on the international community to work in partnership with one another for defeating terrorism. Member States are enjoined to build capacity for multilateralism rather than seeking to work alone. A lot has been achieved in this direction in Africa whether through the establishment of normative frameworks for multilateral peace and security or the implementation of agreed provisions. But these efforts are now being compromised by the gale of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) around the continent in the past few years.

What are the core conflict issues and how do they emerge? It all starts with the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the continent having zero tolerance for UCG. Hence, Member States involved in it are

sanctioned accordingly. But such retributive justice system works and is sustainable only if applied to few cases. The present situation in Africa is embarrassing; the number of countries involved in UCG is large. Efforts at sanctioning them weakens the cords holding the continent together in the fight against terrorism. The situation is rendered more complex by the fact that affected countries are not sanctioned equally; some are even not sanctioned. The implication is readily seen in how the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for example is no longer able to further its regional counterterrorism missions as done in the past. Many of its Member States involved in unconstitutional changes of government are under suspension. Unfortunately, these countries have critical counterterrorism engagements. The papers in this edition of the African Journal on Terrorism takes critical look at different dimensions of this problem and their strategic implications.

Taken together, the papers argue that military coups compromise the quality and future of democratic governance in Africa and by so doing make the prevention and fighting of terrorism more difficult. This means more work for the continent! Two key issues came out of the papers in this direction. The first is that under no conditions would Africa prefer military dictatorship to democratic governance. Hence, the countries currently under military rule should work with the rest of the continent and other members of the international community for finding lasting solutions to the present impasse. Their society should be returned to democratic rule soonest. The second point is the realization that coup plotters take advantage of African political leaders engaged in what has been characterized as “civilian coup” or “state terrorism”. By this is meant the act of civilian rulers managing their society dictatorially as the military often do. This causes a lot of frustration in the society and makes the grassroots population to rejoice when the system is overthrown by the military. Civilian leaders must rule democratically to reduce the chances of military coup on the continent!

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COUP CONTAGION IN AFRICA: IS THE PAST DIFFERENT FROM THE PRESENT?

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Abstract

African states transitioned from military to civil rule in the late 1990s following global and local pressures for democratic change. Unfortunately, there is now a return to military dictatorship in some parts of the continent with 2021 presenting worst scenarios. This paper compares the old and recent coups most especially for shaping response mechanisms. The paper privileges violent extremism and terrorism in the analyses. The findings include the fact that coup d'état is no longer accepted as a normal method of political transition in Africa but now conceptualized as a form of violent extremism (VE) and unconstitutional change of government (UCG) against which the international community has zero tolerance. Grievances of some contemporary coup plotters include poor commitment to fighting terrorism by the deposed leaders. But coup d'état has itself been found to have corrosive effects on fighting terrorism. Integrated suggestions are made on how to respond to the issues.

Keywords

coup d'état ,
democratically elected government ,
unconstitutional change of government ,
sanctions ,
terrorism ,
transition to civil rule.

Introduction

African states regained their independence from European colonizers from the 1950s to the early 1960s¹. The decolonization movements demonized colonialism as a dictatorship contemptuous of people's rights and argued that Africans would do better ruling themselves at the exit of the white colonizers. Before handing over power to these Africans, the colonial authorities sponsored some constitutional conferences aimed at getting the people to agree on how they would rule themselves. Most of the post-colonial states opted for multiparty democracy under which citizens would elect their leaders by popular suffrage. Then power was handed over to them. But the hope of such democratic political transition was soon dashed as African countries, one by one, started to be taken over by some military dictators that came to power through coup d'états. One of the earliest cases was the coup in Togo on 13 January 1963 during which the country's first President, Sylvanus Olympio, was killed. The country got her independence just on 27 April 1960. Several other African countries followed in quick succession and by so doing popularized military coups as a way of changing political leadership in the continent. So bad was the situation that almost 90% of the independent African countries experienced military takeover of power from 1960 to 1982². This period (1960s to 1990s) in African history is considered by the present paper as the old phase of military rule in Africa.

Things started to change positively for Africa in the late 1980s when the global community (most especially the third world) started to experience political and constitutional reforms that Samuel Huntington characterized as the "third wave of democratization"³. The markers of this period and political experience, particularly in African history, include the discrediting of single-party political system, economic adjustments most especially as dictated by the Bretton Wood institutions, and the rise of non-state pressure groups seeking the political and economic liberalization of their society. The military regimes could no longer operate isolation as islands unto themselves. They needed to depend on the international systems for dealing with the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s. Donors and international development agencies tied their interventions to the political conditionality of democratization. Back home, citizens (most especially students, labour unions, and pro-democracy activists) responded to the challenging economic conditions under which they lived by staging public protests that made some of the countries ungovernable. Bowing to these international and local pressures, African states soon started to transit one-by-one from military dictatorship to democratic governance. The

expectation then was that Africa had seen the end of military dictatorship in and that the people were now ready to join the rest of the civilized world in the practice of civil rule under which citizens would freely exercise the power to determine who rule them. By the late 1990s, most of the countries except those in North Africa which importuned “Arab exceptionalism”, had transited to civil rule.

The main argument of this paper is that Africa is in a new era of military coups. The socio-political situation all through Africa up till 2021 showed that the continent experienced an average of 2 military coups annually, even till recent years. Writing on this, Sawahel observed that “Africa has experienced more military coups than any other continent worldwide, with five coups this year alone – in Niger, Chad, Mali, Guinea and Sudan... The number is higher than the average of two decades ago”⁴. So bad is the present situation that Durmaz described 2021 as “the year military coups returned to the stage in Africa”⁵. The United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, dubbed the year as that of “an epidemic of coup d’etats”⁶.

The most worrisome cases were in Mali, Guinea, Sudan, Burkina Faso and Chad. The first major coup in Mali took place on 21 March 2012 by a small group of military officers led by Capt. Amadu Sanogo who revolted against the resurgent Tuareg rebels stormed the presidential palace and removed President Amadou Toumani Toure from power few weeks to the end of his second term. On 18 August, 2020, the second coup took place in the country leading to the overthrow of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita by Col. Malick Diaw, Col. Sadio Camara and Gen. Cheikh Fanta Mandy Dembel. The third coup, eight months after the second one occurred on 24 May 2021. It involved the Malian army led by Vice President Assimi Goita stripping the Prime Minister Moctar Ouane and Minister of Defence, Souleymane Doucoure of their powers and ordering new elections to be conducted in 2022. The three military coups have contributed significantly to the political crises in Mali today. No end in sight for getting the country back on the democratic track. ECOWAS and the AU had to suspend the membership of the country. Their relationship with France and the western world in general also became ruptured for several reasons amongst which was the fact that the military junta worked with communist mercenaries. Wagner group which the UN and the developed world deride for their poor human rights records in fighting insurgency and terrorism were collaborated with by the regime.

The coup in Guinea took place on 5 September 2021 as President Alpha Conde was ousted from power by the Special Forces Commander, Col.

Mamady Doubouya. The military detained the President and some of his cabinet members and then assumed the leadership of the country. On 25 October 2021, the Sudanese military led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, ousted the regime of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. Some senior government officials were detained in secret locations without access to their family members and lawyers; the Sovereignty Council was dissolved. The ousted Prime Minister called for a popular resistance of the military junta and this led to a widespread protests involving members of political parties, lawyers, civil society activists, journalists, human rights defenders. The actions of the protesters were boosted by consistent pressure from members of the international community against the military junta. Several of these protesters were killed. On 3 December, the Prime Minister had to resign having realised that the resistance was not attaining its objective of making the military junta bow to the popular wish of the people.

In Burkina Faso, President Roch Kabore was overthrown on January 24 2022 by some military officers led by Lt. Col. Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. The putsch was applauded by the people based on the belief that the Burkinabe president failed to unite the nation and manage the security problems in the country with sufficient vigour. The new regime pledged to focus its attention on the security challenges. This boosted its legitimacy with the people⁷. However the military junta, like their peers in Mali, do not show any signs of returning the country to civil rule soon. Hence, it had to be suspended by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU). The relationship between the military regime and France is also dented, thus, their choice to work with the Russian Wagner group for managing the crisis in the country.

The situation in Chad is different from those presented above. The political change or transition did not come with violence or as a matter of some soldiers shooting their way into the seats of power. The “coup” was packaged as a decision by the Chadian military to hand over power to a military leader, Lt. Gen. Mahamat Deby (alias “General Kaka»), when President Idriss Deby was killed by Chadian rebels on 20 April 2021 shortly after winning this sixth term election. Deby now heads a 15-member Transitional Military Council (CMT) that will be in power for 18 months. This idea of transferring power to the military is against the constitutional provisions of the country. The international community seemed to have reversed itself on the commitment to zero tolerance to unconstitutional change of government when it decided not to say anything about this particular problem. The country’s transition to

civil rule is now an albatross that students of democratic governance watch with a keen interest.

The Old and New Compared

An objective of this paper is to attempt a comparative analysis of the old and new types of coups in Africa. In doing this, the paper focuses more on issues relating to violent extremism and terrorism. In this respect, four sub-themes are addressed:

- i.** how coups are now treated as a form of violent extremism (VE) and terrorism,
- ii.** how the coup plotters try to make themselves acceptable to the international community,
- iii.** how the fight against terrorism caused some of the coups and how the coups affect the fight against terrorism, and
- iv.** how the military juntas protect themselves.

Re-Conceptualizing “Coups”

From the 1960s to the 1990s, coup d'état was simply considered to be an act of some power-hungry statesmen with access to the state's monopoly of violence who were mostly military officers who depose existing regimes in order to rule societies indefinitely. It was only imagined as something criminal by an incumbent administration. In the past, once the coup succeeded members of the international community recognized and started to send messages of friendship to the new regimes. Those responsible constituted themselves to the state making new laws that applied to everybody. Where the coup failed, mutineers as those responsible were called were rounded up, hurriedly tried and the guilty were executed by firing squad. No member of the international community complained because doing so would have been regarded as undue interference in the affairs of a sovereign country which is in violation of Article 1(4) of the UN Charter.

In the peace and security architecture of the African Union, coup d'état is listed as a form of “unconstitutional change of government” (UCG) and is therefore punishable internationally. This issue was first brought to the front burner in 2000 when the Organisation of African Union (OAU) formally ventilated its opposition to coup-making in Africa by making the Lomé Declaration of July 2000 (AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI)). It outlawed

unconstitutional changes of government; insisting that only political change that is based on ballot and not any other means would be recognized across the continent. The intervention was broad-based and called attention to four cases of unconstitutional change of (a democratically elected) government (UCG) that the continental body would not tolerate. They are:

- i.** a military coup d'état;
- ii.** an intervention by mercenaries;
- iii.** a seizure of power by armed dissident groups and rebel movements;
and
- iv.** a refusal by an incumbent government to relinquish power after free, fair and regular elections.

This situation was further strengthened by the African Union's Constitutive Act in 2002 which includes among its governing principles the 'condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of governments'. Its Article 30 stipulates that 'Governments which shall come to power through unconstitutional means shall not be allowed to participate in the activities of the Union.' The Peace and Security Council (PSC) was created within the AU framework in 2003 with provisions on how to deal with cases of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG). It specifically provides that the PSC shall 'institute sanctions [in conjunction with the AU Chairperson] whenever an unconstitutional change of government takes place in a member state, as provided for in the Lomé Declaration'. In 2014, member states of the African Union adopted a protocol in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, known as the Malabo Protocol. The drafters of the Protocol decided for prosecutorial purpose to include the crime of unconstitutional change of government in the document. Its Article 28E gave legal teeth to all passed resolutions and declarations of the African Union by defining the offences of UCG to mean committing or ordering to be committed any of the following:

- 1.** A putsch or coup d'état against a democratically elected government;
- 2.** An intervention by mercenaries to replace a democratically elected government;
- 3.** Any replacement of a democratically elected government by the use of armed dissidents or rebels or through political assassination;
- 4.** Any refusal by an incumbent government to relinquish power to the winning party or candidate after free, fair and regular elections;

5. Any amendment or revision of the Constitution or legal instruments, which is an infringement on the principles of democratic change of government or is inconsistent with the Constitution; and
6. Any substantial modification to the electoral laws in the last six months before the elections without the consent of the majority of the political actors⁸.

The fourth, fifth and sixth issues raised above have birthed a new concept of coup beyond its original militaristic connotation. They expand the meaning of coup as a broader set of antidemocratic actions. In this contexts, some new concepts now emerge. They include “constitutional coup” or “civilian coup”⁹. By the two is meant how civilian rulers conduct themselves in such a militaristic manner that impinges negatively on democratic processes. In this case, the civilian political leaders are unwilling to allow smooth political transition and tampwer with the laws of the land for perpetrating themselves in power. Drawing a parallel between such acts and coup d’etat, John Campbell observed that:

... the old style of coups – occupation of the state radio and television stations, the presidential palace, and perhaps the central bank, with the arrest of the deposed chief of state by military units based in the capital, all accompanied by martial music – has become rare in Africa. Old-style coups as methods of transferring power face international opprobrium. More common now are incumbent chiefs of state, often with an authoritarian bent, using different, more subtle methods to stay in power rather than seize it, often justifying themselves by the need to counter insurgencies or even COVID-19.¹⁰

The evil done by “civilian coup” to the growth of democratic governance is sometimes so monumental that Varol, in a paper in the Harvard International Law Journal, coined the term “democratic coup” to characterize the action of the military juntas that organize against it. He said: “Following a democratic coup, the military temporarily governs the nation as part of an interim government until democratic elections take place. Throughout the democratic-transition process, the military behaves as a self-interested actor and entrenches, or attempts to entrench, its policy preferences into the new constitution drafted during the transition”¹¹. Derpanopoulos and others too argued that this kind of coup may be necessary for preventing some autocratic civilian rulers from turning their administration into another military regime¹². In other words, a civilian administration should not

necessary be taken to be working for the advancement of democracy; it may be a military rule redefined.

In closing this aspect of the paper, it should be observed that civilian coups are not the same thing as “civilians in coup” or “civilian coup advocacy”. Civilians in coup simply refers to the direct participation of civilians in a coup process while “civilian coup advocacy” refers to civilians engaging in activities that tend to promote and defend a coup plot or military junta often for selfish reasons¹³. The advocates in this case could be citizens of the country or some foreigners hoping to benefit from the political crisis.

Deodorising Coup

In the past, coup plotters made themselves clear by saying exactly what they did, knowing they are not accountable to anybody for the act except those with the capacity to organize a counter coup. For stabilizing themselves, they threatened to deal harshly with any attempt to challenge them and then direct “law abiding citizens” to go about their normal activities. Having suspended the constitution of the country they would reel out new decrees and start to apply them to the society. Today’s coup unfold differently. Those responsible try as much as possible to make their acts smell good; they try to legitimize the exercise as being closer to democratic governance than authoritarianism. This refers to all the activities quickly embarked upon by the juntas to make their actions more acceptable to the people. For hours after the coup had been carried out, the media report it in speculative mold because of being denied adequate information. Gunshots are heard and unusual movement of soldiers and vehicles are noticed without the general public knowing or understanding what is happening. During that period, the coup plotters try to force the deposed leaders to commit themselves into saying they resigned from office and voluntarily handed power to the coup plotters. It is only after extracting such agreement or not having it that the coup is formally announced. When the former leaders agree to “resign”, the international community is deceived to believe the transition process was a constitutional change of government. The coup plotters and their conspirators usually claim that the military merely “forced to step in” to save the nation.

This strategy of making a coup look otherwise was used in Zimbabwe from 14 November to 21 November 2017; and it worked. Following Zimbabwe, the strategy was also tried in Guinea on 5 September 2021, but President Alpha Conde refused to cooperate with them by resigning. His forced removal from

office had to be announced later and the military junta crowdsourced street celebrants with them for making it all look like a popular uprising. It was also used in Sudan on 21 September 2021, and after about one month of street protests and death of several protesters Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok resigned from office thus leaving the country in the hands of the military junta. In a televised broadcast, Hamdok said the country was at a « dangerous turning point that threatens its whole survival » and that the country was « sliding towards disaster... despite everything that has been done to reach a consensus... it has not happened »¹⁴.

Another way by which coup plotters work around the growing anti-coup norm in the world is how they negotiate their exit strategies with the international community. Usually, the international community confront the coup leaders by asking them to return power to the deposed leaders immediately. But this is hardly done. Then the international community start to negotiate the transition period with them. How soon are they willing to organize elections that would return the country to democratic rule? While the international community would insist on a short transition period, the juntas normally ask for a longer period. The shorter the exit time the more the international community is willing to make peace with the juntas. Zimbabwe settled for a short period of transition in 2017; everything happened in November 2017 and the matter died out. The only outcome is that President Robert Mugabe was removed from office and he was smoothly succeeded in office.

In some cases, the ruling junta would agree to a short transition period, use the agreement to make peace with the international community and then renege later when it comes to the stage of the implementation. Mali is a good case for illustrating this problem. When the military led by Colonel Assimi Goita first took over power in August 2020 a transition agreement of 18 months was reached between them and ECOWAS. The next election in the country would have therefore been held in February 2022. But another coup took place in May 2021; it was led by Goita who led the one in August 2020. Goita's grouse for this second coup is that the transitional administration formed following the first coup did not consult him on the cabinet reshuffle following the rising social tensions in the country. Both President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane in charge of the transitional government were forced to resign from office and Goita appointed himself the President. The new regime proposed a five-year transition plan pushing the next presidential election in the country to 2025. The Malian opposition and the international

community rose up in anger against the new regime. The lesson here is that Malian military merely agreed to the initial transitional administration and the 18 month transition period agreed with ECOWAS just to buy legitimacy and time. The main plan, which became evident after the second coup, is to keep the country under military rule for a long time. This is fast becoming a reality with the robust support that the ruling junta get from Russia.

The situation in Guinea was slightly different but constitutes another strategy of dodging punishments for planning coup. The new regime announced a «transitional charter» consisting a series of tasks aimed at steering the country back to civil rule. The activities include having to draft a new constitution that would dispense with the vexed third term clause imposed on Guinea by the deposed President Alpha Conde. The proposed constitution also promised to have the template for responding to the people's quest for free, democratic and transparent elections. The implementation of the Charter was to be handled by four institutions and no member of any of the institutions, including Colonel Mamady Doumbouya who led the September 5 coup but now heads the National Rallying Committee for Development (CNRD), would be allowed to take part in any of the elections to be held at the end of the transition period¹⁵. These suggestions look very good and must have won some sympathies for the ruling junta. However, the charter did not spell out how long the transition period would be. That is probably where the booby trap and seed for future conflict lies.

Terrorism / CoupNexus

The unfolding scenarios in Mali and Burkina Faso show that coups and terrorism can be linked. The first finding in this respect is that terrorism and the fight against it could be goad the military into overthrowing a political regime. The flip side of the argument is that a coup could impact negatively on the fight against terrorism. The theoretical framework for the first conclusion is that a society fighting terrorism is more likely to call out the military to defend the society. The military gets more powerful under such atmospheres and this could lead to the temptation to take over the government believing that a total control of the polity would make the work easier. Explaining the logic, Feaver (1999: 214) observed that “[b]ecause the military must face enemies, it must have coercive power, the ability to force its will on others. But coercive power often gives it the capability to enforce its will on the community that created it”¹⁶. Providing insight into how this could happen another scholar observed that “military actors have motives to intervene in

politics and their ability to do so depends on the presence of an opportunity structure”¹⁷. The “opportunity structure” for military intervention in politics in situations of counterterrorism include the belief that they are not being given all the needed incentives to win the war. The political leaders could also be overthrown if their public conduct does not justify the fight against their enemies. The situation where the civilian political leaders use power in such an autocratic manner that make them not different from the military. Under any of these situations, the military intervene in politics believing themselves to be the last hope of the nation in accordance with the position of Huntington that “the responsibility of the [military] profession is to enhance the military security of the state”¹⁸. The expectation of military junta in this respect is that they would do better with power than whatever regime they overthrow. But military regimes, most especially in Africa, hardly do better than those they overthrew.

Mali and Burkina Faso are two countries in which coup makers included terrorism and the fight against it in the justifications for their actions. The first major case occurred on 21 March 2012 in Mali where a small group of military officers led by Capt. Amadu Sanogo removed President Amadou Toumani Toure from power few weeks to the end of his second term with the argument that sufficient attention and resources were not given to the fight against the Tuareg rebels in the northern parts of the country consisting of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) backed up Ansar Dine, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa. The coup that occurred on 18 August 2020 but now led by more senior officers was also motivated, amongst other things, by the government’s ineffective handling of the terrorism in the country¹⁹. Financial corruption was also alleged as one of the reasons for the state failure. There was another coup in Mali in May 2021 as a result of which the ruling junta opted not to return to civil rule until 2025. This ruptured the relations between Mali and its western allies, most especially France which had around 2,400 troops fighting Islamist insurgencies as part of Operation Barkhane in the country. The French government is currently withdrawing these forces from Mali on the account of the deterioration of relationship between France and Mali since the army first seized power in a coup in August 2020. Mali now works with Russia. Colonel Souleymane Dembélé, a spokesman for the ruling junta, did not see this as any problem with the exit of the French based on his argument that the presence of the European forces in his country had not been able to stop Mali from being engulfed by jihadist violence²⁰. These make the issue of the fight against terrorism to be at the heart of coup making in Mali.

There is a flip side to the claims above. It is that coup d'état too weakens the fight against terrorism. The last paragraph above contains some ideas for developing this second line of argument. Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso have all been suspended from ECOWAS and the AU. This is a setback for the war on terror in the Sahel and West Africa. France which takes the lead in the fight against terrorism in Mali is also withdrawing its troops now. On the other hand, the ruling junta in the country now works with the Russians in a manner that ruptures the existing engagement activities with the rebels and other stakeholders. The present situation makes it difficult for Mali to garner the needed broader international support for fighting terrorism. In particular, the former western allies of Mali would find it difficult to freely supply intelligence to the country as they did in the past on the account of the existing friction between them (the west) and the Russians (the east). The situation in Burkina Faso is not too different from that of Mali. Like Mali, they have also been suspended by ECOWAS and AU and are now working towards switching alliances from France to Russia in fighting jihadists. Obaji considers this development as having negative impacts on fighting terrorism. One of the unique issues he called attention to was how the new development could divide the military and weaken their unified commitment to fighting terrorism given the fact that not every key officer in the country approved the removal of President Kabore from office.²¹

Obaji observed that periods of coup enable terrorists to become more resilient. They take full advantage on the ensuing confusions to expand their nuisance value. Commenting on the manifestations of this problem in Mali and Burkina Faso, particularly focusing on how the coups impacted negatively on the fight against terrorism in the two countries, Rupersinghe and Diall too said:

Following the coup in 2012, jihadists were able to consolidate control over two thirds of Mali's territory, paving the way for the development of a jihadist proto state. In neighbouring Burkina Faso, the coup d'état of 2015 dismantled the Burkinabé intelligence services and monitoring mechanisms in rural areas, which some analysts suggest contributed to insurgencies like Ansaroul Islam gaining traction early on... It appears that jihadist insurgents already exploited the chance to signal resolve of their intentions to expand southwards when Bamako appears weak: days after the coup, on 30 May 2021, suspected jihadists launched an attack killing five in the region of Sikasso in southern Mali. This represents a growing trend of jihadist perpetrated violence affecting southern regions which have previously been spared from these type of attacks.²²

Coup Proofing

Generally speaking, military rulers, except when forced to do so hardly have any succession plans. From the 1960s to the 1990s, they ruled until when overthrown by another round of coup plotters. They left in the 1990s because of the international pressure for democratization. Hence, they therefore invested heavily on “coup proofing”. By this is meant what some regimes, military or civilian, afraid of being overthrown do to preserve themselves. It has to with ensuring that no other group is strong enough to challenge their authority most especially militarily or even seek to overthrow their regimes. The steps taken in this respect could include “effectively exploiting family, ethnic, and religious loyalties; creation of an armed force parallel to the regular military; development of multiple internal security agencies with overlapping jurisdiction that constantly monitor one another; fostering of expertness in the regular military; and adequately financing such measures”²³.

Are there differences in the old and new “coup proofing” strategies? It is too early for now to judge how the military regimes exploit ethnicity and religion for coup proofing but the emerging scenarios in Mali, Burkina Faso and Sudan suggest that the past may not be too different from the present in this respect. The present situations remind one of the strategies used by Libya’s Muammar Ghadafi up to 20 August 2011 when he was killed. He became the leader of Libya on 1 September 1969 after deposing King Idris 1 in a bloodless coup and this was at a time when members of the international community did not care much about coup making. But sooner than later, Ghadafi became demonized on the international scene as a sponsor of international terrorism. He was also high handed back home in handling those opposed to his style of governance²⁴. He empowered the “Khamis Brigade” and the “Revolutionary Guard Corps” dominated by his trial group in the Sirte region to protect his regime. They controlled the armoury, dominated the intelligence networks and carried out special operations. As he came on collision path with the western world, he bought his weapons in the 1970s and 1980s from Russia and some Eastern European countries but these soon become obsolete. His problems became compounded by inability to acquire new ones because of the international sanctions against his regime. Yet, Ghadafi remained brutal and defiant to the end²⁵. While writing on the outcomes of all the intrigues that are being replayed in contemporary Africa by the military juntas, MacFarquhar had this to say of Ghadafi: “By the time he was done, Libya had no parliament, no unified military command, no political parties, no unions, no civil society and no nongovernmental organizations. His ministries were hollow, with the

notable exception of the state oil company”²⁶. He later suffered the injustice of regime change facilitated by NATO in 2011 and it was difficult to defend him. He was not only dethroned but also lost his life in the process. The mercenaries that worked with him then now roam round Africa serving as foreign fighters to terrorist groups.

The military junta that ruled Nigeria from 1966 to 1999 equally invested too less on the police so as to prevent it from getting strong enough to stop military coups. Nigeria is today paying heavily for it in terms of the police lacking the capacity to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing war against violent extremism and terrorism in different parts of the country. Today’s Nigerian Police lacks the manpower, training, and equipment to hold the communities taken by the military during counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations and no quick fixes have been found for the problem. Hence when any Boko Haram ravaged community is occupied by the Nigerian military today, some soldiers out of the limited number that is available must be left there for ensuring that such towns and villages were not reoccupied. The more communities the military captures, the more soldiers they have to leave behind in the communities and the less the number that is ultimately available for fighting the next battles. This slows down the operations and counter terrorism and counterinsurgency operations. In all, Nigeria now have military presence in 33 of the 36 states of the federation.

Even outside the North East and North West where the military is fighting terrorists the Police still finds it difficult to effectively manage the security challenges. The army is thus left as the only security organization called upon to deal with every security problem in the country. To this end, the military has effective operations in 33 of the 36 states of the federation as if the whole country is in a state of war. Even then, the Nigerian military lacks requisite weapons for fighting the terrorists, bandits, insurgents and belligerents in the country. The last time that Nigeria acquired adequate weapons for protecting the country was from 1979 to 1983 during the civilian regime of President Shehu Shagari. Shagari filled the gaps by the military left when ruling from 1966 to 1979. But since he left office no significant efforts were made by the juntas that succeeded him to really replenish the country’s stock of arms. Coup proofing prevented the military regimes that succeeded Shagari from procuring arms needed by the country. They ensured that the military did not grow too strong to pose any threat to those in power. This is one of the reasons why the war against Boko Haram is proving difficult to fight. The

weapons needed for fighting Boko Haram are not there; efforts to buy them are frustrated by the international community that had slammed arms embargo on the country.

The new military rulers in the continent may not deny their militaries of weapons for ensuring regime security as noted above. It is doubtful if the international sanctions against them would enable them to have access to enough weapons for fighting their battles. But they are most likely to surround themselves with ethnic and religious cronies for coup proofing but by so doing further weakening cohesion in the military and preparing grounds for future problems.

For dealing with the external dimensions of their problems, Central African Republic, Mali and Burkina Faso are already working with the Russian Wagner Group. The other places where the Wagner group exists in Africa include Libya, Sudan, Mozambique, Madagascar²⁷. All of these countries are united by factors of violent extremism and terrorism in particular. What the countries stand to gain from the Russians, according to Fasanotti, include “the ability to conduct counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations unconstrained by human rights responsibilities...allowing African governments to be as brutish in their military efforts as they like”²⁸. In return, the Russians get concessions for natural resources, substantial commercial contracts, or access to strategic locations, such as airbases or ports. The experience of Ghaddafi and the history of forceful regime change in Africa suggests that this kind of security framework may not be sustainable on the long term. What more? The new security frameworks established by these countries for themselves make it difficult to implement the continental and regional peace and security architectures in Africa and therefore serve as a force multiplier for terrorism in the continent. Under the present international system, no nation can fight terrorism alone. All the countries under military rule now need the rest of Africa. This should be taken into consideration by the military juntas in seeking peace with the international community.

Conclusion

In concluding this work is paper there is the need to return to our main research question. This has to do whether or not there are differences between the old and new manifestations of coups in Africa? The question is answered in the affirmative based on the data teased together from Mali, Sudan, Guinea, Central Africa Republic, and Burkina Faso. In the past, coup d'état

was considered a mere method of political transition but now punished as a form of unconstitutional change of government. As of the old coup approach, the coup plotters justified their incursion with bad governance of the civilian ruling class. The public seem to agree with them by coming out in some cases to celebrate with the coup plotters. The contemporary grievances of the coup plotters include poor fight against terrorism by the deposed leaders. However the study found military coup to have corrosive effects on the prevention and countering of terrorism. The situation could escalate further given the way the affected countries dare the African Union, ECOWAS, France and EU countries over the sanctions imposed on them for refusing to transit to civil rule within a short time. What is required now is for Africa to dialogue more carefully with the ruling juntas for reducing the negative effects that coup could have on the scale of terrorism in the continent. African heads of governments must also be better schooled on the need to shun civilian coups. Whether now or in the past, military and civilian coups constitute an affront to stability, legitimacy, and democracy and stand condemned.

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COUPS D'ÉTAT AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN THE WESTERN SAHEL: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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Abstract

Africa's western Sahel region faces multiple political, social, economic and security challenges, which are exacerbated by terrorism, violent extremism, communal violence and banditry. While the African Union Commission (AUC) and its partners are working together to address these challenges with innovative approaches, a resurgence of coups d'état has increased the region's fragility and threatened the democratic foundation of affected states. There are growing concerns that terrorist groups could exploit these political uncertainties to entrench their position and expand their activities to other parts of West Africa – and beyond. Against this backdrop, this paper explores how these recent coups d'états and the associated political instability may impact on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in the western Sahel. The paper also provides policy options to promote a more robust response to the evolving politico-security situation. Analysis of the unfolding situation points to a potential leadership crisis in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. This is due to various factors, including the demise of the former President of Chad, Idriss Déby Itno, who was considered a stabilising force in the region. To turn the tide, this paper recommends that international and regional pressure on the various military juntas to cede power must be carefully implemented to prevent further suffering among affected populations; as this may increase sympathy for terrorist and violent extremist groups. While returning to democratic rule is important, the international response must be coordinated with determination, caution and discretion. Flexibility, pragmatism and

skilled diplomacy are needed to avoid exacerbating the precarious security situation. Ensuring future stability will require the AU to mobilise international support to reshuffle and strengthen the implementation of signed peace agreements, and to enhance the socio-economic resilience of western Sahel countries. In this way, the root causes of political instability can be addressed.



Keywords

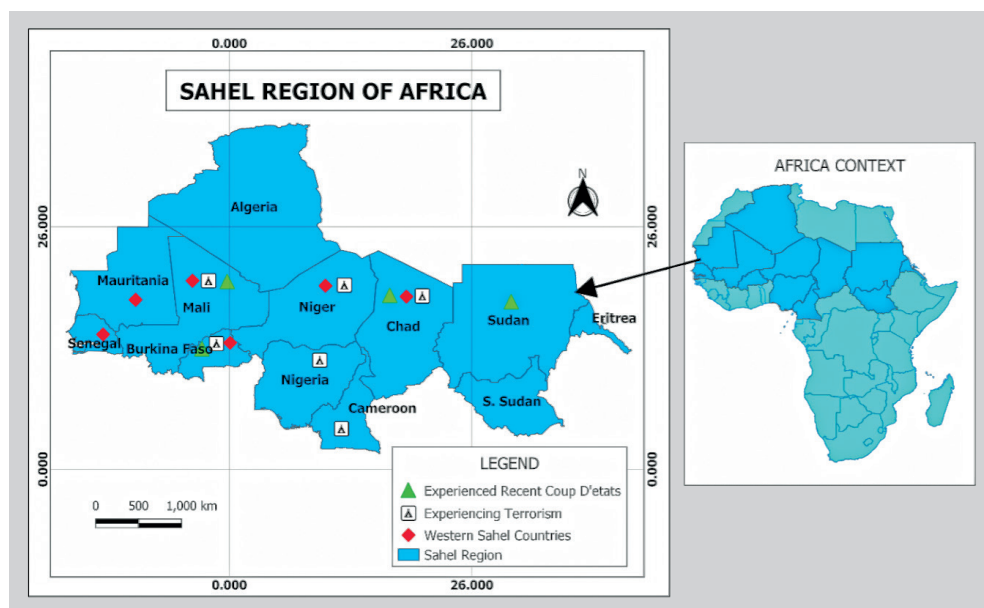
Coups D'état ,
Political Instability ,
Western Sahel ,
Terrorism ,
Violent Extremism.

Introduction

Terrorism undermines human security. African countries have been particularly susceptible to the threat of terrorism. This is due to several factors, including weak institutions, porous borders, historical grievances and bad governance. Other drivers include corruption, extreme poverty, absence of rule of law, injustice, impunity of the political elite, and lack of economic opportunities – particularly for young people¹. At the 455th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), several causal factors were identified as conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa². These included prolonged and unresolved conflicts, a lack of rule of law, violations of human rights, discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalisation and poor governance. These factors have acted as catalysts for terrorist and violent extremist organisations to expand their ambitions, capabilities, mobility and geographical reach in Africa, with devastating impact on human security and economic development³.

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The Sahel region is confronted with several political, social, economic and security challenges. These existing challenges are exacerbated by the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. As shown in Map 1, countries in the region – particularly Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria – have continued to witness terrorist attacks. Data from the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), reveals that in 2018 and 2019, there was a spike in the number of attacks. In particular, these were perpetrated by Boko Haram and its breakaway faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in Nigeria and Niger; Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) in Mali and Burkina Faso; and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) in Burkina Faso and Niger¹. The ACSRT records further indicate that between January 2019 and December 2021, West Africa recorded the highest number of terrorist attacks in Africa. In this time, the region recorded 2 602 attacks, resulting in 10 899 deaths². Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire, Togo and Benin were affected by the attacks, with Burkina Faso experiencing a sharp increase in the number of deaths per attack during that period.



Map 1: *Western Sahel states that have experienced recent coups d'état (2019-2022), and/or violent extremism and terrorism.*

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The deteriorating security situation in the western Sahel has elicited support from the international community. This has resulted in multiple international and regional military deployments. Despite the deployments, terrorist activities have continued. While the AUC and partners are strategizing innovative approaches to contain the scourge, a resurgence of coups d'état across the region has threatened to make an already volatile situation worse.

In August 2020 and May 2021, Mali experienced two coups d'état carried out by Colonel Assimi Goïta, leading to the overthrow of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and Transitional President Bah N'Daw, respectively. In Chad, Mahamat Déby was installed as the transitional president following the death of his father, Idris Déby – in violation of the country's constitution. The most recent coup occurred in Burkina Faso, when Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba organised the overthrow of Roch Marc Christian Kaboré in January 2022. Most of the countries affected by these recent coups are located at the centre in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism as shown on Map 1.

Given the already volatile security situation, there are fears that terrorist groups could exploit the chaotic political scene to entrench their position and expand to other parts of West Africa, and beyond. What remains under-researched, however, is how unconstitutional changes of government impact on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in western Sahel. This paper explores the potential impact of the recent coups d'état and resulting political instability on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in the western Sahel, and offers policy options to promote a more robust response to the evolving situation.

Section Two of the paper explores the coups d'état and political instability in the western Sahel from a historical perspective. This is followed by an assessment of the evolving threat of terrorism and violent extremism in the western Sahel in Section Three. Section Four focuses on the international response to the current coups d'état and political instability, while Section Five presents a detailed discussion on the implications of the coups d'état and political instability on the fight against violent extremism and terrorism. Section Five outlines the main conclusions and recommendations on the way forward.

Coups D'état and Political Instability in Western Sahel: Historical Perspectives

Most African countries experienced some form of political instability after gaining independence, typically characterised by a military takeover of a democratically elected government, or the overthrow of another military regime

(counter coups). Table 1 provides a list of successful military coups d'état that occurred in the western Sahel from 1960 to 2022. The ensuing political instability led to deteriorating security conditions, which severely affected states' overall developmental objectives¹. A push for multi-party democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to many countries on the African continent, including in West Africa and the Sahel, to adopt multi-party democratic rule.

Table 1: Successful military coups d'état in western Sahel countries, 1960-2022

Year	Coup leader	Affected president
Chad		
1975	Noël Milarew Odingar	François Tombalbay
1982	Hissène Habré	Goukouni Oueddei
1990	Itno Idriss Déby	Hissène Habré
2021	Mahamat Idriss Déby	Haroun Kabadi*
Burkina Faso		
1966	Sangoulé Lamizana	Maurice Yaméogo
1980	Saye Zerbo	Sangoulé Lamizana
1982	Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo	Saye Zerbo
1983	Thomas Sankara	Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo
1987	Blaise Compaoré	Thomas Sankara
2022	Lt-Col Paul-Henri Damiba	Roch Kaboré
Mali		
1968	Moussa Traoré	Modibo Keita
1991	Amadou Toumani Touré	Moussa Traoré
2012	Amadou Sonogo	Amadou Toumani Touré
2020	Assimi Goïta	Ibrahim Keïta
2021	Assimi Goïta	Bah N'Daw
Mauritania		
1978	Mustafa Ould Salek	Moktar Ould Daddah
1979	Ahmad Ould Bouceif	Mustafa Ould Salek
1980	Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidallah	Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Louly
1984	Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya	Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidallah
2005	Ely Ould Mohamed Vall	Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya
2008	Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz	Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi
Niger		
1974	Seyni Kountché	Hamani Diori
1996	Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara	Mahamane Ousmane
1999	Daouda Malam Wanke	Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara
2010	Salou Djibo	Mamadou Tandja

Source: *Author's own.*

* *As president of the National Assembly, he should have been sworn in as the president of Chad until elections were held.*

1. McGowan, P., & Johnson, T. H. (1984). African Military Coups d'État and Underdevelopment: a Quantitative Historical Analysis. *The journal of modern African studies*, 22(4), 633-666.

New democratic constitutions had emerged in many states, making unconstitutional takeover of governments treasonable. Regional and international organisations also adopted protocols and resolutions that espoused zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of government.¹ The drive to democratise became part of the conditionalities for Bretton Woods institutions to lend or grant funds to African countries.² This requirement, and citizens' demand to have a say in who governs them, were linked to the conviction that undemocratic regimes often result in chaos, instability and underdevelopment.

By the mid-1990s, all countries in the western Sahel – including Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad – had embraced multi-party democratic rule. This development was seen as a breath of fresh air that would usher in new stability for the region and enabling it to tackle the developmental challenges confronting states. During this new era, the internal civil conflicts and interstate wars that had characterised post-colonial African states disappeared in all but a few cases.³ However, the growing insecurity and discontent over issues such as bad governance, underdevelopment, poverty, corruption, unemployment, terrorism, and violent extremism have undermined the democratic gains achieved in the 90s and the early part of the 21st century.

In **Mali**, the third Tuareg rebellion in 2012 in the northern part of the country resulted in the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Amadou Toumani Touré. The putschists, led by Captain Amadou Sonogo, accused the Touré government of incompetence in handling the insurgency. They further alleged that the government had not given the army the equipment, ammunition and resources needed to fight the rebel-jihadists coalition. Soon after the overthrow of the government, the security situation in Mali deteriorated significantly as the rebels and terrorists took control of the regional capitals of Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu. Captain Sonogo eventually ceded power to a civilian-led transitional government with a mandate to conduct presidential elections. In August 2013, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta was declared winner, and was sworn into office in September 2013. Keïta was re-elected for a second term in 2018.

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1. See, for example, The AU's Lomé Declaration of 1999, African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, and the Supplementary Act A/SP.2/08/11 on Sanctions Against Member States That Fail to Honour Their Obligations to ECOWAS.
 2. Baylies, C. (1995). Political conditionality and democratization. *Review of African Political Economy* 22.65 (1995): 321-337.
 3. For more information see State of Democracy in sub-Saharan Africa. Democratic progress at Risk. Briefing. European Parliament. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690647/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)690647_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690647/EPRS_BRI(2021)690647_EN.pdf).

In 2020, public discontent over corruption, the mismanagement of public funds, and failure to contain the terrorism situation began to manifest. Tensions worsened following a disputed legislative election in March 2020. In June, massive protests broke out in Bamako and other parts of the country. Led by the June 5 Movement and Gathering of Patriotic Forces (M5-RFP), the protesters demanded President Keïta's resignation. Unable to stem the tide, the president was detained by Malian soldiers – led by Colonel Assimi Goïta – in August 2020, and was forced to resign.

Burkina Faso similarly experienced a popular uprising in 2015. The protests, much like the 2020 Mali demonstrations, led to the ouster of former President Blaise Compaoré. By October 2013, Compaoré had ruled Burkina Faso for 27 years. The constitution prevented him from running for president again in the 2015 election. Compaoré had manipulated term limits in the past, and he survived army mutinies and popular protests calling for his resignation in 2011.¹ In October 2014, he planned to change the constitution to allow him to run for office again. The plan succeeded, as his party controlled two-thirds of the legislature. This sparked demonstrations, which soon spread to other parts of the country beyond the capital Ouagadougou. Following the protests, Compaoré was forced to leave office and flee the country.²

Roch Marc Christian Kaboré was elected president in November 2015, and again in November 2020. Frustrations began to grow over the spread of jihadist violence that had emerged in the country in 2016. Attacks linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State were escalating. As in Mali, anger over the deteriorating security situation and the government's inability to stem the jihadist violence was rising both within the security services and among the general population. On 11 January 2022, eight soldiers accused of planning 'a project to destabilise the institutions of the republic' were arrested. On 24 January, members of the army, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba, detained President Kaboré and seized power. The coup leader criticised the president's strategy for battling Islamist terrorists.³

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1. Maggie, D. (2014). "Burkina Faso: Where Democracy Has Always Run on Protests and Coups". Open Democracy. Retrieved March 2, 2015. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150302052926/https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/maggie-dwyer/burkina-faso-where-democracy-has-always-run-on-protests-and-coups>) 21/02/2022.
 2. Fessy, T. (2014). How Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaoré Sparked His Own Downfall. BBC News. Retrieved January 2, 2022 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150302053814/http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29858965>).
 3. Burkina Faso army deposes president in West Africa's latest coup. Reuters. 24/01/22. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/burkina-faso-president-kabore-detained-military-camp-sources-tell-reuters-2022-01-24/>.

In the case of **Chad**, late President Idriss Déby Itnohad held on to power for 30 years until his sudden demise in 2021. Déby's death was attributed to injuries sustained during a visit to troops fighting the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) rebel movement. During his reign, Déby faced a number of coup attempts and rebellions. This included a foiled attempt in March 2006, led by brothers Tom and Timane Erdimi. The two high-ranking military officers had also tried, unsuccessfully, to overthrow Déby in 2004. According to the constitution, the president of the National Assembly should assume the duties of the head of state on an interim basis until elections are conducted. However, the military swiftly took power and installed President Déby's 37-year-old son and military commander, Mahamat Idriss Déby, as interim president.¹ The military suspended the constitution, and established the Transitional Military Council to govern the country for 18 months.

In April 2021, **Niger** witnessed the transfer of power from one democratically elected leader to another for the first time when former president Mahamadou Issoufou peacefully handed over power to President Mohamed Bazoum after two five-year terms in office. Prior to that, Niger had been bedevilled by coups since independence in 1958. The latest attempt to forcefully take power occurred in March 2021, when a military unit attempted to seize the presidential palace in Niamey days before Bazoum was sworn into office.² Therecurring coups, counter and attempted coups are indications of the necessity to strengthen democratic institutions in the country. Niger, like other countries in western Sahel, requires a stable and strong government to confront the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism in the Tillabéri and Diffa regions.

Mauritania, like the other countries in the western Sahel has not been spared coups and political instability. A string of coups began in Mauritania after its independence in 1960. In 1978, Col. Mustafa Ould Salek overthrew the country's first President, Moktar Ould. Coups continued thereafter. Col. Mustafa only stayed in power for a year, before being similarly ousted by Lt. Col. Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Louly, who also barely remained in power for another one year before being overthrown by Col. Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla in 1980. The unbroken streak of coups would continue (see Table 1). Mauritania's most recent coup took place in 2008, instigated by Gen. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz and his friend Mohamed Mohamed Ould

1. Chad's 'covert coup' and the implications for democratic governance in Africa. Retrieved on 21/02/2022 (<https://theconversation.com/chads-covert-coup-and-the-implications-for-democratic-governance-in-africa-159725>).

2. Niger: Attack on presidential palace an 'attempted coup'. Retrieved on 21/02/2022 (<https://www.dw.com/en/niger-attack-on-presidential-palace-an-attempted-coup/a-57060812>).

Ghazouani, ousting the country's first democratically elected civilian president Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi.

Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Western Sahel: An Evolving Situation

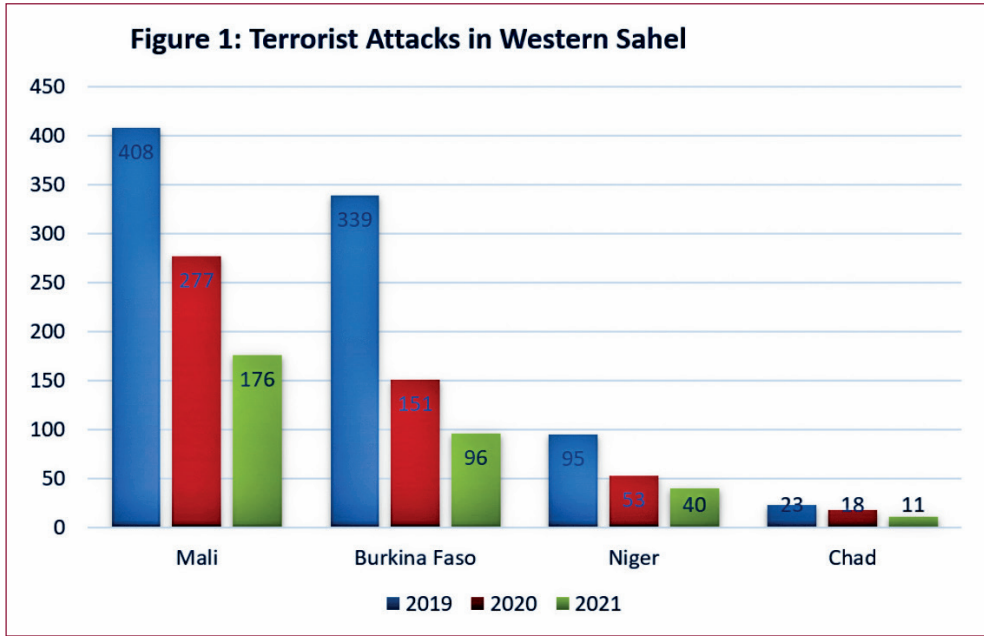
The Sahel region has become home to some of the world's deadliest terrorist groups in recent years, witnessing numerous atrocities committed against civilians, security forces and government officials.¹ The most active groups in the region are JNIM and ISGS. Tens of thousands of people have lost their lives in attacks perpetrated by these groups, and millions more have been displaced within and across national borders.²

In Mali, the return to civilian rule in 2013 did little to improve the deteriorating security situation, as the Salafi-jihadist groups that had virtually hijacked the Tuareg rebellion continued to run riot in the north. In 2015, the Malian government and the Coordination of Azawad Movements, an alliance of rebel groups from the north, signed the Algiers Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. Optimism surrounding the peace deal soon diminished as terrorist groups that had been excluded from the agreement expanded their activities. By the end of 2015, these groups had spread to central Mali and joined with the newly formed Macina Liberation Front (MLF), led by Amadou Koufa. Terrorist activities in central Mali quickly spilled over into Burkina Faso and Niger. In Burkina Faso, the group Ansarul Islam, led by now-deceased Malam Ibrahim Dicko, also began to perpetrate attacks in the north of the country. By 2017, western Sahel became the epicentre of terrorist activities on the continent, with Mali bearing the brunt of most of the attacks.

Numerous international military deployments in the region have included the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Operation Barkhane, and the G-5 Sahel Force. In response to the expansion of these groups, the Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups – comprising Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Mourabitoun, the MLF and Ansaru Dine – announced in March 2017 that they would merge to form JNIM (Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin). The merger led to an intensification of attacks in northern and central Mali, western Niger, and

1. Lacher, W. (2012). Organized crime and conflict in the Sahel-Saharan region, The Carnegie Papers, New York, September 2012.
2. Apau, R & Ziblim, I (2019). Beyond Rhetoric: Addressing the Terrorism Situation in the Sahel. African centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Policy brief 001, available at: <http://caert.org.dz/Policy-Briefs/POLICY%20BRIEF%20001.pdf> (Accessed: 01/02/2022).

north and eastern Burkina Faso. Figure 1 shows the number of terrorist attacks per year in western Sahel countries from 2019 to 2021.

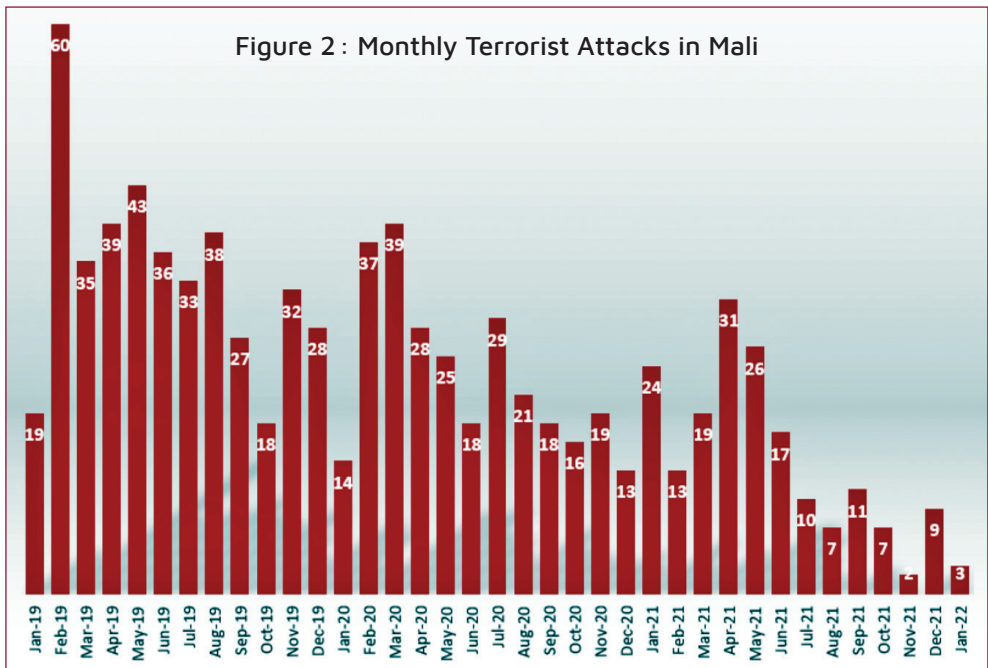


Source: ACSRT Terrorism Database, 2022.

Although the 2020 coup leaders in Mali cited growing insecurity as the main reason for their action, the security situation has not witnessed any significant improvement since the military takeover. Admittedly, the number of terrorist attacks has declined in the area governed by the junta, particularly in latter part of 2020 and in 2021— as shown in Figure 2. However, attacks had begun to decline before the junta took power in August 2020.

While the total number of terrorist attacks in 2019 was 408, 2020 witnessed a 32.1% reduction, with 277 attacks were recorded. Similarly, 2021 saw a further decline in attacks: 176 attacks were recorded, lower than those recorded in 2019 and 2020.¹ The decrease may be attributed to several factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic; the intensification of counter-terrorism operations by Operation Barkhane, the G-5 Sahel Joint Taskforce, and the Malian forces; as well as reported conflict between JNIM and ISGS.

1. African Terrorism Database (2022). This information is available at African Union’s African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), based in Algiers, Algeria. Information retrieved on 21/02/2022.



Source: ACSRT Terrorism Database, 2022.

Since the popular uprising that led to the ouster of former President Blaise Compaoré in 2015, Burkina Faso has faced persistent attacks by terrorist groups. This has resulted in numerous deaths and the displacement of an estimated 1.5 million people.¹ Between 2016 and 2019, the number of terrorist attacks increased fivefold, from 69 attacks in 2016 to 339 attacks in 2019.² The initial vacuum created by the departure of President Compaoré, and the subsequent disbanding of the elite presidential corps, affected the security coordination in the country. Terrorists exploited this lull to launch attacks, with initial hostilities first occurring in the capital Ouagadougou, and later concentrating in the north. The 15 January 2016 double terrorist attacks on the Splendid Hotel and the Cappuccino restaurant in Ouagadougou, in which 30 people were killed, changed the terrorism landscape in the country.³

1. Mednick, S. (2022). Burkina Faso army overthrows President Kaboré in Africa's latest coup. retrieved on February 21, 2022 (<https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/africa/300502875/burkina-faso-army-overthrows-president-kabore-in-africas-latest-coup>).
2. African Terrorism Database (2022). This information is available at African Union's African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), based in Algiers Algeria. Information retrieved on 21/02/2022.
3. Dozens killed in Burkina Faso hotel attack. France24. 17/01/16 (<https://www.france24.com/en/20160116-live-security-forces-launch-assault-burkina-hotel>).

In response to the growing terrorist attacks, President Roch Kaboré progressively increased the defence budget. Between 2017 to 2019, it was increased by some 80% from US\$205 million, to US\$373 million.¹ This increase, along with the creation of groups like Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP) in addition to other existing self-defense groups – Koglweogo and Dozo; intensive counter terrorism operations by international, regional, and national forces; as well as the conflict between JNIM and ISGS; led to a 12% decrease in terrorist attacks in 2020 from the previous year, as shown in Figure 3.² This was the first reduction since 2016. Unfortunately, several lethal attacks occurred in 2021. This included the 5 June Solhan massacre, which killed at least 160 people, as well as the 14 November attack at a gendarmerie post at Inata, where 54 gendarmes and three others perished.³ This led to discontent among the rank and file of military and the general population, creating impetus towards the overthrow of the democratically elected president. **Furthermore, the VDP which was created to support Burkinabé security responses is accused of worsening intercommunal conflicts between pastoralists (Fulani's) and farmers (Mossi's).**⁴ Specifically, data on attacks by the VDP (which has majority Mossi composition) have shown alleged abuses against the Fulani population and various instances of arbitrary arrests, summary executions, torture, and rape by the volunteer forces.⁵ Therefore, while the VDP can help to strengthen the country's security, their activities could exacerbate inter-community violence and undermined civil-military relations by worsening the trust between the state and communities.⁶

1. Terrorism in the Sahel: facts and figures. 3rd Joint NSD-S HUB & ACRST Four-Monthly Report. Jan 2019 to Dec 2020. Retrieved on January 02, 2022 (<https://caert.org.dz/Reports/NSDS-HUB-ACSRT-Sep-2020.pdf>).

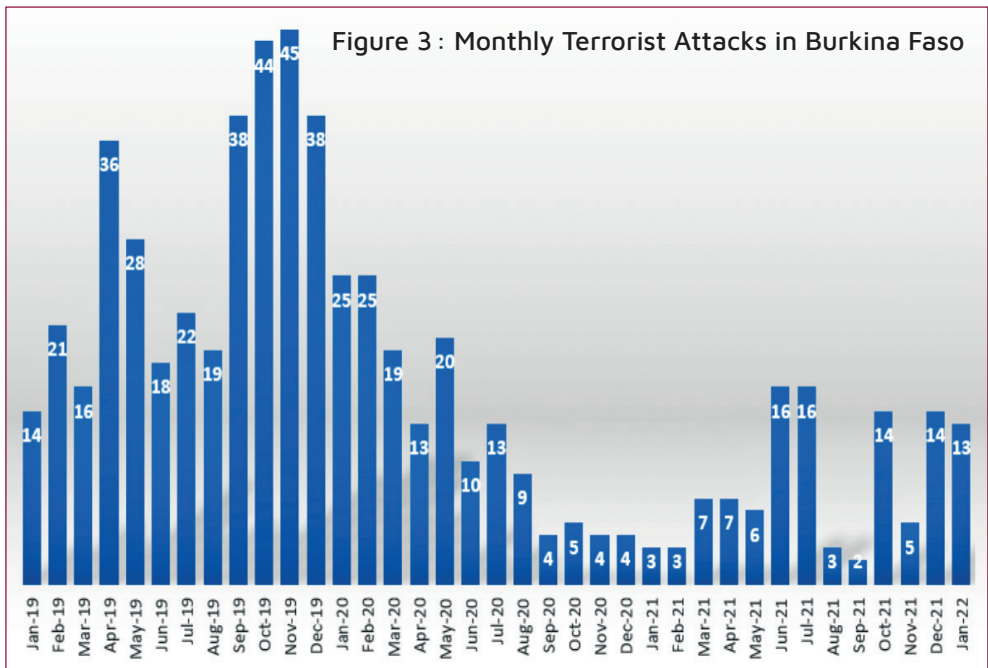
2. Ibid.

3. Burkina Faso: A history of destabilization by jihadist insurgencies. France24. 25/01/22 (<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220125-burkina-faso-a-history-of-destabilisation-by-jihadist-insurgencies>).

4. Clingendael Strategic Monitor, (2021), The Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland. Available at: (<https://www.clingendael.org/publication/volunteers-defense-homeland>).

5. Venturi, B and Toure, N. (2020), The Great Illusion: Security Sector Reform in the Sahel. The International Spectator, 55: 4, 54-68; Human Rights Watch.

6. Tisseron, A. (2021). Pandora's box. Burkina Faso, self-defense militias and VDP Law in fighting jihadism. Dakar: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.



Source: ACSRT Terrorism Database, 2022.

Due to its geographic location, Niger is exposed to terrorism and other trans-border criminal activities on multiple fronts. While JNIM and its affiliates are a source of insecurity at the border with Mali and Burkina Faso, Boko Haram and ISWAP carry out repeated attacks along the frontier with Nigeria – particularly in the Diffa region. The ISGS also has a stronghold in the Tillabéri region, from where it launches attacks against both Niger and Malian security forces. Nigerien security forces have stepped up operations against the terrorist groups, resulting in a considerable decline in the number of attacks.

In the Lake Chad Basin, both the Al-Qaeda affiliate groups – Boko Haram and its breakaway Islamic State affiliate, ISWAP – have dominated the terrorism landscape. While the two groups continued to launch limited terrorist attacks in south-western Chad, their major areas of operation have been in the north-eastern Nigerian States of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe.

In South-Western Chad, Boko Haram and ISWAP have mainly targeted the military in their attacks. For instance, on 4 April 2019, armed members from Boko Haram attacked a military post at Bouham, killing seven soldiers. Security forces, in a reprisal attack, killed 63 of the assailants. Similarly, 11 Chadiansoldiers were killed in the Lake Chad Basin area by Boko Haram on 23 June 2019. However, the deadliest attack against Chadian forces by Boko Haram

occurred on 23 March 2020, when the group attacked a military base on Boma island – killing 92 soldiers.¹ The Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has considerably reduced the momentum and degraded the capabilities of both groups, subsequently lowering the number of their attacks in Chad.

International Response to the Current Coups D'état and Political Instability

The recent overthrow of governments in the Sahel could be viewed as a dangerous fallout of prioritizing counterterrorism efforts while neglecting obvious governance challenges, local grievances, and concerns. The overthrow of President Kaboré was the fourth coup in the western Sahel in 18 months, starting with the August 2020 coup in Mali, the April 2021 coup in Chad, and Mali's 'coup within a coup' in May 2021. These coups spurred widespread condemnation, including from West African leaders (from the Economic Community of West African States, or ECOWAS), the AU, European Union (EU), UN, US, and France – which had deployed troops to Mali to fight extremists.

Following the first coup in Mali, ECOWAS – in line with the relevant provisions of its Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance – imposed trade restrictions and border closures, and suspended Mali from all its decision-making bodies. Following dialogue with the military junta by ECOWAS-appointed mediator, former president of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan, the junta subsequently handed over power to a civilian-led transitional government and pledged to hold elections within 18 months. This culminated in the lifting of sanctions by ECOWAS, except for the country's suspension from ECOWAS-related proceedings.

ECOWAS called on Malian authorities to honour their commitment to hold elections by February 2022 in line with the Transition Charter. The 4th Extraordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS was held in Accra, Ghana, on 9 January 2022 to review the political situation in Mali. Here, the junta submitted a new transition calendar, proposing the end of December 2026 as the period for holding elections. ECOWAS rejected the proposed transition period and imposed new diplomatic, trade and economic sanctions, which many have described as draconian.

1. Al Jazeera. 92 Chad soldiers killed in 'deadliest' Boko Haram attack. Retrieved 27/02/2022. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/3/25/92-chad-soldiers-killed-in-deadliest-boko-haram-attack>).



Second ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit on the Political Situation in Burkina Faso, held on 4 February 2022. © Office of the President, Republic of Ghana.

In the case of Burkina Faso, ECOWAS suspended the country on Friday 28 January 2022, in line with its protocol. However, the regional body did not impose sanctions against the country. The differences in ECOWAS' approaches were partly motivated by the backlash it had received after imposing sanctions on Mali, and more significantly, a demonstration of commitment by the military junta in Burkina Faso to hand over power to a civilian-led transitional government, following a meeting with the ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff and ministerial level envoys on 3 February. Consequently, the ECOWAS Heads of State called on the military rulers to return to constitutional order as soon as possible.¹

The ECOWAS sanctions on both Mali and Burkina Faso were endorsed by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU. With Chad, however, the PSC embraced the military transition and opposed any suspension from AU institutions, which they believed would further fuel the instability in the country and the wider region.² Many analysts described the PSC decision on Chad as a double standard in asserting the AU's principles on unconstitutional

1. Burkina Faso coup: West African bloc hold off on new sanctions. DW. 04/02/22. (<https://amp.dw.com/en/burkina-faso-coup-west-african-bloc-hold-off-on-new-sanctions/a-60654646>).

2. Paul-Simon Handy and Felicite Djilo (2021). AU balancing act on Chad's coup sets a disturbing precedent. (<https://issafrika.org/iss-today/au-balancing-act-on-chads-coup-sets-a-disturbing-precedent>) 21/02/2022.

changes of government.¹ Both the AU and ECOWAS called on the international community to support the sanctions against Mali. At the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Russia and China blocked the Council from endorsing the new ECOWAS sanctions on Mali.² The EU, however, on 4 February, imposed sanctions on five senior members of Mali's transitional government, including Prime Minister Choguel Maïga – accusing them of working to obstruct and undermine the transition from military to civilian rule. Others affected by the EU asset freezes and travel bans include purported members of the inner circle of Col. Assimi Goïta.³ Similarly, the US government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) suspended \$450 million in aid to Burkina Faso, and described the coup as being at odds with MCC's commitment to democratic governance and respect for rule of law.

These international condemnations and sanctions are politically and normatively justifiable. Yet there are concerns that this approach is likely to cause severe hardship and serious disruption to economies in the western Sahel that have already been ravaged by multifaceted security challenges – and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implications on the Fight Against Violent Extremism and Terrorism

The ongoing political crisis in the western Sahel will no doubt have a significant impact on national, regional, and international responses to terrorism and violent extremism.

At the national level, there is likely to be a vacuum in terms of the strategic direction needed to fight terrorism and violent extremism, due to the fractured and weak political leadership in the region.⁴ For instance, prior to his demise, Idriss Déby Itnoof Chad was considered a stabilising force in the region and a major international ally in the fight against groups such as Boko Haram, ISWAP, JNIM and ISGS in the Lake Chad Basin, as well as the tri-border

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1. See PSC Insights. The AU reneges on its stance against coups d'état. (<https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/the-au-reneges-on-its-stance-against-coups-detat>) 20/02/2022.
 2. Russia and China block UN support on ECOWAS Mali sanction. (<https://mrdeshh.wordpress.com/2022/01/13/russia-and-china-block-un-support-on-ecowas-mali-sanction/>).
 3. EU imposes sanctions on Mali Junta Members. (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022R0156&from=EN>).
 4. VOA. (2022). Experts Say Death of Chad's Deby Will Impact Regional Security. (https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_experts-say-death-chads-deby-will-impact-regional-security/6204969.html) 6 February 2022.

region of Liptako Gourma of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.¹ **Despite his autocratic rule and series of protests by civil society organisations against the country's worsening economic and political environment, President Déby's leadership and voluntarism in the fight against terrorism in the region earned him some form of legitimacy among the Western partners, including France.² Thus, as a bulwark and reliable ally in the global fight against terrorism, his autocratic rule was overlooked by Western countries. In both the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), President Déby provided the strong political leadership not only to the well-financed Chadian military, but also to the regional joint efforts through the MNJTF and G5 Sahel Force. His sudden death, and the ensuing tense and fragmented political landscape in Chad, has left behind a leadership vacuum that has already hampered momentum in the fight against violent extremist groups. There is a risk of in-fighting within the Chadian military and the circles of power if the political transition is not managed well.**

The consequences of Idriss Déby's demise could spill over to the entire Central African region and even Sudan's Darfur region, as that country grapplesto return to constitutional order. Just as the instability in Libya, for instance, continues to affect Chad, any destabilisation of Chad can have immediate consequences on the Darfur region. Darfur has experienced armed conflicts for several decades because of its historical connections to the western Sahel and the Maghreb region.³

For the fight against terrorism in the Western Sahel, the effects of the political situation in Chad have further exacerbated by the recent coups in Mali and Burkina Faso, which have left both countries with an extremely weak political leadership. These two states are now led by military personnel who arguably lack the international credibility, political fortitude, and experience needed to address imminent challenges.

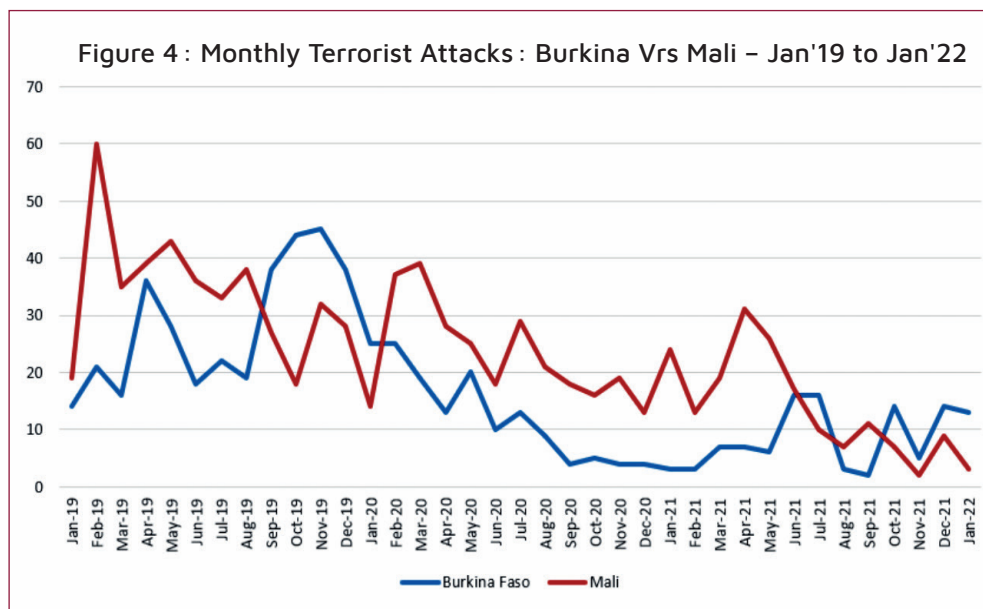
Statistics from the ACSRT Terrorism Database from January 2019 to January 2022 (Figure 4) show a downward trend in the number of terrorist attacksbefore the coups in these countries. This means that while the two ousted presidents may not have adequately responded to the terrorist threats,

1. Michelle Gavin (2021). The Unfolding Consequences of Idriss Déby's Death. (<https://www.cfr.org/blog/unfolding>) 8 February 2022.

2. Chutel, L. (2021). Why the World Won't Criticize Chad. Foreign Policy weekly Africa Brief. (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/14/chad-election-idriss-deby-terror-sahel/>).

3. Biajo, N. (2021). Sudanese Analysts: Chad Military Takeover Will Likely Cause Instability in Darfur Region. (https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_south-sudan-focus).

they achieved some modest gains in reducing attacks. Sustaining these short-term gains or achievements may be difficult due to the current leadership crises and political uncertainties. Given the political transition challenges, especially in Mali, it is evident that the kind of strong political leadership and strategic foresight needed to fight terrorism and violent extremism may further wane. The president of Niger, Mohamed Bazoum, who could fill the regional leadership vacuum, is also facing internal challenges such as attempted military coups, insurgency, drought and wide-spread poverty. His focus will mostly be on addressing Niger's internal matters to consolidate his power, and to avert the same coup predicament of his counterparts in Mali and Burkina Faso. Therefore, as the military-dominated transition authorities in both Mali and Burkina Faso wrestle for power in the capital cities, the terrorist and violent extremist groups are likely to benefit from the distracted central governments. Al-Qaeda and Islamic State-linked groups in the Sahel may continue to commit violent attacks in their bid to undermine domestic and regional security.



Source: ACSRT Terrorism Database, 2022.

Beyond the political leadership vacuum, the capacity of states to fight terrorism may also be weakened by the international sanctions and persistent internal challenges. The weakness of state institutions is reflected in many ways. First, in Mali, the leadership vacuum is exacerbated by the cessation of defence and security assistance by Western allies due to the coup; the

alleged new orientation of the military and security cooperation of the country with mercenaries-Wagner; as well as the diplomatic, trade and financial sanctions of ECOWAS.

In particular, the alleged involvement of a Russian private military company; the proposed withdrawal of French forces; and the gradual international isolation of Mali through sanctions may negatively affect the international financial and technical support. The country needs this support to address the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation caused by terrorism, violent extremism, and communal conflicts.¹

Second—the ECOWAS sanctions against Mali and the negative consequences on the economy, coupled with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the country’s systemic challenges – may hinder the essential investment required for state authority and services to be extended throughout the country. There are limited resources for strengthening the country’s socio-political resilience to overcome the persistent challenges and to support the political transition processes. This can significantly undermine the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, and allow the terrorist groups operating in northern and central Mali to further ingratiate themselves with local populations by providing basic services, resources and other materials that the central government has persistently failed to deliver.²

Such propaganda efforts may increase civilian support for terrorist groups in some areas. It may also provide these groups with additional intelligence sources and the manpower to expand and continue their violent attacks with impunity within and beyond the territories where they currently operate.

1. Aubyn, F. K. (2022), ECOWAS Sanctions Against Mali Necessary, but May Be Counter-Productive. (<https://theglobalobservatory.org/2022/02/ecowas-sanctions-against-mali-necessary-but-may-be-counter-productive/>) 7 February 2022.

2. Steve Rakowski (2022). Mali’s Recent Coup Exposes Country’s Profound Weaknesses (<https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/insights/articles/malis-recent-coup-exposes-countrys-profound-weaknesses>).



According to the UN, levels of need in Mali are now higher than at any point since 2012, with an overall total of around 7.5 million citizens in need of assistance.

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Third, the impact of the political crisis may give violent extremist and terrorist groups the opportunity to further consolidate their authority and influence in the areas where they control, and even expand to new geographical areas outside the western Sahel.

In Burkina Faso, prior to the coup, the defence and security forces were confronted with serious internal weaknesses and dissensions. The increase in defence spending was not enough to properly equip and reform the entire security sector after the fall of Blaise Compaoré's 30-year regime.¹ Indeed, the limited results of counter-terrorism efforts in the country can be partially attributed to these factors and others, including discontent and frustrations among security forces on the frontlines, who have suffered most from ongoing terrorist attacks.

Given the international condemnation of the coup, transitional authorities are unlikely to benefit from the same support as the democratic regime before them had received to equip the security and defence forces. The focus of the transitional authorities may be on either consolidating their power, or addressing the political situation to restore constitutional order – rather than fighting terrorism.

1. Méryl Demuyne and Julie Coleman, (2022), Political Upheaval and Counter-Terrorism in Burkina Faso: Between a Rock and a Hard Place. (<https://icct.nl/publication/political-upheaval-and-counter-terrorism-in-burkina-faso/>) 10 February 2022.

Moreover, not all elements in the security and defence forces may be loyal to the coup leaders. This can cause counter coups and further fragmentation within the military, with far-reaching consequences for the fight against terrorism. Internal weaknesses within the Burkinabe military can play into the hands of terrorists and violent extremist groups, who will seek to exploit these vulnerabilities and the attention being directed towards politics in the capital, Ouagadougou, to increase their targeting of civilian and security forces. This could trigger population displacements and movements into neighbouring countries, and accelerate the deterioration of the security situation in the coastal countries – including Ghana, Togo, Benin and Côte d’Ivoire.

Similarly, in Chad, the military has been left as a weak institution with a serious risk of infighting.¹ The army is marred by internal rivalry between commanders and ethnic divisions; which Idriss Déby had managed through personal negotiations. Loyalties within the military were to him and not the military leadership, or the state. With the current political uncertainty in the country, it is unclear whether the Transitional Military Council will devote greater efforts and attention to combating transnational terrorist threats.

Indeed, in August 2021, Chad announced that it was recalling 600 of its 1200 contingent from the G-5 Sahel Force. Depending on how the political situation evolves, the joint operations and capacity of the two dominant ad hoc coalitions in the region, namely the MNJTF and the G5-Sahel Force, may be negatively impacted by the common fragilities, including increased tensions within the security apparatus, a lack of equipment and difficulties in controlling their territory.²

Conclusion and Recommendations on the Way Forward

The escalating insecurity in the Sahel, mainly caused by terrorist and violent extremist groups, has partly contributed to the region’s current political turmoil. The current situation in Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad is therefore not conducive to fighting terrorism and violent extremism. Internal political challenges are creating a leadership vacuum. This has contributed to a gradual

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1. Alexandre Marc. (2021). The death of Chadian President Idris Déby Itno threatens stability in the region. (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/04/29/the-death-of-chadian-president-idris-deby-itno-threatens-stability-in-the-region/>).
 2. Virginie Baudais. (2020). The impact of the Malian crisis on the Group of Five Sahel countries: Balancing security and development priorities (<https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2020/impact>) accessed 8 February 2022.

weakening of both the capacity and the resolve of states to ensure a more robust response to the threat, and to re-establish security in troubled areas. As the political and security situation in the region deteriorates, it is crucial to resolve the domestic political conundrums to promote a more robust response to terrorism and violent extremism.

It is against this background that the response from ECOWAS, the AU, and rest of the international community be exercised with determination, caution, and discretion. The complex situation requires flexibility, pragmatism, and skilled diplomacy to avoid exacerbating the precarious security situation. To achieve this, the following recommendations are made:

- Action taken to pressure the various military juntas to cede power must be crafted and implemented with extreme care to avoid causing more suffering and misery to an already impoverished population, as this would risk promoting solidarity with the juntas and playing into the hands of terrorist and violent extremist groups, as well as organised crime groups.
- The AU Panel of the Wise (PoW) should be deployed to consistently engage with the various transitional leaders together with ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other international partners for a swift return to constitutional order.
- Neighbouring countries affected by terrorism and violent extremism, including Algeria and Mauritania, should be fully engaged to ensure unity of purpose and coordinated action.
- There is a need for the **AU, ECOWAS, ECCAS and the international community** to support comprehensive security sector reform in Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger to enhance capabilities, unlock possible funding, and improve the professionalism of the defence and security forces to address current capacity shortfalls that hinder an effective response to the terrorist threat.
- As the current attention of the transitional authorities in Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad is directed towards internal politics, the AU should consider collaborating with ECOWAS and ECCAS to take up the leadership role in fighting terrorism and violent extremism in western Sahel. This could serve as an alternative to current ad hoc coalitions like G5-Sahel and MNJTF, which are unduly influenced by the interests of countries.

- The AU should also consider activating the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) to strengthen the counter terrorism response, particularly in Mali and Burkina Faso – where the need is urgent.
- **The United Nations**, AU and ECOWAS should endeavour to undertake a joint assessment mission in Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali within the framework of subsidiarity and complementarity to understand the underlying causes of the recurring coups d'état. This will enable the relevant decision-making organs of the UN, AU and ECOWAS to know what is and is not working, manage expectations of the various interest groups – including the military – and boost the effectiveness of political elites' response generation mechanisms to the various local specific grievances.
- Coastal countries in West Africa should elevate their state of preparedness **at the national level and through cross border operations like the Accra Initiative** to effectively respond to the spill over of insecurity in western Sahel, and the consequent humanitarian needs, based on regular security risk analysis.

AFRICA'S ZERO TOLERANCE FOR UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT : A REVIEW OF THE EXTANT PROTOCOLS AND FRAMEWORKS

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Abstract

Unconstitutional Changes of Governments (UCG) appear to be once again an option of regime change in Africa in forms of military coups, rebellion, popular upheavals, mass protests and public demonstrations, all as a reaction to the failures of democracy and weak economy. On the contrary, since the democratic revival of the 1990s in Africa, UCGs has encountered growing intolerance, this is much more a realization that democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of law are prerequisites for the security, stability, and development of the continent. If that is the case, why is UCG becoming attractive again in Africa? What are the leaders in these countries not doing right? What is the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) doing to protect democracy in the continent and in their regions? With these re-occurrences, there is the need for closer interrogations and a review of extant African legal framework on UCG, in order to access its utility for political stability and sustainable democracy in Africa.

Keywords

Constitutionalism ,
Coup d'État ,
Democracy ,
Development ,
Military.

Introduction

Despite the more than two decades of development of democratic institutions in some parts of Africa, it is near difficult for many African countries to sustain and consolidate on their adopted liberal democracy. This is happening at a time when UCG appear to be once again an option of regime change. Many reasons have been given as to why UCG take place. Some of these reasons given are political, sociological as well as economics, with some having to do with the failures of democratic governance, the aftermath of a dwindling economy, that is, when the government is no longer in position for social provisioning, coupled with the fact that, impoverished populations are often alienated from constitutional authority. These factors and more tends to deepen Africa's socio-political and economic problems and, sometimes leads to unconstitutional changes of governments (UCG), which is fast becoming the norm again.

In fact, the incidences of UCGs are taking place in two ways. First is through social revolutions as encapsulated by the Arab spring in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya among others which experienced mass uprising against non-performing and sit-tight governments. Second, as a result of grievances, politically resurgent or disgruntled militaries are once again threatening fledgling democracies in Africa (Eboe, 1997) by engendering military takeover of governments in some African countries. Indeed, regimes that were established by the liberalization process of the third wave of democracy are today being “stalled”, “truncated” or collapsing (Ubi & Ibonye, 2019) through unconstitutional changes of government.

More worrisome is the fact that these coups are being supported by a significant portion of the society (Mura, 2022) and citizens who have demanded structural reforms in the management of the security situation, governance, public funds management and the justice system, etc. On the flip side, these citizens also jubilate when these changes take place as recent coups in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali portrayed. As noted, this is all a reaction to leadership, governance and democratic failures. In many African countries, the citizens had hoped that liberal democracy will guarantee greater political freedom and strong institutions, which would in turn lead to more government accountability and more effective development, but unfortunately, this has not been the case. After more than two decades of democratization, instead of the envisaged development that the adoption of liberal democracy projected, the African experience has consistently been perturbed with perennial and many episodic political crises as a result of

dissatisfaction with the status quo (Ubi & Ibonye, 2019), giving impetus to the narratives of Africa as a violent continent.

Notwithstanding, since the democratic revival of the 1990s in Africa, military coups encountered sustained intolerance, this is much more a realization that democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of law are prerequisites for the security, stability, and development of the continent (Yusuf, 2017). If this realization subsists, why the recent resurgence of UCG in Africa again? What are the leaders in these countries not doing right? Why do citizens rejoice and give legitimacy to UCG? What is the African Union and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) doing to protect democracy in the continent and in their regions? While the above questions stimulate closer interrogations into engendering solution to the phenomenon of UCG, it nevertheless calls for a review of extant African legal framework on UCG, to assess its utility in proffering solutions to this malaise.

Africa and the Problematique of Unconstitutional Changes of Governments

Irrespective of the much-celebrated "decline of military regimes" in Africa, the years 2010 to 2022, Africa have witnessed over forty (40) coup d'états and attempted coup d'états. Of these numbers, twenty (20) occurred in West Africa and the Sahel (including Chad) (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022; Wikipedia, 2022). The year 2019 saw seven (7) coup d'états and attempted coup d'états (five successful and two failed) (Suleiman & Onapajo, 2022). More so, the past two years, has seen countries in Central Africa, West Africa and few other countries in the Sahel, either reacting to lack of the gains of democracy and/or the failures of liberal democracy. For instance, experienced two military takeovers in Mali (in 2020 and 2021); and an attempted coup in Guinea-Bissau at the beginning of February 2022 and; another coup in Burkina Faso (on January 2022 and September 30, 2022) all as Mura (2022) notes, occurring in the wake of popular upheavals, mass protests and public demonstrations. The important question is what is creating the scenarios for incessant UCG in Africa? There are varied reasons acknowledged to that effect. But before we delve into the discourse on factors necessitating UCG, it is important we conceptualized what the phrase means.

A lucid meaning and classification of UCG is given by the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) adopted by member

states of the African Union (AU) on January 30, 2007. Article 23 of this instrument classified UCG as;

- a.** Any putsch or coup d'état against a democratically elected government.
- b.** Any intervention by mercenaries to replace a democratically elected government.
- c.** Any replacement of a democratically elected government by armed dissidents or rebels.
- d.** Any refusal by an incumbent government to relinquish power to the winning party or candidate after free, fair and regular elections; or
- e.** Any amendment or revision of the constitution or legal instruments, which is an infringement on the principles of democratic change of government (African Union, 2007).

From the above, there is no gainsaying that any change of government using the above five methods is constitutionally unacceptable and must be dealt with. Meanwhile, the norm against UCG in Africa has a strong bases on the post-Cold War normative interest in the evolving interpretation of the concept of threats to international peace and security within international law and international organizations in defense of constitutional order and in the promotion of democratic governance. Needless, to overemphasized here that UCG and other governance-related issues – such as election-related violence constitute a setback for Africa's democratic processes (Souaré, 2009). More so, these occurrences are anathema to democratic consolidation are taking place at a time when the AU and RECs are striving hard to fine-tune their relevant mechanisms and policy/legal instruments to address such challenges, which is a major source of the dysfunctionality of several Africa post-colonial states. In fact, the origin of the UCG framework in Africa is associated with a shift in the 1990s from single-party or military-political monopolies to a system of government based on multiparty democratic elections (Derso, 2016; Ubi & Ibonye, 2019) aimed at strengthening democracy, especially in the 3rd wave, to avoid the quandaries of the first and second waves of democracy.

As noted, the first wave between 1828-1926, saw the expansion of modern democracy from its intellectual roots in the American and the French Revolutions to Western Europe and parts of Latin America, before being reversed by the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany (Mozaffar 1997). The second wave began from

1942-62 with the advent of democracy in Germany, Italy and Japan, in most of Latin America, in the Asian and African countries that gained independence from European colonial rule. Yet, between 1962-1973, this wave saw a reversal as authoritarian governments replaced most of the fledgling democracies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Mozaffar 1997), surreptitiously scaling back the democratic gains made.

In avoidance of the above reoccurrences in Africa and the fact that incessant UCG undermines the peace, security and stability of countries in the continent, the AU and its RECs have not only adopted a ‘zero-tolerance’ approach to military coups, but are also taking firmer action against such unconstitutional changes in government (Harsch, 2010). Such action includes, but not limited in issuing out unequivocal condemnation of wave of military coups and attempted putsches across the continent, by reiterating its zero tolerance of unconstitutional changes of government in line with the Ezulwini Framework of 2009 and other comprehensive Framework to respond to military coups and other forms of UCG.

Other major instruments that the AU has put in place for this are the Constitutive Act, the Peace and Security Protocol, the Lome Declaration, and the ACDEG (Mushoriwa, 2021) on illegal takeover of governments on the continent. In some other cases, the AU’s Peace and Security Council (PSC) suspends countries with military regimes from the organization until normal constitutional order is restored in the affected countries (Warah, 2022). For instance, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Sudan (since June 2019) were all suspended and banned from all AU activities until the effective establishment of a civilian-led Transitional Authority (DW, 2022).

The Push and Pull Factors for Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa

In a study on “Military Spending and the Risks of Coups d’États”, Collier and Hoeffler opined that a major challenge facing the governments of many developing countries, especially Africa are coup d’états. They posit that while the military establishment of such countries have a dual characteristic, of both a defender of the government against external threats and internal rebellions, on the contrary they are also a source of threat (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007). The question then is, if they are the defenders of the government against external threats and internal rebellion, why do they still go against their own government?

As coercive agencies, like in any other country, the military and the police in Africa are a necessity of government, because there are the custodian of state violence and remain subservient to political leaders. On the contrary, in some cases this has not been the case in some countries of Africa; because those who were employ to manage violence on behalf of the state, on numerous occasions have chosen to use their access and monopoly control of the instruments of violence on the state itself, by instigating military coup d'état to capture political power for themselves (Thomson, 2000). All coups involve a short-circuit of the normal political process, creating an opportunity for violence to become the deciding factor. The military take advantage of this opportunity, and captures the state for itself (Thomson, 2000).

The continent of Africa has experienced about 200 military coups since the first military coup was successfully executed in Togo against Sylvanus Olympio in 1963. Sudan topping the chart with 17 coups. Burundi has had 11, while Ghana and Sierra Leon have witnessed 10 each. Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Comoros have recorded nine each, while Mali and the Republic of Benin have each witnessed eight coups. Niger and Chad have had seven military overthrows. The statistics on coups in Africa confirms West African region as the hotspot for military takeovers on the continent (Ojoko, 2022), as well as the most pronounced center of a global crisis. These coups, with the most recent being the coup in Burkina Faso that toppled President Paul-Henri Damiba remains a reminder that elected and military governments are no more immune to military takeovers than autocracies (Ubi & Ibonye, 2019). It further highlights a disturbing trend in African politics which is the resurgence of unconstitutional means to bring about regime change as well. The pertinent question then is; what are the reason for these recent resurgence of military coups in Africa? It further raises concerns on why are military coups becoming more fashionable again? To search for answers, political scientists have tried so hard to isolate common factors that lead to regime displacements.

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo identifies the reasons some African countries keep experiencing unconstitutional change of government to include; “deficiencies in governance, political greed, mismanagement of diversity, failure to seize opportunities, marginalization, human rights violations, unwillingness to accept electoral defeat, manipulation of constitutions and their revision through unconstitutional means to serve personal narrow interests” (Akufo-Addo, 2022). This in effect is compounded by the quality of leadership and lack of political alternatives. The aftermath is

the often-cited broad label of «governance» and the failure of political leaders to exercise good governance and respect for human and peoples' rights. These have had more devastating effects on Africa's cultural, socio-economic and political futures (Tettey, 2012).

Generally, military coups are the consequence of different motives (altruistic, nationalism, selfish desire, or ideological zeal) (Thomson, 2000). This can be subsumed within two schools of thought. The scholars of first school are Samuel Huntington and S. E. Finer who posit that military inclinations do not explain military interventions in politics, but instead, it is the state's socio-political environment. In their views, coups d'état is most likely to occur in states lacking institutionalized political culture, which also suffer economic hardship and social division, especially of ethnic and class conflict (Ndoh, 1997; Thomson, 2000). The second school of thoughts, focus on the organizational ability and character of the military itself. This is the internal characteristic model of Morris Janowitz, which points to patriotism, discipline, professionalism, internal social cohesion, cleavages, political ideology found at the heart of military service. Janowitz therefore argues that, it is these characteristics that eventually compel soldiers to intervene to rid their state of inept and corrupt civilian governments. (Thomson, 2000; Ndoh, 1997). Notwithstanding, these two factors cannot be disconnected as Thomson (2000) lucidly observed, when he opines that:

It seems very artificial to separate these two contributing factors. Military coups occur in Africa, first because the socio-political environment encourages this, and second because there exists on the continent military establishment which are organized and motivated enough to take advantage of this situation. What is more, patriotism and professionalism are not the sole determining factors for soldiers as well as rebels to further their own cooperate and personal interest.

Stemming from the above, it is pertinent to note that, the legitimacy of a regime in a country is in fact, an important component to understand the incursion of the military into politics. For instance, a state's existence rest on its authority, and where sufficient authority exist, citizens believe it is in their interest to respect state institutions and conform to their law. The result thereof will be a stable political order where individuals defer to their government. Conversely, if a state loses its authority, confusion reigns, and established channels of conflict resolutions decays. In such situations, groups take advantage of the state of affairs and compete with the failing elite and with each other, in their attempts

to mould a new political order. To mould this new order, coercive power and the instrument of violence which only the military with its organizational ability and technology could wield, is often being employed to gain power.

The feasibility of a coup more or less depends upon the perceived legitimacy of the government by the populace. The government can acquire legitimacy in many ways. If a country's economic performance is high and growing rapidly, the population is likely to be more reconciled to the government than one that is in rapid decline. A decline and weak economy could engender a military coup d'état. However, if the government comes to power through means that the society accepts, like democratic elections, the government is likely to get legitimacy. Again, if the regime has been in place for a long-time, people may come to see it as part of the natural order (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007).

On the contrary, if the government comes to power through a military coup, it faces the internal contradiction of legitimacy as a result of the means in which it came to power and nevertheless legitimizes an equivalent attempt through another coup to replace it (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007). Once the ice is broken as a result of a successful coup, it destroys the structures of civilian authority, constitutional procedures further erodes the «political culture». This in turn continues to elevate the probability of more coups (Londregan & Poole, 1990). In addition to the above thoughts, two important indicators for this article that may often give impetus to unconstitutional change of government if not mitigated are issues related to governance and extension of term limits, and weak economic growth and development as discussed briefly below.

Extension of Term Limits and Sit Tight Chief Executives

Since independence, African politics has been characterized by the preponderance of a “winner takes all” mindset. Losing an election in Africa means losing access to patronage; therefore, power seekers are willing to risk everything to make certain that they have and keep a grasp on power. The result is that, the 1950s and 1990s in Africa saw sit-tight leaders, autocrats among whom many were military strongmen, who later metamorphosed into “democratic leaders” who also did not permit democratic space for other interests in society (Ubi & Ibonye, 2019). More so, between the period of independence and the end of the 1980s, not a single African Head of State in three decades had permitted his being voted out of office. Indeed, that period saw only six out of 150 Heads of States voluntarily relinquishing power. Prominent among these were Senegal's Leopold Senghor, after twenty years in office; Cameroon's Ahmadu

Ahidjo, after twenty-two years in office; and Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere, after twenty-three years in office (Meredith, 2011; Ubi & Iboye, 2019).

Even today, instances of sit-tight presidents abound in many countries of Africa. A study released in 2017 by the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, also noted the problem of African leaders’ adherence to constitutional term limits – a key component for the institutionalization of predictable norms of democratic succession. It was observed that, while leaders of some African countries have succeeded in upholding term limits over the past two decades, some other leaders in more than 20 countries do not have restrictions on their time in power. The average time in power for leaders in these countries is 21 years. Thus, eight of the 10 countries where term limits have been undone are in Central Africa. While term limits for leaders in North and East Africa largely remain weak or absent. Notwithstanding, Southern Africa remains the sub-region with the strongest adherence to term limits (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2017).

Table 1: Constitutional Term Limits for African Leaders)

AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES					
Constitutional Term Limits for African Leaders					
No Constitutional Two-Term Limit	Countries with Two-Term Limit in Constitution				
	Limit Not Yet Met by Any President (Year Limit to Be Reached)	Limit Not Retroactively Applied to Current Executive	Two-Term Limit Reached		Left Office (First Leader to Adhere to Limit)
			Attempted Modification or Elimination of Limit		
			Successful	Unsuccessful	
Cape Verde ¹ (three-term limit)	Liberia (2017)	Algeria ⁴	Togo (Eyadéma, 2002)	Zambia (Chiluba, 2001)	Tanzania (Mwinyi, 1995)
Equatorial Guinea	Côte d'Ivoire (2018)	Zimbabwe ⁵	Gabon (Bongo, 2003)	Malawi (Muluzi, 2003)	Ghana (Rawlings, 2001)
Eritrea	Mauritania (2019)		Uganda (Museveni, 2005)	Nigeria (Obasanjo, 2006)	São Tomé and Príncipe (Trovoada, 2001)
Ethiopia ⁴	Guinea (2020)		Chad (Deby, 2005)	Niger (Tandja, 2009)	Kenya (Moi, 2002)
Gambia	Egypt (2022)		Cameroon (Biya, 2008)	Senegal (Wade, 2012)	Mozambique (Chissano, 2005)
Guinea-Bissau	Madagascar (2024)		Djibouti (Guellah, 2010)	Burkina Faso (Compaoré, 2014)	Benin (Kérékou, 2006)
Lesotho ¹	Tunisia (2024)		Rwanda (Kagame, 2015)		Comoros (Assoumani, 2006)
Mauritius ¹	Central African Republic (2026)		Burundi (Nkurunziza, 2015) ⁶		Sierra Leone (Kabbah, 2007)
Morocco ²	Angola (2027)		Republic of Congo (Nguesso, 2015)		Botswana (Mogae, 2008)
Seychelles (three-term limit)	Libya ³		DRC (Kabila, 2016) ⁷		Mali (Konaré, 2008)
Somalia					South Africa (Mbeki, 2008)
South Sudan					Namibia (Pohamba, 2015)
Sudan					
Swaziland ²					

¹ Executive authority largely rests with the office of the prime minister, which does not face any restrictions on tenure.

² Executive authority rests with a monarch.

³ Libya: The draft 2016 Constitution imposes two-term limits.

⁴ Algeria: The term-limit clause was removed in 2008 for Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run again and reinstated in 2016 as he serves out his last term.

⁵ Zimbabwe: The Constitution adopted in 2013 introduced a two-term limit. Robert Mugabe is due to run for his second term in 2018.

⁶ Burundi: While legitimacy remains contested, Pierre Nkurunziza has held onto power past term limit expiration in 2015.

⁷ DRC: Joseph Kabila served out his second term in 2016 but negotiated to stay on until December 2017.

Updated September 2017

Source: (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2017).

One of the reasons for this sit-tight syndrome is as a result of the supposed largesse of political power. Ubi and Ibonye observed that, many individuals struggle for state power and privileges through unethical means, such as the politics of godfatherism, rigging, electoral fraud, violence, and so on. Once they obtain power, these leaders not only ignore the demands of the poor for fundamental change, because it is inimical to their interest, but also, they perpetuate themselves in power and undermine the poor (Ubi & Ibonye, 2019). The worst is that, on the contrary, even when African leaders lose elections, it is not also certain that they will agree to leave office. For instance, it is noted that ten African leaders have evaded term limit restrictions. The average time in power for these leaders in their various countries is 21 years (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2017). Examples of such leaders may include but not limited to late Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola, who was president for thirty-five years, former Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, he was in power for thirty-four years; President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda who has been in office for thirty years; President Paul Biya of Cameroon, has been in office since 1982, and much recently, Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, who has ruled Rwanda since 2000 and following the December 2015 amendment of the Rwandan constitution earned an extension of stay for a third term of seven years.

Another recent example was former Burundi's President, Pierre Nkurunziza, who after 10 years in office, extended for a third five-year term – in contravention of Burundi's constitution that limits presidents to two five-year terms.¹ His extension sparked a significant public unrest in 2015 that almost brought the country to the brink of another civil war, as a result of the government's hardline response to protests which resulted in more than 100 deaths, arrests of some 500 media and civil society leaders, a splintering of the military, and an exodus of some 200,000 refugees (Siegle, 2015). Notwithstanding the frequent number of term limits extension, the good side is that there are about eighteen African countries that have established a constitutional two-term limit on their executive officeholders with their Chief executives usually not exceeding four years (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2017).

Deriving from the above, two important indicators suffice about the system of government in Africa. The first is the character of the democratization process and the general question about the credibility, effectiveness and legitimacy of

1. The major issue in contention was that President Nkurunziza's term extension bid was the determination of when his third term begins. The case at hand was his insistence that the two term was to start from his second 5 years in office since the deal was struck during his first 5 years, which in his view was excluded from the new constitutional arrangement.

African leaders. Administrative incompetence can erode a regime legitimacy. Illegitimate regimes that are ineffective, have a smaller chance of survival than legitimate regimes that are effective (Kennedy, 1974). Second, the lack of term limits and sit-tight Chief Executives syndrome in Africa undermines democratic consolidation which is not likely to occur in a hurry, if we have to take African political scenarios into consideration. The fact remains, that it is an extremely difficult task to remove under-performing and erring leaders due to the lack of free and fair elections and/or through impeachment by the representation of the people in the parliament, the recourse is always UCG through the use of violence mostly by military coup d'états, rebellion or social revolution by the populace.

A critical analysis of African politics shows that the abuse of power, exclusion or perceived exclusion from the political process for reasons of personal, ethnic or value differences, lack of socio-political unity, lack of genuine access to national institutions of governance, reliance on centralized and highly personalized form of governance, perception of inequality and discrimination has surreptitiously constituted major socio-political causes of conflicts in Africa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1995) as well as creating the conditions for UCG. Hence, we cannot deny the fact that negativity toward governance and leadership, citizen's welfare, and the overall society development has remained a burden to constituted governments in Africa with serious and deepening politico-economic crisis as well as political instability and conflicts.

Lack of Economic Growth and Development

At the President Biden “Democracy Summit” held in December 2021, a wide range of commitments and pledges in support of democratic renewal were put forward by leaders from 100 governments based on the Summit's three themes, these include:

- a.** Strengthening democracy and defending against authoritarianism;
- b.** Fighting corruption; and
- c.** Promoting respect for human rights (White House, 2021).

A critical examination of the outcome of the Summit, the problem of weak economy and development deficits which continue to undermine democracy in Africa were not mentioned among the themes. While these three commitments are exceedingly necessary, they are not essential enough

to consolidate and sustain democracy, especially in the developing world of Africa, Latin America and Asia, as each country and each continent is burdened with their own peculiar problems and challenges that has overtime undermined democracy. It is indeed an established fact that, countries with weak economy and are underdeveloped show a marked proneness to military intervention (Kennedy, 1974). Many African countries in the post-colonial era have failed to meet expectations of development. This often leave Africans disconnected, and further damaged level of legitimacy (Thomson, 2000) of the government.

Thus today, the resurgence of military coups in Africa are related to economic weaknesses, low income and low growth and, more so because of the prolonged failure of the growth process in Africa (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007). In a seminal study, using political and economic data from 121 countries between 1950 and 1982 to examine the interrelationship between economic privation (as measured by per capita income) and the incidence of coups d'état, Londregan and Poole found out that poverty remains a common denominator instigating coups. They further noted that there is an inverse relationship between coups and income. In this case, economic backwardness is close to being a necessary condition for coups. For instance, coups are non-existent in developed/wealthiest countries, but are 21 times more likely to occur among the poorest countries (Londregan & Poole, 1990). This occurs when many people begin to draw connections between their economic predicaments and the paucity of basic liberties, local grievances very quickly escalate into popular challenges against the government that is seen domestically as predatory and corrupt, and internationally, as servile executors of the economic agenda of the ruling classes of Western nations (Ubi and Ibonye, 2019).

These further portrays that there is no contending formula for political legitimacy in the world other than sustained ability to provide welfare, prosperity, equity, justice, domestic order, and external security; the lack of these indicators over time could undermine the legitimacy of even democratic governments. Many African countries that made the transition to liberal democracy over the past decades are today in grave political crisis because democracy has not yet delivered economic growth and development, honest and decent government etc., which many people yearn (Ubi and Ibonye, 2019).

Africa's Normative Efforts towards Mitigating Unconstitutional Change of Government

One observed trend with the emerging military coups in Africa is that with the exception of the October 2021 coup in Sudan where street protests were held demanding restoration of civilian rule, a significant population in the affected countries welcomed the military intervention. Peace and Security Council (PSC) Insights, noted with dismay the fact that Mali and Sudan even experienced coups while in political transitions brokered by the Economic Community of West African States and the AU. Indeed, this is a testament to the challenges that both the African regional and continental bodies face in assisting countries' transition to democratic rule (ISS, 2022). Does it mean that, the resurgence of military coups in Africa is an indication that existing continental frameworks and mechanisms on UCGs have failed to deter the overthrow of sitting governments by military juntas? More importantly, what solutions are there to safeguard future military takeovers in Africa?

The first continental condemnation of an unconstitutional change of government was in June 1997, when the Organization for African Unity (the AU's predecessor) at its meeting in Harare rejected the Major Paul Koroma led coup d'état against the democratically elected government of Ahmed Tejjan Kabbah in Sierra Leone. Following that, different OAU/AU declarations dealing with unconstitutional changes of government (Algiers: OAU, 1999; Lomé: OAU, 2000) and principles governing democratic elections in Africa have been enacted, with the establishment of AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in 2004 to give it teeth and act as the continent's institutional watchdog over violations of the ACDEG. (Wiebusch, Aniekwe, Oette, & Vandeginste, 2019).

Enduring democratic governance deficits like, coups d'états, rife corruption, abuse of state power, silencing of dissent, perturbing Africa, necessitated the need for collective responsibility for a continental solution to offer new perspectives to improve the African democratic governance landscape (Wiebusch, Aniekwe, Oette, & Vandeginste, 2019). In that vein, the Ambassadorial level meeting of the Central Organ of the OAU/AU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, held in September 1995, is seminal, in that it was the first time, the organisation condemned a mercenary-led coup d'état that took place in the Comoros on 28 September 1995. On the day, a group of mercenaries and Comorian soldiers led by Bob Denard overthrew President Saïd Mohamed Djohar (Djinnit, 2021).

In fact, that gave the OAU/AU impetus towards an Africa's Zero tolerance for unconstitutional change of Government, which indeed propel the first intervention by the Council of Ministers as adopted and endorsed at the 66th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State held in Harare in June 1997, where the OAU/AU Council of Ministers “strongly and unequivocally condemned the coup d’état which overthrew the Government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, of Sierra Leone. The Council called for “the immediate restoration of constitutional order” and further requested the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to take all necessary measures to “assist the people of Sierra Leone to restore constitutional order to the country” (Djinnit, 2021).

However, using a combination of three measures, namely, dialogue, imposition of sanctions and enforcement of an embargo and the use of force”, the OAU /AU Secretary-General and ECOWAS with the bold support of the General Sani Abacha regime in Nigeria were able to eventually reinstate Tejan Kabbah as president in February 1998. In fact, this reinstatement was seen by many as a landmark decision and a significant breakthrough in Africa towards strengthening democracy and as a function of Africa’s zero tolerance for unconstitutional change of government. In fact, we can vividly assert that the restoration of constitutional order in response to the coup d’état in Sierra Leone actually began the norm against UCG with those measures proposed by the 1997 OAU/AU Council of Ministers (Dersso, 2016).

From Algiers to Lomé, 1999-2000

Following that, the AU went to work, this time to create legal framework/instrument abhorring unconstitutional change of government in Africa. The 1999 Algiers Summit of the OAU (AU) ushered-in the beginning of the development of norms to deal with unconstitutional changes of government (Yusuf, 2017), when the OAU reviewed the various methods by which governments were changed in Africa and unanimously rejected unconstitutional changes in government as a contradiction to democracy. (Dersso, 2016).

Two things are distinct from the Algiers Summit. The Algiers OAU (AU) Summit adopted two decisions related to UCG, AHG/Dec.141 (xxxv) and AHG/Dec.142 (xxxv). First, the Thirty-fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Head of States, unanimously rejected any unconstitutional change, it was seen as an unacceptable and anachronistic act, which is in contradiction to OAU commitment to promote democratic principles and conditions (African Union

AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI), 2000). At that Summit, it was decided that “Member States whose governments came to power through unconstitutional means after the 1997 Harare Summit, should restore constitutional legality before the next Summit”. This its predecessor, the AU later adopted as a resolution to bar attendance of its meetings to all governments that came into power in an undemocratic and unconstitutional way (Yusuf, 2017).

Second and most importantly, the Algiers Summit decisions paved the way for the establishment of an OAU (AU) road map and policy against UCG (Djinnit, 2021), as the AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI) Declaration on the Framework for an OAU response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government noted:

We recall further the mandate by the Seventieth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, held in Algiers, in July 1997, to the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution to reactivate, as a matter of urgency, the sub-committee on unconstitutional change, in order to finalize its work in the light of the Harare discussions particularly, as regards the measures to apply in coup d'état situations occurring in Member States (African Union AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI), 2000).

The decision above to set the tune for a framework of such a nature was in fact, at the time herald as a bold and transformative measure by an organization which hitherto had agreed to non-interference and intervention in the internal affairs of its members states (Yusuf, 2017).

Lomé Declaration of the Organisation of African Unity

The Algiers Summit was followed by the “Lomé Framework on unconstitutional change of government,” adopted at the meeting of the Thirty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Heads of State Assembly in Lomé, Togo, 10-12 July, 2000. The Lomé framework was apparently prompted by four coups d'État that took place within the same month in four African countries, namely Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Comoros. After taking a review of the political developments on the continent and in particular the state of consolidating democracy in Africa, the Assembly noted with dismay, a grave concern about the resurgence of coup d'état in Africa, with its attendant threat to peace and security of the continent. In fact, the ‘Lomé Framework’ defined for the first time in international law what constituted an unconstitutional change of government.

More so, four elements of a Framework for an OAU response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government were agreed upon and these include:

- a.** a set of common values and principles for democratic governance;
- b.** a definition of what constitutes an unconstitutional change; and
- c.** measures and actions that the OAU would progressively take to respond to an Unconstitutional Change of Government; and
- d.** an implementation Mechanism.

Following the above, the Assembly further articulated and considered elaborated common values and set of principles on democratic governance to be adhered to by all member states of the OAU. Importantly, in order to give practical effect to the principles, the Assembly also enunciated, and agreed on a definition of what could be considered situations of unconstitutional change of government (African Union AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI), 2000) as defined earlier-on. More importantly, while the declaration condemned UCG, it simultaneously provided for member State failing to observe those standards to be subjected to political and economic sanctions, which include but not limited to the following;

- a.** Six months grace given to the perpetrators of the unconstitutional change to restore constitutional order. Failure to do so, the government concerned should be suspended from participating in the Policy Organs of the OAU. Apart from the sanctions provided for under Article 115 of the OAU Financial Rules and Regulations, the governments concerned should not participate in meetings of the Central Organ and Sessions of the Council of Ministers and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.
- b.** Furthermore, within the said six months, the Secretary-General should also gather facts relevant to unconstitutional change of Government in the country and establish appropriate contacts with the perpetrators with a view to ascertaining their intentions regarding the restoration of constitutional order in the country. However, if after the expiration of the six months nothing happens, range of limited and targeted sanctions such as, visa denials for the perpetrators of an unconstitutional change, restrictions of government-to-government contacts, trade restrictions etc, against the regime that stubbornly refuses to restore constitutional order should be instituted, in addition to the suspension from participation in the OAU Policy Organs, however, this will be done in juxtaposition with other Member States, Regional Groupings and the wider International/ Donor Communities (African Union AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI), 2000).

Importantly, a very interesting caveat was instituted and that is “careful attention should be exercised to ensure that the ordinary citizens of the concerned country do not suffer disproportionately on account of the enforcement of sanctions (African Union AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI), 2000)”. It is often observed on the one hand that, once coups take place, the international community is quick to brand each of these countries a pariah, while various international organizations, such as the African Union, Economic Community of West African States, and the Southern African Development Community, have responded by suspending membership, imposing sanctions, and even send emissaries to mitigate solutions. In fact, Campbell & Harwood (2010) noted that these steps are largely ineffective – or worse, because the international community has limited leverage, and sanctions may have a greater negative impact on the population than on the coup-makers (Campbell & Harwood, 2010). Irrespective, the most pertinent aspect of the Lomé Declaration was that it banned UCG in order to preserve ongoing democratization on the continent and officially codify constitutional means as the only acceptable methods of changing governments.

African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), 2007

According to Wiebusch et al, the establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2002 coincided with an overall trend in African politics to demand better democratic governance, including peaceful and credible transfers of power, transparent and accountable exercise of power, and the progressive realization of the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in national and international legal frameworks (Wiebusch, et al., 2019). The search for the above, gave birth to another very important African framework known as the “African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)” to promote liberal democracy and human rights in Africa. This charter was adopted by the Eight Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Heads of Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 30 January, 2007. It is seen as the first binding document adopted by members of the African Union and the main normative instrument to set standards for better governance across the continent. The Charter which came into force on February 2012 after ratification by fifteen (15) States (Aniekwe, et al., 2017), have been signed by forty-six (46) countries, ratified by thirty-four (34), and another thirty-four (34) have also deposited the Charter out of the fifty-five (55) States member states that make up the African Union (Africa Union, 2019).

The Charter takes its inspiration and roots from several UN resolutions, as well as from a number of Declarations and Decisions of the African Union (AU), among which is the “1999 Algiers Decision on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa” and the “2000 Lomé Declaration on the Framework for an OAU (AU) Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government”. Worthy of note here is that the ACDEG is different from previous protocols and agreements. This is because it combines in a holistic manner, the key elements of democracy, human rights and governance, with the objectives of enhancing the quality of elections in Africa, promote human rights, strengthen the rule of law, improve political, economic and social governance, and also imbued with modalities to address recurrent issues as raised inter-earlier by the Lomé Declaration with regards to unconstitutional changes of government in the continent (Aniekwe, et al., 2017) as noted in Chapter 8 titled “On sanctions in cases of unconstitutional changes of government” in Article 24, 25, and 26.

A critical analysis of Chapter Eight (8) explicitly and resolutely seeks to create a political culture of change, predicated on a democratic process of holding regular, free, fair, and transparent elections conducted by competent, independent, and impartial national electoral bodies (Permanent Forum of Arab-African Dialogue on Democracy and Human Rights, 2010). In the case of deep lapses in governance like, the problem of UCG in any country, the Chapter further gives impetus to the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union to act positively. In that stead, should there be a breach of such norm by any member states, the states are made to face sanctions, such as suspensions of membership of the Organization. However, since the adoption of the ACDEG into a binding treaty, it has gradually become the references document for AU PSC decisions on member states’ crisis situations. In fact, it has remained the most important normative international legal framework to guide the efforts of the AU in supporting democratic processes in its member states and to urged African countries and the international community to refrain from recognizing or supporting the perpetrators of coup d’états who overthrow a democratically elected government.

Notwithstanding its merits, the ACDEG has its own shortcomings. The policy document did not take into consideration a major case that has perturbed Africa’s leadership, that is the manipulation of the constitution to retain power and or extend term limits. In fact, as Djinnit noted, this case was the most critical one and if considered could lend credibility to the policy. Without this component, the policy would run the risk of being perceived as

a self-insurance policy for incumbent leaders (Djinnit, 2021). All hope was not lost though, because the decision - Assembly/AU/Dec.269(XIV) Rev. 1 at the 14th AU Summit held in Addis Ababa in January and February 2010 not only emphasized “the need for a comprehensive approach to the issue of UCG based on zero tolerance for coups d’État, but also for violations of democratic standards, the persistence and reoccurrence of which could result in unconstitutional changes” (Djinnit, 2021).

Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, 2022

In order to finetune the extant protocol and frameworks, in March 2022, another continental meeting was held in Accra, Ghana to re-engage the question of UCG in Africa in a bid to strengthened existing legal frameworks. The participants of this meeting were drawn from the representatives of the African Union (AU) Member States, members of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU, AU Organs/institutions and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, as well as the representatives of African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); academia, professional bodies, youth and women groups and other stakeholders.

The outcome document known as the “Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa” (African Union, 2022) acknowledged and observed with dismay, the complex challenges in Africa, for instance socio-economic governance, peace and security issues, resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa, gaps in governance and a convergence of vulnerabilities and security challenges such as: terrorism and violent extremism; the surge of foreign fighters and mercenaries; illicit circulation of arms/ weapons; corruption; illicit financial flows; transnational organized crimes, drug trafficking, a slow process of the ratification of AU instruments as well as implementation of AU Assembly and PSC decisions etc., has continued to hamper continental and regional efforts to consolidate and sustained democracy.

A perusal of this recent document portrayed that there is no gainsaying the fact that the AU and RECs/RMs have made significant efforts in addressing unconstitutional changes of government and other maladies on the continent through different measures as provided in the AU and RECs/RMs instruments. This includes imposition of sanctions and other punitive measures, such as political and targeted financial sanctions, as well as travel bans (African Union,

2022) in order to promote democracy and good governance, including through holding free, fair and transparent elections; and upholding of term limits, and their respective constitutions, which in recent times have become a major problem for the consolidation of democracy in Africa. However, despite these laudable efforts, over the past two decades, the Continent is still experiencing the increase in the number of Member States which manipulate democratic processes to modify and eliminate constitutional term limits, while others resist efforts to institute term limits in their Constitutions (African Union, 2022).

These continuous challenges all put together further gave impetus for the Accra Declaration to stressed on the zero tolerance for the overthrow of constitutionally elected governments and manipulation of the constitutions by incumbents and all other forms of unconstitutional changes of government. what has come out of the document is that it has agreed to continually and strongly condemn all forms of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa; to fully implement the existing national, regional and continental legal tools to enhance national ownership of governance processes and consolidate democratic, governance, prevent, manage and resolve conflicts; and undertake post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development; to Effectively Address development challenges, particularly socio-economic inequalities and to Comprehensively address factors which lead to unconstitutional changes of government, including manipulation of democratic processes (African Union, 2022).

Challenges of Africa Union Frameworks on Unconstitutional Change of Government

The implementation of the extant protocols of the AU and RECs relating the unconstitutional change of government is fraught with a number of challenges. Prime among the challenges are UCG and the Problem of Semantics, Acceptability and Implementation of Frameworks and as well as the Inconsistency and Lack of Consensus on the Fundamental causes of UCG. These challenges are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

Unconstitutional Change of Government and the Problem of Semantics

A major gap that has been identified within the AU norm for UCG is inadequate or lack of definition of what should constitute UCG and as Dersso noted also, the poor formulation of the five instances that constitute

what UCG is (Dersso, 2016). For instance, it has been noted that both the Lomé Declaration and the Addis Ababa Charter take the same stances on the situations defined as unconstitutional change of government. A critical analysis of those documents tend to depict UCG more from a military coups than on any other situation. The reason for this is not far-fetched. This is because African leaders thought coups d'état are the most prevalent of all the four or five situations, and could be easier to deal with than other situations. Another reason is surreptitiously that most African leaders – some of whom had come to power through the barrel of a gun – thought that coups were a bigger threat to their regimes and thus merited greater attention than other forms of unconstitutional changes of government (Souaré, 2009). Thus, neglected are other situations like social revolutions/popular uprisings as the Arab Spring depicted, and the manipulation of constitutional term limits (as has happened in many African countries) (Dersso, 2016).

Challenge of Non-acceptability and Implementation of Frameworks

The level of acceptability of the extant frameworks on UCG has remained varied and has therefore affected their implementation. Generally, their level of acceptability especially among the population remains highly uneven, and has engendered countless debates on the utility of the legal framework in solving not only the persistent military putsches that Africa is experiencing, but also governance challenges. These challenges has nevertheless, constitutes a major problem to making the Charter's objectives a reality across Africa. (Aniekwe, et al., 2017).

Another major shortcoming also relates to who defines when constitutional order is said to have been restored. The lack of agreement in practice by the AU on this issue has cause significant confusion when it comes to implementing and enforcement of the UCG norms (Dersso, 2016), Djinnit (2021) observed that even prior to the adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) in 2007, the continental organization had produced a vast number of policy documents and normative frameworks related to peace and security, and economic and political governance, but its challenge has always laid in its implementation of these policies.

The gaps in the implementation and enforcement framework remains a problematic that the AU and RECs have had historical divergence when it comes to pragmatizing and determining whether a country has restored

constitutional order (Dersso, 2016). A notable case is Mali, when ECOWAS lifted Mali's suspension upon the signing of an agreement between ECOWAS negotiators and the military junta, while on the contrary the AU still maintained its sanctions. This also occurred in Guinea Bissau with ECOWAS being satisfied with the country's transitional government, which was at odds with the AU's requirement for an election and a democratically elected government to be in place before lifting their suspension (Dersso, 2016).

Nevertheless, this problem of implementation of AU legal instruments acceded to by member states has also been a major anathema to AU. In fact, this is one of the setbacks of OAU/AU that Salim Ahmed Salim as OAU/AU Secretary-General (1989-2001) observed. In trying to solve to solve this challenge, one of the actions he took was to first reduce the number of resolutions submitted to the policy organs, while focusing more on the implementation of extant frameworks, among other reforms. This footstep was also followed by President Kagame as Chairman of the AU (2018-2019) two decades later, in which he made the implementation of decisions a priority in his reform of the AU (Djinnit, 2021).

Lack of Consensus on the Fundamental causes of Unconstitutional Change of Government

It is believed that the AU lacks guidance on the fundamental causes of UCG. However, while we could definitely allude to fact that UCG's are usually the result of serious deficits in democratic governance, leadership, observance of people's and human rights, the rule of law and constitutionalism among others. There is still no consensus among member states on the triggering effects of UCG in Africa, hence the crisis of precise approach to dealing with UCGs. Thus, this lingering divergence on this causal complex of mixed factors, couple with specific processes and actions, has rendered more or less many summit's outcomes purely rhetorical.

Even though all states agree that UCGs requires urgent responses from the AU and regional economic communities (RECs), the inability of the AU to define the actions or measures that it needs to take in cases of serious breaches of these norms has continually put the AU more as a reactive endeavor rather than preventive. And as Dersso (2016) observed, lacking impact on AU policies and actions, has not help to developed a comparable framework for sanctioning major democratic and human rights deficits that underline the emergence of instances of UCG.

That being the case, the different organ of the AU, The Assembly, the Executive Council and the Commission, should make it a point to urge for consistency of action at the bilateral, inter-state, sub-regional and international levels. The AU Commission should thereafter convene, as a matter of urgency, to discuss the matter. At the request of its chairperson or any AU Member State, the Executive Council may be convened to consider any given situation that could be considered as constituting an unconstitutional change.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This article concludes with the predication of Ubi and Ibonye (2019) that, the road to democracy is a difficult one and that democratic transformations are never simple linear processes as historical evidences of other advanced democracies have shown. democratization process takes a tortuous process of partial transformations, conflicts, slowdowns, and even outright reversals to institutionalize, sustain and consolidate democracy.

More than five decades after independence, the development of many countries in Africa has been constrained by their political systems. So many African countries have failed to produce a political and economic systems in line with their socio-structural dynamics in which development can flourish. The African political scenarios have shown that African leaders have been more concern about retaining power than about long term development interest of their people and nations (Meredith, 2011). It must be stated categorically here that, many of the generic causes of the failure of the first two waves of democratic reversal are still with us in the forms of shallow value commitments to democracy, intense economic problems, social conflicts, dangers of political polarization, resistance of conservative forces to redistribution of power and wealth, terrorism, and insurgency, and until these maladies are rectified, UCG will remain a component of African politics.

The truth remains, liberal democracy will have little chance of being sustained or consolidated if it cannot revive economic fortunes, especially in this post COVID-19 era when the pandemic related economic turn down has posed tremendous challenges associated with economic volatility, high levels of poverty and inequality as well as high rates of crime and violence. It is therefore not overstatement to assert that democracy will consistently remain under stress and imperfect in many African countries and even suffer reversals in the foreseeable future”.

African countries are in dire need of political stability which is central to the pursuit of economic development. As observed by the World Bank, economic reforms alone cannot solve Africa's crisis; political reforms too is essential. In fact, it was observed that Africa's economic malaise had a political as well as economic roots. What Africa needed is not just less government but better government. (Meredith, 2011). Thus, the saying goes, "there cannot be peace without development and neither can there be development without peace" Drawing from this, the imperative of good governance and pursuit of development remain astute conditions to keep UCG at afar. Hence it is time governments in our different countries of Africa begin to make deliberate attempts towards economic growth and development. This presupposes that if we do not resolve the economic quagmire that many countries in Africa finds themselves, they will always be a probability of an imminent revolt in the form of military coup d'états, rebellion or social revolutions.

A part of the problem giving impetus to UCG in Africa is the perennial insecurity many African countries are experiencing, especially in West Africa and in the Sahel, which is today Africa's hotspot of insecurity. Observed speeches of some of the coup plotters in Mali, Burkina Faso have suggested that the inability of the toppled government to fight insecurity caused by Islamist insurgents remains a major grievance that necessitated military intervention. The inability of many countries across Africa to resolve their security problem has therefore engendered the resurgence of military putsches that Africa is experiencing right now. Hence, there is a great need for concerted efforts by the developed and advance countries of the international community to lend hands to many of these countries in Africa experiencing the scourge of terrorism and insecurity.

It is in line with this that the quest for the way forward for democracy in the continent, this paper proffers the following recommendations with hope it will help stem the rising resurgence of UCG in Africa.

- a.** African countries should intensify professional training and capacity building programs of their defense and security forces to act solely in the public interest and in line within their constitutional responsibility.
- b.** African government should explore credible bilaterally or multilaterally partners to enhance professionalism of their respective militaries and security services.
- c.** The AU should exhibit informed restraint in the condemnation of UCG in any member state pending the analysis of the situation.

- d.** The Chairperson of the AU Commission should also convey a clear and unequivocal warning to the perpetrators of the unconstitutional change that, under no circumstances, will their illegal action be tolerated or recognized by the AU.
- e.** African governments should as a priority pursue sustained economic and political reforms and policies that enhance the general well-being and economic development of their respective countries as these are essential to forestall UCG.
- f.** African leaders should adhere to constitutional term limits and not make themselves permanent or sit-tight presidents.
- g.** The political leadership of various African states should also endeavor to adhere strictly to ‘the principles of good governance, transparency and human rights’ and more ‘strengthened democratic institutions.
- h.** African leaders should as a matter of priority work towards the security of lives and property as sustained insecurities remains direct assaults to the reason of the state and therefore proved another invitation to unconstitutional change of government in the continent.

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DEBATING THE NEXUS BETWEEN STATE TERRORISM AND COUPS IN AFRICA

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Abstract

This article reflects on the dynamics of coup, terrorism and democracy in Africa and the implications to security and stability of states in the continent. It provides the theoretical and philosophical explanations of these concepts drawing from extant instruments of the African Union and subsequently provides linkages to security and development. The paper notes that although extant instruments of the African Union is silent on state terrorism, the power elites in several African countries sometimes deploy coercive assets of the state in manners synonymous with acts of terrorism and this has created deep grievances and governance problematic that sometimes culminate to military coups, armed conflicts and terrorist attacks in Africa. Drawing from this, the paper posits that good and responsible governance is critical to ending the scourge of coups and terrorism in the continent.

Keywords

Coup ,
constitutional coup ,
democracy ,
state terrorism ,
terrorism.

Introduction

The study of coups and terrorism in Africa has a long history dating back to the second half of the twentieth century especially with the Gamel Abdel Nasser led coup in Egypt in July 1952. The incidence of coups in Africa increased after the attainment of independence in the 1960s by majority of African states. Countries like Togo (1963), Ghana (1966), Nigeria (1966), Sierra Leone (1967), Libya (1969) among others joined the league of African countries to experience coups. The incidence of coups in Africa persisted till the end of the twentieth century when the continent seemed poised for democratic enlargement.

Like coups, the scourge of terrorism in Africa has also continued to attract policy and academic attention on governance and security discourses. From initial focus on the North Africa and Maghreb region, the scourge of terrorism has spread to through the Sahel to the larger sub-Saharan Africa. Among the areas of curiosity is the focus on state terrorism and its links to coups, security and stability across Africa. To understand the interplay of forces associated with state terrorism and coups, the paper reflects on the nature of state power and the character of the power elites as well as the socio-political behaviour of the mass of the population in terms of input-output interactions with the political system. This is further embellished with intervening dynamics from beyond Africa. In this regard, Africa has gone through diverse political experiences characterised by democratic contractions and enlargements which have provoked varying security realities associated with loyalties and civil disobedience, civil wars, insurgencies and terrorism.

In the decade following the Arab Spring in Middle East and North Africa (MENA), inquiries on security and governance in Africa has significantly featured concerns associated with threats of terrorism and unconstitutional change of government (Okereke, 2013). While it is accepted that these twin misnomer which are direct assaults on the values of the African Union have long history in Africa politics and governance, both phenomena have assumed new dimensions especially after the violent overthrow of the Ghadaffi regime. For instance, the uprising in Egypt ended with the replacement of the Hosni Mubarak era with a military regime in February 2011 (Associated Press, 2012). In Libya, the outbreak of a bloody revolution that culminated in the execution of Colonel Muammar Ghadaffi and some members of his regime (Gaynor, 2011). Mali joined the league of unconstitutional change of government after mutinous soldiers complaining about the lack of military equipment to fight

rebellious armed groups fighting for the actualisation of the independent state of Azawad toppled former President Ahmadou Toumani Traore in March 2012 who was replaced by Captain Amadou Sanogo (Nossiter, 2012).

The scourge of military coups has further spread across the continent and engulfed the Republic of Guinea and Burkina Faso while the nature of succession that characterized the sudden death of Idriss Itno Derby in March 2021 to incumbent Mahamat Derby raised concerns of legality and due process (Vanguard, 2021). The shadows of coup resonated in Guinea Bissau in February 2022 following the aborted coup against the Umaro Sissoco Embalo administration which resulted to several deaths (BBC, 2022). This troubling incidents of coups is deepened by the escalating assaults mounted on the African Union member states which seems to be spreading to new states as growing apprehensions of terrorist attacks are now been experienced in previously insulated states like Togo, Benin, Ghana, Eswatini among others.

The resurgence of coups and terrorism across Africa is considered a negation of the Lome Convention of 12 July 2000 which embodies the Declaration on the Framework for the OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government, adopted by the 36th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. It further contravenes the AU Declaration rejecting for unconstitutional change of government as adopted in Accra, Ghana on 17 March 2022 as well as the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance which has earlier been adopted in Dakar, Senegal on 21 December 2001. With respect to the scourge of terrorism, African leaders had adopted the Organization of African Unity Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism at Algiers in July 1999 (OAU Convention, 1999). This was followed in September 2002 with adoption of the Plan of Action of the African Union High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa. It is however thought provoking that despite the implementation of these instruments alongside various regional and national counterterrorism frameworks, the scourge of terrorism has persisted and continues to spread.

In response to the growing threats of coups and other forms of unconstitutional change of government, the West Africa Elders Forum held a two-day Regional Dialogue on Sustaining Democratic Principles in West Africa in Dakar, Senegal in May 2022. The regional dialogue specifically reflected on the threats to democratic enlargement in the region following the incidence of military coups in Burkina Faso, Guinea (Conakry) and Mali (Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, 2022). The deepening decline in democracy and spread of unconstitutional

change of government in an era when security calculus across the continent is concurrently threatened by scourge of terrorism including allegations of state terrorism. On 17 May 2022, the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs held a conference on *Democratic Consolidation and the Resurgence of Coups in Africa* in Lagos while the National Defense College, Nigeria a national seminar on the *Emerging Security Threats in West Africa: Implications for Regional Security and Stability*. In Arusha, Tanzania, the Institute of Security Studies held the Africa Drive for Democracy Conference in July 2022. These conferences are multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary endeavour aimed at tackling the threats to democracy, peace and security in the continent.

This paper interrogates the nexus between coups and state terrorism in Africa. It observes that although the extant Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa dated 1999 did not recognize the incidence of state terrorism, it notes that the nature of state power in Africa and the sometimes excessive resort to the coercive assets to compel allegiance provokes concerns categorized as state terrorism. Subsequently, it reflects on the theoretical and philosophical issues associated with state, terrorism, coups and democracy in Africa.

Explaining the Conceptual Underpinnings of State Terrorism and Coup d'État

It is considered imperative to begin this discourse with a clear explanation of the key terms notably state terrorism and coups as a prelude to accompanying analysis of the subject matter. Drawing from this, it is necessary to observe that several attempts at explaining terrorism often begins with a conversation on how difficult it is to establish a consensus scholarly definition of the concept. This is consistent with the assertion that one man's terrorist could be another man's freedom fighter; an assertion which captures the intricate nature of relationship between the notion of state terrorism and the inalienable rights and liberties of individuals and groups within its territory.

It is the response to the accompanying difficulty of terrorism that has resulted in the identification of core characteristics of what could be classified as terrorism. To this effect, terrorism is characterized by the following; first is threatened or perpetrated violence directed at some victims, next is that violent actors intends that violence to induce terror in some witness who is generally distinct from the victim; and third, the violent actor(s) intends that the terrorized witness to the violence will alter his or her behaviour (Walter, 1969).

Resolution 49/60 of the United Nations General Assembly Declaration of Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism (1994) notes that terrorism involves criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes (UNGA 1995). It further notes that such act(s) are in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them (UNGA, 1995). In 2004, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1566 in which it noted that terrorism includes “criminal acts, including against civilians that are committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a groups of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act (UNSC 2004).

Wilkinson identifies five characteristics of incidents that can be labeled terrorism as follows:

It is premeditated and aims to create a climate of extreme fear or terror; it is directed at a wider audience or target than the immediate victims of the violence; it inherently involves attacks on random and symbolic targets, including civilians, the act of violence committed are seen by the society in which they occur as extra-normal, in the literal sense that they breach the social norms, thus causing a sense of outrage; and terrorism is used to try to influence political behaviour in some way (Wilkinson, 1992 : 228-9).

On its part, the African Union draws its understanding of terrorism from the provisions of Article 1 (3) of the Organization of African Unity Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism adopted at Algiers on 1 July 1999. The instrument describes terrorist acts as:

- a.** Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a state party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:

- i. intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or
 - ii. disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or
 - iii. create general insurrection in a State.
- b. any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing, or procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in paragraph (a) (i) to (iii) (OAU Convention, 1999).

Having tacitly established the meaning of terrorism and clearly identified the African notion of what constitutes terrorism especially its emphasis on the violation of the criminal laws of state members, it is important to note that the African Union perspective technically does not recognize the probability of state terrorism which is central to this study.

State Terrorism

So far, the conversations on terrorism are often dedicated to the activities of non-state actors engaged in damning assaults on the state and its assets thereby neglecting the conduct of states which bear the imprints of terror. This reality thereby ignores a disturbing but objective reality that could enrich studies and research on terrorism bearing in mind that the state has responsibility to protect the population within its territory and also signatory to several international frameworks that guarantees and projects human and people's rights.

There exists contending views that the emphasis on state terrorism projects the danger of criminalizing the state and delegitimizing its engagements in counterterrorism at domestic and international levels. (Laqueur, 2003: 237) contends that such engagements tend to degrade or ignore that monopoly control of the state over all instruments of coercion upon which it justifies its transcendental control over all individuals and groups within its territory. Further attempts at explaining state terrorism suggests that it involves acts which are considered to violate extant international law. Here, the state is seen as targeting individuals or group to whom it has a legal responsibility to protect and such repression can occur in times of war or peace. Walter Laqueur identifies the key ingredients of state terrorism to include the following:

- a.** There must be a deliberate act of violence against individuals that the state has a duty to protect, or a threat of such an act if a climate of fear has already been established through preceding acts of state violence.
- b.** The act must be perpetrated by actors on behalf of or in conjunction with the state, including paramilitaries and private security agents.
- c.** The act or threat of violence is intended to induce extreme fear in some target observers who identify with that victim; and
- d.** The target audience is forced to consider changing their behaviour in some way (Laqueur, 2003: 237).

It is argued that the emphasis on random target differentiates the state use of terror from those perpetrated by non-state actors. By this, Blakeley contends that the state could repress or suppress individuals and groups opposed to it and a manner considered as targeted. As a result, individuals and groups in the society know what to do to avert being targeted by the State unlike acts of terrorism perpetrated by non-state actors. However, at a point of convergence, acts of terrorism whether committed by states or non-state actors usually involves deliberate coercion and violence targeted at victims. Such violence naturally induces and sustains extreme fear in the population, many of who ends up considering themselves as potential future victims and are compelled to consider adjusting their behaviour in manners desired by the perceived or real terrorist(s).

Coup d'État

In its simplest sense, coup d'état is considered a blow to the state and is characterized by the sudden and sometimes violent overthrow of an existing government by a group of military officers leading to the seizure of political power and the total control of the armed forces and security agencies is a major prerequisite of coups. Cyril Obi (1999: 132-133) identified the features of military coup as follows:

- a.** Targeted mainly to effect change in political leadership.
- b.** Highly enclavistic, the work of a clique of conspirators working secretly to overthrow an existing government or eliminate existing office holders in a government.
- c.** Usually relies on the Armed Forces and public sympathy.

- d.** Could be the result of external forces and intervention on behalf of, and in support of local allies.
- e.** Relies on circumstance, chance and elaborate planning with the seizure of strategic places as targets: airports, seaports, land borders, radio, Television and communication installations.
- f.** Can take place in period of depression or wealth and is often executed at night to reduce the possibility of civilian casualties.
- g.** Leads mainly to reforms aimed at stabilizing the political system, and the appointment of a fresh set of office holders (Obi: 1999).

To understand and appreciate the significance of military coups to governance in Africa, a tacit reflection on the constitutional role of the armed forces in Africa is considered worthwhile. This is necessary to guide the polemics associated with military intervention in partisan politics across Africa. For the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF), the primary purpose of the armed forces is to ensure national defense against external threats and internal conflicts (DCAF, 2015). In this regard, it considers the armed forces or military to comprise of the regular military forces, auxiliary military forces and reserve military forces but notes that what constitutes the armed forces may differ substantially between contexts in varying states.

The DCAF described the Regular military forces to refer to military institutions whose primary purpose is readiness for war and comprises of the armies, navies, amphibious forces, air forces, border guards and presidential guards, including all their military support functions (DCAF, 2015). Such forces may be professional or based on conscription, or include a combination of professional uniformed staff, professional civilian staff and/or uniformed non-professional conscripts. The auxiliary military forces on the other hand, include professional security forces that can be called upon to assist the regular military under certain conditions. In this regard, the DCAF identified the auxiliary forces to include constabularies, gendarmerie, border guards, coastguards, close protection forces, merchant marines or navies, radio support and air patrols. Others are specialized scientific information and intelligence services, organizational commands, logistics services and education and training establishments, among others. Such forces may be military, civilian or mixed in character, and may be subject to military discipline (DCAF, 2015). With respect to the Reserve military forces, the DCAF describes these

as military forces composed of either volunteers or compulsory recruits who can be called on to reinforce the regular military. Examples of the reserve military forces include the army, navy, or air force reserves, special tactical police units, national guards and territorial, militia and home defense forces, among others (DCAF, 2015).

The primary purpose of the armed forces is national defense which in contemporary time go beyond defense against external aggression to include support for internal stability. For instance, in response to the growing dimensions of threat to the internal security and stability of states, there have emerged the increased engagement of the armed forces in several tasks for domestic order through internal security operations when certain domestic threats exceeded the capabilities of police and other security agencies to contain. Such threats could be in the form of insurgencies, armed banditry and separatist struggles and often considered within the framework of Military Aid to Civil Power (MACP). Furthermore, the armed forces could also be invited by the government to provide supports considered Military Aid to Civil Authority (MACA). In this regards, the level of intervention is devoid of the use of force but concentrated mostly on assistance related to civil matters like disaster management, movement of medical supplies during health emergencies like epidemics and COVID-19 pandemic, distribution of electoral materials during elections among others. Checklist of secondary tasks in internal security that the armed forces perform are:

- a.** Assisting in law enforcement, such as public order operations, border control, drug control, crime investigation, cyber operations, intelligence gathering;
- b.** Civil defense, including responding to national emergencies and natural disasters;
- c.** Protection tasks, for example critical infrastructure, important personnel, or large scale public events;
- d.** Non-security assistance tasks, such as search and rescue, training and monitoring, equipment and facility provision, scientific research, environmental protection;
- e.** Development mandates, for example infrastructure and engineering projects, harvest assistance and educational programs, among others (DCAF, 2015).

So far, the incidence of military coups have come to occupy the attention of philosophers and scholars for several decades. This is because coups constitutes aberration to the doctrine of civil-military relation which places emphasis on military subordination to civil authority. Such philosophical inquiries into the nature of civil-military relations have been carried out by Finer (1962), Huntington (1962), Janowitz and Luckham among others. Samuel Finer identified four types of civil-military relations which are distinguished by the degree of military interventions. In the first case, he likens the military to pressure groups that exercise legitimate and constitutional influence on the civilian administration in pursuit of its goals like the increase in military budget. Finer isolated a second approach as when the military apply threats of some sanctions or form of blackmail to attain its ends. In addition, he identifies a third dimension as when the military displaces a civilian regime which failed to adequately discharge its mandate s and replace it with another civilian regime. Finally, he identifies a fourth dimension as when officers decide to overthrow the civilian regime and control state power directly (Finer, 1962:3). In his treatise, *The Man on Horseback*, Finer considers the military as a parasitic institution which exploits its centrality to the State to overthrow weak civilian political institutions because it possesses the monopoly control of the coercive instruments of the state (Finer, 1988). It is his view that the centralized chain of command, military discipline, extreme communication and inherent *Espirit de Corp* strengthens the cohesiveness of the military which enables it with the capacity to effectively mobilize requisite assets needed to capture state power (Finer, 1988).

Huntington classifies civil-military relations into three distinct categories based on the basis of the political objectives of actions embarked by officers. To this effect, he identified namely, palace coup, reform coup and revolutionary coup (Huntington, 1962: 32-33). These classifications by Huntington has been faulted as subjective and elusive especially as it fails to acknowledge that military intervention could start as from one dimension and be compelled to undergo other radical changes (Karabelias, 1998:11). Furthermore, Huntington adopted the modernization perspective to interrogate military intervention in Third World societies arguing that modernization processes created rising social expectations and mobilization through education, media exposure and urban-industrial development culminating in greater awareness and capacities for political action. By implication, contending groups within the polity were more likely to participate in placing demands on the state. He however noted that the trends in political development lagged behind as the Third World states remained largely fragile and institutionally weak to

regulate social conflicts and adequately meet the demands from the population. This leads to a participation crisis that encourages military intervention into politics (Huntington, 1968).

In his contribution to the debate on civil-military relations, Morris Janowitz (1964: 2-3) relied on the core-periphery dichotomy to distinguish between western states and developing societies. In this regard, he categorized civil-military relations in core states as aristocratic, democratic and totalitarian while those of the periphery were categorized as authoritarian-personal, authoritarian-mass, democratic-competitive, civil-military coalition and military oligarchy. Janowitz classification however fails to take into consideration the level of autonomy between civilian and military leaders.

In another treatise, Janowitz further argues that political centrality of the military and stressing that the greater the resources and cohesion of the military institution, the greater the likelihood of its intervention into partisan politics. He conceives Third World militaries as modernizing elites who through their education in developed countries are significantly exposed to equate national security to socio-economic and political development. Drawing from this, Janowitz contends that the elite corp of the military consider themselves as better placed than the corrupt and inefficient civilian power elites who have kept their countries backwards (Janowitz, 1977).

Yet, while Lucian Pye (1962) consider the military in the third world countries as modernizers and promoters of development, others like Luckham distinguished civil-military relations on a number of variables. These include the strength and weakness of civilian institutions and the political and organizational resources at its disposal. Others are the strength and weakness of the military institution and the coercive as well as the nature of boundaries between the military establishment and its socio-political environment (Luckham 1961:21) (Karabelias, 1998:11).

Clapham and Philip opted to focus their analysis away from how military officers gain access to political power to how they use it. From this, they identified four types of military regimes as Veto, Moderator, Factional and Breakthrough. The veto and moderator regimes could be likened to Huntington's revolutionary and guardian classifications respectively. The factional regimes refers to a situation of factional coup by disgruntled officers while the breakthrough regime is depicted in a radical reforming military like the Ghadaffi and Abdel Nasser examples in Libya and Egypt respectively (Clapham and Philip: 1985:8-10). Subsequently, they identified six differing

results of military regimes as handback, military-party state, factional clientelism, civilian renewal and impasse.

The views of Huntington, Finer, Janowitz as well as Clapham and Philip constitutes varying contending and complimentary perspectives to explaining the incidence of military intervention into partisan politics. Much of these interpretations squarely captures the experiences of the new states in post-colonial Africa which although inherited over-developed state apparatus from the erstwhile colonial powers proved unable to effectively mobilize its assets for the pursuit of political stability and national development. The inability of the civilian elites to reconcile the competing and contradictory relationship in the conduct of governance provided avenues for military misadventure into partisan politics in these African states.

Understanding the Contending Perspectives of Military Interventions in Africa

The conversations on the causes of coups in Africa have continued to generate immense interest especially with the resurgence of coups in the continent since the Arab Spring. Core to the perspectives at explaining the decline to coups in Africa is the focus on structural violence that emanates when people are disadvantaged by political, economic or cultural traditions. By its nature, structural violence is the product of stratification which uphold longstanding, structural inequities that create situations in which the population or a section of it are denied access to things required to fulfill their basic needs (Campville University, 2017). The dangers of sustained structural violence is that it often leads to direct violence as persons chronically oppressed tends to resort to direct violence which are usually met with the coercive apparatus of the state to re-assert the dominance of the hegemon.

Writing on structural violence, the Centre for Health, Equity and Research (CHER), Chicago conceives it as the multiple ways in which social, economic and political systems expose particular populations to risks and vulnerabilities leading to increased morbidity and mortality (CHER, 2020). It identifies the sources of structural violence to include income inequality, racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, sexism, ableism and other means of social exclusion leading to vulnerabilities such as poverty, stress, trauma, crime, incarceration, lack of access to care, healthy food and physical activity.

The logic of structural violence have been deployed to explain the incidence of military coups in Africa. In his work, “The Decline of African

Military Coup” John F. Clark argues that electoral authoritarian regimes in Africa are more vulnerable to political violence especially military coups and terrorism. Noting that many African regimes have experienced a sort of authoritarian drift shortly after nominal transition to democracy, Clark posits that by following a trajectory of gradual liberalization, African states could gain requisite legitimacy that could inoculate regimes against military intervention (Clark, 2007: 141-155). The January 1992 military coup in Algeria seems to represent this dimension because against the background of near Islamist take over of government having won nearly 187 seats out of the 430 seat in the parliamentary election of December 1991 considered the first free multiparty election in the country. The ISF therefore needed only 29 more seats in the proposed run-off election of 16 January 1992 to control the parliament. This coup was carried out to prevent the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF) which shares the orientation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt from winning the run-off election (Murphy, 1991).

Attention has also been drawn to how the existentialist struggles between the interacting ethnic groups propel them to invite the military components in the quest for political ascendancy. In the views of Smaldone, the Africanisation of the officer corp of the military in countries characterized by ethnic plurality heightened inter-ethnic rivalries and competitions which encouraged coups and counter coups in Africa. In his view, the substitution of colonial officers with indigenous African officers removed the effective checks and controls from the colonial metropole on the one hand while also stimulating inter-personal and primordial affinities and rivalries along ethnic lines (Smaldone, 1974).

Stressing the logic of ethnicity and cultural pluralism, Jenkins and Kposowa argues that the greater the incidence of cultural diversities of the post-colonial states in Africa, the greater the elite instability. They noted that the end of colonial rule came with ethnic plurality and rivalries among the different groups that were compelled to live together as citizens of the new states. However, with the exit of the colonial power, the pursuit of urbanization and rapid development led to new trajectories as migrations to cities in search of education, jobs and better standards of living. This stimulated new consciousness and mobilization along primordial lines thereby leading to ethnic conflicts which sometimes led to military coups and counter coups (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1992).

Houle and Bodea notes that inter-ethnic inequality increases the likelihood that an ethnic group stages a coup when perceived and manifest between-

ethnic group inequality is considered high. In their view, when large income and wealth disparities between ethnic groups accompanied by within-group homogeneity increases, the tendency of ethnicity increases and this solidify within-group preferences vis-a-vis the preferences of other ethnic groups thereby increasing the appeals of and feasibility of coups (Houle & Bodea, 2017:382-396). Put differently, the existentialist struggles among competing ethnic groups that make up the states in sub-Saharan Africa constitutes a strong appeal to military intervention into partisan politics.

J Craig Jenkins and Augustine J Kposowa also reflected on the interactions of ethnicity vis-a-vis military intervention in sub-Saharan Africa and arguing that the role of ethnicity is necessary to understand who gets what, when and how in the new states of post-colonial Africa (Jenkins & Kposowa, 1992: 271-291). In their view, the presence of strong militaries existing alongside ethnic plurality and inter-ethnic competitions is crucial to understanding coups in the early post-independence era. They however noted that military coups of the 1970s were rooted in ethnic political competition. It is their position that coups of the 1970s were motivated by strong ethnic basis and that multiparty democracy and accompanying mobilization facilitated such coups ((Jenkins & Kposowa, 1992). Jenkins and Kposowa further noted that the states in post-colonial societies inherited weak administrative structures characterized by corruption and internal rivalries. These societies remained characterized by primordial political loyalties tied to ethnic and religious identities which sustains vulnerabilities to civil governmental stalemates that presents opportunities for military coups.

The continued deployment of the military in new tasks have provided opportunities for effectively engaging the military and making them more relevant to their societies in a world where international wars are significantly limited as external aggression has become increasingly illegitimate by international law. So far, the armed forces of African states have also been engaged in several peace support operations and missions either as peace observers, peacekeepers or peace enforcers depending on the mandate of the specific missions. African militaries have also been deployed in response to certain transnational threats to counter arms proliferation, terrorism and organized crimes.

It is however important to note that although such engagements have contributed to enhancing combat readiness and operational efficiency of the armed forces, they have also created windows through which some aggrieved military commanders have utilized to mobilize troops and armoury to execute

military coups. A clear case was the overthrow of Joseph Momoh in Sierra Leone by Captain Valentine Strasser who mobilized a group of soldiers fighting against Foday Sankoh and his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in the eastern front to protest against bad working conditions of the soldiers on 29 April 1992. This act of mutiny transformed to a coup that forced President Joseph Momoh to flee to neighbouring Republic of Guinea while Captain Strasser announced himself as Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) which formed the new government in Sierra Leone (Pratt, 1999).

The consequences of continued deployment of the military for internal security in the civil society include the inappropriate application of military force in the management of civil order, undue interests and influence in political matters, asymmetric allocation of scarce state resources the armed forces to the detriment of other security agencies and sectors like education, sports development and health as well as civilianization of the armed forces to such an extent that could hamper military preparedness for national defense in time of war. It is pertinent to also note that these negative consequences of sustained deployment of the armed forces outside its core mandate have sometimes stimulated resentment from some officer corps. The atmosphere of large-scale dissent sometimes constitute signals for opponents of the regime to mobilize sections of the armed forces for coup. In several instances, these coups and mass uprisings have contributed to the overthrow of dictators in Africa. It has also been exploited by military hierarchies to exert undue and inappropriate influences on the governance process in Africa.

While some coups end up reshuffling the leadership while leaving the regime it overthrew intact, others bring about regime change which overhauls the entire power elite. For instance, the deployment of the military for control crowds in Egypt during the Arab Spring provided the platform for the eventual overthrow of the Hosni Mubarak regime following his resignation from power on 11 February 2011 after 18 days of popular protest demanding the end of his 30-year rule. In a media announcement, then Egyptian Vice President, Omar Suleiman announced that “In the difficult circumstances our country is facing, President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak has decided to give up the office of the president of the republic and has charged the high command of the armed forces to administer the affairs of the country” (El-Terk, 2011; BBC News, 2011). The military high command was then headed by the Minister of Defense, Mohammed Hussein Tantawi.

In his analysis of military coups in Africa, Odetola (1982:4-5) identified three perspectives to explaining military intervention in the continent. First, the military is considered as conservative and apolitical force without formal training in democratic governance and civil management. This perspective therefore considers the military as unsuitable to drive the pursuit of development confronting states in post-colonial Africa. Odetola further argues that military intervention in Africa have usually served the narrow corporate interest of military elites to the exclusion of the mass population. The second perspective on military intervention in Africa describes the officer corp of the Armed Forces as a social force traditionally aligned to the oligarchy, the middle class and other conservative elements in the polity. To this effect, the institution of the military act in concert with the class in hegemon to that perpetuate the status-quo and prevent revolutionary changes in the country. The third perspective identified by Odetola contends that military intervention in Africa takes an entirely different interpretation and posits that military intervention can bring about positive socio-political change in the society. Proponents of this perspective insists that the military will bring to bear on the polity, its virtue of discipline, regimentation, patriotism and professionalism to foster nation building and pursuit of development (Odetola 1982).

Military coups against a democracy in Africa represents regime change because a new set of elites are introduced and the rules of the political succession and policy formulation are often disrupted. Some of such coups merely reshuffles leadership leaving the bulk of the regime members still in high command. This was the case of the overthrow of Nigeria's General Yakubu Gowon through a palace coup led by General Murtala Mohammed in July 1975 and the overthrow of Major General Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria in the palace coup of 27 August 1985 led by General Ibrahim Babangida. Several African countries have also experienced revolutionary coups that brought about complete regime change characterized by a complete overhaul of the power elites in control. A clear example was the June 1979 coup in Ghana led by troops loyal to Jerry Rawlings (Dash, 1982).

Efforts at explaining the incidents of coups in Africa have sometimes focused on the utility of political power. In this regard, Claude Ake argues that the nature of state power in Africa and the possibility of its use for exploitation and oppression have sparked off intense competition between and among the emerging indigenous power blocs for the control of the state and its institutions such that the struggle for power has become so intense, norm-less and so absorbing with politics degenerating into conflict and warfare (Ake, 1996:6).

This is further buttressed by the fact that the nature and utility of state power by the power elites in Africa has for decades been associated with the deficits in accountability and lack of transparency exhibited by several regimes as well as the non-adherence to the rule of law. Others are the inherent abuse or absence of democratic processes and litany of human rights abuses. Such scenario, it is argued make the quest for political change very imperative and the resort to forces either through coups or acts of terrorism and civil wars often become tempting options.

The causes of military coups in Africa have also been associated with the politicization of the military which happen when the civilian power elites drag the military institution in the struggle for power. Ali Mazrui subscribes to this view and locates the incidence of military coups in Africa to sectional rivalries within the militaries and society at large. This is facilitated by the existence of a corp of officers within the military institutions who seek to capture political power in the pursuit of personal, sectional, ethno-religious and corporate interests of the military institution (Mazrui, 1975). In Nigeria, which the bloody coup of 15 January 1966 led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu which overthrew the civilian administration of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and counter coup of 29 July 1966 coups in Nigeria led by officers of northern Nigeria were largely interpreted from narrow ethnic and regional prisms (Ademoyega, 1981).

Furthermore, the incidence of corruption, political instability, illegal seizure of power among others have also been identified as other contributory causes of military coups in Africa. For instance, the losers of the 1967 and 1996 general elections in Sierra Leone instigated and supported military coups that toppled the elected national governments. This was made possible because there existed collusion between military commanders and civil power elites in the country in Nigeria (Kandeh, 2021). Similarly, the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential election presumably won by Moshood Abiola provoked centrifugal tensions in the country which the Ernest Shonekan led, Interim National Government (ING), put in place by the General Ibrahim Babangida could not effectively manage. It is important to note that the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential election formed the immediate cause of the hijack of the Nigeria Airways aeroplane by the Movement for the Advancement of Democracy (MAD) in October 1993 in what obviously was a terrorist act (ICIR, 2017). It was the growing insecurity and threats of disintegration of the Nigerian state that created room for the eventual overthrow of the ING by General Sani Abacha on 17 November 1993 (Onuoha, et al, 2021).

In his analysis of coups in Africa, Obi (1999: 131-140), observes that coups can occur in polities where existing government demonstrates utter disregard for its people, flagrantly abuses power, engages in electoral fraud and corruption and provokes mass discontent (Obi, 1999:137). The overthrow of Professor Alpha Conde in the Guinea on 5 September 2021 was predicated on his reneging on the constitutional order which required a president to stay in office for not more than two terms limit which Conde subverted by amending the constitution to favour extra term in office using the power of incumbency. Similarly, the January and October 2022 coups in Burkina Faso have also been considered as populist coups against regimes perceived as working contrary to the genuine aspirations of population. The inability of the democratically elected government of President Christian Kabore to effectively contain the terrorist assaults on the country created a situation in which the population welcomed the military coup of Lt Col Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba who blamed the Kabore administration of failure to deal with the terrorists ravaging the country.

However, Damiba's inability to effectively crush the terrorists and violent extremists amidst their repeated audacious assaults on Burkina Faso as well as his fraternal links with deposed Head of State, Blaise Campaore whom he allowed to visit the country provoked sections of the population against his regime (Zombre & Mednick, 2022). This culminated to another military coup which overthrew the President Damiba regime on 30 September 2022 and ushered in a new administration Captain Ibrahim Traore over his inability to crush the terrorists (Ndiaga & Mimault, 2022). The efforts by the ousted Damisa loyalists to fight their way back to government was resisted by the population which accused France of providing support to deposed Damisa loyalists culminating in attacks on the Embassy of France in Ouagadougou and the French Cultural Centre in Bobo Dialosso (Ouedraogo & Ouedraogo, 2022).

Drawing from the Burkina Faso and Mali experiences, a new dimension to understanding military coups in Africa indicates that the military interventions is an instrument of the civilian population to replace a non-performing government. This is demonstrated in the nature of support received by the Colonel Assimi Goita who overthrew the civilian regime of President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane claiming that the ousted political leadership failed in their duties and were seeking to sabotage the country's transition (BBC News, 2021).

The history of military interventions in Africa is also characterized by coups that lack the support of the population and in which the pro-democracy

groups mobilize for civil disobedience through non-violent means. For instance, on 25 October 2021, the Sudan military executed an unpopular coup to truncate the transition process in the country. The coup was accompanied by the arrest of politicians, activists and leaders of local resistance committee and advocated of democracy. In attempt to justify the military coup in the country, Sudan's head of armed forces, Lieutenant General Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan claimed that the military intervened to protect the transition to democracy in the country as political infighting was stalling progress on establishing crucial institutions (Solima, 2021). Determined not to allow a return to military dictatorship in the country, pro-democracy forces in the country mobilized and engaged the military usurpers in non-violent resistance with the support of the international community especially the African Union. The coup leaders responded to the public protest with the imposition of a State of Emergency (SoE) and arrest of pro-democracy activists some of who were later released while the SoE was lifted the emergency rule in May 2022 (France24, 2022).

Notwithstanding the justifications often propagated to support military coup, scholars like Obi considers military intervention into partisan politics as an aberration which should not be accepted, arguing instead that military regimes have contributed significantly to deepening corruption, political instability and socio-economic crisis in Africa. It presupposes that Africa needs democracy to avert dictatorships which have often imposed a siege mentality and apprehensions on African leaders thereby compelling them to be more preoccupied with coup-proofing to retain their grip on political power for regime security. Such preoccupation have often negated the dividends of democracy including the pursuit of development. This is because as political power is deployed for repression, citizens start exhibiting signs of alienation and behavioural adjustments to evade and/or cheat the state. When suppression of the trend is not curbed, the propensity to resist the state is heightened and this could assume the form(s) of terrorism, rebellion, insurgencies, coups and counter coups and sometimes civil wars.

Emerging Trends and threats of Constitutional Coup in Africa

In addition to the incidence of military coup d'état in Africa, the recurrence of tenure elongation perpetrated by the civil power elites have emerged another potent threat to stability and governance process in the continent. It is on record that while presidents in some African countries like Kenya, Nigeria, Liberia and even Ghana have in the last two decade kept to the constitutional

term limits, several other presidents in Africa have utilized the legislative arms of government to amend the term limits in their respective constitutions. Such amendment have enabled them contest and stay in power after exhausting the constitutional approved term or age limits and have come to be labeled as constitutional coup. Countries that fall into this category include Rwanda, Uganda, Cameroon, Republic of Guinea, Togo, Chad, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Egypt.

The danger of constitutional coups is that degrades the relevance of elections as means of political recruitment as the incumbents retain power irrespective of popular aspirations for political change. The use of constitutional coups to ensure tenure elongation constitute an infringement of Article 23 (5) of the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance (ACDEG) which stimulates that “any amendment or revision of the constitution or legal instruments, which is an infringement on the principles of democratic change of government” is considered unconstitutional change of government (ACDEG, 2007). This charter was adopted by the Eight Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Heads of Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 30 January, 2007.

Furthermore, such constitutional coup have contributed to military coups in Africa as demonstrated in the Republic of Guinea where it provided the military with excuse for intervention into partisan politics. The abilities of presidents to use their power of incumbency to manipulate the constitutions to remove term or age limits has been traced to the existence of weak institutions and absence of efficient and effective democratic culture (Mbak, 2020).

While it is accepted that elections is central to democratic process in Africa, it has also become a medium through which tyranny and authoritarianism is legitimized. This is the case of countries where constitutional term limits have been altered by incumbent presidents for tenure elongation in office. Generally, the term limits are designed to facilitate democratization and political accountability but the circumvention of term limits has degraded the relevance of elections as means of political recruitment and have therefore contributed to military coups in Africa as demonstrated in the Republic of Guinea with the overthrow of former President Alpha Conde by Col Mamady Doumbouya in September 2021.

When constitutional coups precede elections in any African country, the accompanying elections no longer provides the population with a medium to control and make choice of government to foster political accountability.

Rather, it becomes a decoy utilized by the power elite to legitimize dictatorship before the international community. The opposition groups in the country usually consider the emerging government as illegitimate and not different from military coups. Such political scenario usually heightens the propensity for civil disobedience and sometimes lead to human rights violations.

Nexus between Coups and Terrorism

Beyond the clearly established distinctions between military interventions and terrorism, there still exists some incidences of military coups in Africa that sparked resistance and repressions that culminated to acts of terrorism as demonstrated by experiences in Algeria in the 1990s and Egypt following the Arab Spring of 2011. In Algeria, the move to prevent the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) or Islamic Salvation Front from capturing power through a run-off election scheduled for January 1992 after winning almost 50 percent of seats in the parliamentary elections of December 1991 made the military to intervene and compel then President Chadli Bandjedid to resign and surrender power to the military (Botha, 2008). Subsequently, the elections were canceled and Algeria was thrown into a sustained wave of violent resistance and terrorism orchestrated by the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) which served as the armed wing of the FIS (Botha, 2008).

The terror attacks by the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) which replaced the GIA was a continuation of political rivalries between the Islamists and the Government of Algeria. It is estimated that more than 100,000 persons were killed in the course of the conflict during this bloody decade of Algerian history (Wilson Centre, n. d).

Similarly, the circumstance leading to the overthrow of Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi on 3 July 2013 captures a setting that demonstrates the nexus between military coup and terrorism in Africa. Contrary to his promise to lead a government for all Egyptians, the barely one year administration of Morsi was criticized for allowing Islamists especially concentrating power in the hands of his Muslim Brotherhood supporters, economic mismanagement all leading to the renewed calls for human rights and social justice (BBC, 2019). Public suspicion and apprehension towards the Morsi administration deepened as the constituent assembly drafting the new constitution was dominated by Islamists. Amidst growing public discontent with his administration's policies and empowerment of the Islamists, Morsi issued a decree authorizing the armed

forces to protect national institutions and polling places until a referendum on a draft constitution was held on 15 December 2012. This measure was condemned by critics as a form of Martial law and led to violent protests that resulted to the death of 50 persons outside the Ittihadiya presidential palace in Cairo (BBC, 2019).

Following two weeks of mass protests in Cairo against the Morsi administration, Egypt's army chief, General Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi cautioned President Morsi to satisfy the public demands within 48 hours or risk military intervention. It was the failure of the Morsi administration to address the legitimate aspirations of the protesting population that provided the opportunity for the military under General Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi to intervene through the suspension of the constitution and formation of a technocratic interim government ahead of new presidential election (BBC, 2019). Deposed president Morsi was arrested by the military and kept incommunicado after he denounced the coup. Leading to violent protests by his Muslim Brotherhood supporters who demanded the release and reinstatement of Morsi's presidency. The new military regime described the violence as terrorism and deployed force to crush the violent protest by Muslim Brotherhood members who demanded the release and reinstatement of Morsi's presidency leading to the death of about 1,000 persons (BBC, 2019). Subsequently, the Islamists intensified terrorist attacks on Egypt as the Fattah Al-Sisi regime declared the Muslim Brotherhood party a terrorist organization while former president Morsi and 14 senior officials of his administration were put on trial over accusations of inciting his supporters to murder or a journalist and two protesters and torture of unlawful detention of several other persons (BBC, 2019).

Drawing from the above polemic on statecraft, terrorism and military intervention in Africa, it is evident that there exists nexus between sustained deployment of the military for internal security operations, civilianization of the military and militarization of the civil society especially when such deployments heighten the risk of human rights violations. Sequel to note that the African experience of dictatorship is replete with records of human rights violations which have provoked allegations of state terrorism on the one hand while further building accumulated grievances that could provoke terrorism and armed resistance.

The nature of state power inherited at independence in several African states, together with the real and perceived advantages of capturing and maintaining power is a key source of coups and conflict and terrorism in Africa. This is because the sustained suppression of legitimate aspirations of

citizens by dictatorial leaders including the culture and supporting culture of political repressions reinforces genuine grievances of otherwise law abiding citizens which sometimes culminates into acts of terrorism when no genuine interventions are made by the state to redress the grievances.

The nexus between state terrorism and coups could be located in the motives, manifestations, target audience and nature of perpetrators. Specifically, military coups and terrorism constitute different manifestations of political dissent against the power elites in a polity.

- a.** Numerically, terrorists and coup plotters are usually small group of persons when compared to the large population in the country.
- b.** Socio-political grievances against bad governance and dictatorship are underlying causative factors of military coups and terrorism.
- c.** Like military coups, terrorism indicates the existence of grievances that have been mobilized for action against the incumbent power elite.
- d.** Military coups and terrorism target both democracies and dictatorship which they seek to overthrow.
- e.** State terrorism breeds dissent that could lead to armed resistance and acts of terrorism against the political leadership. Burkina Faso, Egypt (2011 and 2013) and Mali have shown how mass protests could lead to political violence and coup.
- f.** Political dissent have also triggered mass protest or demonstrations which in some cases have resulted to coups in Africa. The case of Burkina Faso, Egypt, Mali and Sudan are clear examples.
- g.** Under military regime, the ruling junta are considered illegitimate by democratic ethos thereby making the governance process to rely on the coercive apparatuses of the State to compel allegiance. This often breeds public discontent and resistance.
- h.** The military regime abhors dissent and often resort to brute force to subdue opposition thereby stimulating and sustaining deep grievances that sometime manifest through acts of terrorism.
- i.** As the power elites mobilize the military for counterterrorism and counter insurgency operations, some aggrieved military commander leverage on the opportunity to mobilize troops and armaments needed to stage coup

and overthrow the government. This scenario reflects the circumstances of the 2012 military coup in Mali.

- j. Regimes in power can counter terrorism through reliance on the police and other security agencies without the mobilisation of the military. On the other hand, countering military coups usually requires the reliance on loyal military troops. Moreover, the notion of state terrorism presupposes that it is the state that is deploying its coercive assets to terrorize the population.

Conclusion

There is no overstatement that the incidence of terrorism and coups constitutes attacks on the values that lie at the heart of the African Union. The Constitutive Act of the AU attaches high premium to human rights preservation, rule of law and rejects unconstitutional change of government. State terrorism is not considered within the framework of the OAU Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (1999) and the African Union Plan of Action (2002) as the extant definition of terrorism at the African Union is restricted to activities of non-state armed groups. Yet, sometimes power elites in Africa resort to the use of coercive assets in such manner that have variously been considered within the prism of state terrorism. Such abuses should as a matter of priority be stopped.

Furthermore, the utility of democracy in Africa cannot be overemphasized because African countries need democracy in their pursuit of nation building and rapid development. This is why military coups and state terrorism are often considered as detrimental to democracy in Africa. Yet, as African leaders frown at terrorism and military coups, it is imperative to note that good governance remains the antidote to these twin anomaly. This therefore presupposes that if the power elites in African countries want to put an end to coup and state terrorism, then they need to uphold the tenets of democracy which encompass representation, accountability, inclusiveness, effective delivery of public goods should occupy top priorities in the conduct of governance. This is because the mass of the population are always predisposed to fully support and pledge allegiance to a responsible and responsive government committed to good governance. In such a circumstance, the military institution will hardly find any justifiable reason to overthrow an effective performing government which has the support of the bulk of the population as any such misadventure will attract widespread civil disobedience against the attempted overthrow of

the interim government of President Michel Kafando in September 2015 by troops of the elite unit loyal to General Gilbert Diendere, an ace supporter of deposed Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso (Aljazeera, 2016).

However, where the power elites among the civilians repeatedly degrades the quality of governance with politics descending to political decay, prebendalism, corruption and armed conflicts, then they are tempting the military and inviting unconstitutional change of government. This is because several African militaries comprises of corps of well educated officers within the sphere of military professionalism who seeks to uphold the tenets of military subordination to civil authority so long as the civilian elites do not degrade the conduct of governance to such extent which beacons on the military to intervene as the Last Bastion of National Defense of Democracy.

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IMPLICATIONS OF UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT ON VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM INTERVENTIONS : WHAT MORE COULD ECOWAS AND AU DO ?

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Abstract

The recent surge of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) in West Africa and the Sahel region of Africa is detrimental to the attainment of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and the aspirations of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It also threatens the fight against violent extremism and terrorism in the Sahel region of the continent. Unlike the past UCG that occurred some decades ago, the latest undemocratic changes of government through military coups d'état in countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad are happening within the context of violent extremism and terrorism. However, despite the security complexities in the host countries of recent UCG, the AU and ECOWAS responses has followed the same past template or prescriptions - condemnation, suspension, and sanctions. Against this backdrop, the paper explores what the AU and ECOWAS could do address UCG and its implications on the possible spiraling of violent extremist and terrorist activities. The aim is to proffer enduring solutions to the problem of UCG to mitigate its impact on the efforts to combat violent extremism and terrorism. The analysis of the unfolding situation has shown that the resurgence of UCG have created a big vacuum in terms of the strong political leadership needed to fight terrorism and have further aggravated the leadership problem in the region. Furthermore, the capacity of states in the region to fight the terrorism menace have weakened by the international sanctions

and persistent internal challenges. To answer the question of what more the AU and ECOWASS could do, the need to review both the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the ECOWAS protocol on democracy and good governance to make them responsive to the challenges; intensification of efforts to ensure decentralization and empowerment of local governance mechanisms in order to devolve power away from the central government and to make local communities own local decision-making processes are considered worthy pathways. AU and ECOWAS must ensure citizens feel the benefits of multi-party democracy and experience it as a best form of government.



Keywords

Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCG) ,
Violent Extremism ,
Terrorism ,
African Union (AU) ,
ECOWAS ,
Peace and Stability.

Introduction

The recent surge of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) in West Africa and the Sahel region of Africa is detrimental to the attainment of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 and the aspirations of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It also threatens the fight against violent extremism and terrorism in the Sahel region of the continent. Unlike the past UCG that occurred some decades ago, the latest undemocratic changes of government through military coups d'état in countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad are happening within the context of violent extremism and terrorism. In fact, in both Mali and Burkina Faso, the coups were partly blamed on the poor handling of violent extremist and terrorist activities by the respective governments. Given the political uncertainties, the fractured and weak political leadership induced by the military coups, there are concerns that

violent extremist groups including Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Boko Haram with strongholds in the Sahel region could take advantage of the current situation to expand on their activities and carry out extended attacks to destabilize the region. Undeniably, depending on how the political and security situation unfolds, these terror groups with links to al-Qaida and Islamic State could become the greatest beneficiaries of the recent coups in the region.

However, despite the security complexities in the host countries of recent undemocratic changes of government in the Sahel, the AU and ECOWAS responses have followed the same past template or prescriptions – condemnation, suspension, and sanctions. Worryingly, unlike the past cases of UCG where the main issues of contention were largely restricted to governance and developmental deficiencies, the current cases combine both the old underpinning factors and the new challenges of violent extremism and terrorism. It is therefore instructive to note that addressing UCG cannot be sustainable without tackling the problem of violent extremism and terrorism. Against this backdrop, this paper explores what the AU and ECOWAS could do differently beyond just responding to unconstitutional changes of government to also address its implications on the possible spiraling of violent extremist and terrorist activities. The aim is to proffer enduring solutions to the problem of UCG to mitigate its impact on the efforts to combat violent extremism and terrorism in especially the Sahel region of Africa.

Unconstitutional Changes of Government

Unconstitutional Changes of Government was first defined by the AU in the 2000 Lomé Declaration and then later in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) of January 2007. In the Lomé Declaration¹, UCG is categorized as:

- a.** Military coup d'états against a democratically elected government;
- b.** Intervention by mercenaries to replace a democratically elected government;
- c.** Replacement of democratically elected government by armed dissident groups and rebel movement; and
- d.** The refusal by an incumbent government to relinquish power to the winning party after free, fair, and regular elections.

1. See the Lomé Declaration of July 2000 on the framework for an OAU response to UCGs (AHG / Dec. 5 (XXXVI)).

This definition was further expanded in the Article 23(5) of the ACDEG to include: “Any amendment or revision of the constitution or legal instrument, which is an infringement on the principles of democratic change of government.” The addition of this provision to the Lomé Declaration was to enable the AU and its Regional Economic Communities respond effectively to incumbent presidents who temper with their country’s constitution to prolong their stay in power. Despite these normative frameworks, UCG in Africa especially West Africa seem to be a norm rather than the exception.

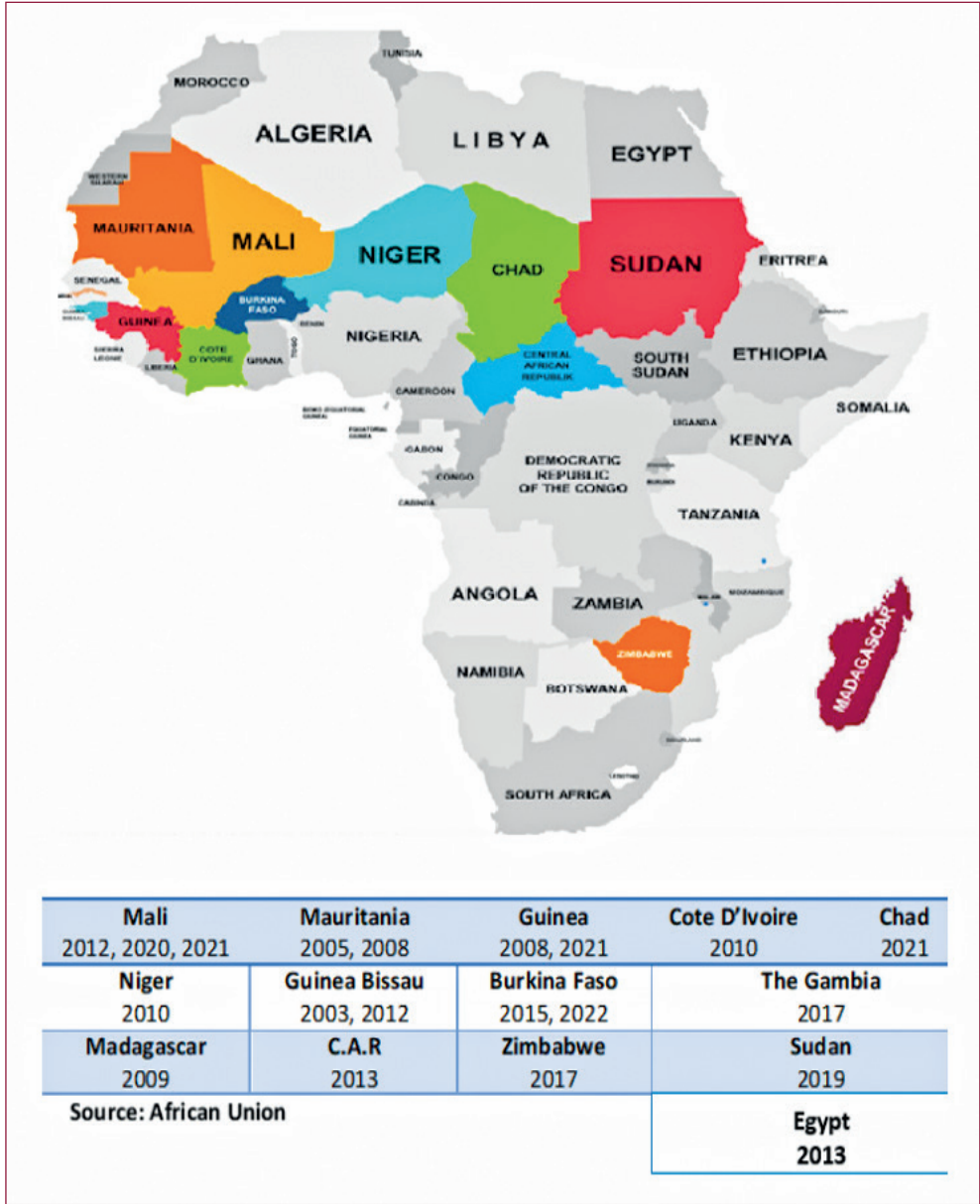
Africa’s post-independence history has been fraught with the challenge of unconstitutional changes of government, mostly through military coup d’états. This phenomenon has helped perpetuate dictatorships, subverted democratic governance, precluded the exercise of the rights of people to constitute or change their government and led to the gross violation of fundamental human rights. Over the past two decades, instances of UCC have been recorded in countries such as Mali, Niger, Madagascar, Central African Republic (C.A.R), Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Zimbabwe, Chad, The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Cote D’Ivoire, Mauritania and Sudan (see figure 1). The most recent cases of UCC which is the focus of this policy brief took place in Mali, Guinea, Sudan, Chad, and Burkina Faso. Apart from Guinea, all these countries are in the Sahel region where challenge of violent extremism and terrorism is widespread.

In Mali, the deceased President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) was overthrown by the military led by Colonel Assimi Goita in August 2020 and forced to resign over issues of corruption, mismanagement of public funds, and failure to contain the terrorism situation in the country.¹ A transitional government led by Transitional President Bah N’Daw and the Prime Minister Moctar Ouanewere subsequently overthrown by Colonel Assimi Goita for allegedly failing in their duties in May 2021, disrupting the holding of presidential elections before February 2022. In Chad, Mahamat Deby was installed as the transitional President following the death of his father Idris Deby in violation of the constitution of Chad.² The military suspended the constitution and established the Transitional Military Council (CMT) to govern the country for 18-months. In Burkina Faso, Lieutenant Colonel

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1. Aubyn, F. K. (2022), ECOWAS Sanctions Against Mali Necessary, but May Be Counter-Productive. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2022/02/ecowas-sanctions-against-mali-necessary-but-may-be-counter-productive/>, 7 February 2022.
 2. Chad’s ‘covert coup’ and the implications for democratic governance in Africa. Retrieved on 21/02/2022. (<https://theconversation.com/chads-covert-coup-and-the-implications-for-democratic-governance-in-africa-159725>).

Paul-Henri Damiba led a group of soldiers to oust the democratically elected President Roch Marc Christian Kabore in January 2022 over the President's poor strategy for battling Islamist terrorists.¹

Figure 1. Cases of Unconstitutional Changes of Government (2003 – March 2022)



1. Burkina Faso army deposes president in West Africa's latest coup. Reuters. 24/01/22 (<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/burkina-faso-president-kabore-detained-military-camp-sources-tell-reuters-2022-01-24/>).

The President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, who is also the current (date of chairmanship) chairperson of ECOWAS in his address at the reflection forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government, organized by the AU Department of Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, on 15th March 2022, In Accra, Ghana listed the causes of UCG among others as:

“deficiencies in governance, political greed, mismanagement of diversity, failure to seize opportunities, marginalization, human rights violations, unwillingness to accept electoral defeat, manipulation of constitutions and their revision through unconstitutional means to serve personal narrow interests”¹.

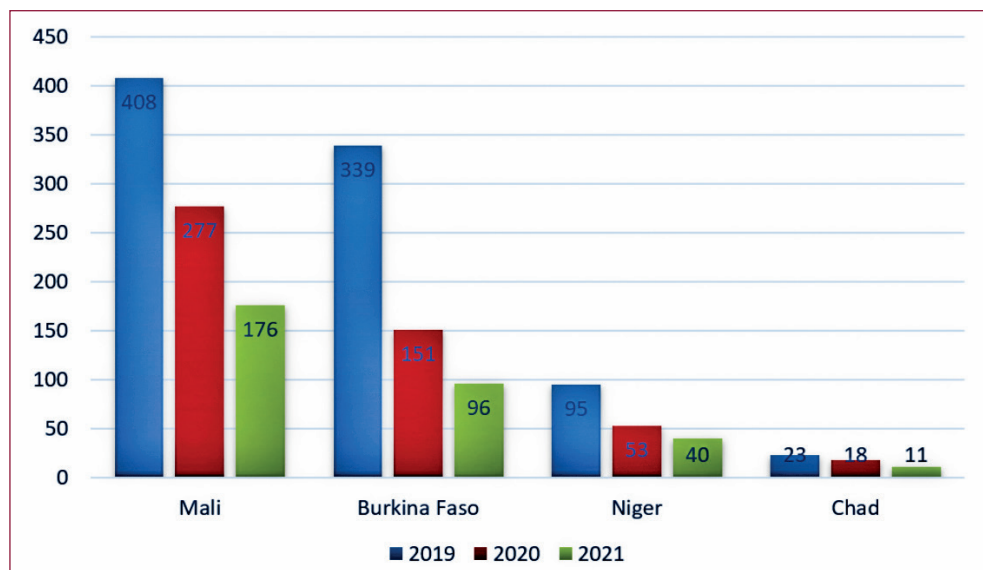
While these underpinning factors of UCG are spot-on, one critical factor which is worth mentioning is how the poor handling of the increasing violent extremist and terrorist attacks inspired the coups in Mali and Burkina Faso. In both countries, the growing expansion, sophistication and incessant killing of innocent civilians and security personnel by groups such as JNIM and ISGS and the inability of the government to address the whole issue of violent extremism and terrorism contributed to the military takeovers.

The Violent Extremism and Terrorism Landscape

The violent extremism and terrorism landscape in Africa has been deteriorating over the past decade with increasing attacks targeted at civilians, security personnel and government officials² From Somalia to Mali and Nigeria to Mozambique, the African continent has repeatedly witnessed macabre acts of violence by groups affiliated to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State including JNIM, ISGS, Boko Haram, Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), Boko Haram, and al-Shabab. In the year 2020, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) estimated that there were 7,108 attacks across the continent targeting civilians, and this resulted in 12,519 fatalities.³

1. See the Address by the President of The Republic of Ghana and Chairman of The ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, at the Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government, organized by the AU Department of Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, on Tuesday, 15th March 2022, in Accra, Ghana.
2. Lacher, W. (2012). Organized crime and conflict in the Sahel-Sahara region, The Carnegie Papers, New York, September 2012.
3. For more information see Mroszczyk, J. and Abrahms, M. (2021). Terrorism in Africa: Explaining the Rise of Extremist Violence Against Civilians (<https://www.e-ir.info/2021/04/09/terrorism-in-africa-explaining>).

Figure 2: Yearly number of terrorist attacks in Western Sahel countries from 2019 to 2021.



Source: ACSRT Terrorism Database, 2022.

The Sahel region which hosts some of the recent UCG has become the hotbed of the world's deadliest terrorist groups in recent times. Attacks by terrorist groups have killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions within and across national borders.¹ The figure 2 shows the number of terrorist attacks in the Western Sahel countries from 2019 to 2021 according to the African Union's African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).² Mali has recorded the highest number of attacks, followed by Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad respectively. Nevertheless, the figure 2 also shows a steady decline in the number of attacks since 2019 in all the countries, attributable to several factors including the COVID-19 pandemic that inhibited the ability of terrorist groups to launch attacks, and the intensification of counter terrorism operations by Operation Barkhane, the G-5 Sahel Joint Taskforce, Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the National Security forces.³ In the specific case of Burkina Faso, the minimal

1. Apau, R & Ziblim, I (2019). Beyond Rhetoric: Addressing the Terrorism Situation in the Sahel. African centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Policy brief 001, available at: <http://caert.org.dz/Policy-Briefs/POLICY%20BRIEF%20001.pdf> (Accessed: 01/02/2022).

2. African Terrorism Database (2022). This information is available at African Union's African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), based in Algiers Algeria. Information retrieved on 21/02/2022.

3. African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Policy Paper 002 – F. K. Aubyn, I. Ziblim, R. Apau – Coups d'état and Political Instability in the Western Sahel: Implications for the Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism – 2022 (<http://caert.org.dz/Policy-Briefs/final-policy-paper-coups200522.pdf>).

decrease in attacks could also be partly attributed to the increase in defense spending from US\$205 million in 2017 to US\$373 million in 2019 which led to intensive operations, the creation of the self-defense Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland (VDP) groups; rivalry between JNIM and ISGS and other international counterterrorism operations.¹ It is imperative to note that although across the four countries the attacks have been declining, the attacks are high in terms of lethality. For example, in Burkina Faso, at least 160 people were massacred on 5th June 2021 at Solhan, while 57 people were killed (54 of whom were gendarmes) at a gendarmerie post at Inata.²

In the Lake Chad Basin, Boko Haram and ISWAP have continuously dominated the terrorism landscape. Attacks have been recorded in the South-Western Chad and North-Eastern Nigerian States of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. For instance, on 4th April 2019, armed men from Boko Haram attacked a military post at Bouham killing 7 soldiers. In response, security forces, killed 63 of the assailants. The deadliest Boko Haram attack against Chadian forces occurred on 23rd March 2020 in a military base on Boma island killing 92 soldiers.³

Implications of Unconstitutional Changes of Government on Violent Extremism and Terrorism Interventions

The resurgence of UCG in West Africa and the Sahel region could retard and undermine national, regional, and international efforts to combat violent extremism and terrorism. To begin with, the military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad have created a big vacuum in terms of the strong political leadership needed to fight terrorism. Already, the demise of Idriss Déby Itno of Chad who was considered a stabilizing force and a major international ally in the fight against groups such as Boko Haram, ISWAP, JNIM, and ISGS has created a leadership vacuum that has so far slowed down the momentum in the fight against violent extremist groups. It is an open secret that Idriss Déby provided the strong political leadership not only to the well-financed and competent Chadian military but also to the regional joint efforts through the MNJTF and G5 Sahel Force. The consequences of Idriss Déby's

1. Terrorism in the Sahel: facts and figures. 3rd Joint NSD-S HUB & ACRST Four-Monthly Report. Jan 2019 to Dec 2020. Retrieved on January 02, 2022 (<https://caert.org.dz/Reports/NSDS-HUB-ACSRT-Sep-2020.pdf>).

2. Burkina Faso: A history of destabilization by jihadist insurgencies. France 24. 25/01/22 (<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220125-burkina-faso-a-history-of-destabilisation-by-jihadist-insurgencies>).

3. See 92 Chad soldiers killed in 'deadliest' Boko Haram attack. Retrieved 27/02/2022. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/3/25/92-chad-soldiers-killed-in-deadliest-boko-haram-attack>).

absence in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism could even spill over to the entire Central African region and Sudan's Darfur region due to the cultural and historical connections.¹ Ominously, the military coups in Mali and Burkina Faso have further aggravated the leadership problem in the region. The current leadership in both countries are weak and lack the international credibility, political fortitude, and experience needed to fight terrorism.² Given the political transition challenges especially in Mali, the kind of strong political leadership and strategic foresight needed to fight terrorism and violent extremism may be absent. The president of Niger, Mohamed Bazoum, who could fill in the leadership vacuum also faces internal challenges including attempted military coups. Clearly, as the military-dominated transition authorities in both Mali and Burkina Faso wrestle for power in the capital cities, the terrorist and violent extremist groups will benefit from the distracted central governments.³

Furthermore, the capacity of states in the region to fight the terrorism menace will be weakened by the international sanctions and persistent internal challenges. The leadership vacuum is further bolstered by the halt of security assistance to the defense and security forces by Western allies as well as the ECOWAS diplomatic, trade, and financial sanctions. In Mali for instance, the alleged involvement of a Russian private military company, the proposed withdrawal of French forces, and the gradual international isolation of the country could negatively affect the strong international financial and technical support needed to address the worsening security and humanitarian situation.⁴ Additionally, the ECOWAS sanctions and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's economy could hinder the essential investment required for a return of State authorities and services across the country. This could allow terror groups to further ingratiate themselves with local populations by providing basic services, resources, and other materials that the central government has persistently failed to deliver to increase civilian support for recruitment purposes to expand and continue their violent attacks with impunity.⁵

1. Biajo, N. (2021). Sudanese Analysts: Chad Military Takeover Will Likely Cause Instability in Darfur Region. (https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_south-sudan-focus).

2. African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Policy Paper 002 – F. K. Aubyn, I. Ziblim, R. Apau – Coups d'état and Political Instability in the Western Sahel: Implications for the Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism – 2022 (<http://caert.org.dz/Policy-Briefs/final-policy-paper-coups200522.pdf>).

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Another crucial impact of the UCG is that the weakened capacity of the states and core institutions such as the military could give violent extremist and terrorist groups the impetus to further consolidate their authority and influence in the areas where they control and even expand to new geographical areas. Prior to the coups in Mali and Burkina Faso, the military establishments were faced with internal problems including discontent and frustrations among personnel on the frontlines, who have suffered most of the terrorist attacks over poor equipment and motivation. It is obvious from the international condemnation of the coups and sanctions that the military in both countries are unlikely to receive the necessary support to properly equip the military for effective action. Besides, as it is the case with all coups, not all elements in the security and defense forces may be loyal to the coup leaders. This can cause counter coups and further fragmentation within the military with far-reaching consequences on the fight against terrorism. Similarly, in Chad, despite the strength of the military, the personalization of Idriss Deby's regime has left the institution very weak with serious risk of infighting. The army is marred by internal rivalry between commanders and ethnic groups. With the political uncertainty in the country, it is unclear whether the Transitional Military Council will devote more attention to combat transnational terrorist threats or not. In August 2021, Chad announced that it was recalling 600 of its 1200 contingent from the G-5 Sahel Force. In sum, the political uncertainties and the internal weaknesses within the military establishments risk playing into the hands of terrorist and violent extremist groups who will seek to exploit it and the attention being directed towards politics in the capitals.

What More Could ECOWAS and AU Do?

Following the coups in Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Guinea, the AU and ECOWAS responded with condemnations and suspensions in line with the relevant provisions of their respective protocols and institutional frameworks.¹ However, in the case of Mali, ECOWAS imposed far ranging diplomatic, trade and economic sanctions on Mali due to the failure of the transitional authorities to respect the country's transitional charter. The ECOWAS sanctions on both Mali and Burkina Faso were endorsed by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU. With Chad, however, the PSC embraced the military transition and opposed any suspension from AU institutions which they believed would fuel the country's instability and the wider region. This decision taken by the PSC on Chad has been described by many analysts as double standards on how to assert

1. Ibid.

the AU's principles against unconstitutional changes of government.¹ Both the AU and ECOWAS called on the international community to support the sanctions against Mali. Although the international condemnations and sanctions are politically and normatively justifiable, there are concerns that this approach is likely to cause severe hardships and serious disruption to economies in Sahel already ravaged by multifaceted security challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic. The key question, therefore, is what could the AU and ECOWAS do differently beyond just respond to UCG to also address its implications on the possible spiraling of violent extremist and terrorist activities?

As the current attention of the transitional authorities in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad is directed towards politics, the AU should consider collaborating with ECOWAS and ECCAS to take up the leadership role in fighting terrorism and violent extremism in western Sahel in order to support the efforts of the deployment in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin such as G5-Sahel and MNJTF. The AU and ECOWAS could also ensure that the various regional deployments within the regions are effectively working to avoid undue influence by the interests of countries. In addition to the current deployments, African Union should also consider activating the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) to strengthen the CT response, particularly in Mali and Burkina Faso where the need is urgent.

Even before the ACIRC deployments, the African Union and ECOWAS could endeavor to undertake a joint assessment mission in Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali within the framework of subsidiarity and complementarity to understand the underlying causes of the recurring coup d'états. This will afford the relevant decision-making organs of the AU and ECOWAS to know what is working and not working, expectations of the various interest groups including the military, and the effectiveness of political elites' response generation mechanisms to the various local specific grievances.

Review of some existing frameworks and protocols governing the political activities of members of both AU and ECOWAS require some attention. There is the need for the review of both the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the ECOWAS protocol on democracy and good governance to make them responsive to the challenges particularly where incumbent leaders exploit or disregard them to prolong their stay in office. The review could include targeted sanctions regime against incumbents and opposition elements whose actions give impetus for coup makers to justify

1. Ibid.

their actions. In this regard, ECOWAS should continue with its efforts to enshrine term limits in its protocols and Heads of State who oppose same must be called out for undermining good governance in the region. While efforts are required to ensure the necessary review of the existing protocols, both the AU and RECs particularly ECOWAS and ECCAS should also work to ensure that Member States do not only ratify the various protocols but domesticate them through national legislations so as to empower national actors to ensure compliance. This can be achieved through conscious stakeholder consultation, education and awareness of various protocols and the benefits to drive from them when fully implemented.

Local governance structures have not been effectively leveraged in Africa to curb the realization of vulnerable groups. The AU and ECOWAS should intensify efforts to ensure decentralization and empowerment of local governance mechanisms in order to devolve power away from the central government and to make local communities own local decision-making processes. In this regard, advocacy for the ratification and full implementation of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development cannot be over emphasized. Despite its adoption in 2014, only 18 MS have signed the charter and seven MS comprising Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali and Namibia ratifying it.¹ The charter can only enter into force 30 days after the deposit of the 15th instrument of ratification to the AU Commission. The ratification, domestication, and the full implementation of the charter could common root causes of UCG, Violent extremism, and Terrorism. These root causes include lack of government presence in some local communities, inability of government to provide for the basic needs of local communities, high and rising unemployment levels, lack of accountability by political office holders, rampant corruption, injustice, impunity of the political elites, discrimination, exclusive politics and other context-specific good governance deficits, as well as poor communication that generate mistrust between government and local communities which are often cited as creating conditions of disillusionment, hopelessness, and frustration in local communities and elsewhere that facilitate radicalization and a resort to acts of violent extremism and terrorism.²

1. African Union (2022). Ratification Status. African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development (<https://au.int/sw/treaties/african-charter-values-and-principles-decentralisation-local-governance-and-local>).

2. Apau, R. & Ziblim, I (2019). Beyond Rhetoric: Addressing the Terrorism Situation in the Sahel. African centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Policy brief 001, available at: <http://caert.org.dz/Policy-Briefs/POLICY%20BRIEF%20001.pdf> (Accessed: 01/02/2022).

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no doubt that the recent cases of UCG threaten the national and multilateral efforts to combat violent extremism and terrorism. The strategic and operational deficits both at the national and regional levels in responding to UCG needs to be vigorously and systematically addressed to strengthen the AU and ECOWAS normative frameworks, decisions, and actions to check the current surge in the continent. Otherwise, the greatest beneficiaries of the UCG will be the insurgents and terrorist groups who are seeking to destabilize the entire region.

All relevant tools at the disposal of both the AU and ECOWAS must be deployed to halt the coups that the president of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo described as contagious and to return countries already affected to constitutional order. These tools should include measures that address the underlining causes leading to UCG (no matter how unjustified), that incidentally are mirrored in the factors conducive for the emergence and spread of terrorism and violent extremist captured under pillar 1 of the UN Counter Terrorism Strategy. AU and for that matter ECOWAS leaders needs to ensure that citizens feel the benefits of multi-party democracy and to experience it as a best form of government. Although unscientific, the apparent popularity of some of the recent coups is an indictment on leaders who are accused of exploiting the democratic process for their own selfish benefits. Issues about bad governance, corruption, discrimination, nepotism, wanton abuse of power must no longer be left for so-called sovereign states as the fallout affects all countries in the region and beyond. Relevant AU and ECOWAS agencies such as the peer review mechanisms must be impartial and objective in raising the red flags before it is too late.

Given the resurgence of unconstitutional changes in Government, the effects on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, and bearing in mind that development could indeed be harnessed as levers to counter terrorism, the following policy recommendations are made for the consideration of the relevant policy making and implementation organs:

- **Ratification and Domestication of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development:** The Charter which was adopted by the African Union on 27th June 2014 in Malabo and entered into force on 13 January 2019 is yet another strategic framework if, ratified and effectively implemented could solve a lot of the development issues and address a number of governance deficit issues in many Member States.

- **Operationalisation of sanction Regimes in Africa:** The AU and ECOWAS must have a concerted efforts towards operationalising sanction regimes in Africa, particularly against political leaders who manipulate constitutions to stay on to power. This if well implemented will go a long way to address some of the root causes to Unconstitutional changes of government and terrorism.
- **The revision of the protocol on Democracy and Election, both at the AU and ECOWAS:** there is the need to review the laws to reflect the needs of the people. In Africa, majority of the grievances of people have been linked to poor management of election, political exclusion, and injustice in the governance system. A protocol that clearly forbids 3rd term in office could bring some level of stability in the agitations.

L'ÉTAT DE LA COOPÉRATION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA LUTTE CONTRE LE TERRORISME DANS LA RÉGION DU SAHEL : TENDANCES, OPPORTUNITÉS ET DÉFIS

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I. Mise en contexte

Dans le cadre de cet article, le Sahel ne correspond pas à son acception originelle. Nous savons que cette région du continent couvre un espace assez large qui, selon certains auteurs, va de l'océan Atlantique à la mer Rouge (d'Est en Ouest) et est comprise entre le Sahara et la savane de type soudanien (du Nord au Sud) (Ba ; 2007). L'analyse ici opérée se focalise donc sur les pays considérés comme « chauds » dans le Sahel¹, à savoir le Mali, le Niger et le Burkina-Faso. Éventuellement certains pays limitrophes de ceux cités y seront inclus (le Bénin et la Côte d'Ivoire par exemple). En fait, la zone en question correspond à une partie du Sahel occidental et au Liptako-Gourma.² Ceci posé, il faut reconnaître que, depuis la crise libyenne de 2011, cette partie du monde est en proie à un climat sécuritaire délétère et inquiétant qui s'est vite amplifié dans un contexte socio-économique déjà caractérisée par la pauvreté, le chômage, la criminalité transfrontalière, les impacts négatifs du changement climatique, la faiblesse et la fragilité des institutions politiques, etc.³

En effet, commencées au Mali, les attaques des groupes armés et extrémistes se sont progressivement multipliées pour atteindre les pays voisins (le Burkina Faso⁴ et le Niger⁵ notamment). A partir de 2015, les régions dites des trois (3) frontières (Mali, Burkina Faso et Niger), du fait de leur porosité, virent les groupes terroristes et extrémistes violents s'y installer. La complexité géographique de ces régions n'est pas étrangère à cet état de fait; En effet, à travers elles, il est facile de circuler entre les trois (3) pays. L'immensité de ces zones désertiques, la faible densité et le faible contrôle étatique sur toute l'étendue des territoires font de ces pays des proies faciles exposées aux exactions et incursions des groupes radicaux violents et à l'émergence de conflits tous azimuts.

1. Voir utilement le RAPPORT D'ÉTAPE 2018-2019 de la *Stratégie intégrée des Nations Unies pour le Sahel*, disponible sur (https://reliefweb.int/files.UN_UNISS_Report_Fr).
2. www.liptakogourma.org.
3. Voir Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, La sécurité au Sahel après la crise du Mali Quels enjeux et défis pour les pays régionaux et internationaux, Séminaire international, mars 2014, Rabat, N°4/2014, disponible sur (https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=6dc644e9-79fb-54e1-4860-2c4868b39971&groupId=252038).
4. « *Il faudra l'attaque de Nassoumbou, dans la province du Soum, en décembre 2016, pour que les autorités burkinabè prennent enfin conscience que la crise ne relève pas d'un problème exclusivement malien* ». (Rapport d'International Crisis Group, N° 254, 12 octobre 2017).
5. « Depuis la fin des campagnes militaires majeures qui, dans le cadre de l'opération Serval, ont permis de libérer le nord du Mali occupé par les groupes islamistes d'Ansar Eddine, d'Al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (AQMI) et du Mouvement pour l'unité et le djihad en Afrique de l'ouest (MUJAO), la situation sécuritaire s'est considérablement dégradée au Niger voisin », in 'Le Niger dans la crise malienne', **Mamoudou Gazibo, professeur titulaire, département de science politique de l'Université de Montréal**, Juillet 2013, Dossiers du CERJ, disponible sur (<https://www.sciencespo.fr/cerj/fr/content/dossiersducerj/le-niger-dans-la-crise-malienne>).

C'est dans ce contexte qu'un véritable réseau diplomatico-militaire s'est tissé, dans le cadre de la coopération internationale, pour tirer les pays de la région de l'insécurité et prévenir une nouvelle vague d'expansion du fléau terroriste ou extrémiste vers d'autres horizons (les régions voisines du Sahel, voire de la Méditerranée)¹. Cette coopération internationale s'est traduite par plusieurs initiatives au nombre desquelles il est loisible de citer les différentes opérations comme Serval, Barkhane, la Mission Internationale de Soutien au Mali (MISMA), la Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Mali (MINUSMA), l'European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) et la Mission de l'Union Africaine pour le Mali et le Sahel (MISAHEL), pour ne citer que ceux-ci.

Cependant, la situation géopolitique de la région est très précaire, depuis 2018, avec la crise de l'Etat de droit au Mali.² La situation s'est propagée au Burkina-Faso et en Guinée Conakry – malgré la présence d'un réseau dense de coopérateurs internationaux. Ce faisant, il n'est pas surabondant de s'interroger sur l'impact de ces changements importants induits dans la région sur l'état de ladite coopération. Cette interrogation est d'autant plus légitime que le pays épicerie de la crise, le Mali, est entré dans une spirale de désintégration institutionnelle et diplomatique dont l'effet le plus spectaculaire est sa rupture avec la France (*rupture avec les forces Serval et Barkhane, renvoi de diplomates français mais aussi et surtout retrait du G5 Sahel*). Pour analyser les éléments susmentionnés, cet article s'efforce de répondre aux questions fondamentales suivantes :

- Quels sont les grands axes de la coopération internationale au Sahel en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme? Quels en sont les acquis à travers ces axes?
- Quelles sont les difficultés connues par cette coopération?
- Quels sont les défis à relever et les perspectives enviables pour un Sahel plus apaisé et sécurisé ?

Cet article se propose d'apporter des éléments de réponse aux questions soulevés.

1. Lire utilement les rapports du Projet 'Stabiliser le Mali' du Centre Franco Paix en résolution des conflits et missions de paix (UQAM, Chaire RAOUL-DURAND en Etudes Stratégiques et Diplomatiques: <https://dandurand.uqam.ca>).

2. Lire utilement Camille Mercier, *IBK réélu malgré les contestations*, Perspective Monde, disponible sur (<https://perspective.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/servlet/BMAnalyse?codeAnalyse=1953>). Voir aussi, Rapport final de la Mission d'observation électorale de l'Union Européenne au Mali, Mai 2018, disponible sur (https://www.oods.eu/library/moe_ue_mali_2018_rapport_final1.pdf).

Méthodologie

Ce travail repose essentiellement sur des résultats de plusieurs recherches menées dans le Liptako-Gourma, en lien avec des questions de paix, de sécurité et de défense, par des institutions de recherche, de même que différentes initiatives et approches privilégiées par les Etats pour une sécurité durable qui ont été étudiées et commentées. L'analyse de ces différents documents et données a été croisée avec notre propre expérience du terrain sur l'extrémisme violent, la criminalité transnationale organisée, les conflits communautaires et les notes d'analyse géopolitiques et stratégiques rédigées à cet effet. Dans les parties qui suivent, il sera question de revenir sur les grands axes de coopération internationale en matière de défense et de sécurité.

II. Les acquis à travers grands axes de la coopération internationale au Sahel en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme¹

Il serait trop ambitieux de prétendre pouvoir dresser ici tout l'inventaire des axes de la coopération internationale au Sahel, mais sa catégorisation semble possible à partir de deux domaines majeurs : le politique et le militaire.

2.1. La coopération politique internationale pour la lutte contre le terrorisme au Sahel

Depuis l'éclatement de la crise malienne en 2012, la communauté internationale, sous l'égide de Nations Unies, mais par délégation à la France, a entrepris des actions dans le Sahel en vue de circonscrire les effets du terrorisme mais surtout d'empêcher son expansion dans les autres régions de l'Afrique, voire au-delà de la Méditerranée. Ce qui, avec le recul d'une décennie, a montré à suffisance un échec, pas dans l'absolu, mais dans une mesure assez significative, au point que l'on assiste de nos jours à un rejet quasi général des organisations de la coopération internationale par certaines communautés de la région Sahel. Il s'agit de la coopération internationale avec la France (opération Barkhane) et ses alliés (Takuba et appui américain), mais aussi de l'Union Européenne (EUTM) et des Nations-Unies (MINUSMA). Toutes ces émanations de la coopération internationale n'agissent pas sans les Etats africains d'où la création de la MISAHÉL et du G5 Sahel. À défaut

1. Lire utilement à ce sujet Nadia ADAM ET Ornella MODERAN, Sécurité au Sahel : une multitude de stratégies mais peu de progrès, ISS, 26 JANV. 2021, disponible sur : <https://issafrica.org/fr/iss-today/securite-au-sahel-une-multitude-de-strategies-mais-peu-de-progres>.

d'analyser un tel fait ici, il convient de rappeler les principaux éléments de cette coopération politique internationale. Ils concernent essentiellement la formation et la construction/réhabilitation de structures.

Le volet de la formation

Conscients que le tout militaire n'est pas une solution satisfaisante, à long terme, les partenaires des Etats du Sahel ont entrepris beaucoup d'initiatives en vue de former les principaux acteurs des Etats dans la prévention et la gestion du terrorisme.

C'est la raison principale qui a incité tous les partenaires du Sahel à insérer dans leur intervention un volet formations qui, au-delà la professionnalisation des armées, essaie de faire en sorte que l'objectif de la lutte contre le terrorisme intègre la société civile et tous les acteurs étatiques et non étatiques des Etats de la région.

Pour s'en convaincre, le rappel de la création du Collège Sahélien de Sécurité¹ du G5-Sahel² n'est pas surabondant. En effet, ce Collège a pour objectif de se substituer, dans son nouveau format, au CSS créé en 2012 dans le cadre du projet UE – CT SAHEL³, *pour constituer un réseau des acteurs de la sécurité (agents des forces de l'ordre, magistrats, auxiliaires de justice, membres de la société civile, dignitaires religieux, etc.). Il est aussi un instrument important de formation pour les cadres des forces de sécurité intérieure.* Il est important de souligner que dans cette mission de formation, l'accent est beaucoup mis sur le respect des droits humains dans toute intervention dans le Sahel. Le fait que les acteurs de la chaîne pénale et de la chaîne de la sécurité (y compris la société) y sont impliqués est un gage de respect de ces normes internationalement admises. Ces formations sur le respect des droits humains (pris dans leur globalité) est aussi assurée par la MINUSMA. Bien que cette mission n'opère qu'exclusivement au Mali, elle contient en son sein des représentants de la quasi-totalité des pays du Sahel. De ce fait, toute action prise dans le sens de la formation des acteurs de la sécurité et de la chaîne pénale entre dans le crédit des pays de la région.

1. Voir: <https://www.g5css.com/decouvrez-le-css/>.

2. Le G5 SAHEL a reçu un appui officiel de la MINUSMA (Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Mali), via la résolution 2391 du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies, qui apporte un appui à la force conjointe. (Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU, 2017, Résolution 2391, 5).

3. C'était un programme européen de contre-terrorisme au Sahel.

Bien que strictement centrés sur les forces de police et les forces militaires, pour Eucap sahel et l'EUTM1 il est important de noter que leurs interventions intègrent les mêmes notions. De cette manière, au bout de leur mission, les forces de défense et de sécurité seront mieux outillées au respect des droits de l'homme dans toutes leurs interventions.

Ces différentes formations ont fait passer certaines armées à de mauvaises à excellentes en matière de défense et de sécurité. C'est ainsi que l'armée tchadienne a été appréciée comme exemplaire en matière de lutte contre les groupes radicaux violents par le général François Lecointre (ancien commandant de la mission européenne de formation au Mali). Au cours d'une présentation à Bruxelles, le 5 mars 2013, il a estimé que l'armée tchadienne est un modèle. Nonobstant, il a ajouté qu'il faut éviter le piège de calquer le modèle de l'armée malienne à celui du Tchad, sans une prise en compte des particularités propres à chaque armée. » (Voir Défense globale, blog de la Voix du Nord defense.blogs.lavoixdu nord.fr).

C'est dans cette même dynamique de soutien aux Forces Armées Maliennes (FAMA) que la mission dont le quartier Général est à Bamako (capitale du Mali) a été initiée.

Quant au Département « Education and Training Task Force (ETTF) », il est l'entité en charge de l'instruction et de la formation des unités et il apporte aussi son soutien à la formation dans les différents centres d'entraînements militaires maliens sur des thématiques en lien avec le leadership et la gestion des ressources humaines.

S'agissant du Département « Advisor Task Force (ATF) » basé à Bamako, il prodigue des conseils auprès du personnel du Ministère de la défense, des États-Majors des armées et des quartiers Généraux des Régions militaires. De même, il intervient également auprès de la force Conjointe du G5 Sahel en matière de renforcement des capacités opérationnelles des troupes (voir Accord de défense entre la République Française et la République du Mali, publié par le Décret n° 2016-1565 du 21 novembre 2016 portant publication du traité de coopération en matière de défense entre la République française et la République du Mali, signé à Bamako le 16 juillet 2014, Art.2).

Il convient de rappeler que bien avant l'éclatement de la crise multi-dimensionnelle que connaît le Mali depuis 2012, les États Unis d'Amérique

1. L'Union Européenne a engagé plusieurs centaines de militaires et d'experts dans deux missions de formation au Mali, l'EUTM pour les forces armées et l'EUCAP Sahel-Mali pour la police.

assuraient des formations au bénéfice de certaines unités de l'armée malienne en matière de prévention et de lutte contre le terrorisme. Le président du Mali, à la tête de la Transition, le colonel GOITA était un des bénéficiaires desdites formations ayant abouti à la création des forces spéciales maliennes anti-terroristes.

Dans le même élan, la MISAHÉL appuie fortement les acteurs de la Réforme du Secteur de la Sécurité. L'effort des partenaires ci-dessus cités est beaucoup constant et d'ailleurs plus étoffé auprès des organisations de la Société civile. Beaucoup de formations sur la *déradicalisation* et la prévention contre l'extrémisme violent sont assurées par elles dans le Sahel, principalement au Mali, au Burkina Faso, en Mauritanie et au Niger. Absolument, dans tous les pays du Sahel visés ici, ce sont les Organisations de la Société Civile (OSC) qui ont été les premières à intervenir dans ces domaines avec des appuis techniques et financiers consistants des partenaires susmentionnés.

Grâce à ces appuis, les notions liées à l'extrémisme violent et les concepts de droits humains ne sont plus l'apanage des seules institutions étatiques. En outre, l'intervention des OSC permet d'atteindre les communautés dans des localités difficiles d'accès, voire inaccessibles par des institutions étatiques. Et cela a été possible grâce à l'intervention des partenaires internationaux œuvrant au Mali et ailleurs, à la suite des politiques et initiatives qu'ils y développent, politiques contribuant fortement à l'enracinement de l'état de droit par un éveil des communautés du fait de leur implication effective et réelle dans le déploiement des activités des OSC.

Un autre aspect important dans le volet de la formation est l'ouverture d'un espace d'excellence accessible pour tous les pays africains dans le domaine de la consolidation de la paix, et ce, tant aux civils qu'aux forces de défense et de sécurité. Il s'agit de l'École de Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondin BEYE (Bamako-Mali). Cette école fournit des offres de formations et de stages très prisés dans toute l'Afrique et participe, de ce fait, à la professionnalisation des FDS sur le continent et constitue en même temps un lieu de rencontres et de renforcement de la confiance entre les populations et les FDS.¹

A l'échelle continentale, l'Union africaine s'est dotée de divers instruments juridiques pour prévenir et lutter contre le crime organisé et le terrorisme dans le Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest en particulier.² La pertinence et l'efficacité

1. Voir utilement (<https://www.empbamako.org/>).

2. Note d'analyse de la Fondation Friedrich Ebert- Stiftung, Sering Bamba Gaye (2017), *Connexion entre groupes djihadistes et réseaux de contrebande et des trafics illicites au Sahel*.

de ces mesures dépendent en grande partie des capacités de chaque État à les expérimenter. Le statut fragile des États constitue un obstacle majeur pour lutter contre la nébuleuse terroriste et le crime organisé. C'est le cas du Mali, du Burkina Faso et du Niger où les groupes terroristes et les narcotrafiquants opèrent sur de vastes territoires.

La coopération internationale au Sahel se conçoit aussi par l'appui aux États dans la construction et la réhabilitation d'infrastructures.

Le volet de la construction et de la réhabilitation d'infrastructures

Il s'agit de la construction ou de la réhabilitation d'infrastructures dans les pays du Sahel au profit des populations afin qu'elles puissent bénéficier des services sociaux de base, tâche initialement dévolue à l'État. Dans ce sens, l'action des partenaires internationaux tend à combler un grand vide, lequel vide est très souvent exploité par les acteurs de la violence pour embrigader certaines communautés dans leurs activités de terrorismes.¹

Ces infrastructures concernent celles qui garantissent *un accès à l'eau et à l'assainissement, une résilience à l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle, un accès à des espaces d'expression*. Dans ce domaine ci, le programme de développement d'urgence de l'Alliance du Sahel², sous l'égide du G5 Sahel, a enregistré des résultats très probants. En mars 2022, *22 projets nationaux et 9 projets-multi pays sont en cours de mise en œuvre. 5 projets sont d'ores et déjà achevés. 207 millions d'euros ont été décaissés, démontrant une capacité d'exécution supérieure (40%) à celle généralement constatée sur les projets financés dans les pays du G5 Sahel*. À l'instar de cette Alliance, tous les autres partenaires internationaux³ participent directement ou pas à la réalisation de tels projets en vue de renforcer l'accès des populations aux meilleurs services de base. Ce faisant, elles deviennent moins vulnérables.

Dans une moindre mesure, à l'échelle malienne, la MINUSMA a initié des projets à impact rapide (QIPS) qui sont des microprojets communautaires d'un coût maximal de 50,000 US\$ et une durée ne dépassant pas six (06) mois,

1. Lire utilement FIDH, *Dans le centre du Mali, les populations prises au piège du terrorisme et du contreterrorisme*, Rapport d'enquête, Novembre 2018 / N° 727f, disponible sur (https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/fidh_centre_du_mali_les_populations_prises_au_pie_ge_du_terrorisme_et_contre_terrorisme.pdf).

2. En 2018, en vue de stabiliser les zones confrontées à des enjeux sécuritaires complexes et à de fortes vulnérabilités économiques, sociales et climatiques, les pays membres du G5 Sahel ont demandé au Secrétariat exécutif du G5 Sahel (SEG5) de concevoir un Programme de Développement d'Urgence (PDU). Voir: <https://www.alliance-sahel.org/actualites/le-programme-de-developpement-durgence-pdu-du-g5-sahel/>.

3. À ce titre, il s'agit de la MINUSMA, de la DUE, des coopérants français, allemands, danois, espagnols...

dans les domaines de la réhabilitation des services et petites infrastructures publiques, de la formation et sensibilisation et de la création d'emplois et de revenus. *Ces projets doivent avoir un effet à la fois rapide et durable répondant aux besoins prioritaires de la population et ont pour but d'établir un climat de confiance dans le processus de paix, la Mission et son mandat.*

La région du Sahel est devenue extrêmement dépendante de ces appuis, fruits de la coopération internationale. Mieux, toutes les actions menées aident à la lutte contre le terrorisme par le renforcement de la résilience des communautés.

2.2. Les acquis de la coopération militaire

À l'analyse, il ressort que ces acquis peuvent être classés en deux catégories : l'état d'entraide militaire au Sahel et le rôle des Organisations de la Société Civile pour une gouvernance inclusive au Sahel.

L'état d'entraide militaire au Sahel

Au regard de la gravité et de l'expansion de la menace terroriste avec une vitesse étonnante dans le Sahel, notamment au Mali, au Burkina Faso et au Niger, les trois pays les plus touchés, se sont mobilisés afin de proposer des réponses susceptibles de juguler l'insécurité née du terrorisme et des conflits locaux. C'est ainsi que le Mali, avec l'appui de ses partenaires techniques et financiers a engagé le Plan d'Urgence pour le Sahel (PUS), le Burkina Faso, le Plan de Sécurisation Intégrée des Régions du Centre (PISRC) et le Niger la création de la Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix (HACP). Tout cela constitue un témoignage éloquent de la prise en compte de la nébuleuse terroriste par lesdits États (Toukara, 2020).

De l'analyse de ces différentes initiatives, il ressort clairement que la multi dimensionnalité de l'insécurité est prise en compte, le curseur étant même davantage axé sur le tout sécuritaire au détriment des actions de développement.

Les différentes opérations militaires sont certes saluées çà et là, mais force est de reconnaître qu'elles portent très souvent l'étiquette de la violation grave des droits de l'homme et du droit international humanitaire.¹

1. Voir aussi : Human Rights Watch, *Le jour, nous avons peur de l'armée, et la nuit des djihadistes : abus commis par des islamistes armés et par des membres des forces de sécurité au Burkina Faso, mai 2018*, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/burkinafaso0518fr_web3.pdf.

Les organisations régionales et sous régionales sont au chevet du Mali depuis l'éclatement de la crise multidimensionnelle en 2012 et à celui du Burkina Faso depuis le coup d'État militaire de janvier 2022. Ce qui a fait dire à l'Observatoire Citoyen (2020) que l'Union Africaine a été l'un des premiers acteurs a déployé trois mille (3 000) hommes pour soutenir la Force conjointe G5 Sahel et celle de la CEDEAO, et a adopté aussi un plan d'action qui a consisté à mettre à disposition des ressources financières dans le cadre de la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent en Afrique de l'Ouest, en particulier au Mali, au Niger et au Burkina Faso.

Ce faisant, l'Union Africaine et la CEDEAO ont d'ailleurs renforcé leur implication aux côtés des autorités du Mali, depuis le mois de juin 2020, à la suite du soulèvement dénommé Mouvement du 5 juin (M 5) qui a occasionné le départ prématuré du Président Ibrahim Keita, pourtant démocratiquement élu. Ce mouvement a fini par avoir raison de son régime, un coup d'État militaire étant survenu le 18 août 2020¹, disant avoir parachevé la contestation incarnée par le M5.

Le rôle des Organisations de la Société Civile une gouvernance inclusive au Sahel

Au niveau des Organisations de la Société Civile (OCS), les crises les ont poussés à s'engager davantage dans le processus du retour à une paix durable dans presque tous les pays en proie aux attaques terroristes et/ou aux tensions politiques. Les OCS sont essentiellement (non exclusivement) dans les campagnes de sensibilisation, d'information, de communication, dans les opérations de soutien/aide aux victimes de la crise, etc.

De manière générale, les Organisations Non Gouvernementales (ONG) de développement, quant à elles, mettent en œuvre ou soutiennent des petits projets ponctuels, à petite échelle. Elles interviennent dans la plupart des domaines de développement: la lutte contre la famine, et soutiennent les activités génératrices des femmes, et les activités de relance économique, notamment à l'endroit des personnes vulnérables. Il convient de rappeler que la société civile du Mali a participé à toutes les étapes du processus de l'Accord de la paix, des accords préliminaires de Ouagadougou (juin 2013) à la signature de l'accord de Paix survenu en 2015, entre le Mali, les mouvements armés et la communauté internationale.

1. Entretien avec la CEDEAO-Mali.

De même des ONG telles que WANEP (Réseau Ouest Africain pour l'Édification de la Paix), IMPRAP (Institut Malien de Recherche ACTION) et le Centre de Dialogue Humanitaire (HD) mènent des activités de réconciliation et de cohésion sociale auprès des communautés au Mali, au Niger et au Burkina Faso.

L'une des exigences de la gouvernance démocratique du secteur de la sécurité réside dans l'existence de mécanismes de contrôle et de suivi à l'interne ainsi qu'à l'externe. Ce contrôle et ce suivi doivent venir des acteurs de diverse nature, en l'occurrence les organisations de la société civile.

Il est admis que la bonne gouvernance du secteur de la sécurité passe par¹ :

- la soumission des institutions de sécurité à l'autorité civile jouissant d'une légitimité constitutionnelle,
- la non-ingérence des institutions de sécurité et de défense dans les affaires politiques,
- la définition des politiques de sécurité par l'autorité politique, qui en supervise la mise en œuvre par les institutions de sécurité.

Partant de ce préalable, il est à constater que l'absence d'un contrôle effectif du secteur de la sécurité par les organisations de la société civile pourrait favoriser les pratiques corruptives, le clientélisme, le népotisme, l'impunité et le déni des droits des personnes dans le secteur de la sécurité. Ainsi, si la gouvernance du secteur de la sécurité n'est pas soumise à un contrôle civil rigoureux et efficient, elle pourrait saper les efforts que consentent les autorités (Mali, Burkina Faso et Niger) en faveur de la sécurité pour tous et de la gouvernance démocratique et inclusive.

III. Les difficultés du plein essor de la coopération internationale au Sahel pour la lutte contre le terrorisme

Ces difficultés sont de deux ordres au moins : la non-participation effective des États du Sahel et la résurgence des ruptures de l'ordre démocratique dans la région.

1. Augustin Loada et Ornella Moderan, (2015). *Le rôle de la société civile dans la réforme et la gouvernance du secteur de la sécurité*, DCAF.

3.1. La non-participation effective des États du Sahel

La coopération signifie le fait de mettre ensemble des moyens pour l'atteinte d'objectifs communs. Or, il se trouve que dans la coopération internationale avec les pays du Sahel, ce sont malheureusement les partenaires qui fournissent la quasi-totalité des moyens nécessaires à la bonne marche de l'entreprise de coopération. L'exemple le plus frappant à cet égard est celui du G5 Sahel. La force conjointe prévue par cette organisation devait être pourvue de 5000 hommes, à raison de 1000 hommes par pays membres (Mali, Mauritanie, Burkina, Niger et Tchad), mais ce ne fut jamais le cas. Les pays membres n'y sont pas parvenus. La question du pourquoi reste pendante, tant les raisons peuvent être nombreuses et variées. Mais l'on peut facilement concevoir que c'est le manque de moyens financiers qui en est la cause principale.

Ce constat est valable pour tous les autres domaines de la coopération. Les OSC étant les plus actives, dépendent principalement et entièrement des partenaires internationaux pour l'ensemble de leur projets et programmes dans un contexte où l'État est quasi absent.

3.2 La résurgence de la rupture de l'ordre démocratique

Il ne fait aucun doute que plus d'un observateur est resté pantois au regard de la situation politique dans le Sahel. Les attermolements politiques consécutifs aux troubles électoraux au Mali ont fini par avoir raison de l'ordre démocratique et accéléré l'avènement d'un régime militaire en août 2020 et en mai 2021. Ces faits dépassèrent tout entendement car sans précédents dans la région du Sahel. Les organisations régionales d'intégration (CEDEAO, UEMOA et même l'UA) condamnèrent avec la plus grande fermeté ces actes et imposèrent des sanctions car le nouveau régime violait toutes les règles de la démocratie. Ce faisant, tous les partenaires internationaux lièrent leur coopération au retour à l'ordre constitutionnel. Ce qui n'est toujours pas le cas. Pis, les forces internationales présentes au Mali, à l'exception de la MINUSMA, ont été remercié et le pays serait dans une réorientation de sa coopération vers d'autres partenaires.

Ces faits ne sont pas spécifiques au Mali. La Guinée Conakry et le Burkina Faso connaissent également tous l'avènement de régimes militaires.

Ce climat de retour aux heures « sombres » du continent n'est pas de nature à favoriser le développement de la coopération internationale. La lutte contre

le terrorisme devient dans ses pays la seule affaire des nouveaux régimes, avec des postures remettant même en cause certaines des relations bilatérales entre États. Le Mali, par exemple, à cause de l’embargo qu’il subit et de la fermeture des frontières que lui ont imposée ses voisins de la CEDEAO, vient de refuser l’entrée sur son territoire de troupes du Sénégal engagées dans le contingent de la MINUSMA. Les prises de position du Niger à l’égard du Mali constituent aussi par ailleurs un exemple de cas alimentant la dégradation de la coopération internationale au Sahel.

Dans un tel environnement marqué par des tensions entre les pays du Sahel, il est difficile de voir le développement de la coopération internationale dans le schéma traditionnel qui lui était connu.

IV. Perspectives et Recommandations

La dynamique du retrait des forces européennes (Barkhane et Takuba) du Mali pourrait se poursuivre avec plus de tensions, de sentiment de suspicion et de menaces, de part et d’autre. On sait déjà que les deux armées (malienne avec l’aide des éléments russes et française) s’accusent mutuellement d’être à l’origine d’un charnier supposé ou réel découvert à Gossi (camp anciennement occupé par la force Barkhane dans le Nord du Mali) après son transfèrement solennel en avril 2022 à l’armée malienne. Dans ce climat délétère, comment saisir et envisager le rôle et la place de l’Union africaine, à certains égards, en matière de soutien à la Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel, dans la mesure où cette force est en grande partie soutenue financièrement par l’Union européenne, à travers la France, qui est en brouille diplomatique (la France en particulier) avec le Mali ?

Avec le retrait annoncé du Mali le 15 mai 2022 de tous les organes et instances du G5 Sahel, y compris sa Force conjointe (FC)¹, quel sort réserve-t-on aux actions militaires conjointes dans l’espace G5 Sahel ?

La question mérite d’être posée surtout quand on sait que le Niger n’est plus en bon terme avec le Mali (suspension des actions militaires communes). De même, le Burkina Faso a également abandonné un certain nombre de ses bases militaires (Koutougou, Nassoumbou dans la province de Soum).

En effet, le regain d’intérêt manifesté vis-à-vis de la Russie en matière de coopération militaire par un certain nombre de pays du G5 Sahel (le Mali l’a déjà acté, le Burkina Faso et le Niger en discussions). Quel maillage avec les

1. À noter que les « pères fondateurs » (côté français comme sahélien) ont tous, aujourd’hui, quitté le pouvoir.

armées européennes dans un environnement où l'Europe et la Russie sont en compétition dans le Sahel?

Ces différents points et questionnement soulevés, il est pertinent de formuler les recommandations pragmatiques suivantes à l'endroit de l'Union africaine :

- au regard de la gravité de la situation sécuritaire et du chevauchement des actions des acteurs des services de sécurité au Sahel, il serait urgent que l'Union africaine reprenne toute sa place dans la lutte contre le terrorisme et le crime organisé. Cela passerait par la mise en route de la force en attente de l'institution sous le chapitre 07 des Nations Unies afin de se prémunir d'éventuelles difficultés financières et même techniques. Cette appropriation de l'Union africaine de l'offre et de la demande de sécurité va non seulement permettre aux africains d'avoir foi en leur institution, mais dans le même temps, d'affaiblir de façon significative la compétition ouverte entre les puissances militaires dans le Sahel au nom de lutte contre le terrorisme;
- renforcer davantage les capacités des OSC et de la classe politique (notamment en mettant un accent particulier sur les femmes et les jeunes) afin qu'elles soient mieux disposées à jouer pleinement et à bon escient leur rôle et assumer leur responsabilité dans les initiatives de consolidation de la paix et de la cohésion sociale. Les OSC et la classe politique bénéficient certes de l'apport technique et financier des partenaires financiers et techniques (PTF), mais ces aides soulèvent la problématique de l'autonomie et de l'indépendance vis-à-vis desdits partenaires qui, parfois, pour certains d'entre eux, auraient un agenda autre que celui de la paix et de la cohésion sociale;
- évaluer les capacités tactiques et opérationnelles des armées du Liptako Gourma (Mali, Burkina Faso et Niger) en vue d'adapter les réponses et les initiatives aux spécificités propres à chaque armée. Cette non prise en compte de l'ingénierie des armées a impacté négativement l'efficacité des réponses proposées çà et là, à certains égards.

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THE STATE OF INTERNATIONAL COUNTER-TERRORISM COOPERATION IN THE SAHEL REGION : TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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I. Background

For this article, the Sahel is not used in its original sense. We know that this region of the continent covers a large area which, according to some authors, extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea (from east to west) and is comprised between the Sahara and the Sudanian Savannah (from north to south) (Ba; 2007). Therefore, the analysis focuses on the countries considered “hot” in the Sahel¹, namely Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Some countries bordering on these countries may be included (e. g. Benin and Côte d’Ivoire). The area in question corresponds to part of the Western Sahel and the Liptako-Gourma². Having said this, it must be recognised that, since the Libyan crisis of 2011, this part of the world has been plagued by a worrying and deleterious security climate which has rapidly grown in a socio-economic context already characterised by poverty, unemployment, cross-border crime, the negative impacts of climate change, the weakness and fragility of political institutions, etc.³

Indeed, starting in Mali, attacks by armed groups and extremists have gradually multiplied to reach neighbouring countries (Burkina Faso⁴ and Niger⁵ in particular). From 2015, the so-called three (3) border regions (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger), due to their porosity, saw terrorist and violent extremist groups settle there. The geographical complexity of these regions is not unrelated to this state of affairs; indeed, it is easy to move between the three (3) countries through them. The vastness of these desert areas, the low density and the weak state control over the entire territory make these countries easily prey to the exactions and incursions of violent radical groups and the emergence of all kinds of conflicts.

1. Voir utilement le RAPPORT D'ÉTAPE 20182019- de la *Stratégie intégrée des Nations Unies pour le Sahel*, disponible sur (https://reliefweb.int/files.UN_UNISS_Report_Fr).

2. www.liptakogourma.org.

3. See Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Security in the Sahel after the Mali crisis What issues and challenges for regional and international countries, International Seminar, March 2014, Rabat, N°4/2014, available at https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=6dc644e9-79fb-54e1-4860-2c4868b39971&groupId=252038.

4. « *It took the attack on Nassoumbou, in the Soum province, in December 2016 for the Burkinabe authorities to finally realise that the crisis was not an exclusively Malian problem* » (International Crisis Group Report, N° 254, 12 October 2017).

5. « Since the end of the major military campaigns which, as part of Operation Serval, liberated the north of Mali occupied by the Islamist groups Ansar Eddine, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), the security situation has deteriorated considerably in neighbouring Niger », in ‘Le Niger dans la crise malienne’, Mamoudou Gazibo, full professor, Department of Political Science, University of Montreal, July 2013, Dossiers du CERi, available at <https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/en/content/dossiersduceri/le-niger-dans-la-crise-malienne>.

It is in this context that a real diplomatic-military network has been woven within the framework of international cooperation to pull the countries of the region out of insecurity and prevent a new wave of expansion of the terrorist or extremist scourge towards other horizons (the neighbouring regions of the Sahel, or even the Mediterranean)¹. This international cooperation has resulted in several initiatives, including operations such as Serval, Barkhane, the International Support Mission to Mali (MISMA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) and the African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), to name but a few.

However, the geopolitical situation in the region has been very precarious since 2018, with the crisis of the rule of law in Mali². The situation has spread to Burkina Faso and Guinea Conakry – despite a dense network of international development workers. It is, therefore, not too much to ask what impact these significant regional changes have had on the state of cooperation. This question is all the more legitimate as the country at the epicentre of the crisis, Mali, has entered a spiral of institutional and diplomatic disintegration, the most spectacular effect of which is its break with France (*break with the Serval and Barkhane forces, dismissal of French diplomats, but also and above all withdrawal from the G5 Sahel*). In order to analyse the above-mentioned elements, this article attempts to answer the following fundamental questions:

- What are the main axes of international cooperation in the Sahel in the fight against terrorism? What have been the achievements through these axes?
- What are the difficulties experienced by this cooperation?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for a more peaceful and secure Sahel?

This article aims to provide some answers to the questions raised.

1. Lire utilement les rapports du Projet ‘Stabiliser le Mali’ du Centre Franco Paix en résolution des conflits et missions de paix (UQAM, Chaire RAOUL-DURAND en Etudes Stratégiques et Diplomatiques (<https://dandurand.uqam.ca>).

2. Read Camille Mercier, *IBK re-elected despite challenges*, Perspective Monde, available at: (<https://perspective.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/servlet/BMAnalyse?codeAnalyse=1953>).

See also, Final Report of the European Union Election Observation Mission in Mali, May 2018, available at: (https://www.eods.eu/library/moe_ue_mali_2018_rapport_final1.pdf).

Methodology

This work is mainly based on the results of several research studies carried out in Liptako-Gourma, related to peace, security and defence issues by research institutions, as well as different initiatives and approaches favoured by states for sustainable security, which have been studied and commented upon. The analysis of these other documents and data was cross-referenced with our field experience on violent extremism, transnational organised crime, community conflicts and the geopolitical and strategic analysis notes written for this purpose. In the following sections, we will look at the main areas of international cooperation in the field of defence and security.

II. Achievements across the main axes of international counterterrorism¹ cooperation in the Sahel

It would be too ambitious to claim to be able to draw up a complete inventory of the axes of international cooperation in the Sahel here. Still, it seems possible to categorise it according to two major areas: political and military.

2.1. International political cooperation in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel

Since the outbreak of the Malian crisis in 2012, the international community, under the aegis of the United Nations, but by delegation to France, has undertaken actions in the Sahel with a view to containing the effects of terrorism but above all to prevent its spread to other regions of Africa, and even beyond the Mediterranean. With the benefit of a decade's hindsight, this has been a failure, not in absolute terms, but to a significant extent, to the point where there is now an almost general rejection of international cooperation organisations by specific communities in the Sahel region. This concerns international cooperation with France (Operation Barkhane) and its allies (Takuba and American support), but also the European Union (EUTM) and the United Nations (MINUSMA). All these emanations of international cooperation do not act without the African states, hence the creation of MISAHÉL and the G5 Sahel. Without analysing such a fact here, it is appropriate to recall the main elements of this international political cooperation. They mainly concern training and the construction/rehabilitation of structures.

1. Read Nadia Adam and Ornella Moderan, Security in the Sahel:

A multitude of strategies but little progress, ISS, 26 JANV. 2021, available at:

(<https://issafrica.org/fr/iss-today/securite-au-sahel-une-multitude-de-strategies-mais-peu-de-progres>).

The training component

Aware that the military approach is not a satisfactory solution in the long term, the partners of the Sahel States have undertaken many initiatives to train the main actors of the States in the prevention and management of terrorism.

This is the main reason why all the partners in the Sahel have included a training component in their intervention, which, in addition to the professionalisation of the armed forces, tries to ensure that the objective of the fight against terrorism includes civil society and all the state and non-state actors of the states in the region.

To convince oneself of this, it is not too much to recall the creation of the Sahel Security College¹ of the G5-Sahel². Indeed, this College aims to replace, in its new format, the CSS created in 2012 within the framework of the EU – CT SAHEL project³, *to constitute a network of security actors (law enforcement officers, magistrates, court officials, members of civil society, religious dignitaries, etc.). It is also an essential training tool for the cadres of the internal security forces.* It is important to emphasise that in this training mission, much emphasis is placed on respecting human rights in any intervention in the Sahel. The fact that the actors in the criminal and security chain (including society) are involved guarantees respect for these internationally accepted standards. This training on respect for human rights (taken as a whole) is also provided by MINUSMA. Although this mission operates exclusively in Mali, it contains representatives from almost all the countries of the Sahel. As a result, any action taken toward training security actors and the penal chain is credited to the region's countries.

Although strictly focused on police and military forces, for Eucap Sahel and EUTM,⁴ it is essential to note that their interventions integrate the same notions. This way, at the end of their mission, the defence and security forces will be better equipped to respect human rights in all their interventions.

These different trainings have brought some armies from poor to excellent in terms of defence and security. For example, the Chadian army was praised

1. See (<https://www.g5css.com/decouvrez-le-css/>).

2. The G5 SAHEL has received official support from MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali), via UN Security Council Resolution 2391, which provides support to the joint force. (UN Security Council, 2017, Resolution 2391, 5).

3. It was a European counter-terrorism programme in the Sahel.

4. The European Union has committed several hundred soldiers and experts to two training missions in Mali, EUTM for the armed forces and EUCAP Sahel-Mali for the police.

as exemplary in the fight against violent radical groups by General François Lecointre (former commander of the European training mission in Mali). During a presentation in Brussels on 5 March 2013, he considered the Chadian army to be a model. However, he added that it is necessary to avoid the trap of copying the Malian army's model to that of Chad without considering each army's specificities. (See *Défense globale*, blog of La Voix du Nord defense.blogs.lavoixdu nord.fr).

In this same dynamic of support to the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA), the mission, whose headquarters are in Bamako (capital of Mali), was initiated.

As for the Education and Training Task Force (ETTF), it is the entity in charge of the instruction and training of the units. It also provides support to the training programmes in the various Malian military training centres on themes related to leadership and human resources management.

The Advisory Task Force (ATF) Department based in Bamako provides advice to the Ministry of Defence personnel, the army headquarters, and the military regions' headquarters. Similarly, it also provides support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force in terms of strengthening the operational capabilities of troops (see Defence Agreement between the French Republic and the Republic of Mali, published by Decree No. 2016-1565 of 21 November 2016 on the publication of the treaty on defence cooperation between the French Republic and the Republic of Mali, signed in Bamako on 16 July 2014, Art. 2).

It should be recalled that well before the multidimensional crisis Mali has been experiencing since 2012, the United States of America provided training to specific units of the Malian army to prevent and fight against terrorism. The President of Mali, at the head of the Transition, Colonel GOITA, was one of the beneficiaries of the said training, which led to the creation of the Malian special anti-terrorist forces.

In the same vein, MISAHHEL strongly supports Security Sector Reform actors. The efforts of the above-mentioned partners are much more constant and more extensive with civil society organisations. They provide many trainings on deradicalisation and prevention of violent extremism in the Sahel, mainly in Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. In all the Sahelian countries covered here, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been the first to intervene in these areas with substantial technical and financial support from the partners mentioned above.

Thanks to this support, notions related to violent extremism and human rights concepts are no longer the sole preserve of state institutions. Moreover, CSO intervention allows communities to be reached in places that are difficult to access or even inaccessible to state institutions. This has been possible thanks to the intervention of international partners working in Mali and elsewhere due to the policies and initiatives they are developing there. These policies strongly entrench the rule of law by awakening communities through their practical and genuine involvement in deploying CSO activities.

Another critical aspect of the training component is opening a space of excellence accessible to all African countries in peacebuilding, both for civilians and for defence and security forces. This is the Alioune Blondin BEYE Peacekeeping School (Bamako-Mali). This school provides training and internships that are highly valued throughout Africa. It thus contributes to the professionalisation of the Somaliland Development Fund (SDF) on the continent while simultaneously providing a place for meetings and confidence-building between the population and the SDF.¹

At the continental level, the African Union has adopted various legal instruments to prevent and combat organised crime and terrorism in the Sahel and West Africa in particular². The relevance and effectiveness of these measures depend mainly on the capacity of individual states to test them. The fragile status of states is a significant obstacle in the fight against the terrorist nebula and organised crime. This is the case in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, where terrorist groups and drug traffickers operate in small territories.

International cooperation in the Sahel also involves supporting states in the construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure.

The construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure

This involves constructing or rehabilitating infrastructure in Sahelian countries to benefit the populations by providing essential social services, a task initially assigned to the state. In this sense, the action of international partners tends to fill a large gap, which the actors of violence very often exploit to enlist specific communities in their terrorist activities.³

1. See usefully (<https://www.empbamako.org/>).

2. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung analysis note, Sering Bamba Gaye (2017), *Connection between jihadist groups and smuggling and illicit trafficking networks in the Sahel*.

3. Read usefully FIDH, *Dans le centre du Mali, les populations prises au piège du terrorisme et du contreterrorisme*, Rapport d'enquête, November 2018/N° 727F, available at (https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/fidh_centre_du_mali_les_populations_prises_au_pie_ge_du_terrorisme_et_contre_terrorisme.pdf).

These infrastructures concern those that guarantee *access to water and sanitation, resilience to food and nutritional insecurity, and access to spaces for expression*. In this area, the Sahel Alliance's emergency development programme¹ has achieved very good results under the aegis of the G5 Sahel. As of March 2022, *22 national and 9 multi-country projects are being implemented. Five projects have already been completed. 207 million have been disbursed, demonstrating a higher implementation capacity (40%) than that generally observed for projects financed in the G5 Sahel countries*. Like the Alliance, all other international partners² are directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of such projects to strengthen the access of populations to better basic services. In doing so, they become less vulnerable.

To a lesser extent, at the Malian level, MINUSMA has initiated Quick Impact Projects (QIPS), which are community-based micro-projects costing up to US\$50,000 and lasting no longer than six months, in the areas of rehabilitation of public services and small-scale infrastructure, training and awareness-raising, and job and income creation. *These projects must have both a rapid and lasting effect, responding to the priority needs of the population and aiming to build confidence in the peace process, the Mission and its mandate*.

The Sahel region has become highly dependent on this support, resulting from international cooperation. Better still, all the actions carried out help in the fight against terrorism by strengthening the resilience of communities.

2.2. The achievements of military cooperation

These achievements can be divided into two categories: the state of military assistance in the Sahel and the role of civil society organisations in inclusive governance in the Sahel.

The state of military assistance in the Sahel

Given the seriousness and expansion of the terrorist threat with astonishing speed in the Sahel, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, the three countries most affected have mobilised to propose responses likely to curb the insecurity caused by terrorism and local conflicts. Thus Mali, with the support

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1. In 2018, in order to stabilise areas facing complex security challenges and high economic, social and climatic vulnerabilities, the G5 Sahel member countries asked the G5 Sahel Executive Secretariat (SEG5) to design an Emergency Development Programme (UDP). See: (<https://www.alliance-sahel.org/actualites/le-programme-de-developpement-durgence-pdu-du-g5-sahel/>).
 2. These include MINUSMA, the DUE, French, German, Danish and Spanish development workers.

of its technical and financial partners, has launched the Emergency Plan for the Sahel (PUS), Burkina Faso, the Integrated Security Plan for the Central Regions (PISRC) and Niger, the creation of the High Authority for Peace Consolidation (HACP). All of this is eloquent testimony to the fact that these states have taken the terrorist nebula into account (Toukara, 2020).

From the analysis of these different initiatives, it is clear that the multidimensionality of insecurity is taken into account, with the cursor even being more focused on security at the expense of development actions.

The various military operations are certainly praised here and there, but it must be recognised that they often carry the label of severe violation of human rights and international humanitarian law.¹

Regional and sub-regional organisations have been at the bedside of Mali since the multidimensional crisis broke out in 2012 and at the bedside of Burkina Faso since the military coup of January 2022. This has led the Observatoire Citoyen (2020) to say that the African Union was one of the first actors to deploy three thousand (3,000) men to support the joint G5 Sahel and ECOWAS forces, and also adopted an action plan that consisted of making financial resources available in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa, particularly in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

In doing so, the African Union and ECOWAS have increased their involvement with the Malian authorities since June 2020, following the uprising known as the June 5 Movement (M5), which led to the premature departure of the democratically elected President Ibrahim Keita. This movement eventually overcame his regime with a military coup on 18 August 2020², claiming to have completed the protest embodied by the M5.

The role of Civil Society Organisations for inclusive governance in the Sahel

At the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) level, the crises have pushed them to become more involved in restoring sustainable peace in almost all countries undergoing terrorist attacks and/or political tensions. CSOs are mainly (but not exclusively) involved in awareness-raising, information and communication campaigns, support/assistance operations for victims of the crisis, etc.

1. See also: Human Rights Watch, *By day we fear the army, by night the jihadists: abuses by armed Islamists and security forces in Burkina Faso*, May 2018, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/burkinafaso0518fr_web3.pdf.

2. Interview with ECOWAS-Mali.

In general, non-governmental development organisations (NGOs) implement or support small-scale, one-off projects. They intervene in most areas of development: the fight against famine, and support for women's generative activities, and economic recovery activities, particularly for vulnerable people. It should be recalled that civil society in Mali has participated in all stages of the peace agreement process, from the preliminary agreements of Ouagadougou (June 2013) to the signing of the peace agreement in 2015 between Mali, the armed movements and the international community.

Similarly, NGOs such as WANEP (West African Network for Peacebuilding), IMPRAP (Institut Malien de Recherche ACTION) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) carry out reconciliation and social cohesion activities with communities in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

One of the requirements of democratic governance of the security sector is the existence of internal and external control and monitoring mechanisms. This control and monitoring must come from a variety of actors, namely civil society organisations.

It is recognised that good governance of the security sector is achieved through¹:

- the submission of security institutions to the civil authority with constitutional legitimacy,
- non-interference of security and defence institutions in political affairs,
- the definition of security policies by the political authority, which supervises their implementation by the security institutions.

Based on this precondition, it should be noted that the absence of effective control of the security sector by civil society organisations could encourage corrupt practices, clientelism, nepotism, impunity and the denial of people's rights in the security sector. Thus, if security sector governance is not subject to rigorous and efficient civilian oversight, it could undermine the efforts of the authorities (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) towards security for all and democratic and inclusive governance.

1. Augustin Loada and Ornella Moderan, (2015). *The role of civil society in security sector reform and governance*, DCAF.

III. The difficulties of fully developing international counter-terrorism cooperation in the Sahel

These difficulties are of at least two kinds: the effective non-participation of the Sahel states and the resurgence of breakdowns in the democratic order in the region.

3.1. The effective non-participation of the Sahel states

Cooperation means putting resources together to achieve common goals. However, in international cooperation with the Sahel countries, the partners, unfortunately, provide almost all the means necessary for the collaboration to work. The most striking example of this is the G5 Sahel. The joint force planned by this organisation was supposed to have 5,000 men, with 1,000 men per member country (Mali, Mauritania, Burkina, Niger and Chad), but this was never the case. The member countries did not succeed. The question of why this is the case remains open, as the reasons may vary. But it is easy to imagine that the main reason is the lack of financial means.

This observation is valid for all other areas of cooperation. CSOs, being the most active, depend mainly and entirely on international partners for all their projects and programmes in a context where the state is almost absent.

3.2. The resurgence of the breakdown of the democratic order

There is no doubt that the political situation in the Sahel has left many observers in awe. The political procrastination that followed the electoral unrest in Mali finally got the better of the democratic order and accelerated the advent of a military regime in August 2020 and May 2021. These events were unprecedented in the Sahel region and were beyond all comprehension. The regional integration organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA and even the AU) condemned these acts in the strongest terms and imposed sanctions because the new regime violated all the rules of democracy. In doing so, all international partners linked their cooperation to the return to constitutional order. This is still not the case. Worse, the international forces present in Mali, except MINUSMA, have been dismissed, and the country is reportedly reorienting its cooperation towards other partners.

These facts are not specific to Mali. Guinea Conakry and Burkina Faso are also experiencing the advent of military regimes.

This climate of return to the continent's "dark" hours is not conducive to the development of international cooperation. In these countries, the fight against terrorism has become the sole concern of the new regimes, with postures that even call into question some of the bilateral relations between states. Mali, for example, because of the embargo it is under, and the closure of its borders imposed by its ECOWAS neighbours, has just refused to allow Senegalese troops involved in the MINUSMA contingent to enter its territory. Niger's stance towards Mali is also an example of the deterioration of international cooperation in the Sahel.

In such an environment marked by tensions between Sahelian countries, it is difficult to see the development of international cooperation in the traditional pattern it was known.

IV. Perspectives and Recommendations

The dynamics of the withdrawal of European forces (Barkhane and Takuba) from Mali could continue with more tension, suspicion and threats on both sides. It is already known that the two armies (Malian with the help of Russian and French elements) accuse each other of being behind a supposed or actual mass grave discovered in Gossi (a camp formerly occupied by the Barkhane force in northern Mali) after it was solemnly transferred to the Malian army in April 2022. In this poisonous climate, how can the role and place of the African Union in supporting the G5 Sahel Joint Force be understood and envisaged, given that this force is primarily supported financially by the European Union through France, which is in a diplomatic dispute (France in particular) with Mali?

With the announced withdrawal of Mali on 15 May 2022 from all G5 Sahel organs and bodies, including its Joint Force (JF)¹, what is the fate of joint military actions in the G5 Sahel space?

The question deserves to be asked, especially when we know that Niger is no longer on good terms with Mali (suspension of joint military actions). Similarly, Burkina Faso has also abandoned several of its military bases (Koutougou, Nassoumbou in the Soum province).

Indeed, the renewed interest shown towards Russia in terms of military cooperation by a certain number of G5 Sahel countries (Mali has already taken note, Burkina Faso and Niger are in discussions). What kind of linkage

1. It should be noted that the 'founding fathers' (both French and Sahelian) have all left power today.

with European armies in an environment where Europe and Russia compete in the Sahel?

Having raised these points and questions, it is appropriate to make the following pragmatic recommendations to the African Union:

- In view of the seriousness of the security situation and the overlapping actions of the security services in the Sahel, the African Union must resume its role in the fight against terrorism and organised crime. This would involve setting up the institution's standby force under Chapter 7 of the United Nations to guard against possible financial and even technical difficulties. This appropriation by the African Union of the supply and demand of security will not only allow Africans to have faith in their institution but at the same time, significantly weaken the open competition between military powers in the Sahel in the name of the fight against terrorism;
- further strengthen the capacities of CSOs and the political class (with particular emphasis on women and youth) so that they are better prepared to play their role fully and wisely and assume their responsibility in peace-building and social cohesion initiatives. CSOs and the political class certainly benefit from the technical and financial support of financial and technical partners (TFPs), but this support raises the issue of autonomy and independence vis-à-vis the said partners, some of whom may have an agenda other than that of peace and social cohesion;
- evaluate the tactical and operational capacities of the armies of the Liptako Gourma (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) to adapt responses and initiatives to the specificities of each army. This failure to consider the troops' engineering has negatively impacted the effectiveness of the proposed responses in some respects.

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16th EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY
OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON TERRORISM AND
UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT IN AFRICA
28 MAY 2022
MALABO, REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl. (XVI)



DECLARATION ON TERRORISM AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT IN AFRICA

« Robust Response, Deepening Democracy and Collective Security »

Special Edition

DECLARATION ON TERRORISM AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT IN AFRICA

«Robust Response, Deepening Democracy and Collective Security»

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), meeting at the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 28 May 2022 :

GUIDED by existing AU legal instruments, particularly the Constitutive Act (2000) ; the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (2002) ; the Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP) [2004]; the AU Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact, (2005) ; AU Agenda 2063 specifically aspirations 3, 4 and 7 ; and the Johannesburg Declaration on Silencing the Guns in Africa, (2020), as well as the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030 ;

RECOGNIZING the continued relevance of various instruments adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the AU over the past years to address the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, including the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, (1999) ; the Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, (2002) and the Protocol to the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (2004) and the Tripoli Declaration on Conflict Reduction, Sustaining and Promoting Peace in Africa (2009) ;

RECALLING Assembly Decisions Assembly/AU/Dec.256(XIII) on combating the payment of ransom to terrorist groups (2009) and Assembly/AU/Dec. 311(XV) on the prevention and combatting of terrorism (2010) ;

BEARING IN MIND our pledge to silence the guns on the Continent, as contained in the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration (2013) and Decision Assembly/AU/Dec. 501(XXII) declaring 2014 – 2024 as the “*Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation in Africa*” (2014) ;

ALSO GUIDED by the principles enshrined in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007) ; the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1981), and other relevant AU human rights instruments ;

FURTHER REITERATING our Decisions and pronouncements on unconstitutional changes of government in Africa, including Decisions AHG/Dec. 141 (XXXV), [AHG/Dec. 142 (XXXV) (1999) and Assembly/AU/Dec. 253(XIII) (2009) ; the Declaration on the Framework for the OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government, (the Lomé Declaration) July 2000 ; as well as the PSC Ezulwini Framework for the Enhancement of the Implementation of Measures of the African Union in Situations of Unconstitutional Changes of Government (2009) ;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to promote constitutionalism ; the principles of separation of powers and independence of the judiciary ; the promotion of political pluralism with the full participation of citizens, in conformity with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and the Union's Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections ;

REITERATING the Decisions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on the issues of terrorism, violent extremism and unconstitutional changes of government in Africa ;

TAKING NOTE of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Commission on Terrorism and Violent Extremism and on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT :

- i) The resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government ; the expanding threat of terrorism and violent extremism across the Continent, including the influx of foreign terrorist fighters, private military companies and mercenaries, the proliferation of armed groups, as well as transnational organized crime, negatively impact the peace, security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of some Member States ;
- ii) Africa continues to face structural challenges in adequately addressing the root causes of terrorism, violent extremism, and unconstitutional changes of government ;
- iii) Governance deficits ; terrorism and violent extremism are being compounded by the impact of climate change ; and the concern over the use of natural resources by terrorist groups as a source of financing ; and

- iv) Despite these challenges, Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and AU Organs continue to make gradual progress towards the consolidation of democracy and constitutionalism, as well as countering terrorism and violent extremism ; and
- v) There is an imperative for greater collective action to address the challenges of terrorism, violent extremism and unconstitutional changes of government.

WE HEREBY DECLARE THE FOLLOWING :

A. On Terrorism and Violent Extremism,

1. Our unequivocal condemnation of all manifestations of terrorism and violent extremism across the Continent; and reaffirm our commitment to preserve the indivisibility of the security of African states in line with the Common African Defense and Security Policy and within the spirit of finding African security solutions ;
2. Salute all African citizens and peace operations personnel who paid the ultimate sacrifice as a result of terrorist attacks in the Continent and globally ;
3. Scale up implementation of all relevant AU instruments and Decisions, particularly the 1999 Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the 50th OAU/AU Anniversary Solemn Declaration ;
4. Accelerate the signing and ratification of relevant continental instruments, including the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism; the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, and the African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa ;
5. Full operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) without further delay and to strengthen coordination with RECs/RMs on its utilization; and to expedite the finalization of the Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and RECs/RMs on the ASF ;
6. Reiteration of Decisions, particularly Assembly/AU/Dec.753.XXXIII of February 2020, and Assembly/AU/Dec.815(XXXV) of February 2022 on the establishment of a Counter-Terrorism Unit within the ASF ;

7. Affirmation of the call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries from the Continent; and on the Commission to speed up the conclusion of the revision of the OAU Convention on Mercenaries ;
8. Strong rejection of external interference in Africa's domestic affairs and call upon all external actors to cease their support to terrorist groups in the Continent ;
9. Reaffirmation of the imperative of adequate, sustainable and predictable financing for counterterrorism efforts on the Continent and consequently renew the call to the United Nations, particularly the UN Security Council, for use of assessed contributions for AU-mandated Peace Support Operations (PSOs), to further strengthen counter-terrorism efforts and promote stabilization in the Continent ;
10. The AU Peace Fund is a viable instrument for addressing urgent peace and security challenges on the Continent and commend the contributions by Member States made thus far ;
11. Strong commitment to provide adequate budgetary allocation for national initiatives and programmes aimed at strengthening the prevention and combatting of terrorism and violent extremism ;
12. Strengthen the fight against local and external financing of terrorism and to accelerate the implementation of the Assembly Decision on the criminalization of the payment of ransom to terrorist groups; and to promote concerted efforts on the improved management of natural resources ;
13. Scale up efforts to combat transnational organized crime especially the proliferation of illicit arms, including through enhanced intelligence sharing mechanisms, border management, cooperation and control ;
14. Develop a comprehensive Continental Strategic Plan of Action on countering terrorism in Africa, premised on existing national and regional strategies, to enhance coordination and coherence, in order to consolidate coordination and enhance actions ;
15. Deploy more efforts and resources to strengthen cybersecurity, including through legislation at national level, ratification of the AU Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection and enhanced cooperation; and institute necessary legal and regulatory

action to prevent the abuse of social media; platforms by terrorists, as well as support the development of the Continental Cybersecurity Strategy and the Child Online Safety and Empowerment Policy ;

16. Establish an AU Ministerial Committee on Counter Terrorism to serve as a high-level coordination, monitoring, evaluation and follow up mechanism of the implementation of the commitments made in this Declaration ;
17. Substantially increase support for children, youth and women affected by armed conflict especially terrorism, radicalization and insurgency, in collaboration with RECs/RMs and AU Organs; and initiate concerted actions in building capacity for community-based resilience and stabilization, to promote effective long-term recovery through the post-conflict reconstruction and development programs ;
18. Promote a multidimensional and proactive approach in empowering the youth by reinforcing peace education, tolerance and coexistence in order to consolidate the fight against terrorism and violent extremism ;
19. Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Commission, and specialized agencies of the AU including, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) and the AU Centre for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), to build synergies with and improve the efficiency of Member States in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism ;
20. Promote experience sharing and lesson learning among Member States and RECs/RMs to better coordinate and enhance regional and continental efforts in combating terrorism ;
21. Build, diversify and consolidate strategic international partnerships to reinforce cooperation and coordination of efforts in preventing and countering terrorism ;
22. Welcome the initiative of the AU-UN Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) on security and governance in the Sahel under the auspices of the Chairperson of the Commission **H. E. Moussa Faki MAHAMAT** and the UN Secretary-General **H. E. António GUTERRES**; and the appointment of the former President of the Republic of Niger, **H. E. Mahamadou ISSOUFOU**, as Chair of the JSA Independent High-Level Panel ;

23. Welcome the outcome of the Meeting of Directors-General and Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa held on 26 May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, and, in this regard, call for greater intelligence and information sharing and joint operations through the platform of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), as well as the various regional fusion centres, to ensure effectiveness of our intelligence governance initiatives in the Continent.

B. On Unconstitutional Changes of Government,

1. Unequivocally condemn of all forms of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa and reiterate our zero tolerance in this regard ;
2. Recalls Assembly Decision, AU/Dec.818(XXXV) which mandated the Third Africa Governance Report to focus on the nexus between Governance and the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR); however, given the spate of unconstitutional changes of government on the Continent, Directs the Commission and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to remodel the Third Africa Governance Report-2023 to reflect issues related to unconstitutional changes of government ;
3. Recommit to our total adherence to the relevant principles, norms and shared values contained in the AU Constitutive Act, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Lomé Declaration ;
4. Determine to further enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of AU support to Member States in political transition and post-conflict situations, to build durable peace, entrench democratic culture and governance, including through transitional justice, and prevent relapse to cycles of violence, within the context of silencing the guns in Africa ;
5. Commend the strides made by Member States in organizing free, fair, credible and transparent elections, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic; and the continued respect for electoral outcomes and constitutional provisions relating to term limits ;
6. Take due note of and endorse the Accra Declaration arising from the Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government held from 15 to 17 March 2022 in Accra, under the leadership of **H. E. Nana**

Addo Dankwa AKUFOADDO, President of the Republic of Ghana and current Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government ;

7. Consolidate our efforts to create a conducive environment for the effective participation of women and youth in political processes, as well as addressing the impact of unconstitutional changes of government on children ;
8. Strengthen national, regional and continental mechanisms on early warning and conflict prevention, as well as the interface between the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), to consolidate good governance, particularly constitutionalism and the rule of law through multi-level engagements; and to that end, call on Member States yet to accede to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), to do so, to concretize national ownership of governance processes.

We are fully cognizant of the ultra importance of building resilient societies, social cohesion, national unity and regional cooperation, as the bedrock for lasting peace, and in the spirit of the Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation in Africa; institute **31 January** of each year, as “*Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation*”; and, to this effect, appoint **H. E. João Manuel Gonçalves LOURENÇO**, President of the Republic of Angola, as AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa.

As Heads of State and Government of the African Union, speaking with one voice, mindful of our responsibility and commitment, we recommit to build on the shared vision of Pan-Africanism and the legacy of African unity and solidarity, by upholding constitutionalism, democracy and good governance and to embrace the multidimensional approach to achieve peace, security and sustainable development, in line with the aspirations of Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want.

Adopted by the 16th Extra Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on 28 May 2022.

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SEIZIÈME SESSION EXTRAORDINAIRE DE LA CONFÉRENCE DE
L'UNION AFRICAINE SUR LE TERRORISME ET LES CHANGEMENTS
ANTICONSTITUTIONNELS DE GOUVERNEMENT EN AFRIQUE
28 MAI 2022
MALABO (République de Guinée équatoriale)

Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl. (XVI)



DÉCLARATION SUR LE TERRORISME ET LES CHANGEMENTS ANTICONSTITUTIONNELS DE GOUVERNEMENT EN AFRIQUE

« Réponse robuste, approfondissement de la démocratie et sécurité collective »

DÉCLARATION SUR LE TERRORISME ET LES CHANGEMENTS ANTICONSTITUTIONNELS DE GOUVERNEMENT EN AFRIQUE

« Réponse robuste, approfondissement de la démocratie et Sécurité collective »

NOUS, chefs d'État et de gouvernement de l'Union africaine (UA), réunis lors de la 16e session extraordinaire de la Conférence des chefs d'État et de gouvernement sur le terrorisme et les changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement à Malabo, en Guinée équatoriale, le 28 mai 2022 :

GUIDÉS par les instruments juridiques existants de l'UA, notamment l'Acte constitutif (2000), le Protocole relatif à la création du Conseil de paix et de sécurité (CPS) de l'Union africaine (2002), la Politique africaine commune de défense et de sécurité (PACS) [2004]; le Pacte de non-agression et de défense commune de l'UA (2005); l'Agenda 2063 de l'UA, en particulier les aspirations 3, 4 et 7; et la Déclaration de Johannesburg sur la réduction au silence des armes à feu en Afrique (2020), ainsi que la Feuille de route principale de l'UA sur les mesures pratiques pour faire taire les armes en Afrique d'ici 2030;

RECONNAISSANT la pertinence continue des divers instruments adoptés par l'Organisation de l'unité africaine (OUA) et l'UA au cours des dernières années pour faire face au fléau du terrorisme et de l'extrémisme violent, notamment la Convention sur la prévention et la lutte contre le terrorisme (1999), le Plan d'action sur la prévention et la lutte contre le terrorisme en Afrique (2002), le Protocole à la Convention de l'OUA sur la prévention et la lutte contre le terrorisme (2004) et la Déclaration de Tripoli sur la réduction des conflits, le maintien et la promotion de la paix en Afrique (2009);

RAPPELANT les décisions de la Conférence Assembly/AU/Dec.256(XIII) sur la lutte contre le paiement de rançons aux groupes terroristes (2009) et

Assembly/AU/Dec.311(XV) sur la prévention et la lutte contre le terrorisme (2010);

AYANT A L'ESPRIT notre engagement à faire taire les armes sur le continent, tel que contenu dans la Déclaration solennelle du 50^e anniversaire (2013) et la Décision [Assembly/AU/Dec.501(XXII)] déclarant 2014 – 2024 comme la « Décennie Madiba Nelson Mandela de la réconciliation en Afrique » (2014);

ÉGALEMENT GUIDÉS par les principes consacrés par la Charte africaine de la démocratie, des élections et de la gouvernance (2007), la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples (1981) et les autres instruments pertinents de l'UA en matière de droits de l'homme;

RÉITÉRANT EN OUTRE nos décisions et prises de position sur les changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement en Afrique, notamment les décisions AHG/Dec.141(XXXV), AHG/Dec.142 (XXXV) (1999) et [Assembly/AU/Dec.253 (XIII)] (2009); la Déclaration sur le cadre de la réponse de l'OUA aux changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement (la Déclaration de Lomé) juillet 2000; ainsi que le Cadre d'Eszulwini du CPS pour le renforcement de la mise en œuvre des mesures de l'Union africaine dans les situations de changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement (2009);

RÉAFFIRMANT notre engagement à promouvoir le constitutionnalisme, les principes de séparation des pouvoirs et d'indépendance du pouvoir judiciaire, la promotion du pluralisme politique avec la pleine participation des citoyens, conformément à la Charte africaine de la démocratie, des élections et de la gouvernance (ACDEG) et à la Déclaration de l'Union sur les principes régissant les élections démocratiques;

RÉITÉRANT les décisions du Conseil de paix et de sécurité (CPS) sur les questions du terrorisme, de l'extrémisme violent et des changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement en Afrique;

PRENANT NOTE des rapports du Président de la Commission sur le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent et sur les changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement en Afrique.

RECONNAISSONS QUE :

- i) La résurgence des changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement, la menace croissante du terrorisme et de l'extrémisme violent sur le continent, y compris l'afflux de combattants terroristes étrangers, de sociétés militaires privées et de mercenaires, la prolifération des groupes armés, ainsi que la criminalité transnationale organisée, ont un impact négatif sur la paix, la sécurité, la stabilité, la souveraineté et l'intégrité territoriale de certains États membres;
- ii) L'Afrique continue de faire face à des défis structurels pour s'attaquer de manière adéquate aux causes profondes du terrorisme, de l'extrémisme violent et des changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement;

- iii) Les déficits de gouvernance; le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent sont aggravés par l'impact du changement climatique; et l'inquiétude suscitée par l'utilisation des ressources naturelles par les groupes terroristes comme source de financement; et
- iv) En dépit de ces défis, les États membres, les communautés économiques régionales et les mécanismes régionaux (CER/MR) et les organes de l'UA continuent de progresser progressivement vers la consolidation de la démocratie et du constitutionnalisme, ainsi que vers la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent; et
- v) Il est impératif de renforcer l'action collective pour relever les défis du terrorisme, de l'extrémisme violent et des changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement.

NOUS DÉCLARONS CE QUI SUIT :

A. Sur le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent,

1. Condamnons sans équivoque toutes les manifestations de terrorisme et d'extrémisme violent sur le continent; et réaffirmer notre engagement à préserver l'indivisibilité de la sécurité des États africains conformément à la politique africaine commune de défense et de sécurité et dans l'esprit de trouver des solutions africaines en matière de sécurité;
2. Saluons tous les citoyens africains et le personnel des opérations de paix qui ont fait le sacrifice ultime à la suite d'attaques terroristes sur le continent et dans le monde;
3. Renforçons la mise en œuvre de tous les instruments et décisions pertinents de l'UA, en particulier la convention de 1999 sur la prévention et la lutte contre le terrorisme et la déclaration solennelle du 50e anniversaire de l'OUA/UA;
4. Accélérons la signature et la ratification des instruments continentaux pertinents, notamment la convention sur la prévention et la lutte contre le terrorisme, la convention de l'UA sur la coopération transfrontalière et la charte africaine sur la sécurité, la sûreté et le développement maritimes en Afrique;
5. Rendons pleinement opérationnelle la Force africaine en attente (FAA) sans plus tarder et renforcer la coordination avec les CER/MR sur son

utilisation; et accélérons la finalisation du protocole d'accord entre l'UA et les CER/MR sur la FAA;

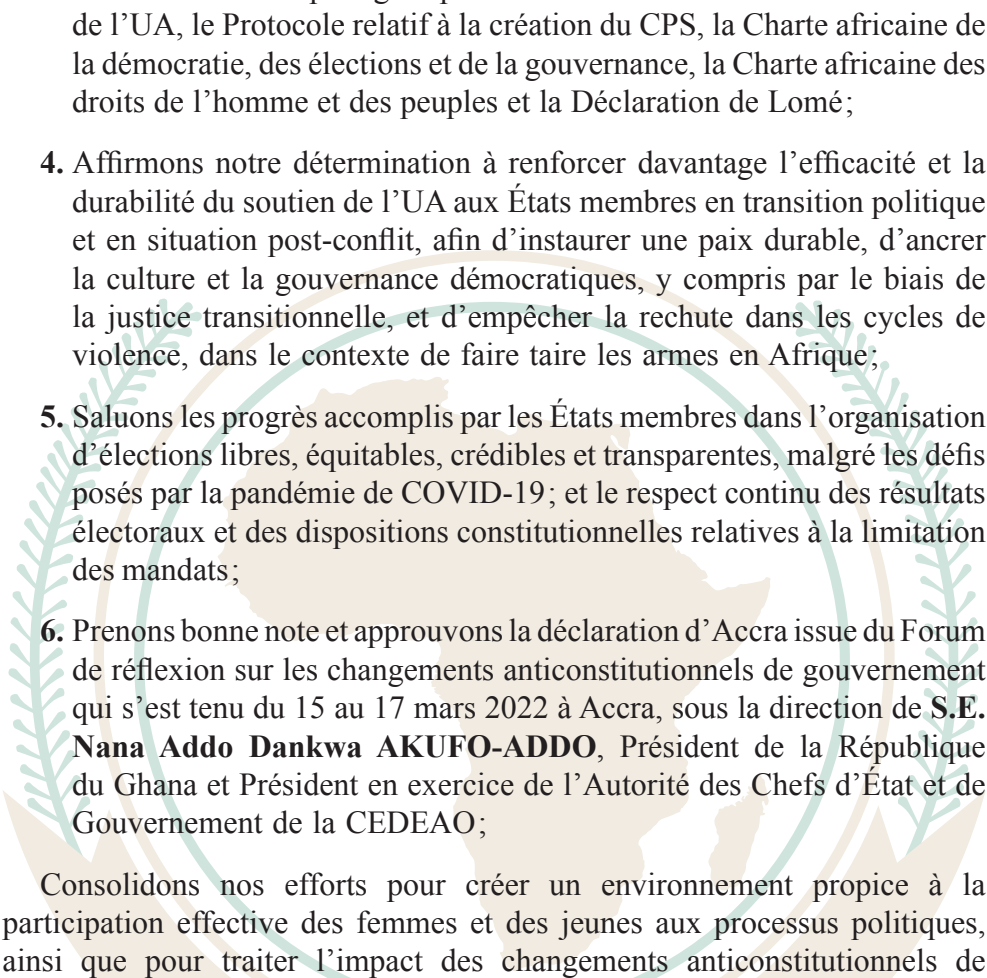
6. Réitérons les décisions, notamment [Assembly/AU/Dec.753.XXXIII] de février 2020, et Assembly/AU/Dec.815(XXXV) de février 2022 sur la création d'une unité de lutte contre le terrorisme au sein de la FAA;
7. Affirmons l'appel au retrait immédiat et inconditionnel des combattants terroristes étrangers et des mercenaires du continent; et à la Commission d'accélérer la conclusion de la révision de la Convention de l'OUA sur les mercenaires;
8. Rejetons fermement l'ingérence extérieure dans les affaires intérieures de l'Afrique et appeler tous les acteurs extérieurs à cesser leur soutien aux groupes terroristes sur le continent;
9. Réaffirmons l'impératif d'un financement adéquat, durable et prévisible des efforts de lutte contre le terrorisme sur le continent et, par conséquent, renouveler l'appel aux Nations unies, en particulier au Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies, pour l'utilisation des contributions mises en recouvrement pour les opérations de soutien de la paix (OSP) mandatées par l'UA, afin de renforcer davantage les efforts de lutte contre le terrorisme et de promouvoir la stabilisation du continent;
10. Faisons du Fonds pour la paix de l'UA un instrument viable pour relever les défis urgents en matière de paix et de sécurité sur le continent et nous saluons les contributions apportées jusqu'à présent par les États membres;
11. Nous engageons fermement à fournir une allocation budgétaire adéquate pour les initiatives et programmes nationaux visant à renforcer la prévention et la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent;
12. Renforçons la lutte contre le financement local et externe du terrorisme et accélérer la mise en œuvre de la décision de la Conférence sur la criminalisation du paiement de rançons aux groupes terroristes; et promovons des efforts concertés pour une meilleure gestion des ressources naturelles;
13. Intensifions les efforts pour lutter contre la criminalité transnationale organisée, en particulier la prolifération des armes illicites, notamment en améliorant les mécanismes de partage des renseignements, la gestion des frontières, la coopération et le contrôle;

14. Élaborons un plan d'action stratégique continental global de lutte contre le terrorisme en Afrique, fondé sur les stratégies nationales et régionales existantes, afin de renforcer la coordination et la cohérence et d'améliorer les actions;
15. Déployons davantage d'efforts et de ressources pour renforcer la cybersécurité, notamment par le biais de la législation au niveau national, de la ratification de la convention de l'UA sur la cybersécurité et la protection des données à caractère personnel et d'une coopération renforcée; prenons les mesures juridiques et réglementaires nécessaires pour empêcher l'utilisation abusive des plateformes de médias sociaux par les terroristes, et soutenons le développement de la stratégie continentale en matière de cybersécurité et de la politique de sécurité et d'autonomisation des enfants en ligne
16. Créons un Comité ministériel de l'UA sur la lutte contre le terrorisme qui servira de mécanisme de coordination, de contrôle, d'évaluation et de suivi de haut niveau de la mise en œuvre des engagements pris dans la présente déclaration;
17. Augmentons substantiellement le soutien aux enfants, aux jeunes et aux femmes touchés par les conflits armés, en particulier le terrorisme, la radicalisation et l'insurrection, en collaboration avec les CER/MR et les organes de l'UA; et lançons des actions concertées pour renforcer les capacités de résilience et de stabilisation des communautés, afin de promouvoir un redressement efficace à long terme par le biais des programmes de reconstruction et de développement post-conflit;
18. Promouvons une approche multidimensionnelle et proactive de l'autonomisation des jeunes en renforçant l'éducation à la paix, la tolérance et la coexistence afin de consolider la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent;
19. Renforçons la capacité institutionnelle de la Commission et des agences spécialisées de l'UA, notamment le Centre africain d'étude et de recherche sur le terrorisme (CAERT), le mécanisme de coopération policière de l'UA (AFRIPOL) et le Centre de l'UA pour la reconstruction et le développement post-conflit (PCRD), afin de créer des synergies avec les États membres et d'améliorer leur efficacité dans la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent;

20. Promouvons le partage d'expériences et l'apprentissage de leçons entre les États membres et les CER/MR pour mieux coordonner et renforcer les efforts régionaux et continentaux dans la lutte contre le terrorisme ;
21. Établissons, diversifions et consolidons les partenariats stratégiques internationaux afin de renforcer la coopération et la coordination des efforts de prévention et de lutte contre le terrorisme ;
22. Nous félicitons de l'initiative de l'évaluation stratégique conjointe (JSA) UA-ONU sur la sécurité et la gouvernance au Sahel sous les auspices du Président de la Commission **S.E. Moussa Faki MAHAMAT** et le Secrétaire général des Nations unies **S.E. António GUTERRES**; et la nomination de l'ancien Président de la République du Niger, **S.E. Mahamadou ISSOUFOU**, en tant que président du panel indépendant de haut niveau de la JSA ;
23. Nous félicitons des résultats de la réunion des directeurs généraux et des chefs des services de renseignement et de sécurité en Afrique qui s'est tenue le 26 mai 2022 à Malabo, en Guinée équatoriale, et, à cet égard, préconisons un plus grand partage des renseignements et des informations et à des opérations conjointes par l'intermédiaire de la plateforme du Comité des services de renseignement et de sécurité d'Afrique (CISSA), ainsi que des divers centres de fusion régionaux, afin de garantir l'efficacité de nos initiatives de gouvernance du renseignement sur le continent.

B. Sur les changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement

1. Condamnons sans équivoque toutes les formes de changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement en Afrique et réitérons notre tolérance zéro à cet égard ;
2. Rappelle la Décision AU/Dec.818(XXXV) de la Conférence qui a demandé à ce que le Troisième rapport sur la gouvernance en Afrique se focalise sur le lien entre la gouvernance et la 4^e révolution industrielle (4IR); toutefois, compte tenu de la vague de changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement sur le continent, Charge la Commission et le Mécanisme africain d'évaluation par les pairs (MAEP) de remanier le Troisième rapport sur la gouvernance en Afrique-2023 pour refléter les questions liées aux changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement ;

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3. Renouvelons notre engagement à une adhésion totale aux principes, normes et valeurs partagées pertinents contenus dans l'Acte constitutif de l'UA, le Protocole relatif à la création du CPS, la Charte africaine de la démocratie, des élections et de la gouvernance, la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples et la Déclaration de Lomé;
 4. Affirmons notre détermination à renforcer davantage l'efficacité et la durabilité du soutien de l'UA aux États membres en transition politique et en situation post-conflit, afin d'instaurer une paix durable, d'ancrer la culture et la gouvernance démocratiques, y compris par le biais de la justice transitionnelle, et d'empêcher la rechute dans les cycles de violence, dans le contexte de faire taire les armes en Afrique;
 5. Saluons les progrès accomplis par les États membres dans l'organisation d'élections libres, équitables, crédibles et transparentes, malgré les défis posés par la pandémie de COVID-19; et le respect continu des résultats électoraux et des dispositions constitutionnelles relatives à la limitation des mandats;
 6. Prenons bonne note et approuvons la déclaration d'Accra issue du Forum de réflexion sur les changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement qui s'est tenu du 15 au 17 mars 2022 à Accra, sous la direction de **S.E. Nana Addo Dankwa AKUFO-ADDU**, Président de la République du Ghana et Président en exercice de l'Autorité des Chefs d'État et de Gouvernement de la CEDEAO;

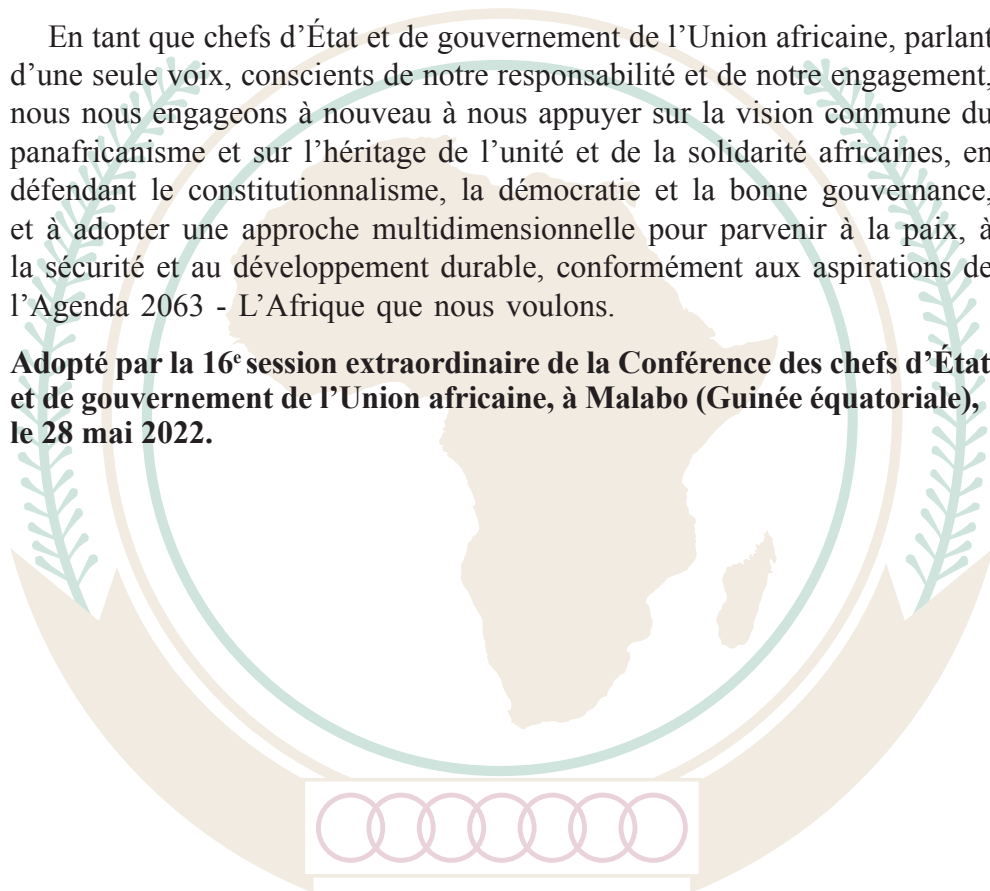
Consolidons nos efforts pour créer un environnement propice à la participation effective des femmes et des jeunes aux processus politiques, ainsi que pour traiter l'impact des changements anticonstitutionnels de gouvernement sur les enfants;

Renforçons les mécanismes nationaux, régionaux et continentaux d'alerte précoce et de prévention des conflits, ainsi que l'interface entre l'architecture africaine de gouvernance (AGA) et l'architecture africaine de paix et de sécurité (APSA), afin de consolider la bonne gouvernance, en particulier le constitutionnalisme et l'État de droit, par des engagements à plusieurs niveaux; à cette fin, appeler les États membres qui n'ont pas encore adhéré au mécanisme africain d'évaluation par les pairs (MAEP) à le faire, afin de concrétiser l'appropriation nationale des processus de gouvernance.

Nous sommes pleinement conscients de l'importance primordiale de la construction de sociétés résilientes, de la cohésion sociale, de l'unité nationale et de la coopération régionale, en tant que fondement d'une paix durable, et dans l'esprit de la Décennie Madiba Nelson Mandela pour la réconciliation en Afrique, instituons le **31 janvier** de chaque année comme « Journée africaine de la paix et de la réconciliation » et, à cet effet, nommons **S.E. João Manuel Gonçalves LOURENÇO**, Président de la République d'Angola, en tant que Champion de l'UA pour la paix et la réconciliation en Afrique.

En tant que chefs d'État et de gouvernement de l'Union africaine, parlant d'une seule voix, conscients de notre responsabilité et de notre engagement, nous nous engageons à nouveau à nous appuyer sur la vision commune du panafricanisme et sur l'héritage de l'unité et de la solidarité africaines, en défendant le constitutionnalisme, la démocratie et la bonne gouvernance, et à adopter une approche multidimensionnelle pour parvenir à la paix, à la sécurité et au développement durable, conformément aux aspirations de l'Agenda 2063 - L'Afrique que nous voulons.

Adopté par la 16^e session extraordinaire de la Conférence des chefs d'État et de gouvernement de l'Union africaine, à Malabo (Guinée équatoriale), le 28 mai 2022.



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