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1. Letter from Secretary General

Dear participants, fellow delegates. First of all, as a senior in my school I would like to send my appreciation to every one of you for your interest. As BarisMUN Team, we are working every second of each day for 1 year straight just to make our dream come true. And the dream is here, we present to you BarisMUN'25 with the great help of Bursa International MUN Club.

With this conference, our "Better MUN Experience for Bursa" slogan is becoming a reality. Not only to Bursa, but to every city of Turkiye. With a big faith, I assure everyone that this conference will not only be successful academically but organization also. BarisMUN'25 is not only a Model United Nations Conference but it is a faith, it is a passion. With a capacity of 400+ in a single conference, we are about to achieve a milestone for the Bursa community.

2. Letter from Under-Secretary-General

Dear delegates, honorable academic team and every other distinguished participant; my name is Kadircaan Yıldız and I am the responsible Under Secretary-General for the committee of SPECPOL.

Events that have been occurring in the Sahel Region have become a deep concern globally. Thus, we felt the need to expand the discussion and try to come up with ideas after understanding it in full terms. In our committee, delegates will be expected to acknowledge the issues first, then move on with the problem solving part. In order to ease the acknowledgement process and also to show your passion and knowledge, position papers are enabled. I highly encourage you to write one. Further explanation is present in the how to part.

If you feel the need to ask questions or have any inquiries feel free and do not hesitate to contact me

Kadircaan Yıldız

Under Secretary-General of SPECPOL

kadircanyildiz.business@gmail.com

3. Leter From The Academic Asisstant

Esteemed Delegates, Academic Team and the secreteriat of Barismun25 I am Taym Al-qassab and I am The Academic Asisstant of this committee.

If nothing happens I will be with you throughout these 4 days. I sincerely hope that you produce meaningfull debates, understand the purpose of your committe and the agenda while embracing the true spirit of diplomacy.

I would like to kindly remind all of you that we will be expecting a position paper from all of you and it will efect your chance of recieving an award. All of the informatation you need to know including How To Write A Position Paper, The Agenda & Backround etc. can be found in this study guide so I hardly suggest that all of you delegates shall read the study guide, understand the topic and with studying you're country's position take action according to your country's policy so that both your solution and debates be realistic & effective.

If you need help, have a problem or have any kind of questions related to the committe do please do not hesitate and feel free to contact me via my phone number or e-mail.

Best Regards,

Taym Al-qassab

The Academic Asisstant of Specpol.

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4. How to Write A Position Paper

Since the conference will follow the Harvard MUN procedure (position papers are not allowed on Harvard MUN procedure), delegates are not obliged to prepare a position paper for the committee, opening speeches will be evaluated as qualifications. However, it is highly encouraged to prepare a position paper for representative situations, it is highly efficient and effective for a person to understand how the committee will proceed. Even though a workshop for the committee will be given, notifying the delegates, who know their assigned representative organ's (head of state, country, etc.) roles and necessities without any obligatory executive order, before the committee starts, will have an impact on the view towards the delegate.

Position Paper Outline

Paragraph One – Issue and Position

One should utilize this paragraph to clearly outline the main problems associated with the topic. The point of the paragraph is to provide a basic foundation as to the current situation associated with the topic. After generally describing the issue, one should give their country's policy regarding the issue, and state especially why their country supports that policy. Policy statements may often be as short as stating a delegate's country supports a certain action followed by a detailed qualification regarding this policy decision. This section of position paper should not exceed five to six sentences.

Paragraph Two – Detailed Background Information

This paragraph is an opportunity for one to show the depth of their knowledge about the past and current situations regarding the topic. Be sure to discuss:

- Historical origin of the problem, particularly why the problem arose,
- How does the issue relate to the international community and why is it of international concern,

- Previous actions taken to try and solve the problem (if any),
- Successes and failures of past actions and why they succeeded or failed,
- Problems that continue to exist or ones that have not yet been addressed,
- Devoting two to three sentences per item on this list should allow you to have sufficiently discussed the topic and to set the foundations for the final paragraph of your position paper.

Paragraph Three – Proposed Solutions Regarding the Issue

This paragraph is the one that will set one's paper apart from the others. After identifying the problems in paragraph two, one should utilize this paragraph to list their solutions to all the problems they enumerated above. The quality of their solutions could be a great determinant in the overall evaluation of position paper. Be sure to discuss:

- Specific proposals regarding how to solve specific issues,
- How each proposal will be implemented, including the feasibility,
- Global impact of solving the problem or implementing these solutions,

Mechanically, position paper should follow the guidelines set forth by the conference, such as margin width and font size. Recommendations for example may be, first, limit position paper to one page, and do not write about both topics in the same position paper (for committees with multiple agendas). Write one position paper for each topic, and print each position paper on its own, separate piece of paper. Second, place a heading at the top of the paper including country, issue, and committee. Feel free to place a picture of the allocated country's flag in the header if desired.

5. Key Terms

Political Instability: Political instability is a natural tendency of a government to collapse either because of conflicts or growing struggles, sometimes violent, between various political parties. Political instability also occurs if there is a rapid change of government and policy, increasing the likelihood of subsequent instability.

Sahel Region: The Sahel is a region in Africa. It is defined as the ecoclimatic and biogeographic realm of transition between the Sahara to the north and the Sudanian savanna to the south. Having a hot semi-arid climate, it stretches across the south-central latitudes of Northern Africa between the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea.

Militarism: Militarism is the belief or the desire of a government or a people that a state should maintain a strong military capability and to use it aggressively to expand national interests and/or values.

Coup d'état: Coup d'état, also called coup, the sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group. The chief prerequisite for a coup is control of all or part of the armed forces, the police, and other military elements.

Terrorism: Terrorism is the unlawful use of force, threats or violence against persons or property in the sake of achieving political, religious or ideological goals. Law enforcement generally recognizes two types of terrorism: domestic and international.

Governance: Governance is a concept that describes how a country, institution, or a community is governed. How Decisions are **made, implemented** and **monitored**. In summary it describes the quality of the decision-making and the management process.

Security Vacuum/Gap: Security Gap or Security Vacuum is a state of weakness resulting from the inadequacy or ineffectiveness of the authorities, institutions or mechanisms that will ensure security in a region or system.

Social Cohesion: Social Cohesion is the extent to which individuals and groups within a society can live together peacefully, respect common values, and maintain social integrity.

Radicalization: Radicalization is the process by which individuals or groups move away from the general values of society and adopt extreme ideological, political or religious ideas.

Insurgency: Insurgency is a violent, armed rebellion by small, lightly armed bands who practice guerrilla warfare against a larger authority

Counter-terrorism Measures: Counter-terrorism measures are the totality of military, legal, intelligence, political and social measures taken by a state or international organization to prevent, stop and reduce the effects of terrorist acts.

Regional Cooperation: Regional Cooperation means that the states in a specific geographic region act together in the economic, political, military or cultural fields to protect their common interests, promote development and increase security.

6. What is SPECPOL and How It Works?

The United Nations Special Commission on Politics and Decolonization, commonly referred to as SPECPOL, is the fourth of six major commissions within the General Assembly. Its mission is to address issues related to decolonization, disarmament and international security. SPECPOL, through its deliberations, resolutions and recommendations, plays an important role in promoting international peace and security.

One of SPECPOL's main priorities is to solve the problem of decolonization globally, nowadays specified in the Middle East. The Commission works to ensure that all people living under colonial rule and harsh authorities have the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination and independence throughout their life. This includes identifying remaining non-autonomous areas and working with management authorities to develop decolonization processes. In recent years, the Commission has also focused on addressing challenges facing already independent sectors, such as: B. The Need for Economic Development and Good Governance.

Another key focus of SPECPOL is disarmament and non-proliferation. The purpose of the Commission is to reduce the number of weapons and inappropriate usage of weapons, especially nuclear weapons, in circulation around the world and to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. To achieve this goal, the Commission participates in middlecourse, amicable movements and multilateral disarmament negotiations, including the review process of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). SPECPOL also works to promote confidence-building measures between countries to reduce tensions and prevent conflict escalation. SPECPOL also addresses various other issues related to international security, such as terrorism, cybersecurity, trusteeship and peacekeeping. This committee monitors and stabilizes global security trends and develops strategies to counter emerging threats. It also oversees the activities of United Nations peacekeeping missions tasked with

maintaining international peace and security in conflict-affected areas around the world.

The Commission works through a combination of formal meetings and informal consultations. In formal sessions, participants of each country representing their countries give speeches and negotiate solutions on various issues. Informal consultations, on the other hand, allow delegates to participate in more detailed, heated and assisting discussions on specific issues and work toward consensus on issues. These consultations are often moderated by a committee chair or designated moderator. SPECPOL plays an important role in promoting world peace and security through addressing decolonization, disarmament, and other security-related issues. The Commission operates through a combination of formal and informal meetings that enable delegates to engage in constructive dialogue and negotiate solutions that address the most pressing problems facing the international community. increase. As global security challenges evolve, SPECPOL will remain an essential forum for multilateral cooperation and diplomacy.

7. Introduction to the Agenda

Terrorism is often a symptom of political instability and, when present, can enrage that instability and lead to increased violence and conflict. Political instability can create an environment in which extremist groups can thrive, exploit power vacuums to recruit new members, spread ideologies, and carry out attacks. It can cause significant damage, disrupt economic activity, and cause loss of life, including innocent civilians. The resulting violence and instability can complicate the creation and maintenance of democratic institutions and provoke the problem of political instability.

The economic consequences of terrorism due to lack of political stability in a region can be severe. Terrorism can lead to the destruction of infrastructure, businesses and tourist attractions, leading to significant losses of income and investments. Alongside with destroying both the growth and the economic stability in the region caused because of the lack of Security **(Due to the terrorism and the**

political instability) which can lead to a huge financial crisis Nationwide in a country . Furthermore, the uncertainty caused by terrorism may discourage foreign investors from entering the market, leading to a slowdown in economic growth. This Could lead to a vicious cycle where lack of economic opportunity fuels terrorism and increases the problem of political instability, which can also result in a civil war caused by a riot in the region that can worsen an ongoing situation. Terrorism can have a significant impact on social cohesion and human rights. It is not uncommon for communities to become polarized after an attack, with some blaming the entire group or community for the actions of extremists. This can lead to discrimination, hate speech and even violence against innocent people. Moreover, terrorism can erode civil liberties as governments take counter-terrorism measures that can violate human rights such as freedom of speech, assembly and privacy etc. . These impacts on social cohesion and human rights can further compound the problem of political instability and make it more difficult to build coherent and democratic societies.

7.1. What is Sahel Region and Its Importance

The Sahel region is a long strip of land on the African continent, just south of the Sahara Desert. It spans about 5,400 kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east and includes parts of more than a dozen countries. The Sahel is generally defined as the region between the Sahara in the north and the savannah in the south, characterized by a semi-arid climate.

The Sahel region includes parts of the following countries: Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Eritrea. It is home to about 100 million people, many of whom make their living from subsistence farming and ranching. The area is also culturally diverse, with more than 20 ethnic groups living in the area.

The Sahel region faces many challenges including poverty, food insecurity and political instability. Drought and desertification are causing widespread land degradation, making it increasingly difficult for farmers and ranchers to earn a living. The region has also been plagued by armed conflict and extremist violence with groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Islamic State.

Despite these challenges, the Sahel region is also home to a vibrant culture and rich history. Known for its music, dance and traditional arts, it has been the birthplace of many influential African leaders and thinkers. Despite the difficulties facing the region, efforts are being made to promote sustainable development, reduce poverty, and increase stability and security.



7.2. What is Political Stability and Why Is It Desired?

Political stability refers to the ability of a government to maintain its authority and stability over time. It is characterized by a consistent and predictable political environment that enables the government to effectively govern and manage national affairs. Political stability is essential to creating an environment in which citizens can live peacefully, pursue their goals, and thrive economically.

A politically stable government is one that can ensure security, maintain law and order, and provide basic services such as education, health care, and infrastructure so that the nation can also grow and develop itself throughout time. It is characterized by the rule of law in which everyone is equal before the law and has access to justice. A politically stable government also creates an environment in which citizens can

trust state institutions such as the judicial, legislative and executive branches to have their voices heard and their grievances resolved.

Political stability is essential for sustained economic growth and development. A politically stable government can create an environment that attracts foreign investment, creates jobs and fosters economic growth. We can also provide the infrastructure, education and health services needed to support economic development. Political stability is therefore a key factor in creating an enabling environment for economic growth and development. And due to all of this benefits countries whom in an intention of an attack/harming a country first step is going to taken is to ruin that country's **Political Stability** wich can cause the stopagge of the growth and development of the country due to the deficiencies of basic needs such as the security, healthcare, education etc. alongside with the problems can accour on account of the lack of Justice and freedom of speech in the country wich is going to ruin the stable environment that can be explained with the term of; **'The Domino Effect'**. In summary, political stability is an integral part of good governance and essential to building stable and prosperous societies. A politically stable government provides security, upholds the rule of law, and promotes economic growth and development, while ensuring that citizens have access to basic services and enjoy their basic rights and freedoms.

8. Sahel Region's Political Past

Since gaining independence from European colonial rulers in the 1960s, many countries in the Sahel region have experienced political instability, coups, and civil wars. Ethnic and religious tensions may fuel political violence, while economic and social challenges may be the underlying causes. Over the years, various regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) have attempted to intervene and mediate the conflict with varying degrees of success.

For example, in Mali, the 2012 military coup triggered a political and security crisis that continues to this day. The country has faced a series of armed insurgency by

Tuareg separatists and jihadist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS). In response, the French-led Coalition of West African Nations deployed troops to the region to support the Malian government and combat the threat of terrorism. Violence in neighboring Burkina Faso has surged since the 2014 popular uprising that overthrew longtime President Blaise Compaoré, with jihadist groups launching attacks against civilian and military targets. Niger faced similar challenges, with armed groups such as Boko Haram and his ISGS carrying out deadly attacks in the southeast of the country.

Many countries in the Sahel region have made progress in promoting democracy, human rights and good governance, but the region remains vulnerable to political and security crises. Ethnic and religious tensions, economic challenges, and the threat of terrorism and extremism remain major challenges. However, efforts by regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the AU, and by international partners such as France and the United States, remain focused on promoting peace, stability and development in the region. These efforts include initiatives to address the root causes of conflict, support the development of effective and accountable institutions of government, and promote economic growth and social inclusion. Despite the challenges ahead, there is hope that the Sahel region can overcome its past and build a bright future for its people.

8.1. Colonizing State' Effects

Colonization of the Sahel by European powers occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. France, in particular, was a major settler of the Sahel in the early 20th century, ruling what is now Senegal, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mauritania. The influence of colonization on the region continued into its twentieth century, with most Sahelian countries gaining independence from European colonizers in the 1960s. However, the legacy of colonialism, including arbitrary borders, economic dependence on cash crops, and political instability, remained long after independence.

Located in northern Africa, the Sahel has a long history of colonization by European powers. Sahelian colonization had a profound impact on the region, with

economic, social and political effects that are still being felt today. One of the main effects of colonization on the Sahel was the introduction of a new economic system that prioritized natural resource extraction and cash crop production over subsistence agriculture. European settlers introduced monoculture plantations such as peanuts and cotton to replace indigenous farming practices and food production. The result has been an over-reliance on cash crops. Cash crops were vulnerable to global market fluctuations, leading to economic instability and poverty.

Colonization also led to the imposition of arbitrary borders on the Sahel, leading to ethnic tensions and conflicts that continue to this day. The European powers divided regions among themselves, creating borders that ignored the natural flow of people, goods and services. As a result, several ethnic groups split into different nations, creating tensions and conflicts over resources and political power.

Colonization also had a significant social impact on the Sahel. European powers have introduced new cultural values and norms that undermine the traditional way of life of the people of this region. Missionaries and colonial officials introduced Christianity and Islam, disrupting traditional religious practices. Europeans also imposed their own standards of beauty and dress, leading to the marginalization of indigenous cultures and traditions.

Finally, colonization had a significant impact on the Sahelian political climate. European powers reinforced their own systems of government, often using local elites as collaborators to maintain control. These systems were often exploitative, leading to resentment and resistance from locals. When the colonial powers finally withdrew, they were left with a weak and unstable government struggling to provide basic services and maintain order. In summary, colonization had a severe impact on the Sahel, leading to economic, social and political instability that persists to this day. The legacy of colonialism continues to shape the region's future as the Sahel's people struggle to meet the challenges posed by centuries of exploitation and oppression.

8.2. Multi-party Democracies in the Sahel Region

Given the long and complex history of various forms of government in the Sahel region, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when the first democracies emerged in the Sahel. However, it is worth noting that some countries in the Sahel have a history of democratic rule that predates European colonialism.

For example, the Kingdom of Ghana, which existed west of Mali from the 6th century to its 13th century, is thought to have had a highly centralized and complex political system with elements of democratic decision-making. According to some reports, the King of Ghana was elected by a council of elders from various clans, and decisions were made through a system of consultation and consensus building. Similarly, the Mosi Empire, which existed in what is now Burkina Faso from its 14th century to its 19th century, had a system of government based on a decentralized federation of clans and villages. Although the empire was governed by monarchs, decision-making was highly participatory, with councils of elders and representatives of various communities playing a key role in governing.

In modern times, the first multi-party elections in the Sahel region took place in 1945, when Senegal was still under French colonial rule. Although limited in scope and turnout, these elections marked an important step in establishing democratic governance in the region. The history of democratic governance in the Sahel is complex and multifaceted, with different forms of decision-making and governance emerging at different times and in different contexts.

The Sahel region has a variety of political systems, including multi-party democracies. Many countries in the region hold elections and have established multi-party systems, but the quality and effectiveness of these systems vary widely. In recent years, some countries in the Sahel region have made great strides towards democratization. Senegal, for example, has been hailed as a model of democratic governance in West Africa with its competitive multi-party system, regular elections and peaceful transfer of power. Similarly, Ghana, which lies on the western border of the Sahel, has enjoyed several electoral successes since transitioning to democracy in the 1990s.

However, other countries in the Sahel struggle to establish and maintain an effective multi-party system. Political opposition is often stifled by government crackdowns on freedom of expression, press freedom, and freedom of assembly. Some countries, such as Chad and Niger, have seen multiple coups and military interventions over the past decades, undermining efforts to establish stable and democratic governance.

Furthermore, the security situation in the Sahel region poses a significant challenge to multi-party democracies. Several countries in the region face rebel groups and terrorist organizations seeking to undermine democratic processes and destabilize governments. In countries like Mali and Burkina Faso, attacks by armed groups have disrupted elections, forced governments to declare states of emergency, and restricted political and civil liberties. In summary, some countries in the Sahel region have made significant strides towards multi-party democracy, while others continue to suffer from political instability and authoritarian rule. The challenges posed by rebel groups and the legacy of political instability and repression continue to pose significant obstacles to the establishment of effective multi-party democracy in the Sahel.

8.3. Coups d'état in the Sahel Region

A coup is a sudden, violent and illegal seizure of power by a government or government agency. It is usually a group of individuals, often military personnel and political elites, who overthrow existing governments and take control of nations. Coups may be motivated by a variety of factors, including political or economic grievances, power struggles, or attempts to address perceived national security threats. They are generally considered undemocratic and often lead to the suspension of constitutional rights and freedoms. Coups have severe consequences for the countries involved, including political instability, social unrest, and economic trouble. Africa's Sahel region, which straddles several countries including Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, has seen a series of coups in recent years. These coups have brought political instability, violence and humanitarian crises to the region.

One of the most notable coups in the Sahel occurred in Mali in August 2020. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was overthrown by a group of military officers led by Colonel Asimi Goyta. The coup was preceded by months of protests and political unrest, driven by public anger over corruption, economic hardships, and the government's failure to address the country's security crisis. The coup in Mali was condemned by the international community, calling for the restoration of democratic rule and the release of imprisoned political leaders. However, the Goyta-led military government remained in power and installed an acting government that promised to hold elections in 2022.

Burkina Faso has seen a series of coups and coup attempts since longtime dictator Blaise Compaoré was overthrown in 2014. In September 2015, a failed coup by members of the president's security forces killed 14 people and arrested several senior military officials. In May 2021, the country's interim government was overthrown in another coup led by military officer Colonel Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiva. The coup was widely condemned by the international community, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) imposed sanctions on the country.

Niger underwent a coup in February 2010, in which President Mamadou Tanja was overthrown by a military government led by Saloujbo. The coup followed a power struggle between Tandjah and opposition groups over his efforts to extend his term beyond the constitutionally mandated limit of two posts.

Chad has also seen its fair share of coups and failed coups since independence from France in 1960. The final coup occurred in April 2021, when President Idriss Deby was killed fighting rebels in the north of the country. His son, Mahamat Idriss Deby, soon took office as the country's new leader, raising concerns about the country's future political stability.

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 Keita
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

In summary, the Sahel region has been characterized in recent years by a series of coups leading to political instability, violence and humanitarian crises. These coups are often fueled by a combination of factors such as corruption, economic hardships and security concerns. The international community has called on these countries to restore democratic rule, but the path to stability and peace remains uncertain.

8.4. Effects of Political Status in the Sahel Region

One of the most significant effects of political instability in the Sahel region is its economic impact. Constant conflict and violence disrupt trade and investment, slowing economic growth and development. This has exacerbated poverty and

displaced millions of people in the region. According to the World Bank, the Sahel region has the highest poverty rate in the world, with more than 40% of its population living in extreme poverty. High unemployment, especially among young people, also contributes to the region's economic adversity. Political instability has also had a significant impact on the security situation in the region. The Sahel is plagued by numerous extremist groups, including Boko Haram, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara (ISGS). These groups have carried out numerous attacks against civilians and security forces, causing widespread fear and destabilizing the region. The ongoing conflict and insecurity have displaced millions and heated the humanitarian crisis in the region.

In addition to the security and economic impact, political instability has also had a significant impact on the humanitarian situation in the region. Ongoing violence and displacement have created a humanitarian crisis, leaving millions in need of food, water and shelter. According to the United Nations, more than 29 million of its people in the Sahel region are in need of humanitarian assistance, a situation inflamed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The political status of the Sahel is closely linked to regional and global conditions. Regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) are committed to promoting regional stability and good governance. However, these efforts have been restrained by ongoing conflict and political instability. The international community is also involved in efforts to address the crisis, providing humanitarian assistance and supporting security initiatives.

In brief, the influence of political status in the Sahel is far-reaching and significant. Political instability has adversely affected the economic, security and humanitarian situation in the region, exacerbating poverty, displacement and conflict. Addressing these issues requires sustained efforts by governments, regional organizations and the international community to promote stability, address the root causes of conflict and provide humanitarian assistance to those in need.

9. Terrorist Groups and Militarism

One of the main problems that the Sahel Region is facing for a while now is the constant terrorist attacks on various areas in the region. Terrorism is spread widely around the region and makes the Sahel one of the most affected areas by terrorism around the world. Nearly all countries in the Sahel are impacted by terrorist groups, some more than others, some less. Several terrorist groups are active or have attacked the region before.

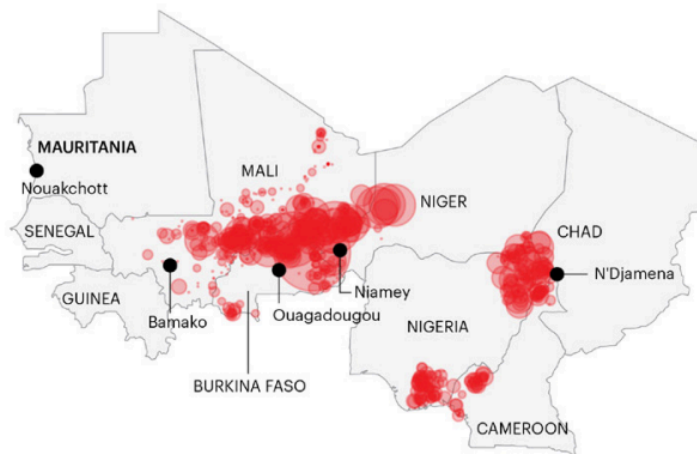
The lack of security and stability in the region is only making the impact of these terrorist groups' actions more intense and irreversible in the area. There is not enough source or support to maintain the safety of these countries therefore they are very open to any attack from any terrorist group. Throughout history since these countries gained independence from European colonizers the conflicts relating to terrorism or insecurity continue.

Besides these factors, the Sahel Region is struggling with extreme poverty and inequality in its society, creating frustrated generations alongside tensions regarding culture and ethnic diversity making the region more vulnerable to any damage. Therefore several terrorist organizations exist in different areas of the region.

The efforts on preventing these terrorist groups from spreading or creating any more damage are being made by different groups including other states from outside the region. French and US military, United Nations or National armies are performing in the region for the sake of providing safety. Nevertheless the militarization in the area, Sahel Region is under the high threat of any terrorist attack. In addition to the lack of security regarding the terrorist organizations, militarization in the area to prevent these attacks also backfires often too. The interventions made by militaries to provide safety have shown mixed results and also resulted in unintended violations of human rights or civilian losses. Consequently, the Sahel Region is one of the most at-risk areas in the world with various complications.

Terrorist attacks in the Sahel, 2007-2021

Most terrorist attacks occur away from major urban centers.



Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

9.1. Active Terrorist Groups in the Sahel Region

The Sahel Region is and has been under the impact of several terrorist groups. The effect of these terrorist groups is expanded through the areas of various countries. There are multiple motives of these terrorist groups all being complex and relying on a different issue in the region. Some being based upon economic factors, some being upon ethnic tensions and the majority of them being upon political motives. All the countries in the region and near the region are being impacted by these attacks but to count some of the most affected countries in the Sahel Region, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger are primarily the countries that have been most damaged from terrorism.

The significant terrorist groups in the region are, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Anser Dine, Al-Mourabitoun, ISWAP, JNIM and many others. Most of these organizations' main purpose is to pursue the Islamic State or support Jihad.

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda is a Sunni pan-Islamist militant organization and their primary intent is backing Jihad with the ideal of the Islamic State. Al Qaeda was first formed in the Afghan-Soviet war to defend the Muslims against the USSR. After the war, veterans including Osama bin Laden decided to pursue the group, for their current main goal, Jihad. Later on, the organization started to take action on supporting Muslim groups and the Jihad movement. Al Qaeda has attacked several locations several times and is identified as a

terrorist group by the United Nations. 1988 US embassy bombings, 2002 Bali bombings and September 11 attacks are their main offenses.

Al Qaeda retains their role in the Sahel Region as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) or Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and leads as one of the major terrorist groups in the Sahel. AQIM aims to overthrow the Algerian government and form an Islamic State. For that purpose, AQIM has been engaged with the Maghreb and Sahel regions since the 2000s. AQIM's first attack was in 2007 on Algeria, they carried out a double suicide bombing aimed at the United Nations Office and a government building. The attacks resulted in 33 deaths and over 200 injuries. Since the first attack, the organization constantly resumed their offenses on several occasions including in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Algeria.

On the other hand, Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) continues to operate as a unit of Al Qaeda in West Africa and specifically in Mali. JNIM could be counted as one of the newest terrorist groups in the region starting their appearance in 2017. Besides JNIM, various terrorist organizations are linked together including Ansar Dine and Al-Mourabitoun with their mutual focus on attacks in Mali.

Ansar Dine

Ansar Dine is a terrorist organization that was first formed in late 2011, 2012 when the Malian coup d'état occurred. The 2012 military coup and the Tuareg Rebellion had made Mali severely unstable and vulnerable to any raid. Ansar Dine exploited this position of instability and the overthrow of the Malian Government and made their attacks during this period. The organization's first offense occurred in late 2011 with an attack on a police station in Mali. Later on, Ansar Dine continued their violations in the region and in March 2012, after the military coup in Mali, alongside other groups gained authority in Northern Mali with their invasion. The increase of vulnerability and instability in the Sahel region due to military coups and political instability are clearly displayed in the raids of Ansar Dine, Mali was in a vulnerable position after the coup and it was a clear opportunity for these terrorist groups to invade Mali. Ansar Dine was active between the years 2012 and 2017 till its coalition with Al-Mourabitoun and the Macina Liberation Front to assemble the JNIM organization.

Al-Mourabitoun

Al-Mourabitoun is an Islamist Militant group that was originally a part of the AQIM until its leader separated from the group in late 2012 with the name of al-Mulathamun Battalion. Afterwards, the split, the al-Mulathamun Battalion and the Mali-based Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) decided to merge under the name of Al-Mourabitoun in 2013. Following, the group's first attack was committed on a gas facility in Algeria, in January 2013. Their attacks continued in the region, mainly in Algeria, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso until 2017 when the organization merged with other groups including Anser Dine to form the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin organization.

Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin

JNIM, one of the newest terrorist organizations in the area was first formed in 2017 with the unification of several terrorist groups including Ansar Dine, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Al-Mourabitoun. JNIM is an active militant Islamist terrorist group that is counted as an official branch of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The organization is mainly active in Mali but its raids have spread to other states like Burkina Faso too. JNIM's aim is mainly to overthrow the current government, remove other forces like the UN from the area and impose Islamic Law in the region. JNIM's atrocities in the region continue since their first offence in the Malian army base in 2017 which caused at least 60 deaths.

JNIM has been active in the region with high-profile attacks in the Sahel targeting military or civilian targets and working on drawing other forces like the UN or French military out of the region. Besides the efforts against JNIM, the organization is still one of the main causes of insecurity in the area.

Boko Haram

The other malicious terrorist organization is the Nigerian-based group Boko Haram, with the other name 'Nigerian Taliban'. The organization's main purpose is to overthrow the Nigerian government and form an Islamic State in the region. Boko Haram was the world's deadliest terrorist organization till the 2010s, the split of the organization which led to the formation of ISWAP, the Islamic State's West Africa Province. The first major attack of this

malicious organization occurred in 2009 in Nigeria at police stations and government buildings. Over the years, their offenses occurred constantly on various occasions in Nigeria and its neighboring countries including Niger and Chad. Boko Haram has been probably the most significant threat to Nigeria's security and stability for several years to nowadays.

Islamic State's West Africa Province

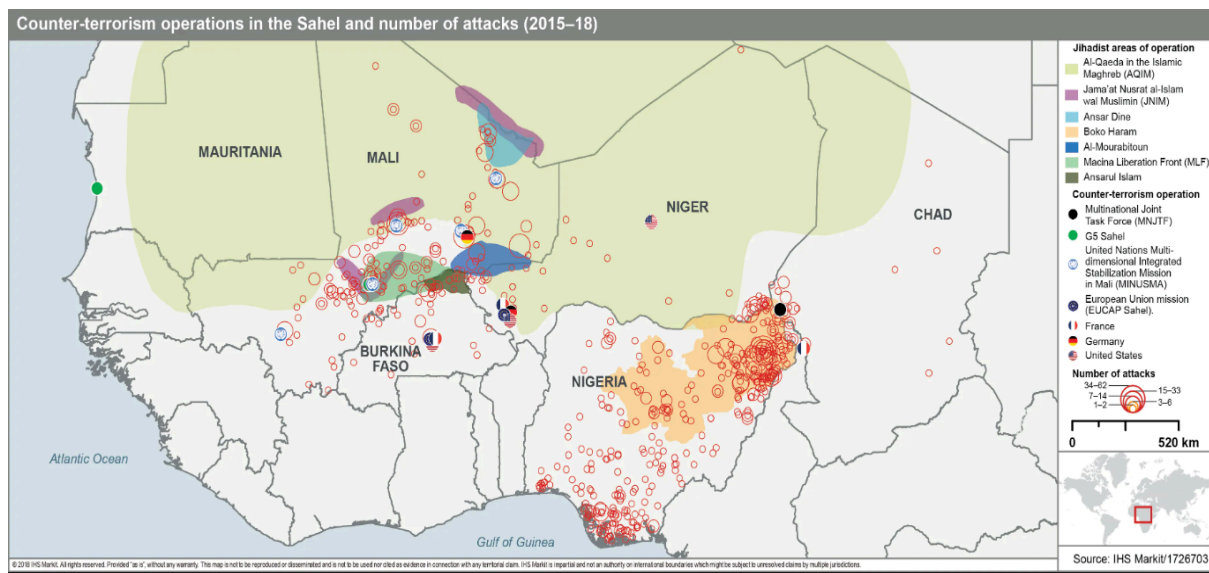
ISWAP, the former Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa unit assembled primarily in 2015 when Boko Haram was identified as the ISWAP. At the start of its formation, Boko Haram and ISIS agreed on making Boko Haram the West African unit of Islamic State, but later in mid-2016 the group separated and Boko Haram was resurrected as its own. Afterwards, the tension between these separate organizations increased, starting to cause conflicts. IS recognized another leader in 2016 and Boko Haram's activities started to be separated from IS. Boko Haram's terrorism started to be seen as indiscriminate violence by the Islamic State due to their attacks on Muslims in the area. ISWA declared their separation from Boko Haram's attacks on Muslims and expressed its focus on the attacks on Christians or other targets.

Later on, tensions grew with ISWA's evolvement and their overtake on Boko Haram over the years with their successful raids. After ISWA's convalescence, the leader of Boko Haram was murdered by ISWA militants in 2021. With the murder, ISWA provoked the Boko Haram militants including thousands of other groups. ISWA gained people majorly after the incident and proved its power and governance in the region. Besides Nigeria, ISWA continues their attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger with their bloc known as the IS-Greater Sahara. Other groups emerging from the former Boko Haram militants still resume their invasions in Nigeria and other areas.

Overall, Islamic State West Africa Province is one of the main reasons for the terrorism in the region mainly in Nigeria and other provinces. ISWAP is causing a major threat to the region regarding their range of action in several states.

Islamic State in the Greater Sahara

Islamic State in Greater Sahara is an Islamist terrorist group and the second most active organization that operates as one of the branches of Islamic State in mainly Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, sustaining the ideology of Salafi Jihadism with their invasions. The group was formed in 2015 by separating from Al-Mourabitoun and made its first raid in September 2016 to a military base in Burkina Faso. ISGS continues their attacks in various areas and sustains an indiscriminate violence pattern against civilians and militants. The group's attacks in the Liptako Gourma between 2019 and 2020 acted as a significant role in making ISGS's capabilities and sophistication more seen. ISGS persisted in their atrocities in the region and the way they operated as a separate wing of ISWAP started to raise the tension between JNIM. Over the years the conflict between JNIM and ISGS started to become a significant threat to the region and has been causing extensive damage. ISGS is a malicious organization operating mainly in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger also known as the tri-state border area of Liptako Gourma and other neighboring areas as one of the most significant reasons for the inconsistency and insecurity in the region



9.2. Why Terrorist Groups Are Able to Exist and Spread

The insecurity and instability in the Sahel Region continue to increase day by day and one of the main reasons for the lack of security in the area is the several terrorist groups that are active in various states of the region.

These terrorist organizations have been committing uncountable atrocities in the region since the early 2000s and their activities continue non-stop. Therefore with the increasing instability and vulnerability in the region these terror organizations' offenses increase accordingly. Due to several reasons including weak governance, poverty or political divisions in the region, Sahel has become a very sensitive and open area to any invasions. Caused by the same reasons, the terror activities in the region are very brutal and hard to recover for the Sahel States.

The reasons for the vulnerability in the Sahel are various and severe, one of them is the constant coup d'états that the region has been and still going through. These coups make the already weak governments more defenseless or make governments collapse. Even though a coup can not be the sole reason for terrorism in the region, after a state goes through a coup d'état, the environment in the region changes in a more unstable and insecure direction causing power vacuums to occur and contributing to the rise of terrorist groups operations in the area.

Therefore, the existing terrorist groups take advantage of the power vacuum in these areas and commit their raids accordingly to achieve more successful invasions or overthrow governments to accomplish their political goals, making these raids more fierce and irreversible.

There are several examples in history of the power vacuum and instability that occurred after a military coup in the Sahel Region making the area more vulnerable and open to attacks hence causing incidents to happen regarding the opportunity that has been created for terrorist groups to invade the Sahel.

To example some of these incidents;

- After the Mali 2012 military coup; due to the Tuareg Rebellion and its effects on Mali also the displeased and frustrated soldiers regarding the mismanagement of the rebellion the soldiers attacked several locations in Mali intending to overthrow the government. The attacks resulted in a rather successful way for the soldiers but left Mali open to the attacks of terrorist groups. Therefore with the power vacuum that

occurred after these incidents Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Ansar Dine organizations used this opportunity to gain control in the area. These terror organizations seized control in Northern Mali including Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal.

- After the Burkina Faso 2015 failed coup; even if the attempted coup failed, the effects that it left on Burkina Faso were significant. After the attempt, the security and stability of the region were severely damaged. Thus, Burkina Faso's wounded position was an open door for terrorist groups to encounter. Since 2015 after the attempt the region has been under numerous attacks of Jihadist Organizations. With the damaged balances of Burkina Faso's security, stability and political state, these terrorist organizations expanded their operations in the region since then.

Besides the weak governance and political instability factor there are several other reasons for the terroristic groups to grow and continue their presence in the Sahel region. The spread of these organizations through the region is particularly easy due to the conflicts that Sahelian countries are struggling with and the spillover effect of these conflicts in the region. The region is constantly unstable due to these constant conflicts in the region or near the Sahel region. Therefore the instability and weak governance, these conflicts are severely harsh on Sahel's security. There have been several occasions in history regarding the increased terror activities in the Sahel Region. Also, due to the spillover effects, when conflicts occur in the Sahel, the after-effects are spread widely to the region or its neighbors. These incidents are handled poorly due to the weak governance in the region, making the Sahel vulnerable and open to any kind of terrorist organization.

9.3. Militaristic Approaches of Sahel States

The Sahel States has been struggling with various matters throughout the years and terrorism is a major problem, on numerous occasions resulting with deceased people, that the Sahel faces. With various factors, terrorism in the Sahel is widely spread and causes a major threat in the region due to years of unsupervised governance. The poor management of terrorism due to the instability and weak security or orders in the region are making the threats even more fatal. The Sahel States has given attempts and heaps of efforts towards handling these terrorist organizations and stopping their activity in the region in various militaristic ways, including joint military operations or international military support.

One of the biggest ones is the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which was established in 2014 by 5 Sahel States; Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, with the purpose of handling the security problem in the Sahel Region by addressing issues such as terrorism or organized crime. G5 Sahel Joint Force mainly works for creating stability and security in the region by primarily dealing with terrorism, strengthening border security and operating joint operations in the area. G5 Sahel operates with unified cooperation from each party and support from international partners such as the US and France. It also coordinates with other regional or international initiatives such as Interpol, MINUSMA or Barkshane which is a French-led operation. Even though G5 Sahel has a significant role in maintaining security and stability in the region it faces several challenges during the process as expected. These struggles are mainly caused by the lack of governance and supervising people in the Sahel States, the lack of equipment and resources or coordination problems. Regarding these struggles, G5 Sahel faces concerns relating to accountability of the Joint Force and allegations of human rights abuses during operations are rising.

Besides G5 Sahel, there are multiple international military forces that operate in the region with the mission of maintaining stability and fighting terrorism. Primary international forces that operate in the Sahel are France, the United States, United Nations, European Union and Germany. These forces are operating their mission by conducting operations separately or by cooperating with regional or other international forces in the region.

One of the most active forces in the region is the French Force, which has been active in counterterrorism in the Sahel for several years. France has been a significant factor in degrading jihadist groups in a vast area including Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad. France is known in the region for its operation, Operation Barkhane. Operation Barkhane was a follow-up to Operation Serval which was again a French-led operation in Mali. It was replaced by Operation Barkhane in 2014, aimed to counter the jihadist terrorism threats in the region. Besides France, the operation was co-operated by former French colonies Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger also known as the G5 Sahel. The French military continued its actions from 2014 to 2022, until the withdrawal of France forces from the region. While the operation achieved some success regarding the jihadist threats in the region, it encountered various casualties and concerns regarding human rights

abuses. France also provided assistance, training and support to local security actors in efforts of counterterrorism in the region.

Along with French forces, the United States has been significantly active in the region with its involvement in counterterrorism in the Sahel. The US has provided support and assistance with the aim of making their capacities stronger in order to achieve success in counterterrorism. They have made efforts regarding providing support through training, equipment and resource support and conducting operations. The US has conducted several operations in the region with the mission of combating terrorism and creating stability. One of them is the US Africa Command, which is an initiative that covers every part of Africa except Egypt. The command was established in 2007, and since then has been continuing its actions in Africa. The initiative has several exercises that work on different areas and matters. Since 2007 the program has been making its efforts to counter terrorism in Africa by direct military operations, cooperating with other initiatives and providing training, assistance and equipment support for the regional forces. Alongside with US Africa Command, The US has several other initiatives that operate in the Sahel region such as the Trans Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership or the Operation Juniper Shield. Overall, The US has been an active role in the Sahel region whether it is by counterterrorism actions or efforts on sustaining stability for the Sahel.

Besides the US and France, forces like Germany, European Union and United Nations are significant forces that operate in the Sahel region that made efforts on the matters of terrorism, weak governance, instability and insecurity. These forces have launched various initiatives such as the MINUSMA which was operated by the UN and has participation from various states like Germany, or the EUTM Mali which is the European Union's initiative that focuses on providing training in order to build the capacity of the local Malian forces.

With all these military forces that operate in the Sahel, terrorism and instability still continue to exist and spread. The main cause that these forces can only be effective at some level is that the root causes of these matters are not recognized by them. Without recognizing the root causes and solving the regional governance problem, these forces are not effective enough and will face struggles like coordination or accountability problems.

9.4. Backfires of Militarism

While the operating militaristic forces in the Sahel have achieved success at some level, the struggles are continuing to increase and spread in the region. Military support is necessary and needed in order to combat terrorism and solve the insecurity problem in Sahel but the main causes of these struggles generally come from the roots like the governance problems or socio-economic grievances and are being left unrecognized. Therefore militarism is not an effective solution on its own to completely solve the Sahel crisis. There are various negative consequences of militarism that the Sahel has faced throughout years of struggling with terrorism. Militarism in the region if not done comprehensively and without recognizing the root problems can backfire and worsen the problems that Sahel struggles with daily. There are multiple forces that operate in the Sahel in order to combat terrorism and bring peace to the region and even though these forces have achieved some success we have encountered backfires and negative consequences too. Militarism in such a fragile region with such weak governance is very open to backfire due to coordination and accountability problems. These militaristic approaches can result in human rights abuses or civilian casualties while giving efforts to combat terrorists and therefore can weaken the trust among the population. Heavy militarism and weakened trust due to the negative results on the population can contribute to radicalism and therefore create violence circles that exacerbate terrorism and insecurity.

There have been several examples of these backfires in the Sahel region; for instance in the early 2000s when Nigeria was fighting Boko Haram, the Nigerian Government approached with a very heavy-handed militaristic response and resulted in several human rights offenses, civilian casualties and various military offenses. Plus the government gave insufficient focus to the root problems that the population was struggling with like socio-economic matters with marginalized communities, therefore the situation worsened. The Nigerian government made the crisis more severe with these actions and caused radicalization to increase and actually enlisted more people to Boko Haram ranks. With this insufficient response, the conflict still continues to pose a threat to Nigeria and it shows the way heavy-handed militarism can backfire.

The Sahel Region is still being militarized with the mission of counterterrorism but insecurity and terrorism continue in the Sahel. These results show that militarism is not a

long-term solution to any of the Sahel's struggles and can result in more severe problems if the necessary focus is not given to the root causes and coordination issues among these military forces.

10. Stances of Non-Sahel States

10.1. African Union

The African Union is a significant party that plays a role in the Sahel Crisis. The African Union consists of 55 African states and aims for a mission of greater unity among African countries by operating in every field for the benefit of the continent. African Union poses a significant role in the struggles that the Sahel faces and approaches with important policies to these matters. They hold their strategies with the Sahel mainly focused on 3 main pillars, governance, security and development of the region. AU has several structures that function for the implementation of these strategies primarily The African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel or the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism and many other structures that operate in different fields. They also collaborate with different initiatives such as Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or the Regional Mechanisms in the Sahel and African financial institutions for the sufficient implementation of their Sahel strategies. AU works for governmental development in the Sahel Region by contributing to the democratic institutions in order to promote the rule of law and trust in governments. They practice and collaborate with other initiatives in economic governance, better implementation of law and political development with the mission of controlling current or possible crises that the Sahel faces regarding governance issues. AU recognizes the major insecurity crisis in the region and the need for support from the necessary instruments of the Union. They function in capacity-building in the security of the region and take appropriate measures in order to provide support with its mission of a more secure Sahel. AU also functions in the development of Sahel in various fields by collaborating with initiatives such as Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) or the Civic Service for Development Action programme. They aim for development in every field of the Sahel, contributing to the youth and women with the goal of sufficient advancements and prevention and control of socio-economic crises. AU functions in many areas such as agricultural, industrial and educational practices with efforts towards the development of the Sahel.

10.2. United Nations

The United Nations is a major contributor to the Sahel's development and enhancement. The UN has a special initiative for the Sahel, The United Nations Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and a support plan United Nations Support Plan for The Sahel (UNSP). The UN's program aims to achieve its priorities of government and security goals by 2030. The UN works with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Sahel's security problems and creates comprehensive approaches to those matters. UNISS emphasizes the region's struggles in governance, security and resilience and recognises the need for initiative practices of the UN in the Sahel with the mission of responding to these challenges. The United Nations uses a broad definition of the Sahelo-Saharan area that includes West, Central, and North African countries, with a focus on five core Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger for the implementation of its practices. The UN functions in governance by working on capacity-building measures aimed at improving the delivery of crucial services, and political involvement aimed at encouraging broad agreement on the country's priorities. On the Security problems, the UN recognizes the need for stronger border security regarding the vastness of the region and operates upon the matter by giving efforts to promote collaborative approaches among states and capacity-building measures. the UN works on building long-term resilience in every part of the population and building up the needed capacity in every part of the nation by providing resources

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