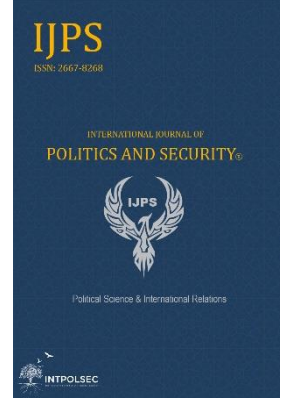


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Author(s) / Yazar(lar) : Buket ÖNAL - Moudassir OUMAR

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Policies and Security Strategies of G5 Sahel States against Terrorism

Buket ÖNAL*

Moudassir OUMAR**

Abstract

The issue of terrorism and insecurity in the African Sahel region is considered one of the most important global problems. This region is classified as one of the most vulnerable areas due to economic challenges, ethnic conflicts, political instability, lack of development, and the spread of criminal acts by terrorist organizations. The proliferation of weapons and criminal activities and the increase in illegal immigration have led to insecurity and instability in the African Sahel region, which prompted the African Sahel countries to rebuild security and political strategies in line with security developments and changes in the Sahel region. Accordingly, this research's main focus is to investigate the effectiveness of policy and security strategies pursued by G5 Sahel states (G5s) and to find whether these policies and strategies were implemented successfully or if modifications are necessary. For this purpose, the Anti-terrorism approach is used to analyze the policies and strategies adopted by the G5s Sahel countries in the process of combating terrorism, in addition to the internal and external variables that affect those policies.

Key Words: *The African Sahel Region, In-Security, Anti Terrorism, Security Strategies, G5 Sahel (G5S) Organization,*

G5 Sahel Devletlerinin Terörizme Karşı Politikaları ve Güvenlik Stratejileri

Özet

Afrika Sahel bölgesindeki terör ve güvensizlik sorunu en önemli küresel sorunlardan biri olarak kabul ediliyor. Bu bölge, ekonomik zorluklar, etnik çatışmalar, siyasi istikrarsızlık, gelişme eksikliği ve terör örgütlerinin suç eylemlerinin yayılması nedeniyle en savunmasız alanlardan biri olarak sınıflandırılmaktadır. Silahların ve suç faaliyetlerinin çoğalması ve yasadışı göçün artması, Afrika Sahel bölgesinde güvensizlik ve istikrarsızlığa yol açmış, bu da Afrika Sahel ülkelerini, Sahel bölgesindeki güvenlik gelişmeleri ve değişiklikler doğrultusunda güvenlik ve siyasi stratejilerini yeniden inşa etmeye sevk etmiştir. Buna göre, bu araştırmanın ana odak noktası, G5 Sahel ülkeleri (G5S) tarafından izlenen politika ve güvenlik stratejilerinin etkinliğini araştırmak ve bu politika ve stratejilerin başarılı bir şekilde uygulanıp uygulanmadığını veya değişikliklerin gerekli olup olmadığını bulmaktır. Bu amaçla terörle mücadele yaklaşımı, G5s Sahel ülkelerinin terörle mücadele sürecinde benimsedikleri politika ve stratejilerin yanı sıra bu politikaları etkileyen iç ve dış değişkenler analiz için kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Afrika Sahel Bölgesi, Güvensizlik, Terörle Mücadele, Güvenlik Stratejileri, G5 Sahel (G5S) Organizasyonu*

* Asst. Prof., Kocaeli University, Department of International Relations, buketonal@hotmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-9075-257X

** Ph.D. Candidate, Kocaeli University, Department of International Relations, Mh9h@hotmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-1483-2329

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1. Introduction

The international scene has witnessed several developments like dealing with security threats that have resulted in many changes at international and regional stages. As a result of these transformations in current international relations, many issues interact with one another at different levels. The degree of impact of these transformations on the international agenda has expanded to include many different issues. Due to its paramount importance to countries and people alike, researchers in international relations have become more interested and have diverted a great deal of time and effort on this teeming issue. Where International terrorism expert Audrey Kurth Cronin defines the term terrorism as the threat or use of seemingly random violence against innocents for political ends by a non-state actor. According to this definition, terrorism consists of several characteristics as follows: terrorism always has a political nature, terrorism is distinguished by its nonstate character, terrorism deliberately targets the innocent, and terrorists do not abide by international laws or norms.¹ Whereas Brian Burgoon defines terrorism as deliberate political violence committed against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually aimed at influencing citizens.² while Peter Rosendorff and Todd Sandler define terrorism as the deliberate use or threat of violence, by individuals or subnational groups, to achieve political or social ends by threatening a wide range of citizens beyond the bounds of its direct victims.³

Terrorism is one of the most complex phenomena that the international community has known so different initiatives and strategies have been developed to contain terrorism, taking into account new developments on the ground at the national, regional, or international levels. To unify efforts and opinions, the United Nations (UN) has made efforts to develop a general strategy that brings together its member states within a single counter-terrorism framework. On June 26, 2018, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that included a plan of action to address conducive conditions towards the spread, prevention, and control of terrorism and measures to build the capacity of states. However, an essential step in principle has so far achieved little success in this regard.

¹ Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Behind the Curve: Globalization and international terrorism." *International Security* 27, no. 3 (2003): 33.

² Brian Burgoon, "On welfare and terror: Social welfare policies and political-economic roots of terrorism." *Journal of conflict resolution* 50, no. 2 (2006): 186.

³ B. Peter Rosendorff and Todd Sandler. "The political economy of transnational terrorism." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 2 (2005): 172.



Therefore, regional organizations have begun to develop their mechanisms, such as G5 Sahel (G5S), and efforts by states at the national level to assume their responsibility in curbing terrorism⁴. The research includes both a political and a security dimension in the African Sahel region, the extent of the ability of countries to achieve stability and security within their countries in light of the widespread proliferation of weapons and terrorist organizations in the Sahel region, and how to implement effective policies to eliminate threats that take the traditional and unconventional style. From the above, the research problem can be formulated as follows: Are the policies and security strategies pursued by G5 Sahel States effective in combating terrorism? The study assumes that policies and security strategies pursued by the G5 Sahel States are ineffective in stopping the lack of security or curbing the threat of terrorism in the region.

2. Anti-Terrorism Approach

The anti-terrorism approach, its a modern approach in the field of international relations, also known as the counter-terrorism approach, and it includes all military practices, tactics, techniques, and strategies used by the state and other law enforcement agencies to combat or prevent terrorism. The anti-terrorism approach is defined as a government strategy to use the tools of power to neutralize terrorists, their organizations, and networks to make them unable to use violence to instill fear and coerce the state or its citizens to respond following the objectives of the terrorists.⁵ The anti-terrorism approach consists of four basic stages: Firstly, Follow-up and control: in this stage, the activities of individuals and terrorist organizations are monitored and an attempt is made to stop terrorist attacks, Secondly, Prevention and Awareness: At this stage, special policies and procedures are prepared to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, Third, Protection: Providing all means that contribute to strengthening protection from terrorist attacks, Fourth, Preparedness, and vigilance: full preparedness to mitigate the effects of terrorist attacks.⁶ Since the Anti-terrorism approach is recent, some studies dealt with it as follows: Edward H. Kaplan's study entitled Socially efficient detection of terror plots, where study focused on the potential danger facing

⁴UN-General Assembly, "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review," Seventy-second session, (2018): 5-17, <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/RES/72/284> (19.03.2021).

⁵Dan E Stigall, C. Miller and L. Donatucci, The 2018 US National Strategy for Counterterrorism: A Synoptic Overview. *Nat'l Sec. L. Brief 10*, no.1 (2020): 01-06.

⁶ John P.Crank and Patricia E. Gregor, *Counter-Terrorism after 9/11, Justice, Security and Ethics reconsideration*, Lexis Nexis, Reflection on the War on Terror, Critiques, and Ethics, (2005): 211-250.



workers in law enforcement agencies in the country during the Anti-terrorism process, and the number of effective factors for detecting terrorist plots and plans. Based on the data of events related to the United States of America, the study calculates the number of terrorist plots and plans that have been discovered by various national intelligence agencies, and it has been found that the United States of America is close to the optimal effectiveness to stop terrorist attacks on its territory.⁷ Also, David B. Carter's study entitled "When terrorism is evidence of state success: securing the state against territorial groups", which focused on the resources and capabilities that governments employ in the process of combating terrorism, as it assumed that the most successful governments in the fight against terrorism are the ones that direct a large part of the resources to fight terrorism, and states generally focuses on limiting the terrorist group's territorial control in its counter-terror operations.⁸ While Javed Younas points out in his study, "Does globalization, mitigate the adverse effects of terrorism on growth?" That globalization plays a positive role in combating terrorism, as the negative effects of local and transnational terrorism are compensated by the positive impact of the state's openness at the regional and global levels but this positive impact of globalization in the process of combating terrorism only occurs when the state's openness to the outside world is at high levels Which in turn reflects positively on the political, economic and security situation within the country.⁹ The policies and security strategies of the African Sahel countries (G5s) will be analyzed based on the Anti-terrorism approach and through internal and external factors that affect the policies and strategies adopted by the countries of the African Sahel (G5s).

3. The Sahel Region: A General Vision

The African coast in a general sense is the area extending from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the north of Senegal and southern Mauritania until it reaches Sudan and Eritrea, where its nature varies between the desert in the north and the savannah in the south.¹⁰ (see fig. 1).

⁷ Edward H. Kaplan, Socially efficient detection of terror plots. *Oxford Economic Papers* 67, no.1 (2015): 104-110.

⁸ David B. Carter, When terrorism is evidence of state success: securing the state against territorial groups. *Oxford Economic Papers* 67, no.1 (2015): 116-121.

⁹ Javed Younas, Does globalization mitigate the adverse effects of terrorism on growth?. *Oxford Economic Papers* 67, no.1 (2015): 133-135.

¹⁰ Karim Maslouh, "Security in the Sahel-Sahara Region in Africa", *The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research*, (2014): 9



Figure 1. Map of the Sahel: An Ecological Region.¹¹

It is considered a semi-arid region because it experiences eight dry months and a short rainy season in a year. It should be noted that the severe drought that affected the area between 1967 and 1974 has led to widespread famine among the population and the immigrants in the south as well.¹² Since the African Sahel extends from Senegal, Mauritania in the west, to Sudan and Eritrea in the east, it includes many countries: Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, and Eritrea.¹³

3.1. Economic Failure and Unfair Distribution of Wealth

There is no doubt that most African Sahel countries are socially and economically deprived despite the tremendous natural and human resources abundant in these countries. However, these countries fail to achieve any worthwhile sustainable development and social justice. The region's people still suffer from illiteracy and unemployment, low per capita income, and the absence of public services as well as the lack of basic social amenities and facilities. As a result, there is a presence of high poverty rate record levels in the Sahel countries coupled with a deteriorating economy, increased social problems, widespread corruption, and a growing political and social anger. Most African Sahel countries suffer from severe indebtedness and high debt service, which sometimes exceeds the origin of the debt. (See fig.

¹¹ Lotfi Sour, "The Strategy of Securitization in African Sahel: Regional Arrangements and Transnational Security Challenges." *International Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 2 (2015): 7.

¹² Maslouh (2014): 7-15

¹³ Malkom Potts, E. Zulu, M. Wehner, F. Castillo, C. Henderson, "Crisis in the Sahel: Possible Solutions and the Consequences of Inaction", *Africa Portal*, (2013): 7
https://media.africaportal.org/documents/Crisis_in_the_Sahel.pdf (19.03.2021).



2) Therefore, these countries remain in need of aid and donations from foreign countries and international organizations, which severely interferes in the political decision-making of the country. Consequently, this leads to interference in the formulations of alliances and restructures these countries' national economies, according to creditors' strategies and plans.

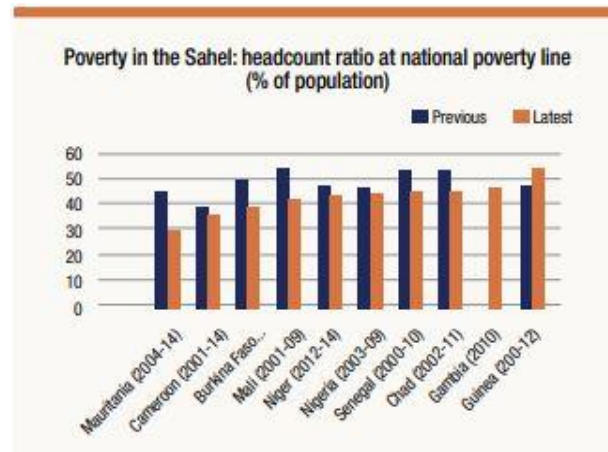


Figure 2: Poverty in the Sahel Region ¹⁴

This has made the Sahel countries unable to achieve sustainable development within the region and depend on grants and foreign aids to reach sustainable development.¹⁵ These indicators and factors led to the creation of the prospects of failure of most African Sahel countries, which is due to the weak social integration, economic deficit, and fragile political and institutional construction of these countries (see table 1).¹⁶

Table 1. The Cost of Implementing The SDGs in The Sahel (\$billion), 2018-2022¹⁷

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CAMEROON	10.03	10.29	10.56	10.83	11.11
NIGERIA	78.51	80.65	82.83	85.07	87.37
CHAD	7.03	7.27	7.51	7.76	8.01
BURKINA FASO	8.98	9.25	9.54	9.82	10.12
GAMBIA	1.00	1.03	1.06	1.10	1.13
GUINEA	6.21	6.38	6.56	6.75	6.93
MALI	8.77	9.05	9.35	9.65	9.96
MAURITANIA	1.99	2.04	2.09	2.14	2.20
NIGER	10.22	10.65	11.10	11.58	12.07
SENEGAL	7.53	7.76	8.00	8.24	8.49
10 UNISS COUNTRIES	140.25	144.37	148.60	152.94	157.39
10 UNISS COUNTRIES (EXC. NIGERIA)	61.74	63.72	65.76	67.86	70.02

¹⁴ United Nations, *The 10 UN Support Plan for the Sahel Countries*, (2018): 8. https://www.un.org/africarenewal/sites/www.un.org.africarenewal/files/English%20Summary%20Report_0.pdf, (19.03.2021).

¹⁵United Nations, *The 10 UN Support Plan for the Sahel Countries*, (2018): 08-11.

¹⁶United Nations, *The 10 UN Support Plan for the Sahel Countries*, (2018): 17-18.

¹⁷ United Nations, *The 10 UN Support Plan for the Sahel Countries*, (2018): 17.



3.2. The Trio of Death: Drugs, Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration.

There is no doubt that the drug trade was the underlying cause of most of the security unrest and disturbances in Guinea-Bissau and Mali. Moreover, widespread poverty and corruption contributed to exacerbating this situation.¹⁸ The presence of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in the region and its branches, such as the movement of unification and jihad in West Africa and the Boko Haram movement, or groups nearby, such as the Ansar Al-Din Islamic Group, as well as nearly eleven armed organizations in southern Libya, led to the booming drug trade in the Sahel region, which benefited greatly from the weakness of the governments in the region.¹⁹ The phenomenon of terrorism is one of the main obstacles to peace efforts, national integration, nation-building, and promoting administration across the African continent. The continent has witnessed an unprecedented rise in terrorist operations and Jihadi organizations since the year 2010 in particular, as radical religious movements have been active on the African scene from east to west, leaving behind it hundreds of dead and wounded. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2014, among the top 50 countries facing terrorist movements, 18 are from the African continent.²⁰ The 2019 Global Terrorism Index emphasized that Boko Haram is one of the most deadly terrorist groups globally, and the number of victims killed by its operations has increased. Boko Haram terrorist activity is concentrated in three major countries, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger. The movement also launches lightning attacks occasionally in the Republic of Chad and the Republic of Burkina Faso (see fig. 3).²¹

¹⁸ Matthew Levitt, "Hezbollah Narco-Terrorism: A Growing Cross-Border Threat," Washington Institute, (2012): 34-41, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hizbullah-narco-terrorism-growing-cross-border-threat> (19.03.2021).

¹⁹ Brooke Stearns Lawson, Phyllis Dininio, "The development response for drug trafficking in Africa: A Programming guide", USAID (2013): 09-14 https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Development_Response_to_Drug_Trafficking_in_Africa_Programming_Guide.pdf . (19.03.2021)

²⁰ Adan K. Mulata, "Managing Peace and Conflict Issues in Africa," National Defence College, (2016) <http://www.africanforumscotland.com/managing-peace-and-conflict-issues-in-africa> . (19.03.2021).

²¹ Institute for Economics & Peace, "Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism" (2019): 39-63 <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2019-web.pdf> (19.03.2021).

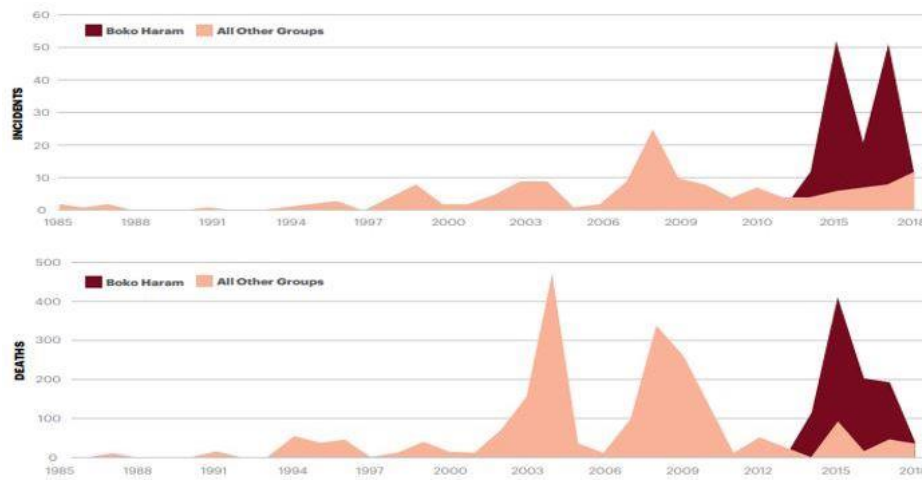


Figure 3: Suicide Attacks and Deaths Involving at Least One Female 1985-2018.²²

4. The Main Terrorist Movements in The Sahel Region

There are terrorist groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda, which meet under the Islamic and Muslim support group's banner, and others affiliated with Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), similar to the Islamic State in the Sahara Desert. From this standpoint, five major terrorist organizations, which are very active in the region, will be examined:

4.1. Boko Haram Terrorist Group

Boko Haram group: is a Nigerian Islamic group that means Western education is forbidden in the Hausa language. Boko Haram is active in northern Nigeria, where it seeks to apply Islamic law. The movement was officially banned and described as a terrorist movement. Boko Haram was founded in 2002 in the northern state of Borno under the leadership of Mohamed Yousef. However, the movement's actual presence began in 2004 after it had moved to the Yobe state on the border with Niger, where it began operations against Nigerian security and civilian institutions. The Nigerian authorities confirm that Boko Haram's appearance dates back to 1995 when Abu Bakr Lewan established the Ahal al-Sunna and Migration Group at

²² Institute for Economics & Peace, Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, (2019): 63.



Maiduguri University in Borno State. The group rejects Boko Haram's name, which the media launched on it, and prefers the title of Jama'atu Ahli Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad.²³

The exact number of members of the movement is unknown but mainly consists of students who have left school because they rejected Western educational curricula. Hours after locating and arresting him by the security forces in northern Nigeria, Mohamed Yousef, the group leader, was assassinated on July 30, 2009. The government declared in June 2010 that it had killed all members of the group. Abu Bakr Shikawa deputy Mohammed Yousuf appeared in the square as the leader of Boko Haram and set his goals to release imprisoned members from his movement and said his group fighting against three types of people: police, Christian armed soldiers, and the raider's campaign. He also confirmed that other people would not be harmed. In mid-April 2014, the Boko Haram movement was reported in the international media to have kidnapped about 276 girls from a foreign school in the Shibok region of northern Borneo state, where a Christian majority lives. They demanded the release of the group's prisoners held for four years in exchange for girls' freedom. In the first week of February 2015, US intelligence officials estimated that the Boko Haram group numbered 4,000 and 6,000 fighters and had large amounts of money and weapons stockpiled during its progress in the field. They said the group's finances had flourished thanks to bank robberies and ransoms resulting from the abductions.²⁴ On March 7, 2015, Boko Haram announced in a voice recording attributed to its leader Abu Bakr Shekau, the Islamic State Organization leader in West Africa he had pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Shekau confirmed in the recording: "We declare allegiance to the caliph for hearing and obedience in activism, hatred, hardship, and ease." Boko Haram finances its activities in several ways; taking money from local merchants, arms trafficking, and money laundering through wealthy sponsors (senators and businesspeople from the north-eastern states) controlling specific drug trafficking routes in Europe and West Africa. They had also got financial help from ISIS.²⁵

²³ Guy Brichall, WHAT DO THEY WANT? Who are Boko Haram, who is their leader Abubakar Shekau and what do the Nigerian Islamist group want? THE SUN, A NEWS UK COMPANY, (2018) <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1614327/boko-haram-leader-abubakar-shekau-nigeria-islamist> (19.03.2021).

²⁴ Boko Haram Group, Al-Jazeera encyclopedia, Al-Jazeera Institution, (2013) <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/movementsandparties/2013/11/23/%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%83%D9%88-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%85> (19.03.2021).

²⁵ Edoardo Camilli, "Boko Haram, and the future of Nigeria", Russian International Affairs Council (2015) <https://www.hozint.com/2015/02/russian-international-affairs-council-%D0%B1%D0%BE%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D1%85%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC-%D0%B8->



4.2. Al-Qaida in The Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

An armed Salafist organization emerged from the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which had changed its name and declared allegiance to al-Qaeda. It was placed on the international list of terrorist organizations after carrying out several armed operations. The organization led by Abdelmalek Droudkal, nicknamed Abu Musab Abdel Wadood, emerged on January 25, 2007, after changing its name from the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. It seeks to liberate the Islamic Maghreb from the Western presence and its loyalists and protect the region from foreign ambitions. There are no accurate statistics on the number of fighters of the group, mostly Algerians, while the rest are divided into different nationalities, notably Mauritania, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Mali, and Nigeria. This group is mainly active in Algeria. It extends its influence to the south of the Sahara and also trains members from neighboring countries. The organization also prepares members from neighboring countries to carry out operations within its territories, such as Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. However, the organization has launched bloody attacks in Algeria in recent years, although its military activity remains limited.²⁶

4.3. Ansar Al-Din Movement

It is an armed jihadist movement in northern Mali described as the most significant militant organization in the province of Azwad; it seeks to apply Islamic law and obtain an expanded autonomy for the region. Ansar al-Din movement was founded in December 2011 in Kidal, northern Mali. It is led by Iyad Ag Ghali, a Tuareg historical leader who fought the government of Mali in the 1990s with the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Azawad. The founder of the movement, Ag Ghali, was closer to the national leftist nationalist but later embraced the Salafi-Jihadist orientation. He returned with the fall of the regime of the late Libyan Colonel Muammar Gaddafi into Azwad. He took from the Agargar mountain range bordering Kidal. He began to assemble Tuareg fighters to form the nucleus of the Ansar al-Din

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%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B3%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B8 (19.03.2021).

²⁶ Zachary Laub, Johnathon Masters, " Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," Council on Foreign Relations, (2015) <https://www.cfr.org/background/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb> (19.03.2021).



movement.²⁷In early 2013, the movement demanded the implementation of Islamic law throughout the north of the country. It stressed that it was "a non-negotiable condition." The defense of the identity of the Tuaregs and Islamic law was the focus of the movement's political program, which was handed over by its delegation on January 1, 2013, to the Burkinabe President, who acted as a mediator in the Mali crisis mandated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In contrast to the Liberation of Azawad movement, Ansar al-Din does not call for the independence of northern Mali and only demands an expanded autonomy within the state's framework, provided that the constitution provides the Islamic character of the country. Ansar al-Din's movement generally finances its activities through kidnapping for ransom and arms, drugs, and cigarette trafficking.²⁸

4.4. Al-Mua'qi'oon Biddam Brigade

It was established from the battalion "bloodthirsty" in late 2012, after its leader Mokhtar's announcement. Balmokhtar separation of his leading group "masked" from the organization in the Islamic Maghreb states came after the issuance of the leadership of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb declares a decision to remove him from the command of the battalion. "Al-Mua'qi'oon Biddam " is a Salafi jihadist group close to al-Qaeda, and its leader Mukhtar Belmokhtar is one of the most prominent al-Qaeda leaders and activists in northern Mali.²⁹

However, he broke away from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and established his organization before returning to it; he remained in close contact with al-Qaeda. On May 23, 2013, the forces of Mokhtar Belmokhtar launched an attack on a French-owned uranium mine in Arlit, Niger, and a military base 150 miles away in Agadez, where suicide bombers used truck bombs in the attack. Anouar Boukhars of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace said that the bombing was in retaliation for the earlier French intervention in the Northern Mali conflict.³⁰

²⁷ ECRF, ANSAR AL-DIN, European Council on Foreign Relations (2019) https://ecfr.eu/special/sahel_mapping/ansar_al_din#menuarea (19.03.2021).

²⁸ Eleonora Lebedeva, "Islamic Extremism in Sub-Saharan Africa," Russian International Affairs Council, (2016) <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/extremism-africa> (19.03.2021).

²⁹CISAC, "Al Mulathamun Battalion," Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, California:Stanford, 2018). <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-mulathamun-battalion> (19.03.2021).

³⁰ Adam Nossiter, "Militant Says He Is Behind Attack in Niger", NY Times (2013) <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/25/world/africa/militant-says-he-is-behind-fatal-niger-attack.html?src=twrhp> (19.03.2021).



4.5. Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO).

The Unification and Jihad Movement was established in West Africa in October 2011, after secession from the organization of "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb" and after refusing to form a battalion or a secret group purposefully for Arab fighters. Similar to the secret Ansar organization, it includes mainly Tuareg fighters. The movement, which has been described as the most influential in northern Mali, adopts the Salafist-Jihadist orientation. Its objectives are to spread the ideology of Jihad in West Africa rather than the Sahel. It was formed by Arabs and gangs to smuggle drugs after they seized a large number of heavy weapons coming from Libya.³¹ The movement formed four military brigades, namely Abdullah Azzam, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Abu Lait al-Libi, and the martyrdom of the martyrdom, and it has another battalion known as the Osama bin Laden Battalion led by a member of the Shura Council of the Tawheed and Jihad Ahmed Ould Amer known as Ahmed Talmsi.

The movement justified this division by expanding its influence and increasing numbers of fighters. In cooperation with soldiers from the National Liberation Movement of Azawad, the change captured the cities of Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal. However, it quickly ended association with Liberation Movement Azwad, and fighters and commanders were expelled from the region after receiving support from the masked group of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. It adopted the strategy of abducting foreigners in exchange for ransom.³²

5. G5 Sahel Group

When determining the Sahel region, we must consider the geographical, geopolitical, and strategic criteria because the area according to these criteria widens and narrows according to the standard that has been adopted. Therefore, the programs that are concerned with the region are sometimes different in their determination and definition.³³

Geographically, the Sahel stretches on the strip extending from Eritrea to Mauritania and separates North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger,

³¹CISAC , Mapping Militant Organizations. "Mouvement pour l'Unification et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest." Stanford University (2018) <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/mujao> (19.03.2021).

³²START, Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, University of Maryland, (2015) <https://www.start.umd.edu/baad/narratives/movement-oneness-and-jihad-west-africa-mujao> (19.03.2021).

³³ Virginia Smith, "The Sahel Region", Transboundary Water Resources (2008): 1 <https://studylib.net/doc/7631423/the-sahel-region> (19.03.2021).



Nigeria, Senegal, Chad, and Sudan. The word "Sahel" is sometimes used to refer to the Sahara Desert and the North African region of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.³⁴ Geopolitically speaking, the area is of direct importance and influence in several neighboring countries. According to this criterion, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Guinea can be regarded as Sahel states for their direct relations with the region's countries politically and geographically.³⁵ G5s countries adopted a narrow definition of the area by relying on the significant and most influential nations, the five states that formed the group (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, and Chad). The strategic criterion was taken into consideration according to this definition. The area of the Sahel is 5.097.138 km²; it has a population of 78,5 million according to 2018 estimates. In this context, Sahel refers to the region that includes only those countries, The following diagram illustrates the demographics of the Sahel countries.³⁶

Table 2. Demographics of The Sahel Countries³⁷

G5 Sahel country	Human Development Index (rank)	Population (millions)	Percentage rural	Age structure	Maternal mortality (per 100,00 live births)	Total fertility rate	Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (all women)
Burkina Faso	183	19.2	69%	45% under 14, over 65% under 25	371	5.4	24.2
Chad	186	14.9	77%	47% under 14, over 67% under 25	856	5.9	6.1
Mali	182	18.5	59%	48% under 14, over 67% under 25	587	6.1	14.6
Mauritania	159	4.4	40%	40% under 14, 60% under 25	602	4.7	10.6
Niger	189	21.5	81%	50% under 14, over 68% under 25	533	7.3	16.9

The area has been the focus of considerable international attention and has recently witnessed a power struggle between France and the United States of America. Because most of its countries are considered old French colonies, that is why France claims its historical right in the region. At the same time, America is also seeking to establish its presence in the area, and it has already succeeded in creating its military base in Niger and begun building the \$100

³⁴OECD, Cahiers de L'Afrique de L'Ouest Un Atlas Du Sahara-Sahel: Geographie, Economie Et Insecurite (2014):2

³⁵ Marcel Kitissou, "France and the United States in the western Sahel: cooperation and competition in an interlocking conflict", Institute for African Development, Cornell University (2016): 5

³⁶ PAI, Making the case: Including sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Sahel security and development agenda, Washington (2019): 1-3 <https://pai.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Making-the-Case-Sahel.pdf> (19.03.2021).

³⁷ PAI, (2019): 3.



million air base to deploy drones.³⁸In the same vein, France continues to control the ongoing military operations in Mali in the name of Operation "Serval" which began in 2013 and was replaced by Operation "Barkhane" in August 2014. In recent years the African Sahel has witnessed exceptional circumstances that were very difficult because of terrorism. A report by the African Center for Research and Terrorism Studies (ACSRT) in 2013 stated that the west and the coast of Africa are the most vulnerable to terrorism in Africa. This is due to several key factors, which have created favorable conditions for establishing the Sahel 5 group.³⁹

5.1. G5 Group Institutions

Article 6 of the Convention establishing the group members is limited to five constitutions: Conference of Heads of State, Council of Ministers, Defense and Security Committee, Permanent Secretariat of the Group, and National coordinating committees. The conference of Heads of State consists of all chairs of the group, which is the supreme body of the group. It is the decision-making body of public policies and strategic options. It also ensures the management of all political and security activities of the Group. The Council meets in regular sessions every two years regularly. At the same time, the Council of Ministers, which includes ministers responsible for the development, is the body responsible for implementing the group's policy as set by the Conference of Heads of State. The Council of Ministers meets twice a year, and the Defense and Security Committee entrusts with security matters for countries in the region and counter-terrorism. The Commission is composed of chiefs of staff and security officers from their respective countries. It is headed by the chief of staff of the armies of the state that leads the group.

The administrative work entrusts the Permanent Secretariat and the National Coordinating Committees Secretariat, taking responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the development and security strategy's implementation. For mobilizing financial resources to finance the sustainable development strategy, it consists of a team of experts with multiple

³⁸BBC, Etats-Unis: Une base américaine au Niger, (September 2016). <https://www.bbc.com/afrique/region-37518660> (19.03.2021).

³⁹ACSRT, "The African union terrorism situation analysis report" (2013): 162-205 https://archives.au.int/bitstream/handle/123456789/2044/Global-sit-rep-2013_E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (19.03.2021).



competencies. The National Coordinating Committee also consists of national experts and is responsible for monitoring and implementing programs and projects in their sectors.⁴⁰

5.2. Policies and Security Strategies of G5 Sahel States

Since its inception in 2014, the five-member states had focused their efforts on adopting a security solution in the face of terrorist movements, and the local people who support them criminalize all who belong to those movements from the local population. They waged an intense war on the cities and provinces where these movements exist without paying attention to finding solutions to the economic, social, and other issues to discourage the local population from joining these groups. As a result, they are engaged in armed conflict in the Sahel region. They have created many joint forces to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking to create a safe environment by eliminating the actions of terrorist armed groups and other organized criminal groups, paving the way for the restoration of security and peace, as well as contributing to necessary steps and procedures towards restoring state authority. The return of displaced persons and refugees facilitates humanitarian operations and the delivery of aid to the affected population as far as possible.⁴¹

According to the Anti-terrorism approach policies and security strategies of G5 Sahel states against terrorism can be analyzed through the following stages:

a) Follow-up and control: Since its establishment, the five Sahel countries have failed to develop their mechanism to monitor and track the activities of terrorist movements in the region, due to their lack of logistical capabilities and their complete dependence on French and American intelligence in tracking and monitoring terrorist movements.

b) Prevention and Awareness: The five Sahel countries promised to allocate huge budgets for the development of the region and to prevent people from joining terrorist movements, but so far they had not fulfilled their promises which makes it easier for terrorist movements to attract many young people who are looking for a decent life.

⁴⁰ Abdelhak Bassou, "State, Borders, and Territory in the Sahel: The case of the G5 Sahel", *OCP Policy Center*, PB-17/33 (2017): 1-9 <https://sahelresearch.africa.ufl.edu/files/OCPPC-PB1733vEn.pdf> (19.03.2021).

⁴¹ CONOPs, Strategic Concept of Operations of the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel, PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL, AFRICAN UNION, (2017): 01-04 <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/679th-com-g5sahel-13-04-2017.pdf> (19.03.2021).



c) Protection: The G5s Sahel countries relied on the military solution with military support from France and intelligence support from the United States of America to provide protection to the local population and secure them against terrorist attacks by launching military campaigns on the locations of terrorist movements in the African Sahel region

d) Preparedness and vigilance: The escalation in the number of terrorist attacks in the Sahel region shows the lack of vigilance and preparedness of the various Agencies of the G5s Sahel countries in the face of terrorist movements spread in the Sahel region, in addition to the failure of these agencies to take measures to mitigate the effects of these attacks.

There is no doubt that the policies and strategies pursued by the 5G group during the past five years have not been effective in eliminating extremist ideology prevalent in the Sahel region and have not taken suitable measures that would limit this thought and eliminate it. This is due to internal and external factors that will be reviewed as follows:

5.2.1. Internal Factors

The main questions have focused on the contextual determinants of political and security instability in Africa in general and the Sahel region in particular. A team of researchers considers the ethnic identities and the arbitrary division of the African borders without considering the privacy of societies. At the same time, another group suggested the role of economic factors and poor development while others focused on dependency. Moreover, others focused on what is currently known as the "war economy" and the repercussions that it stimulates conflicts and new actors such as terrorist acts and organized crime activities.

5.2.1.1. The Crisis of Identity and National Integration

Among the challenges that national leaders faced, in the focus of nation-building in Africa and the Sahel region is how to transform multi-racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious societies into one nation. Any cultural group's belief that states that it does not belong to the state or claims not belonging to another group, even though the latter group lives within the country itself provides very fertile grounds for the existence of identity crisis. As educational, military, and bureaucratic institutions, as well as intermediary institutions such as parties and unions all, belong to the dominant central state irrespective of tribal, sectarian, ethnic factions so is the state institutions that are vital working tools in neural service and durability and also responsible for the deepening of the crisis must work as one single integrated



working unit. The absence of "institutionalism" is the characteristic feature in many African Sahel states' institutions, as they are related to ethnic, tribal, and sectarian trends. The political life in this region is based on the prevalence of the manifestations of tribal life in which loyalty to tribe predominates over allegiance to homeland⁴²Especially for some of the region's settling tribes that have transnational extensions such as the minority of Tuareg distributed in five countries: Mali, Niger, Libya, Algeria, and Burkina Faso, which directly affect the cohesion of national unity and thus the survival and continuity of the countries. Therefore, the identity and integration crisis in the African Sahel states appears in three primary forms:

- a) Racial contrast, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity.
- b) The dilemma of the artificial borders left by colonialism with no regard to this diversity
- c) Consequently, the weakness of affiliation and loyalty shifted abroad.

5.2.1.2. The Political Participation Crisis

Deep structural imbalances characterize the political process in all African Sahel countries and the nature of closed political systems, weak political participation, lack and restriction of freedom of expression and information. The continued influence of the military establishment in these countries is one of the authentic features of reality in the African Sahel countries, which is a decisive factor in managing the political transition process, despite the countries' adoption of democracy. In addition to the relationship of this to the degree of institutionalization, which is an absent feature of all the Sahel states, and this is why Samuel Huntington links institutionalization with political participation and political stability. He believes that the latter's achievement depends on building political institutions that organize political participation and prevent instability.⁴³

⁴² Marcel Ilkechukwu, "National Identity and Crisis of Integration in Multi-Ethnic Nigeria: An Existentialist Perspective", *Open Journal of Philosophy* (2016): 2-10. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291385697_National_Identity_and_Crisis_of_Integration_in_Multi-Ethnic_Nigeria_An_Existentialist_Perspective/fulltext/56a2e03108aef24c586001d/National-Identity-and-Crisis-of-Integration-in-Multi-Ethnic-Nigeria-An-Existentialist-Perspective.pdf (19.03.2021).

⁴³ Samuel Huntington, "Political Order in Changing Societies", Yale University Press, The Henry L. Stimson Lectures Series edition (1993): 32-92 https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/gov2126/files/huntington_political_order_changing_soc.pdf (19.03.2021).



5.2.1.3. Legitimacy Crisis

The legitimacy of the political system is one of the essential constituents of the state and its continuity. However, in African Sahel, power is often achieved through non-democratic means and mechanisms in the form of imposing the dominating of a particular minority on the country's political scene and the monopoly of power or by adopting the method of military coups to reach authority. That is incompatible with the democratic act as the heritage of the authoritarian state in Africa had led to the domination of political considerations over the administration of elections, which took a symbolic character in many cases to legitimize the ruling regime. It can be said that countries in the third world in general, including the African Sahel states, are both Western and traditional. They represent Western experience in its administrative, security, and military apparatus model. Simultaneously, the idea of making power exclusive to the ruler and his followers has been extracted from its cultural heritage, which would void any modernization of its actual content.⁴⁴

5.2.1.4. Penetration Crisis

The state in the African coast countries continues to experience difficulties in internal political geography due to the lack of control over its vast lands and borders. The governments of the five countries within the African coast theoretically exercise sovereignty over its vast territories. This is due to the lack of available capabilities and the failures that they live in. The majority of the countries in this region are either collapsed states or are on the way to failure, which would fuel instability and insecurity in this region by sharing power with non-state actors with a central authority, such as the tribes, and the various ethnicities scattered along the African coast, similar to Tuareg minority, in addition to organized crime networks. Terrorist active groups in this region sometimes confront the Tuareg rebel alliance with al-Qaeda and organized crime networks.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, Thomas Mccarthy (Translated), (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988): 1-8 https://www.ias.edu/sites/default/files/sss/pdfs/Crisis-and-Critique-2018-19/habermas_legitimation_crisis.pdf (19.03.2021).

⁴⁵ James. Coleman, "The Concept of Political Penetration", In L. Cliffe, J.S. Coleman M.R. Doornbos (eds) *Government, and Rural Development in East Africa*, Institute of Social Studies (Series on the Development of Societies), vol 2 (1977): 3-14 https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=_RcyBwAAQBAJ&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=James+S.+Coleman,+The+Concept+of+Political+Penetration&source=bl&ots=KiGtNhcPz6&sig=ACfU3U3BPUFQJoTpOhJ2JcbSIoaIFGC BBA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjrupje8LroAhWD5OAKHXyDrUQ6AEwAnoECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=James%20S.%20Coleman%20The%20Concept%20of%20Political%20Penetration&f=false (19.03.2021).



5.2.1.5. Economic Challenges

Among the challenges hindering the nation-building process in the African coast are poverty, increased unemployment, starvation, economic decline, health decline, weak economic growth, high levels of borrowing, dependency abroad, poor educational and social infrastructure, and disruption of agricultural resources, in addition to illiteracy and ignorance. These factors nurture sources of despair, exacerbate feelings of frustration, and provide fertile ground for rebellious movements, defection, and extremism. Starting from the security and development syndrome, as a sign of this, all African Sahel countries are ranked at the bottom (last rank) of the Human Development Index for the year 2019, for example, Niger 189th place, Chad 187, Mali 184, Sudan 168, and Mauritania 161.⁴⁶ As for food security, which entails health security, the estimates for December 2019 indicated that more than 25 million people in the Sahel region suffer from food insecurity; 3 million are in critical conditions and need urgent food assistance. The year 2019 witnessed a deterioration in the food security situation for a more significant number than in previous years.

The Sahel region is persistently and unacceptably experiencing high levels of acute malnutrition. OCHA (United Nations Office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs) indicated that in 2018, 500,000 children suffered from severe malnutrition while 5.8 million children under the age of five suffered from high food insecurity levels. 24 million people will need urgent assistance in the Sahel region, including 1.6 million children who have suffered from acute malnutrition (SAM) and 4.4 million children from moderate, severe malnutrition (MAM). Furthermore, an average third of children in the Sahel region are stunted (due to stunted growth). It is also estimated that 5.71 million children die every year under the age of five because of malnutrition, and 5 million children need educational assistance.⁴⁷ These multi-dimensional challenges can be attributed to several factors:

⁴⁶UNDP, "Human Development Report, Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century", United Nations (New York: 2019): 320-346 <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/hdr2019.pdf> (19.03.2021).

⁴⁷OCHA, "Sahel overview of humanitarian needs and requirements", Report prepared by OCHA on behalf of Regional Humanitarian Partners, United Nations (New York: 2018): 03-14. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Sahel%20HNRO%202018.pdf> (19.03.2021)



a) Mismanagement and corruption.

b) The external environment is related to external indebtedness because the African Sahel countries live and depend largely on humanitarian aid and borrowing, which significantly hinders their growth and development thereby leveraging the political and socio-economic independence of these countries.

c) The state relinquishes its social functions within the framework of achieving social justice despite the rapid demographic growth, which is not in line with the pace of economic growth in this region. Consequently, it would weaken loyalty and transfer it to other bodies represented in the minority, ethnic group, entity, and clans. This has led to an alliance with organized crime gangs to secure livelihood, as was evident during the recent crisis in the African Sahel region beginning in 2012.

5.2.2. External Factors

The current wave of changes that are taking place in the North African region has contributed to the complexity by deepening crises in the African Sahel region. Moreover, the security situation and the region's abundance of natural resources have made it gain an international strategic value. Thus, the Sahel region became significantly important among the international powers' priorities and interests in light of the intertwined security threats. The major countries have sought to review their security strategy in line with the nature of the security, political, economic, social, and environmental crises experienced by most of the region's countries. In light of the international competition on the African continent in general and the African Sahel region. International powers, especially France, have sought to rebuild their relations with the area's countries to preserve their position and influence on its former colonies.

6. France: The Necessity of Preserving its Interests and the Heightening of its Hatred

The independence granted to the majority of West African countries was based on the will of the French government, not by a decision of the African citizens themselves. This is evident through the message The French President Char de Gaulle sent to his counterpart, Leon Amba, the Gabonese Prime Minister, in which he said, "We are giving the independence of the country, provided that it undertakes to respect the cooperation agreements agreed by the two



parties.⁴⁸ From this statement, it becomes clear that France is not ready to lose its influence on West Africa, and that is why it imposed on its former colonies the inclusion of cooperation agreements in various fields (security, economic, environmental). Before studying and analyzing France's policy towards the African continent in general and the African Sahel region, we must clarify what is meant by the France-Africa strategy. It is also known as Jacques Foucart's policy. It is called in the French history books "Mr. Africa in the Elysee Palace." Paris imposed this strategy on its former colonies in Africa, where the African political elites considered it a strategy to exploit African countries. However, France viewed it as a mechanism for cooperation between Paris and its former colonies. This strategy can be summarized in three main points: ensuring access to vital resources such as uranium, oil, and diamonds, expanding established military bases, and reinforce the gap between political and social institutions.⁴⁹ France always sets its eyes on Africa. It plays in all the cards, especially when it comes to the Sahel, West, or North Africa, where it still wants to retain its influence in these areas, especially in light of the United States of America's competition in the region.

France has played a significant role in creating the G5 group, and the first person who was very pleased after its establishment was the French general Pierre Dévé in his famous phrase, "This is the time to improve the security situation in the region."⁵⁰ The European Council was delighted with the group's birth, and the official announcement of the formation of the 5,000-strong contingent was announced on July 2, 2017, in Bamako, the capital of Mali, in the presence of the French President Emmanuel Macron.⁵¹

Six months after its creation, France announced the end of Operation Serval. It replaced it with a new operation that was not the Mali government's will, as France claims. However, it was only to adapt to the unique situation and expand the French army's control of the territory. The process of "Serval" was limited in Mali, while the operation "Barrakhan" in which France

⁴⁸ Priscille Guinant, "La politique de la France en Afrique subsaharienne après les indépendances", Toulouse (2013): 09.

⁴⁹ Corentin Dautreppe, "Présence française en Afrique : ce qu'il reste de la Coopération", La Tribune (2014) <https://www.latribune.fr/actualites/economie/france/20140201trib000813094/presence-francaise-en-afrique-ce-qu-il-reste-de-la-cooperation.html> (19.03.2021).

⁵⁰ Pierre de Villiers, Propos tenus devant l'assemblée nationale, Commission de la défense nationale et des forces armées, (2014). <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cr-cdef/14-15/c1415005.asp> (19.03.2021).

⁵¹ Dossier de Presse – Opération Barkhane, Bureau relations médias de l'État-major des armées, Ministère des Armées, (France :2017): 3-4 <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/492362/8406707/DP-BARKHANE-0118.pdf> (19.03.2021).



divided its soldiers and military bases in the five group countries and the number of French troops were 4000 soldiers, which is approximately equal to the number of Special Forces of the group combined. The troops were led by a French general stationed at his headquarters in Chad. The plan was based on three main support points, GAO in Mali, Niamey in Niger, and N'Djamena in Chad, and six advanced temporary bases in Kidal, Tisalit, Agla, Madama, Faya, and Abeche and three points of maritime support in Dakar, Abidjan, and Douala.⁵² France has a strong and influential presence in the group; five generals attend the group's meetings. France also participates in working with committees responsible for developing plans and strategies against terrorist attacks and planning joint operations. On May 20, 2014, the Nouakchott Declaration's adoption was by the interior ministers of the five countries in the presence of French Interior Minister Bernard Kazanov.

The declaration called for facilitating the exchange of information in security and border management in the period from 20 to 27 of December 2014. The group's first military operation was carried out under the name operation "Mangouste" and was with the participation of the French forces in the process "Barrakhan" and was led by the French military base in Madama.⁵³ French incursion has reached the level of control over the group in a way that may raise doubts about the independence of the group and made it a machine in the hands of France or just another facade of the process of Barrakhan, which also increases complexity because of the calculations and priorities of France in the region.

7. Conclusion

No anti-terrorism policy can be effective without addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. That is the first pillar of any strategy based on combating terrorism and seeking security and stability worldwide in the globe. It is known that the African Sahel is exposed to a real threat that hampers severely the safety and stability of the Sahel countries due to the proliferation of terrorist groups, which have contributed significantly to the spread of organized crime and illegal immigration in the region. This has led to pushing the most affected African Sahel countries (Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Burkina Faso) to form a united

⁵² Dossier de Presse, "Opération Barkhane" , 14

⁵³ Antonin Tisseron, "G5 Sahel: une simple organization de plus ?", Groupe de Recherche et D'information sur La Paix Et La Seurite, (2015): 2 https://grip.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/EC_2015-03-25_FR_A-TISSERON.pdf (19.03.2021).



front in 2014, under the name of the G5 Sahel group to confront this existential threat of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons in the region.

The collapse of the regime in Libya provided unprecedented and robust support to terrorist groups in the Sahel states' face. The policies pursued by the G5 Sahel group in the face of terrorism in cooperation with France were based on security solutions and military solutions without taking into account that security is linked closely to development, the economic situation, democracy, human rights, and the peaceful transfer of power. These policies paved the way for the spread of terrorism and organized crime. Furthermore, increasing hostility to France and high hatred to the French presence in the Sahel in a way that has never been seen before, which prompted French President Emmanuel Macron to expedite the holding of an emergency summit with the heads of state of the G5 Sahel group to clarify the matter and try to reduce the percentage of hatred for France, which has 4,700 soldiers in the Sahel region involved in the fighting there. Almost every day, attacks occur in the Sahel. In 2019, there were about 700 attacks with more than 2,000 dead. Furthermore, behind these dead people, there are sad stories of desperate families who lost a loved member and may think of revenge. They have lost all confidence in the state and politics, which contributes to mobilizing new supporters to the jihadists and reasserts the failure of the policies and strategies pursued by the G5 Sahel group. It also demonstrates the defeat of France's policy in the Sahel. Confidence in the state and politics must be re-acquired, and this is what the leaders of countries must understand, and France must understand that. The military solution alone will not lead to a positive result, so it should be replaced by real development programs and allow the local population to participate in managing the areas that they are responsible for. This contributes to the real circulation authority, and residents will not have to submit to the services provided by terrorist groups in the region, which will ultimately reduce the influence and danger of armed groups and stop the movement of illegal immigration toward the north.



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