

Committee: Security Council

Topic: The question of crisis in Sahel

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Summary

The Sahel region, spanning from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east, faces complex challenges despite its rich mineral resources. This vast area, home to over 80 million people, is marked by severe poverty—especially outside Algeria—and increasing demographic pressures. Over the past two decades, the region has become a hotspot for insecurity, driven by the inability of Sahelian states to govern rural areas effectively.

Porous borders have facilitated the movement of traffickers and militants, contributing to a rise in terrorism and organized crime. Groups like Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara exploit these conditions.

The Sahel also struggles with climate change, leading to severe droughts and flooding that threaten agricultural livelihoods and increase migration. Coupled with governance issues and inter-ethnic conflicts, the region's instability is exacerbated.

Addressing these multidimensional challenges requires concerted development strategies and a focus on governance to reduce the risks posed to local people.

Definition of Key Terms

Violent Extremism: The use of violence to propagate ideological objectives.

G5 Sahel: A regional coalition of five Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger) formed with the hope of increasing regional security.

Transnational terrorism: Terrorist activities that occur across national borders.

IDP: internationally displaced person.

Mali Crisis: Ongoing political and security challenges in Mali, exacerbated by a coup in 2020 and rising extremist violence.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM): A jihadist group that operates in North and West Africa, contributing to instability in the Sahel.

Background Information

The conflict in the Sahel region stems from issues of climate change (unpredictable weather patterns), political instability, economic insecurity and food insecurity. This instability has led to multiple coups, and the emergence of terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, resulting in significant civilian casualties and widespread displacement.

Sahelian states have to deal with internal corruption, weak institutions, and inadequate service delivery, especially in rural areas. These shortcomings create a governance vacuum that militant groups exploit, gaining local support and further entrenching their influence.

Despite various attempts to stabilize the region, including international interventions and regional initiatives, the situation remains precarious. Militant organizations continue to hold considerable power, posing ongoing risks to the lives and living standards of residents.

People began fleeing the central Sahel region in 2011 after an outbreak of violence in Northern Mali. Poverty, unemployment and the presence of armed groups in rural areas of Northern Mali all contributed to an increase in forced displacement. Today, armed groups have rapidly expanded, spreading violence to central parts of the country and to neighbouring countries, such as Burkina Faso and Niger.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Republic of Mali

Republic of the Niger

Burkina Faso

Republic of Chad

Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Al-Qaeda

UN

Timeline of Events

Date	Description
2011	Fall of Gaddafi in Libya, weapons fill the Sahel region, arming rebel groups in Mali.
2012	Mali coup.
2013	French intervention.
2017	Formation of G5 Sahel Joint Force.
2020-2021	Further coups in Mali.
2023	France ends its operation in the region.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Operation Serval: French military.

UN mission: Entrance of UN forces.

UN Security Council Resolutions on Mali: A series of resolutions (Resolution 2295) authorizing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to support peace and security efforts.

UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (2013): A comprehensive approach aimed at addressing the root causes of instability and promoting peace, security, and development in the Sahel.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Particularly Goal 16, which emphasizes the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, relevant to conflict resolution efforts in the Sahel.

UN Human Rights Council Resolutions: Various resolutions addressing human rights violations in the Sahel region, emphasizing accountability and protection for affected populations.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

G5 Sahel Joint Force

International Conferences and Summits

Humanitarian Assistance Initiatives

Possible Solutions

Strengthening of government institutions on national, regional and international levels.

Environmental and Agricultural initiatives and increase development planning.

Countering violent extremism.

Increase humanitarian assistance.

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