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**NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THREATS OF TERRORISM IN THE SAHEL REGION
OF WEST AFRICA**

by

Samuel Kamara

December 2020

Co-Advisors:

Cristiana Matei
Carolyn C. Halladay

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THREATS OF TERRORISM IN THE SAHEL REGION OF WEST AFRICA

Samuel Kamara
Civilian, Office of National Security, Sierra Leone
BA Honours Political Science, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 1996
M. Phil, Political Science, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 2010

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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2020**

Approved by: Cristiana Matei
Co-Advisor

Carolyn C. Halladay
Co-Advisor

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

This thesis finds that the African regional response to mitigate terrorist threats in Mali and the Sahel region of West Africa has been more successful than Mali's local efforts for reasons that cannot be unconnected from the collaborative efforts of regional players who presided at diplomatic engagements, shared intelligence, and participated in combat operations against terrorists. However, terrorists continue to pose isolated threats to Mali and the Sahel. The African regional bodies can curtail the threats through joint military operations by an established joint standby regional force, sound regional border security coordination and management practices, effective intelligence gathering and sharing procedures, and reform of the Malian armed forces to adequately step in and robustly replace the regional forces when they scale down operations in the near future. The African regional bodies have obtained support from their partners—the United Nations, European Union, France, and the United States, among others—and can explore the possibility of obtaining additional resources from the partners when the joint regional standby force is established. However, the extent to which a regional force will be successful depends on its counterterrorist response, its exposure to various types of weapons and equipment, and the degree of its professionalism. The conditions in the Sahel are right for an improved regional response to terror.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFIMSA	African-led International Support Mission in Mali
AML	anti-money laundering
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CDG	civil defense group
CFT	counter financing-of-terrorism
CISSA	Committee of Intelligence and Security Service
DGSE	State Security General Intelligence Directorate
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FC G5 S	Joint Force Group of Five for the Sahel
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
FLM	Macina Liberation Front
GIABA	Inter Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
ICG	International Crisis Group
IR	International Relations
ISGS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JNIM	Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin
MNLA	Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MUJAO	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
OAU	Organization for African Unity
SSR	security sector reform
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Sahel Region of West Africa has experienced planned and systematic terrorist attacks that have threatened the peace and security of the affected states and the region. Terrorists have attacked Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. Indeed, Mali has experienced more terrorist attacks than any other West African state; between 1990 and 2014, some 199 terrorist attacks in Mali killed a total of 725 people, including 178 perpetrators.¹ Throughout the region, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has orchestrated these attacks, and it maintains links with its affiliates—the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant , Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab, among others. In response, the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have stepped in to render assistance in the fight against terrorism. There have been some successes, yet terrorism lingers in the region and much remains to be done.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis aims to answer the question: What should regional organizations do differently to combat the threat of terrorism in the Sahel more effectively?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH QUESTION

This project hopes to contribute to the broader knowledge about countering terrorism in Africa, particularly in the Sahel, as well as to the growing study of regional and multinational organizations. This investigation is relevant to policymakers in the region in that its recommendations are meant to help them better devise policies aimed at combating terrorist activities more effectively, thereby saving lives, property, and billions of dollars that would be expended to manage effects of terrorism and reconstruct post-terrorism environments. This research is also useful to regional bodies across the globe in their efforts to formulate policies on issues of terrorism.

¹ “Terrorism in Mali,” National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2015, https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_MaliFactSheet_Nov2015.pdf.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, I examine scholarly works on regionalism globally and in the Sahel Region of West Africa. I am mindful that researchers have attributed the growth of regionalism to the demise of the Cold War and the bipolar world order that it imposed. These researchers include Giovanni Barbieri, Edward D. Mansfield, and Etel Solingen. According to Barbieri, regionalism originated in the aftermath of World War II and gradually evolved until the post-Cold War.² Mansfield and Solingen quote Buzan, Weaver, Lake, and Morgan who maintain that, “the decline of bipolarity and movement toward multipolarity enabled regional arrangements that could not have surfaced during the Cold War.”³ Mansfield and Solingen’s stance is significant because, following the demise of bipolarity, the world became a global village with states more frequently cooperating regionally to address such issues of mutual concern as mitigation of terrorism, which this thesis examines.

Regionalism can be linked to the international relations (IR) theories of liberalism, realism, and constructivism. Authors whose literary work has elements of the major IR paradigms are Borzel and Risse, Mansfield and Solingen, and Nyesiga, whose submissions explore the role of regionalism in the promotion of peace and development. This literature review throws light on regionalism, with focus placed on the advent of regionalism, general perspectives of regionalism, and regionalism’s new focus, to indicate the transformation of regionalism from addressing minimal to myriad challenges confronting states. Given the wave of terrorism in the world, regionalism’s transformation is timely for restoring order in the universe.

1. The Advent of Regionalism

On the one hand, regionalism—in the sense of an association of neighboring states—has more than a century of history in Africa. According to McKeever, “one, the

² Giovanni Barbieri, “Regionalism, Globalism and Complexity: A Stimulus Towards Global IR?” *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 4, no. 6 (November 2019): 425, 10.1080/23802014.2019.1685406.

³ Edward D. Mansfield and Etel Solingen, “Regionalism,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, no. 1 (June 2010): 158, 10.1146/annurev.polisci.13.050807.161356.

oldest international agreement in the region and the oldest customs union in the world, is the Southern African Customs Union.”⁴ Similarly, a handful of regional organizations elsewhere in the world existed even in the 1940s, although they were not too coherent. For example, Meyer notes that in 1948, the Organization of American States was formed as a platform for the deliberation on matters of collective concern by states in the hemisphere,⁵ and the Arab League in 1945 as a regional political organization to secure the interest of Arab countries.⁶

On the other hand, the Cold War period and the post–Cold War period witnessed the gradual evolution of regionalism.⁷ According to Barbieri, “during each period, regionalism has been influenced by the political and ideological contexts of the time.”⁸ However, in the 1990s, regionalism adopted a new focus to address the myriad of challenges experienced since its inception.

2. General Perspectives on Regionalism

Regionalism is established because states cannot operate in isolation, given the anarchic nature of international systems,⁹ as postulated by realist political philosophers. According to Borzel and Risse, “states have used regional institutions to gain leverage in international negotiations on market access.”¹⁰ Borzel and Risse here assume a liberal

⁴ Matthew McKeever, “Regional Institutions and Social Development in Southern Africa,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 34, no. 1 (August 2008): 458, <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134645>.

⁵ Peter J. Meyer, *Organization of American States: Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report No. R42639 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2018), 1, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42639.pdf>.

⁶ İrfan Kaya Ülger and Joe Hammoura, “The Arab League: From Establishment to Failure,” *Journal of Social and Legal Studies* (July 2018): 35–37, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326783428_The_Arab_League_From_Establishment_to_Failure.

⁷ Giovanni Barbieri, “Regionalism, globalism and complexity: A stimulus towards global IR?,” *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 4, no. 6, (2019), 425, DOI: 10.1080/23802014.2019.1685406.

⁸ Barbieri, “Regionalism, globalism and complexity.”

⁹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), 103.

¹⁰ Tanja A. Borzel and Thomas Risse, “Grand Theories of Integration and the Challenges of Comparative Regionalism,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 26, no. 8 (2019):1239, DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2019.1622589,1239.

posture in attributing the establishment of regionalism to the desire of attaining economic influences to depict the necessity of regionalism in promoting economic growth. However, promotion of economic growth is only one segment of regionalism.

Mansfield and Solingen share a similar view and catalogue the reasons for the formation of regional organizations. They quote Keohane:

Institutions are expected to reduce uncertainty, enhance information about preferences and behavior, lower transaction costs responsible for market failure, monitor compliance, detect defections, increase opportunities for cooperation, reduce the costs of retaliation, facilitate issue linkages, and offer focal points or salient solutions.¹¹

Arguably, Mansfield and Solingen are of the view that regionalism helps states obtain fair terms of trade and economic opportunities. However, they do not elaborate on how regionalism manages or accommodates non-state actors like multinational corporations and firms that produce commodities.

For Gruel and Hout, regionalism can be seen as an attempt by the state and/or domestic actors to affect and influence the course of globalization within their regional sphere.¹² Gruel and Hout's agreement that states participate in regionalism to impact globalization may be partly correct, as globalization offers opportunities to states. However, there are winners and losers in globalization, with winners being those who invest resources in trade and manage their investments well.¹³ Nevertheless, regionalism helps states obtain grants, loans, and investors who provide job opportunities for the people. Arguably, job opportunities offer financial resources needed to prop up families and limit the rate of participation in extremist activities. Similarly, job opportunities provide socialization through which employees inculcate the ethos of the jobs and reject

¹¹ Mansfield and Solingen, "Regionalism," 157.

¹² Jean Gruel and Wil Hout, "Regionalism Across the North-South Divide, States Strategies and Globalization" (London: Routledge, 1999, 11, <https://www.amazon.com/Regionalism-across-North-South-Divide-ebook/dp/B000SJWUHO>).

¹³ Kimberley Clausing, *Open the Progressive Case for Free Trade, Immigration, and Global Capital* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 73.

threat-prone activities. That said, regionalism offers member states the required expertise to help develop and advise on national programs.

Nyesiga takes the debate forward and presents a realist argument that, as Kupchan, Solomon, and Cilliers observe:

The underlying logic of collective security is twofold. First, is that the balancing mechanisms that operate under collective security should prevent war and stop aggression far more effectively than balancing mechanism in an anarchic setting.... Second, a collective security organization, by institutionalizing the notion of all against one, contributes to the creation of an international setting in which stability emerges through cooperation rather than competition.¹⁴

In the above submission, Nyesiga throws light on the collaborative efforts of states in the mitigation of war and refers to states' concerted efforts to curb security threats more effectively.

In addition to the liberal lens initially used, Borzel and Risse assume a constructivist lens in their submission that “the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was created based on a strong post-colonial elite identity emphasizing African independence and a strong non-intervention norm.”¹⁵ Although the OAU's non-intervention norm depicts noninterference in African political matters, it “provide [s] a solid foundation for peaceful and positive cooperation among States”¹⁶ on matters of mutual concern, particularly terrorism.

3. Regionalism's New Focus

Regionalism's new focus does not imply that inter-governmental relations are no longer relevant. They are indeed relevant and utilized in the new dispensation alongside

¹⁴ Nicholas Humble Nyesiga, “Combating Transnational Terrorism in the East African Region: The Role of the African Union Mission in Somalia” (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2017), 7–8, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/55509>.

¹⁵ Borzel and Risse, “Grand Theories of Integration and the Challenges of Comparative Regionalism,” 1242.

¹⁶ OAU Charter, 1, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7759-file-oau_charter_1963.pdf.

the new actors. Another new initiative in regionalism is human security.¹⁷ Grant and Soderbaum claim that human security is a shift away from a narrow state-centric notion of security to a broader, more encompassing one.¹⁸ Arguably, human security entails measures employed to promote daily sustenance and economic and physical wellbeing, among others, mindful that abject or sustained need can drive a person to extremism, violence, or criminality.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Regional organizations can better combat terrorism if they have the correct policies and strategies and collaborate with host communities. I hypothesize that regional organizations with established policies and strategies that include intelligence sharing, inter-state collaborations, and harmonized border security procedures mitigate terrorism. This hypothesis asserts that a regional organization with the correct direction and team will succeed in the fight against terrorism. The independent variable is “regional organization” while the dependent variable is “mitigate terrorism.” The hypothesis illustrates the need for having correct strategies and guidelines and the significance of teamwork in the promotion of national security.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

To answer the research question, this thesis uses a single case study analysis—Mali. First, this thesis investigates the terrorist threats in Mali, followed by an overview and analysis of Mali’s and regional organizations’ endeavors to combat the terrorist threats. To conclude, this thesis provides recommendations to policymakers in the region for strengthening regional responses to terrorism.

This thesis draws on a range of sources: textbooks, journals, reports, and government policies, including those from established international organizations. Other pertinent materials consulted in the preparation of the thesis are internet materials and

¹⁷ Frederik Soderbaum and Andrew Grant, “New Regionalism in Africa,” Research Gate (January 2003), 9, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259580724_New_Regionalism_in_Africa

¹⁸ Soderbaum and Grant, “New Regionalism in Africa,” 9.

reports from credible news outlets that are relevant to the research for critical examination of the views of authors on the research topic. The thesis analyzes data from these sources in qualitative rather than quantitative terms to promote critical thinking, a novel point of view, and ease of reading and comprehension by those who may access the work for design of policies on terrorism or further research on the subject matter.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is segmented into five chapters, as indicated below:

Chapter I is the introduction. It entails the research question, significance of the research, literature review, hypothesis, research design, and thesis overview.

Chapter II provides an overview of terrorism in Mali. It gives the background, nature, and composition of Mali's terrorist groups and the factors responsible for terrorism in Mali.

Chapter III examines Mali's response to terrorism. It throws light on the efforts of Mali's government and its operatives in the fight against terrorism. The chapter further encompasses policies enacted, strategies rolled out, and tactical operations undertaken in the mitigation of terrorism.

Chapter IV examines responses from the regional organization, AU, and its sub-regional body, ECOWAS. It investigates the extent to which the actors have helped mitigate terrorism in Mali and analyzes gaps in the response.

Chapter V is the conclusion. It provides an analysis of regional actors' responses to terrorism and proffers recommendations to mitigate the threats more effectively.

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II. OVERVIEW OF TERRORISM IN MALI

Mali—indeed, the Sahel Region of West Africa—is plagued with terrorism, which, in turn, is exacerbated by regional/supranational, environmental, and economic challenges. Moreover, Mali’s vulnerabilities to terrorism are heightened by its vast land, which is threatened by drought and deforestation that result in inadequate water supply, poor agricultural productivity, and economic gloom. Mali’s borders are porous, largely because its national security operatives cannot effectively secure the state amid logistical inadequacies, limited manpower, and ineptitude. These problems mirror the issues that afflict the entire region; in fact, many of them can only be explained in the regional context.

This chapter is segmented into two sections. First, this chapter throws light on Mali’s terrorist threats and terrorist organizations; then, the analysis turns to an examination of Mali’s vulnerabilities, both human and geographical. This context informs and explains the insecurity of Mali and the Sahel.

A. THREATS OF TERRORISM IN MALI

Mali’s threats of terrorism are authored by terrorist groups that operate within the Sahel Region of West Africa. They include AQIM, Ansar Dine, Macina Liberation Front (FLM), Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), among others. These groups originated from the Sahel where they affiliated with al Qaeda or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), presumably to be globally recognized as potentially dangerous and a threat to the world. Since 2012, Mali has experienced systematic and sporadic terrorist attacks with a surge in terrorism in recent years. There have been severe terrorist attacks with the use of arms or explosives on state security operatives, peacekeepers, international dignitaries, and harmless and defenseless civilians. In 2020 alone, terrorist attacks in Mali have been decidedly deadly. For example, on March 19, 2020, armed men ambushed a Malian army camp in Gao, northern Mali, killing at least 29 soldiers and wounding at least five others.¹⁹ Although these groups attack

¹⁹ Counter Extremism Project, “Mali: Extremism and Counter-Extremism,” 5, Accessed, August 3, 2020, https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/country_pdf/ML-08242020.pdf.

Mali, their activities are not limited to Mali. Rather, they are also experienced in the Sahel, with different states in the region having their portion of attacks. Terrorist groups have severely attacked Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania. For example, between January and July 2020, there were 85 attacks on teachers, students, and schools in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.²⁰ According to Lederer, “terrorist attacks have increased five-fold in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger since 2016 with over 4,000 deaths reported in 2019 compared to an estimated 770 deaths in 2016.”²¹ The wave of terrorism across the Sahel is worrisome, as the Sahel remains unsafe. Given the crisscrossing of terrorists and the wave of attacks they unleash in the Sahel, it can be argued that the threats are not local and cannot be effectively curbed by local solutions.

Like their affiliates, Mali’s terrorist groups are opposed to non-Islamic practices and perceive the West as adversaries. However, Mali’s terrorist attacks do not necessarily reflect the ideology of Malian terrorists given that they are generic rather than selective, as no religious faith is excluded from their vicious strikes. For example, on March 2019, terrorists dressed as Dogan hunters killed more than 160 ethnic Fulani civilians, including children and pregnant women in the village of Ogossagou, Central Mali.²² With the March 2019 terrorist attack on Mali’s ethnic Fulani civilians, Mali’s terrorists reflected their global affiliates (al Qaeda and ISIS) in being destructive, deceptive, and without regard for human rights principles, specifically right to life. However, attacks have even rolled into 2020. In March 2020, terrorists attacked a convoy in Aguelhoc, Northern Mali, which resulted in the death of three UN peacekeepers.²³ Also, in November 2020, terrorists killed eight civilians in an attack on a minibus between Paron and Songobai in the Bandagara

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Attacks on Students, Teachers and Schools, Surge in Africa Sahel*, September 8, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/08/attacks-students-teachers-and-schools-surge-africas-sahel#>.

²¹ Edith M. Liderer, “UN Envoy: Terrorists Attacks Surging in Sahel and West Africa,” *AP News*, January 8, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/c8481aae55ca1a13aebdf34c9fe12595>.

²² James Blake, “Radical Islamist Have Opened a New Front in Mali,” *FP News*, March 29, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/29/radical-islamists-have-opened-a-new-front-in-mali/>.

²³ “UN Peacekeepers Killed in Improvised Explosive Attack in Mali,” *UN News*, May 11, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1063662>.

circle in Mopti region, Mali.²⁴ That said, Mali's terrorists, like their affiliates, attack where they are likely to obtain success and the desired impact.

1. Background of Terrorist Threats in Mali

The 2012 Tuareg rebellion in Mali and the civil conflict that ensued attracted Islamist extremists who allied with the Tuareg rebels to perpetuate violence in Northern Mali. According to Lecocq et al., the formation of a new Tuareg political movement—the National Movement of Azawad—in October 2010 and the proclamation of an independent Azawad Republic in Mali fueled the civil conflict.²⁵ Since Mali obtained independence in 1960, the Tuareg tribe has been dissatisfied and aggrieved by state authorities and has rebelled several times (in 1963, 1991, 2006, and 2012) to secede from Mali and establish an independent Tuareg state, “Azawad.” Terrorists exploited one such secessionist conflict in 2012 to recruit combatants and fight alongside the Tuaregs. As a result of the Tuareg-terrorist coalition, terrorists were able to overpower Mali's weak and ill-equipped armed forces and temporarily control Northern Mali, where they introduced shariah law.²⁶ Commenting on the conflict between the Malian government and the Tuaregs, Sow notes that, at the beginning of the conflict, the jihadist groups never publicly showed their support for the secessionist fighters and quotes Charbonneau:

Terrorist groups divided northern and central Mali into delineated areas of operations: Timbuktu was under AQIM; Kidal was controlled by Ansar Dine; FLM controlled the center in Segou and Mopti; the Ivory Coast border was controlled by an unnamed group; and Al-Mourabitoune was suspected of having moved to Libya, but it resurfaced in Mali and Burkina Faso with shocking attacks on both capitals.²⁷

²⁴ “Eight Civilians Killed in Alleged Terrorist Attack in Central Mali,” *Panapress*, November 2020, https://www.panapress.com/Eight-civilians-killed-in-allege-a_630667002-lang2.html.

²⁵ Baz Lecocq et al., “One Hippopotamus and Eight Blind Analysts: A Multivocal Analysis of the 2012 Political Crisis in the Divided Republic of Mali,” *Review of African Political Economy* 40, no. 137 (June 9, 2013):1–2, DOI: 10.1080/03056244.2013.799063.

²⁶ Counter Extremism Project, “Mali: Extremism and Counter-Extremism,” 1.

²⁷ Brehima Sow, “The Rise of Terrorism in Mali: A Review of The Historical Causes and the Failures of Both Malian and International Efforts” (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2018), 19, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/61275>.

The Tuareg's rebellion of 2012 is significant because it unraveled the capacity of terrorists, brought them to the limelight globally, and portrayed what their goals were given their brief leadership of Northern Mali and spate of horror experienced during that period.

Mali's influx of terrorists can further be attributed to the demise of the Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, and return of his Tuareg fighters to Mali. The Libyan leader provided employment for impoverished Tuaregs as mercenaries under his command and offered them huge salaries, homes, and cars with oil.²⁸ According to Durmaz, these Tuareg combatants projected Qaddafi's power in the region by fighting for him for decades from Lebanon to Niger and Mali.²⁹ Following Qaddafi's death, these combatants returned to their native home (Northern Mali) with sophisticated weaponry.³⁰ According to Boas and Utas, in Mali, the returning Tuaregs returned home with quantities of weapons collected from the arsenal that nobody controlled when the Qaddafi state crumbled.³¹ According to Lymmaouri, following the demise of the Libyan leader, "rebels, militias and criminal gangs looted Libyan arms caches, utilizing them for self-protection, fighting the Qaddafi regime, or sold them via the black market to armed groups."³²

Additionally, the death of the Libyan leader has made Libya a harbor of refuge for fleeing terrorists. According to Boas and Utas, following the death of the Libyan leader, Islamist insurgents fleeing from international intervention in Mali took refuge in Libya's South Fezzan region to regroup and launch attacks on Mali.³³ Arguably, Libya has been used as an illicit base for fleeing terrorists because of its proximity to Mali and security

²⁸ Mucahid Durmaz, "Libya in the African Context," *TRT World Magazine*, January 24, 2020, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/libya-in-the-african-context-33208>.

²⁹ Durmaz, "Libya in the African Context."

³⁰ David J. Francis, *The Impact of the Armed Conflict and French Intervention in Mali* (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center, April 2013), 4, https://www.academia.edu/12186299/The_regional_impact_of_the_armed_conflict_and_French_Military_Intervention_in_Mali.

³¹ Morten Boas and Mats Utas, "Introduction: Post-Gaddafi Repercussions in the Sahel and West Africa," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 35, no. 2 (November 2013): 6, <https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/Legacy/sitefiles/file/46/1322/04boasandutaspp315.pdf>.

³² Rida Lyammouri, *Northern Mali: Armed Groups, State Failure, and Terrorism*, HSPI Issue Brief 20 (Homeland Security Policy Issue, George Washington University, 2013), 4, <https://www.slideshare.net/RobSentseBc/northern-mali-armed-groups-state-failure-and-terrorism>.

³³ Boas and Utas, "Introduction: Post-Gaddafi Repercussions in the Sahel and West Africa," 5.

pitfalls experienced in that state since the downfall—and death—of Qaddafi. Given that some of the Tuareg terrorists have served in Qaddafi’s military forces, it is likely that they are very familiar with the terrain, as well as military tactics, and therefore have used Libya for cover whenever international forces pursue them.

2. Mali’s Terrorist Organizations

Terrorist organizations that operate in Mali have similar ideologies and incentives to their affiliates, mainly al Qaeda and ISIS. Their common ideology is to establish an Islamic caliphate and enforce shariah law in the Maghreb.³⁴ These groups have mostly emerged from existing groups in the Sahel Region of West Africa, where they dwell and attack neighboring states and have been fused with others to become potent. For example, the Islamist group Ansar Dine established FLM and the Katibat Khalid Ibn Walid,³⁵ while the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) was formed through fusion of different terrorist groups in an area known as the zone of the three borders (Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger).³⁶ Although different terrorist groups have operated in Mali at diverse dates, the main terrorist organizations in that country are AQIM, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, JNIM, and ISGS.

3. AQIM

AQIM is a terrorist organization in the Sahel Region of West Africa that continues to pose threat to Mali and its periphery. The Algerian civil war produced AQIM in reaction to a military coup that cancelled an election that a broad Islamist movement won.³⁷ AQIM moved into Mali at the turn of the millennium, became affiliated with al Qaeda on

³⁴ Center for International Security and Cooperation, “Mapping Militants: Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb,” Stanford University, last updated July 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/aqim#highlight_text_7741.

³⁵ Giuseppe Dentice, “Terrorism in the Sahel Region: An Evolving Threat on Europe’s Doorstep,” *Euro Mesco Policy Brief*, No. 80 (February 19, 2018): 6, https://www.euromesco.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Brief80_Terrorism-in-the-Sahel-Region.-An-evolving-threat-on-Europe-doorstep.pdf.

³⁶ Elisee Jean Dao, “Learning from U.S. Counter Terrorism Experience in the Sahel: A Springboard for the Sahel G5 Organization” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2019),70, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/60389>.

³⁷ Sergei Boeke, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism, Insurgency, or Organized Crime?” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (2016): 918–919, DOI: 10.1080/09592318.2016.1208280.

September 11, 2006, and had its name rebranded from the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat to AQIM in January 2007.³⁸ AQIM might have affiliated with al Qaeda for financial and logistical support. However, ideological motives cannot be ruled out as another reason for that affiliation. Like al Qaeda and its affiliated groups, AQIM's incentives for operating as a terrorist organization include expelling western forces from that region³⁹ and saving countries from the arms of those criminal governments that betrayed their people and religion.⁴⁰ Here, AQIM assumes a religious posture that is contrary to the tenets of Islam, which it professes to propagate. To achieve its aims, AQIM fought alongside the Tuareg group in its rebellion of the northern region against Malian leadership. Also, it teamed up with other terrorist groups, mainly Ansar Dine and MUJAO, to take control of the north and chase the Malian military and state officials out of that region to make it an Islamic state.⁴¹ That said, AQIM's terrorist activities in Mali can be seen as a response to Sayyid Qutb's request for jihad against apostasy. In his literary work *Milestone*, Qutb asks "Muslims to separate themselves from mainstream society and engage in violent jihad [against apostasy]."⁴² In Qutb's request for action against apostasy, he appears to be myopic in determining what is correct for the world. In a nutshell, it can be argued that Qutb sees jihad as an obligation for Muslims to purge out or cleanse states from infidels or nonbelievers.

4. Ansar Dine

Ansar Dine, also referred to as Defenders of Faith, is another Islamist extremist group operating within Mali from its base at Mali, with its membership drawn mostly from members of the Tuareg group. Ansar Dine is associated with AQIM and has a veteran rebel leader, Iyad Ag Ghaly, who founded the group in 2011–2012 in the framework of the crisis

³⁸ Boeke, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," 919.

³⁹ Counter Extremism Project, "Mali – Extremism and Counter-extremism," 1.

⁴⁰ Boeke, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," 920.

⁴¹ Lyammouri, "Northern Mali," 1.

⁴² Steven G. Zenishek, "Sayyid Qutb's "Milestones" and Its Impact on the Arab Spring," *Small Wars Journal* (May 9, 2013), <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/sayyid-qutb%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cmilestones%E2%80%9D-and-its-impact-on-the-arab-spring>.

in Mali.⁴³ Ansar Dine was among the coalition of jihadist groups that allied with the Tuareg separatists in their rebellion to take control of northern Mali. Like most other Islamist groups, Ansar Dine believes in sharia, and those accused of adultery have been stoned to death, thieves have had limbs amputated, and social activities have been banned in areas under its control.⁴⁴ The Daily Mail press notes that “the group has also demolished most of the ancient city’s shrines to Muslim saints, which the jihadists consider idolatrous.”⁴⁵ According to Dentice, in 2015, “the group expanded its network in the central and southern regions of Mali, establishing new Jihadist groups: the Macina Liberation Front and the katibat Khalid Ibn Walid.”⁴⁶

5. The Macina Liberation Front (FLM)

Another Islamist group that has played a prominent role in Mali is the FLM. Amadou Koufa founded the FLM in 2013 to reinstate the theocratic Macina Empire experienced in Segou, Mopti and Timbuktu, Mali from 1818 to 1863.⁴⁷ Like most other Islamist extremist group in Mali, the FLM applies Islamic rule across its territories presumably to gain support from the locals, given that the bulk of Malians are Muslims. That said, FLM is closely linked to Ansar Dine and its chief, Iyad Ag Ghaly, and comprises combatants from mostly the Fulani ethnic group. According to Pauline Le Roux, “in 2018, the FLM was linked to 63 percent of all violent events in central Mali and a third of violent events in the whole of Mali.”⁴⁸ From 2013 to 2018, the FLM “has been responsible for the

⁴³ Dentice, “Terrorism in the Sahel Region,” 6.

⁴⁴ “Couple Stoned to Death in Northern Mali: Accused of Affair,” *Fox News*, May 24, 2017, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/couple-stoned-to-death-in-northern-mali-accused-of-affair>.

⁴⁵ “Man Lashed 40 times for Drinking Alcohol as Extremists Tighten Grips on Mali,” *Daily Mail*, July 16, 2020, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2174399/The-Islamic-group-imposing-strict-sharia-law-whipping-people-destroying-shrines.html>.

⁴⁶ Dentice, “Terrorism in the Sahel Region,” 6.

⁴⁷ Dao, “Learning from U.S. Counter Terrorism Experience in the Sahel,” 67.

⁴⁸ Pauline Le Roux, *Confronting Central Mali’s Extremist Threat* (Africa Center For Strategic Studies, February 22, 2019), <https://Africacenter.Org/Spotlight/Confronting-Central-Malis-Extremist-Threat/>.

kidnappings of many military members and government workers, the burning of villages and food stores in Dogon and of Bambara ethnic group's villages.”⁴⁹

6. Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)

MUJAO is one of the radical Islamist Salafist extremist groups in Mali that came into existence as a splinter group from AQIM, following its abduction of three humanitarian workers from a Saharan refugee camp in Tindouf on October 23, 2011.⁵⁰ Hamad el Khairy and Ahmed el Tilemsi founded MUJAO to spread jihadism in the Sahel Region of West Africa and expel foreign troops from that region. To achieve its goals, MUJAO has teamed up with Ansar Dine and the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in driving the Malian Armed Forces out of Northern Mali, after which it occupied territories in Northern Mali around Gao. In this community, MUJAO projected that it was defending the local population in Gao and appealed to religious leaders and local “notables,” mainly Arab and Songhai, for support. In August 2013, MUJAO merged with al Multathamum Battalion to form Al Mourabitoun.⁵¹ Al Mourabitoun had attacked states and facilities in the Sahel, including Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako (Mali) on November 2015 and Cappuccino Café and Hotel in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) on January 2016. Like other terrorist groups, MUJAO's or Al Mourabitoun's attacks are waged in both Mali and states in the Sahel because MUJAO or Al Mourabitoun members dwell in this environment and are familiar with the terrain, which they easily navigate.

7. Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM)

Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), which means “Group for the support of Islam and Muslims,”⁵² is another Islamist extremist group that has orchestrated several

⁴⁹ Dao, “Learning from U.S. Counter Terrorism Experience in the Sahel,” 67.

⁵⁰ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, “Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa,” 2015, Accessed August 10, 2020, <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/movement-unity-and-jihad-west-africa-mujao>.

⁵¹ Center for International Security and Cooperation, “Mapping Militants CISAC-MMP: MUJAO,” Stanford University, last updated June 2018, <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/mujao>.

⁵² Africa Defense Forum, “Making Sense of the Sahel,” Defense Web, November 3, 2020, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/joint/diplomacy-a-peace/making-sense-of-the-sahel/>.

terrorist attacks in Mali. According to Africa Defense Forum, “the group is most active in Mali, waging attacks from Bamako to as far north as Taoudenni.”⁵³ However, Burkina Faso and Niger have also been attacked by JNIM.⁵⁴ JNIM is an al Qaeda affiliate formed in the Sahel Region of West Africa by a merger of three jihadist organizations—Ansar Dine, Al Murabitoon, and AQIM—under the leadership of Iyad Ag Ghaly, founder and former militant of Ansar Dine and longtime leader of Mali’s Tuareg uprising. JNIM comprises about 1,000 to 2,000 members, and its main goal is to expel non-Muslim occupiers from the Sahel Region of West Africa and institute sharia law in the whole of that region.⁵⁵ JNIM is opposed to western presence, specifically French and U.S. personnel in Mali. Consequently, its leader Ghaly affirms that JNIM’s secondary targets were the U.S. and France’s allies in West Africa, whereas France was their primary enemy for being an old enemy of Muslims in that part of the Muslim world.⁵⁶ Ghaly concludes that France’s allies in West Africa, including the United States, were JNIM’s second adversary.⁵⁷ According to Weiss, JNIM has claimed many attacks in Mali, which “includes two major assaults on Malian military bases which left dozens of soldiers dead.”⁵⁸

B. MALI’S VULNERABILITIES

The terrorist threats to Mali cannot be disconnected from the country’s vulnerabilities, mainly its state of deprivation, attacks on neighboring countries, and harsh, vast, porous, and mostly unmanned terrain that conceals terrorists from security operatives. This section surveys these issues in their turn.

⁵³ Africa Defense Forum, “Making Sense of the Sahel.”

⁵⁴ Africa Defense Forum, “Making Sense of the Sahel.”

⁵⁵ Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Jamaat Nasr al-Islam Wal Muslimin*, (Washington, DC: CSIS, September 5, 2018), 1, <https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/terrorism-backgrounders/jamaat-nasr-al-islam-wal-muslimin>.

⁵⁶ Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Jamaat Nasr al-Islam Wal Muslimin*, 2.

⁵⁷ Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Jamaat Nasr al-Islam Wal Muslimin*, 2.

⁵⁸ Caleb Weiss, “JNIM Targets Military Bases in Central Mali,” *FDD’s Long War Journal* (January 27, 2020), <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2020/01/jnim-targets-military-bases-in-central-mali.php>.

Mali's ungoverned spaces conceal terrorists and criminals that access them, thereby promoting terrorism and organized crime. According to Vice Admiral Lowell Jacoby, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, U.S. Navy, ungoverned spaces are "geographic areas where governments do not exercise effective control....Terrorist groups and narco-traffickers use these areas as sanctuaries to train, plan and organize, [operations] relatively free from interference."⁵⁹ Terrorists exploit the porosity of ungoverned spaces to illicitly access states and inflict atrocities on their targets. Mali's porous borders are vast, and securing them demands collaborative efforts from Sahelian states, which the regional bodies can lead.

1. Mali's State of Deprivation

According to the International Organization for Migration, which quotes a World Bank report of 2013, "Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, with 43.6 percent of its population in 2009/2010 below the poverty line."⁶⁰ Consequently, in Mali, militants exploit the vulnerability of the masses, preying on their economic straits to recruit their children as terrorists. According to Obajr, "hundreds if not thousands of Malian children have been sold to armed groups by family members or school officials in exchange for money."⁶¹ In reality, hundreds or thousands of children have been sold; in other instances, children have also been enticed to become terrorists by money and the appeal of fighting for God.⁶²

A further complication is economic disparity, which could stem from a variety of factors including the Malian government's granting of significant privileges to those

⁵⁹ Phil Walter, "Ungoverned Spaces, What Threats Do They Pose?" *Blogs of War*, February 16, 2016, <https://blogsofwar.com/ungoverned-spaces-what-threat-do-they-pose/> .

⁶⁰ World Bank, *Mali Poverty and Gender Notes*, Report No. 77752-ML (2013), IV, <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/145431468281645332/pdf/777520ML0ESW0P00Box377382B00PUBLIC0.pdf>.

⁶¹ Philip Obajr, "Here's How Terrorists Recruit Africa's Children," *Daily Beast*, January 21, 2016, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/heres-how-terrorists-recruit-africas-children?ref=scroll>.

⁶² Obajr, "Here's How Terrorists Recruit Africa's Children."

aligned with the center and failing to curb corruption.⁶³ On economic disparity, Hoije notes that “high unemployment—especially among young people—has spawned widespread discontent with authorities in the southern capital.”⁶⁴ Mali’s northern region suffers particularly from this marginalization from state authorities and severe geographical challenges.

2. Regional and Domestic Instability

Mali shares common borders with Algeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Mauritania, which means it also shares its neighbors’ insecurity, particularly their terrorist threats.⁶⁵ The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2019, which analyzes the impact of terrorism in 163 countries, ranks Mali as 13th. The same index ranks its neighbors—Niger as 23rd, Burkina Faso as 38th, Algeria as 57th, and the Ivory Coast as 72nd—for frequency of terrorist attacks in 2018.⁶⁶ The frequency of terrorist attacks on Mali’s neighbors and their level of insecurity illustrate that Mali is at the heart of terrorism. The attacks on Mali’s neighbors also depict that Mali will continue to suffer from threats of terrorism if the level of terrorist threats to its neighbors continues to be high. Consequently, no single state in the Sahel will be able to address the attacks all alone given the regional dimension of the threats, and this necessitates regional intervention to liberate the Sahel from terrorism.

Furthermore, Mali is home to more than 24 distinct ethnic groups, with the main ethnic groups being the Mande, Bambara, Malinke, and Sarakole.⁶⁷ In some cases, these

⁶³ Martin Van Vliet, “Weak Legislatures, Failing MPS, and the Collapse of Democracy in Mali,” *African Affairs* 113, no. 450 (2014): 50, DOI: 10.1093/afraf/adt071.

⁶⁴ Katarina Hoije, “Mali Conflict: South is South, North is North, Never the Twain Shall Meet?,” *The Guardian*, March 19, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/mar/19/mali-conflict-south-north-divide-algiers-peace-talks>.

⁶⁵ Raul-Ionut Badale and Diana-Cristina Isvoranu, “Mali. Conflict Analysis” *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, no. 3 (April 2013): 4, <http://cscubb.ro/csq/wp-content/uploads/CSQ-3.-Badale-Isvoranu.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism* (Sydney, Australia: IEP, November 2019), 8, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GTI-2019web.pdf>.

⁶⁷ *Encyclopedia of Nations*, “Mali-Ethnic Groups,” Accessed August 10, 2020, <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Mali-ETHNIC-GROUPS.html>.

subpopulations may feel a divided loyalty between the state of Mali and their own ethnic groups. Mali's ethnic divide was manifested during its 2012 military leadership, as Malian armed forces relegated the Arabs and Tuaregs and systematically abused them. Research that the Human Rights Watch undertook in Mali in 2012 found that "outside the capital, the Malian army has arbitrarily detained and executed mostly Tuareg and Arab men for their alleged connections to rebel groups in the north."⁶⁸ Apart from the Arabs and Tuaregs, the Fulanis have also experienced their share of brutality. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), villages where Fulanis reside, e.g., Koulogon, were attacked in January, resulting in the death of 37 people.⁶⁹ Although the attackers have not stated the reasons for the attacks and remain incognito, the attack cannot be unconnected from ethnic problems, given that Fulanis have been accused of supporting the jihadists.⁷⁰

Mali encourages religious tolerance amid a predominantly Muslim population.⁷¹ Indeed, according to the U.S. Department of States, "statistics of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Worship, [show that] Muslims constitute an estimated 95 percent of the population."⁷² Even among the Muslim majority in Mali, Islamist extremists use Islamic religious tenets to sow the seeds of discord and recruit. At the same time, Islamist extremists perpetuate horrific acts to instill fear in the population, attract media attention, and coerce governments to adhere to their demands.

⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch, "Mali: Rising Ethnic Tensions Threatens New Violence," December 20, 2012, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/12/20/mali-rising-ethnic-tensions-threaten-new-violence>.

⁶⁹ Jean Herve Jezequel, "Central Mali: Putting a Stop to Ethnic Cleansing," International Crisis Group, March 25, 2019, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/centre-du-mali-enrayer-le-nettoyage-ethnique>.

⁷⁰ Jezequel, "Central Mali."

⁷¹ Badale and Isvoranu, "Mali. Conflict Analysis," 4.

⁷² U.S. Department of State, *Mali 2018 International Religious Freedom Report* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2019), 2. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/mali-2018-international-religious-freedom-report.pdf>.

3. Ungoverned Spaces

The Malian Sahara allows Islamist terrorists and secular-national insurgents to operate because it is chronically under policed and porous.⁷³ The UN shares these concerns and has commented that the Sahelian borders are porous, harsh, and extremely hard to control and can be easily accessed by terrorists.⁷⁴ Indeed, the porosity of the Sahelian borders envelops terrorists and transcends borders of Sahelian states; thus, it can be addressed through regular border patrols, intelligence sharing, and joint border management and control meetings of Sahelian states, which the regional organizations should lead for proper coordination and control while also training security operatives for maximal efficiency. That said, Mali's corrupt state officials exploit the porosity of the border to participate in trafficking of contraband items, mainly cigarettes, narcotics, and arms, which Islamist extremists use in attacks against the state.⁷⁵ Organized criminal syndicates also take advantage of the ungoverned spaces of Mali to conduct their illicit trades. According to ICG, "many of the armed groups in Northern Mali rely on the drug trade to finance operations, meet logistical needs, and acquire weapons and vehicles."⁷⁶

Organized crime in the Sahel Region of West Africa is even more severe in the form of human trafficking. According to BBC News, "hundreds of African men dreaming of a future in Europe pass through one of Gao's three 'ghettos' every month."⁷⁷ The use of the Sahel's ungoverned spaces to traffic people to Europe impacts security of states in the region, especially when migrants are unable to continue their journey and stay in the Sahel only to become radicalized as terrorists, or when terrorists use migration as cover for reconnaissance and attacks.

⁷³ Stephen Harmon, "Securitization Initiatives in the Sahara-Sahel Region in the Twenty-first Century," *African Security* 8, no. 4 (2015): 228, DOI: 10.1080/19392206.2015.1100503.

⁷⁴ UN Secretary General, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sahel Region*, S/2013/354 (UN Security Council, 2013), 2, https://unowas.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2013_354_sahel_strategy_en_0.pdf.

⁷⁵ Lyammouri, *Northern Mali*, 4.

⁷⁶ International Crisis Group, *Drug Trafficking, Violence and Politics in Northern Mali*, ICG Report No. 267/Africa (Brussels: International Crisis Group, December 2018).

⁷⁷ Alex Duval Smith, "Inside Mali's Human Trafficking Underworld in Gao," *BBC News*, April 21, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32359142>.

C. CONCLUSION

This chapter has indicated the capacity of terrorists to defeat the Malian armed forces and institute their system of governance. The chapter showed that in the absence of regional forces, terrorism will thrive in Mali and the Sahel. Hence, regional intervention is imperative, which is the main research question of this thesis—what can regional organizations do differently to combat the threats of terrorism in the Sahel more effectively?—seeks to answer.

Mali's terrorist threats transcend the borders of Mali while factors that exacerbate Mali's terrorist threats demand regional attention to better secure Mali and its neighbors. The terrorist groups in Mali are affiliated to al Qaeda and ISIS and exploit the protection received from ungoverned spaces as a shield to attack Mali and its neighbours. Given the proliferation of terrorist organizations and their increasing level of threats to the security of Mali and the Sahel Region of West Africa, it is apparent that regional support is imperative to rid Mali and the Sahel of terrorist attacks. Additionally, Malians remain worried, mindful of the rate of fatalities and injuries sustained in terrorist assaults.

Furthermore, Malians are still licking their wounds and grappling with the pains of shariah in the brief period it was imposed in Northern Mali when terrorists controlled that region. Moreover, the oxygen of terrorism in Mali—marginalization, ungoverned spaces, organized crime, and environmental degradation, among others—remains prevalent, as terrorists mutate in names, outlook, and mode of operation, making the mitigation of terrorism an uphill task.

III. MALI'S LOCAL RESPONSE TO TERRORIST THREATS

Mali's local response indicates gains and challenges of Mali's efforts to curb terrorism within its territory. Mali's local response commences with legal and strategic policy framework, which provides the legal basis for Mali's counterterrorism policies and strategies and draws its strength from international protocols and conventions that harmonize counterterrorism measures in the fight against terrorism. Although a GTI reports that the impact of Mali's terrorism has fluctuated in the past five years from 5.87, 6.03, 5.88, and 6.02 to 6.65 in 2015 to 2019, respectively, the figures (6.02-6.65) portray that there was a severe increase in Mali's terrorism in 2018 and 2019, respectively.⁷⁸ Mali's situation is similar to that of states in the Sahel, for example Burkina Faso, which experienced an increase in terrorism index from 4.81 in 2017 to 5.42 in 2018.⁷⁹ The reason for the increase in terrorism in both Mali and Burkina Faso cannot be unconnected from the proliferation of terrorism, considering the harshness of the Sahel, inadequate logistics of state security operatives, and their inability to adequately combat the threat. Thus, any attempt to combat terrorism in one state will be futile without regional considerations.

Mali has ratified and implemented international protocols and conventions and has made some gains in implementation, but these are not commensurate with the challenges, as Mali is ranked 13th on impact of terrorism in the Global Terrorism Index 2019.⁸⁰ This ranking, which cannot be uncoupled from challenges experienced in the implementation of Mali's policies and counterterrorism strategy, happens to be Mali's worst in five years.⁸¹

This chapter discusses Mali's approach in three sections: Section A details Mali's legal and policy framework, Section B examines Mali's domestic practices, and Section C provides Mali's strategic operational response to terrorism.

⁷⁸ World Data Atlas, "Mali- Global Terrorism Index," Knoema, Accessed August 10, 2020, <https://knoema.com/atlas/Mali/topics/World-Rankings/World-Rankings/Global-terrorism-index>.

⁷⁹ Trading Economics, Burkina Faso Terrorism Index 2002-2018 Data, Accessed September 5, 2020, <https://tradingeconomics.com/Burkina-Faso/Terrorism-Index>.

⁸⁰ Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index 2019-Measuring the Impact of Terrorism.

⁸¹ World Data Atlas, "Mali-Global Terrorism Index."

A. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

In response to the proliferation of terrorism in the Sahel Region of West Africa and Mali specifically, the government of Mali has acceded to international protocols and conventions on terrorism and codified them as domestic law.⁸² This section assesses the impact of the protocols and conventions Mali has ratified and incorporated to combat terrorism.

1. Ratification of Protocols and Conventions

The Republic of Mali has acceded to universal protocols or conventions against terrorism in its territory. Mali has acceded to the Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents (1973); therefore, Mali is expected to secure these diplomatic agents when they visit or are in Mali for official functions [Article 1 (a) and (b)].⁸³ Consequently, the Malian armed forces have launched several attacks against terrorists. In one onslaught to secure Westerners in hotels and restaurants in Bamako, Malian security forces successfully arrested several terrorist suspects and seized weapons and explosives.⁸⁴

With the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971), Mali is to secure aircrafts in its land and airspace against all forms of violence. Securing aircrafts and their content against terrorism is required, given the volume of people that travel daily by air and the spate of casualties that terrorists inflict because aviation security systems are riddled by pitfalls. Therefore, to enhance airport security, Mali has installed a passenger screening system at its airport to enhance air transit

⁸² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *A Review of the Legal Regime Against Terrorism in West and Central Africa, Working Document* (New York; United Nations, October 2008), 121. f. http://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/Review_West_African_CT_Legal_Regime/A_Review_of_the_Legal_Regime_Ag_Terr_in_W_and_C_Africa_V09837531.pdf.

⁸³ United Nations, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents (1973), Annexed to General Assembly resolution 3166 (XVIII) (New York: United Nations, 2005), 2, https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_4_1973.pdf.

⁸⁴ U.S. State Department, *Country Report on Terrorism: Mali* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2019), <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/mali/>.

security monitoring.⁸⁵ Despite installing a passenger screening system and adopting many other conventions, Mali's aviation security remains challenged because of the wave of terrorist attacks in Mali.

Mali has incorporated international conventions and protocols acceded to in a counterterrorism law. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "in July 23, 2008, Mali adopted a counter-terrorism law (Law No. 08-025) to address such issues of terrorism as offences related to civil aviation, vessels and fixed-platforms, dangerous materials, diplomatic agents, hostage-taking, financing of terrorism and nuclear terrorism."⁸⁶ Although Mali has adopted this law, aviation reports indicate that Mali's aviation system is unsafe and prone to attacks. A Safe Airspace aviation report published on June 19, 2020, placed Mali's aviation system at level two risk, with the likelihood for danger.⁸⁷ According to the report, Mali remains the deadliest place to serve in the UN. The United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom have all issued warnings advising all aircrafts to fly higher in Mali. For example, United States has advised that caution be taken when flying into, out of, within, or over the territory and airspace of Mali at altitudes below FL 260 due to ongoing fighting and extremist activities, while the Federal Republic of Germany has advised civil and German air operators to avoid landing, taxing, parking, and taking off at the airports in Timbuktu, Gao, Mopti, and Kidal (Mali) due to potential risk to aviation from dedicated anti-aviation weaponry and possible terrorist attacks.⁸⁸ The battery of concerns regarding the insecurity of Mali's air domain indicates that Mali is unsafe and portrays deficiencies in the implementation of its counterterrorism law.

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Mali 2019 Crime and Safety Report* (Washington, DC: Overseas Security Advisory Council, July 31, 2019), <https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/4c12f7e7-9a2f-4269-8e3f-16649ed848ed>.

⁸⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *A Review of the Legal Regime Against Terrorism in West and Central Africa*, 121.

⁸⁷ Safe Airspace, "Conflict Zone and Risk Database, All Current Warnings in One Place," Accessed August 15, 2020, <https://safeairspace.net/mali/>.

⁸⁸ Safe Airspace, "Conflict Zone and Risk Database."

B. DOMESTIC STRATEGIES

Mali has instituted diverse domestic strategies to secure its state and people against terrorist attacks. Mali has designed and implemented a National Counterterrorism Strategy that reflects its counterterrorism laws. Also, it has instituted anti-money laundering (AML) procedures to monitor financial transactions and apprehend offenders and has established procedures for transitional justice and religious tolerance. Mali's AML measures are the right steps and can yield dividend if rigidly followed. An evaluation of Mali's AML procedures undertaken by the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering (GIABA) reported that the preliminary measures instituted are good, although Mali remains vulnerable to money laundering.⁸⁹

Thus, this section of the chapter assesses the impact of Mali's domestic strategies in the fight against terrorism.

1. National Counterterrorism Strategy

The Republic of Mali has integrated its counterterrorism laws into a single operational strategy to combat terrorism within its jurisdiction, thereby adopting a national strategy to counter violent extremism. Unlike the policies initially mentioned, this strategy is a national effort to operationalize the policies acceded to and incorporates previous efforts to combat terrorism. Mali's counterterrorism strategy demands logistics and collaboration among security sector operatives and their local partners and is based on five pillars, namely prevention, protection, pursuit, response, and social cohesion.⁹⁰ On prevention, Mali is expected to combat terrorism by identifying methods, propaganda, and instruments terrorists use to inflict harm on the people. On protection, Mali shall protect its citizens and Critical National Infrastructure, thereby reducing their level of vulnerability. That said, the impact of terrorism in Mali since 2018 as portrayed in Mali-GTI indicates that the national strategy has not been prudently rolled out, although the

⁸⁹ GIABA, *Anti-money Laundering and Counter-terrorist Financing Measures: Mali Mutual Evaluation Report* (Dakar, Senegal: GIABA, November 2019, ii, <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/reports/mer-fsrb/GIABA-Mutual-Evaluation-Mali-2019.pdf>).

⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, Mali 2018 International Religious Freedom Report, 3.

possibility exists that progress will be made if the necessary training and support are provided.⁹¹

2. Anti-money Laundering Procedures

Mali has instituted AML and counter-financing of terrorism (CFT) measures in adherence to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's demands that member states are "to implement measures against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism."⁹² On counter money laundering measures of Mali, GIABA reports that "Financial Institutions, including banks and large DFIs, have a good understanding of their AML/CFT obligations. They have put in place due diligence measures tailored to their risks and taken specific due diligence measures for high-risk situations."⁹³ However, GIABA's report concludes that Mali faces risk from homegrown, locally funded terrorists and terrorist groups that receive support from external actors.⁹⁴ From the GIABA reports, it appears that the likelihood for Mali to experience money laundering is high, regardless of preliminary measures instituted to curb the threat. That said, GIABA is "an institution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) responsible for facilitating the adoption and implementation of Anti-Money Laundering (AML) [policies] and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (CFT) [strategies] in West Africa."⁹⁵ Additionally, Mali has established a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), which collects and analyzes bank reports on financial customer transactions to detect suspicious transactions and mitigate terrorist financing.⁹⁶ To enhance the FIU's activities, Mali has established specialized courts that conduct investigations and try money laundering matters. Although establishment of financial policies to mitigate money laundering is a step to combat the menace, money laundering mitigation in Mali remains a challenge because Mali cannot

⁹¹ World Data Atlas, "Mali- Global Terrorism Index."

⁹² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC on Money-laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism.

⁹³ GIABA, Anti-money Laundering and Counter-terrorist Financing Measures, i.

⁹⁴ GIABA, Anti-money Laundering and Counter-terrorist Financing Measures, ii.

⁹⁵ GIABA, "Mission and Vision," Accessed August 15, 2020, <https://www.giaba.org/>.

⁹⁶ GIABA, Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Measures, ii.

effectively secure its vast porous borders, which promote trafficking of contraband commodities and thereby illicitly generate resources for terrorism. According to GIABA, “Mali’s criminal control policy and AML/CFT strategy do not explicitly identify confiscations as a priority, and only a few criminal investigation officers and investigating magistrates have received training on financial investigation.”⁹⁷

3. Transitional Justice

Part of Mali’s strategy to mitigate its wave of terrorism is the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to listen to testimonies of victims and perpetrators, document findings from the commission, and proffer recommendations to help bridge the gaps in Mali’s diverse society. Following its establishment in 2014, the TRC was placed under a ministry (the Ministry of Reconciliation) to afford it a cabinet-level profile. Unfortunately, this evolution makes its independence questionable while Mali continues to experience unstable security challenges and threats of terrorism that have derailed the TRC’s public hearings.⁹⁸ Also, the TRC has drafted rules, established internal structures, and adopted a general strategy for its operations, but the credibility of the commission is threatened as victims have given falsified statements to attract reparations.⁹⁹

Mali’s TRC public hearings are meant to restore victims’ dignity, facilitate their healing, and keep the world abreast of the horror victims have painfully endured. According to the President of the TRC, Ousmane Oumarou Sidibe, victims’ stories will be factored into Mali’s national history for use as an educational tool to prevent a recurrence of violence.¹⁰⁰ Given the significance of the TRC in the consolidation of peace in, for example, South Africa and Sierra Leone, it can be argued that the establishment of Mali’s

⁹⁷ GIABA, *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Measures*, ii.

⁹⁸ Relief Web, *Transitional Justice In Mali: Opportunities And Challenges* (May 25, 2015), <https://Reliefweb.Int/Report/Mali/Transitional-Justice-Mali-Opportunities-And-Challenges>.

⁹⁹ Hannah Dunphy, “How a Transitional Justice Expert Helped Mali Confront Its Legacy of War,” *The New Humanitarian*, May 21, 2018, <https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/peacebuilding/community/2018/05/21/how-a-transitional-justice-expert-helped-mali-confront-its-legacy-of-war>.

¹⁰⁰ Bokar Sangare and Ephrem Rugiririza, “Malian Victims to Get a Voice for a Day,” *Justice Info*, December 6, 2019, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/truth-commissions/43146-malian-victims-to-get-a-voice-for-a-day.html>.

TRC was positive in unifying the country and mitigating its wave of terrorism. However, for the hatchet to be properly buried, the various parties—mainly, government, perpetrators, and victims—must be sincere and there must be reparations to appease victims.

4. Religious Tolerance

In one local counterterrorism innovation, Mali incorporated its religious bodies in its executive arm of government through the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Worship.¹⁰¹ The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Worship has promoted tolerance and enhanced collaboration between Muslim and Christian religious leaders in their condemnation of extremism and demand for peace and cohesion. For example, the United States Department of State notes that “Muslim, Protestant, and Roman Catholic religious leaders [have] jointly called for peace and solidarity among all faiths at celebrations marking Christmas, the New Year, and Eid al-Fitr.”¹⁰² The Ministry of Religious Affairs, with support from the Islamic High Council and the Malian Association of Imams, makes use of TV, YouTube, and Facebook in its counterterrorism campaign called, “Mali Kuma Kan,” or “Mali’s Voice” that uses local Malian languages to project gruesome images of extremism.¹⁰³ However, following the August 2020 military coup that toppled Mali’s democratically elected leadership and seated retired Col. Maj. Bah N’Daw as Mali’s interim president, a new cabinet has been established with board members of the parties that signed the 2015 peace agreement as Ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries, Youth and Sports, and the National Reconciliation.¹⁰⁴ However, it is yet to be ascertained whether the new cabinet will restore peace and mitigate terrorism in Mali. Furthermore,

¹⁰¹ United States Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2018* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2019), 3, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MALI-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>.

¹⁰² U.S. Department of State, *Mali 2019 International Religious Freedom Report* (Washington, DC: Office of International Religious Freedom), 1, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MALI-2019-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>.

¹⁰³ “Mali Organizes to Stop Terrorist Cells,” Defense Web, November 13, 2020, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/security/national-security/mali-organizes-to-stop-terrorist-cells/>

¹⁰⁴ “Military Appointed to Key Posts in Mali’s Interim Government,” *France 24*, October 5, 2020, <https://www.france24.com/en/20201005-military-appointed-to-key-posts-in-mali-s-interim-govt>.

although the Ministry of Religious Affairs has yet to be reinstated, the significance of religion in Mali remains constant.

Religion plays a vital role in Mali and is significant in Mali's counterterrorism drive, given Mali's reverence of religious leaders and Malian's zest for worship. Unfortunately, terrorists that operate in Mali are jihadists who use religion as a front to attack and destabilize the country. According to Lebovich, "Mali's religious leaders draw crowds so large that they are the envy of its politicians and celebrities."¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Mali's religions provide the forum for collaboration of religious leaders on matters of morality and conduct. Ironically, a renowned Islamic figure, Imam Mahmoud Dicko, caused the unrest that led to a revolt against Mali's President Boubacar Keita that resulted in the military coup that toppled him from leadership in August 2020.¹⁰⁶ Dicko's local support illustrates the extent to which Malians respect religious heads and the range of their influence. Still, the deposition of Mali's president and incorporation of the coupists—Col. Sadio Camara, Col. Modibo Kone, and Col.-Maj. Ismael Wague—into Mali's executive are negative precedents that pose uncertainty to Mali's national security.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, deposing of democratically elected regimes can be replicated in Sahelian states if not checked. Military coups or appointment of coupists into executive positions can promote insecurity, which terrorists can exploit if measures are not instituted to forestall them. Given the undemocratic and repressive nature of coups vis-à-vis the AU's nonacceptance policy on coups, it is imperative that the AU revisit its policy to mitigate coups in its constituents.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Andrew Lebovich, *Sacred Struggles: How Islam Shapes Politics in Mali* (European Council on Foreign Relations, Policy Brief, November 2019), https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Secular_stagnation_malis_relationship_religion.pdf.

¹⁰⁶ "Imam Mahmud Dicko, the Powerful Mullah that Caused Mali's Coup," *PM News*, August 22, 2019, <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2020/08/22/imam-mahmoud-dicko-the-powerful-mullah-that-caused-malis-coup/>.

¹⁰⁷ Felix Tih, "Mali's Interim Premier Announces 25 Member Cabinet," Anadolu Agency, October 6, 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/malis-interim-premier-announces-25-member-cabinet/1996920#>.

¹⁰⁸ OAU, "Declaration on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government," AHG/Dec 1.5 (XXXV1), Slide Share, June 9, 2019, 1, <https://www.slideshare.net/DesireAssogbavi/lome-declaration-coup>.

C. OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

Mali has operationalized its counterterrorism policies and strategies with the use of its national security institutions and obtained some successes in the process but remains ineffective in securing Mali because the threat is concealed by its border while security operatives are ill equipped, undisciplined, or unprofessional. According to a U.S. Department of State report on terrorism in Mali available from Refworld, “the Malian Armed Forces under the Ministry of Defense (MOD) remained the primary entities responsible for securing Mali against terrorist threats.”¹⁰⁹ Mali uses its armed forces to secure its borders and uses the police, in partnership with the gendarmerie and national guard force, to secure the interior of Mali against terrorism. Hence, this section examines the contribution of Mali’s national security institutions—the armed forces, police, gendarmerie, and national guard force—in the fight against terrorism.

1. Response from Mali’s Armed Forces

Mali’s armed forces consist of the National Defense, which, according to International Sector Advisory Team, comprise the Air Force, the Army, and the National Guard, alongside the National Gendarmerie.¹¹⁰ The Malian armed forces are to secure Mali against terrorism and support law and order operatives during peacetime as an auxiliary force to maintain public order.¹¹¹ The Malian armed forces have conducted several operations to combat terrorism, some independently and some in collaboration with foreign troops in an integrated manner. For example, the Malian armed forces have served in the Joint Force Group of Five for the Sahel (FC G5 S), which comprised soldiers drawn from Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Mauritania, and Mali.¹¹² In an independent operation launched

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports on Terrorism 2017-Mali,” Refworld, September 19, 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1f94a.html>.

¹¹⁰ International Sector Advisory Team, *Mali’s SSR Background Advisory Note* (Geneva, Switzerland: Center for Security Sector Governance, November 2, 2019), <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Country-Profiles/Mali-SSR-Background-Note>.

¹¹¹ International Sector Advisory Team, *Mali’s SSR Background Advisory Note*.

¹¹² UN Security Council, *Stabilizing Mali, Tackling Terrorism in Sahel Region Hinges on Long-Term Plan, Sustained Support, Senior Peacekeeping Official Tells Security Council*, 8266th Meeting (New York: United Nations, May 23, 2018), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13351.doc.htm>.

against Islamist extremists, the Malian armed forces found identity cards of several foreign nationals revealing that some of Mali's terrorists are non-Malian nationals.¹¹³ Similarly, it has conducted counterterrorism operations in the Mopti and Segou regions, resulting in the arrest of at least 13 terrorists.¹¹⁴ Additionally, the Malian armed forces has teamed up with the armed forces in Burkina Faso to carry out cross-border counterterrorism operations and collaborated with French forces to launch a month-long counterterrorism operation in Timbuktu, northern Mali.¹¹⁵ However, Malian armed forces have suffered defeat in the north and several massacres, including the loss of over fifty men in November 2020.¹¹⁶ Commenting on the massacre, the Guardian quotes local media that "after an initial bombardment, the positions of the Malian soldiers were over-run by small groups of militants, some riding motorbikes. Only 20 soldiers survived the assault."¹¹⁷ Moreover, the Malian armed forces have exhibited unprofessional tendencies. For example, they have staged mutinies and disputes over leadership, pay, and promotions and have toppled their democratically elected regimes twice in a decade (in 2012 and 2020).¹¹⁸ However, the independent operation in which the Malian armed forces found identity cards and the joint operations that led to the arrest of 13 terrorists are successes of the Malian armed forces, which indicate that if the Malian armed forces are properly restructured and trained, they will be very effective. These necessitate reform of the Malian armed forces through a security sector reform (SSR) process to eliminate the deadwood and the lawless and facilitate the committed and disciplined.

¹¹³ Associated Press, "Mali Says Several Extremists Killed In New Military Offensive In Troubled Central Region" *ABC News*, November 12, 2019, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/WireStory/Mali-Extremists-Dead-Military-Offensive-66943912>.

¹¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali, S/2016/281* (March 28, 2016), 6, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1607793.pdf>.

¹¹⁵ United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali*, 6.

¹¹⁶ Jason Burke, "Jihadists Kill Scores of Soldiers in Mali Attack," *The Guardian*, November 2, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/02/dozens-killed-in-mali-jihadist-attack>.

¹¹⁷ Burke, "Jihadists Kill Scores of Soldiers in Mali Attack."

¹¹⁸ Michael A. Sheehan and Geoff D. Porter. "The Future Role of U.S. Counterterrorism Operations in Africa," *CTC Sentinel*, Special Issue 7, no. 2 (February 2014): 13, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>

The military coup of Amadou Sanogo in 2012 resulted in the disappearance of his military adversaries, some of whose corpses were later discovered in mass graves.¹¹⁹ Military coup is a mark of unprofessionalism, while surreptitious executions of those opposed to the junta leadership portray the level of inhumanity and human rights abuses Malian armed forces perpetuate. That said, prior to the 2012 military coup, military officers were trained from a U.S.-backed \$5 million project provided to capacitate the Malian armed forces.¹²⁰ The U.S. support for training of personnel of Mali's military was aimed at improving their operational and professional capacity. However, the training has not transformed or improved their capacity to effectively combat Mali's terrorist threats. Therefore, the Malian armed forces, though under the control of the executive, partner with local operatives, mainly, police, gendarmerie, and national guard, in the fight against terrorism, as indicated in Table 1. Table 1 reveals the local security forces that secure Mali and portrays the supervisory role of Mali's executive over them.

¹¹⁹ Marian Caparini, *DDR and SSR Challenges in Mali*, Research Gate, May 2015, 16, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282613572_DDR_and_SSR_Challenges_in_Mali/citation/download.

¹²⁰ Geoffrey York, "Training of Mali Soldiers Said to Lack Values, Ethics and Military Ethos," *The Globe and Mali*, January 25, 2013, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/training-of-mali-soldiers-said-to-lack-values-ethics-and-military-ethos/article7893675/>.

Table 1. Partners of the Malian Armed Forces in the Fight Against Terrorism.¹²¹

No.	Institution	Role
1.	The Executive	Supervises the Malian armed forces
		Determines Malian armed forces' budget, guidelines, and priorities
2.	Malian Armed Forces	Secure Mali against threats of terrorism
		Complement efforts of the police in law and order
3.	The Police	Protect lives and properties
		Gather intelligence and support investigations
4.	The Gendarmerie	Shares some internal security roles with the police
		Collects intelligence and protects private property
5.	The National Guard	Protects Critical National Infrastructure (CNI)
		Collaborates in maintaining public order and territorial defense
6.	Mali's Religious Leaders	Promote religious tolerance
		Are responsible for preventing Islamist radicalization

2. Response from Mali's Internal Security Agencies

Mali's internal security operatives—police, gendarmerie, and national guard force—collaborate in Mali's counterterrorism drive. The gendarmerie (a paramilitary force) shares internal security duties with the police but focuses on rural areas, whereas the police that maintain law and order focus on urban towns.¹²² Given the level of terrorism in Northern Mali, state authorities have deployed 2,026 gendarmerie and police officers in that region to secure it against terrorism.¹²³ Mali's gendarmerie teams up with the national guard force to form Mali's Special Anti-terrorist Task Force that conducts counterterrorism patrols across the length and breadth of Mali.¹²⁴ The establishment of an interagency approach to combat terrorism in Mali seems ideal given diverse competencies of

¹²¹ Source: Data prepared personally from literature obtained from International Sector Advisory Team, "Mali's SSR Background Advisory Note."

¹²² Michael Shurkin, Stephanie Pezard, and S. Rebecca Zimmerman, *Mali's Next Battle Improving Counterterrorism Capabilities*, Report No. 1241 (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2017), 79, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1241.html.

¹²³ International Security Sector Advisory Team, *Mali's SSR Background Note*.

¹²⁴ Shurkin, Pezard, and Zimmerman, *Mali's Next Battle*, 82.

institutions in that integrated body. Unfortunately, the interagency approach has not obtained its objectives because it is hampered by resource constraints, corruption, inadequate training, and logistical challenges that retard performance and undermine operations.¹²⁵ On the performance of Malian security operatives, the U.S. Department of State affirms, “law enforcement units lacked capacity, training, and the necessary equipment to secure Mali’s porous borders, which extend about 4,500 miles and touch seven countries.”¹²⁶ Given the tactical role of Malian security operatives coupled with the AU’s subsequent withdrawal from Mali, it is imperative that Malian security operatives be incorporated in the SSR process to sharpen their skills.

3. Intelligence Gathering and Processing

The porosity of Mali’s borders, coupled with the acumen of terrorists to break security defenses with innovative and novel strategies, the Malian security authorities must embark on intelligence gathering and processing to identify potential and real threats in order to mitigate surprise terrorist attacks. However, Mali does not have an effective intelligence service, in no small part because Mali does not rigidly follow the intelligence cycle comprising planning, collection, analysis and processing, production, and dissemination, as illustrated in Figure 1:¹²⁷

¹²⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism – Mali*, 24–25.

¹²⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism – Mali*, 25.

¹²⁷ Adama Mahamane Maiga, “Challenges To Reforming Intelligence Agencies In Re-Democratizing Countries: The Case of Mali,” master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2018, 23, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/60432>

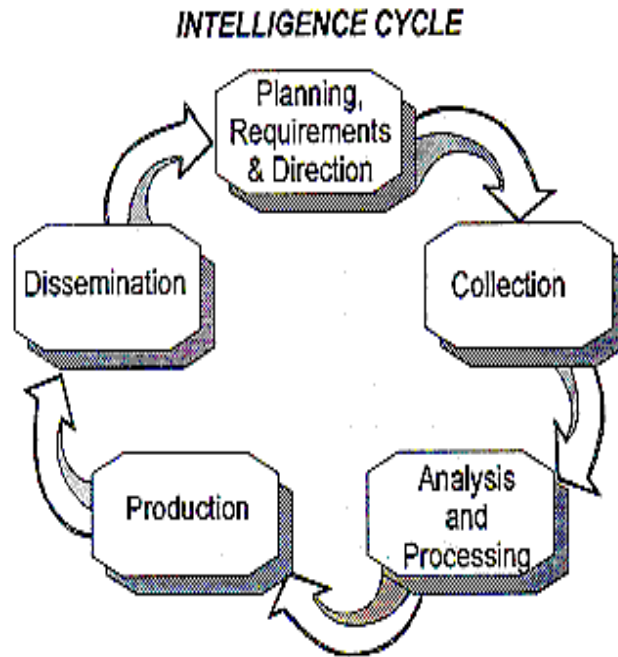


Figure 1. Security Operations Intelligence Cycle.¹²⁸

The protest against the Code de la Famille had negative consequences because Mali’s intelligence services are ineffective.¹²⁹ According to Matei, the State Security General Intelligence Directorate (DGSE) and the General Intelligence Directorate of the National Police are Mali’s two known intelligence agencies.¹³⁰ However, Matei notes that the DGSE is deficient in operational and analytical abilities, which shows that the Malian intelligence agencies do not follow the cycle effectively.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Source: *Security Operations Intelligence Handbook* (Greenbelt, MD: Interagency OPSEC Support Staff, May 1996), <https://fas.org/irp/nsa/ioss/threat96/part02.htm>.

¹²⁹ Adama Mahamane Maiga, “Challenges to Reforming Intelligence Agencies In Re-Democratizing Countries: The Case of Mali,” 23.

¹³⁰ Florina Christiana Matei, “The Case of Mali,” in *Security Forces in African States Cases and Assessments* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 109.

¹³¹ Matei, “The Case of Mali,” 110.

Mali gathers human intelligence, and its intelligence functions are under the army's chief of staff as the G2 directorate.¹³² Like other intelligence agencies, Mali shares intelligence but is constrained in doing so. For example, intelligence officers gather intelligence manually.¹³³ Impeding Mali's intelligence is scarcity of major sources of information. For example, in Northern Mali, local media is scarce and scattered while major sources of information are gossip and casual conversation, which cannot be accepted at face value as authentic.¹³⁴ On effectiveness of Mali's intelligence agencies, Maiga notes that "although Mali has a solid framework of statutory regulations for intelligence institutions, roles, and missions, in addition to a budget for intelligence, it seems that in Mali, the intelligence community is struggling to deal effectively with the threats that the country faces after more than two decades of democratic experience."¹³⁵

D. CONCLUSION

This chapter has indicated that there are gaps in Mali's local or domestic response; hence, Mali could not combat terrorism within its territory. There are gaps in Mali's policies and strategies that impeded Mali's responses against terrorism. For example, Mali's AML procedures combat money laundering superficially, and only a few of Mali's personnel have been trained on financial investigations. Furthermore, Mali's counterterrorism strategies have not addressed the root cause of Mali's crisis while its security personnel remain weak and unproductive.

Effective counterterrorism measures demand intangibles like "ethics" and "motivation" and anti-terrorism actions. These counterterrorism requirements are either inadequate or not manifested, and in instances where anti-terrorism actions have been rolled out, some have been characterized by gross human rights violations that promote

¹³² Shurkin, Pezard, and Zimmerman, *Mali's Next Battle*, 72–73.

¹³³ Shurkin, Pezard, and Zimmerman, *Mali's Next Battle*, 72.

¹³⁴ Peter Albrecht, Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde, and Rikke Haugegaard, *DIIS Policy Brief, Inequality in MINUSMA #2: An Uninterrupted Resource: African Forces in Intelligence Gathering* (Denmark: Royal Danish Institute for International Studies, January 2017), 3, https://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/777145/Minusma_inequality_2_WEB.pdf

¹³⁵ Adama Mahamane Maiga, "Challenges to Reforming Intelligence Agencies In Re-Democratizing Countries: The Case of Mali," 22.

resentment of locals against security personnel, thereby increasing the polarization of Mali and enhancing its level of terrorist threats.

Ultimately, Mali's local response to combatting terrorism, although manifested in a legislative, policy, and operational framework, has not altered the surge of terrorism Mali experiences, which necessitates the regional bodies' intervention as Mali cannot effectively combat its terrorist threats alone.

IV. REGIONAL RESPONSES TO MALI'S THREATS OF TERRORISM

Unlike the limited impact of Mali's national responses, regional interventions have made a sizable dent on terrorism. This chapter explores specifically the activities of the regional and sub-regional organizations—the AU and ECOWAS—in the fight against Mali's terrorist threats and finds that several measures at the regional level can help mitigate Mali's terrorism. That said, though effective, regional bodies need more time for planning, studying the outbreak, and curbing terrorism. Regional organizations have liberated northern Mali from terrorist occupation and governance; mediated and diplomatically pacified the conflicting parties in the series of insurgencies experienced; promoted state governance throughout Mali, resulting in conductance of peaceful elections; and launched successful operations that cut off supply routes of extremists, from which large caches of arms and ammunition were obtained. To this end, this chapter first analyzes the counterterrorism policies and diplomatic engagements that the AU has rolled out with ECOWAS, which, in turn, reflect the aims and aspirations of its global partner, the UN.

Next, this chapter turns to regional defense and security activities of the AU and ECOWAS, including the FC G5 S and the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA). Finally, this chapter explores other regional options that may be available to Mali, particularly with the broader support of the Sahel's partners.

A. POLICIES AND DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENTS

Regional policies have been successful in bringing perpetrators to justice for terrorist activities and in reconciling government and insurgents. For example, a Malian terrorist, Al Faqi Al Mahadi, has been incarcerated in the Hague for nine years for his role in the destruction of ancient shrines in Timbuktu while another, Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud, is in detention awaiting trial at the Hague for enforcing

policies on sexual violence and destruction of cultural monuments.¹³⁶ Additionally, regional negotiations on Mali's crisis have resulted in the signing of accords—the Tamanrasset Accord in 1991, the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement of June 18, 2013, and the Bamako (Algiers) agreement of 2015—that have helped unify conflicting parties in Mali's civil crisis, although some of the obligations of the accords have not been fulfilled.

Hence, this section examines policies that the AU promulgated and the diplomatic meetings that the AU and ECOWAS convened to reconcile and unify the Malian government and its local insurgents. Moreover, the section explores disruptive forces in and to the peace mediation processes.

1. Regional and Sub-regional Legal Framework

The AU has enacted the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, 1999, which, according to the African Union Peace and Security, “defines areas of cooperation among states, establishes state jurisdiction over terrorist acts, and provides a legal framework for extradition as well as extra-territorial investigations and mutual legal assistance.”¹³⁷ This convention mostly tasks states with activities to execute in the mitigation of terrorism. For example, Article 4, 2 (a) of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism stipulates that state parties shall “prevent their territories from being used as a base for the planning, organization, or execution of terrorist acts.”¹³⁸ However, Islamist extremists' brief occupation of northern Mali and their introduction of shariah law in that country in 2012 illustrate Mali's inability to fully implement the convention, thereby necessitating regional response. According to African Globe, Mali's terrorists “recruited locally in Mali and the broader Sahel, both from Mali's

¹³⁶ “Mali: Alleged Timbuktu Destroyer to Appear at International Criminal Court,” *Deutsche Welle*, January 4, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/mali-alleged-timbuktu-destroyer-to-appear-at-international-criminal-court/a-43212936>.

¹³⁷ African Union Peace and Security Department, “The African Union Counterterrorism Framework,” November 23, 2015, <http://www.peaceau.org/en/page/64-counter-terrorism-ct>.

¹³⁸ African Union, “OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism,” July 11, 2003, https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/37289-treaty-0020_-_oau_convention_on_the_prevention_and_combating_of_terrorism_e.pdf,5.

arid north as well as from the more heavily-populated south.”¹³⁹ According to the United Nations Children’s Fund, Arab terrorist groups were recruiting children in the hundreds in Northern Mali as terrorists.¹⁴⁰ The occupation of Northern Mali and the recruitment of Malians it resulted in preceded the intervention of regional forces that drove terrorists from Northern Mali.

Another counterterrorism policy, the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, addresses issues of border security, legislative and legal procedures, and financing of terrorism, among others.¹⁴¹ It has as its product the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, which analyzes terrorism incidences in Africa through monthly bulletins that inform states on trends of terrorism for remedial action.¹⁴² For example, in its July 2020 bulletin, Mali was portrayed as the African state most affected by terrorism in July 2020, with 29 attacks and 86 deaths.¹⁴³

2. Inter-organizations and State Partnership

The AU and ECOWAS partner with the UN, the EU, United States, and France, among others, to secure Mali. Their collaboration has resulted in support to the regional partners, with regard to finance, logistics, and training. The AU and ECOWAS partner with the UN, which has primacy on matters of global security, and work with the EU, United States, and France to promote stability and prevent Mali from being used as a base to breed and export terrorism to the west and the world generally. For example, the AU has a joint EU-AU strategic partnership adopted in 2007 that, according to the Council of European

¹³⁹ Andrew Lebovich, *The Local Face of Jihadism in Northern Mali* 6, no. 6 (June 2013), <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-local-face-of-jihadism-in-northern-mali/>.

¹⁴⁰ “Arab Terrorists Forcibly Recruiting Children in Mali,” *African Globe*, August 17, 2012, <https://www.africanglobe.net/africa/arab-terrorists-forcibly-recruiting-children-mali/>.

¹⁴¹ Marisha Ramdeen, “Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa,” Accord, <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/countering-terrorism-violent-extremism-africa/#:~:text=In%202002%2C%20the%20AU%20adopted%20the%20Plan%20of,financing%20of%20terrorism%20and%20the%20exchange%20of%20information.>

¹⁴² African Union, *The Monthly Africa Terrorism Bulletin 1st-31st July 2020*, Africa Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism, No. 07, <https://caert.org.dz/Medi-review/Terrorism-bulletin/BULLETIN-July-20.pdf>

¹⁴³ African Union, *The Monthly Africa Terrorism Bulletin*, 8.

Union, “acts as the formal channel for EU relations with African countries.”¹⁴⁴ Through this partnership, the AU has derived support from the EU for its peace and security initiatives, specifically data collection on early warning signs, making of informed security decisions, support toward a standby force, and engagements with the youth and civil society on matters of security.¹⁴⁵ On establishment of a standby force, while the AU has an ad hoc regional integrated force, it does not permanently maintain a standby force, even though the African leaders have endorsed its establishment. According to Batware, the protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council and the associated African Standby Force entered into force in December 2003, only “17 months after being signed.”¹⁴⁶ Additionally, although the final concept adopted provided for the establishment of five standby brigade-level forces—North Africa Regional Standby Brigade; East Africa Standby Brigade; Force Multinational “de Afrique” Central; Southern Africa Standby Brigade; and ECOWAS Standby Brigade¹⁴⁷—not a single one has been established, even though it is very necessary considering the AU’s role in peacekeeping and peace building. Moreover, the establishment of the standby force will provide African peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations trained manpower to deal with issues that pose threat to the region. Therefore, it is time to test the process, with the establishment of at least a single standby force.

3. Diplomacy and Negotiations

The AU and ECOWAS have also employed diplomacy to combat Mali’s crisis and presided at diplomatic negotiations between aggrieved parties—government of Mali and insurgents—to limit their political animosity. With exception to the Tamanrasset Accord,

¹⁴⁴ The Council of European Union, “EU-Africa Relations, How Do African Countries and The EU Cooperate?” October 20, 2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-africa/>.

¹⁴⁵ African Union, “The African Union and The European Union Join Forces for Ensuring Peace in Africa,” March 17, 2020, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20200317/africa-union-and-european-union-join-forces-ensuring-peace-africa>.

¹⁴⁶ Billy Batware, *The African Standby Force – A Solution to African Conflicts?*, European Peace University, December, 19, 2011, <https://Acuns.Org/Wp-Content/Uploads/2012/06/Africanstandbyforce.Pdf>.

¹⁴⁷ Batware, *The African Standby Force – A Solution to African Conflicts?*

the AU and ECOWAS have obtained much success in diplomatic engagements on the implementation of terms of the peace accords.

The Tamanrasset Accord did not stop hostility because its terms of agreement were not publicized, and the government that signed the accord was deposed before the implementation of the accord. The Algerian government led the diplomatic engagements that resulted in the Tamanrasset Accord.¹⁴⁸ However, the Tamanrasset Accord was unsuccessful because it did not prevent unrest or intermittent armed clashes in Mali.¹⁴⁹ Algeria's diplomatic role is significant in the fight against Mali's terrorism because AQIM originated from Algeria.¹⁵⁰ Hence, the Algerian government had the government of Mali, the Azaouad Popular Movement, and the Arabic Islamic Front sign the Tamanrasset Accord to re-establish and maintain peace and security in Mali.¹⁵¹ The Tamanrasset Accord was meant to keep the Malian armed forces to the traditional role of defending the territorial integrity of Mali, integrating combatants into the Malian armed forces, and promoting cease fire between the opposing factions.¹⁵² However, the Malian leadership Moussa Traore who signed the accord did not publish it, thereby promoting speculation about its content.¹⁵³ In this regard, Gold attributes Amadou Toumani Toure's military coup in March 1991 to the failure of the Tamanrasset Accord and the wave of unrest in Mali.¹⁵⁴ According to Barnes, the military strongman Amadou Toumani Toure, who toppled Moussa Traore's leadership, "did not consider Tamanrasset Agreement

¹⁴⁸ UCDP, *Tamanrasset Accord, Agreement on Ceasing of Hostilities*, January 6, 1991, 1–2. <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/fullpeace/mal19910106.pdf>.

¹⁴⁹ Global Security, Tuareg-Mali – 1990–1996, May 4, 2012, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/tuareg-mali-1990.htm>.

¹⁵⁰ Shivit Bakrania, *Conflict Drivers, International Responses, and the Outlook for Peace in Mali: A Literature Review*, GSDRC Issues Paper (Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham, January 31, 2013), 13, <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/ip14.pdf>.

¹⁵¹ UCDP, *Tamanrasset Accord, Agreement on Ceasing of Hostilities*, 1–2.

¹⁵² Rick Gold, "Initiatives for Peace in Northern Mali in the 1990s, Lessons Learned," *A Contrario International Criminal Law*, February 13, 2013, <https://acontrarioicl.com/tag/tamanrasset-accord/>.

¹⁵³ Catherine Barnes, "Owning the Process: Public Participation in Peacemaking Featuring South Africa, Guatemala and Mali," *Accord*, Issue 13 (London: Conciliation Resources, 2002), https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Owning_the_process_Public_participation_in_peacemaking_Accord_Issue_13.pdf.

¹⁵⁴ Gold, "Initiatives For Peace in Northern Mali in the 1990s, Lessons Learned."

legitimate and made few moves towards implementing it.”¹⁵⁵ Barnes elaborates that many “Songhoy were also negative, believing that the Tamanrasset Agreement failed to pay serious attention to their particular needs.”¹⁵⁶

Additionally, key stakeholders in Mali, notably civil society, were not represented in the Tamanrasset Agreement; thus, the general view was that the parties that signed the agreement did not broaden its involvement.¹⁵⁷ According to Devermont and Harris, “the Accord excludes key actors involved in the Malian conflict ... the Accord fails to include or at minimum consider options to engage al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the prominent jihadist group in Mali in 2015 that was allied with some northern rebel faction.”¹⁵⁸ Considering the gaps in the Tamanrasset Agreement, it can be argued that for peace agreements to be all-encompassing and acceptable, accords must embrace all shades of opinion; this necessitates the inclusion of civil society in peace deliberations, given their neutrality and expertise on matters of peace and cohesion.

The Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement of 2013 is another offshoot of the AU and ECOWAS diplomatic engagements to combat Mali’s crisis and was successful. The president of Burkina Faso (President Blaise Compaore) hosted and led the ECOWAS diplomatic efforts, while the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel (former President Pierre Buyoya), who also served as special representative and head of the AFISMA, represented the AU in that engagement.¹⁵⁹ The Malian parties in the negotiations were Mali’s Transitional Government of National Unity, the Coordination of the MNLA, and the High Council for the Unity of the Azawad.¹⁶⁰ According to the AU, the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement provided for “among others, the redeployment

¹⁵⁵ Barnes, “Owning the Process,” 59.

¹⁵⁶ Barnes, 59.

¹⁵⁷ Barnes, 59.

¹⁵⁸ Judd Devermont and Marielle Harris, “Why Mali Needs a New Peace Deal,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 15, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-mali-needs-new-peace-deal>.

¹⁵⁹ African Union, “The African Union Welcomes the Signing of the Preliminary Agreement to the Presidential Election and Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali,” Peace and Security, June 18, 2013, 1, <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/auc-com-mali-18-06-2013.pdf>.

¹⁶⁰ African Union, “The African Union Welcomes the Signing of the Preliminary Agreement to the Presidential Election and Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali,” 1.

of the Malian army throughout northern Mali ... and the holding of the presidential elections scheduled for July 2013 on the entire Malian territory, including Kidal.”¹⁶¹ This outcome of the peace agreement was successful because elections were held as scheduled and a new leadership elected and installed. On assuming the mantle of leadership, Mali’s new leader, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, lifted warrants of arrest against leaders of Mali’s insurgency and released several of their members from prison as conciliatory moves.¹⁶² Furthermore, the rebels agreed to reciprocate in handing the governor’s office and radio station in Kidal to the Malian government.¹⁶³

Another peace agreement was the Bamako agreement signed in Mali on May 15, 2015, following eight months of negotiations between parties to the Malian conflict.¹⁶⁴ On status of the Bamako agreement, it can be said to be satisfactory for at least providing temporal respite. Preceding that agreement, Mali experienced several attacks; these gradually ceased when the agreement was signed. The signing of the Bamako agreement was followed by publication of its content and backing down of rebels from their initial demand of northern (Azawad) autonomy.¹⁶⁵ The agreement is meant to restore Mali’s peace and foster reconciliation of its locals. However, the ICG elaborates that international moderators wrote the agreement to reflect their interest rather than that of the conflicting parties.¹⁶⁶ Consequently, only two parties, mainly Mali’s government and the Algiers Platform, signed the agreement on May 15, 2015. The other party to the crisis, the

¹⁶¹ African Union, “The African Union Welcomes the Signing of the Preliminary Agreement to the Presidential Election and Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali,” 1.

¹⁶² Tobias Koepf, *Stuck in the Desert: Negotiations on Northern Mali* (Brussels: European Union Institute for Security Studies, December 2013), 1, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert__42_Northern_Mali_06.pdf.

¹⁶³ Koepf, *Stuck in the Desert: Negotiations on Northern Mali*, 1–2.

¹⁶⁴ International Crisis Group, *Mali an Imposed Peace?* Report No. 226/Africa (Brussels: ICG, May 22, 2015), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/mali-imposed-peace>.

¹⁶⁵ Audrey Parmentier and Philipp Sandner, “Mali Peace Deal Raises Hopes of Stability,” *Deutsch Welle*, June 20, 2015, <https://www.dw.com/en/mali-peace-deal-raises-hopes-of-stability/a-18527239>.

¹⁶⁶ International Crisis Group, *Mali an Imposed Peace?*

Coordination of Movement for Azawad, officially did so on June 20, 2015.¹⁶⁷ An independent observer, the Carter Center that monitors implementation of the agreement, notes that parties to the conflict have sustained cessation of hostilities, while the government of Mali has launched enhanced disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration measures and demonstrated efforts at promoting inclusive constitutional reforms.¹⁶⁸

4. Sabotage of Peace Mediation Processes

While the regional bodies did much to ensure implementation of peace agreements, sabotage from local operatives in some instances derailed the attainment of peace. For example, following the Tamanrasset accord, the Malian military became hostile toward civilians in Northern Mali, resulting in distrust and the formation of more aggressive movements: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Azaouad and the Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of Azaouad.¹⁶⁹ Also, the rebel group disrupted the Ouagadougou agreement in their refusal to disarm because of uncertainty of their status. Unprofessionalism among the Malian armed forces, as manifested in its unethical practices, can reverse gains made if measures are not put in place to secure Mali preceding the departure of regional and international troops. Furthermore, uncertainty with regard to status of parties to a conflict can result in breaches of peace agreements if not prudently addressed. Hence, the regional bodies should include in the SSR modules on professionalism and ethics to promote the armed forces' adherence to the ethos of professionalism and ensure that disarmament is fully done before scaling down operations.

¹⁶⁷ Jean-Herve Jezequel, "Mali's Peace Deal Represents Welcome Development But Will It Work This Time?" *The Guardian*, July 1, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jul/01/mali-peace-deal-a-welcome-development-but-will-it-work-this-time>.

¹⁶⁸ Soyia Ellison and Ntole Kazadi, "Mali Independent Observer Releases Third Report on Implementation of the Peace Agreement," *The Carter Center*, February 22, 2019, <https://cartercenter.org/news/pr/mali-022219.html>.

¹⁶⁹ Barnes, "Owning the Process," 59–60.

B. SECURITY AND DEFENSE

The AU and ECOWAS ad hoc joint operational security forces, for example the FC G5 S and AFISMA, as well as partnering with French forces and their joint operational activities have been successful in fighting terrorists, capturing arms, and temporarily cutting off some of their supply routes. The establishment of the joint operational forces is good because the forces are inclusive of military operatives from the Sahelian countries, e.g., Chad, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, and Mali,¹⁷⁰ that are familiar with the terrain, and their presence in the joint operational task force will afford them the expertise required to secure their portion of the Malian borders when requested to do so. To be proactive, the AU operates a regional intelligence organization, namely, the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), which fosters intelligence sharing between and among member states. However, although intelligence activities are classified and therefore not published, operations that result in capturing of arms and cutting off supply routes can be intelligence led.

1. Integrated Regional Force

A regional strategy employed in the mitigation of terrorism in Mali and the Sahel Region of West Africa is combat operations, which have decapitated terrorists and chased them out of northern Mali. There is the FC G5 S that from November 1 to November 17, 2019, teamed up with France in operation Bourgou IV that targeted Mali's Boulikessi region and Burkina Faso's Deou region, in which about 24 terrorists were killed and 64 vehicles, mobile phones, and ammunition were captured.¹⁷¹ Also, in February 2018, a cross-section of the FC G5 S participated in an operation to control land along common borders that resulted in the death of 10 AQIM militants and stopped an attempt to smuggle

¹⁷⁰ UN Security Council, Stabilizing Mali, Tackling Terrorism in Sahel Region Hinges on Long-Term Plan, Sustained Support, Senior Peacekeeping Official Tells Security Council, SC/13351, 8266th Meeting (New York: United Nations, 2018), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13351.doc.htm>.

¹⁷¹ Fergus Kelly, "Mali: 17-Day Operation Combined 1,400 Troops From France, The G5 Sahel Joint Force, Burkina Faso, Mali And Niger," *The Defense Post*, November 18, 2019, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2019/11/18/joint-operation-burkina-faso-mali-barkhane-bourgou-iv-sahel/>.

arms.¹⁷² Furthermore, a battalion of the Burkina Faso contingent in the FC G5 S has carried out an operation in collaboration with the French and UN Multidisciplinary International Stabilization Mission to dismantle training camps of terrorists and cut off their supply routes.¹⁷³

According to Dentice, the regional force “G5 Sahel joint force aims at fighting terrorism, organized crime and smuggling through enhanced cooperation among national armed forces and surveillance of rural areas.”¹⁷⁴ According to Cooke, “the force was authorized by the African Union Peace and Security Council in April 2017 and was strengthened by the adoption of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2359 in June.”¹⁷⁵ The FC G5 S consists of 5,000 soldiers drawn from some African states.¹⁷⁶ Unlike Mali’s local forces, the integrated composition of the regional force is significant because the integrated regional force has different levels of training, experiences, and competencies, which less experienced contingents can learn from, and the integrated regional forces also have the required logistics for operations. In this regard, Lawrence E. Cline affirms that the Mauritania battalion received from the United States “155 vehicles, a Level II field hospital, night vision devices, GPS devices, computers, radio and phone communication system, and individual soldier equipment that includes body armor.”¹⁷⁷

The AFISMA was another ad hoc armed African regional initiative to help liberate and secure Mali from terrorism. ECOWAS obtained UN’s endorsement to establish AFISMA, with Nigeria being the first West African state to send troops to that

¹⁷² Virginie Baudais, “The Impact of the Malian Crisis on the Group of Five Sahel Countries: Balancing Security and Development Priorities,” SIPRI, May 18, 2020, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgroundunder/2020/impact-malian-crisis-group-five-sahel-countries-balancing-security-and-development-priorities>.

¹⁷³ Baudais, “The Impact of the Malian Crisis on the Group of Five Sahel Countries.”

¹⁷⁴ Dentice, “Terrorism in the Sahel Region,” 7.

¹⁷⁵ Jennifer G. Cooke, “Understanding the G5 Sahel Joint Force: Fighting Terror, Building Regional Security?” Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 15, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-g5-sahel-joint-force-fighting-terror-building-regional-security>.

¹⁷⁶ UN Security Council, Stabilizing Mali, Tackling Terrorism in Sahel Region Hinges on Long-Term Plan, Sustained Support.

¹⁷⁷ Lawrence E. Cline, “Trying to Coordinate Force in the Sahel: The G5 Sahel,” *Small Wars Journal*, October 26, 2020, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/trying-coordinate-force-sahel-g5-sahel>.

contingent.¹⁷⁸ The establishment of AFISMA was a step toward the implementation of the ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy and indicated the need for Africans to assume responsibility in solving African challenges.¹⁷⁹ Maiangwa shares this view and submits that, “the responsibility for implementing the ECOWAS Strategy lies, first and foremost, with the West African states.”¹⁸⁰ Thus, the ECOWAS effort was expected to:

Support the Malian authorities in maintaining security and consolidate State authority through appropriate capacities; support the Malian authorities in their primary responsibility to protect the population; and support the Malian authorities to create a secure environment for the civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance and the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees.¹⁸¹

Nevertheless, AFISMA’s activities in Mali lasted for only a year, with the UN rejecting the ECOWAS request for its continuity. According to ECOWAS Peace and Security Report (ECOWAS 2013a, 6), “the UN refusal to support ECOWAS and its subsequent takeover mission through MINUSMA demonstrated a lack of acknowledgement of [ECOWAS] ongoing regional counterterrorism efforts in Mali.”¹⁸² Although AFISMA was short-lived, it was a success story because it helped in the liberation of Northern Mali from terrorist occupation. On AFISMA’s successes, Strydom notes that “AFISMA forces assisted, with the help of the French forces, in restoring Mali’s territorial integrity after the Tuareg rebellion and the subsequent military coup.”¹⁸³ However, AFISMA was financially handicapped, and the international donors propped up its operations. On AFISMA’s funding, Maru states, “another serious challenge for AFISMA will be insufficient and unpredictable funding for its operations and fight against

¹⁷⁸Counter Extremism Project, “Mali – Extremism and Counter-Extremism,” 9.

¹⁷⁹ Comfort Ero, “The Problems with ‘African Solutions,’” Internal Crisis Group, December 2, 2013, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/problems-african-solutions>.

¹⁸⁰ Maiangwa, “Jihadism in West Africa,” 23.

¹⁸¹ Counter Terrorism Project, “Mali – Extremism and Counter-Extremism,” 9–10.

¹⁸² Maiangwa, “Jihadism in West Africa,” 24–25.

¹⁸³ Hennie Strydom, “Mali and the Sahel: Making Peace in Another Rough Neighborhood,” *Netherlands International Law Review* 66 (April 2019): 94, DOI: 10.1007/s40802-019-00134-6.

organized crime particularly by blocking arm supplies, ammunition, and combat materials in Azawad.”¹⁸⁴

2. Intelligence Gathering and Border Management

The AU member states gather and share intelligence on security matters of concern within member states. While Mali’s intelligence practices appear to be limited, the AU’s intelligence practices are extensive, at least regarding scope, considering the number of countries in the African continent. The AU has established specialized agencies—for example, CISSA—and fusion centers for intelligence sharing between and among states. According to the African Union, CISSA comprises intelligence agencies and security services in Africa and was established primarily to “provide the African Union Commission (AUC) and its Member Services with timely and insightful intelligence, which would assist them in making informed decisions.”¹⁸⁵ Also, the AU has launched the Nouakchott Process to assemble Heads of Intelligence agencies and competent ministers of the Sahel Region to brainstorm and address issues of security in the Sahel. On one such meeting, intelligence operatives reiterated the need for timely intelligence sharing and the importance of cooperation and conduct of activities to develop intelligence and security operatives’ capacity.¹⁸⁶ On intelligence sharing, Matei and Halladay assert that “the need for intelligence sharing among democracies also arises from the fact that security and intelligence are no longer the exclusive purview of the national government.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Mehari Taddele Maru, *African-Led International Support Mission in Mali: Military Ahead of Politics* (Doha, Qatar: Al Jazeera Center for Studies, February 14, 2013), 6, https://studies.aljazeera.net/sites/default/files/articles/reports/documents/2013214835996734AFISMA_MilitaryaheadofPolitics.pdf.

¹⁸⁵ African Union, *Inauguration of the Headquarters of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services*, 33rd AU Summit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, February 9, 2020, <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20200209/inauguration-headquarters-committee-intelligence-and-security-services-cissa>.

¹⁸⁶ African Union, *Progress Report on the Implementation of the Conclusions of the Nouakchott Ministerial Meeting of 17 March 2013* (Njamena, Chad: AU, September 11, 2013), 1, <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/auc-report-ndjamena-ministerial-meeting-11-09-2013.pdf>.

¹⁸⁷ Florina Cristiana Matei and Carolyn Halladay, *The Conduct of Intelligence In Democracies, Processes, Practices and Cultures* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynn Rienner Publishers Inc., 2019), 126.

On border control and management, the AU has a draft border strategy that identifies areas of intervention to enhance border management of its member states.¹⁸⁸ The draft border strategy directs inter-state and inter-agency collaboration to mitigate threats to security of its member countries.¹⁸⁹ When approved, its effective implementation requires resources for training and logistics. Meanwhile, joint integrated border security patrols are carried out, including a novel integrated border patrol comprising the Malian Armed Forces, former 2012 insurgents, France’s Operation Barkhane, and UN peacekeepers.¹⁹⁰ The border patrol was meant to diffuse tension between the government of Mali and former insurgents in order to promote peace in Mali.¹⁹¹ According to Justice Info Net, quoting Daniel on the significance of the exercise in integrating the parties in the 2012 civil conflict, “trust will be restored, because the armed groups will be obliged to sleep together, make tea together, go and meet the people.” However, although it has been about five years since that joint border patrol took place, much remains to be done to address challenges at the border. According to Solomon, who quotes a West African director at Human Rights Watch (Dufka), Mali’s border with Niger and Burkina Faso suffers from inter-communal conflicts between nomadic and agrarian groups that have necessitated the establishment of ethnically based civil defense groups (CDGs). The establishment of a CDG can be parallel to state security forces if not under the supervision and control of state security forces. Also, its establishment can result in inter-ethnic conflicts where the different ethnic groups in a community establish a CDG.

C. CONCLUSION

This chapter indicated that the regional bodies have done much and can do better in the drive to combat terrorism in Mali soon. The African regional bodies have enacted

¹⁸⁸ African Union, “Draft African Union Strategy for Enhancing Border Management in Africa,” Peace and Security Department, 2012, 19–20, <http://www.peaceau.org/Uploads/Au-Dsd-Workshop-March-2013/Border-Programme-Docs/Au-Bm-Strategy-Revised%20draft.Pdf>.

¹⁸⁹ African Union, “Draft African Union Strategy for Enhancing Border Management in Africa,” 20–30.

¹⁹⁰ Suleymane Ag Anara, “Mali Soldiers, Armed Groups Hold First Joint Patrol In Northern Town,” Reuters, February 23, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-security-iduskbn162116>.

¹⁹¹ Anara, “Mali Soldiers, Armed Groups Hold First Joint Patrol In Northern Town.”

policies from which counterterrorism programs have been designed. These policies, which reflect demands of the UN, have resulted in monthly reports to determine waves of terrorism, perpetrators, and extent of fatalities, and the findings have been used to respond to the threat.

The regional organizations have employed a two-track approach—dialogue and negotiations and combat operations—to lessen Mali’s terrorism, from which dialogue and negotiations are more successful for stabilizing Mali, restoring state governance, and integrating insurgents in the community. Dialogue and negotiations are arguably more appropriate in resolving insurgencies because insurgents can easily be reached for negotiation. The strategies of the regional bodies (dialogue and negotiations and combat operations) are related to the hypothesis of this thesis, which stipulates that regional organizations with established policies and strategies that include intelligence sharing, inter-state collaboration, and harmonized border security procedures mitigate terrorism. The various components in the hypothesis—policies, intelligence sharing, and inter-state collaboration—are evident in the regional approach that has helped lessen Mali’s threats. For example, there was intelligence sharing as manifested in the activities of CISSA and inter-state collaboration as was experienced in support received from such neighboring states as Algeria and Burkina Faso that presided in diplomacy and dialogue. The composition of the integrated regional force is also inter-state and therefore very appropriate.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to identify what regional organizations can do differently to combat the threats of terrorism in the Sahel Region more effectively. It finds that the regional response to Mali's security situation—where the threats are also largely regional—has been more successful over the long run than Mali's domestic measures for a variety of reasons that have implications for all the states of the Sahel. This investigation found that regionalism has cut off supply routes, killed terrorists, and enhanced border security management. Based on these findings, this chapter provides some regionally focused recommendations and conclusions.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter suggests six areas—severe penalties for unconstitutional changes of government, incorporation of key stakeholders in mediation efforts, joint standby military force, SSR, training of intelligence operatives, and border security—that regional organizations can address in their efforts to curtail the extent of terrorism Mali faces. In each of these areas, the gaps that necessitated the proposed action have been factored to justify the proposed action.

1. Severe Penalties for Unconstitutional Changes of Government

This thesis found that Mali's armed forces toppled the democratically elected government of Mali twice in a decade (2012 and 2020) in the midst of terrorist threats, and the likelihood exists that the armed forces will either repeat the practice or that neighboring Sahelian states will follow the practice and compromise security of the Sahel if the regional bodies do not institute stringent measures against the act. The regional bodies should revisit the Declaration on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of government 2000 (Lomé Declaration) to severely punish those who topple democratically elected governments. On coups, the Lomé Declaration affirms that “these developments [coups] are a threat to peace and security of the continent and constitute a disturbing trend

and serious setback to the on-going process of democratization in the continent.”¹⁹² Yet in 2012, Mali’s armed forces toppled the democratic leadership and formed a government that repressed the people. The junta government indulged in human rights abuses against those opposed to their leadership. In 2020, another coup was staged, but ECOWAS diplomatically forced the coupists to establish an interim government with a civilian leadership. Military coups are manifestations of unconstitutionality, unprofessionalism, and dictatorship, as the constitution is suspended. Given the undemocratic and repressive nature of military regimes, the AU and ECOWAS should revisit the Lomé Declaration to include long prison sentences for those who oust democratically elected regimes instead of the sanctions and travel bans imposed that mostly affect states and the innocent citizenry.

2. Incorporation of Key Stakeholders in Peace Mediations

This research found that key stakeholders were excluded from peace mediations whose contributions could have helped broaden and make peace agreements holistic and acceptable. Incorporating stakeholders in dialogue to resolve armed crises can lead to widened views on the nature and mode of a crisis, facilitating amicable and lasting resolutions. It is likely that the presence of key stakeholders, e.g., civil society, would have enriched the discussions, given their neutrality and sincerity of purpose. Therefore, to resolve Mali’s crisis, including future crises in the Sahel, the regional bodies should incorporate victims and civil society’s representatives at diplomatic negotiations as independent actors whose points of view and neutrality might create more amicable negotiations. Additionally, regional bodies can explore the possibility of incorporating interreligious organizations in peace agreements, given their reverence and acceptance.

3. Establishment of Joint Standby Military Force

This research found that the establishment of regional standby forces was ad hoc and so not prompt in responding to Mali’s 2012 insurgency. Regionalism’s operational responses to Mali’s threats of terrorism, though evident, are remiss for delaying to establish

¹⁹² OAU, “Declaration on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government,” 1.

a standby force that can be called upon for action on short notice. Establishment of a regional standby force, specifically one in each of the regions, has long been endorsed but not implemented. If the regional force is established, funds for its operations can be obtained from AU member states and donor partners. However, if regional organizations are unable to raise the required funds for the establishment of the regional standby force, the option is to maintain the ad hoc integrated forces assembled on a case-by-case basis to respond to threats.

While the establishment of the standby forces seems appropriate considering the vastness of the continent and the volume of threats the continent faces, it will be fitting to start with one as an experiment and gradually establish the others based on the availability of funds. However, while it is likely that the Sahel Region of West Africa is the most threat-prone as a result of its volume of terrorist threats, it will be prudent for the AU to do threat assessments to determine the most vulnerable region for the establishment of the maiden standby force, and the same analysis should be replicated to determine the manner in which subsequent standby forces will be built. Regional organizations can solicit support for the standby force from donors and their international partners.

4. Undertaking Security Sector Reforms

Overall, the research found that Malian security operatives were weak and incompetent in the execution of duties, as evidenced in their defeat and retreat from northern Mali in the 2012 insurgency, and unprofessional, as manifested in the breach of ethical standards. Certainly, unprofessional practices can compromise Mali's security, especially when carried out at border posts. Hence, regional bodies should explore the possibility of obtaining funds for Mali to undertake SSR to make Mali's security sector operatives more disciplined, trustworthy, and efficient in the execution of duty. Moreover, Mali's SSR should target state institutions that uphold national security, for example primary security forces, security management and oversight bodies, intelligence agencies, and national security coordination. While Mali's SSR can help transform its security sector institutions and maximize their efficiency, it is imperative that the sector be subjected to civilian coordination to enhance democratic oversight and control of the Malian security

forces. With SSR, security sector practitioners will be transformed to adhere to the ethos of the security sector.

5. Training of Intelligence Officers

The research found Mali's rate of terrorism to be the highest in the Sahel, indicating widespread intelligence failures. Terrorists attack Mali regularly and have attacked the various components, mainly local armed forces, international military officers, and the civil populace. Hence, it seems that regional and local intelligence officers have either not gathered the correct intelligence or have failed in their intelligence analyses. According to Dahl, who talks about the importance of analysis to the overall intelligence successes, intelligence can fail "if analysts fail to understand signals and warnings that were right in front of them all the time."¹⁹³ Dahl notes that analysts refer "to this problem as inability on the part of intelligence authorities to 'connect the dots' of existing information."¹⁹⁴ Similarly, intelligence can fail when analysis "become so dependent on data that it misses important tangibles."¹⁹⁵ Intelligence can also fail if only a handful of intelligence officers can speak a foreign language.¹⁹⁶ To address these problems and improve the overall intelligence actions undertaken to secure Mali, the AU can, through CISSA, train intelligence personnel in Mali and the Sahel Region of West Africa to capacitate them on how to gather, debrief, and analyze intelligence. Training is significant to capacitate intelligence officers to perform effectively. The AU's training programs can incorporate such common international languages as French, English, and Arabic, among others, to enhance intelligence practices. Additionally, intelligence officers should be trained in the culture of host countries so as to integrate and gather intelligence more easily.

¹⁹³ Erik Dahl, *Intelligence and Surprise Attack: Failure and Success from Pearl Harbor to 9/11 and Beyond* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 7.

¹⁹⁴ Dahl, *Intelligence and Surprise Attack*, 7.

¹⁹⁵ Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence from Secrets to Policy*, 8th ed. (London: Sage, 2020), 8.

¹⁹⁶ Patrick C. Neary, "The Post-9/11 Intelligence Community, Intelligence Reform, 2001-2009: Requiescat in Pace?" *Studies in Intelligence* 54, no. 1 (March 2010): 15, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/volume-54-number-1/PDFs-Vol.-54-No.1/U-%20Studies%2054no1-IntelReform2001-2009-Web.pdf>.

6. Border Security and Management

The research found that the Sahelian border conceals terrorists that navigate it to unleash terror on their targets. The Sahelian border is mostly unmanned or policed by ill-equipped and unprofessional security operatives that cannot effectively execute their roles because of the regional nature of the border. Therefore, the border provides haven for terrorists and is a contributing factor to the spate of terrorism Mali faces. To address this problem, this thesis recommends that the regional bodies should harmonize border security practices with regard to movements of people and goods across the Sahelian border. Additionally, there should be border patrols and surveillance. On border patrols, Sahelian states should simultaneously undertake patrols at their portion of the border. On surveillance, security operatives should serve as watch dogs in gathering and sharing of intelligence with their counterparts in the Sahel, while the regional bodies should monitor the process to ensure its effectiveness.

B. CONCLUSION

Regionalism has helped promote state governance across the length and breadth of Mali and paved the way for Mali's electoral processes. Insurgents had temporarily occupied northern Mali after defeating the Malian armed forces and chasing their allies, the Tuareg, out of northern Mali. The insurgents' occupation of northern Mali was brief but characterized by repression as the shariah law was manifested. That said, collaborative efforts of integrated regional forces and French troops liberated and restored democratic governance in northern Mali to depict their strength and capability of defeating the Islamists. Additionally, because of peace mediation efforts, regional efforts have paved the way for the electoral process, resulting in the 2013 presidential elections. While these successes are noteworthy, terrorist attacks are intermittent, thereby necessitating more regional efforts to consolidate and improve on gains obtained.

Regionalism has unified the conflicting parties—the government of Mali and some insurgents—through peace mediation efforts. Peace negotiations provided the forum for airing and addressing the grievances and concerns of the conflicting parties, resulting in the signing of peace accords, some of which are currently being rolled out. However,

regionalism not only deliberates mediations but also monitors implementation of agreements. In this regard, regionalism has organized joint border security patrols of the parties that signed the 2015 accord to build their confidence and trust in the accord. That said, joint border security patrols remain significant in monitoring Mali's borders to identify and address border practices that are inimical to Mali and its neighbors in the Sahel.

Regionalism has cut off terrorist supply routes and, in the process, decapitated terrorists and secured large caches of arms and ammunition. Eliminating supply routes is a step to limit the flow of arms for attacks on Mali. To consolidate these gains and locate unidentified or newly created supply routes, regionalism should strengthen reconnaissance activities and increase border security patrols while intelligence practitioners should be proactive to unearth terrorist moves.

Finally, regionalism has created a training ground to develop the capacity of military practitioners in their constituencies. Routine combat and defensive activities of joint regional operational forces have enhanced their competences for future anti-terrorist activities either regionally or domestically. However, the extent to which the capacity of the joint regional forces will be developed is dependent on the extent of threats mitigated while on operations and the extent of exposure of regional forces to various types of weapons and equipment. Therefore, it is imperative that the required weapons and gadgets be provided to enhance activities of joint regional operational forces and develop their capacities for subsequent operations.

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