

ISSUE DESCRIPTION

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ISSUE Peace in West Africa and in the Sahel region

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Introduction

Africa has never seen a peaceful moment in its history. The governments are responsible for keeping law and order in their country. Comparing it to the world itself we can see the big difference as in most countries there is a strong government who supervises their country. The issue in Africa is most governments are corrupt or non-existent and paramilitary groups are in power. Western-African countries has a committee which main purpose is to establish strong central government as it is the first step to a better life. Due to the unstable political situation in these countries, foreign companies are not willing to move in, which would help the native people by giving them job opportunities. The ECOWAS tries to help the people in these countries by giving punishment for the unlawful acts of the governments, but it is not enough to restore peace. The people in these countries face coup as often as in other countries elections, and other governments refuse to hold election. These 15 countries who are part of the ECOWAS need the help of countries to fight crime and establish a legal and strong government.

Definition of Key Terms

UNOWAS: United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, plays a key role in the support of institution-building processes, which correlates with the military cooperation initiative.

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States: The initial treaty was signed by the Heads of States and Governments of the then 16 member states in Lagos, Nigeria. Later the treaty was revised and updated in 1993 with now only 15 member states in it. The main goals of ECOWAS are economic developments, improvements of living standards, facing political issues.

Coup: a sudden change in the government which is often violent and illegal.

CNRD: Committee for Reconciliation and Development.

General Overview

On 5 September, Guinea became the third country in West Africa to experience a military takeover during the past 16 months, the other countries were Mali and Chad. Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, leader of the CNRD, announced the dissolution of the current government, and the suspension of the constitution, thus allowing himself to run for a third term in 2020. On 16 September 2021, the ECOWAS called on Guinea to hold presidential elections within 6 months and declared travel ban and asset freeze sanctions on the members of CNRD. Since then, CNRD has announced its plans for the Transition Character regarding the elections and other tasks but has not specified the duration of the transition. Doumbouya became the president on 1 October 2021, and a civilian prime minister and transitional government were appointed.

ECOWAS on 7 November urged Guinea to set the timetable for the elections to which they will follow.

Mali's political transition to restore constitutional order following coups in August 2020 and May 2021 has made little progress toward organizing elections within the 18-month timeline that ECOWAS set for them in October 2020. ECOWAS imposed a travel ban and asset freeze on 150 individuals, further stressing the importance to follow the 27 February 2022 date for legislative and presidential elections.

President Adama Barrow of The Gambia was re-elected on 4 December 2021. IT was the Gambia's first presidential election since Barrow's 2016 defeat of long-time ruler Yahya Jammeh, whose refusal to accept that result led to the intervention of ECOWAS forces in January 2017.

Russia's involvement in the Sahel region has increased over the past years. Russia and Mali had talks on strengthening military cooperation between the countries. There is a possibility the Mali is considering hiring Russian Private military soldiers for reiterating peace.

UK and US are not keen on helping the countries with military forces, rather they are worried about the support of counter-terrorism forces because they have questionable use of their power. Some records show that they break the rules of UN human rights, and this act undermines the purpose of UN peacekeeping forces.

Insecurity continues to affect the region as more and more terrorist attacks happen. The number of the supporters of terrorist groups are also growing. Recently on 14 November 2021 was attacked in Burkina Faso and 49 gendarmes and 4 civilians were killed. This led to an increase

in civil unrest and to the resignation of the Prime Minister and his government on 8 December 2021.

The Gulf of Guinea is a place where many pirate organizations operate. In 2020, they were responsible for the kidnapping of 130 people and over 800 million dollars in damages. It is estimated that their revenue is 4 million dollars a year. They attack cargo ships, they capture the workers and sell them for ransom and also sell the cargo on the black market.

Due to Covid-19 more people in poverty than before and the increase in the food prices pushes more people into poverty. 38 million people are at risk of food shortages, which is 23% more than last year.

Major Parties Involved

Burkina Faso: recently faced terrorist attacks which led to unrest in the country. The Prime Minister and the government resigned. The political progress was negligible compared to the increased threat of terrorist attacks in the country. The country is in a volatile position and its future is unknown.

Nigeria: Increase in the criminality and farmer herder conflicts pulled the attention of the public away from the violence in the north-east. Previously which was a fear that terrorist will come to the country is now a real threat to the country. Niger must be ready to defend itself from terrorist attacks in the future.

Guinea: A coup took place in the country and the new Prime Minister is not yet hold presidential elections. The ECOWAS sanctioned some members of the new legislation to speed up the process.

Mali: After the coup in May 2021 the country's main purpose is to restore peace and order. We yet to see any progress and ECOWAS imposed some restriction on the people who are involved with this issue to incentivize them to hold elections.

Russia: Russia is establishing military contact with Nigeria and tries to increase its influence in West Africa. Russia was working on a draft resolution which was like the Irish-Nigerian resolution but is halted now.

Ghana: Ghana is concerned about the ongoing situation in Mali and in Guinea. Ghana believes that if we do not help these countries hold an election, then it will be impossible to make further improvements in the two countries. Ghana is also concerned about the climate situation and is open to support it.

Timeline of Events

2020 August: Military Coup in Mali

2021 May: Military coup in Chad

2021 June 30: the UN Peacebuilding Commission held a meeting on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

2021 September 5: Military coup in Guinea

2021 November 14: Al-Qaeda attack in Burkina Faso killing 49 people

2021 Gambia: Presidential elections

2022 Jan 24: Military coup in Burkina Faso

2022 February 3: Meeting in the Ecowas to demolish the coup in Burkina Faso

2022 February 27: Mali's elections were not held and Goita announced that he will rule till the next elections in 2025

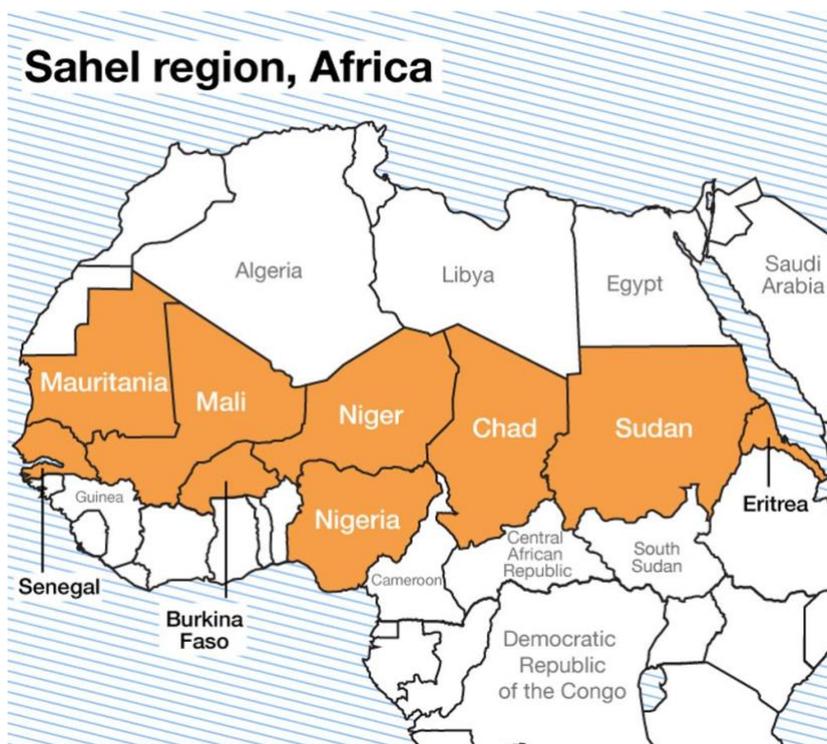
Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Deployment of UN peacekeeping forces in Western African countries to fight terrorism. However, these troops allegedly used anti-humanitarian methods. This raises whether these troops are helping the people or causing more harm.



ECOWAS was set up to help the countries with political, military, legislative, economic issues. ECOWAS is nowhere near in as powerful as the EU, and in case of a crisis it does not have the means to tackle it. Also, ECOWAS promotes peaceful means to deal with these kinds of situations and a military intervention would be against its polices. There is non-aggression between member states, and a fight against the new Prime Minister does not fall under these criteria. An attempt they made both in Guinea and in Mali was financial sanctions and travel ban. However, these prove to be insufficient.

Possible Solutions and Approaches



In a meeting on 10 January 2022 the President of the Security Council suggested that to prevent all these crimes and increase the security in the countries we will need to focus on accountability and provide opportunities for education and work, including youth and women. Without cooperation, it will be impossible to achieve justice and establish sustainable prosperity and security that the people of West Africa and the Sahel deserve.

The biggest issues West Africa is facing is terrorist attacks and to establish a legal government in Guinea and in Mali, which requires elections. An ideal outcome would Guinea and Mali hold their elections on a set date soon, then the ECOWAS could focus all its resources to stop terrorism in the area. However, alone these countries cannot solve their issues, so they will need cooperation as there is interdependence between the members of ECOWAS.

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Maps

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