



BISMUN 2026



**TRICOM: UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**



STUDY GUIDE



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear delegates,

I welcome you to the United Nations Human Rights Council at our first-ever inter-school BISMUN! I am honoured to serve as one of the USG Head of Tricom and as your Director of UNHRC. I hope you are as excited for the committee as I am.

I began my Model UN journey almost 2 years ago at one of the biggest and arguably most challenging MUNs in the city. All of my classmates participating had much more experience than I did at the time. Everyone in my committee seemed older than me and more confident than me. Naturally, I felt intimidated throughout the conference. Intimidated by my peers, my fellow delegates, and by the idea of failing. It took till the end of day 1 for me to realise that my inexperience had an unexpected upside to it. The delegates around me had more to lose to a first-timer than I had to lose to them. I went on to be one of 6 in a committee of 60 to win an award. And I am proud to say that I haven't lost in the city since. Across 15 Model UNs, my love and sheer obsession with MUN seems to be never-ending.

It is that obsession and that love that many of my share and that has directly led to the creation of TRICOM. From a mere shower thought to topics of discussions with 4 of my friends, who seemed to have no better way of spending their lunch breaks than discussing crazy ideas with me that challenged the very fabric of MUN tradition in the city. It has taken us almost a year to develop this rather simple yet unique concept. Tricom remains the closest approximation to simulating the Neopolitan vision of the United Nations. I am wholeheartedly ready for you to be the first, among the many graduates of the Tricom format.

Before I am accused of being a MUNing monomaniac, I must highlight that I have other interests. While most of them do not stem far from Public policy, political science and international relations. I also enjoy boxing and basketball, both as a player and a spectator. However, my greatest sporting obsession is Formula One. As a Mercedes fan, I would like to clarify that if a fellow Mercedes supporter just happens to win Best Delegate in UNHRC, it will be purely coincidental. Jokes aside, I value creativity. I will be looking for delegates who can produce Ideas that are unique and well thought out while still being in the realm of possibilities. And if thats you, i have a feeling that you will do well in my committee.

To conclude, as you enter this committee, know this. It doesn't matter if this is your first MUN. It doesn't matter if you fumble in a speech or get a fact wrong. If you are able to show that you love the game. If you can display your courage to try. and if the only way I know this is your first conference is because you tell me. You will watch me call out your name at the closing ceremony. To borrow a line from one of my favourite book series: "A very small man can cast a very large shadow."

I look forward to seeing you in committee. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. Sincerely,

Anarv Gupta (anarv.3002@bis.edu.in)

Director,

United Nations Human Rights Council

LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

Dear delegates,

We are extremely excited to welcome you to the United Nations Human Rights Council at BIS's first ever inter-school BISMUN as your Assistant Directors. We can't wait to take this 3 day journey with you as you engage in thought-provoking debate, tackle complex crises, draft innovative resolutions, and collaborate with fellow delegates to address some of the most pressing human rights challenges facing our world today.

I'm Gyaana Khanna, and when I first started attending MUNs, I was intimidated by the quality of debate and the confidence of more experienced delegates. It took me a couple of conferences to find my footing, but once I did, I quickly fell in love with the whole experience. Over time, I was fortunate enough to win a few awards and later serve as a Vice-Chairperson, where I discovered that I enjoyed evaluating debate and watching delegates grow just as much as participating myself. Outside of MUN, I enjoy playing and following basketball as well as reading. I can usually be found practising on the court or with my nose buried in a good book!

Hi, I am Siddharth Sukhtankar. I remember my first MUN clear as day. I was extremely anxious to even raise my hand let alone speak. As they say, if you never try you will never know. All it took was one broken speech to get me started and the rest followed. I encourage you to do the same, just take the first step. MUNning leaves you with skills you need for life so look at each day at BISMUN as an opportunity to learn. I hope you come out of BISMUN a better decision-maker, a confident speaker, and a global citizen.

Whether this is your first MUN or your fiftieth, we encourage you to step out of your comfort zone, share your ideas, and make the most of every moment in committee. We look forward to meeting you all and seeing the debate, diplomacy, and creativity you bring to UNHRC.

Sincerely,

Gyaana Khanna (gyaana.3330@bis.edu.in) & Siddharth Sukhtankar (siddharth.3271@bis.edu.in),
Assistant Directors,
United Nations Human Rights Council 2026

INTRODUCTION TO TRICOM

TRICOM is a new Model United Nations format that combines three committees operating simultaneously under a single overarching agenda. Unlike a traditional MUN where each delegate represents one country in one committee, TRICOM splits each delegation into three representatives, one placed in each of the three committees, allowing them to engage with the same issue from multiple perspectives at the same time.

Each committee focuses on a different dimension of the same global crisis. TRICOM's overarching agenda at BISMUN 2026 is addressing terrorism in the Sahel Region. The free date for all three committees is 30th April, 2026.

The agenda will be explored in the following three committees:

- UNSC: Preventing the rise of terror groups to power, upholding political stability in the Sahel
- DISEC: Disarming Terrorist Groups & Preventing Armed Terror Attacks in the Sahel
- UNHRC: Protecting Human rights against terrorism in the Sahel

Although the committees operate independently in debate and voting, they remain interconnected through shared developments, coordinated crises, and delegation-wide strategy. The functionings of TriCom are explained here:

Delegations

Each delegation represents a single country or non-state actor and is divided into three delegates, one per committee. While each delegate operates within their assigned committee, they are expected to maintain a broadly consistent overall national or organisational position.

Crises

Crises play a central role in TRICOM. When a crisis is officially ratified in any committee by the Executive Board, it is shared across all three committees. However, committees are not required to act on every crisis.

Instead, crisis updates serve as contextual developments that:

- Influence debate
- Shape bloc formation
- Provide strategic background when writing communiques

Crises may be presented periodically in the form of announcements, slideshows, skits, or verbal updates.

Paperwork

Delegates will use similar tools to a standard MUN, but with additional coordination mechanisms.

1. Communiqués

Delegates may submit:

- Open communiqués
- Covert communiqués
- Joint communiqués
- Cross-committee communiqués (written by all three delegates of a single delegation together)

2. Directives

Each committee produces its own directives in response to crises. Delegates are not expected to address every crisis, but should focus on those relevant to their committee's mandate. Directives are debated, amended, and voted on within each individual committee.

3. Draft Resolutions

Each committee also produces formal draft resolutions outlining long-term policy solutions, handled entirely within the committee, aligning with the committee's mandate, and are not cross-committee documents.

Coordination of the Delegation

A key feature of TRICOM is structured inter-committee collaboration, between the three delegates of the delegation. Delegations will be assessed on the coordination between the 3 delegates, and consistency in stance and strategy across the delegation will be rewarded.

For the purpose of coordination, delegations have access to limited Team Time, allowing all three delegates of a country to meet in a designated area outside the committee and coordinate strategy:

- Team Time may be requested once per day per delegation (subject to change as per the EB's discretion)
- Duration: up to 10 minutes (subject to change as per the EB's discretion)
- Held under supervision in a designated space
- Only members of the same delegation may interact during this time
- It is not an unmoderated caucus and cannot be used to interact with other delegations

Additionally, inter-committee communication channels remain open throughout the conference, allowing ongoing coordination between teammates. Delegates are encouraged to use designated lunch and snack breaks as well as time before and after committee sessions to plan and coordinate the delegation's stance and strategy.

Awards and Evaluation

Delegates are assessed both individually and as part of their delegation.

Committee awards will be presented to individual delegates, based on a wide rubric of speeches, quality of paperwork, crisis response, lobbying, bloc leadership, and more.

Delegation awards will be presented to delegations, based on the delegation's performance and consistency across the 3 committees, coordination between the 3 delegates, effectiveness of Team Time, and strategic alignment across all three committees.

ABOUT UNHRC

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is the primary international body responsible for promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. In Tricom, delegates must approach the Sahel crisis specifically through the mandate of protecting human rights against terrorism. While all committees will receive the same crisis updates, not every crisis will fall within UNHRC's scope. Several developments may be more relevant to DISEC or UNSC, and delegates are not expected to respond to every crisis. All directives, communiqués, and draft resolutions must remain clearly connected to UNHRC's mandate and the agenda. Delegates who choose to address issues outside this scope must provide a clear justification for their relevance to human rights.

UNHRC's agenda and mandate for this committee are fluid. Although delegates should focus on how terrorism affects civilians and how governments and international actors can protect human rights, which are specifically under threat because of terrorism.

What is Expected

Delegates are expected to approach the Sahel crisis through a human rights lens rather than a purely military or security oriented one. This committee aims to identify larger problems where rights are being violated and where populations suffer, but more importantly, the goal is to come up with pragmatic solutions that align with international law and standards. We encourage delegates to move beyond general condemnation of terrorism and propose effective solutions and frameworks that truly make for a better world. Furthermore, delegates should also recognise the limits of the Council's mandate and justify any security-related proposal by clearly linking it to the protection of human rights in the context of terrorism. The most successful contributions will combine legal measures, realistic implementation, and a clear understanding of the UNHRC body in the United Nations.

UNHRC & UN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIONS IN THE SAHEL

Independent Expert Mandate on Mali (2013 – present)

This is the UNHRC's most sustained and concrete intervention. The Council established a country-specific Independent Expert mandate for Mali, which has been extended annually by successive resolutions, including resolutions 25/36 (2014), 28/31 (2015), 31/28 (2016), all the way through to resolution 58/30 in 2025. The mandate tasks the expert with evaluating the human rights situation and assisting Mali with implementation.

Analysis: This is arguably the UNHRC's most meaningful ongoing tool in the Sahel. Experts like Alioune Tine have used the mandate to sound alarms, for instance, calling on ECOWAS and the African Union to urgently find effective remedies to end violence in central Mali, and calling on the Security Council to reassess MINUSMA's mandate given that the violence was "increasingly difficult to control." However,

the mandate is limited to Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger; arguably, in even worse condition, they have no equivalent mechanism. The mandate is also advisory, not enforcement-based, and its impact depends heavily on the host government's cooperation, which has deteriorated sharply under the post-2021 junta.

OHCHR Human Rights & Counterterrorism Compliance Framework for G5 Sahel (2019)

In 2019, a senior UN human rights official visited the Sahel to embed human rights into the region's counter-terrorism architecture. The five Sahel countries, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, adopted a compliance framework with strong EU support to ensure adherence to international human rights and humanitarian law standards in their fight against terrorism.

Analysis: This was a genuinely forward-thinking initiative recognising that brutal counter-terrorism tactics were fueling, not reducing, extremist recruitment. The framework essentially acknowledged that security forces were themselves committing violations. However, since the 2021–2023 coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, the juntas have expelled international monitors, expelled French forces, and invited Wagner Group/Russian Africa Corps personnel, making compliance monitoring effectively impossible on the ground.

High Commissioner Reporting to the HRC on Sahel Deterioration (2024–2025)

At the HRC's 59th session in 2025, High Commissioner Volker Türk addressed the deteriorating human rights situation in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, where instability and violence perpetrated by both extremist armed groups and government forces have resulted in numerous civilian casualties. This has become a recurring feature of HC oral updates.

At the 56th session in 2024, the High Commissioner similarly noted that in situations like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, "civilians bear the brunt" and that militarised approaches are not yielding sustainable results.

Analysis: These statements are important for keeping the Sahel on the global human rights agenda, but oral updates carry no binding weight. Critically, none of these sessions resulted in a country-specific resolution on Burkina Faso or Niger, both of which have arguably surpassed Mali in severity. The UNHRC's reluctance to escalate reflects the political difficulty of passing resolutions against African military governments that enjoy support from Russia and China on the Council.

UN Security Council Presidential Statement Condemning Terrorism in the Sahel (2013)

While this was the *Security Council* rather than the HRC, it formed the political backbone for subsequent human rights action. The Security Council strongly condemned human rights abuses and violence against civilians by terrorist and extremist groups, expressed deep concern over Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, and welcomed the deployment of MINUSMA following the transfer of authority from the African-led mission in Mali.

Analysis: This statement marked the formal UN acknowledgement that the Sahel's terrorism problem was a human rights crisis, not just a security one. The deployment of MINUSMA was the operational

follow-through. Its eventual 2023 withdrawal, demanded by the Malian junta, left a major gap that no UN body has been able to fill.

UNHCR Emergency Appeals and Displacement Monitoring (Ongoing)

UNHCR has raised deep concern about the fast-growing humanitarian crisis in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, where over 3.3 million people are forcibly displaced due to relentless conflict, exacerbated by the worsening effects of climate change. UNHCR Women and children make up 80 per cent of the displaced population, and protection risks from gender-based violence to trafficking and forced recruitment are worsening. Despite this, only 14 per cent of the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for the Sahel had been funded at the time of reporting.

Analysis: UNHCR's documentation work is invaluable, but the chronic underfunding exposes a gap between UN rhetoric and member-state commitment. The 14% funding rate is damning; it suggests that while the system diagnoses the crisis accurately, the political will to respond is absent.

Security Council Debates on Terrorism as the Dominant Epicentre (2023–2025)

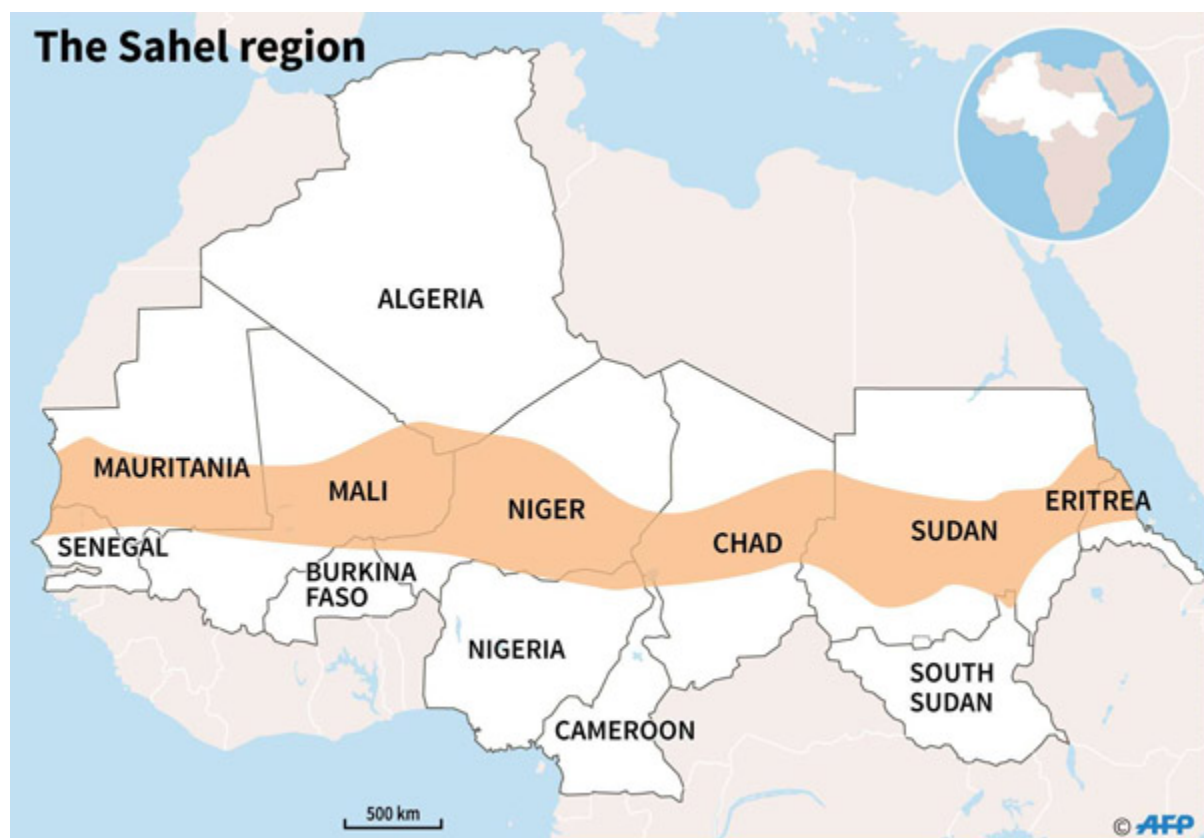
Armed groups, including JNIM, ISGS, ISWAP and Boko Haram, are expanding across the Sahel, driving mass displacement, shuttering over 14,800 schools and 900 health facilities, and leaving millions without essential services. By late 2025, the ECOWAS Commission reported that terrorism now "poses an existential threat to the whole of West Africa," with 450 attacks and over 1,900 deaths recorded between January and November 2025 alone, and extremist groups expanding into "economic warfare" by restricting fuel supplies and crippling trade.

Analysis: The Security Council's repeated debates have produced increasingly urgent language, but structural obstacles remain. The failure to establish predictable financing for the G5 Sahel has been described as "a strategic error with clear and dramatic consequences." The collapse of G5 Sahel after the three juntas withdrew from ECOWAS created a regional coordination vacuum that no UN mechanism has adequately filled.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

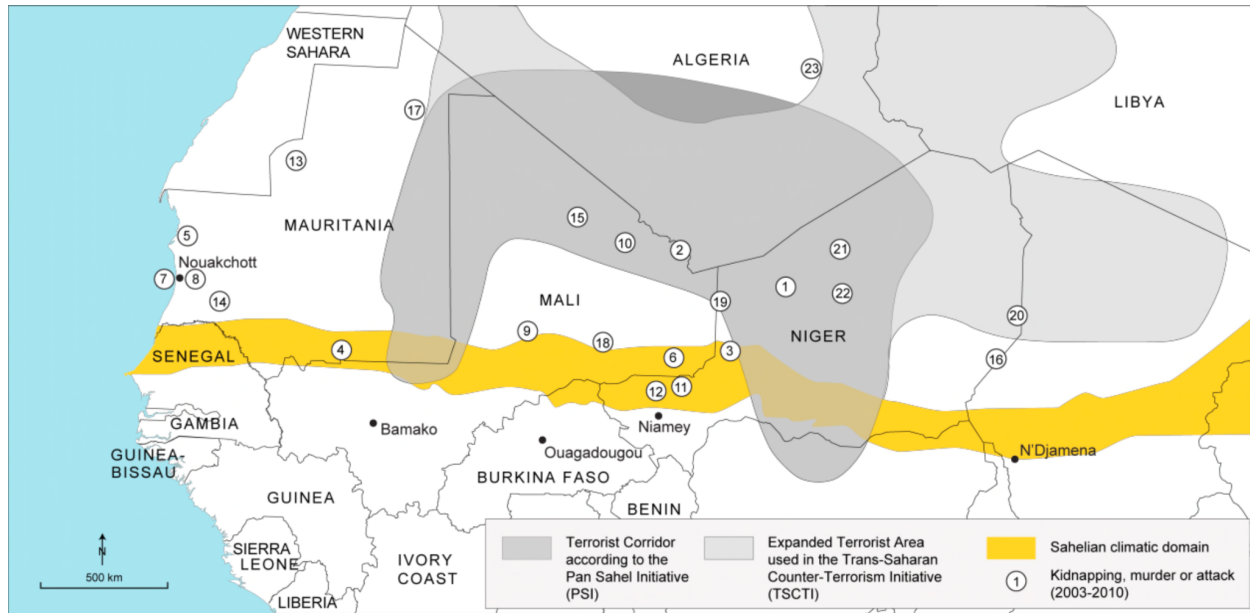
The Sahel Region

The Sahel is an expansive region covering over 6000 kilometres from East to West Africa. The word ‘Sahel’ comes from the Arabic word sāḥil (الساحل) meaning ‘the coast’; and it extends from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east. It is a semi-arid region in north-central Africa, home to over 200 million people and encompassing 10 core countries: Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria. Historically, the Sahel has seen the confluence of Arabic, Islamic and nomadic cultures of the north, and indigenous cultures of the South. The region remains a critical transit point for migrants travelling from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa and Europe.



The Sahel Region

The Sahel region has now become home to some of the world’s deadliest terrorist groups, leading to innumerable atrocities being committed against civilians, security forces and government authorities. The geographical features of the Sahel, such as its vast open spaces and poorly protected borders enable criminals, terror groups, and armed forces to use the region as a route for illegal migration and drug trafficking. Today, the hotbeds of violence are in the Liptako-Gourma and Lake Chad Basin subregions.



Terrorist Activity in the Sahel

Historical Instability

Colonial Legacy

The crisis in the Sahel can be traced to the colonial era, when European powers (primarily France) carved the map of Africa with little regard for ethnic, cultural or historical realities. Decolonization was rampant in the 1960s; with Mali, Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania all gaining independence from their colonizers in 1960. The Sahel has traditionally contained various ethnic groups such as the farming communities of the Songhai and Bambara & the nomadic Fulani and Amazigh. As borders were drawn during the colonial period, tribes found themselves divided or confined within new, alien territories, fuelling modern-day tensions. The economies in these new states were unsustainable and its people inherently in conflict; creating much political, economic and military turmoil. A prevailing trend was the rise of weak, corrupt, and illegitimate central governments across the Sahel states that could never exercise full control over the extent of their territories. Thus, the power vacuum left by colonialism was pivotal to the instability in the Sahel.

Tuareg Rebellions

The Tuareg (Arabic: “abandoned by God”) are an indigenous Berber ethnic group of pastoralists and traders who primarily inhabit the Sahara Desert across Mali, Niger, Algeria, Libya, and Burkina Faso. The Liptako-Gourma basin has experienced three Tuareg rebellions pre-2011: the First Tuareg Rebellion (1963–64), the Second Tuareg Rebellion (1990–96) and the Third Tuareg Rebellion (2006–09).

The First Tuareg Rebellion (the Alfellaga) was an insurrection in northern Mali that was violently repressed. The Malian military massacred innocent civilians, eradicated livestock and poisoned vital wells- creating a sense of underlying resentment within the Tuareg population. This triggered a migration of Tuareg communities to Algeria, en masse.

The impetus for the Second Tuareg Rebellion was largely due to the debilitating droughts in the 1970s and 1980s, which altered traditional Tuareg livelihoods and left many young Tuareg men in exile. This generation of Tuareg fighters, which came to be known as the *ishumar*, shared a sense of injustice following the *Alfellaga*, and held a cohesive political identity. The Tuareg notably orchestrated attacks in *Tchintabaradene* in northern Niger (1990) & *Ménaka* in eastern Mali (1990); leaving behind a trail of violence in their wake. The conflict was eventually resolved with the signing of the 1992 *Pacte National*, promising the economic regeneration of northern Mali, local reconciliation initiatives, and the integration of Tuareg rebels into the army and government.

The Third Tuareg Rebellion was sparked by mutinies in the Malian cities of *Ménaka* and *Kidal*. The *Democratic Alliance for Change*, a Malian Tuareg rebel group, responsible for these attacks signed a peace treaty with the government temporarily halting the conflict. However, this ceasefire was short-lived when the *Alliance Touareg Niger-Mali (ATNM)*- another insurgent Touareg organization argued that northern Mali still remained politically and economically marginalized; and attacked government garrisons and kidnapped soldiers. Furthermore, the *Niger Movement for Justice (MNJ)* targeted military outposts and Niger's critical uranium mining infrastructure. Several other attacks by Tuareg factions were carried out including a siege on the Malian capital of *Bamako*. Another peace settlement was ultimately reached, yet several underlying problems that had plagued Mali and Niger since their nascency prevailed. The Third Tuareg Rebellion reinforced the lack of tangible action taken by the governments of Mali and Niger to successfully integrate the Tuareg populace into society. At its essence, a cyclical pattern of rebellion that has characterized Mali and Niger for decades continued to be perpetuated.

All three conflicts stem from Tuareg resentment in being governed by what was perceived to be a 'foreign' authority. Following Malian independence, several Tuareg communities opposed consolidation within the Republic of Mali; and instead sought that their homeland, *Azawad* be recognised as an independent state. Moreover, it is believed the Tuareg felt marginalized & neglected within Mali. This pervasive sentiment amongst a sizeable majority of the Tuareg, was compounded by extreme economic disparity, resource inequality & harsh droughts; provoking the Tuareg rebellions.

The Emergence of Terrorism in the Sahel

The Algerian Civil War and Birth of AQIM

Following the emancipation of Algeria from France in 1962 and the subsequent period of civil unrest, militant Islamic social movements gave rise to organisations such as the *Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA)* and its splinter *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC)*. These armed Islamist groups fought the Algerian government during the Algerian Civil War from 1991 to 2002.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), was an Algeria-based Sunni Muslim group operating in West Africa, and was among the most threatening and longest standing terrorist groups on the continent. AQIM was the formal rebranding of the GSPC. In 2006, *Abdelmalek Droukdal*, the leader of the GSPC, transitioned the organisation into AQIM- by officially pledging allegiance to AQ central. AQIM underwent a dramatic change in strategy- attacking both local and international targets & conducting high-profile suicide bombings (notably, an attack on United Nations headquarters and a constitutional court in Algiers which killed around 60 people on December 11, 2007).

However, intense counterterrorism efforts in northern Algeria, forced AQIM to abandon its traditional base to the Sahel (primarily Mali, Niger, and Mauritania). AQIM also began to operate more aggressively across national borders in the western Sahel, running smuggling networks and abducting Westerners. By exploiting weak local governance structures and forming ties with regional tribes, AQIM integrated into the region by absorbing other militant groups such as Al-Mourabitoun and Ansar Dine.

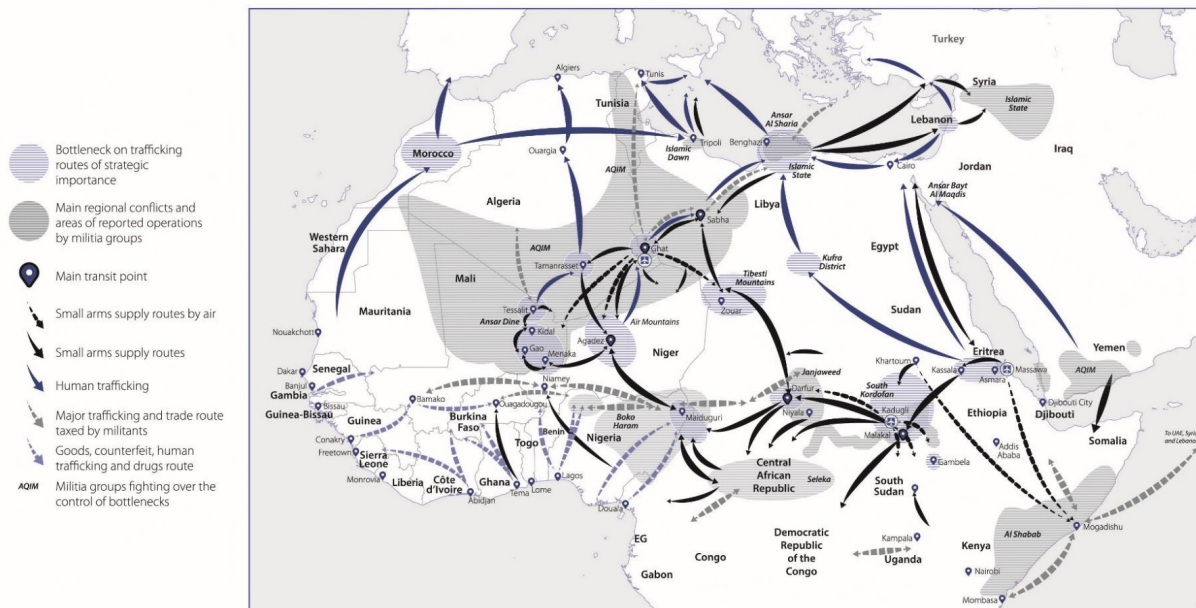
Association between Islamist Militant Groups and Crime Networks

Militant networks such as AQIM carried out a multitude of activities during their period of growth and consolidation (2003-2012). These activities still remain the modus operandi for terrorist and extremist groups across the Sahel today:

Kidnap for ransom (KFR): Kidnapping was vital to AQIM's business model, and constituted the financial foundation for the campaign. KFR is a protracted process that involves abduction, captivity, proof of life, negotiation and, in successful cases, ransom delivery and release. The targets of KFR abductions are largely Westerners visiting the region or those on work assignments. These include aid workers, diplomats or employees of international organisations or multinational corporations. Moreover, groups like Boko Haram are renowned for their involvement in kidnapping (although, KFR is less of a lucrative fundraising strategy for Boko Haram compared to AQIM).

Arms Smuggling: Arms trafficking is an essential trade for AQIM and its affiliates such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), one that directly affects their regional influence and enables their pursuit of organisational goals. It is a vital factor for the ability of these jihadist groups to control trade routes and establish territorial control. The collapse of past regimes, notably the 2011 looting of Libyan armories, has flooded the Sahel with black-market weaponry.

Drug Trafficking: West Africa is a critical artery for illicit narcotic drugs. Cocaine trafficking from South America has skyrocketed in Sahelian countries from an average of just 13 kg per year between 2015 and 2020 to 1,466 kg in 2022 (according to UNODC). AQIM and the eventual coalition of JNIM, utilise heavily armed fighters and fleets of vehicles to protect cocaine, hashish, and pharmaceutical shipments from rival factions or state security forces. Additionally, jihadist commanders such as Mojtar Belmojtar, drastically expanded the movement of contraband cigarettes across West Africa, during the late 2000s and early 2010s.



Smuggling and Trafficking in the Sahara

Migrant Trafficking and Human Smuggling: AQIM and its affiliates have been linked to the transport of humans across the Sahara for trafficking or smuggling. Anecdotal evidence suggests that members of the Tuareg community are also connected to these human smuggling routes across the desert. Migrant trafficking usually occurs when migrants knowingly pay facilitators to cross sovereign borders illegally. In contrast, human smuggling involves extreme exploitation, coercion and the subjugation of migrants. Criminal networks hold these migrants hostage, use them as forced labour, or act violently towards them.

The Expansion of Armed and Extremist Groups After 2011

The Arab Spring and Collapse of Libya

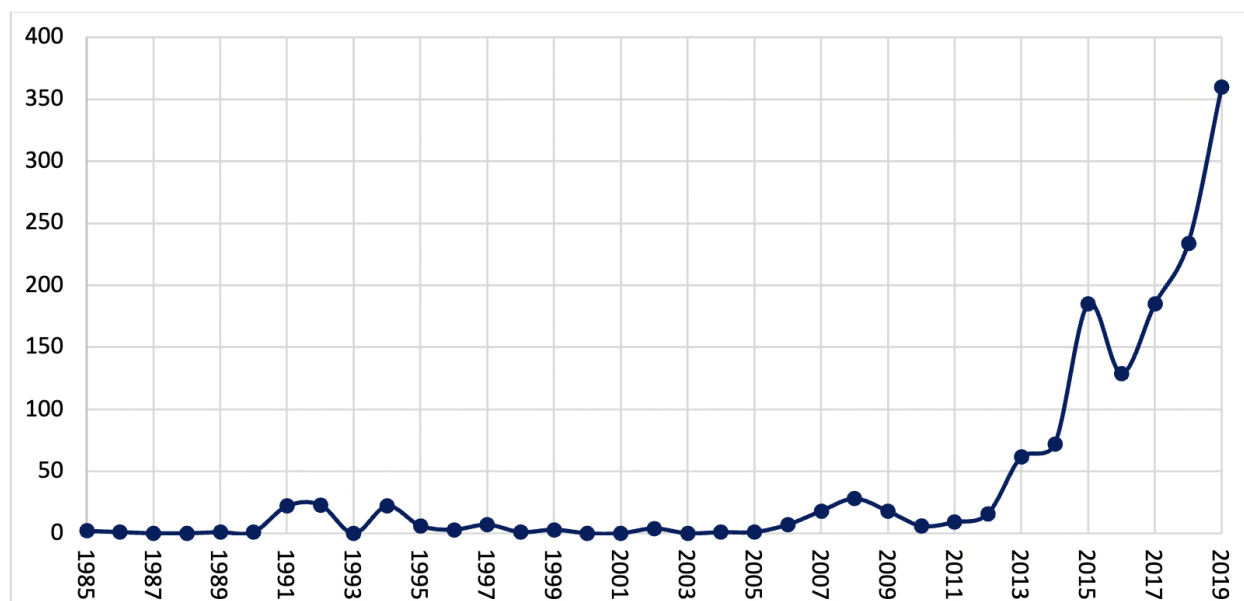
The term 'Arab Spring' is a name used to designate popular revolutions that took place from 2010-2012 in the Arab world to liberate and liberalise Arab states, ensure a change of autocratic governments, and institute socio-economic and political reforms. In Libya, protests against the Muammar Gaddafi government escalated into an armed rebellion in early 2011. In response to the growing violence in the nation, the United Nations adopted Resolution 1973, leading to an intervention by NATO to support the anti-government forces within the country. In October of that year, Gaddafi was captured and killed, ending his forty-two year rule over Libya. The collapse of the nation, however, created a vacuum within its security forces, leading to the spread of threats throughout the Sahel region.

Libya was home to the largest stockpile of weapons in Africa. With the collapse of its government and military, vast amounts of weaponry was stolen from the country and poured into neighboring nations within the Sahel region. These increased military strengths of the various nations across the region led to the increased power of rebel movements in those areas.

Another factor that contributed to the rise of rebellion movements within the Sahel was the return of thousands of former Libyan soldiers to the region. Upon the return of these soldiers to the region, with

their military knowledge and weapons, they were able to contribute to the growing power of rebellion movements within the area. Militant Islamist organizations began to spread into the Sahara-Sahel region as a result of the weakened border controls between the Sahel and Libya. Organizations such as the aforementioned Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and subsequently Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) began to establish themselves in the Sahel, take advantage of the lax border controls, and expand their areas of operation. Additionally, these organizations began to work alongside others, including various trafficking organizations and other rebel movements.

The collapse of Libya is considered to be a turning point in the Sahel's modern history. While the Sahel was experiencing periods of instability prior to 2011, the collapse of Libya initiated a period where extremism began to spread at an increased rate throughout the region. As a result, many of the terrorist and armed groups began to form throughout the Sahel region.



Number of Terrorist Attacks in G5 Sahel

Return of Armed Tuareg Fighters from Libya

Following the collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011, thousands of Tuareg fighters from Libya began to return to the Sahel region. For several decades, Libya had drawn migrants, refugees, and combatants of Tuareg descent. Several waves of Tuareg movements into the country occurred following the droughts and rebellions that plagued the region between the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In addition to the fact that Libya had permitted some of these tribes to settle in the nation, some even joined the Libyan military.

The Libyan Civil War led to the sudden collapse of Gaddafi's regime. During this period, an estimated 200,000 Tuaregs from Mali and Niger returned to their home countries. These fighters were all experienced in the use of military and combat tactics. Additionally, they returned with military equipment looted from the military forces of Libya during the war between the various rebel groups within the country.

There were existing grievances of the Tuareg tribes against the governments of Mali and Niger. However, the arrival of these warriors with military experience and weaponry led to these tribal rebellions. As a result of these developments, the 2012 rebellion was led by Tuaregs who had returned from Libya. The arrival of these fighters contributed to the rapid collapse of the country's political authority in the region.

The governments of Mali and Niger became concerned over the possible influence that these combatants might have upon populations involved with human trafficking, rebel movements, and movements of militant Islamist groups. These problems were exacerbated by the weapons that these fighters brought into the Sahel region. Thus, the arrival of these fighters was one of the most significant outcomes of the Libyan Civil War. It initiated the development of Sahel's extremist and combatant movements.

2012 Mali Crisis

The 2012 Mali Crisis was a watershed moment in the modern history of the Sahel. Although northern Mali had experienced repeated Tuareg rebellions since independence, the events of 2012 transformed a localized rebellion into a wider regional security crisis whose effects continue to shape the Sahel today.

The crisis began in January of 2012, when the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) began a rebellion against the Malian government. The MNLA is a group composed predominantly of Tuareg separatists. However, the rebellion was strengthened by the return of Tuareg rebels from Libya, following the collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in the nation.

In reaction to the growing rebellion, the military of Mali overthrew President Amadou Toumani Touré in March of 2012 in what would become known as the Mali coup d'état. The soldiers that overthrew the President were dissatisfied with the leader's support of the MNLA rebels.

In April of 2012, the MNLA officially declared the independence of Azawad, following the successful capture of several regions of northern Mali. However, the rebellion was soon overtaken by several militant Islamist groups. These included the Ansar Dine movement, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA). These militant groups had initially assisted the MNLA in their attempts to usurp the Malian government. However, they quickly got rid of the MNLA and began to exercise control over the major cities of the region: Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu.

These various extremist groups were able to take advantage of the existing instability within the nation. Their expansion into several other countries, including Burkina Faso and Niger, laid the foundations for the crisis that continues to impact the Sahel region today. Several experts have referred to the Mali crisis as a "perfect storm" resulting in the region's deeply entrenched instability.

The Mali crisis of 2012, therefore, marked the beginning of a new era of insecurity for the Sahel region. The extremist groups that established themselves in the nation were able to begin the cycle of violence that continues to beset the area today.

Evolution of Terrorist Groups

Al-Qaeda and its Affiliates

Al-Qaeda General Command (AQGC): Al-Qaeda is an international militant Islamist network and terrorist organization founded in the late 1980s by Osama bin Laden, during the Soviet-Afghan War. The overarching objective of Al-Qaeda is the waging of a global 'jihad'; seeking to dismantle secular governments in the Muslim world and establish a pan-Islamic caliphate. Al-Qaeda General Command, known as "AQ Core" or central leadership, is the supranational governing body that coordinates the global network of affiliates and outlines its tactical goals. Currently, the de facto leader of AQGC is Saif al-Adel. The General Command issues overarching fatwas (religious decrees), sets ideological parameters, and coordinates propaganda across the Islamic world. Groups in the Sahel such as AQIM must swear a bayat (oath of allegiance) to AQGC, although these organisations still retain a high degree of territorial autonomy.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM): AQIM is a North Africa-based Sunni terrorist group that seeks to eliminate governments and Western influence in the region and to establish sharia (Islamic law). The group's long-standing leader Abdelmalek Droukdel, was killed by French forces in 2020, prompting the group to restructure its operations and leadership. According to various intelligence services, the current Amir of AQIM is Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Annabi. AQIM employs small arms, machineguns, rockets, landmines, mortars, and IEDs, conducting guerrilla-style ambushes against military and civilian targets that include tourist areas and UN peacekeeping bases. Members have been responsible for kidnap-for-ransom operations against foreign and local targets and in some cases have executed their hostages. The group also obtains revenue by extorting drug-trafficking groups and engaging in illicit arms markets.

Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM): Jama'at Nusrat ul-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) is an extremely prominent Salafi-jihadist militant alliance that was created on 2 March 2017; as announced by its leader Iyad Ag Ghali in a speech broadcasted by the media agency Al Zalaqa. Four Mali-based extremist groups- Ansar al-Din, al-Murabitun, the Macina Liberation Front (MLF), and the Sahara Emirate subgroup of Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)- announced that they had merged, formalizing cooperation among them. Ag Ghali pledged fealty to the amir of AQIM, to the amir of Al-Qaeda and the amir of the Taliban. With an estimated force of around 6,000 fighters, JNIM has expanded its presence across Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and has even extended operations into Benin, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire. The group enforces its authority by imposing Sharia law and collecting taxes in territories under its control, establishing parallel governance structures that challenge state authority. Moreover, it funds itself through well-established pathways including ransoming captives (KFR), smuggling armaments and extorting human and drug traffickers. According to some analysts, JNIM's recent coordination with the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) to orchestrate the attack on Bamako in 2026 indicates that the group is preparing to distance themselves from traditional, stringent Sharia law and the Al-Qaeda factions that practise it.

Ansarul Islam: Ansarul Islam is a major Burkinabé jihadist organization that was established in 2016 by Ibrahim Malam Dicko and is active in Burkina Faso and Mali. Its members are predominantly Fulani fighters. There are thought to be between 300 and 350 people in the group. In order to coordinate their activities in the area, Ansarul Islam and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) remain close

allies. It is well-known for carrying out lethal ambushes against civilians and security personnel as well as for establishing local Islamist governance in areas it controls, frequently enforcing stringent regulations based on its interpretation of Sharia law. The northern and central Sahel have seen increased instability and insecurity as a result of the group's actions.

(Note: Apart from the groups listed above, Al-Qaeda has historically been affiliated with several other extremist groups in the region including Al-Mourabitoun, Katibat Macina and Ansar al-Din)

Boko Haram

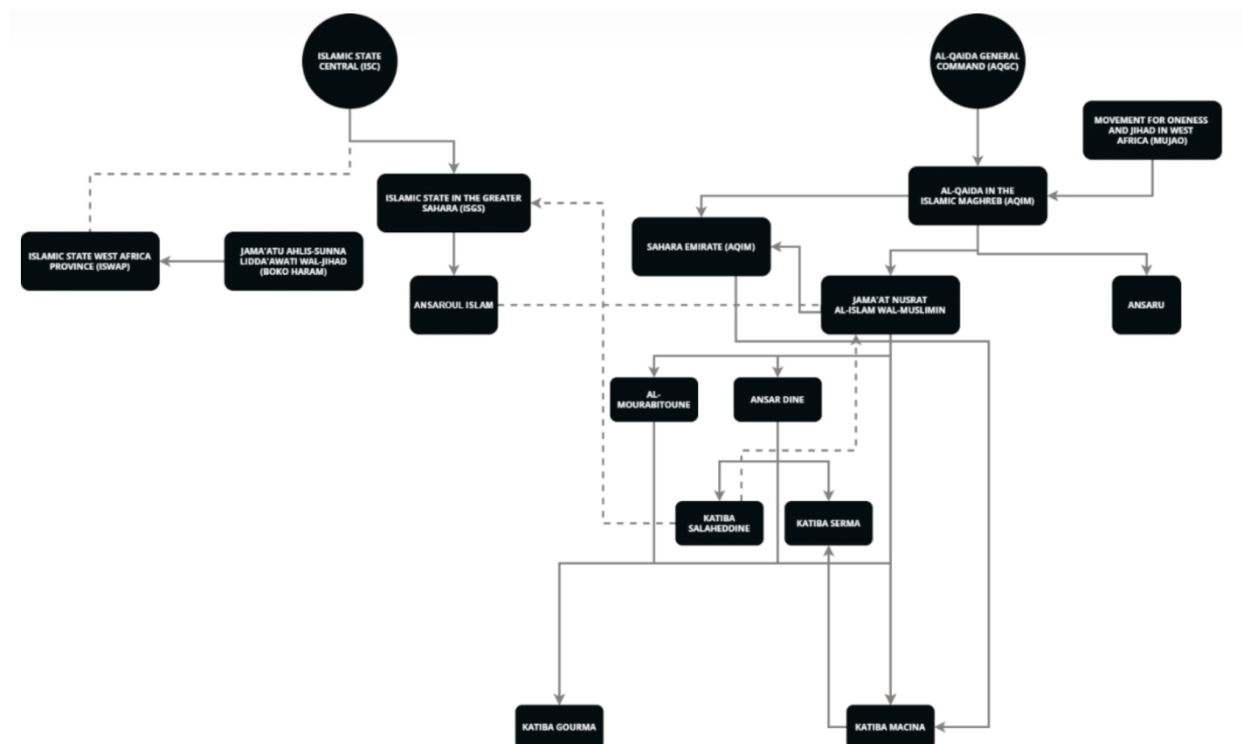
Boko Haram (Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad, JAS): Boko Haram is an extremist organization that was founded in Madiguri, Nigeria in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf, with the ultimate goal of supporting an Islamic education and creating an Islamic state in Nigeria. Following Yusuf's death in 2009, the group developed into a violent insurgency under Abubakar Shekau and expanded its activities throughout the Lake Chad Basin- terrorising Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The group works to overthrow secular governments and install a regime based upon Sharia law. The organization is infamous for its mass attacks, kidnappings, suicide bombings and assaults upon settlements, security forces, schools and places of worship. In 2015, Shekau made a pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State- but internal disputes gave rise to a major split within the group in 2016. The faction led by Abu Musab al-Barnawi formed the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), while the remaining loyalists continued as JAS or Boko Haram. Though the group has lost territory and experienced various leadership losses (including Shekau in 2021), Boko Haram continues to remain active throughout the Lake Chad region- executing raids, enacting kidnappings and IED attacks as well as assaulting military installations. Such an insurgency continues to play a major role in regional instability- tens of thousands of deaths and millions of displaced civilians throughout the basin.

The Islamic State

Islamic State - Sahel Province (ISSP): The Islamic State – Sahel Province is an Islamist extremist organization that primarily operates in the Liptako-Gourma border region between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. ISSP was originally a branch of Al-Mourabitoun that severed ties with the Al-Qaeda faction to pledge allegiance to ISIS in 2015. The ISSP was formerly known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) until 2022. SSP frequently carries out attacks including raids, ambushes, and bombings, targeting both military forces and civilian populations to assert its influence in the region. ISSP routinely utilise mortar attacks, roadside bombs, vehicle-borne explosives, suicide bombers, IEDs and perform KFR operations. The ISSP is known to enforce strict interpretation of Sharia Law, block humanitarian aid from relief organizations and systematically targets civilians based on ethnicity.

Islamic State – West Africa Province (ISWAP): The Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) is an Islamist extremist organization active predominantly within northeastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin. The group dates to 2016 following a split within Boko Haram (as mentioned earlier)- after the Islamic State recognized Abu Musab al-Barnawi as leader of its West African affiliate. Unlike Boko Haram's former leader Abubakar Shekau, ISWAP tended to direct its attacks against military and governmental targets rather than violence against Muslim civilians- though the group has led numerous attacks resulting in civilian casualties. ISWAP utilizes ambushes, raids, IEDs, kidnappings and assaults upon military installations to extend its area of influence. Each region that comes under their control

features taxation and governance systems- making the group one of the most capable Islamic State affiliates active within Africa. Such operations and recruitment efforts cross into both Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon making ISWAP a significant threat to regional security and stability throughout the Lake Chad Basin.



Violent Networks

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Independence of Niger - Independence Era Begins (August 3, 1960): Much of the Sahel became independent of France in 1960, including Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania and Upper Volta (modern Burkina Faso). While the states achieved political independence, they did so with weak institutions, artificial borders imposed by colonial rule, little infrastructure and vast, unwieldy territories to manage. The national boundaries did not reflect existing ethnic boundaries, with many groups such as the Tuareg and Fulani spread across numerous states. This was in addition to poor institutions. As a result, later years would see widespread instability, rebellions and difficulties managing the new states.

Military coup in Mali (November 19, 1968): Lieutenant Moussa Traoré seized power and removed Malian president Modibo Kéita, launching the region's first military coup. This set a precedent for the future and demonstrated the fragile nature of democracy in newly independent Sahelian states, with other coup d'états following in the coming decades.

Military coup in Niger (April 15, 1974): Hamani Diori was ousted by the army amid widespread concern over drought, poor economic conditions and government corruption. The coup solidified military involvement in governance and illustrated the vulnerability of Sahelian states to both environmental crises and political instability.

Thomas Sankara comes to power in Burkina Faso (August 4, 1983): Captain Thomas Sankara took power and implemented an extensive reform programme covering environmental issues, women's rights, economic self-sufficiency and anti-corruption efforts. Sankara rose to become an iconic figure for progressive African leadership and reduced reliance on former colonial powers while addressing poverty and inequality. Thomas Sankara is still regarded today as one of Africa's most important post-colonial revolutionaries.

Thomas Sankara Assassinated (October 15, 1987): Sankara was murdered during a coup orchestrated by Blaise Compaoré. The assassination of Sankara and his reign ushered in an era of instability and highlighted the difficulties experienced by reformist leaders in managing fragile states and political institutions in the Sahel region.

First Major Tuareg Uprising (June 1990): The Tuareg in northern Mali and Niger revolted against their national governments. The tribes cited political and economic marginalisation in the north of their countries. The uprising demonstrated deep rifts between central governments and ethnic minorities. This became a recurring issue for Sahelian states for the next three decades.

Al-Qaeda Spread into the Sahara (2002–2007): Extremist organisations linked to Al-Qaeda began spreading into the Sahara and Sahel region, initially called Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). They exploited weak security mechanisms in remote areas to establish a presence, gradually merging local conflicts with the broader global jihadist agenda and smuggling routes.

Emergence of Cross-border Jihadist Networks (2010): By 2010, extremist groups were not only developing more sophisticated attacks but were working on a trans-border basis with militants moving easily between Mali, Niger, Chad and Algeria. This demonstrated the inadequacy of national counterterrorism measures and the need for cooperation between states.

Fall of Gaddafi (October 20, 2011): The collapse of the regime of Muammar Gaddafi during the Libyan civil war triggered what many consider to be the key cause of the modern crisis in the Sahel. Thousands of experienced jihadist fighters returned to their home countries, bringing vast caches of arms and military training, significantly bolstering rebel groups.

Northern Mali Crisis (January–April 2012): Rebels and extremists joined forces to fight the Malian state and establish territorial control in northern Mali, capturing Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. For the first time, extremists were exercising control over large areas of a state and posed a direct threat to central governments and international interests in the region.

Operation Serval (January 11, 2013): France intervened militarily in Mali under Operation Serval at the request of the Malian government and pushed extremists out of the major urban areas, preventing the complete collapse of the Malian state. The military intervention succeeded in pushing back extremists but

did not eliminate them and allowed their networks to continue operating in the vast rural hinterland of Mali.

Formation of Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (March 2, 2017): Several Al-Qaeda affiliated groups in the Sahel formed a new alliance called Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), one of the region's most formidable extremist organisations. The group remains a major security threat today and combines local and national grievances with transnational extremist ideology.

Inates Attack in Niger (December 10, 2019): Militants launched a major assault on a military base in Inates in Niger, killing over 70 soldiers, one of the worst ever defeats for the Malian army. This demonstrates the growing power and ruthlessness of terrorist groups in the region.

Military coup in Mali (August 18, 2020): President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was ousted from power by the army following widespread anger over corruption, insecurity and poor economic performance and another military coup signals instability across the region.

Coups in Burkina Faso (January and September 2022): Two coups in Burkina Faso in 2022 signal continuing regional instability, with military leaders arguing it is to combat increasing terrorist violence in the nation, although the government's own inability to achieve success against the growing crisis leads many to criticise these actions.

Coup in Niger (July 26, 2023): President Mohamed Bazoum was overthrown by the army, ending a crucial security alliance between Niger and Western governments. The move intensified regional geopolitical competition and signals increasing instability.

Alliance of Sahel States formed (September 16, 2023): A regional military and political pact between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger is formed, named the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). The alliance signifies a turning away from Western-backed security models, towards a focus on sovereignty and military self-reliance.

Withdrawal of Western forces, expansion of Russian influence (2024–2025): As Western powers such as France began reducing their security presence in the region, relations between AES states and Western governments began to sour as Russia increasingly took an increased role in security initiatives across the region.

Intensification of JNIM operations (June 2025 – June 2026): JNIM leads attacks on military posts across Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger with unprecedented strength and sophistication, demonstrating that years of counter-terrorism and military action have done little to diminish their capability.

The Mali Offensive (April 25, 2026): JNIM orchestrates major, coordinated attacks against military bases across Mali, including in the capital Bamako. The successful offensive leads to the assassination of the Minister of Defence, Sadio Camara, and around 130 Malian soldiers are captured, and JNIM blockades the capital. The commander of the junta takes over the defence portfolio himself, and the crisis is regarded as the worst seen since 2012, prompting widespread international concern.

April 27, 2026: The Guterres Doctrine (Note: the events illustrated below have been introduced by the Executive board)

In the wake of increased instability in the Sahel geographical region and the rise of terrorism all around the world. Antonio Guterres gave a historic speech on the floor of the United Nations. He rallied the nations of the world to form an international coalition to unanimously pass an unprecedented resolution in the UNGA, spearheaded by the Honourable Secretary General. The resolution permitted unrecognised actors to send representation to UN forums only under extraordinary circumstances. This resolution has come to be referred to as the Guterres Doctrine. It allows unrecognised groups to have voting rights in the committees.

30th April, 2026: FREEZE DATE

AGENDA SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Important Resolutions Passed

HRC Res. 22/18 (2013) This was the beginning. The Council appointed the Independent Expert on Mali – the mechanism responsible for human rights monitoring in the Sahel region. All subsequent resolutions were only an extension of his mandate. Delegates need to be aware of this and the long time during which the mechanism has operated.

HRC Res. 52/42 (2023) The latest and perhaps most important resolution from the HRC. Renewed the mandate of the Independent Expert despite the threefold refusal of Mali's junta to allow him into the country. Message received: even state obstruction cannot affect monitoring. It will help your committee in assessing sovereignty claims.

HRC Res. 48/13 (2021) Acknowledged the right to a safe and healthy environment as a human right for the first time in history. Important due to the opportunity for delegates to frame climate displacement in the Sahel region as an issue related to human rights rather than development or environmental concerns.

The Monitoring Vacuum

MINUSMA left in December 2023. Burkina Faso and Niger expelled their UN Coordinators. The result: the Independent Expert on Mali is now the last formal UN human rights monitor in the entire Central Sahel — and he cannot even enter the country. This is the core problem the committee exists to address.

Abuses are coming from three sides and any credible resolution must acknowledge all three:

1. Jihadist groups (JNIM & ISGS) — mass killings, town blockades, sexual violence, child recruitment
2. State security forces — documented ethnic-targeted massacres, most notably Moura, Mali (500+ civilians, March 2022)
3. Russia's Africa Corps — present at massacre sites, operating alongside state forces, outside any accountability framework

The HRC High Commissioner named all three publicly in 2025. A resolution that only mentions armed groups is not credible.

Why Aid Isn't Getting Through

It is not just a funding problem. JNIM has blockaded dozens of towns. Burkina Faso banned cash-based aid in conflict zones. Aid workers have been killed and NGOs expelled. And only 32% of UNHCR's 2025 funding appeal has been met. The legal obligation to allow access already exists — the problem is that no one is enforcing it.

The Sovereignty Argument

AES junta governments will argue that international monitoring is neo-colonial interference. This will come up constantly. The counter: the ACHPR — an African body — already condemned the coups and confirmed human rights obligations survive military transitions. All three AES states also voluntarily signed the Refugee Convention, Kampala Convention, and CEDAW. Sovereignty does not override treaties they chose to ratify.

What the HRC Can Actually Do

The HRC cannot sanction, enforce, or refer cases to the ICC. Its tools are monitoring, reporting, calling upon parties, requesting investigations, and building norms. The most effective resolution your committee can produce is one that closes monitoring gaps, protects civil society, demands humanitarian access from all parties, and requests a follow-up report, not one that promises enforcement it cannot deliver.

DELEGATION STANCES

Mali

Mali's junta came to power through the 2020 coup and has since expelled MINUSMA, ejected French forces, and invited Russian security personnel onto its soil. The April 2026 JNIM offensive exposed severe state fragility, the Defence Minister was assassinated, Kidal was lost, and Bamako itself was blockaded. Mali simultaneously demands international solidarity while having systematically dismantled the multilateral frameworks designed to provide it. Its closest ideological companions in this room are Burkina Faso and Niger.

Burkina Faso

Two coups in 2022 brought Captain Traoré to power, inheriting a state where armed groups have embedded themselves into rural governance, taxing communities and settling disputes in territories the government cannot reach. Burkina Faso has expelled French forces, shut down the UN human rights office, and suffered some of the deadliest terror attacks recorded globally. The gap between the junta's sovereignty rhetoric and its actual territorial control is stark. It shares its political trajectory closely with Mali and Niger.

Niger

The 2023 coup ended Niger's role as the West's last meaningful security partner in the central Sahel, triggering the closure of US bases and the departure of French forces. Its legitimacy crisis runs deep, the

democratically elected President Bazoum remains detained, yet the junta governs a state facing acute pressure from both JNIM and ISSP along its borders. Niger's relationship with France is among the most fractured in the room, and its pivot toward Russia mirrors that of its AES partners.

Chad

Chad occupies a uniquely ambiguous position. It never joined the AES and still hosts French and American military assets, yet Mahamat Déby's own government is a military transition following his father's assassination in 2021. Chad was a founding member of the G5 Sahel and remains central to the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin, maintaining security relationships across ideological lines that no other Sahelian state has managed to sustain. Both Western powers and AES states regard Chad as a country worth cultivating.

Mauritania

Alone among Sahel states, Mauritania has materially improved its security situation, reducing extremist influence through community dialogue, prisoner releases, and economic integration of former fighters, without expelling foreign partners or joining regional military blocs. It remained in the G5 Sahel until its dissolution and has consistently advocated for political solutions over purely military ones. Mauritania's experience sits in quiet tension with the approach taken by its AES neighbours, and in quiet alignment with the kind of dialogue-first thinking Senegal also represents.

Nigeria

Africa's most populous state has waged a sustained counterterrorism campaign against Boko Haram and ISWAP across its northern territories for over fifteen years, at enormous human and financial cost. Nigeria was instrumental in establishing the Multinational Joint Task Force alongside Chad and Cameroon, and championed the G5 Sahel framework before its collapse. The Lake Chad Basin remains an active warzone on its doorstep, and JNIM's documented southward expansion toward the Sokoto region marks a direct and escalating threat to Nigerian territorial integrity.

Cameroon

Cameroon's Far North region has endured repeated Boko Haram and ISWAP incursions for over a decade, with thousands of civilians killed and hundreds of thousands displaced. It is a founding member of the Multinational Joint Task Force alongside Nigeria and Chad, a relationship that anchors its approach to regional security. Internally, Cameroon manages its own separatist conflict in its Anglophone regions, a context that shapes its deeply state-centric instincts on questions of armed group legitimacy.

Sudan

Sudan's own civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, ongoing since April 2023, has produced one of the world's largest displacement crises and effectively hollowed out central state authority. Sudan shares a border dynamic with Chad that directly affects regional stability, and the relationship between the two countries carries significant weight in this room. The Sudanese state's lived experience of armed groups capturing territory and establishing parallel governance gives it an acutely personal lens on this committee's agenda.

France

France spent over a decade as the Sahel's primary external security guarantor, launching Operation Serval in 2013, then sustaining Operation Barkhane across five countries until its expulsion. It was the principal architect of the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the driving force behind MINUSMA's mandate. Having been expelled from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger in successive years, France now watches Russian personnel operate in the same theatres where its soldiers died. Its relationships with the AES states are broken; its alignment with the US and UK remains the foundation of its position here.

United States of America

The US built a substantial counterterrorism infrastructure across the Sahel, drone bases in Niger, special forces training programmes, and intelligence-sharing frameworks, much of which has been dismantled following the AES coups. Washington has since redirected security partnerships toward coastal West African states to contain southward jihadist expansion. The US maintains the most robust sanctions architecture against Sahelian terror groups and coordinates closely with France and the UK, though it has historically been less exposed than France to the personal animosity of AES governments.

Russia

Russia's Africa Corps currently operates on the ground in Mali alongside the junta, fighting JNIM forces that now sit across the committee table. Bilateral defence agreements with Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger were signed as Western forces departed, a sequence Russia regards as vindication of its partnership model. This direct military presence gives Russia stakes in the Sahel's political outcomes that are immediate and material, not merely diplomatic. Its alignment with China on sovereignty-first language reflects a broader coordination that extends well beyond this committee.

China

China's engagement with the Sahel is anchored in economic interests, mining concessions, infrastructure investment, and the security of trade routes, rather than direct military involvement. It has expanded diplomatic and commercial ties with AES governments while maintaining a studied distance from the security debates that animate Western delegations. China abstained rather than vetoed the resolution creating MINUSMA, a pattern of quiet non-interference it has sustained across successive Sahel crises. Its structural alignment with Russia on sovereignty questions is more habitual than coordinated.

United Kingdom

The UK contributed troops to MINUSMA and has maintained development and intelligence partnerships across West Africa, including through programmes in Nigeria and Ghana. Post-Brexit, Britain has sought to redefine its multilateral security role, remaining broadly aligned with France and the US while cultivating a reputation for flexibility on dialogue mechanisms. The UK's institutional experience negotiating with armed actors in Northern Ireland gives it a distinct perspective on the Guterres Doctrine that neither France nor the US quite shares.

JNIM (Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin)

Founded in 2017 through the merger of four al-Qaeda-affiliated groups under Iyad ag Ghali, JNIM has evolved from an insurgent network into a proto-state actor, imposing taxes, settling disputes, and establishing rudimentary governance across rural Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. It conducted the April 2026 offensive that brought Bamako to its knees. Formally aligned with al-Qaeda, though recent

communications have increasingly omitted that affiliation, a deliberate repositioning toward local political legitimacy that distinguishes it from ISSP's more nakedly expansionist posture.

ISSP (Islamic State Sahel Province)

Formerly known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, ISSP operates primarily along the Niger-Nigeria-Mali tri-border area. Unlike JNIM, it pursues territorial consolidation rather than embedded governance, and maintains an implicit operational truce with JNIM rooted in their shared objective of targeting Sahelian security forces. The two groups are ideological rivals, JNIM is al-Qaeda aligned, ISSP pledges to the Islamic State, and that tension does not disappear simply because both now hold seats in the same chamber.

Boko Haram

Emerging from northeastern Nigeria in the late 2000s, Boko Haram waged a campaign of mass atrocity across the Lake Chad Basin, most notoriously the 2014 Chibok kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls. A 2016 internal split produced ISWAP, significantly fragmenting the movement and diminishing its operational reach. Its ideology rejects Western education and secular governance as fundamentally incompatible with Islamic life. The presence of Nigeria's delegation in this room, the state that has spent fifteen years trying to destroy Boko Haram, makes for the committee's most charged bilateral dynamic.

ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province)

ISWAP broke from Boko Haram in 2016, pledging allegiance to the Islamic State and adopting a markedly different community strategy, reducing attacks on civilians and positioning itself as a governing alternative to the Nigerian state in the Lake Chad Basin. This approach has expanded its recruitment base and territorial control considerably through 2025 and 2026. ISWAP and Boko Haram share a geography and a history, but their strategic divergence is real and significant, a tension that shapes how both delegations navigate this room.

Ansarul Islam

Ansarul Islam was founded in 2016 in northern Burkina Faso by Ibrahim Malam Dicko, emerging directly from the Fulani community's experience of state neglect, ethnic marginalisation, and targeted violence by security forces. Unlike the transnational networks present in this committee, its origins and grievances are hyper-local, rooted in land rights, inter-communal conflict, and the near-total absence of state services in the Sahel's most neglected border regions. It later aligned with JNIM, though its local character and more specific political grievances set it apart from its larger partner.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMA)

1. How can civilians in the Sahel be better protected from human rights violations committed by terrorist groups?
2. What measures can governments implement to combat terrorism while ensuring full respect for international human rights standards?
3. How can humanitarian organisations and aid agencies be granted safe and effective access to populations affected by terrorism?

4. What policies should be adopted to protect vulnerable groups, including women, children, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and minority communities?
5. What mechanisms can be established to ensure accountability for human rights violations committed by terrorist groups and other actors involved in the conflict?
6. How can education, community engagement, and counter-radicalisation initiatives reduce recruitment into terrorist organisations and prevent violent extremism?
7. What role should the United Nations, regional organisations, neighbouring states, and civil society play in strengthening human rights protection across the Sahel?
8. How can victims of terrorism be supported through access to justice, rehabilitation, psychological assistance, and reintegration programmes?
9. What strategies can address the underlying drivers of terrorism and instability, including poverty, weak governance, lack of economic opportunity, and social exclusion?
10. How can long-term peacebuilding, sustainable development, and institutional capacity-building contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in the Sahel region?

GUIDE TO FURTHER RESEARCH

Demographics and Statistics Relating to the Sahel Crisis

1. <https://www.unhcr.org/emergencies/sahel-emergency>
2. <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends>

Political, Economics and Security Reports

1. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/unowas-west-africa-and-the-sahel/>
2. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/cmt/africa/sahel/burkina-faso-mali-niger/defining-new-approach-sahels-military-led-states>
3. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/burkina-faso-mali-niger/splinter-sahel-can-divorce-ecowas-be-averted>

Human Rights Violations and Accountability

1. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-mali>
2. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2026/04/02/none-can-run-away/war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity-in-burkina-faso-by-all>
3. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/16/west-africa-civilians-unprotected-conflicts>
4. <https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/burkina-faso/>
5. <https://acleddata.com/report/conflict-watchlist-2024-sahel-deadly-new-era-decades-long-conflict>

Humanitarian Aid, Delivery, and Challenges

1. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/burkina-faso/2024-sahel-humanitarian-needs-and-requirements-overview>
2. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/unhcr-calls-urgent-international-support-advance-solutions-sahel-s-forcibly>
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