

BACKGROUND GUIDE
VANGUARD MUN' 24
UN African Terrorism Council

Agenda:

Discussing the impacts of and solutions to terrorism, with
a special emphasis on the Sahel region

LETTER FROM THE EB

Greetings Delegates,

As your executive board for the UN ATC, it is our utmost pleasure and in our best interests to overlook the simulation and experience of the committee through the agenda, which aims to simulate situations related to terrorism and threats to harmony in the Sahel region.

The background guide ahead and its contents will provide the **BASIS** for your research and will serve as a starting point in your individual research on the topic and its heavy implications and nuances.

Before starting your research, we would implore you to place your country's interests first, and act toward the furtherance of your country's interests; as is done by diplomats in real life; instead of sacrificing one's national interests for world peace.

Furthermore, the background guide will put down the facts that will form the need to discuss the issue at hand and the work to be done to solve said issue, being the situation in Sahel. The basic elements presented in this document will guide your research and mustn't be your research entirely. The background guide may serve as a document to guide and define the extent of your research, every minute detail down to the last word is important and significant in this international tragedy.

The Executive Board expects an enthusiastic and fierce debate within the bounds of responsibility, in committee and expects each and every delegate to take part and do their due diligence and research the topic as extensively as possible and develop an understanding of it.

A deeper dive into your nations' foreign policies regarding the issues as well as your nation's public statements on the issue is what will constitute deeper research, further understanding of the issue as well as the past offenses will also make up and constitute your knowledge of the situation, as making an example of the past, would serve as the best measure to solve the presents endeavors.

However, the agenda is such that there's an endless pit for scope of discussion therefore do not limit yourself in committee. We expect a degree of vast participation from each and every delegate regardless of stature of portfolio, experience and grade, for everyone has an opinion on the issue, otherwise it would never be an issue in the first place, an active participation in the proceedings of this committee in order to have a fruitful discussion on a pertinent national problem.

If any further doubts occur regarding the agenda or the freeze date or even the background guide, feel free to contact any of the chairpersons mentioned below.

Signing off,

Nitin Narayanan

Chairperson

Nishanth Sandeep

Chairperson

Venkateshwar L

Chairperson

CRISIS DOCUMENTATION

Directives: In a crisis committee , directives are like "special orders" or "instructions" that delegates give to different organizations within their control to take specific actions during a crisis.

Eg: The delegate of the France orders their military to conduct a raid on a compound in Dhahran

Press Releases: They are documents used by the delegate to issue a formal message to the international community on behalf of their government.

Eg: The delegate of the UK declares their stance on activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs): In a crisis committee of a model UN, MoUs are like "special agreements" or "promises" that delegates make with other countries or organizations to work together during the crisis.

MOU's are NOT legally binding; however treaties or accords are.

MOUs are considered to be in the public domain, so a delegate can request to see the exact terms of the MOU through a written point of parliamentary enquiry.

Communiqués: Communiqués are official letters/messages used by delegates to communicate with an entity/individual/group that is not present in committee

DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

Terrorism is defined as the unlawful use of violence and force, especially against civilians, to achieve a political or religious goal.

In Africa, terrorism has often manifested itself as a collaboration between a group of people demanding better representation or standing in community, and Islamic terror organizations including but not limited to Al Qaeda.

Other than such nexuses, many governments of less than democratic ascent often collaborated with opportunistic ideological and paramilitary groups to further their own interests, however this has only resulted in more violence and instability.

For the express purpose of this simulation, and considering that it is a committee directly under the UN, terrorists and terrorist organizations will be referred to as Non State Actors

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF FUNDING IN TERRORISM

Now, nothing as massive as the emergence of a terrorist organization or war can happen without the existence of funding.

This is especially true with regards to the situation in the Sahel region, with many shady and nefarious financiers bringing in funding from equally shady and nefarious sources, such as other terrorist organizations like the ISIS, Taliban and Al Qaeda, and also from the proceeds of criminal activities such as the sale of narcotics, human trafficking, piracy, extortion, kidnapping, etc.

The Executive Board urges the delegates to look at solutions to terror not only from the military and geopolitical lens, but also from that of finance and funding, for without funding, terror ceases to exist.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SAHEL REGION

The Sahel, a vast swathe of semi-arid land south of the Sahara Desert, has a long history shaped by trade, migration, and empires. However, the postcolonial era has witnessed a descent into violence and instability, fueled by a complex web of factors that have severely compromised regional security. This essay delves into the key military and security challenges that have plagued the Sahel since independence, highlighting the rise of armed groups, external interference, regional conflicts, and the ongoing struggle to establish lasting peace and stability.



THE HISTORY OF THE SAHEL REGION

THE BIRTH OF NATION STATES IN THE SAHEL REGION

- The end of colonial rule birthed many new and independent states in the Sahel region; however, they were born into an environment of violence and instability.
- Newly formed governments grappled with the challenges of forging national identities from diverse ethnic and tribal populations, and the arbitrary borders drawn by European powers often exacerbated pre-existing tensions, creating friction between different groups vying for political power and independence of their own.
- This political instability led to a wave of military coups, establishing a pattern of authoritarian rule that undermined democratic development and weakened state institutions.

THE COLD WAR

The ideological rivalry of the Cold War spilled over into Africa, with the United States and the Soviet Union vying for influence in the newly independent states. They provided military aid and fueled regional conflicts to advance their agendas. This external interference exacerbated tensions within the Sahel, providing opportunities for the formation of rebel groups and increasing the flow of weapons into the region. The Chadian Civil War (1965-1990) stands as a stark example of a regional conflict heavily influenced by Cold War interests. These proxy battles further destabilized the political landscape, undermining fragile state authority and creating a security vacuum that would be exploited by future armed groups.

Economic hardship, political grievances, and corruption within newly formed governments led to a series of military mutinies and uprisings throughout the Sahel in the 70s, 80s, and 90s. These internal security challenges further eroded state authority, highlighting the vulnerability of these fragile governments. This cycle of unrest not only threatened the safety of civilians but also created opportunities for armed groups to exploit power vacuums and expand their influence, particularly in marginalized regions with limited government presence.

THE TUAREG REBELLIONS

Tensions between the central governments and the Tuareg ethnic minority, a nomadic people inhabiting parts of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, erupted into armed rebellions in the 1990s. These conflicts highlighted the challenges of integrating marginalized ethnic groups and maintaining national cohesion. The Tuareg grievances stemmed from feelings of political and economic exclusion, with a lack of representation in government and limited access to resources. While peace agreements were reached in the late 1990s, these tensions would resurface in the future, contributing to the broader security crisis in the Sahel.

TERRORISM IN THE 21st CENTURY

The turn of the millennium ushered in a new era of insecurity in the Sahel. A confluence of factors - poverty, lack of opportunity, weak governance, and the spread of radical interpretations of Islam - created a fertile ground for the rise of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs). These groups exploited these vulnerabilities to establish themselves, recruit fighters, and launch attacks that continue to plague the region today.

These VEO's are one of the chief proponents of violence and instability in the Sahel region in recent times, and their effects on socioeconomic and political climate of the region is undisputedly devastating.

As VEOs like AQIM gained influence, they adopted a more sophisticated approach to operations. Hostage-taking for ransom became a lucrative source of income, and suicide bombings became a weapon of terror. VEOs also began to exploit inter-communal tensions, manipulating ethnic and religious grievances to further their agenda.

AQIM and Boko Haram's rise coincided with the erosion of state authority in several Sahelian countries. The 2011 Libyan revolution and the subsequent collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's regime led to the proliferation of weapons across the region, further empowering these VEOs. Additionally, weak governance and a lack of economic opportunities in several Sahelian states created a breeding ground for grievances that VEOs readily exploited

Over the course of the 2000s, the nature of the VEO threat in the Sahel evolved. Initially, the focus was on regional al-Qaeda affiliates like AQIM. However, with the rise of ISIS in the Middle East, VEOs in the Sahel began to shift allegiances, leading to further fragmentation and complexity within the extremist landscape.

TIMELINE

- **1960:** Independence for Senegal, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta at the time), Chad, Mauritania.
- **1963:** Military coup in Togo led by Gnassingbé Eyadéma.
- **1968:** Military coup in Mali led by Moussa Traoré.
- **The Cold War:** Proxy Battles and Destabilizing Arms Flows (1960s-1980s).
- **1974:** Military mutiny in Niger.
- **1983:** Military coup in Upper Volta, renaming the country Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara.
- **1987:** Military coup in Chad led by Hissène Habré.
- **1990-1995:** First Tuareg Rebellion in Mali.

AL-QAEDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAHGREB (AQIM)

- **2003:** The Group for Salafist Preaching and Combat (GSPC), an Algerian extremist group, pledges allegiance to al-Qaeda, forming the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC).
- **2007:** GSPC officially changes its name to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This marks a significant turning point, as AQIM leverages al-Qaeda's global network and notoriety to attract funding and fighters.
- **December 2007:** AQIM launches a series of coordinated attacks across Mauritania, targeting a military barracks and a tourist train, killing 18 people. This attack signals AQIM's expanding reach and growing ambition within the Sahel.
- **2008:** AQIM kidnaps several Western tourists in the region, including a high-profile case involving a Swiss couple who are held for ransom for several months. This tactic becomes a key source of revenue for the group.
- **2009:** AQIM claims responsibility for the suicide bombing of a military barracks in Kati, Mali, killing at least 38 soldiers. This attack highlights the group's growing lethality and ability to strike deep within Sahelian states.

BOKO HARAM:

- **2002:** Boko Haram, meaning "Western education is forbidden" in Hausa, was founded in Nigeria by Mohammed Yusuf. Initially focused on domestic issues in Nigeria, the group's ideology and reach would eventually spill over into neighboring Sahelian countries.
- **2009:** Boko Haram launches a violent uprising in northern Nigeria, leading to clashes with security forces and the deaths of hundreds. This marks a significant escalation in the group's activities and signals its intention to pursue an armed struggle.
- **2010:** Boko Haram is designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US Department of State. This designation aims to disrupt the group's financial networks and global support.
- **August 2011:** Boko Haram carries out a devastating attack on a Christian church in Maiduguri, Nigeria, killing at least 68 people. This attack exemplifies the group's targeting of civilians and its disregard for religious tolerance.
- **2012:** AQIM and its allies, including the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), capitalize on the Malian government's weakness to seize control of large swathes of northern Mali. This event marks a significant territorial expansion for VEOs in the Sahel and raises fears of a "failed state" in Mali.
- **2014:** Boko Haram declares allegiance to the Islamic State, rebranding itself as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). This alliance provides ISWAP with access to ISIS's global network, propaganda expertise, and potentially, funding and fighters.

TIMELINE OF CURRENT CRISIS

4th June 2024: Narendra Modi is elected the prime minister of India for the third consecutive time, as BJP fulfills its promise of “Ab ki baar, 400 par” by securing 420 seats in the Lok Sabha. The INC, in all its might and pedigree, could only secure 69 seats.

18th June 2024: China and France hold a bilateral conference in Shanghai with the official reason being “to discuss future Sino-French collaboration in the domain of nuclear power generation”.

However, some sources close to the French President are to believe that behind closed doors, there were discussions about France using China as a conduit for funding money to the political opponents of Ibrahim Traoré, current leader of Burkina Faso.

15th July 2024: The JNIM (a Jihadist terrorist group based out of Mali and Burkina Faso formed on the merging of 4 extremists groups including the AQIM) announces its partnership with Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, Former President of Burkina Faso who was ousted by the Ibrahim Traoré, the current president. In an Instagram video the JNIM calls Traoré a “violent, expansionist and colonialist”.

20th August 2024: Renowned international think tank, CFR publishes a report of how Sino-French funding has covertly reached the JNIM and Paul-Henri Sadaogo Damiba.

25th August 2024: With the ‘alleged’ new funding, the JNIM tastes its first military success in its plan to overthrow Traoré as they capture the western province of Cascades, in just 48 hours. Their leader, Commander Iyad Ag Ghali delivers a speech at Banfora.

EXCERPTS FROM IYAG AG GHALI'S SPEECH

IT IS NOW TIME TO RULE OVER ALL THAT IS PURE AND ALL THAT IS HOLY FOR FAR TOO LONG ALLAH'S OWN STATE, THE BURKINA HAS SEEN CLOWNS WITH ELABORATE RED NOSES CALLING THEMSELVES REPUBLICS RULE OVER US WITH IRON FISTS, AND IT IS NOW TIME WE FIGHT FOR THE FREEDOM WE SO DESERVE AND WE SO YEARN FOR

IN BANFORA I DREAM, IN BURKINA I SHALL HAVE ITS REALITIES.

5th September 2024: A report released by Brookings detailing the presence and influence of the Wagner group in Nigeria reads as follows:

EXCERPT FROM BROOKINGS REPORT ON WAGNER GROUP IN NIGERIA

The long overdue collapse of the Wagner Group in Africa, post the death of their commander Yevgeny Prigozhin, has finally occurred.

The dissolution of the Wagner Group in Nigeria has led to some of the Wagner fighters going back to Russia and Crimea. However, most of the fighters have assimilated into the Boko Haram, under the promise of good pay. They have been assigned command of regiments of fighters and training camps, and leadership roles in many of the criminal enterprises that fund Boko Haram.

27th September 2024: The United Nations Security Council holds an emergency session to discuss the political instability in Burkina Faso and the possibility of it escalating to a civil war.

India floats draft resolution 2729, sponsored by Russia and the United Kingdom. This draft resolution gets the positive vote of every single member nation of the UNSC, however it is vetoed by France and China.

Refer to the QR code for Draft Resolution 2729:



10th October 2024: The JNIM lead by their Commander Iyad Ag Ghali now stand at the gates of the capital city of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, facing the opposition of an armored brigade of 4200 soldiers and numerous tanks.

However, following the tactics of erstwhile president of Chad, Hissène Habré – “Sticks and Stones will break your bones”, we can see them using Toyota and Nissan pickup trucks modified with anti-aircraft guns and land artillery.

The agility and inexpensive nature of these armed trucks helps them outnumber and outflank the entire armored brigade, as 80% of the Burkinabe armed brigade is destroyed and 20% of them surrender and join Iyad Ag Ghali’s forces; while the JNIM loses only 30 trucks.

11th October 2024: At the crack of dawn, the JNIM lays siege to the parliament office of Burkina Faso. The prime minister of Burkina Faso, Apollinaire J. Kyélem de Tambèla surrenders to the JNIM, and opens the doors of the Parliament building to enable them to enter.

By the evening, commander Iyad Ag Ghali had taken the parliament and by extension, the country of Burkina Faso, and the whereabouts of the deposed President Ibrahim Traoré are unknown.

14th October 2024: Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba was absent at a press conference that he was supposed to attend; and his representatives were not to be found either. His whereabouts are unknown and he is presumed dead by many.

Supreme Commander Iyad Ag Ghali blames the west for “murdering a brother, an ally and a true friend”.

16th November 2024: Leaks from MI6 indicate that the Boko Haram have caught wind that the French might be indirectly funding the JNIM, an adjacent power to the Boko Haram who harbor expansionist ambitions.

The leaked documents indicate that top leadership at the Boko Haram are “not happy” with the French funding an adjacent power which will lead to them having to uncomfortably cohabit the Sahel region with the JNIM.

4th December 2024: French President Emmanuel Macron is found dead in his bedroom. Mr. Macron was sick for the past few days and did not take any meetings, with the exception of a private event at the Nigerian Embassy, hosted by businessman Dele Momodu, and attended by a few individuals including eminent pro-African journalist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

6th December 2024: By what can only be described as a mystery, left leaning politician of African origin, Pap Ndiaye becomes the acting president.

The French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, in ideological disagreement with Pap Ndiaye (whom he refers to as an “anti-national backstabber”), resigns along with a few members of the far-right wing. He promises to stand against Pap Ndiaye in the upcoming presidential elections.

The new *rien de tout ça n'a aucun sens* or *the parti de droite inutile [PDI]* right wing coalition seems to be gaining immense traction among the farmers and the conservatives in France.

21st December 2024: After somewhat stabilizing the situation in Burkina Faso, the leader of the JNIM, Iyad Ag Ghali permanently disbands the Burkinabe constitution and names himself the “**Supreme Leader of the Sinloosheid**” and the savior of Africa from Western influence and Democracy.

25th December 2024: Christmas may not seem very cheerful for Americans this year, as media outlets predict Donal Trump to win the US Presidential elections. This eventuality concerns the international community with thoughts of the election being rigged resurfacing once again.

2nd January 2025: The New Year isn't any better as Pap Ndiaye declares that he is postponing the elections which were set to be held on the 10th of February 2025, indefinitely, stating the reason as the “time of the whims of fate being improperly unaligned, being a disastrous occasion for the French, the first in 200 years since Napoleon's Defeat at Waterloo”

3rd January 2025: This indefinite delay in the presidential elections deeply angers the right wing and the citizens, who call this blatantly unconstitutional.

Gabriel Attal calls Pap Ndiaye an “African Dictator” on live television, a jab that is much agreed upon by his conservative supporters.

6th January 2025: Donald J. Trump has won the presidential elections by a landslide and now stands to begin his second term as President of the United States of America.

12th January 2025: The conservatives under *parti de droite inutile [PDI]* lead by Gabriel Attal stage massive protests in the cities and the countryside, with many farmers taking to pitchforks to display their disagreement with the unconstitutional actions of Pap Ndiaye. Also to be noted are the sporadic acts of violence against individuals of African origin.

18th January 2025:

In a bombshell interview with Iyad Ag Ghali, revealing exclusive details about his love life, new life as a dictator and overall mood in the country, the final few minutes of this interview have sent shockwaves all around the continent.

An Excerpt:

18th January 2025 :

GOOD DAYS HAVE FALLEN UPON THE LAND OF THE HOLY BURKINA FASO THE PROSPEROUS TIMES HAVE ARRIVED AND AS THE LEADER OF THIS NEWFOUND DIVINITY I ENSHRINE THESE VALUES UPON MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE BURKINA FASO WHO WILL NOW IN DUE TIME SEE THE FRUITS OF THE LABOR, SACRIFICE AND MARTYRDOM, OF THESE MEN FIGHTING IN OUR BORDERS TO TAKE US FURTHER BEYOND TO THE TRUE LAND OF ALLAH AND THE HILLS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

20th January 2025: Donald Trump is officially inaugurated as the President of the United States of America.

23rd January 2025: The UK hosts a Trilateral Conference between Nigeria, the UK and the USA to discuss the current geopolitical volatility in the Sahel Region, with special emphasis on the JNIM in Burkina Faso.

There are discussions about the establishment of a UN Council to focus on terrorism in Africa.

In a press conference, Pap Ndiaye reaffirmed the need for the West to let Africa be and not fall to colonialism once again. Donald Trump stated that he isn't a tireless warmonger like "Hillary or sleepy Joe"



26th January 2025: Jared Kushner, son in law of the President of the United States, sets up a mineral based company in Delaware, owned by a holding company based in Jersey,. 35 % of this company is bought out by the Trump Media group soon after.

The white paper of the company reads as follows:

ABOUT US:

The Alliance is a nonprofit organization representing nearly all their multiplatform businesses in the United States and internationally.

The main aim of the Alliance, as per our founder Mr. Jared Kushner's vision is to strive forward and pave the way for development of settlements in the most impoverished states of the world.

Our recent undertakings are in:

1. Nigeria
2. DRC
3. Mali

Where we are providing them with resources to build and be secure as well as installing better internet access in these countries, has enshrined our vision to struggle today, and shine for tomorrow.

28th January 2025: Protests in France intensify as tensions reach a boiling point, violence against individuals of African origin increase, with the total death toll from the protests coming up to 95 individuals.

Pap Ndiaye refuses to announce a fixed election date and seems stubborn in his intent to delay elections.

France is now alarmingly close to the precipice of civil war

30th January 2025

The UN-ATC is formed and an emergency session is held at an undisclosed location to discuss and act upon the recent developments pertaining to Africa