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Charting the Path to Stability: Lessons and Prospects for Peace in Sahel and Horn of Africa



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Abstract: *The Sahel and Horn of Africa face several continuing conflicts and difficulties that put the peace and security of the region in jeopardy. Finding lasting peace and security has proven a difficult task in the difficult and unstable Sahel and Horn of Africa regions. This paper undertakes a thorough analysis of the lessons learned from previous endeavours while imagining the path to stability. This investigation will highlight the difficulties while also illuminating viable routes that could result in permanent peace. The aims to produce practical suggestions for the United States, NATO allies, and the African Union by conducting an analysis of the available data, spanning a variety of sources including scholarly works, institutional reports, and expert interviews available online. Essentially, this acts as a knowledge summary and compass for moving forward and negotiating the challenging terrain in the direction of a more stable and secure Sahel and Horn of Africa.*

Key Words: Horns of Africa, Instability, NATO Allies, Endeavours, Illuminations

Introduction

Achieving lasting peace is still extremely difficult in the unstable Sahel and Horn of Africa. This journal article aims to identify viable paths for peace building and reconciliation while analyzing the complex dynamics that underlie conflict and instability. In the context of geopolitical rivalries, ethnic variety, and historical legacies, the Sahel and Horn of Africa represent intricate venues where a multitude of parties compete for influence and power. A number of issues beset the areas, from the threat of terrorism to the scourge of inter communal violence, which impede progress and prolong instability. By means of an extensive examination of past examples, present patterns, and forthcoming prospects, this piece aims to

provide light on possible routes towards stability (Zeuthen, 2022). Through a combination of academic studies, policy viewpoints, and grassroots observations, it seeks to offer a comprehensive comprehension of the obstacles confronting the area and the approaches that could potentially promote harmony. This essay provides insightful analysis and suggestions to help direct policy development and intervention efforts as the international community struggles with the necessity of tackling insecurity in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. In order to navigate the intricacies of conflict, reconciliation, and development, it emphasizes how crucial it is to take coordinated action and maintain a persistent commitment in order to steer these crucial

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regions toward lasting peace. (Adejumo et al., 2022).

Addressing the Root Causes of Sahel's Instability

Advancing Development and Combating Terrorism

Although the Sahel has many difficulties, including food shortages, terrorist-related security concerns, and the negative effects of climate change, it has the potential to improve with continued attention to equitable growth. Members of the Council stressed the significance of having a holistic approach when talking about the United Nations' plans for the Sahel area of Africa, which were adopted in 2013 and revised this year. This implies that while addressing this vast region of Africa, which encompasses nations like Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, it is important to consider all factors simultaneously, including politics, security, and development (Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, 2021; Pineschi, 2022; Romaka, 2017; UNISS, 2022).

Making peace in the Sahel region, according to Ibrahim Thiaw, a special consultant for the UN, is about more than simply security. Large-scale initiatives that will advance the community, improve living, and inspire young people are necessary to halt difficulties. To discover solutions, several parties from inside and beyond the region must collaborate. We should adopt a new perspective on the Sahel and emphasize its advantages like solar and wind energy. To improve the situation, there also have to be strong leaders and creative ways for the UN to function there (Ikogwi, 2019; Ukeje *et al.*, 2019; UNSC, 2018). Ibrahim Thiaw emphasizes how difficult it is to bring about peace in the Sahel region and how inadequate security is on its own. He asserts that to address issues, large-scale initiatives, cross-regional cooperation, and a change in viewpoint toward utilizing the Sahel's potential for renewable energy are necessary. He also stresses that the UN must exercise strong leadership and use creative strategies if real progress is to be made in the region. (Waldhauser, 2018).

During an online conference organized from Washington, D.C., Hafez Ghanem, Vice-President of the World Bank for Africa, underlined the significance of addressing the underlying economic and social issues fuelling wars. The G5 Sahel nations' growth and resilience have received more than \$9 billion in funding from the World Bank over the last five years. This significant financial investment tries to address the underlying causes of instability and conflict, such as the lack of basic services, high unemployment rates, and limited opportunities (Vito, 2018). It also provides policy direction and technical help. According to Hafez Ghanem, the World Bank is altering how it assists the Sahel area. They want to improve things quickly and rely on the police and army's protection to do it. More employees will work in those nations' offices, and satellite technology will be used to keep an eye on projects. For instance, in Mali, they are improving roads, repairing a fishing port, providing solar electricity, giving people money, and assisting them in finding profitable ventures. This new method of conducting business is viable and will be used in other Sahel nations as well. The World Bank is firmly committed to assisting these nations in maintaining peace and progress (Bank, 2023; UNSC, 2018). Hafez Ghanem, Vice-President of the World Bank for Africa, makes the primary argument that resolving the basic social and economic issues in the G5 Sahel countries is essential for maintaining peace and security. Over the past five years, the World Bank has made investments over \$9 billion in the region to address problems including poor access to basic services, high unemployment, and a lack of opportunity (DeYoung, 2020). They employ technology and a greater on-the-ground presence to monitor and support projects that improve infrastructure, energy access, and economic opportunities in the Sahel region, with the ultimate goal of promoting peace and progress. They are also adopting a new strategy centred on rapid enhancements with the safeguarding of the police and army (Laub, 2015).

Alliance Sahel's major objective, according to Remy Rioux, is to support the Sahel region's growth and the consolidation of its nations. They contend that progress in development is essential

if one is to successfully combat violent extremism. They adhere to the Secretary-General's top goals, which include averting conflicts and strengthening societies, particularly in weaker areas. In addition to concentrating on six crucial areas including education, farming, energy, creating things, how governments function, and keeping places safe, they also incorporate young people, women, and underrepresented groups in their efforts. They have a sizable fund portfolio—roughly €9 billion—to bolster these initiatives in the Sahel region (Editeur, 2022). Programs developed by alliance members are in line with the regional Sahel countries' national agendas. They have combined their knowledge to support regional stakeholders and take part in outreach initiatives (Lederer, 2021). They recently started quick-impact programs meant to stabilize border regions and deal with certain sectoral issues. With a contribution of €266 million, the European Union has assumed a prominent position in emergency response initiatives. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Alliance have teamed up to achieve quick results. They are urging cooperation from the international community to maintain security and promote development in the Sahel area (Andolfatto, 2021).

Concerned about the issues with scarce resources in the Sahel region that are causing turmoil, American Rodney M. Hunter voiced his concern. The United States contributed \$460 million to several initiatives in the region in 2017. He supported programs that empower youth and harness the strength of the commercial sector, with an emphasis on priorities that are driven by African needs and have an impact globally (Camara, 2021). In attempts to combat extremism, he emphasized the significance of giving women and young people more possibilities. In terms of security, he expressed satisfaction that the G5 Sahel Joint Force was in existence and pledged U.S. help to fill any gaps in its capabilities. He emphasized that effective administration, respect for human rights, and the creation of economic opportunities are essential for success in the Sahel (Matsumoto, [2019](#); UN News, 2018).

France's Anne Gueguen emphasized the importance of coordinating political, security, and development initiatives to advance stability in Mali. She placed a lot of stress on the necessity of bolstering the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process as well as the complete execution of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali. Gueguen also demanded a vigorous counterterrorism effort and improved coordination between the Sahel region's different security organizations, including national forces, MINUSMA, the G5 Sahel Joint Force, Operation Barkhane, and European missions. She also emphasized the value of increasing multilateral assistance for the G5 Sahel and expressed gratitude for Alliance Sahel's efforts to enhance communication with Sahel nations. Gueguen emphasized that for development policies to be successful, they shouldn't only be established in the capitals of industrialized countries (Moss, 2018; UNSC, 2018). The passage emphasizes Anne Gueguen's stress from France on the need for collaboration in promoting stability in Mali. Along with the complete execution of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, this involves steps like disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. She also emphasizes the necessity of stronger cooperation between the many security groups operating in the Sahel region as well as effective counterterrorism activities. Gueguen also stresses the need for multilateral assistance and including Sahel states in formulating development plans, calling for a more inclusive strategy that doesn't only emanate from the capitals of developed countries (Krampe et al., 2020).

China's Wu Haitao admitted that there has been recent economic progress in the Sahel. However, he emphasized the persistent issues of crime and destitution that endanger local peace and prosperity. To guarantee regional stability and foster an atmosphere favourable to long-term growth, he underlined the significance of seeking political solutions. To hasten the implementation of the Mali peace and reconciliation deal, Wu urged the international community to continue supporting Mali (Bukar, 2021). This assistance should also cover initiatives to speed up development, deal with the underlying causes of conflict, and strengthen Member States' security

capacities to fend off regional threats. He also emphasized the significance of prioritizing regional and sub-regional institutions, honouring the ownership of African nations over African concerns, and enhancing cooperation when creating country-specific policies (Debrah, 2021; UNSC, 2023). Wu Haitao of China praises recent economic development in the Sahel region in the statement provided, but he also emphasizes ongoing issues with poverty and criminality that put the region's security at risk. The statement demonstrates a diplomatic focus on the complex problems in the Sahel, with a focus on global collaboration and political solutions (Kozera & Popławski, 2019).

British citizen Stephen Hickey expressed his satisfaction with the development of plans for the Sahel region and his belief that it is crucial to realize its full potential. He appreciates the increased focus on issues like education, job creation, and assisting families with future planning. This will assist young people in coping with significant issues like climate change. Additionally, he believes it is critical to collaborate closely with the Sahel region's nations, particularly regarding youth and women. He emphasized the need to invest adequate money and enlist specialists in these initiatives. He wants various parties, including those involved in development, security, and emergency assistance, to communicate and operate effectively together. The UK supports the G5 Joint Force and contributes to long-term development, security, and emergency assistance efforts in the Sahel (Foreign, 2023; UNSC, 2018).

The prospects for peace and security in the Sahel region are challenging due to a multitude of interconnected issues. The region faces extreme poverty, climate change, food crises, rapid population growth, fragile governance, and threats from terrorist-linked groups. These challenges are exacerbated by conflicts over resources like land and water, as well as a rise in criminal activities. While efforts like the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the G5 Sahel Joint Force are in place, they emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach that combines security efforts with development initiatives. To achieve lasting

peace, it is essential to address the root causes of instability, improve governance, and promote economic opportunities, particularly for youth and women, in the region (Kah, 2017).

Strengthening Regional Partnerships

The Role of the African Union

Due to persistent security issues, the African continent, which is comprised of several nations each with its distinct cultures and ecosystems, has struggled to advance and remain stable. These problems are especially acute in regions like the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, where terrorist organizations that operate across international boundaries, like Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, have wreaked havoc and turmoil for local populations and governments (Yamamoto, 2013). These areas have seen years of turmoil, unrest, and uncertainty, with inhabitants having to deal with the awful facts of displacement, poverty, and violence. Due to its significant ramifications for regional and global security, the crisis has not only caused worry inside Africa but has also drawn attention from throughout the world (Oluwole & Olagunju-Yusuf, 2022). The idea of building partnerships has emerged in the wake of continuous security concerns as a fundamental and crucial technique for resolving the complex issues in question. It has become clearer that no one country or institution can solve the complex, cross-border concerns that affect these areas on its own. Modern challenges are globally interrelated and need interdisciplinary cooperation. No one country or group can handle these problems on its own. These dangers need a coordinated and collaborative effort due to their interconnectedness and ability to cross international borders (Abugbilla, 2017; Ehiane, 2018). Partnerships are more crucial than ever in today's global environment for tackling challenging security issues. These partnerships allow countries and organizations to collaborate on resources, exchange knowledge, and promote group accountability while addressing complex security concerns. Partnerships cover a wide range of diplomatic projects, information sharing, development initiatives, and conflict resolution techniques in addition to solely

military collaboration. Their primary goal is to establish long-term stability and increase the community's ability to respond to challenges. To take joint action against changing security risks, partnerships have taken centre stage. They provide a way for governments and organizations to collaborate successfully with the end objective of improving their capacity to handle both pressing security situations and more significant stability problems (Ero, 2017; Solomon, 2015).

The African Union's (AU) function in this intricate environment is multifarious. It emphasizes solidarity among African countries and embraces the ideas of pan-Africanism. The group has put in place important security-related structures, most notably the Peace and Security Council. This council, which was established in 2002, has been essential in resolving conflicts and crises throughout the continent. The AU's deployment of peacekeeping operations to difficult regions demonstrates its commitment to upholding peace and security. These missions, like the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), have frequently been crucial tools in fostering political processes and stability-friendly situations (Bassey, 2023; Engel & Porto, 2010; Peter, 2015). The AU's function is distinguished by both accomplishments and flaws. On the one hand, its actions have helped resolve conflicts in several instances, demonstrating its capacity to advance stability. It has, however, also come under fire for the promptness and potency of its reactions to situations that change quickly. The AU has repeatedly run against resource-related roadblocks that have complicated its efforts to maintain peace. The organization's capacity to efficiently carry out its goals has occasionally been hampered by insufficient finances and logistical challenges. Its reliance on outside funding for these missions also raises questions about its independence and decision-making capabilities (Beza, 2015; Rwengabo, 2016). The AU has come under fire for not having a cohesive military force and for enacting decisions in a uniform manner, which raises questions about its efficacy at the local level. The AU's responsibility in promoting peace and security has significant ramifications, though. Its

accomplishments promote stability and growth, while its flaws emphasize the necessity for ongoing progress (Kabore, 2023). These restrictions have a considerable effect on neighbouring African nations in addition to the Addis Ababa headquarters of the AU. Long-lasting hostilities and unrest in nearby nations burden these nations with displaced people, fatalities, and economic woes (Ero, 2021; Okumu *et al.*, 2020).

The AU is presently at a pivotal turning point with the potential to follow the EU's path of revolutionary success. While the AU's transformation into a second European Union is a challenging endeavour, parallels can be drawn. However, the AU needs to bring its member nations together and advance shared ideals; much like the EU did after emerging from the ashes of tragic wars to become a strong champion for peace, prosperity, and integration. The AU may take inspiration from the EU's history and use its Pan-African vision to lay the foundation for shared values, economic cooperation, and cooperative security measures despite the intimidating barriers in its way (ICG, 2017; Stout, 2020). However, it takes a combination of important components to realize this objective. Member States must commit unwavering political will, set aside funds, and take an active role in the process. The AU must also address its resource constraints, streamline the decision-making process, and allocate funds to capacity-building and conflict-avoidance initiatives (Juu *et al.*, 2020).

Embedding Democracy and Wide-Spread Participation in National Governance

The Horn of Africa is a region with a history of protracted wars and insecurity, with recent developments in Ethiopia and Sudan emphasizing the danger of state collapse. These disputes are influenced by socioeconomic and historical links, prompting the creation of national, regional, and international strategies to resolve them. Democratic government, boundary conflicts, and the use of the Nile Waters are important problems. To stop human misery, initiatives ought to hinge on quick localized

responses that are effective and timely (Gilder, 2019). The region's recent and past encounters provide a chance for regional nations, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the AU, and international partners to evaluate their efforts and develop more effective strategies for conflict mitigation and response (Krampe *et al.*, 2020; Markakis, 2021).

The lack of democratic governance and low levels of public involvement in national affairs continue to be problems in the Horn of Africa. Multiple countries in the region are still having trouble establishing formal democratic governance, with the notable exception of Kenya, where elections are performed more efficiently (Fombad *et al.*, 2022; Meshesha, 2023). Lack of political responsibility and out-of-date democratic institutions are to blame for this shortcoming in formal democratic procedures. Socioeconomic inequities and inadequate governance methods are a result of the region's failure to create democratic values and pluralism. As a result, communities within the region are more likely to use extreme political tactics, which exacerbates already existing disputes. The execution of peacebuilding initiatives is further hampered by the lack of democratic mechanisms. Recent developments in Sudan and other regions in the sub-region serve as a stark reminder that many people still view engaging in armed conflict as a more convenient way to further their political agendas (Engel, 2017; Zona, 2020). Governments in the Horn of Africa must undertake a political shift that stresses democratic governance and the inclusion of different perspectives. With a strong focus on the vital role of civil society in building the groundwork for democratic control and pluralism in the region, this shift should endeavour to develop transparent and accountable institutions. IGAD and foreign allies like the US, UK, and EU should aggressively encourage and assist the flourishing of democracy in the Horn to support these initiatives (De Waal & Ibreck, 2018; Khadiagala, 2015). By creating an umbrella organization with member states and partners to reenergize programs aimed at advancing democratic governance, IGAD's political affairs

program may play a crucial role in this regard (Harkema, 2014)

Although IGAD has been a crucial player in the Horn of Africa's peace talks, it still faces difficulties because of member nations' worries over their sovereignty and a lack of institutional strength. The conflicting interests of external entities present another difficulty. To address this, IGAD should improve its capacity for conflict prevention and reaction, including the ability to impose penalties on individuals who pose a danger to regional peace. The ability of the Eastern Africa Standby Force to respond should be strengthened through triangular coordination with the AU and EAC (Chan, 2019; Takezawa, 2022; Tanui, 2020). To maintain collaboration on peace and security concerns, regional leaders should commit to enhancing IGAD's institutional capabilities and refrain from forming separate blocs within the sub-region (Gaye, 2018).

In the Horn of Africa, border disputes have also frequently resulted in unsolved confrontations between nations, including Ethiopia and Sudan over Al-Fashaga, Kenya, and South Sudan over the Ilemi triangle. Following the fighting in Sudan, the current tensions in Abyei, a disputed territory between Sudan and South Sudan, underline the potential for instability in the region. The history of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea over the management of the Badme border serves as a harsh reminder of the devastation that border conflicts may cause. Regional nations must create or develop bilateral structures, such as joint committees or border commissions, to promote good communication to avert violent disputes (Egudo, 2016). Additionally, Horn countries should work together to encourage socioeconomic activity along their shared borders, such as border trade, which can strengthen community interdependence. With cooperation from groups like IGAD, which can create a regional framework to collect resources and offer technical assistance for the demarcation process, regional governments should also prioritize demarcating their boundaries (Aliye, 2020; Meshesha, 2023; Tadesse, 2022).

Given the escalating hostilities between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), the Nile Waters problem still poses a risk to regional peace. Due to previous failures in reaching an agreement, the UN Security Council has supported the negotiations being conducted by the AU. Progress has been hampered by the crises in Ethiopia and Sudan, thus it is essential to restart negotiations with international assistance (De Développement, 2022). With the support of allies like the US, EU, and UN, the AU can duplicate the effective negotiation strategy adopted in the Ethiopian crisis in Pretoria (Lawson, 2017; Mekonnen, 2017). It is also advised that the three nations open up lines of direct communication to foster understanding and confidence (Achkar, 2015).

The Sahel region is also still unstable, placing millions of inhabitants in danger and necessitating humanitarian assistance. Violence and insecurity in the region are influenced by the existence of armed groups, non-state actors, climate change, poverty, and political instability. Lack of trust in national authority and violations of human rights by security personnel make the situation worse. A comprehensive strategy that includes work to address the core causes of the problems, improve governance, give young people access to jobs, empower women, and battle climate change is required to properly address these concerns (Cepero *et al.*, 2021).

Conclusion

The chapter illustrates the difficult problems that the Sahel and Horn of Africa areas must deal with, such as armed conflict, political instability, and humanitarian disasters. A comprehensive strategy that concurrently tackles several linked concerns, including politics, security, and development, is necessary to bring about long-lasting peace and stability in these areas.

International institutions like the UN and the World Bank understand the value of comprehensive plans that go beyond simple security measures. It is vital to implement programs that improve living circumstances, strengthen communities, and provide young people opportunities. Addressing the root causes

of instability requires considerable financial expenditures and groups like Alliance Sahel place a high priority on incorporating disadvantaged populations in their initiatives.

The United States, the United Kingdom, and China are among the nations that emphasize how crucial it is to deal with economic and social problems, provide opportunities for women and young people, and improve security. Although it has difficulties with finance and decision-making, the African Union (AU) plays a diversified role in tackling security concerns in the continent. By promoting collaboration and common principles, the AU has the potential to develop into a body resembling the European Union (EU). In order to solve complex security concerns, partnerships and collaborations are required, and democratic governance, border dispute settlement, and diplomatic discussions are key measures for peace and stability.

In a nutshell, comprehensive, cooperative, and multidisciplinary strategies involving a range of stakeholders are needed to solve the problems in the Sahel and Horn of Africa areas. Addressing the underlying reasons, boosting growth, and developing diplomatic solutions are necessary for achieving long-term peace and stability.

Recommendations

- Encourage inclusive governance frameworks to resolve complaints and encourage political engagement.
- To combat transnational threats, bolster regional coordination and cooperation systems.
- To address the underlying causes of instability, give priority to investments in economic development, job creation, and education.
- In order to foster social cohesiveness, participate with civil society organizations and lend support to regional peacebuilding efforts.
- Improve early warning systems and conflict prevention to reduce tensions from rising.

To foster accountability and foster trust in institutions, uphold the rule of law and respect for human rights.

- Encourage young people and women to be change agents in peace building

initiatives.

Investigate paths for amicable conflict settlement by negotiating and conversing with non-state armed organizations.

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