

**Forum:** The Third General Assembly

**Issue:** Implementing measures to foster economic development and protect human rights in the rural Sahelian region

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## Introduction

Sahel is a vast semi-arid region in North Africa. With extensive political turmoil, the Sahelian region has become a sanctuary for non-state armed groups. Rising insecurity has spread across the Sahel region, which stretches from Mauritania to Sudan and is home to one hundred and fifty million people, propelled by a string of issues, including the effects of a lack of development that affect the prosperity and peace of the Sahel.

The security situation is deteriorating, as conflict is consequentially further impoverishing a region that has already been burdened with economic issues that extend a mile wide, such as poverty, socio-economic inequality, and political exclusion.

The Sahelian region is defined as the ecoclimatic and biogeographic zone that serves as a transitional between the arid Sahara Desert to the north and a belt of humid savannas to the south. The Sahel part of Africa includes – from west to east – segments of northern Senegal, the Gambia, southern Mauritania, central Mali, northern Burkina Faso, Niger, northern Nigeria, Cameroon, and central Chad.

The challenges in the Sahel are complex in nature and multi-faceted. Sahelian nations have a combined GDP of only USD seventy billion, about the same as Luxembourg's GDP. The agri-food industry is the Sahel's most significant economic sector, accounting for a third of its GDP and three-quarters of its employment. The subregion is a prominent international producer of cotton, cereals, and livestock.

Numerous international initiatives have sought to stabilize the situation. Some have attempted to address security development, while others have on the military dimension of the provision against violent non-state actors. In addition to this, the concerned members, particularly in the European Union and other member nations in the region, have invested significant resources to help systematically address conflicts that are deeply rooted in socio-economic and developmental challenges to aid Sahel from prolonged violence and anarchy.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **The Sahel**

The Sahel is the vast semi-arid region of Africa separating the Sahara Desert to the north and tropical savannas to the south.

### **The working population**

The working-age population is the total population in an economy that is considered able and likely to work based on the number of people in a predetermined age range. The working-age population measure is used to give an estimate of the total number of potential workers within an economy.

### **The dependent population**

is those aged 0-19 and 65 and over.

### **Violent Extremism**

When a person's beliefs move from being relatively conventional to being radical, and they want a drastic change in society, this is known as radicalisation. This is not necessarily a bad thing and does not mean these people will become violent. However, if a person or group decides that fear, terror, and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change and then acts accordingly, this is violent extremism.

### **Corruption**

refers to misusing public power for personal gain.

### **Military deployment**

is the movement of armed forces. The deployment includes any movement from a Military Service Member's home station to somewhere outside the continental U.S. and its territories. Mobilization is when an individual or unit is sent somewhere within the continental U.S. or its territories.

## Key Issues

### **Presence of violent extremist groups and armed non-state actors**

Over the past two decades, the Sahelian region has become a hot zone for violent extremist movements. Political and social security is underlined by the effects of violent extremism and organized crime reaching this region.

The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) has been active in Western Niger since 2015. In 2017, four members of the US special forces and five Nigerian soldiers were killed in an

ISGS ambush. In March of the same year, several violent extremist groups, namely Ansar Dine, Macina Liberation Front, Al Mourabitoun and the Saharan Branch of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb joined forces and created Nusrat al-Islam – group to support Islam and Muslims, GSIM. GSIM is now the official branch of Al Qaeda in the Sahelian region. Their primary operations revolve around Mali, but they have taken responsibility for attacks across the Sahel.

These violent extremist groups have notoriously strong mobility, rapidly changing their names, base of operations and alliances. These groups cannot be generalized as part of a global extremist movement that exploits the Islamic concept of Jihad. Rather than serving as proxies for the global Jihad, violent extremist groups in the Sahel have been able to leverage the vulnerability of the region's population and are the product of the local and regional dynamics which have allowed for their coherent expansion. Specifically, in rural areas, justice and law are not within arm's reach for people and hence protection for both their property and themselves is little, if at all any. There is a deep wound in the trust between vulnerable communities and the national forces, which are often not inclined to provide security to the public. These conditions are the perfect breeding ground for further movement.

Harsh poverty is a notable factor as extremist groups are in a position to offer wages to vulnerable men who are willing to part-take in violence to generate an income for their families. For many, this means multiplying their income by a scale factor of 20. This allows them to make inroads in areas where the state is absent or sovereignty is contested. Violent extremists impose a rough and crude social order in societies characterized by a dynamic of arable land and pastures suitable for grazing.

### **Climate change and resource scarcity**

The vast majority living in the Sahel subsist through agriculture and pastoralism. These occupations are highly dependent on climatic and seasonal factors: in the monsoon, herd livestock are in dry areas, while rice growing takes place in flooded areas; in the dry season, livestock is returned from the northern deserts to the grass fields of the south as farmers have harvested their rice crops. However, climate change has begun to alter the defined traditional movement of people and livestock, thus injecting uncertainty into the lives of those dependent on these traditional patterns.

Poor soil, drought, irregular rainfall, and limited employment in rural areas have undermined pastoral and farming economies, becoming a catalyst for mass migration. Resource scarcity

means competition for access to water and land, forming tensions between the victimized communities in the region. In recent years, regional stability and security have been in a fog of panic as it generates new opportunities for extremist groups to exploit economic hardship to recruit new members and justify violence.

### **Lax government control translates into poor economic conditions**

The states of Sahel consistently rank towards the lower end of international indexes ranking various countries' stability and development. 40% of the population lives below the poverty line, and the region's economic development is amongst the lowest.

The Sahel has high unemployment rates in the agricultural sector, with Chad's 87% serving as a testament. More than 90% of the workforce is employed in the informal sector, leaving the workers and their families vulnerable to man-made or climatic shocks. Climate change in this arid region poses acute economic and humanitarian challenges.

Corruption poses further developmental and security challenges. Not only does it raise the issue of legitimacy, but it erodes public trust in state institutions. The World Bank indicators rank states of the Sahel among the World's lower third for government effectiveness.

Having said that, there is potential for growth. Concentrated efforts can re-imbibe private sector investments, essential when coupled with state sector investments to galvanize the region's economies.

### **Youth unemployment**

The cumulative population of the Sahel is likely to increase from 135 million in 2015 to 330 million in 2030 if current birth rates continue. The fertility rate will rise from 5 children per woman to 7 in Niger. In 2020, the median age in the Sahel region was 16 years, compared to 19.7 in Africa, 30 years in Turkey, 38.6 years in North America and 42.5 in Europe.

Children under 15 are considered a dependent sector of the population. Given the domination of this demographic group that outnumbers the working population in the Sahel, it makes it arduous to improve social and economic conditions. Although young people represent the largest segment of the population in the Sahel and the precarious living conditions translate to limited economic opportunities.

Sahel's labour market is unable to absorb the new workers. Hence, such individuals have few doors to open and seek informal employment, engage in subsistence agriculture, or migrate. This segment is particularly vulnerable, and extremist groups leverage the bait of easy money

to entice a deprived and alienated younger generation. A lack of education, social status and economic opportunities is an underlying element of political instability in the region.

### **Organized crime**

Regional trade over the centuries has encompassed the movement of slaves, gold, ivory, cereals and salt. From the 1990s and 2000s, illicit high-value-added products, such as arms and drugs, opened up. Since 2015, the flow of arms from Libyan stockpiles has fallen. Co-incident to this, national military stocks have become an important new source of arms deployed by non-state military actors operating in the region. Military bases are increasingly the target of militant attacks, as traffickers and non-state actors unguarded borders. Mercenaries from neighbouring countries began to operate both in Libya and in the Sahel; one estimate claims there are at least 3,000 Sudanese mercenaries now fighting in Libya for the so-called Libyan National Army. mounting concerns grow that these mercenaries will be ever more inclined to offer their services to armed groups operating in the Sahel.

Drugs, arms, and human traffickers often employ the same routes and contacts. Wealthier trafficking networks are said to operate with the tacit support of some state actors and to corrupt high-ranking officials, civil servants, defence and security forces officials and senior politicians. These officials, in turn, provide active cover or refrain from enforcing the law. In Mali, for example, experts say the major traffickers have links with Malian authorities and political-military groups in the country's north. Internationally, the fight against drug and arms trafficking has assumed a lower order of priority, with the reluctance to engage due to the sheer complexities of the networks and implicit recognition these groups received by powerful players in the state.

### **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

#### **The European Union**

The European Union has emerged as a noteworthy actor in the Sahel. In 2011, the EU External Action Service (EEAS) put into motion the Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, described as a comprehensive and integrated approach to address the underlying interlinked challenges faced by the region. With its inauguration in 2016 and improved coordination, it stresses the link between development and security.

The introduction of the EU Global Strategy in 2016 improved coordination among the EU's different missions and instruments. EU delegations in the Sahel are Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad. They operate as liaison offices between Brussels, CSDP missions and

external local and international actors. The EU Special Representative for the Sahel, Angel Losada, is currently mandated to coordinate the EU's overall approach.

### **The United States**

In light of the September 11 attacks, the US introduced a range of surveillance programs to monitor Al Qaeda in Africa. This also included security cooperation instruments as well as logistical support. In 2007, the Africa Command (AFRICOM) was established, and US military personnel entered. In April 2018, then-Defence Secretary James Mattis estimated that the US had 7,200 personnel, of which 1,00 military personnel had a presence in Nigeria, Niger and Mali. In the Sahelian region, US special forces have deployed troops and militia in small groups to defeat violent extremists in the field, such as ISGS.

### **France**

In January 2013, Bamako observed violent extremist groups advancing south to attack Bamako. France, an ally, launched a small-scale operation called "Serval" at the request of Mali's then-president Traoré. Bamako was safeguarded from falling into the hands of violent extremists, as the effective use of military force suppressed their operations and helped stabilise the country to a certain extent. Some argue that this has triggered the dispersal of terrorist movements in neighbouring countries, notably in Libya and Niger. In July 2014, France expanded its presence throughout the region with the launch of Operation Barkhane. Its objective is deeply rooted in fighting terrorism, bringing out the G5 Sahel Joint Force, and supporting the Malian armed forces.

### **Mali, Coup D'état**

In August 2020, a military coup in Mali resulted in the forced resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. Soldiers from the Kita army camp outside Bamako stomped into presidential buildings and arrested government officials, including Keita. The "National Committee for the Salvation of the People" were the military leaders responsible for the coup and announced plans for new elections. This reciprocated into protests related to contested parliamentary elections in March, despite the Coronavirus pandemic. The bubble finally burst in the form of the so-called 5 June Movement (5M) led by the influence of imam Mahmoud Dicko, partly inspired by the deteriorating national security and prolonged economic crisis. The repercussion of the coup raised questions about Mali's international stabilization. As a result, the African Union voted to suspend Mali's membership. The UN Security Council

condemned the mutiny and called for the immediate release of the president and government officials.

Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
2011	Anti-corruption agency HALCIA	Niger's efforts against corruption deserves further attention. The Anti-corruption agency HALCIA was created with important legislation passing; Niger made headway to improve governance and its anti-corruption framework.
2012	ECOWAS	Having been determined as a better means to cope with the Sahel crisis than the AU, ECOWAS was granted authorization from the UN Security Council to organize a military support mission during the conflict in northern Mali. It was launched in December 2012, but logistical problems and material bottlenecks undermined ambitions to deploy forces rapidly into the field of operations. There were grave difficulties mobilizing the 3,300 soldiers that ECOWAS originally planned to deploy.
2013	The Nouakchott process	The Nouakchott process sought to cultivate exchange and cooperation among security actors in the Sahel. The implementation in 2014 resulted

		<p>in a poor outcome due to the lack of a clear division of labour among stakeholders and human resources in charge of implementation.</p> <p>The initial optimistic spirit of solidarity had primarily faded, and its last ministerial meeting occurred in 2015.</p>
2013	MINUSMA	<p>The UN Security Council sought to restore public authority in Northern Mali by establishing the ‘Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali’, short for MINUSMA. The mandate for its operations has been renewed each year since its inauguration.</p>
2015	EUTF	<p>European and African Heads of State and Government launched an Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) to help the region build stability and address the root causes of irregular migration in 3 main regions – Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa, and North Africa.</p> <p>The cumulative budget for EUTF is EUR 4.7 billion, funded by the European Development Fund.</p>
2017	G5 Sahel Joint Force Creation	<p>5 countries within the Sahelian region formed the G5 Sahel Joint Force, namely Mauritania, Mali,</p>

		<p>Niger, Burkina Faso, and Chad. Consisting of 5,000 military personnel, its purpose is to combat violent extremist groups. Its operations are oriented towards the border areas. In a 2018 report, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres suggested that it was taking too long for the Joint Force to become fully operational. Since the Ouagadougou summit in January 2020, mobility-related progress is made and some elements of the G5 forces now operate outside of their basing areas, and troops are permitted to move 100km beyond national borders.</p>
<p>2017</p>	<p>RACC initiative by EU</p>	<p>The European Union established a Regional Coordination Cell (RCC), focused on security and defence. In 2019, it was renamed to Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell (RACC). Its objective is to strengthen the G5 region and support the G5 Joint Force military and police components. It aims to ultimately improve cross-border cooperation and enable EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger to provide strategic advice and training to other G5 Sahel states. In March 2020, the mandate for the EU</p>

		training mission expanded in the form of military advice, training and mentoring, wherein the mission was prolonged until 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2024. The budget is also raised to EUR 133.4 million over the four-year period.
October 2019	Assassination of GSIM leader	GSIM is the official branch of Al Qaeda in the Sahel. Its primary operations are in Mali but have also taken responsibility for attacks in other Sahelian countries. In October 2019, French forces, in coordination with Malian forces and with US support, killed its self-proclaimed religious leader, Ali Maychou.
February 2020	French soldiers deployed in the Sahel	French Defence Minister Florence Parly announced the deployment of 600 additional soldiers to reinforce operation Barkhane. With increased coordination with the Sahelian forces and Takuba Task Force, there is increased concentration towards the “three borders” zone, on the borders of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. This made it possible to weaken the ISGS.
June 2020	Killings of 14 soldiers in Côte d’Ivoire	The movement of militants across borders has intensified along with the smuggling of livestock, drugs and guns, which are a key source of

		<p>income for extremist groups. There are legitimate concerns that what transpires around Western Sahel could spread well beyond the region. ISGS fighters have increasingly sought sanctuary across the borders of neighbouring countries to the Sahel, notably Benin, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. This expansion led to the killings of 14 soldiers in Côte d'Ivoire and, worse, provides a new source of income, such as through the seizure of ports and gold mines.</p>
<p>August 2020</p>	<p>Response from the African Union to the Mali Coup d'état</p>	<p>In response to the coup, West African members of ECOWAS imposed comprehensive sanctions on Mali. A couple of months later, in October, these sanctions were lifted to support the handover to civilian rule. The interim government nominated former Defence Minister retired Colonel Bah Ndaw to serve as interim president and Foreign Minister Moctar Ouane as Prime Minister for the duration of the transition, which lasted 18 months.</p>

**Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

**ECOWAS**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 as a group of 15 member states with the goal of advancing regional economic integration.

Member states go as follows: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo.

In the 1990s, when conflict shook Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOWAS transformed itself into a regional security actor. Over the decades, under the aegis of the AU's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), ECOWAS has emerged as one of the most consequential regional security organisations on the continent.

ECOWAS, as examined by the international community as a more suitable forum for coping with the Sahel crises than the AU initiative, ECOWAS obtained authorization from the UN Security Council to organize a military mission to support the Malian government during the Northern Mali conflict. The mission was given a verdict of failure for the lack of sufficient financial support, and military planners had underestimated the strength of extremist groups operating in central Mali. The mission was folded into the UN mission (MINUSMA) in the summer of 2013.

### **EUCAP**

In 2012, the European Union launched EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali in 2015 to help establish a robust and human-rights-based approach to the fight against organised crime. EUCAP Sahel Mali completes the military pillar in the EU strategy in Mali, launching the mission in 2013 to help strengthen the capabilities of the Malian Armed Forces to build a self-sustaining military capable of defending the population and territory. This comprises almost 700 soldiers from 23 EU members and 5 non-member states, namely, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, and the Republic of Moldova. In addition to this, the mission provided a string of benefits, including advice at the strategic and operational level to the Malian Armed Forces and G5 Sahel Joint Force.

### **AU Strategy by the African Union**

The African Union (AU) has launched two initiatives: the Nouakchott Process in 2013 and the AU Strategy for the Sahelian Region in 2014. The AU Strategy is a multidimensional concept that seeks to help ameliorate governance, security, and development. The AU has appointed a special representative for the Sahel in Bamako. The results, however, have been limited despite its ambition to provide a structural long-term approach to peacebuilding.

As the arc of the crises widened, the AU enlarged the initiative's scope, further engaging in the abyss of North Africa. Although the effort has been coherent on paper, the level of

resources and political commitment is insufficient to galvanise a process capable of addressing the root causes of regional conflict. A narrower effort focused intensely on the Sahelian crisis.

### **MINUSMA**

The UN established the “Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali” (MINISUMA) in April 2013. MINISUMA counts 13,365 personnel and a budget of roughly USD 1 billion. The UN Security Council must renew MINUSMA’s mandate each year: it has done so thus far, extending the mandate until 2023.

MINUSMA’s central priority is to support the implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreement, signed in 2015 between the Malian government and the “Cordination des Mouvements de l’Azawad” (CMA), an umbrella of northern rebel groups. This supports efforts to restore state authority in northern Mali and establish the new institutional architecture for the Malian state to back security sector reform efforts. Around 80% of its military resources are dedicated to forcing protection to secure its own infrastructure. Public opinion in Mali has grown critical of the mission – Malians have accused MINUSMA of passivity in the face of non-state actor threats, and there have been charges of placing their own security above civilians. The government, at times, has used the mission as a scapegoat for its own shortcomings – a practice that shakes the foundation of public support and legitimacy for the UN operation.

### **G5 Sahel Joint Force**

The Sahel, a less developed region in the world, faces widespread challenges on a humanitarian scale, such as food crises, extreme poverty & intercommunal conflicts, as well as security-related concerns in the form of the presence of crime and corruption. The challenges from this region require a collective response, and hence forged a set of initiatives by the international and regional actors – G5 Sahel is an important component of these initiatives. The G5 Sahel comprises Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mauritania.

In February 2014 constitution of the G5 Sahel represented a response to the military and diplomatic deficits of ECOWAS. Its mechanisms to manage the Sahelian crisis have superseded those of the AU initiative. Originally, it was conceived as a vehicle for strengthening the bond between economic development and security; over time, it has matured into a focus on the restoration of state authority and revitalization of the population and the States.

The G5 Sahel is facing many drawbacks and difficulties, requiring external support to alleviate its vulnerability. To this extent, many countries significantly contribute to the initiative through bilateral and organisational platforms. The MINUSMA is one such initiative in Mali, coupled with some other military forces being deployed by various actors to conduct military operations and international fundraising efforts. Having said that, the efforts to achieve security and stability objectives in the region have not yet achieved the expected results.

### **Operation Barkhane**

In July 2014, France expanded its presence throughout the Sahelian region with the launch of Operation Barkhane. With an annual budget of EUR 600 million funded by the French senate, Barkhane consists of 4,500 French soldiers with operational headquarters in Chad's capital, N'Djamena. Special forces are in small units capable of high mobility, allowing them to be deployed in the field to take on extremist fighter aircraft, drones, and a range of intelligent assets. In December 2019, France carried out the first armed drone airstrike against armed non-state actors in Mali's Mopti region. Since the beginning of its operations, 44 French soldiers have been martyred in service.

Barkhane doesn't have the logistics to bring about a political solution. Its objective is not to eradicate terrorism but rather to draw such groups onto the military field, where they are more vulnerable to local armies. To evaluate the operation's success, it can be said that it has achieved tactical superiority on the ground, and France's intervening efforts have mitigated the situation from worsening. On the flip side, these efforts are undermined by a political impasse, which triggered a coup d'état in Mali in August 2020.

### **Takuba Task Force**

Operation Barkhane underlined the growing international dimension of the European Union. Support has come through from Denmark, Estonia, the United Kingdom, and Germany, having cumulatively deployed multiple helicopters, up to 100 troops and pledged EUR 10 million for equipment. France has consistently advocated stronger international engagement and in November 2019, announced the creation of the international special operation task force "Takuba". Takuba consists of a French contingent and numerous European nations, including Ireland, Estonia, Latvia, Denmark, Spain, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Greece, and Italy.

Takuba's objective follows up on the foundation built by Barkhane. It aims to free up Barkhane's personnel enabling them to peruse insurgents and prevent attacks, as well as advice, assist and accompany Malian Armed Forces; all the while in coordination with G5 Sahel states and other international actors on the ground, including the UN Mission MINUSMA as well as the EU Missions – EUTF.

## **WAEMU**

In December 2019, the “Western African Economic and Monetary Union” (WAEMU), which includes Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, agreed to overhaul its common currency. The CFA Franc, a legacy of French colonialism – was renamed the ‘Eco’. The new currency is pegged to the Euro through a fixed exchange rate. Participating states no longer require their central bank to deposit a reserve of half their foreign exchange with the Banque de France. The French government has hailed the reform as a symbolic renewal of French African relations. The decision has some unsettled dust. Tensions surged with Anglophone Western African countries left out of the system. Critics of the change include Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, whose commentary has stalled a joint ECOWAS currency due to a reluctance to comply with fiscal standards. However, in June 2021, the decision went through as Eco derailed the former common currency.

## **Possible Solutions**

### **Fostering economic growth**

Although conditions in the region are challenging, there is a potential for growth. The state sector alone must be reinforced by concentrated private sector efforts and direct investments to galvanise the region's economies. The state should, in this effort, cogitate and create the conditions needed to foster domestic and foreign investments. GDP acts like a benchmark to determine the growth of an economy – ideal circumstances would aim to see this numerical value increase over the years.

The government must amend their fiscal policies to reciprocate conditions for growth. Contractionary fiscal policy involves increasing tax rates (direct taxes) throughout the economy. Through higher tax revenue, public sector investment can increase. Through commercial and infrastructure-related investments, the government may work towards promoting better quality occupational opportunities for the public. In turn, this has the ability to attract more private-sector investments and increase the productive capacity of the economy. In this cycle of national growth, greater quantities of goods and services are

produced. In the process, living standards are bound to improve. As government expenditure increases for public and merit goods such as transportation facilities, various humanitarian crises are addressed across the board.

### **Narrower efforts to restore stabilisation**

Simple solutions will not work, and military initiatives alone cannot address the underlying problems at hand. Comprehensive counter-terrorism efforts in the region are essential to be implemented. This should focus on the causes of insurrection and not just the insurrection itself.

As the crisis widened in Libya and Nigerian borders and expanded beyond into Northern Africa, the AU effort has been deployed. As coherent as it is on paper, the level of resources and political commitment is not enough to address the root cause of regional conflict. A narrower effort focused intensely on these challenges in the geographically vulnerable parts is needed to alleviate the Sahelian crisis.

### **NATO involvement**

As violent extremist threats expand, the presence of foreign forces is difficult for local populations to fathom or accept. In Mali, in particular, operations Barkhane and MINUSMA are subject to mounting criticism. There is an evident lack of understanding about the magnitude of foreign forces, and security situations continue to deteriorate. Stabilising the region requires substantial efforts in terms of governance, humanitarian aid and development, which is ultimately the responsibility of governments and people of the region. The international community can only provide support and encourage reconciliation.

The complex and interconnected challenges in the Sahel have a high potential to transition across the Mediterranean to NATO territory itself and disrupt NATO's long-term Sahelian partners, including Mauritania and Algeria, Egypt, Morocco & Tunisia bordering the Sahel. Bordering countries and NATO are key stakeholders in the crisis. It is up to the countries of Sahel to find ways to restore the bond of trust with their populations. Moreover, forging a sense of shared responsibility will be the key to progress. NATO should not shy away from looking closer at this regional hot spot and ideate ways to support international efforts in the Sahel in close consultation and cooperation with the countries in the region.

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