



US Counter-Terrorism Sahel and Horn of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities



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Abstract: *This paper will centre on the US counter-terrorism endeavours within the Sahel and Horn of Africa, counting the parts of military, political, and advancement efforts in combating psychological warfare. It'll dissect the challenges and openings of executing such a methodology, counting the complex political and security situations, the role of territorial accomplices, and the ought to address fundamental variables such as destitution, marginalization, and administration issues. It'll moreover survey the viability and maintainability of US counter-terrorism endeavours within the locale.*

Key Words: US Counter Fear Based Oppression, Territorial Accomplice, Military, Territorial Security, Horns of Africa

Introduction

Outline of Psychological Warfare within the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

For a long time, the Sahel and Horn of Africa ranges have had to bargain with the persevering peril of fear-based oppression and rough radicalism, which has posed a genuine risk to both territorial soundness and worldwide security. Governments and the universal community have both communicated concern around the advancement and history of fear-based oppressor associations in certain ranges due to the far-reaching impacts of their action. With distinctive objectives and convictions, a few fear-based oppressor bunches have shaped themselves within the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Among the foremost well-known associations are Al-Qaeda within the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and the Islamic State within the more prominent Sahara (ISGS) (Bangura & Mbawa, [2023](#); Cyprian Aleksander & Błażej, [2019](#); Kozera &

Popławski, 2019; Marc et al., 2015; Woodward, 2012). To accumulate supporters and commit rough activities, these associations have tried to take advantage of political, social, and economic concerns.

These terrorist groups have an assortment of objectives, but they as often as possible point to setting up Islamic caliphates, weakening legislative education, ousting up political frameworks, and sowing unrest all through the influenced regions. The neighbourhood masses and governments have endured essentially since of the unwavering interest in their destinations. It is inconceivable to overestimate the impact of fear-based oppression on territorial soundness. These organisations' activities have exacerbated pressures, started inside conflict, and posed dangers past universal borders. As fear-based oppressors take advantage of penetrable borders to carry out assaults and evade police, border districts have been particularly uncovered in their operations (Adejumo et al., [2022](#); Bukar,

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2021; Crenshaw, 2020; Egudo, 2016; Humud et al., 2014; Varin, 2016). Due to the smoothness of terrorist developments, it is troublesome for person countries to address the issue on their possess, requesting solid territorial and universal collaboration.

Stresses over global stability have also been raised by the terrorism's spillover effect from the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions. These regions have the chance of spreading fear-based oppression outside of their boundaries due to the presence of well-armed and persuaded radical associations. The impacts of these groups' operations have been felt in neighbouring countries as well as countries that encourage absence through assaults and penetration. Moreover, there have been noteworthy compassionate repercussions of terrorism within the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Individuals have been broadly uprooted as a result of the strife and distress, causing outcast emergencies and internal relocations. As of now, unsteady circumstances have compounded as helpful associations have fizzled to allow help back to the affected populaces (Ali, 2017; Cardoso, 2016; Çonkar, 2020; Williams, 2016).

It is planning to go more into the history and operations of significant fear-based oppressor bunches within the Sahel and Horn of Africa in this area, advertising knowledge into their convictions and objectives. Moreover, numerous ways that psychological warfare has influenced territorial solidness and contributed to a culture of fear and insecurity will be examined. In expansion, the impact on worldwide security and the reaction of the universal community to this diligent threat will be examined. Understanding the elements and impacts of terrorism in these regions will help us to begin distinguishing reasonable arrangements and ways that we are able to work together to handle this difficult problem.

Rise and History of Terrorist Groups within the Locale

The rise and spread of a few psychological militant bunches have long tormented the Sahel and Horn of Africa, imperilling the security and stability of the affected countries and

populations. For occurrence, these ranges have cultivated a few well-known fear-based oppressor bunches, whose arrangement and advancement were frequently affected by components such as awful government, a falling flat economy, climate alter, and the misuse of wars and geopolitical upheaval. The history of a few of the foremost critical and well-known psychological militant associations within the region is as follows:

Al-Qaeda within the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

AQIM could be a Salafi-jihadist fear-based oppressor gather that works within the Sahara and Sahel and is recorded as a foreign terrorist association (FTO) by the Joined Together States. AQIM's objectives incorporate annihilating Western impact from North Africa and toppling Algeria's government to construct an Islamic state (Laub & Aces, 2015). Starting from the 1990s battle between the Algerian government and the Algerian Outfitted Islamic Group (GIA), this association changed its title to AQIM in 2006 and joined Al-Qaeda. Its reach included the Sahel, which incorporates Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger. The Sahel locale, enveloping Senegal and Eritrea, has persevered through genuine security and compassion issues since getting freedom in the 1960s. The Sahel region's extremist savagery has been exacerbated by climate alter, destitute and questionable government, and declining economies. AQIM is still active and proceeds to lock in in actions counting seizing, sneaking, and ambushes on both military and civilian targets (Center for Preventive Activity, 2023b; Organized for Financial Matters & Peace, 2021; OBE & Wallace, 2021).

Islamic State within the more noteworthy Sahara (ISGS)

This organisation first showed up in 2015 as a split-off of Al-Mourabitoun, another AQIM part. Working for the most part within the border regions between Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, it vowed dependability to the Islamic State (IS). ISGS has conducted a few deadly ambushes on household and universal security strengths as

well as civilians (Arslan, 2022; Center for Preventive Activity, 2023b). ISGS could be a functionally separate division of the Islamic State West Africa Area (ISWAP). ISGS was authoritatively a component of ISWAP from Walk 2019 until 2022 and was moreover known as "ISWAP-Greater Sahara". ISGS has fed communal conflict, brutally fought against other jihadist organisations in the region, and aims to develop a Salafi-jihadist caliphate. It has a long history of strife, settlement, and collaboration with other Sahelian Salafi-jihadist associations (Thompson, 2021).

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

Four psychological militant associations, including Ansar Dine, Al-Mourabitoun, the Macina Freedom Front, and the Saharan Department of AQIM, came together to establish this organisation in 2017. It is commanded by former Tuareg revolt commander and activist Islamist Iyad Ag Ghaly. With exercises in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Cote d'Ivoire, JNIM is regarded as the greatest and most active psychological militant association within the Sahel locale. The 2017 assault on the Amazing Bassam resort in Cote d'Ivoire and the 2018 attack on the Ouagadougou international safe haven in Burkina Faso have both been blamed on JNIM (Institute for Financial Matters & Peace, 2021; OBE & Wallace, 2021). The Sahel locale has experienced an increment in savagery since JNIM was shaped in 2017 by the merger of various al-Qaeda groups (Center for Preventive Activity, 2023b).

Al-Shabaab

This association to begin with showed up in 2006 as a more extraordinary department of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which incidentally worked out control over much of Somalia before being driven out by Ethiopian strengths. Al-Shabaab, which is a subsidiary of Al-Qaeda, points to building an Islamic state in Somalia and its encompassing countries. Besides carrying out cross-border ambushes in Kenya, Uganda, and Djibouti, it has conducted a grisly guerilla against the Somali government and the African

Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Al-Shabaab is well-known for using extortion, capturing, slaughtering, and suicide planes (Established for Financial Matters & Peace, 2021; OBE & Wallace, 2021).

Islamic State in Somalia (ISS)

Abdulqadir Mumin, a former Al-Shabaab minister, established this organisation in 2015 as a chip segment of the psychological militant organisation Al-Shabaab. It has sworn association with IS and for the most part operates in Somalia's Puntland locale. In expansion to attacking international targets, ISS has engaged in combat with both Al-Shabaab and Somali security strengths. In spite of the fact that ISS is seen to be a less effective and smaller association than Al-Shabaab, it has received backing from IS members in Yemen and Libya (Faulkner & Specialist, 2021; Founded for Economics & Peace, 2021; OBE & Wallace, 2021).

These are a few of the major psychological militant associations that have created and been dynamic in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel over the past few decades. In spite of the fact that they have assorted histories, rationalities, goals, and strategies, they all use threats and harassment against citizens and government authorities. They moreover have several difficulties as a result of local, regional, and worldwide attempts to halt their actions and bring peace and security back to these locales.

US Counter-Terrorism Endeavors within the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

A complicated and comprehensive subject matter the US Counter-Terrorism Endeavors within the Sahel and Horn of Africa includes a few parties, interfaces, and challenges. Al-Shabaab is an Islamist psychological militant association that genuinely undermines Somalia's delicate centralised control. The US has had a persevering counterterrorism association in Somalia. Concurring to the Pentagon, denying al-Shabaab a "secure sanctuary" is fundamental for avoiding any attacks on the US or its nationals. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which is made up of powers from various African countries and helps the Somali

government in its struggle with al-Shabaab, is another activity supported by the US. AMISOM gets instruction, supplies, calculated help, data administrations, and bombings and particular missions by the US against al-Shabaab targets (Keating & Waldman, 2019; Vito, 2018; Williams et al., 2018).

The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Organization (TSCTP), a multi-agency activity to assist collaborating nations in West and North Africa combat inborn fear-monger dangers, has included the US within the Sahel range. The TSCTP helps countries counting Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Chad with resistance help, regulation backing, as well as financial help. The TSCTP, in any case, has come under fire for being excessively military, clumsy, and insufficiently attending to the fundamental reasons for radicalism and turmoil within the locale. Concurring to a later appraisal by the Office of the Auditor Common of the State Division, the TSCTP had deficiently observing, dishonourable monetary administration, and a need for collaboration over a few divisions (Blanchard, 2014; Bray, 2011; Camara, 2021).

In Operation Barkhane, which encompasses a significant armed footprint within the Sahel, the US moreover works with France. Al-Qaeda within the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Islamic State within the More prominent Sahara (ISGS), and Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) are as were some of the fear-monger associations that are being combated within the locale by France and a union of European and African countries. The G5 Sahel Joint Constrain, which comprises forces from Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Chad, is one of the territorial endeavours that the US has too supported. To battle fear-monger assaults and universal wrongdoing, the G5 Sahel Joint Drive is serious about making strides in security participation and coordination among these countries (Camara, 2021; Dieng, 2019; Rupesinghe, 2018; UN, 2022a). Other than contributing to its equipped and security support, the US also offers budgetary bolster for improvement and crisis assistance to countries within the Sahel and Horn of Africa that are impacted by fear-based oppression and violence. One of the greatest compassionate help suppliers

to Somalia, the US moreover underpins activities to progress popular government, human rights, and financial improvement there (Kabore, 2023; Manu, 2021; Vito, 2018). Various advancement endeavours and programs, counting those advancing women's strengthening, nourishment security, health, education, and climate strength, are also supported by the US within the Sahel locale. In any case, various impediments and restrictions to the methodology exist, including political turmoil, offence, breaches of human rights, a dearth of participation, asset deficiencies, and moving conditions on the ground. As a result, it is basic that the US persistently assess and alter its technique to form beyond any doubt it is fruitful, beneficial, and open to the prerequisites and objectives of those living in these regions.

Military Endeavors

Arrangements of Military Powers and Assets

The US military has taken portion in anti-terrorist operations inside the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. The US military operations inside the Sahel and Horn of Africa have been encouraged by the Joined Together States Africa Command (AFRICOM). AFRICOM has been making a difference in officers and conducting facilitated military operations to combat the fear-based oppressor hazard shown by affiliations like al-Qaida and al-Shabaab. Since 2015, the US military has begun sending troops and equipment to the Sahel and Horn of Africa. The dangers that US military qualities inside the locale stand up to were brought to light in 2017 when four US officers were murdered in a fear-based oppressor attack in Niger. Within the Sahel and Horn of Africa, the US military has been supporting and educating territorial security powers (Halt, 2017; Townsend, 2021; Waldhauser, 2018). The US military's counterterrorism strategy inside the Sahel and Horn of Africa, be that because it may, requires cautious thought. Reusing the same counterterrorism techniques whereas criticising the conduct of other nations would not have much of an influence on African governments, who are attempting to discover more all-encompassing answers to their security issues.

The US military has extended its operations within the Sahel and Horn of Africa, sending a couple of 1,500 staff there and creating a meander station in Niger that's planning to be utilized as a Launchpad for meander assaults against targets in West and North Africa. The Multinational Joint Task Compel (MNJTF) and G5 Sahel Drive have both been calculated and counselling offers assistance from the US military. The Boko Haram radical in Nigeria is likely to be focused on by the meander base in Niger next to other Al-Qaeda and Daesh-connected combatants in Sahelian nations, especially the region around Lake Chad. In addition, the US has advertised calculated support and offered assistance to the Multinational Joint Assignment Oblige (MNJTF) inside the region. Over the past two long times, the number of US military staff in Niger has expanded from 100 to 800, making it the second-highest concentration in Africa, after the 4,000 in Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti (Agadez, 2018; Center for Preventive Movement, 2023b; Morgan & Drinking spree, 2017; Schmitt, 2018). There has to be a comprehensive appraisal of the US military's counterterrorism method inside the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Reusing the same counterterrorism methods while scrutinizing the conduct of other nations would not have much of an influence on African governments, who are looking for more all-encompassing answers to their security issues.

Political Activities

Locks in with Territorial Governments and Organizations

The office of the extraordinary agent for the Sahel was newly established by the joined Together States. In the beginning, the extraordinary agent is charged with boosting U.S. politics and tries to bargain with the inescapable peril of Rough Radical Associations. Dr J. Dwindle Pham, the primary U.S. agent for the Sahel designated by the Trump organization in Walk 2020, emphatically advances political and financial advancement, great administration, and advancement to bring about long-term peace and soundness within the locale. Despite his

position, the Biden organization has however to produce a successor. To successfully arrange American political endeavours, the approaching Sahel envoy must have solid ties to Washington and the locale (Pamuk, 2020; US Division, 2020).

Mali, which is at the heart of the complicated issues influencing the Sahel, has been plagued by uncertainty ever since a military overthrow toppled a president elected democratically in 2012. The same situation happened in Admirable 2020 when another military mediation drove President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who had been chosen really, from control. After the coup, a transitional government was made, and a modern president was chosen. The U.S. agent to the UN contended for Mali to hold inclusive and fair elections at the conclusion of the 18-month move period amid a meeting of the UN Security Committee in early April (Lederer, 2021; Taylor, 2020). The later comments made by the Joined together States within the Security Committee have been famous by the Malian specialists. Washington has taken incredible care to freely denounce important regional destabilising scenes, in spite of the fact that. It'll be significant for the Joined together States to take a stand by making clear and targeted announcements to set its diplomatic authority within the Sahel. In conjunction with this, the U.S. ought to viably use its nearness in noteworthy worldwide associations including the African Union, the Joined Together Countries, and the Financial Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (VOA, 2021; W7VOA, 2020).

The United States should think about reconsidering its Sahel policy while acknowledging its effectiveness in resolving localised issues and terrorist threats through national and regional organisations. The region has needed foreign assistance due to the presence of weak armed forces, insecure borders, and unstable political structures. It would be beneficial for both the United States and its allies in the Sahel to shift the allocation of resources towards a carefully thought-out diplomatic framework. A counterterrorism strategy that is too focused on the military may be ineffective. A step in the right direction would surely be moving towards a strategy that prioritises

improving and expanding diplomatic activities in Washington and the Sahel area (Camara, [2021](#); Coakley, 2021).

Challenges in Implementing US Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Over the years, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) policy framework has provided significant United States security support to Sahel states including Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Chad. A multi-agency initiative called the TSCTP was established in 2005 to help partner nations in West and North Africa deal with domestic terrorism threats. The TSCTP, which tackles political, development, socioeconomic, and governance issues, is the theoretical foundation of U.S. foreign policy in the Sahel (Camara, [2021](#); Tinti, 2012). The millions of dollars annually spent on security aid and institutional backing for internal fighting against extremist organisations in the Sahel illustrate that the US involvement has been too military. Unfortunately, civilian fatalities, chronic human rights violations, and extensive corruption have been frequent outcomes of the U.S.-backed battles against terrorism in the region. Human Rights Watch alleged more than 600 illegal deaths by Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso armed forces since 2019 while conducting operations to combat terrorism (Bamako, [2021](#); Tinti, [2012](#)).

The TSCTP's shortcomings highlight an essential conceptual weakness that makes evaluating counterterrorism actions carried out on foreign soil all but impossible. The United States has provided the French military with crucial logistical support and important information in the Sahel region. The defence minister of France's earlier trip to Washington confirms the importance of the U.S. position in the region. During her trip, Minister Florence Parly made it quite apparent that France's military efforts in the area would suffer grave defeats if the United States withdrew the vital information and logistical support it gives to its French friends in West Africa. As a result, a total withdrawal of American forces from Africa would not be a good idea. Nevertheless, given that France continues to spearhead

counterterrorism initiatives in the Sahel, the US has the chance to establish itself as a regional diplomatic power (DeYoung, 2020; Reuters Staff, [2020](#)).

The Sahel's social, economic, and security challenges cannot now be adequately addressed by the United States foreign policy tools. The United States has to alter the way its foreign policy bureaus operate if it hopes to prevent the Sahel's issues from outpacing Washington's reactionary measures as they have in the past. (Camara, [2021](#)).

Complex Political and Security Environments

Executing the US counterterrorism approach will be troublesome given the complicated political and security circumstances within the Sahel and Horn of Africa. The spread of fear-based oppressor exercises towards the West African coast has driven a worsening security circumstance within the Sahel locale, which incorporates nations like Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. Amina Mohammed underlined Africa's coordinated involvement with fear-mongering as a genuine danger to universal peace and security when tending to the sake of the UN Secretary-General. Since the flimsiness and viciousness of the landmass, psychological militant associations like Daesh, Al-Qaida, and their partners have expanded attacks that have claimed numerous lives. The bigger impacts of fear-mongering have a negative effect on endless lives and jobs, excessively hurting ladies and young ladies who as of now are involved in precariousness and bad form. Due to the nearness of rough Daesh collaborators, the Sahel and West Africa are especially crucial regions. These associations have expanded their impact within the customarily terrorism-free nations of the Inlet of Guinea as well as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The lines isolating fear mongers from non-state-equipped associations and criminal systems are getting more darkened as certain associations have advanced into guerilla substances that involve domain and restricting state specialists (Mohammed, 2022; UN, 2022b).

A rough revolt that began in Mali in 2012 has caused a complicated and connected security

predicament within the range. In conjunction with other issues like political turmoil, serious financial hardship, and climate change, the Horn of Africa, which comprises countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, too should bargain with these issues. The Multinational Joint Assignment Drive within the Lake Chad Bowl and the Bunch of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) are two of the different territorial tries to combat fear-mongering in Africa that require the universal community's full support and long-term commitment. Indeed in spite of the fact that the US has given African countries a record sum of counterterrorism subsidizing, the number of fear-based oppressor strikes within the range has nearly quadrupled in 2018 (Tesfaye, [2022](#); US Congress, 2019; USIP, 2022).

The US is endeavouring to extend the capacity of its African partners to halt, recognize, dishearten, obstruct, and rebuff psychological militants all through the landmass. Within the Sahel and Horn of Africa districts, discussions approximately security and success are getting increasingly centred on the relationship between climate alter and insecurity. To get a parcel of consideration is the Horn of Africa, specifically the expansion, where the Inlet countries have been more intense. Understanding the unmistakable neighbourhood circumstances that terrorist organisations point to misuse and the elements that can inspire individuals to connect their cause will offer assistance in tending to these issues (Make, 2020; UN, 2022b; US Senate, 2009). A comprehensive approach to tending to the causes of violent radicalism and countering radicalization must moreover incorporate ladies as proactive participants.

Conclusion

In the chapter, the US counterterrorism policy in the Sahel and Horn of Africa region is examined, including a variety of topics such as development, military, and diplomatic operations. It examines the advantages and disadvantages of this policy, highlights the origins and past of terrorist organizations in the area, and assesses the success of US counterterrorism measures. It is obvious that terrorism and violent extremism pose serious problems for the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions. Many terrorist organizations, including AQIM, ISGS, JNIM, Al-Shabaab, and ISS, have appeared in these regions. Although they have various objectives, these organizations frequently want to impose Islamic caliphates, overthrow governments, and foment instability. These organizations' influence goes beyond local boundaries, endangering global security and triggering humanitarian disasters.

To combat terrorism in the region, the US has adopted a multipronged strategy that includes military operations, diplomatic efforts, and development assistance. It works along with regional allies, including France, and supports programs like the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). Issues including political unrest, breaches of human rights, and a lack of resources hamper the success of this technique. As a result of the serious security risks presented by terrorist groups, the US counterterrorism policy in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions is a complicated and dynamic undertaking. Although there have been commendable attempts, problems still exist, and a more thorough and flexible strategy is needed to address the origins of extremism and advance stability in the region.

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