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## SECURING THE SAHEL

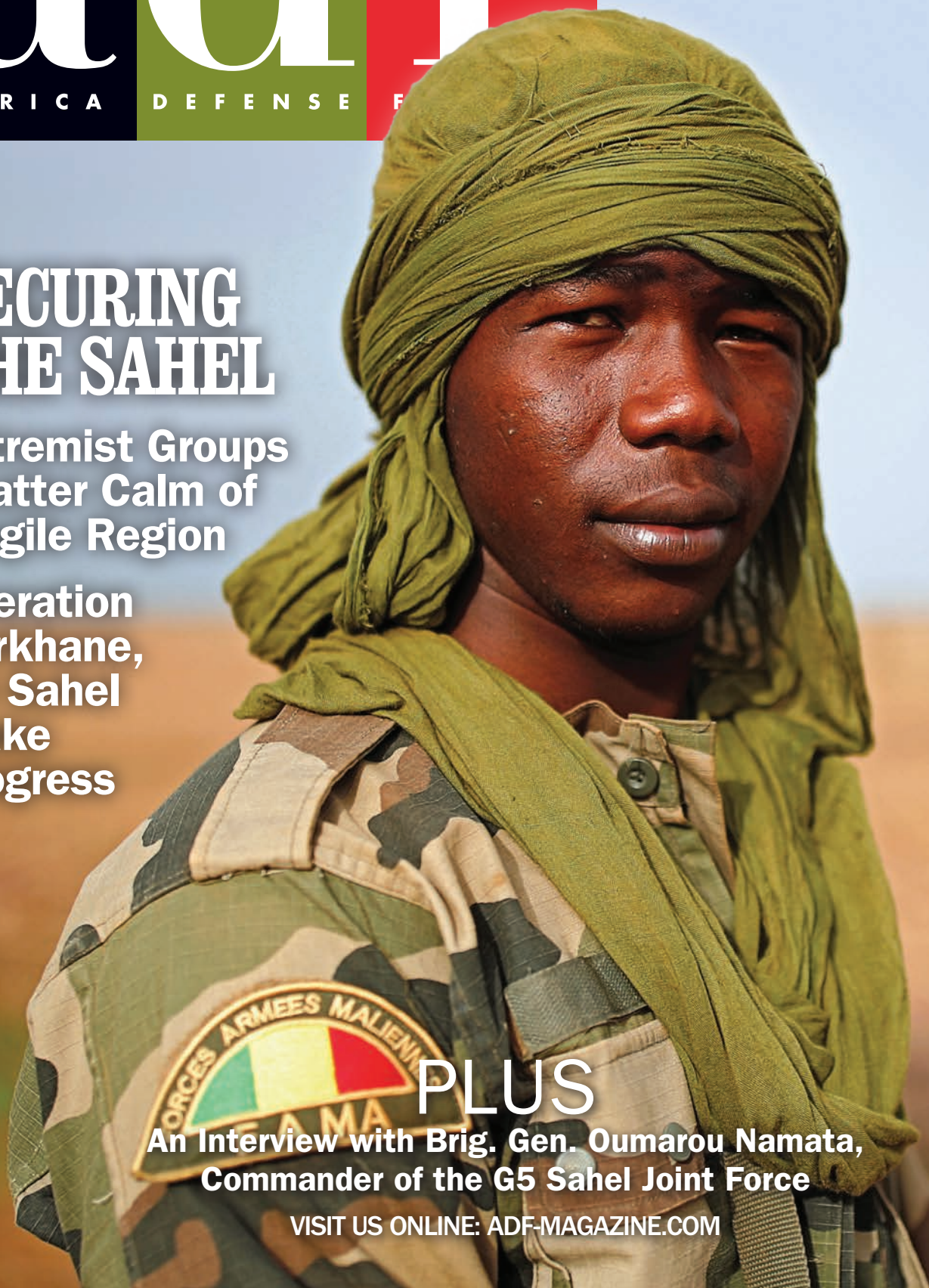
Extremist Groups  
Shatter Calm of  
Fragile Region

Operation  
Barkhane,  
G5 Sahel  
Make  
Progress

## PLUS

An Interview with Brig. Gen. Oumarou Namata,  
Commander of the G5 Sahel Joint Force

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**ON THE COVER:**

A Malian Soldier patrols  
with France's Operation  
Barkhane in Ndaki in  
July 2019. REUTERS

The people of the Sahel are resilient. They have to be. The 5,000-kilometer-long band below the Sahara is marked by extreme beauty and a harsh climate. Farmers defy the odds to grow crops in semiarid conditions. Herders travel long distances to find pastures for their flocks.

Communities uphold traditions that date back centuries.

But in recent years residents of this region have battled a new foe: extremism. Since the 2012 Malian crisis, homegrown and foreign extremist groups have expanded in the region. They've recruited young people, exacerbated ethnic tensions and destabilized governments. The past two years have been the deadliest on record for terror attacks in the Sahel.

Security forces are responding. In 2017, five Sahel countries created the G5 Sahel Joint Force consisting of 5,000 Soldiers. The effort is designed to degrade terrorist strongholds and shut down cross-border trafficking routes.

Another effort is Operation Barkhane, a continuation of France's intervention in Mali that began in 2013. The 4,500-person mission emphasizes training and joint operations with national militaries. With permanent bases in Mali, Niger and Chad and numerous forward operating bases, Barkhane has successfully degraded the leadership of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and other groups.

In Mali, the 16,000-person United Nations mission, MINUSMA, works to preserve a fragile peace and allow displaced civilians to return home. Gains there have been hard-won. With more than 200 peacekeepers killed since its inception, MINUSMA is the deadliest peacekeeping mission in the world. But the sacrifice made by these peacekeepers is allowing for progress. The mission has provided the security needed for a "national dialogue" led by Mali's president, which is aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation.

Achieving a lasting peace in the Sahel will not be easy. Ethnic disputes and fights over natural resources promise to continue as they have for centuries. But the people of the region know that terrorism is not endemic to the Sahel, and they are joining to reject it.

Regional security efforts are a sign that the people of the Sahel now see that their fates are linked. The G5 Sahel sums this up with the motto: "For a Shared Prosperity." For the region to prosper, its militaries, governments, civil society leaders and civilians must work together.

U.S. Africa Command Staff

Nigerien Armed Forces members clear a room during a training exercise in Agadez.

STAFF SGT. DEVIN BOYER/  
U.S. AIR FORCE



## Sahel Security

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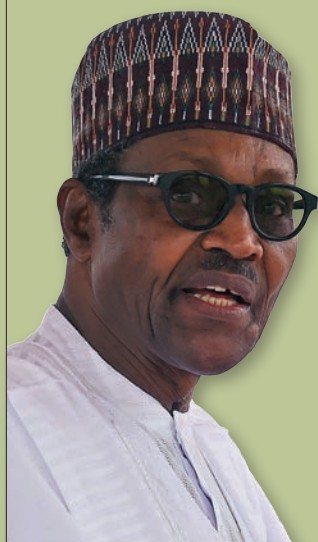
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# ‘Developing a Sustainable Solution’



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari spoke on Democracy Day on June 12, 2019.

*Until 2018, Democracy Day, which marks the restoration of democracy in Nigeria, was observed on May 29. But Buhari has since moved recognition to June 12 to correspond with the day in 1993 when presidential elections were held for the first time since the 1983 military coup. The speech has been edited to fit this format.*



Nigerian military commanders inspect arms and ammunition recovered from Boko Haram. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Terrorism and insecurity are worldwide phenomena, and even the best-policed countries are experi-

encing increasing incidents of unrest.

Most of the instances of intercommunal and interreligious strife and violence were and still are a result of sponsorship or incitements by ethnic, political or religious leaders hoping to benefit by exploiting our divisions and fault lines.

Nigeria is the Big Brother to our neighbors. We are the shock absorber of the West African subregion, the bulwark of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

At home, we have been successful in forging a nation from different ethnicities and language groups. Our evolution and integration into one nation continues apace.

When I took the oath of office on 29 May 2015, insecurity reigned. Apart from occupying 18 local governments in the northeast, Boko Haram could at will attack any city, including the federal capital, could threaten any institution, including bombing

the United Nations building and police headquarters in Abuja.

Admittedly, some of the challenges still remain in kidnappings and banditry in some rural areas. The great difference between 2015 and today is that we are meeting these challenges with much greater support to the security forces in terms of money, equipment and improved local intelligence. We are meeting these challenges with superior strategy, firepower and resolve.

In the face of these challenges, our government elected by the people in 2015 and reelected in March 2019 has been mapping out policies, measures and laws to maintain our unity and at the same time lift the bulk of our people out of poverty and onto the road to prosperity.

When economic inequality rises, insecurity rises. But when we actively reduce inequality through investments in social and hard infrastructure, insecurity reduces.

The disturbing increase in rates of kidnapping, banditry and other criminal activities can be attributed to the decades of neglect and corruption in social investment, infrastructure development,

education and health care.

The ECOWAS and Sahel regions, starting from Chad all the way to Mali, are also experiencing adverse impacts of drought and desertification, which have triggered waves of human displacement, conflicts between farmers and herdsman, terrorism, and a fundamental socio-economic change to our way of life.

These issues are regional and not unique to Nigeria. The problems call for increased regional and international cooperation in developing a sustainable solution.

This government will not tolerate actions by any individual or groups of individuals who seek to attack our way of life or those who seek to corruptly enrich themselves at the expense of the rest of us. We will crack down on those who incite ordinary innocent people to violence and unrest.

Our focus will not be to help the privileged few, but to ensure that Nigeria works for Nigerians of all persuasions.



# GHANA GRAPPLES

## With Illegal Fishing as Stocks Dive

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE | PHOTOS BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**F**ish vendor Mercy Allotey waits in Accra, Ghana, for customers to buy the freshest catch. But she says fishermen are netting less because illegal techniques and unscrupulous trawlers have devastated stocks.

“It is spoiling our fishing,” she said. “Many times when they go, they don’t get the fish.”

The fishing sector supports more than 2 million people, and it generates about 60% of the protein in Ghanaians’ diet.

United Nations data show that production fell from almost 420,000 metric tons in 1999 to 202,000 metric tons in 2014. To blame are the mainly Chinese-operated trawlers and damaging practices employed by artisanal fishermen as they make up for losses.

In a practice known as saiko, trawlers illegally target the staple catch of local fishermen and sell it to communities via middlemen. Ghana wants to crack down on saiko and other illegal practices employed by local fishermen, including using bright lights, poison and dynamite.

The government banned artisanal fishing from May 2019 to June 2019 and banned trawlers in August and September 2019.

“Fisheries [are] linked to food security, the national security and the survival of Ghana as a country,” said Kamal-Deen Ali, director of the Accra-based Centre for Maritime Law and Security Africa.

Few know the threats better than Nii Quaye, a former fisherman who now works as a spokesman



Ghanaian fisherman Eric Quaye Ade fishes off the coast of Jamestown, Accra’s historic fishing community.

for the trade in Accra’s Jamestown district. He said fishermen had not seen an increase in stocks after the artisanal suspension, and that success will come with law enforcement.

He fears that if nothing major is done, there soon may not be any fish left to catch. “Everybody in Jamestown will be hungry because there is no fish,” he said. “We are begging, so [that] they stop it.”



# HIDDEN MYSTERIES ..... LIE IN WAIT INSIDE ..... *Kenya's Fossil Treasury*

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Something extraordinary lay inside the wooden drawer in an office behind Nairobi National Museum. It's a monstrous jawbone with colossal fangs — the only known remains of a prehistoric mega-carnivore declared to be a new species in 2019.

"This is one of a kind," said Kenyan paleontologist Job Kibii, holding up the 23-million-year-old bones of *Simbakubwa kutokaafrika*.

For nearly 40 years, the specimens — proof of the existence of Africa's largest-ever predator, a 1,500 kilogram meat eater that dwarfed lions — sat in a drawer in downtown Nairobi.

How did these fossils, first excavated on a dig in western Kenya in the early 1980s, go unrecognized for so long?

Kibii, who presides over the National Museums of Kenya's paleontology department, has an idea. "We have tons and tons of specimens ... that haven't been analyzed," he said. "Definitely there are things waiting to be discovered."

A card-based filing system is used to find specific fossils. But the collection has grown exponentially, faster than Kibii and his team can keep up.

Between 7,000 and 10,000 new fossils arrive at the lab every year, Kibii said, overwhelming his 15 staff members who must clean and log each specimen. By law, fossils uncovered in Kenya must go to the museum to be accessioned — labeled, recorded and stored for future generations.

If an expert is not on hand to identify a specimen, things can get wrongly categorized or waylaid.

"We have fossils from the 1980s that have not been accessioned," said collections manager Francis Muchemi.

*Simbakubwa* met a similar fate. Thought to be a type of hyena, it was filed away in a back room and ignored for decades.

Kibii is one of just seven paleontologists in Kenya. He trained in South Africa because there was no course available at home. He hopes to acquire collapsible shelves to create space in the collection.

Even better, a micro-CT scanner — a powerful tool driving breakthroughs in the world of paleontology — would allow a fresh look at the museum's most-forgotten corners.

"I always wonder what lies in there on some of these shelves," Kibii said.

The 23-million-year-old bones of the giant *Simbakubwa kutokaafrika* (big lion from Africa) is a highlight of the Nairobi National Museum in Kenya.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



## NEW TB REGIMEN SLASHES TREATMENT TIME IN SOUTH AFRICA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

South African fashion designer Innocent Molefe was diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) in 2015. Three years later it

developed into a multidrug-resistant strain requiring painful injections and heaps of pills.

Three months after the first round of treatment, he relapsed and started a second round. At the end of it, he still wasn't cured.

Thanks to a new treatment approved in August 2019 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, he is clear of the disease and back to work. "I was willing to beat TB, and I'm living proof," he said.

Of the more than 1.6 million TB deaths recorded every year, more than 75,000 are in South Africa. In 2017, South Africa recorded more than 322,000 active TB cases.

The new regimen will drastically shorten the treatment period. The three-drug treatment consists of bedaquiline, pretomanid and linezolid, collectively known as the BPaL regimen. Pretomanid is the novel compound developed by the New York-based nonprofit organization TB Alliance and which received the FDA greenlight in August 2019.

The regimen underwent trials at three sites in South Africa involving 109 patients. It achieved a 90% success rate after six months of treatment and six months of follow-ups.

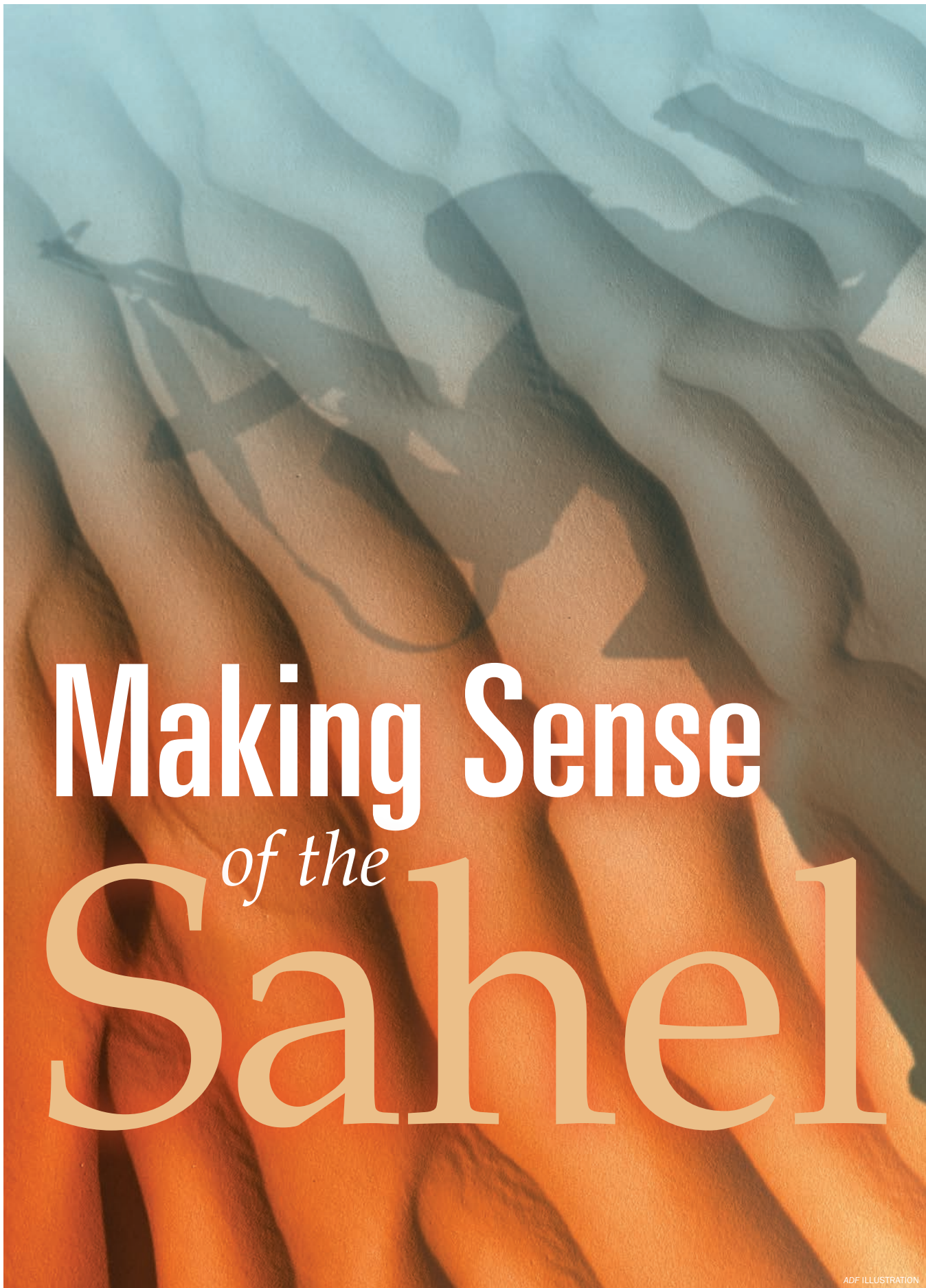
Treatment involves five pills of the three drugs taken daily over six months. This compares to between 30 and 40 drugs that multiple drug-resistant TB patients take daily for up to two years.

Tuberculosis, a preventable and treatable chronic lung disease, produces more than 10 million recorded cases per year. The disease has worsened as it has become increasingly resistant to medicines. TB Alliance started designing the trial in 2014.

The new treatment course, above left, significantly reduces the amount of medicine TB patients must take.

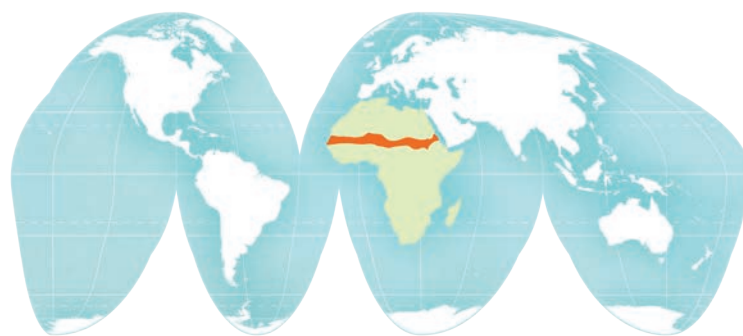
AFP/GETTY IMAGES





# Making Sense *of the* Sahel

ADF ILLUSTRATION



## IN RECENT YEARS, THE REGION HAS BECOME A BASE FOR VIOLENT EXTREMISTS AND THOSE FIGHTING THEM

ADF STAFF

**T**he Sahel, a semiarid region stretching from Senegal on the Atlantic coast to Eritrea and the Red Sea, has been a dividing line in Africa for centuries.

It separates the Sahara to the north from lush savannahs to the south and stretches 5,408 kilometers and covers 3,053,210 square kilometers. Its terrain includes plateaus and mountain ranges, grasslands and shrublands. There is little surface water.

The region stays mostly hot and dry year-round with winds and sparse rainfall, usually no more than 200 to 600 millimeters between May and September. Even then, most rain falls in its southern extremes.

As populations grew in the Sahel in the latter half of the 20th century, erosion and desertification increased. Farmers and townspeople began to fell trees and shrubs for firewood and clear land for crops. Livestock chewed

away the remaining grass cover. Runoff from rain swept away top soils, leaving behind arid and barren land.

Culturally, the Sahel marks a transition from North Africa, which historically has been aligned with the Middle East in terms of language, ethnicity and religion. The nomadic peoples of the Sahara and northern Sahel stand in stark contrast to the more stationary societies in the Sub-Saharan region. Sahel countries such as Mali and Niger have vast, ungoverned spaces in which Islamic nomadic Tuaregs roam.

Terrain, climate, culture, religion, ethnicity, history, tradition — the Sahel serves as a transitional boundary for them all. Along that line is strung an array of security challenges that find African and international security forces confronting militants and terrorists from Mali to Chad.





## SAHEL-BASED MILITANT GROUPS

The geography of Sahelian nations and the remoteness of their capitals and large cities leaves large swaths of territory essentially ungoverned. Such is the case in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

In some cases, particularly regarding Mali and Niger, national boundaries separate culturally and ethnically similar groups. The borders of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are a hotbed of extremist activity in the Sahel.

Several extremist groups make their home in the Sahel. Many of those have morphed and merged with others, aligning themselves with larger, global terrorist groups. The most prominent — past and present — are listed below:

- **JAMA'AT NUSRAT AL-ISLAM WAL-MUSLIMIN (JNIM)** — Formed in March 2017, JNIM is a coalition of several militant groups: Ansar al-Dine, Macina Liberation Front, Katiba Serma, AQIM Sahara and Al Mourabitoun. Ansar al-Dine's leader, Iyad Ag Ghaly, assumed leadership of the coalition. The group, whose name means "Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims," intends to expel non-Muslim "occupiers" from West Africa, particularly French forces and participants in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali. JNIM adheres to Salafist Islamic teachings and wants to bring the region under Shariah. The group is part of al-Qaida's network and had between 1,000 and 2,000 fighters as of September 2018, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The group is most active in Mali, waging attacks from Bamako to as far north as Taoudenni. It also has attacked in Burkina Faso and Niger.
- **ANSAR AL-DINE** — Iyad Ag Ghaly founded the group in November 2011 after he failed to become leader of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL), which pushed for secession from Mali in 2012. The Islamic militant Tuareg group operates in the region around Kidal. The Salafist group, whose name means "Defenders of the Faith," was among the affiliated organizations that took over northern Mali in March 2012 after a military coup, according to Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation. In July 2012, Ansar al-Dine made headlines when it destroyed seven mausoleums honoring Sufi saints in Timbuktu, claiming that the shrines were idolatrous. When operating, the group was thought to have between 100 and 1,000 members.
- **MACINA LIBERATION FRONT (FLM)** — Amadou Koufa founded the group, which operates in the Mopti region, in 2015. FLM, also known as Katiba Macina,



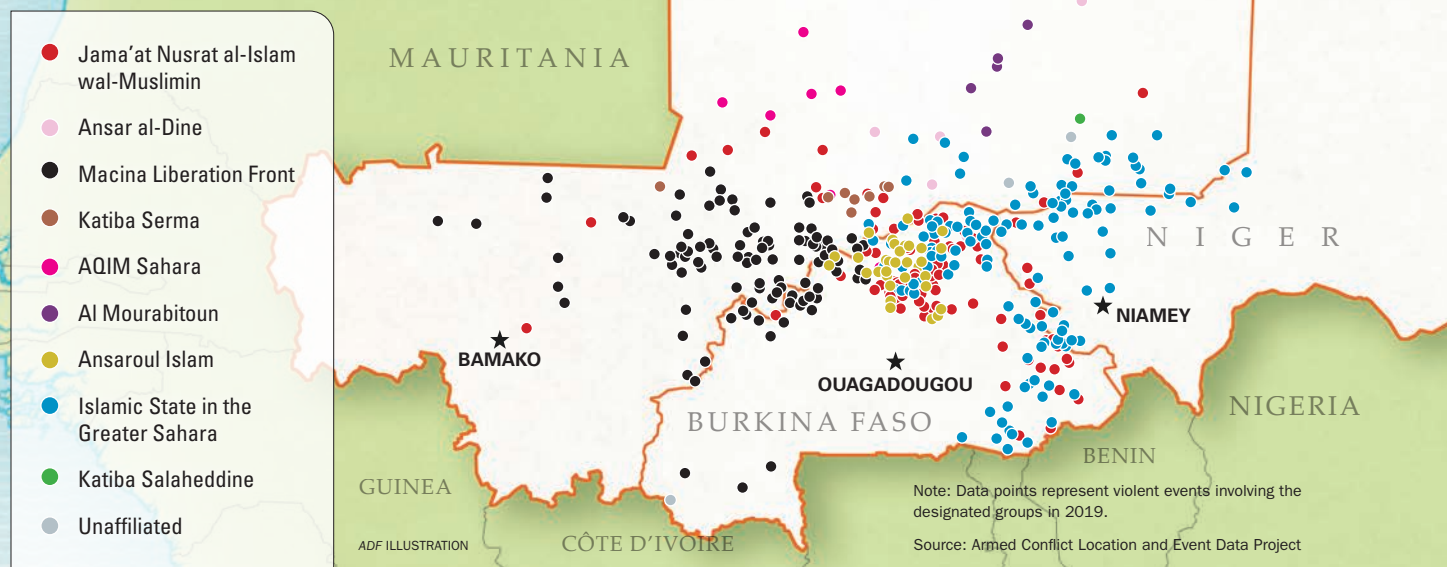
A Malian soldier patrols at the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako in November 2015, two days after an Al Mourabitoun attack killed nearly two dozen people.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

claimed it would try to "reinstall the Islamic Macina Republic," a reference to the Macina Empire, a theocratic society that lasted from 1818 to 1863 in Mali's Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu regions, according to the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). The empire primarily was composed of ethnic Fulanis, and it applied Islamic rule. The FLM uses this historical narrative in hopes of gaining popular support to take over central Mali. Some believe the group includes former members of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa.

- **MOVEMENT FOR ONENESS AND JIHAD IN WEST AFRICA (MUJAO)** — Ahmed el-Tilemsi and Hamad el-Khairi formed MUJAO in 2011, splitting it off from AQIM. MUJAO announced itself by kidnapping three European aid workers in Tindoug, Algeria, in October 2011, according to Stanford. MUJAO, composed mostly of Tuaregs, wanted to establish Shariah in the region. During the 2012 Malian crisis, MUJAO occupied the area around Gao. About a year later, the group merged with the Al Mulathamun Battalion and formed Al Mourabitoun. It is possible that a few MUJAO fighters still operate under that name.
- **KATIBA SERMA** — The group is a semi-autonomous arm of the FLM and is led by Abu Jalil al Fulani, according to ACSS. It operates in the Serma region between Gao and Mopti.
- **AL-QAIDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB (AQIM)** — This group has its roots in the Algerian Civil War. It sprang from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which participated in the war, in 1998. When it emerged from the GIA, it was called the Salafist Group

## Violent Events Linked to Militant Groups in the Sahel



for Preaching and Combat. The name changed to AQIM in 2006 when it formally aligned itself with the global terrorist organization. AQIM is active in the trafficking of drugs, weapons and humans, and it often has kidnapped Westerners for ransom. In 2017, the group's Sahara branch merged with Al Mourabitoun, Ansar al-Dine, the Macina Liberation Front and Katiba Serma to form JNIM.

- **AQIM SAHARA** — This is al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb's branch in Mali and the southwest corner of Niger. It once was led by Djamel Okacha (also known as Yahya Abu al Hammam), who is now dead.
- **AL MOURABITOUN** — The name means "The Sentinels." The group formed in August 2013 after the merger of MUJAO and the Al Mulathamun Battalion. It operates in Mali, primarily around Gao, and pledged its allegiance to al-Qaida in mid-2015. Its aim is to establish Shariah, unite Muslims and attack Westerners in North Africa, according to Stanford. Despite flirtations with the Islamic State, the group stayed allied with al-Qaida, although operating with autonomy. In early 2017, Al Mourabitoun merged to form JNIM. One estimate, from 2014, put the number of fighters at 100.
- **ANSAROUL ISLAM** — Malaam Ibrahim Dicko, now deceased, founded the group in 2016. It is based in Burkina Faso's Soum province, which borders southern Mali. The jihadi group is the first such organization to arise in Burkina Faso, which before had seen no significant militant jihadi violence. Ansaroul Islam announced its formation after attacking a Burkinabé-French

military camp in December 2016, according to Stanford. The group, which operates mostly in Burkina Faso and Mali, seeks to rebuild Djelgodji, an ancient Fulani empire that ended after French colonization in the 1800s. Its targets include civilians, French counterterrorism forces and Burkinabé security personnel. It is thought to have no more than a few hundred active fighters now.

- **ISLAMIC STATE IN THE GREATER SAHARA (ISGS)** — The group operates in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. It broke off from Al Mourabitoun in May 2015 when Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi swore allegiance to the Islamic State and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who died during a United States assault in October 2019. Although ISGS is recognized as an affiliate, the breadth of its support is not clear, according to Stanford. Among the group's Sahel attacks was the ambush that killed four U.S. Green Berets and several Nigerien Soldiers in October 2017. For about two years now, the group has clashed repeatedly with French forces and its allies under Operation Barkhane. ISGS was estimated to have 60 core members in 2018.
- **KATIBA SALAHEDDINE** — Sultan Ould Badi, a former member of AQIM and co-founder of MUJAO, founded the group in 2011. In 2016, Badi allied himself with ISGS' al-Sahrawi, a colleague from his days with MUJAO.
- **UNAFFILIATED** — Some militant groups either could not or have chosen not to claim responsibility for attacks.



# SECURITY EFFORTS IN THE SAHEL

Since unrest broke out in northern Mali in 2012, the Sahel also has been home to a growing number of security efforts. France, long a colonial presence in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, began the fight to restore order with Operation Serval, an effort joined by Chad's Army. Serval later

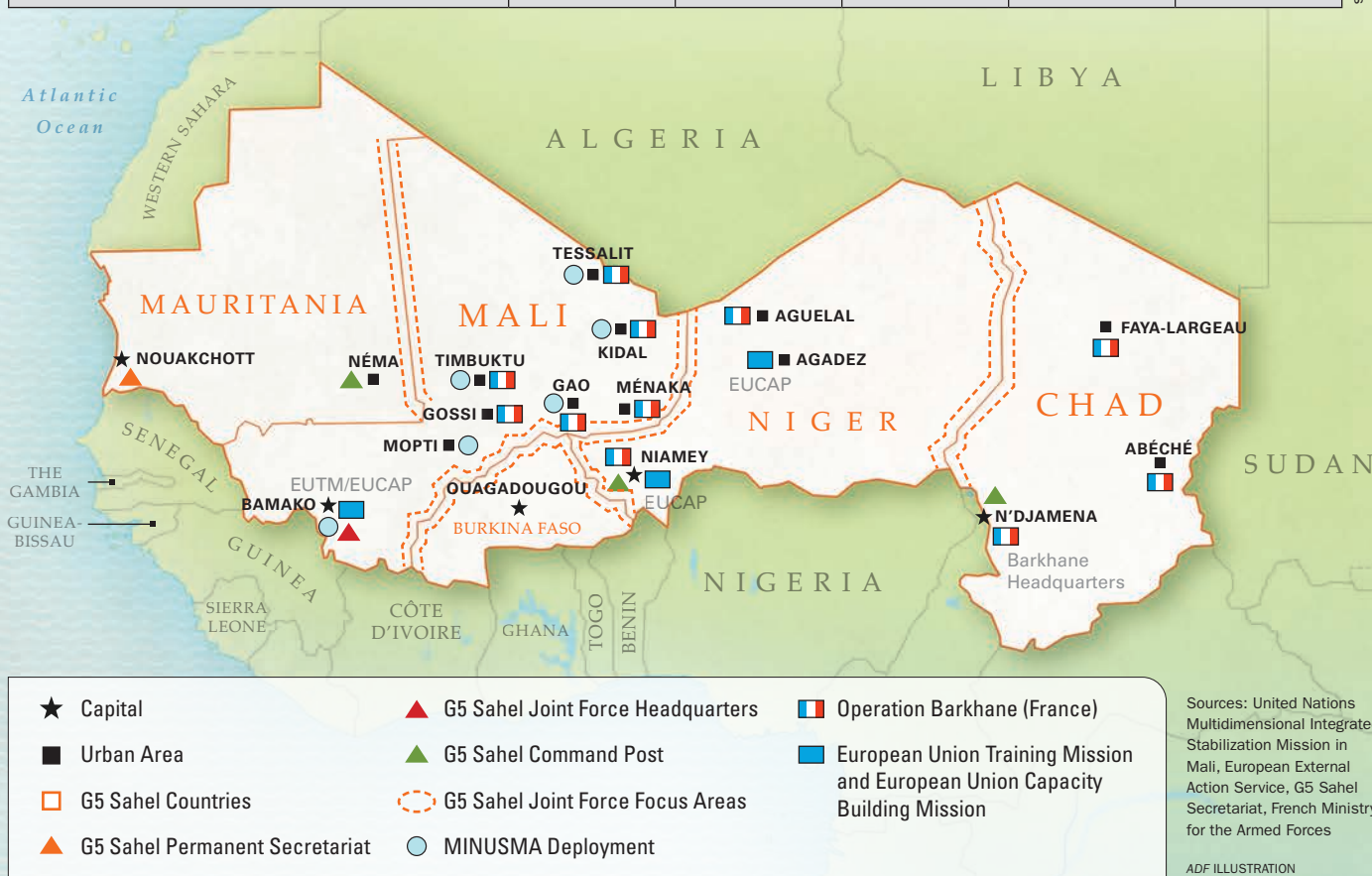
gave way to Operation Barkhane.

The United Nations and the European Union also are working to fend off extremist threats, and five Sahelian nations have banded together to address the problem themselves. Below is a look at the various regional security missions:

## Regional Security Responses in the Sahel

Mission	Location	Dates	Personnel Deployed	African Troops Trained/ Deployed	Annual Budget (\$ mil)
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)	Mali	2013–present	15,162	8,886	1,221
G5 Sahel Joint Force	G5 Sahel countries	2017–present	5,000	5,000	130
Operation Barkhane (France)	Sahel	2014–present	4,500	n/a	797
EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM)	Mali	2013–present	580	12,000	34
EU Capacity Building Mission in the Sahel (EUCAP Sahel Mali)	Mali	2015–present	140	6,000	38
EU Capacity Building Mission in the Sahel (EUCAP Sahel Niger)	Niger	2012–present	200	13,000	36

Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies



## • UNITED NATIONS MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTEGRATED STABILIZATION MISSION IN MALI (MINUSMA):

In January 2012, the Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL) joined with Islamic armed groups Ansar al-Dine, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), as well as deserters from the Malian Armed Forces. Rebels attacked government forces in northern Mali and were bolstered by combatants coming in from Libya, whose regime had just fallen.

In March 2012, soldiers from units defeated in the north led a coup, which accelerated the state's collapse there. Soon, extremists controlled Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. Ansar al-Dine and MUJAO had driven MNL out of the area.

To restore order, the Economic Community of West African States organized the African-led International Support Mission to Mali to back the government against extremists. In April 2013, the United Nations Security Council established MINUSMA and took over.

MINUSMA supports political and transitional processes as authorities stabilize the country. The mission also ensures security, stabilization and protection of civilians; supports national political dialogue and reconciliation; and helps reestablish state authority, rebuilding of the security sector, and promotion and protection of human rights.

## Strength

Deployed number of personnel  
(as of October 2019)

(Civilian data as of May 2018)



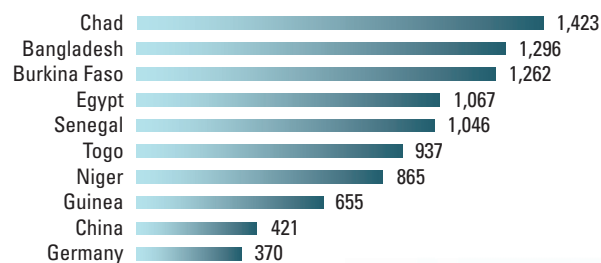
Authorized number  
of personnel



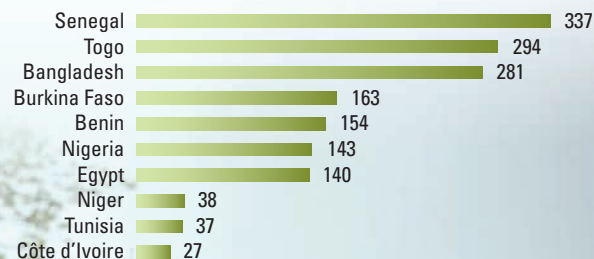
\*Military personnel include contingent troops, experts on mission and staff officers.

## Contributing Countries

Top 10 troop contributors (as of October 2019)



Top 10 police contributors (as of October 2019)



Source: United Nations

ADF ILLUSTRATION



A Dogon village chief in Mali's So community meets with a Senegalese peacekeeper.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



## The G5 Sahel: A Joint Force to Tackle Security Threats



**3** Missions  
fighting terrorism,  
cross-border crime and  
human trafficking



**5** Countries  
Mauritania<sup>1</sup>, Mali<sup>2</sup>,  
Burkina Faso<sup>3</sup>, Niger<sup>4</sup>  
and Chad<sup>5</sup>



**5,000** Men  
spread across  
7 battalions in  
3 sectors

Source: France Diplomatie

ADF ILLUSTRATION

Mauritanian Soldiers  
stand guard at a G5  
Sahel Joint Force  
command post in  
the southeast of  
Mauritania near the  
Malian border.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





A Senegalese peacekeeper patrols the destroyed Fulani village of Bare in July 2019 as part of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



A French Soldier serving in Operation Barkhane talks with a vegetable grower during a civil-military cooperation patrol in Gossi, Mali, in July 2019. REUTERS

- OPERATION BARKHANE:** This French-led military intervention came after Operation Serval in August 2014. Unlike Serval, which was limited to Mali, Barkhane battles militants across the Sahel. Up to 4,500 Soldiers are deployed in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger with headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad, according to the European Council on Foreign Relations. Aircraft and intelligence bases are in Agadez, Arlit, Niamey and Tillabéry, Niger, and there are troops in central and northern Mali. Barkhane is named for a crescent-shaped dune found in the Sahara.
  - G5 SAHEL JOINT FORCE:** The G5 Sahel started in 2014 to foster economic cooperation and security among Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. In 2017, the alliance launched its joint security force to address terrorism, drug trafficking and human trafficking. The force, when fully operational, will consist of 5,000 personnel, mostly troops with some police officers and gendarmes. Personnel will be stationed across three sectors: the Western, in Mali and Mauritania; Central, in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger; and the Eastern, in Chad and Niger. The force headquarters began in Sévaré, Mali, but was moved to Bamako, Mali, after a June 2018 bomb attack. Each sector will have a secondary command post.
 

The force will focus on border zones. One zone will cover the Mali-Niger border, and one will oversee the Mali-Mauritania border. The third will provide security in the tri-border area where Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger meet.

Alpha Barry, Burkina Faso's minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, told the U.N. Security Council on May 16, 2019, that the Joint Force
- is 90% operational in the West, 74% in the Central region and 75% in the East. As of that time, the force had undertaken seven operations on human rights and humanitarian law.
- EUROPEAN UNION TRAINING MISSION IN MALI (EUTM MALI):** The mission, which began in 2013, is made up of almost 600 Soldiers from 22 EU members and five nonmember states. The EU's military strategy in Mali also addresses humanitarian and political development. It bolsters the capacity of the Malian Armed Forces so that it can defend the country. EUTM Mali trains and advises the Malian military, improves the military education system, and advises G5 Sahel Joint Force headquarters personnel.
  - EU CAPACITY BUILDING MISSION IN THE SAHEL (EUCAP SAHEL MALI):** This civilian mission, launched in April 2014, advises and trains Mali's gendarmerie, police, national guard and associated ministries. As of late 2018, the mission also was advising and training personnel in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and Niger. Mission headquarters in Bamako, Mali, has up to 200 local and international agents.
  - EU CAPACITY BUILDING MISSION IN THE SAHEL (EUCAP SAHEL NIGER):** The Nigerien government requested this civilian mission in 2012. More than 100 experts are in Niamey to advise, train and support Nigerien security authorities in fighting organized crime and terrorism. The mission also helps security forces control irregular migration and associated crime. □





G5 SAHEL JOINT FORCE





# 'A LONG-TERM STRUGGLE'

**AN INTERVIEW WITH BRIG. GEN. OUMAROU NAMATA,  
COMMANDER OF THE G5 SAHEL JOINT FORCE**

ADF STAFF

Brig. Gen. Oumarou Namata of Niger was named commander of the G5 Sahel Joint Force in July 2019. He is the third commander of the force, which is composed of up to 5,000 Soldiers and other personnel from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.



G5 Sahel forces in northern Niger receive provisions via aerial resupply during Operation Amane 2, a 10-day operation to degrade traffickers and terrorists near Niger's borders with Libya and Chad.

G5 SAHEL JOINT FORCE



G5 Sahel forces in northern Niger display a weapons cache discovered during Operation Amane 2.

G5 SAHEL JOINT FORCE





Namata has served in the Army since 1984 and was trained to command armored cavalry units. During his career he has held a wide range of posts, including diplomatic assignments as a defense attaché. In 2017, while he was commander of Niger's southeastern military sector near the border with Nigeria, he crafted a tactical response to Boko Haram fighters who were attacking civilians near the town of Bosso. The strategy is credited with turning the tide against the extremist group. Before his current role, Namata served as the deputy chief of staff of the Nigerien Land Forces.

Writing from the G5 headquarters in Bamako, Mali, Namata answered questions submitted by *ADF*. He said

his experience taking on Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin was formative but credited political leaders and the forces on the front lines for success there. He stressed that in a fight against terrorism, military forces must act with professionalism, care and efficiency.

"The fight against extremism and asymmetric threats teaches us to be careful and patient because it is a long-term struggle against a very stealthy enemy, with a high capacity for resilience," he wrote. "They remain difficult to grasp, since they mix in with the population. It will certainly take time, but we remain convinced that with a synergy of efforts, one day we will be able to put these armed terrorist groups out of business."





**“It will certainly take time, but we remain convinced that with a synergy of efforts, one day we will be able to put these armed terrorist groups out of business.”**

**– BRIG. GEN. OUMAROU NAMATA**

## **FIRST YEAR**

As he began commanding the G5, Namata emphasized several points:

- Improving the operational effectiveness of G5 units and reaching full capacity.
- Setting up coordinated or joint operations with national militaries or other partners.
- Starting the force’s police component.
- Improving the communications strategy to raise the force’s public visibility and acceptance.
- Following U.N. Resolution 2480 which calls for increased cooperation, information sharing and support of the G5 Sahel Joint Force by the United Nations and other international players.

A Soldier looks toward the graves of 71 Nigerien colleagues killed in an ambush on December 10, 2019. AFP/GETTY IMAGES





Members of Burkina Faso's honor guard stand at the entrance of a conference center before the opening ceremony of a G5 Sahel security summit in Ouagadougou on September 14, 2019. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

During the second half of 2019, Namata said the Joint Force registered a number of successes. He cited dozens of terrorists neutralized or captured, arms caches uncovered, improvised explosive device (IED) manufacturing plants dismantled, motorbikes seized, and communications equipment and other hardware taken off the battlefield. One notable success took place between October 1 and 10 during Operation Amane 2 in northern Niger: G5 forces uncovered a large weapons cache and stopped a pickup truck carrying weapons that had crossed over from Libya.

In early November, G5 forces took part in a mission in the Gourma region where Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger meet. The mission included 1,400 troops and resulted in the death or capture of 25 terrorists, destruction of 64 motorbikes and the dismantling of an IED workshop. The joint mission included France's Operation Barkhane and the national militaries of the three countries.

"Some efforts undertaken by the Joint Force have borne fruit in the domain of military operations and relations with partners, in particular through strengthening the coordination of forces on the ground," he wrote. "There has also been greater commitment by all stakeholders. In sum, the commitment by the Joint Force to carry out its mission against terrorism in the Sahelian space has been a constant."

The year also showed the cost of the fight. In December, 71 Nigerien Soldiers were killed in an ambush on a base in the nation's west. It was one of the deadliest attacks in the modern history of Niger's military.

"I would like to pay tribute to the civilian and military members who have lost their lives," Namata wrote. "This attests to the engagement of our armies as well as the dangers faced by our Sahelian brothers."

In fact, 2019 was the worst year on record for extremist-related violence in the Sahel, surpassing 2018. Namata said it is impossible to ignore that violence is increasing despite multiple efforts from regional militaries; international organizations; and Western partners such as the U.S., the United Kingdom and France. Namata said extremist groups have capitalized on and worsened regional intercommunal and ethnic violence.

### GLOBAL EFFORT

This fight, he said, is not just for the five countries of the Joint Force; it must be a global effort.

"Extremism is not unique to the Sahel," Namata wrote. "It's a blind phenomenon that crosses borders and slyly embeds itself where extremists think they can spread their theories of chaos."

Fighters linked to the Islamic State have fled the Middle East and North African countries and now have





Brig. Gen. Oumarou Namata, center, meets with G5 Sahel Joint Force troops in Mali near the border with Burkina Faso.  
G5 SAHEL JOINT FORCE

dreams of creating a “caliphate” in the Sahel. “There has been a shift since the phenomenon has ravaged other countries in the Middle East and the Maghreb and has turned toward the Sahel, where it is easier to operate due to the weak presence of states and endemic poverty making it fertile ground for recruitment,” he wrote.

There have been reports that terror groups in the region are forming alliances. An October 2019 report by Radio France Internationale cited anecdotal evidence of collaboration between various groups such as Ansar al-Dine, the Macina Liberation Front, Al Mourabitoun, Ansaroul Islam and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. The report said fighters have moved back and forth among the groups, and there is a tacit agreement that they will seek to gain territory together and settle differences later.

Namata said attacks have grown more sophisticated, and this may be a sign of collaboration. He pointed to the use of IEDs, car bombs and overwhelming amounts of artillery fire as evidence of a well-funded enemy.

“The complex attacks on defense and security forces positions, with growing numbers of enemy fighters, confirms that there are real operational and logistical connections between the armed terrorist groups,” Namata wrote. “So, despite different approaches vis-à-vis the population, these groups support each other.”

## CIVILIAN SUPPORT

One priority of the G5 will be winning civilian support in vulnerable areas where extremists have sought to recruit fighters and get support. Namata said his approach to gaining civilian support has several facets:

- Assure that all actions of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, from planning to operation, comply with the legal framework established

by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. This will be aided by the G5 police component.

- Collaborate with judicial authorities of contributing countries.
- Tell the public what is happening, and support national communications from contributing countries.
- Influence and engage the population directly, through different components of the force, administrative authorities or opinion leaders.
- Assure that population protection remains a top priority of all force components.
- Plan and enact civil-military engagement programs to accompany operations.

Funding continues to be a challenge for the G5. In July 2019, the European Union pledged \$154 million to support the Joint Force, and the U.N. secretary-general has called for additional funds from the international body. Namata said the G5 is making do with limited funding and equipment, but could use additional support.

“Our main point of pride is that despite the weakness of its resources, the Joint Force has been able to complete a number of operations, to make its presence felt and show its determination to pursue the mission entrusted to it,” Namata wrote. “All of this is done while systematically coordinating with partners in what are, very often, joint operations.”

Namata said standing up an alliance like the G5 can be slow and tedious, but it is necessary.

“It is possible, at this stage, to state that [the G5] is currently the only local, credible alternative in the fight against terrorism and cross-border crime in the common space.” □





SPLENDID

HOTEL ★★☆☆

SPLENDID HOTEL

*Les Services de l'Assistance*

# TERROR

## *in an ‘Upright’ Land*

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### SAHEL-BASED EXTREMIST GROUPS SHATTER THE CALM OF BURKINA FASO

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ADF STAFF

**B**urkina Faso’s Splendid Hotel promotes itself to international visitors by listing the amenities many have come to expect. Room service. A front desk staffed 24 hours a day. Proximity to restaurants and local attractions. Free Wifi. Business travelers, diplomats and vacationers all have made the Splendid their temporary home when visiting the capital, Ouagadougou.

Its rooms offered a natural sense of calm and safety. That was the feeling that a half-dozen al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb militants sought to shatter in January 2016 when they laid siege to the hotel after attacking the Cappuccino café, which was packed with 100 customers across the street.

Attackers wearing turbans and speaking a nonnative language trickled into the hotel throughout the day on Friday, January 15, 2016, and mixed with guests. More joined them as darkness settled in, CNN reported. Finally, the attackers began their assault and took hostages.

At least 29 people were killed, and dozens were injured. One survivor told the BBC of how attackers refused to be fooled by victims. “They started shooting, shooting, and everybody lay down on the ground,” said a woman, who escaped with her

younger sister. “As soon as you lifted your head, they would shoot straightaway, so you had to pretend to be dead. And they even came to touch our feet to check if we were alive. As soon as you were alive, they would shoot at you.”

Local and French security forces surrounded the Splendid early on January 16, 2016, before storming it, rescuing 176 hostages, Burkinabé Security Minister Simon Compoare told the BBC. Among those killed, in addition to four assailants, were five Burkinabé citizens, two French nationals, two Swiss citizens, six Canadians, a Dutch citizen and an American missionary.

Terror had come to Burkina Faso, long a place of relative calm. Now instability and violence that plagued Mali, and to a lesser extent, Niger, was seeping across the border, challenging a government with political will but little capacity to face the problem.

#### **VIOLENCE IN THE LAND OF THE ‘UPRIGHT’**

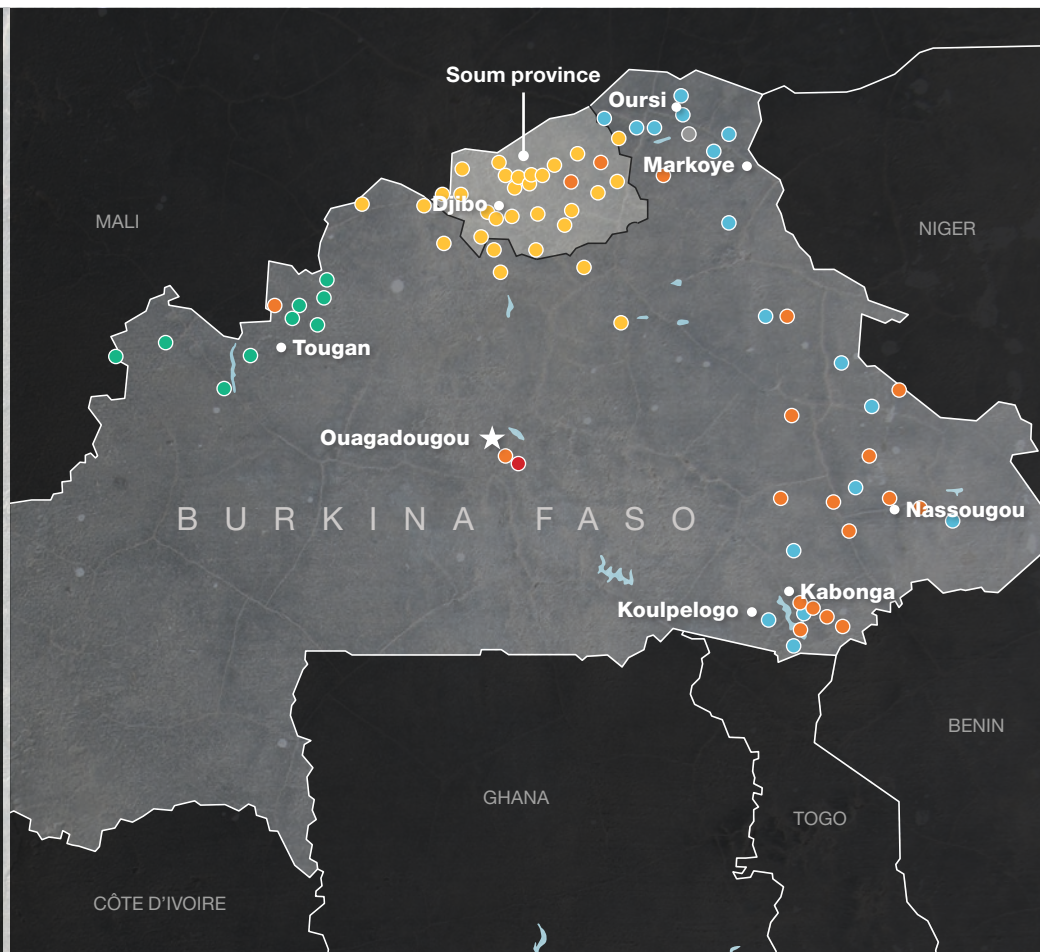
Burkina Faso, formerly the Republic of Upper Volta, embedded a desire for national unity into its new name. In 1984, the country’s new name combined words from three indigenous languages to represent the nation and its people. Burkina, which is Mossi for “upright,” and Faso,



# VIOLENT EVENTS LINKED TO MILITANT GROUPS IN 2018

- Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin
- Macina Liberation Front
- Al Mourabitoun
- Ansaroul Islam
- Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
- Unaffiliated

Sources: Africa Center for Strategic Studies; data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, Menastream, SITE Intelligence Group, and Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium



ADF ILLUSTRATION

which is Dioula for “fatherland” or “country,” combined to denote the nation as “the land of upright people.” Burkinabé refers to a citizen, adding the suffix “bé” from the Fulani Fulfulde dialect to Burkina, to mean a “person with uprightness.”

Then-President Thomas Sankara used the new name to foster national cohesion and identity, said Dr. Daniel Eizenga, a research fellow with the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). “That’s always been really strong in Burkina Faso, this recognition of the differences and diversity, but as a cohesive unit,” he said. In many ways, that sense of national unity has helped the nation despite increased violence in recent years.

Back in 2014, hundreds of thousands of protesters took to the streets of Ouagadougou to protest then-President Blaise Compaoré’s attempt to amend the constitution to extend his rule, which started when he overthrew Sankara in a 1987 coup. This “Popular Insurrection,” as it came to be known, uprooted Compaoré, forcing his resignation and exile to Côte d’Ivoire. Thus began a yearlong transition to a democratically elected civilian government.

Citizens voted in free and fair elections in November 2015, electing current President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré and giving his party a plurality in the National Assembly. The new government was installed in January 2016. Then tragedy struck at Cappuccino café and the Splendid Hotel.

This put Kaboré’s government on the back foot immediately after a peaceful government transition. “Since January 2016, the government has just grappled with trying to figure out what’s going on, why do we see an increase in insecurity, what militant Islamist groups are active in the territory, and they’ve struggled to address those challenges,” Eizenga told *ADF*. “So now here we are in 2019, three years later, and we’ve seen just a steady increase — a steady uptick — in that insecurity.”

## BURKINA FASO’S FACE OF TERROR

The hotel and café attacks began a surge of violence in Burkina Faso that persisted deep into 2019. In 2018, 137 violent events killed 149 people. In 2019, extremist Islamists had killed 324 people in 191 attacks by midyear, according to a July 2019 paper by Pauline Le Roux, visiting assistant research fellow with the ACSS.

Three groups have been responsible for most attacks, but one — Ansaroul Islam — has led the way in destabilizing Burkina Faso’s north. Between 2016 and 2018, more than half of all militant Islamist attacks in the country came at the hands of Ansaroul Islam, mostly clustered around Djibo, the capital of Soum province. In 2018, the group led 64 attacks that killed 48 people. More than half of its attacks — 55% — targeted civilians, which ranks Ansaroul Islam first among all other militant groups on the continent except for one operating

***Terror had come to Burkina Faso,  
long a place of relative calm.***



Children who fled villages in northern Burkina Faso after attacks play at a school outside Ouagadougou. REUTERS





in northern Mozambique, Le Roux wrote. More than 100,000 people fled their homes, and 352 schools closed in Soum.

Those attacks on civilians, coupled with the 2017 death of the group's founder, Ibrahim Malam Dicko, a Fulani imam, probably led to the group's decline. By mid-2019, only 16 attacks and seven deaths could be attributed to Ansaroul Islam, and the group ceased to be a major player in the nation's extremist threat.

Although primarily an ethnic Fulani and Muslim group, Ansaroul Islam lacks some of the grander designs for conquest and territorial control shared by extremist groups operating in central Mali. For example, the Macina Liberation Front (FLM) espoused a desire to reestablish the old theocratic Macina Empire in central Mali.

Eizenga said Ansaroul Islam attracted a lot of attention because it was Burkina Faso's first homegrown extremist group. The fear was that it would metastasize and spawn breakaway groups. That did not happen. In fact, the group never won significant local support. It primarily was a band of disgruntled young men who took up arms because they couldn't find jobs. It seemed that the group attacked civilians because it lacked popular support, not the reverse, he said.

The nation's long-embedded social values worked to its advantage. Its social structures provide local processes for resolving conflict and keeping the peace. So why has violence come to Burkina Faso?

## EXPANDING THE BATTLEFIELD

No group seeks to establish a caliphate or breakaway state in Burkina Faso. Instead, the violence spreading

into the country likely is due to two factors. First, military crackdowns in Mali and Niger by French forces in Operation Barkhane, the G5 Sahel Joint Force and national militaries have pressured extremist groups. As those groups seek safe havens, they exploit borders between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, part of a region historically known as the Liptako-Gourma. Those safe havens include northern and eastern Burkina Faso.

Eizenga explained that populations in the three countries are "highly interconnected," so national borders don't necessarily distinguish people or influence their movements. "So what we're really talking about here is a regional problem for the Malian state, the Burkinabé state and the Nigerien state," he said. Pastoralists move freely through the region, and that regular migration complicates security efforts. To blame the violence solely on Malian unrest misses the point that this was a regional problem from the beginning, Eizenga told *ADF*.

Second, the violence in Burkina Faso is less about extremists trying to fulfill a larger ideological or political goal and more about a tactical decision to "expand the battlefield," he said.

In addition to Ansaroul Islam, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and FLM have been most active in Burkina Faso, according to Le Roux's paper. Eizenga said reports tell of attackers riding into Burkinabé communities on motorbikes, burning buildings and killing a few people. This tactic keeps Burkinabé and other security forces on the defensive because it forces them to spread manpower and materiel across a wider area, thus diluting effectiveness and response time.



Militants attacked the Cappuccino café as they mounted an assault on the Splendid Hotel across the street in Ouagadougou in January 2016.

REUTERS

A police officer stands guard in front of the Splendid hotel in Ouagadougou after the attack.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Spreading into new areas also opens new revenue sources. The move into eastern Burkina Faso has some observers concerned that the threat could expand to Benin and Togo. In May 2019, French forces freed two French tourists, one American and a South Korean in Benin, according to *The Washington Post*. Terrorists had killed their guide, and two French Soldiers died in the rescue. Criminal gangs could kidnap others and transfer them to extremists for money.

Also, Eizenga explained that pastoral communities need to get cattle to markets, and that requires moving toward the coast. Extremists could exploit or attempt to control such movements through extortion. Furthermore, movement into coastal West Africa would give militants access to “large-scale attacks on soft targets,” such as the March 2016 Grand Bassam beach resort attack in Côte d’Ivoire that killed 19 people.

### BURKINA FASO’S WAY FORWARD

Burkina Faso’s social structure gives it an advantage when combating extremists. The lack of local support for such groups may keep them from taking root in the country. However, the low capacity and resources of regional security forces is a continuing challenge.

The government, Eizenga said, has the political will to act. Officials have the sense of urgency and desire to address the threat. “It really is a question of capacity,” he said. “So sustained, long-term military presence is going to be crucial.”

Establishing security would enable improved economic development, which would further strengthen national resilience. But security must come first, and Burkina Faso

won’t be able to handle that alone. The international community will have to help. Hundreds of thousands are displaced, and as of fall 2019, the country was entering its dry season, which could lead to food scarcity.

“We’re at this really delicate moment where, unless the Burkinabé government has the support of the international community and we see some mobilization on a humanitarian front and on a security front, I don’t know that they’ll be able to get past that short-term period,” Eizenga said.

If the G5 Sahel Joint Force could operate at full capacity across the Sahel region, it might be able to provide the sustained security necessary for the mid- and long term. But that, too, likely will require increased international support. Barkhane and the G5 Sahel have had some successes, but as they do, militants attack other areas to expand the battlefield. “What has been missing so far is the ability to sustain a military presence in a broad enough space that it fully disrupts the ability of these groups to operate,” Eizenga said.

Despite this, Burkina Faso’s government has addressed insecurity. It has declared a state of emergency in about a third of the nation and has increased its military presence in those areas. It has launched military operations in the north and east with some success. But an August 2019 extremist attack on an Army unit in Koutougou, Soum province, killed about two dozen Soldiers and wounded several others. That happened because Burkina Faso is trying to restore security in a complex and challenging environment, Eizenga said. With increased support, they could turn the tide.

“There’s not a reason to lose all hope in Burkina Faso yet.” □



# A Scene of *Calm* in a Land of Strife

ADF STAFF

Sometimes, scenes of serenity and calm can be found close to anxiety and unrest. This young Congolese boy would seem to have found just such a spot. He rested along a road connecting the small town of Rudaya, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with the bustling city of Goma, the capital of the troubled North Kivu province, in August 2019.

That same month, the Ebola virus, long the scourge of the region, had been contained in Goma, according to NPR.org. Just more than a month since the deadly hemorrhagic fever spread to Goma, national and international health workers had avoided what many had feared: a deadly runaway virus in a city of 2 million people.

Goma, which is near the Rwandan border, had been on alert for weeks after a gold miner with a large family infected several people before he died in July 2019, according to Reuters. Health workers had logged four cases in Goma as of mid-August. Responders monitored 232 people who had contact with infected patients, a process that was to be completed by the end of August.

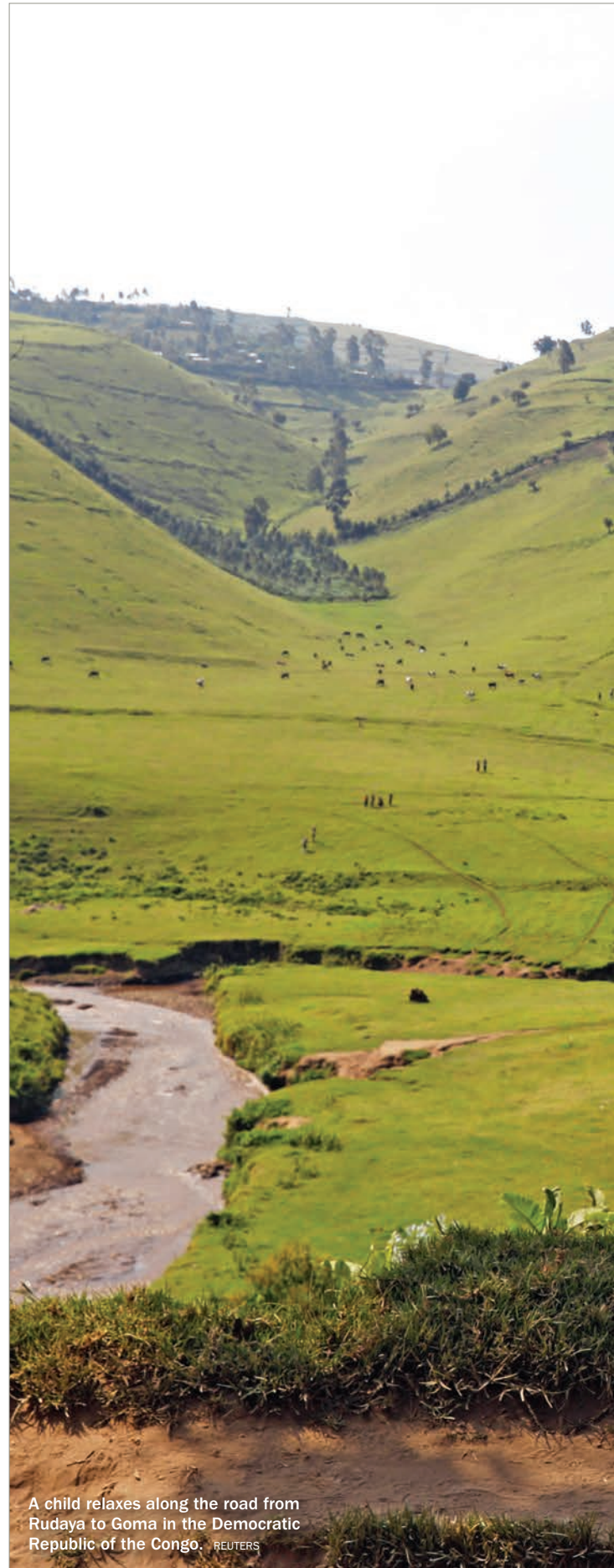
"We haven't seen secondary transmission in Goma — and it represents a huge credit to the teams on the ground," Dr. Michael Ryan, head of the World Health Organization's health emergencies department, told Reuters.

As of August 28, 2019, the DRC's Ministry of Health had reported 3,004 cases and 2,006 deaths in the eastern DRC outbreak, which began August 1, 2018.

Authorities have been using a new vaccine and treatments to significant success in Goma, but as one travels out of the city, things become more complicated. The fight against Ebola continues in areas such as Beni and Butembo.

As long as suspicion and unrest plague the eastern DRC, Ebola threatens to be a just one of many problems. In Ituri province, measles, malaria, violence and population displacements are vexing health workers. Natalie Roberts, operations manager for Doctors Without Borders, summed up the challenge:

"This population and this context have 99 problems, and Ebola is just one of them."



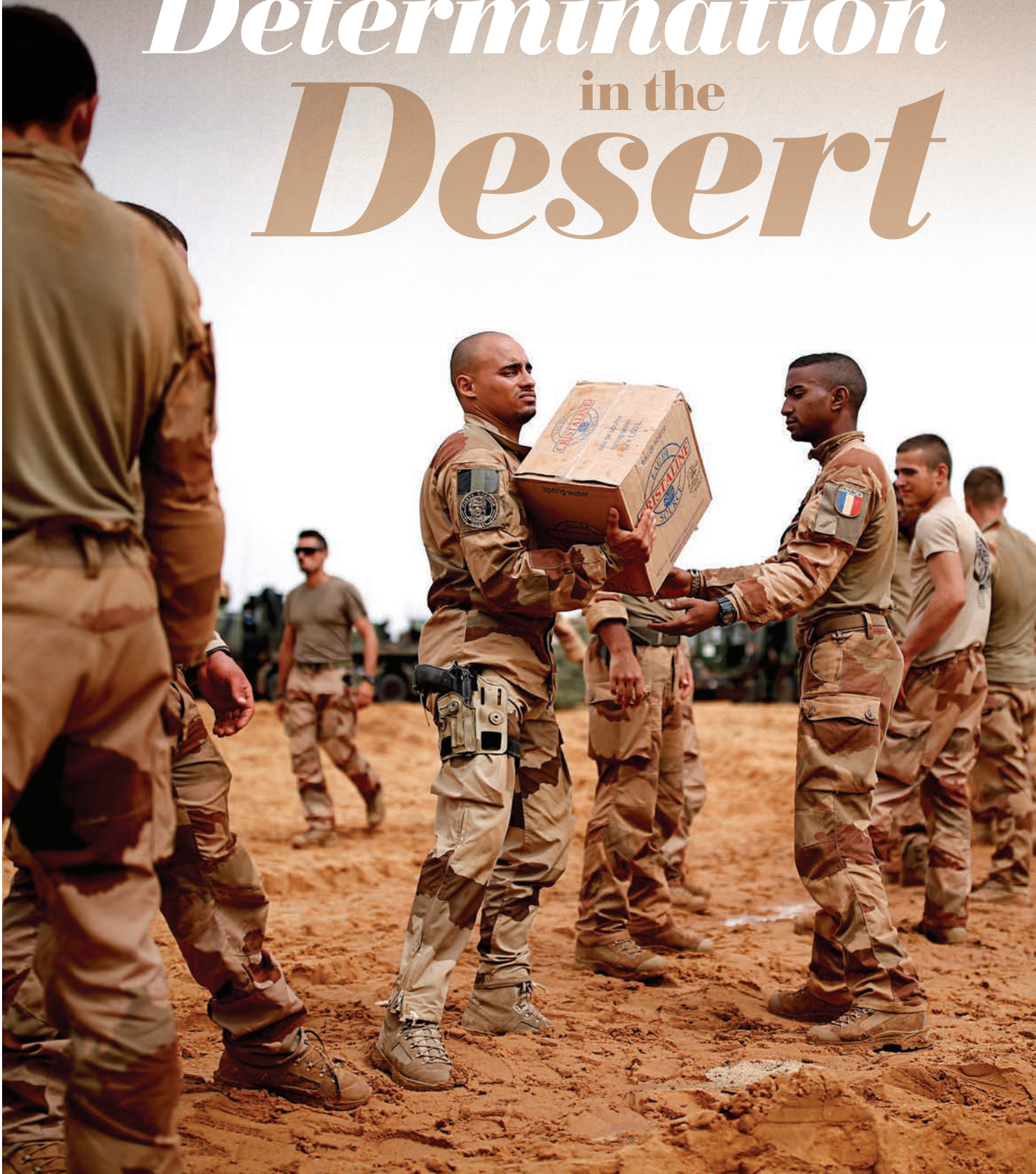
A child relaxes along the road from Rudaya to Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. REUTERS







# *Determination* in the *Desert*





# AFTER FIVE YEARS, FRANCE'S OPERATION BARKHANE SEES PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE IN THE SAHEL

ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY REUTERS



French Soldiers of the Belleface Desert Tactical Group move boxes of bottled water in Ndaki, Mali.

Operation Serval marked a high point for France's military in the modern era. The 18-month mission began in January 2013 at the request of Mali's government as extremist groups pushed south and threatened to overrun the capital, Bamako.

The 4,000-person French effort used a combination of ground forces, aerial bombardments, armored divisions and special operators to halt the advance, liberate all major cities in Mali's north, and decimate the extremist leadership. Three of the five top terror leaders in Mali were killed, and two others — Mokhtar Belmokhtar and Iyad Ag Ghaly — fled Mali.



When then-President Francois Hollande visited liberated areas, he was met by adoring crowds. Children climbed walls to fly the French tricolor, and elderly people threw their arms around French Soldiers. In cities such as Menaka, Timbuktu and Gao, Malians had suffered greatly during the brief extremist occupation and were grateful for a fresh start.

"It was a total panic before; we didn't sleep. We were not free to do what we wanted, but today we feel total liberty," a man in Timbuktu told France 24 television news in January 2013.

But the feelings of exhilaration quickly gave way to the difficult task of preserving the peace. Remnants of extremist groups retreated to rocky formations in the far north nicknamed Planet Mars, forcing French forces and their allies to conduct a painstaking search-and-clear mission. Members of the Tuareg ethnic group signed





A member of a French military medical unit treats a patient in Ndaki, Mali.





# Serving the PUBLIC

ADF STAFF

In many parts of the Sahel, civilians have been traumatized by years of conflict. Often they do not trust the armed forces that are supposed to protect them.

Recognizing this, Barkhane has made civil-military operations (CIMIC) a cornerstone of the mission. Nearly every operation has a civilian outreach component, which can include free health clinics and projects that provide access to water, energy or education.

In 2018, Barkhane forces conducted about 70 CIMIC projects. These included drilling wells in Menaka, Mali, renovating a milk farm in Menaka and building a bridge in Tassiga, Mali. In the first seven months of 2019, Barkhane had conducted 30 CIMIC projects, including 13 in the tri-border Liptako-Gourma region. Barkhane CIMIC teams also provide daily health care, treating an average of 300 people per day.

Larger ongoing projects will repair Menaka's electric power station and support its police station with new vehicles and infrastructure improvements.

"It's essential to evaluate the needs of the people, to give them the means to access water and primary care, to promote their working conditions and their living conditions," said Maj. David, a CIMIC project leader based in Gao. "All of this contributes to improving the general security situation for the population."

CIMIC teams are working hand in hand with their Malian counterparts to emphasize the importance of public engagement. Barkhane forces have provided training and launched a public relations campaign that includes posters highlighting the professionalism of the Malian Armed Forces.

A Malian CIMIC officer, Sergeant-Chef Samba, patrolled Menaka in January 2019, stopping to talk with people and asking about their lives. He said that after a string of CIMIC events such as handing out back-to-school kits, he has noticed a change in the way people interact with him.

"Now we've acquired a certain notoriety," Samba said. "People come to see me to share the problems they're having, and we think about it together to decide what type of actions to put in place to address them."

a tenuous peace deal. The Malian Army remained divided with rumblings of a coup. In early 2013, suicide bombers struck Kidal and Gao, signaling that extremists had not given up.

The French knew the remaining mission would be more difficult. It meant crossing borders, working with regional partners and the United Nations, training local forces, and fighting alongside them to wipe out terrorist enclaves. On August 1, 2014, France launched Operation Barkhane. The mission was simple: Finish the job.

With Operation Serval "we prevented the creation of what you might call a 'Sahelistan,'" Gen. Patrick Bréthous, then commander of Barkhane, told Radio France Internationale. "The situation is stabilized in Mali. There is a peace accord signed and put in place. But there remain insurgents, and it's against these last ones that we now fight."

## SCOPE/STRATEGY

Operation Barkhane is the military component of France's three-pronged Sahelian strategy. Other aspects are supporting economic development and pursuing political engagement.

There are three permanent bases that support the mission: in Gao, Mali; Niamey, Niger; and N'Djamena, Chad. Additionally, in isolated zones, Soldiers set up *plateformes desert-relais*, or forward operating bases. With 4,500 Soldiers deployed, Barkhane is the largest French military effort in the world.

## GROUND

The majority of the operation's infantry troops are based in Mali, where about 2,650 Soldiers specializing in desert tactical warfare are divided between the main base in Gao and forward bases in Gossi, Kidal, Menaka, Tessalit and Timbuktu.

Barkhane places a particular emphasis on the Liptako-Gourma region — the border area where Mali,



French Soldiers drive an all-terrain armored vehicle in the Gourma region of Mali.





French Soldiers work on a Tiger attack helicopter at the Operational Desert Platform Camp in Gao, Mali.

Niger and Burkina Faso meet. A 2019 study by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies found that 90% of Islamic State attacks in the region are within 100 kilometers of the three countries' borders.

**“These border areas are obviously the most sought-after places by terrorists to carry out their actions. So the Gourma region for us presents all the conditions necessary to be effective.”**

— **Gen. Frederic Blachon**  
Barkhane force commander

The Barkhane presence has helped reopen commercial routes and provided the security necessary for the return of civil administration in many tri-border towns. In 2019, Liptako got its first governor since the 2013 crisis. Barkhane also has helped the Malian Armed Forces establish three bases in the border area. The U.N., Barkhane, the Malian Army, Malian police and gendarmes share a unique joint base in Menaka.

“These border areas are obviously the most sought-after places by terrorists to carry out their actions,” said Gen. Frederic Blachon, Barkhane force commander. “There is no better way to move from one to the other and find refuge than in a border area. So the Gourma region for us presents all the conditions necessary to be effective.”

## AIR

Barkhane's military aircraft are mostly at airfields in Niamey and N'Djamena. The fleet includes transport and combat jets. There are seven Mirage 2000 jets nicknamed the “eyes in the sky.”

“These platforms play a major role at the heart of the operation,” the French Ministry of Defense said in a statement. “The presence of transport planes and aerial resupply planes allows us to elongate the theater of operations and rapidly move to any part of the Saharo-Sahelian Band. The presence of combat planes and drones allows us to permanently threaten our adversaries and hit them when necessary.”

The mission uses three CH-47 Chinook transport helicopters provided by the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force and 16 combat helicopters. In 2019, Denmark announced its plan to donate two Merlin transport helicopters to the mission. Barkhane also flies three MQ-9 Reaper drones for reconnaissance and surveillance of targets, and feeds images in real time to deployed units.



# Operation Barkhane

## G5 SAHEL



## PARTNERSHIP WITH THE G5 SAHEL

**8,700** Sahel Soldiers trained since 2014

Courses included riflery, combat medicine and counter-IED training

**9 million euros** in materiel donations

**51** vehicles

**300** night-vision goggles

**600** bulletproof vests



## CIVIL-MILITARY ACTIONS

**70** consultations per day

**300** people treated per day, including **3 surgeries**

**70 civil-military projects** completed in 2018, including **23 in the Liptako-Gourma region** including:

**8** water facilities

**5** agricultural projects

**3** infrastructure projects

**7** projects in the domain of education, energy and access to information

## TAKING ON TERRORISTS

**120** combat operations in 2018



## BY THE NUMBERS



**4,500**  
Soldiers



**3**  
drones



**7**  
fighter jets



**22**  
helicopters



**6-10**  
transport and tactical planes



**260**  
armored vehicles



**360**  
logistical vehicles



**210**  
light armored vehicles

Source: French Ministry of Defense





# TRAINING IS ‘HOW WE WILL WIN’

ADF STAFF

**From the outset**, France has stressed that Barkhane is not an indefinite mission. As soon as possible, it intends to give way to local forces. As often as possible, France wants to partner with national militaries, regional efforts like the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the United Nations.

Therefore, training and joint missions are a central part of Barkhane. In the first seven months of 2019, Barkhane conducted 308 training events or “combat accompaniments” with partner forces. During that same time, 3,000 Soldiers completed a training program, and 1,500 participated in a combat accompaniment.

Areas of emphasis included rifle training, demining, human rights law and battlefield medicine.

From April 15 to 17, 2019, in Timbuktu, French Marine Corps Infantry improvised explosive device experts trained Malian counterparts on how to identify explosives, defuse them and how to drive on a road studded with land mines. The exercise ended with a driving test in which Soldiers had to navigate a mined road.

“Thanks to this training, my men will be able, in turn, to train all of our sections and transmit these best practices,” said Capt. Samake, head of the Malian detachment. “It’s no secret. This is how we will win.”

Joint missions also are beginning to show success. In 2019, France held four events called DIDASKO in four Sahel countries. These events were designed to prepare troops for joint missions.

In December 2018, the presidents of France and Burkina Faso signed an agreement to pursue joint military action. The first major joint effort was from May 20, 2019, to June 3, 2019, when 450 Soldiers from Barkhane conducted a major operation with their Burkinabé counterparts near the Malian border region of Gourma.

After the mission, Col. Jean Francois Calvez of France’s Richelieu Desert Tactical Group had nothing but praise for his Burkinabé counterparts. He envisioned further partnerships.

“This was a very high-quality unit with combined capabilities, well-commanded with volunteer Soldiers who were quick to react and perfectly integrated in the mission,” he said.

An example of the airpower was in February 2019 when, at the request of the Chadian government, French Mirage fighter jets struck a column of 40 pickup trucks operated by a rebel group entering Chad from Libya. In other missions, jets will strike a terror enclave before ground troops enter to clear the area.

Troops deployed on a mission have dedicated aerial support.

“The missions are very long, from four to more than six hours, so we require numerous refueling sessions in air,” said Lt. Wilfred, a Mirage pilot who, as is customary for French Soldiers serving abroad, is identified only by his first name. “It’s atypical hours. We could be taking off very late at night or very early in the morning. Whenever an alert is triggered.”



An NH90 Caiman military helicopter lands at a temporary forward operating base in Ndaki, Mali.

## LOGISTICS

The operational environment across the Sahel and particularly in northern Mali is daunting. Temperatures reach well above 40 degrees Celsius, sandstorms reduce visibility to almost nothing and, during the rainy season, many roads become impassable.

To maintain operational rhythm and allow units to stay in forward operating bases, Barkhane uses air and land transport. The mission uses three West African ports to import materiel. Truck convoys, which can grow to include 100 vehicles and require air support and armed escorts, move equipment to the front lines.

For example, a logistical convoy traveling 360 kilometers between Gao and Kidal consisted of 60 vehicles carrying 135 metric tons of cargo and 340 cubic meters of fuel. The convoy was supported by 10 escort vehicles, aerial surveillance, medical staff and two tow trucks.

“This logistic convoy requires a permanent readiness for many unexpected technical and security problems,” said Capt. Freddy, commander of the logistics unit. “My men are well-trained and have endurance, which allows them to anticipate and react effectively.”





A French Soldier speaks with a civilian while on patrol in Gossi, Mali.

The mission also relies heavily on aerial resupply drops to remote outposts. It has received logistical support from partners including Spain, which has flown a C-130 based in Senegal and a C-295 in Gabon to supply Barkhane.

### 'PERMANENT ADAPTATION'

Not long after the creation of Barkhane, a terror group known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) formed. It operated mainly in eastern Mali and neighboring regions of Niger and Burkina Faso.

In late 2016, the group made its presence felt with three significant attacks in Burkina Faso. The group attacked a gendarmerie, a police outpost and a prison, where it unsuccessfully tried to free jailed extremists. Three weeks after the third major attack, the Islamic State acknowledged the group, while not naming it an official Islamic State *wilayat*, or province.

At the same time, the region saw increasing inter-communal violence, particularly in Mali. In one horrific attack in the Mopti region of eastern Mali, nearly 160 people were killed in clashes between Fulani herders and Dogon hunters. Extremists have sought to exacerbate ethnic tensions as a recruiting tool.

The difficulty led one major French newspaper to ask whether Barkhane was “mission impossible,” pointing out that 4,500 Soldiers cannot reasonably control an expanse of 5 million square kilometers, an area 10 times the size

of France. The year 2019 set a record as the deadliest on record for extremist violence in the Sahel.

The challenge has pressed Barkhane’s leadership to emphasize the quality of “permanent adaptation” in its planning.

Then-Commander Gen. Bruno Guibert said French forces have evolved to move faster and travel with a smaller footprint since the mission began. “We have to travel further, longer and as light as possible,” he told the French newspaper *Liberation* in 2018. “We are prioritizing operations long on the ground, bivouacking, often for a month or more. We are trying to reduce our logistical footprint to match the velocity of the enemy.”

There have been notable successes. In October 2019, French officials announced they had killed Ali Maychou, a Moroccan who led the Group to Support Islam and Muslims. He was the second-most-wanted terrorist in the Sahel at the time of his death. Patrols in the tri-border region have likewise decimated the leadership of ISGS.

Guibert said that Barkhane has improved its network of human intelligence, earning the trust of local civilians who can serve as its eyes and ears. He added that the mission is using biometric tools to identify terrorists.

“I don’t need more cannons; I have all that is needed to hit the target,” he said. “What I need are the tools adapted to contain the enemy who has mobility. ... For a year we have considerably expanded our network of sources in the population, and that’s a good sign.” □





A Malian Soldier patrols with France's Operation Barkhane in Ndaki. REUTERS



# A NEW CENTER OF VIOLENCE

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## Extremism in Mali has Shifted to the Central Region, Where One Group Feeds on Ethnic and Cultural Tensions

ADF STAFF

**M**ali has been a cauldron of violence since early 2012, when a Tuareg rebellion and military coup threw the nation into sustained chaos. Unrest that began in the north prompted an intervention by French and Chadian forces, as well as a huge United Nations peacekeeping operation that continues today. These forces reversed or halted rebel advances into major cities and toward the capital, Bamako.

Since 2015, however, violence has intensified and shifted its center of gravity to central Mali, primarily in the Mopti and Ségou regions. “Confronting Central Mali’s Extremist Threat,” a paper written for the Africa Center for Strategic Studies by researcher Pauline Le Roux, states that central Mali is now the nation’s most dangerous region. The numbers are staggering:

- More than 500 civilians were killed in the region in 2018.
- More than 60,000 have been displaced by violence.
- More than 972,000 people need humanitarian assistance in the Mopti region alone.

Several militant groups remain active in Mali even after years of security efforts. Some new groups have emerged, and others have morphed and combined. For example, the Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM, or Group to Support Islam and Muslims) is a coalition of five groups, including Ansar al-Dine and Al Mourabitoun. But one coalition member, a relatively new player in Mali, stands out. Unlike al-Qaida-linked groups, this one has capitalized on local struggles by exploiting ethnic tensions.



The Macina Liberation Front (FLM) — also known as Katiba Macina — now is the most lethal and active group in the region. Le Roux's paper explains that FLM was involved in nearly two-thirds of all violent incidents in central Mali and a third of the violent events nationwide.

The FLM's message is rooted in a combination of central Mali's history, the region's violent contemporary landscape and its underlying ethnic tensions.

## THE RISE OF THE FLM

The FLM began in early 2015 and claimed it would bring back the Macina Empire, a rigid, mostly Fulani theocracy that ruled the area from Ségou in the south to Timbuktu in the north from 1818 to 1863. "FLM has drawn on narratives of this historical empire to gain popular support, with the overarching goal of taking over the territory in central Mali and substituting itself for the Malian state," Le Roux wrote.

Like its namesake, the FLM recruits mainly, but not exclusively, from the region's Fulani pastoralist population. As military efforts began pushing militants out of the north in 2013, many of them resettled in the central part of the country. As violence ramped up there, the state retreated, allowing for growth and expansion, according to an April 2019 article for The Broker website by researchers Natasja Rupesinghe and Morten Bøås.

When it began, FLM was closely aligned with the Tuareg group Ansar al-Dine and its leader, Iyad Ag Ghaly. FLM's leader was Amadou Koufa,

a Fulani preacher from Mopti who began as a griot, or traditional poet, but later became radicalized. In 2012, he joined Ansar al-Dine and in January 2013 led an attack on the town of Konna that included the Tuareg group, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), Le Roux wrote. (Koufa is thought to have been killed by French forces in November 2018.)

Koufa continued working with other militant groups, such as MUJAO and Al Mourabitoun. It was not until early 2015 that FLM was credited with its first attacks, against military targets in Boulkessi, Nampala and Ténenkou villages. According to Le Roux's paper, FLM followed with a series of high-profile attacks:

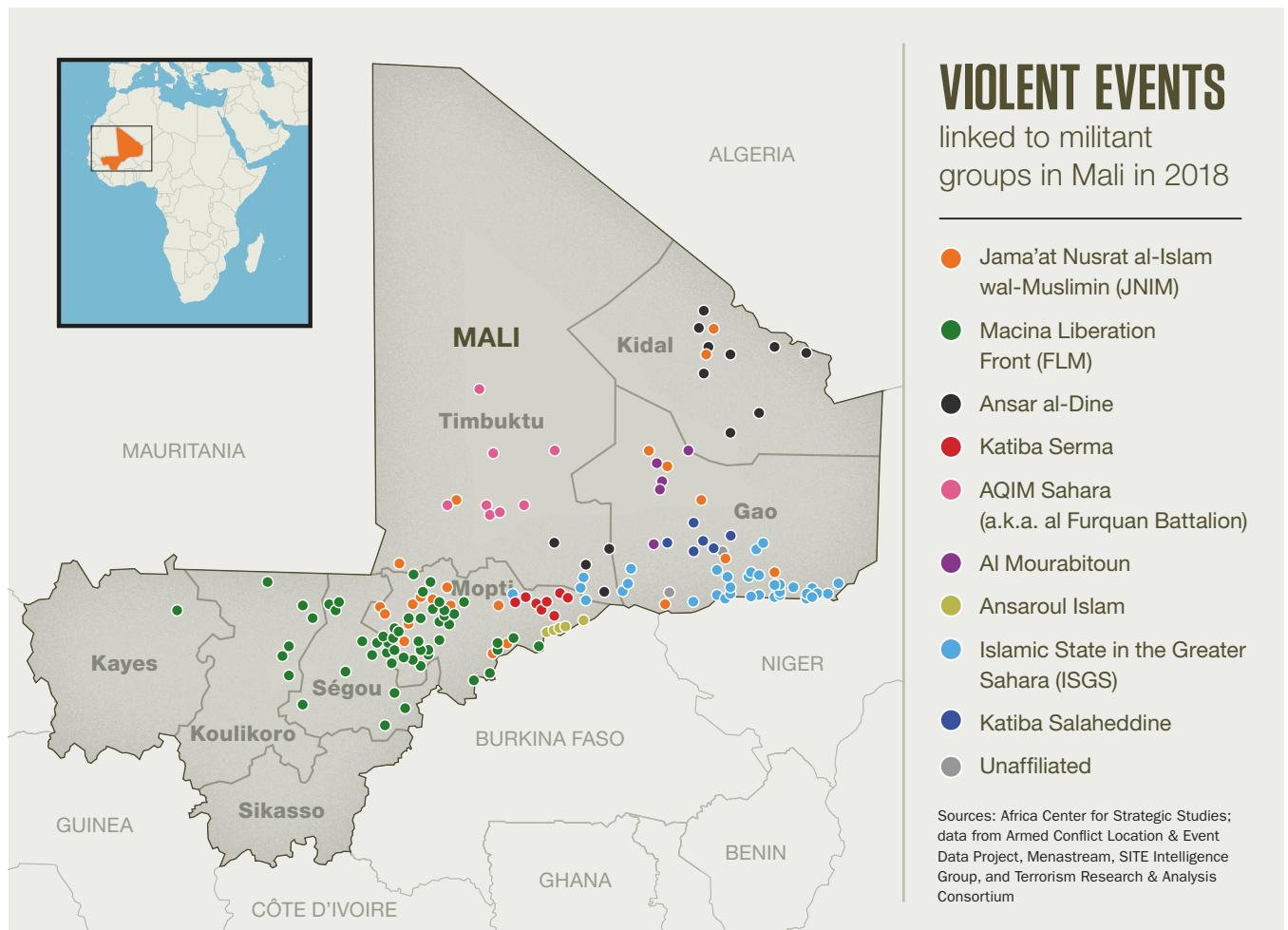
- In August 2015, the group attacked the Byblos hotel in Sévaré, killing 13 people. Among them were four Malian Soldiers and five contractors from the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali.
- In November 2015, the FLM claimed responsibility for the bloody attack on the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako that killed 22 people. Al Mourabitoun also said it was responsible for the attack.
- The insurgent group also raided the G5 Sahel Joint Force headquarters in Sévaré, using a combination of car bombs, improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks in June 2018. The attack prompted authorities to move the headquarters to Mali's capital, Bamako.

Attackers reduced homes to ashes and rubble in the Dogon village of Sobane Da, Mali, in June 2019.

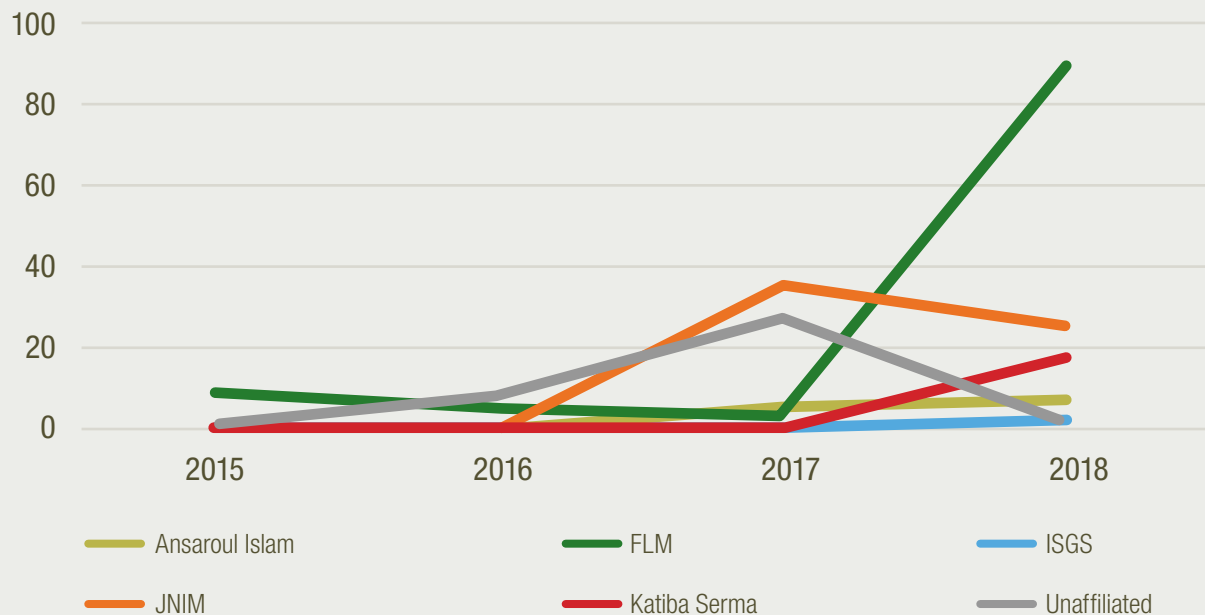
REUTERS







Events Linked to Militant Groups in Mali's Mopti-Ségou Regions



Sources: Africa Center for Strategic Studies; data from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project



“In total, FLM is likely to be directly responsible for the death of hundreds of Malian military personnel,” Le Roux wrote. Its size could range between several hundred and several thousand members, especially if including informants and those who provide other support. The group controls several central Malian villages.

### ‘LEAVE OR DIE’

Koufa’s group built a power base in the villages it controlled through coercion and fear. A November 2018 report by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Malian Association of Human Rights explains that the FLM is not like most armed insurgent groups. It is “above all a social revolt, particularly of nomadic Fulani shepherds, to overturn an established, predatory order, catalysed by a charismatic preacher from the region,” the report states.

Starting in 2015, FLM has executed and kidnapped state officials, including defense authorities, water and forestry agents, municipal officials, judges, teachers, and anyone considered a government collaborator. Its intent is for state officials to withdraw so that it can take over security, judicial, educational and economic functions. By the end of the 2018 school year, 478 schools had closed in Mopti and Ségou, including more than two-thirds of all Mopti schools.

With military and government authorities out of central Malian villages, FLM is left unopposed to enact Shariah, settle land disputes, handle criminal and social disputes, manage resources, and impose taxes called *zakat*. The group enacts strict religious codes and gives those who oppose them a simple choice, according to the report: “Leave or die.”

“They arrive in a village, assemble everyone at the mosque and say what they are going to do,” a witness told report investigators. “They give the village a week to follow their orders. Those who do not want to may leave. But those who do not comply are executed. They killed three men in my village who were collaborating with the authorities. And they did the same in many other villages in the area.”

### ETHNIC STRUGGLES FUEL FIGHTING

The predominantly Fulani composition of FLM has led to intercommunal violence in central Mali that complicates an already dangerous landscape. FLM and JNIM each has recruited heavily among Fulani herdsmen. Now, much of the violence has an ethnic and cultural flavor that pits Fulanis against the Bambara and Dogon ethnic groups, both of which are composed mostly of farmers.

Since 2017, Bambara and Dogon militias — claiming anti-jihadist aims — have killed

hundreds of Fulanis, including women and children, which has prompted retaliatory killings by Fulanis, according to a July 3, 2019, article in *The Economist*. The Malian army has been perceived to favor Dogon and Bambara people, which has intensified the conflict.

The complexities of central Mali’s security challenges can be traced back several years, if not longer. The northern rebellion in 2012 caused national authorities to direct their focus there, leaving the center of the country vulnerable to simmering ethnic tensions. Some Fulanis had joined groups such as Ansar al-Dine, and when they began to return home after the French intervened in 2013, the army followed and persecuted them, according to a June 2019 Al-Jazeera report. It was at this point that the formation of FLM began to appeal to Fulanis, who decried what they saw as government persecution and corruption. *The Economist* reported that government forces have joined Dogon and Bambara militias on patrols and given them special treatment at checkpoints, a move that further inflames tensions with Fulanis.

That disaffection fueled FLM’s attacks on military and government positions and its narrative of reestablishing Islamic rule in the fashion of the Macina Empire. However, Dogon and Bambara communities saw Fulani mobilization as a potential threat and began to prepare for their own protection, Al-Jazeera reported. In 2016, Dogon people formed the Dan Na Ambassagou, one of several ethnic Dogon militias, to combat the perceived threat from Fulanis, who responded in kind with their own militias.

It’s not clear how many of Mali’s 3 million Fulanis have joined FLM, Le Roux wrote. But it seems that the group’s appeal to Fulani ethnics has inflamed long-standing tensions between Fulani and Dogon communities.

Recently, those tensions have erupted into spectacular attacks that have destroyed villages and killed hundreds. On June 9, 2019, attackers struck Sobane Da, a Dogon village near Sanga town in the Mopti region, killing about 100 people — a third of the village’s population, according to the BBC.

“About 50 heavily armed men arrived on motorbikes and pickups,” survivor Amadou Togo told Agence France-Presse. “They first surrounded the village and then attacked — anyone who tried to escape was killed. No one was spared — women, children, elderly people.”

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but it came after a March 2019 incident in which armed men wearing traditional Dogon clothes killed more than 130 Fulani villagers in the same region, the BBC reported.





Since the rise of the FLM in 2015, the group has been accused of targeting Dogon — especially in retaliation for attacks on Fulanis, Le Roux wrote. The Fulanis probably have suffered the highest number of fatalities in the attacks.

In 2017, Mali initiated Operation Dambe to stop terrorism, restore military and government control, and help rebuild social and economic life. However, the FIDH reports that during Dambe, the military executed 67 people during six operations in six villages in 2018. The report called it a “caravan of death” that resulted in six mass graves. Some of those who were detained were tortured but not killed.

These actions resulted in Fulanis being stigmatized as terrorists, the loss of state legitimacy and the alienation of locals. “By multiplying abuses, FAMa [Malian Armed Forces] elements have also pushed many people to join the ranks of jihadists or community militias to ensure their defence and security,” the report states.

## THE WAY FORWARD

In addition to government counterterrorism efforts such as Operation Dambe and work by MINUSMA — the United Nations’ peacekeeping mission in Mali — and the G5 Sahel Joint Force,

more will need to be done to restore peace to central Mali.

In late 2018, Mali launched a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan for groups in central Mali targeting young militants there. Le Roux wrote that Mali will have to increase oversight of how the military interacts with local populations. Allegations of abuse at the hands of security forces will have to be investigated fully and addressed publicly to restore public trust.

Providing security alone is not sufficient. Restoring public services and providing education for young people also must be prioritized. Finally, Le Roux wrote, officials will have to counter the FLM’s messaging through personal, radio and social media channels.

Researchers Rupesinghe and Bøås agree. It is “critical to restore trust between local communities and the state in central Mali: this means providing all vulnerable people with security guarantees and protection from attacks and ensuring transparent justice and accountability for victims. The strategy will also need to include longer-term measures, such as ensuring access to basic services, equitable justice, development and education. Conflict prevention must take centre stage.” □

**Attackers burned homes, killed animals and murdered more than 100 ethnic Dogons in a June 9, 2019, assault on the village of Sobane Da in central Mali.**

REUTERS



A person wearing a grey hoodie is shown from the chest up. Their face is obscured by a large, textured red splatter that covers the eyes and nose area. The background is solid black.

# COUNTERING THE EXTREMIST MESSAGE



# RADIO SHOWS, WHATSAPP GROUPS, AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND EVEN COMIC BOOKS TAKE AIM AT RADICAL GROUPS

ADF STAFF

**T**he social media app TikTok is aimed at teenagers, who create and share 15-second videos. It has 500 million users globally, making it one of the world's most popular apps. ISIS sees its possibilities as a propaganda tool.

In October 2019, TikTok began taking down accounts that the extremist group was using to recruit followers. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that the videos featured corpses being paraded down streets, along with ISIS fighters carrying guns.

TikTok, owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, said it permanently banned such accounts and is working on controls to detect suspicious activity. The ISIS videos were discovered by Storyful, a social media intelligence company. A spokesman for Storyful said "the sheer volume" of content on TikTok made it difficult for the company to police itself.

Years ago, extremists recruited followers by posting long, angry speeches and sermons by clerics on the internet — hardly attractive to young people raised on a diet of short videos. The extremists adapted and tailored their messages to suit their audience, posting material filled with violence, guns and promises of adventure. These days, extremists use the internet to spread propaganda, raise funds, recruit new members and communicate with activists.

"Today, 90 percent of terrorist activity on the Internet takes place using social networking tools," cyber terrorism expert Evan Kohlmann told *The Washington Post*. "These forums act as a virtual firewall to help safeguard the identities of those who participate, and they offer subscribers a chance to make direct contact with terrorist representatives, to ask questions, and even to contribute and help out the cyber-jihad."

Opponents of extremism have struggled to counter such messaging. Shutting down extremists' websites, such as Facebook pages, has not been the answer; extremists merely set up shop at another website or social media page. Long-term solutions can come only from projects and programs countering violent extremism, also known as CVE.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

CVE programs use positive and negative measures. Positive measures include producing content that counters extremist messages and challenges extremist propaganda. Negative strategies can be blocking, filtering and taking down extremist content.

A 2016 study, "The role of online/social media in countering violent extremism in East Africa," noted that a strategy for countering extremist narratives consists of three parts: the message, the messengers and the media.

The message should be multilayered, imaginative and flexible enough to be tailored to specific groups. It can link to existing narratives. Researcher William Robert Avis says that a message that appeals to emotional connections and makes careful use of humor can be successful.

The messenger must have credibility with the target audience. Government leaders, religious leaders and reformed radicals can be effective messengers, depending on the audience. Reformed radicals have been underused in this regard, because some government leaders think the radicals must be punished.

The media requires careful distribution and dissemination of the counternarrative message. In East Africa, radio is one of the most essential forms of media, but other, newer forms also are used, including social media and peer-to-peer communication apps such as WhatsApp.

These countermessages have become critical to preventing extremist conversions. Terrorist actions have become harder to predict, making traditional military and law enforcement techniques inadequate. Extremists no longer are limited to working within organized, hierarchical groups. In his 2012 report, "Lone Wolves in Cyberspace," researcher Gabriel Weimann focused on extremists who work solo.

Lone-wolf terrorism is the fastest-growing form of terrorism, said Weimann. "The real threat now comes from the single individual, the 'lone wolf,' living next door, radicalized on the internet, and plotting strikes in the dark."



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“WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT JUST THE GROUPS MOST VULNERABLE TO EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE BUT ARE ALSO BEST PLACED TO COMBAT EXTREMISM IN THE COMMUNITY.”

*~ researchers Magnus Ranstorp and Peder Hyllengren*

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Young men use a selfie stick to take a picture of themselves in the shallow waters of the Nile in Sudan. Social media is a critical tool in countering extremists' messages. REUTERS



## PARTNERSHIPS

In a 2013 study, researchers Stephen White and Kieran McEvoy determined that a partnership approach involving law enforcement, intelligence agencies, other statutory organizations and community-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) “with grassroots credibility” is more likely to result in effective CVE. Other researchers have noted that NGOs should not merely be perceived as formal organizations but need to include groups and individuals at grassroots levels, such as parents, women, teachers, mentors, coaches and religious leaders.

“The principles of meaningful partnership in this domain must include mutual respect, acknowledgment of respective strengths, skills, and expertise between agencies and community-based organizations, and a willingness, in appropriate circumstances, to take calculated risks to ensure that so-called hard-to-reach groups are approached by those with the required local knowledge and technical capacity,” White and McEvoy concluded.

Experts have spent years researching what does and does not work in countering radicalization. They say results are hard to measure. For example, if nothing happens, it’s difficult to tell whether a certain action is responsible for preventing it.

A 2014 study, “Preventing and countering youth radicalization in the European Union,” said that counterterrorism concerns should not aim exclusively at Muslim communities, because they risk alienating them. A 2013 study by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism noted that the focus of counterterrorism should be to strengthen and empower communities from which radicals and terrorists might be drawn.

In a 2014 study, “Prevention of violent extremism in third countries,” researchers Magnus Ranstorp and Peder Hyllengren said CVE programs don’t have to be high-tech.

“There are several good examples and inspiring models of how civil society can counter violent Islamic extremism,” the researchers said. “This can be done through, for example, initiatives led and governed by women, strengthening youth initiatives or through innovative ways through the use of popular and local culture, and by crafting and deploying specific messages to counter the narrative of extremism.”

Women and young people are essential to CVE because they have so much at stake. Women, young people and even children have been specifically recruited and trained as suicide bombers. They

have been influenced by radicals advocating hate and intolerance.

“Women and young people are not just the groups most vulnerable to extremism and violence but are also best placed to combat extremism in the community,” the researchers said.

## LESSONS FROM SOMALIA

For most of the 21st century, Somalia has been a testing ground for CVE methods. Women there play a critical role in preventing extremism because of their respected position as mothers in the home. They are in an unrivaled position to observe worrisome behavior changes in their children.



A Nigerian man listens to a radio for elections results. Radio remains one of the most valuable communication tools throughout Africa. REUTERS

Women can be important advocates to “demystify the life of a terrorist: to speak openly about the hardships of separation, insecurity, loss of income, anxiety about a covert life,” concluded the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation. In contrast to the idea of Muslim women as silent victims, women should be seen as influential advocates of anti-extremist measures, the center said.

Although Somali society is traditionally male dominated, within the home women hold considerable sway. Some have voiced opposition to the violence preached by extremist groups. A pronouncement from a wife of al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri urging women to raise their children to be jihadists and martyrs was met with resistance in Somalia. Somali women have largely rejected similar instructions from al-Shabaab.

“Somali women’s groups have been very sensitive regarding al-Shabaab’s recruitment of their children and have also been opposed to al-Qaida’s advocacy of martyrdom,” reported Ranstorp and Hyllengren.



# NINE TYPES OF CVE PROGRAMS

Researchers have studied effective countering violent extremism (CVE) plans for years. The United Nations has used such research to develop the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and has identified nine types of national CVE programs:

-  **PRISON PROGRAMS**
-  **EDUCATION**
-  **PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**
-  **TACKLING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES**
-  **GLOBAL PROGRAMS TO COUNTER RADICALIZATION**
-  **INTERNET POLICIES**
-  **LEGAL REFORMS**
-  **DEVELOPING AND DISSEMINATING INFORMATION**
-  **TRAINING AND QUALIFYING AGENCIES INVOLVED WITH IMPLEMENTING COUNTERRADICALIZATION**

In “Somali women and peacebuilding,” researcher Faiza Jama reported: “We call on Somali mothers to raise their children on tolerance and fraternity and to teach them Islam’s righteous path, far from extremism and violence.”

In a 2018 study, “Preventing extremism in the Horn of Africa,” the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) said that successful CVE projects have “a strong focus on promoting cooperation and participation and promoting tolerance and multi-culturalism.”

“In Somalia, where interclan conflict and marginalization have been identified as drivers of violent extremism, the emphasis is on building understanding between different religious and ethnic groups,” the institute reported.

In addition to Somalia, the institute’s research focused on CVE projects in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. In all four countries, poverty and a lack of jobs were identified as drivers of violent extremism. No CVE plan, the study said, will work without addressing those two issues.

“It’s hard to sustain the impact if you can’t provide people with alternatives,” the study said. “People need to feed themselves, and to work and feel productive. Livelihoods and economics are an integral part of any [CVE] project.”

The United Nations also has produced a plan to counter violent extremism. The plan includes promoting dialogue and conflict prevention; strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law; engaging communities; empowering youth; promoting gender equality and empowering women; improving education, training and employment; and using strategic communications, including the internet and social media.

## COMIC BOOKS AND WHATSAPP GROUPS

In addition to its study of CVE programs in the Horn of Africa, the ISS has produced a similar study covering Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. The study concluded that radio remains one of the continent’s most effective means of promoting education and exchanging ideas. The study also said that social media was growing as an effective teaching tool, along with “the use of the arts, including music, theater and visual media, such as cartoons.” The study noted in particular three success stories:

- Cameroon, the institute noted, has been particularly innovative. In one project, popular Cameroonian musicians were asked to produce music containing positive messages. In another project, comic books printed in French and Arabic told stories about three young friends and the challenges they faced. The stories explained





Students work on assignments in a class in Mogadishu, Somalia. Researchers continue to study the country's efforts to counter extremists' messages to young people.  
REUTERS

the choices they made, and how those choices would affect the rest of their lives. Children took the comic books home with them so that their parents, regardless of whether they could read, could learn the same lessons.

- A digital project in Nigeria called for women across the country to set up WhatsApp groups and invite 100 women to join each group. The groups serve as platforms to discuss the dangers of violent extremism and early warning signs of radicalization within families.
- In northern Nigeria, which is predominately Muslim, Michael Sodipo, a Christian, established the Peace Initiative Network to address radicalization of young people. His Peace Club involves schoolchildren and young people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds who gather after school to meet, debate and play football. The Peace Club started in 2006 with 50 members. Today it has more than 8,000 participants across four Nigerian states.

Almost all CVE studies include a warning that any CVE plan must include some component for accurately measuring improvements. The ISS said that organizations working with CVE programs have to find more effective ways to measure



PEACE DIRECT

Michael Sodipo of Nigeria established the Peace Initiative Network to address the radicalization of young people.

progress and “hold governments accountable for their obligations relating to governance, justice and development.”

Other studies have concluded that the weakest aspect of most CVE programs is in monitoring and evaluating.

The United States Institute of Peace noted that attempts to evaluate CVE programs run into two major obstacles: the impossibility of “measuring a negative,” or proving that violent activity or radicalization would have occurred had there been no CVE program; and accounting for the large number of variables and outcomes beyond a CVE intervention. □









# UPROOTING EXTREMISM

**The Sahel's Harsh Terrain Is Fertile Ground for Recruiting Youths. Groups and Governments Must Offer Alternatives.**

ADF STAFF

**L**ife in much of the Sahel is hard. The United Nations estimates that roughly 80% of the Sahel's farmland is degraded. Droughts and floods are growing longer and more frequent, undermining food production. It's one of the poorest regions on Earth, with 44% of its children lacking access to primary education. Only a third of the population can read and write.

Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, the U.N. secretary-general's special envoy for the Sahel, said the region's governments must spend a significant amount on their growing security threats, leaving little for issues affecting young people. The problem is compounded, Sellassie told The Associated Press, because drug traffickers work with armed groups and terrorists who exchange safe passage for money.

In Niger's Tillabéri region, there are two reasons for joining an extremist group. Young unemployed men there feel useless. As one Fulani nomad told International Alert, these young men "are even ready to form an alliance with the devil if it will make their lives meaningful."

For these young herders, joining extremists may not lead to prosperity, but it protects livestock from bandits and other ethnic groups.

Throughout Africa, young people are the backbone of extremist groups. It's no coincidence that "al-Shabaab" means "the youth." Extremist groups use young people in attacks to show their brutality and resolve to win. In raids involving the extensive use of small arms, young people are expendable fighters.

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Displaced children gather at a house in Mali. Poor living conditions are a reason why young people join extremist groups, researchers say. AFP/GETTY IMAGES





A woman casts a ballot in Bamako during Malian elections.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

As researcher-educator Jessica Trisko Darden wrote in a 2019 study, “Over time, the recruitment of youth into armed groups can lay the foundation for future conflicts.” Darden and other researchers have concluded that trying to reform young people who are already in extremist groups is not the answer. The answer lies in preventing them from joining such groups in the first place.

In producing the 2017 study, “We Hope and We Fight,” nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) Think Peace and Mercy Corps interviewed young members of armed groups, nonviolent young people and community leaders in conflict areas. Their goal was to find out why some young people join armed groups while others resist violence. Their findings included:

**Community support for armed groups encourages youths to engage in violence out of a sense of duty or respect.** Whether groups are pro-government, anti-government or violent extremists, their members said they had the support and shared values of their communities. That acceptance meant that participation in violence was regarded as neither deviant nor abnormal. As a member of one anti-government

group noted, “My source of motivation is the support I receive from my community for the safekeeping of property and people.”

**Perceptions of community exclusion fostered by the government, based on geography or ethnic identity, fuel participation in anti-government armed groups.** When young people feel their governments have neglected or mistreated them, they are more likely to join extremist or anti-government groups.

**Young people say they are driven to join anti-government groups because of their experiences with injustice, including abuses and corruption.** Some mentioned direct abuse by the military; others mentioned experiences with, or perceptions of, government extortion. A 2018 study by International Alert said that young people in the Sahel have often experienced government shortcomings firsthand in disputes over land during rainy seasons. “Given the state’s lack of action, a sense of abandonment and a gradual loss of trust in authorities” can drive young people to take up arms to protect themselves, the study reported.

**Some young people, looking for the long-term stability of a government job, think**



**that joining armed groups may be a stepping stone to joining the military.** Other studies have shown that young people, facing poor prospects for employment, have joined extremist groups as a means of status and protest. Farming and herding jobs often “no longer award social respectability in line with existing norms,” the U.N. Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute reported. “For young men, this can easily lead them to question the way society is organized economically and morally. Joining violent extremist groups can provide a solution where the quest for recognition outweighs” other factors.

In her 2019 report for the American Enterprise Institute, Darden said young people are drawn to extremist groups based on a range of motivations, including a search for group-based identity, the ideological appeal of a group, and real or perceived exclusion from society. Among her report’s suggestions was a move beyond the focus on young men to also confront the radicalization and recruitment of girls and young women.

#### FOCUS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Mercy Corps says programs to prevent young people from joining extremist groups need to focus on social networks, not demographics. Because recruitment often is rooted in the cultivation of a tightly knit, collectivist identity, prevention should focus on community-based alternatives: incorporating young people into peaceful groups, mentorship programs, and creating opportunities for young people to build individual identities and positive family connections.

Mercy Corps said recruitment prevention programs should support, educate and partner with “peaceful local actors,” particularly wives, mothers and young people. Trusted community voices are the ones most likely to offer positive role models and alternative views. Local tribal leaders and imams, for instance, are valuable opinion shapers. Mothers’ groups in particular can be valuable in blunting extremist appeal. Mercy Corps also said spaces need to be set up where former fighters can serve as prevention advocates and mentors within communities and universities. And, the NGO said, groups and governments need to increase political and financial support for programs that address governance gaps that drive extremism.

A 2018 International Alert study focused on young people taking up arms in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The study, titled “If Victims Become Perpetrators,” showed that violent

extremism in the central Sahel was mostly a response to local conflicts, “and that the link with international jihadism is more rhetoric than reality.”

In its 2017 report, Mercy Corps came up with five recommendations for preventing young people from joining extremist groups:

- Focus on preventing violence and improving safety at the local level instead of targeting young people assumed to be “at risk.” Many young people in armed groups have deep social ties to people in their communities, suggesting that they are not truly marginalized. Interventions to prevent violence need to be inclusive and address the entire community, rather than targeting specific groups or individuals.
- Establish inclusive, collaborative plans that show the peace process to be transparent and responsive to community needs. A peace process depends on whether it can meet the expectations of young people. If the

## Vulnerabilities for Terrorist Recruitment

- Exposure to Violent Extremist Propaganda
- Social or Political Marginalization
- Permissive Family and Social Networks
- Geographic Proximity and Lack of Physical Security
- Economic Instability

Source: “Tackling Terrorists’ Exploitation of Youth,” By Jessica Trisko Darden



Women leave a mosque in Burkina Faso. Researchers say that women and religious leaders can play a key role in keeping young people from becoming extremists. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Because recruitment often is rooted in the cultivation of a tightly knit, collectivist identity, prevention should focus on community-based alternatives: incorporating young people into peaceful groups, mentorship programs, and creating opportunities for young people to build individual identities and positive family connections.



The people of Agadez, Niger, celebrate the Bianou folk festival in the first days of October.





plan includes or excludes certain groups or regions, those actions must be seen as legitimate and fair. Groups handling the peace process must be flexible and responsive to changing dynamics. They must make sure that armed groups not included in the peace process are accounted for in the future. Groups involved in the peace process must communicate with people in conflict areas to make sure they are aware of the terms of any agreements and identify and resolve other factors in the process.

- Develop community-level security plans that outline a transition from armed groups to state-led security management. Many times, nonstate armed groups have widespread community support, and traditional counter-insurgency approaches may backfire. A failure to address a community's security concerns, along with a failure to

address past military abuses, will prevent a peace plan from taking root.

- Improve local governing through better service delivery and decision-making that includes local input and feedback. That input must include young people.
- Identify and create opportunities for young people to achieve status without joining armed groups. Young people need nonviolent ways to gain recognition within their communities. They need meaningful, stable and demand-driven jobs that will expand their horizons beyond serving in scarce military or civil service posts. Taking part in social activities, civic engagement projects and advocacy groups also can help young people feel a sense of recognition. But such groups must be paired with real changes in government service provision and inclusion. □

Students at the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso attend a lecture by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Educational opportunities are vital in keeping young people from becoming extremists.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





# Marathoner's Feat INSPIRES a NATION

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**K**enyan distance runner Eliud Kipchoge made history by completing a marathon in under two hours. His feat was greeted with joy and pride in his home country.

"I am happy today because he has won in Kenya and in the world. I thank him so much for this, for me, for Kenya and the world," said Kipchoge's mother, Janet Rotich,

who watched in her home village, Kapsisiywa.

Kipchoge's run in Vienna, Austria, was broadcast live on all of Kenya's television stations. The run is not an official world record because of the use of runners who helped pace the leader.

Crowds gathered in Eldoret, a city 40 kilometers from Kapsisiywa, where the 34-year-old runner, his wife and three children live, to watch the race on TV. In Nairobi, crowds gathered early to watch the run on giant screens.

In Eldoret, the fans watched with excitement as their champion ticked off the kilometers and exulted when Kipchoge crossed the finish line with a clock displaying 1 hour, 59 minutes and 40 seconds.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta quickly issued his "heartfelt congratulations."

"You've done it, you've made history and made Kenya proud while at it. Your win today will inspire ...

Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge crosses the finish line after running a marathon in less than two hours in Vienna, Austria. REUTERS

future generations to dream big and to aspire for greatness. We celebrate you and wish you God's blessings," Kenyatta said.

Kenyan Vice President William Ruto, who had made the trip to Vienna, sent out a series of tweets.

"A blistering 1.59.40! Congratulations @EliudKipchoge for the historic achievement in shattering the sub-two-hour barrier for the marathon; you are arguably the greatest runner of all time."

In Kapsisiywa, Eliud's older brother, Wilson Sugut, said the run showed what individuals could achieve.

"He told the world that no human being is limited and that he will overcome this two-hour barrier," he recalled. "People couldn't believe it, but now we can believe it."





JACK BELL GALLERY

## CAMEROONIAN PAINTER IS INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

BBC NEWS AT [BBC.CO.UK/NEWS](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news)

"Painting is for lazy people," Ajarb Bernard Ategwa's father would tell him as a child. Daydreaming and doodling in his schoolbooks would often get him scolded. But the Cameroonian artist, now 30, got the last laugh.

Ategwa says his vivid paintings of life in Cameroon's biggest city, Douala, sell for up to \$26,000.

"It's the only thing I know how to do," he said. "So painting is my life. At times when I'm angry, painting calms me down."

He never formally trained as an artist and says he has used the same bold approach to color since age 7. Although his works feel like portraits of bustling city life, Ategwa said they're filtered to an extent by memory and imagination.

"I do a sketch first before I start painting," Ategwa said of his technique. Many are imposing in size. One of his recent works is more than 2 meters tall and 4 meters wide.

Walking around Douala, "you see many things like markets, shops, hair-dressing salons," Ategwa said. There are lots of sounds too, including "influences from Congolese music and Ivory Coast. You hear that everywhere."

His works were exhibited at London's Jack Bell Gallery and New York's Armory Show in 2019.

"Not everything is just about education, education, education," he said. "If you have a child and they love drawing, please allow them to do their drawing."



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## German Champions OPEN FOOTBALL SCHOOL IN ETHIOPIA

VOICE OF AMERICA

**B**ayern Munich, the champion of Germany's Bundesliga, the top tier of the nation's football league system, has signed an agreement to open its first football school in Africa, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Bayern Munich representatives said they were inspired by the young football players and fans in Ethiopia, which is ranked 150th worldwide, according to the international soccer governing body, FIFA.

"Two-thirds of the Ethiopian population is younger than 25 years. We will support the Ethiopian Football Federation in terms of young development and coaches' education programs," said Holger Quest, team leader of media operations at Bayern Munich.

Bavarian Minister Markus Soeder, other state officials and Bayern executive board

members traveled to Addis Ababa to sign an agreement. Soeder told Ethiopian media the agreement would bring Bavarian expertise in football to the sports-hungry nation.

The international Bayern Youth Cup tournament took place in Nigeria in 2018 and 2019. Its success led to the idea to give young athletes around the world a way to showcase their talents, and include those players from disadvantaged areas.

The soccer school will accept 30 to 40 young athletes, ages 8 to 10, with their training costs covered by Bayern Munich. In the agreement, Bayern Munich said it also would finance the school training and education.

Bayern also has established football schools in China, Japan, Singapore, Thailand and the United States.



# UGANDA AIRLINES RETURNS TO THE SKIES

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**A**fter two decades without a national airline, Uganda commemorated the return of Uganda Airlines with a flight from Entebbe to Nairobi, Kenya.

The airline initially will fly to seven destinations, including Nairobi; Mogadishu, Somalia; Juba, South Sudan; and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; said Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda during a ceremony at Entebbe International Airport. The country has acquired two new Bombardier CRJ 900 jets and is expected to receive another

the carrier was liquidated in 2001 after a failed bid to privatize the foundering company, which was dogged by corruption and mismanagement.

"Uganda Airlines will have direct flights from Uganda to China plus other countries, and it will be very important in hitting the 4 million tourist goal the government has set," said Tourism Minister Ephraim Kamuntu.

Uganda welcomed 1.8 million tourists in 2018, according to official statistics.

two in 2019. It will add two Airbus A330-800 planes in 2020 for long-haul flights.

Uganda Airlines is launching into increasingly crowded East African skies. Rwanda and Tanzania have revived their national airlines to capture a slice of the booming market.

They are taking on regional giants Kenya Airways, which continues to expand, and Ethiopian Airlines, which largely dominates the skies.

Former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin founded Uganda Airlines in 1976, but

## RWANDA UNVEILS FIRST 'MADE IN AFRICA' SMARTPHONE

REUTERS | PHOTOS BY OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, RWANDA

Rwanda's Mara Group has launched two smartphones, describing them as the first "made in Africa" models and boosting the country's ambitions to become a regional technology hub.

The Mara X and Mara Z will use Google's Android operating system and cost \$190 and \$130, respectively.

They will compete with Samsung, whose cheapest branded smartphone costs \$54, and nonbranded phones, which cost about \$37. Mara Group CEO Ashish Thakkar said it was targeting customers willing to pay more for quality.

"We are actually the first who are doing manufacturing," Thakkar said. "We are making the motherboards, we are making the subboards during the entire process. There are over 1,000 pieces per phone."

Other companies assemble smartphones in Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa, but import the components, he said.

Thakkar said the plant cost \$50 million and could make 10,000 phones per day.

Mara Group hopes to profit from the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, a pact aimed at forming a more-than-50-nation trade bloc to boost sales across Africa.

The agreement is due to begin trading in July 2020, aiming to unite 1.3 billion people and create a \$3.4 trillion economic bloc. But it is still in the early stages, and no timelines have



Rwandan President Paul Kagame, wearing glasses, observes a machinery demonstration at the Mara Group manufacturing plant in Kigali.

been agreed upon for abolishing tariffs.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame said he hoped the phone would increase Rwanda's smartphone use, currently at about 15%.

"Rwandans are already using smartphones, but we want to enable many more," Kagame said. "The introduction of Mara phones will put smartphones ownership within reach of more Rwandans."





A large photograph showing a man in a light-colored shirt and dark pants standing in a stone archway, holding a camera up to take a picture. In the background, a large, multi-story white building with many windows and a central staircase is visible. The scene is set within the dungeons of Cape Coast Castle.

# Tourists Mark Somber Anniversary with 'Year of Return'

A tourist takes a picture of the dungeons at Cape Coast Castle on August 18, 2019.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE | PHOTOS BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**T**housands of African-American tourists have flocked to Ghana as part of the "Year of Return" commemorating the 400th anniversary of the slave trade.

"This has been about understanding my history and my roots. Where I came from," U.S. preacher Roxanne Caleb said. "I am very thankful I came here as part of the Year of Return."

Cape Coast Castle, 150 kilometers from the capital, Accra, is a major magnet for visitors.

The white-washed fort lined with cannons was one of dozens of prisons studding the Atlantic coast in which slaves were held before their journey to the New World.

A string of prominent African-Americans headed to the site in 2019 to mark the anniversary since the first slave landing in 1619 in the Virginia Colony, part of what later became the United States.

It is an emotional rite of passage for those who visit.

Sampson Nii Addy, a corrections officer with the Montgomery Police Department in the U.S. state of Alabama, said he and his family found the tour educational.

"I think every black person needs to come around to learn history, how people were treated," the 52-year-old said. "We can't forget history, but we can always learn something from it."

Ghana, one of the continent's most stable democracies, has long pitched itself as a destination for African-Americans who want to explore their heritage and even settle permanently.

In 2009, President Barack Obama visited with his family and paid homage at Cape Coast Castle.

The Year of Return has added fresh impetus, and the country projected it would increase visitor numbers from 350,000 in 2018 to 500,000 in 2019, including 45,000 African-Americans.

Kojo Keelson has spent nine years guiding tour groups around Cape Coast Castle and says 2019 brought a surge in interest as Ghana expected to rake in tourism revenue of \$925 million.

"It's like a pilgrimage. This year we've a lot more African-Americans coming through than the previous year," he said. "I'm urging all of them to come home and experience and reconnect to the motherland."

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A woman stands on Cape Coast Castle in Ghana. The castle was one of dozens of prisons along the Atlantic coast in which slaves were held before their journey to the New World.







Cameroonians Soldiers rescue victims of a ferry accident near the island of Bakassi.

CAMEROONIAN ARMY

## Cameroonians Forces Save Lives After Ferry Disaster

ADF STAFF

A joint rescue team from the Cameroonians Navy and its Rapid Intervention Battalion oil field protection group saved more than 100 people after a shipwreck. A storm caused a ferry, the Austerheim, to capsize near the island of Bakassi during the night of August 25, 2019.

Although rescuers responded quickly, 17 people drowned. The ferry was en route from Calabar, Nigeria, to Tiko, Cameroon, and officials said it had about 130 people aboard.

"According to the latest information, the boat was overloaded and hit a sandbar before turning around," the Cameroonians Ministry of Defense said in a statement.

Ferry accidents have become tragically common in some parts of Africa. In September 2019, 36 people died after a boat capsized in the Congo River on the outskirts of Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One of the worst such incidents occurred in Tanzania in September 2018 when 131 people died after a ferry sank in Lake Victoria.

## Somali General is Youngest to Take Helm of Armed Forces

VOICE OF AMERICA

Gen. Odowaa Yusuf Rageh has been named commander of the Somali National Army (SNA). At 32, he is the youngest person to hold the title. He attended military training in Uganda and became an instructor to new recruits. He won accolades for bravery in 2019 when he personally led a charge to repel an al-Shabaab attack in Lower Shabelle.

"His presence changed the morale of the Soldiers, changed the fight; they fought bravely because of the commander," said SNA Gen. Dahir Aden Elmi. "He led the defense and the charge. They won with his operation plan."

Rageh joined the Army in 2005. In July 2007, he was among 180 Somali officers sent to Uganda's Kaweweta Military Training School for a beginner officers' course. The next year, he was among 12 officers sent to Uganda's Bihanga Military Training School for special training on commanding land forces.

He returned to Somalia in December 2009 and was transferred to the



SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY

presidential guard when al-Shabaab was just hundreds of meters away from the presidential palace. That same month, he was made a lieutenant.

For the next two years, the Somali government fought a deadly, back-and-forth battle against al-Shabaab in Mogadishu. Rageh was the operation commander of two mobile units, one infantry and one technical, that fought from the

palace to the main Bakara market 5 kilometers north of the palace.

"His units faced huge obstacles because al-Shabaab was using underground tunnels," said one of his former senior commanders.

In 2012, Rageh was promoted to captain. In 2013, he was sent to Turkey for training at the National Defense University in Istanbul. He studied staff training, commanding a brigade and army management.

Rageh returned to Mogadishu in July 2016 after graduating with a master's degree. He was promoted to major and became commander of a unit in the 60th battalion in charge of the presidential palace. He then was promoted to deputy commander of the presidential guard after his predecessor was shot and killed by a soldier. Rageh held that post until March 2018, when he became a lieutenant colonel.

At his inauguration for the top post, the general said he will prioritize building the Army, discipline, training, capacity building and fighting al-Shabaab.



# Nigeria Offers Ex-Fighters 'Safe Corridor'

ADF STAFF

**N**igeria is making progress in deradicalizing former Boko Haram fighters.

The plan known as Operation Safe Corridor was unveiled in 2015 at a Nigerian National Security Council meeting when the government offered former Boko Haram members a chance at rehabilitation and reintegration.

German news outlet Deutsche Welle (DW.com) visited the Bulumkutu Rehabilitation Centre in Maiduguri where 151 former Boko Haram fighters were being handed over to the state government in August 2019. Deradicalization includes psychotherapy, interaction with imams who discredit extremist preaching and other counseling.

The coordinator of Operation Safe Corridor, Brig. Gen. Bamidele Mathew Shafa, told DW.com he is hopeful the program is making a difference.

"A lot of ground [has been covered], and we hope these boys will be accepted," he said. "As a matter of fact, the reports we are getting on the first set of people we handed over to the state are positive. We have not received any report of maltreatment in the various communities that they are in. I think this is something we need to sustain."

But some people in Borno State told DW.com they are not ready to accept ex-fighters. "Boko Haram killed my husband while he was praying inside the mosque; two of my brothers were slaughtered," said Hauwa Adamu, a victim of the Boko Haram



Men detained by the Nigerian Army in Borno State are released after a security screening. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

insurgency in Borno State. "They should find a place to keep [the former fighters], but not in our society, please."

Bulama Bukarti, a Nigerian barrister and expert on peace, security and Islamic extremism at SOAS University of London, said a key to the success of the deradicalization program will be effectively tracking graduates and seeing what has worked and what has not. Still, he said, he firmly believes in the potential of the deradicalization process.

"If we believe that people can be taught to hate, we should also believe that people can be taught to love," he said.

## Great Lakes Militaries Eye Joint Action to Secure the DRC

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Congolese Soldiers  
keep watch in a  
camp near Beni,  
Democratic Republic  
of the Congo.

REUTERS



**S**enior military officers from five African Great Lakes countries met to discuss strategies to respond to violence plaguing the region.

Senior officers from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda gathered in the eastern town of Goma, in the DRC's North Kivu province. DRC Armed Forces spokesman Gen. Leon-Richard Kasonga said the meeting was meant to compare strategy and discuss "sharing efforts" to promote peace.

Eastern DRC and its borders have been an area of conflict for nearly a quarter century. The region is troubled by militia groups that evolved from the two wars that decimated the area in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The DRC's chief of staff of the armed forces, Gen. Celestin Mbala, has suggested joint military operations to "eradicate armed groups," both domestic and foreign, in the troubled east. However, the United Nations ruled out supporting any foreign military that intervenes in the DRC.

Among the militias troubling the Kivu region are the Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamist-rooted Ugandan armed group, and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda.





## AFRICA'S CHILDREN GETTING HEALTHIER

VOICE OF AMERICA

At a time when bad news seems inescapable, the aid group Save the Children has some good news: Across the globe, children are healthier and safer than ever before. This is particularly true in Africa.

According to a report by the U.S.-based charity, the overall situation for children has improved in 173 of 176 countries since 2000. Among the highlights are 4.4 million fewer child deaths per year, 115 million more children in school and 11 million fewer married girls.

To quantify the status of children, the group created an "End of Childhood" index and ranked countries on a 1,000-point scale. The scores reflect "childhood ends," including death, severe malnutrition, child marriage, labor and early motherhood.

In Africa, the group found reason for optimism. More than 70% of African countries saw their scores increase by 100 points or more. Ethiopia, Niger, Rwanda and Sierra Leone made the greatest gains.

Each of the African countries highlighted had specific drivers improving the quality of life for children. In Sierra Leone, the end of a protracted civil war led to a 99% reduction in displaced people. In Rwanda, a return to peace and several government initiatives led to a 79% drop in child mortality and a 60% reduction in child marriage and out-of-school rates.

In Ethiopia, a commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals has led to improved health for mothers and children. Twenty years ago in Ethiopia, Save the Children was focused on saving the lives of young children. Now, the problems are less severe, and the group can focus on other issues. The charity said that the Ethiopian government has taken on more community health work, and the child mortality rate has dropped by 54%. Now, the charity is focusing more on basic literacy there.

## INVENTOR HONORED

### FOR PILL-DISPENSING PATIENT LOCKERS

BBC NEWS AT [BBC.CO.UK/NEWS](http://BBC.CO.UK/NEWS)

An invention by a South African engineer that dispenses pills has won a major engineering prize. Neo Hutiri invented the Pelebox, a locker patients can unlock with a one-time personal identification number sent to their phone.

These lockers cut wait times down "from 3 ½ hours to under 36 seconds," he told the BBC.

South Africa runs the world's largest HIV/AIDS treatment program, which has led to high numbers of patients with repeat prescriptions.



Neo Hutiri THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hutiri won the \$32,000 2019 Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation from the Royal Academy of Engineering. He said he came up with the idea after he was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 2014 and he went to his clinic to collect medicine.

Long lines at pharmacies can be caused by staff shortages and high volumes of patients with chronic illnesses, such as HIV and AIDS. Hutiri said the lockers also provide a measure of privacy that can help with illnesses that may have a stigma associated with them, such as HIV.

Six smart locker units are in operation in South Africa, and the company is building eight more. He says he will use prize money to help build an assembly section for manufacturing and improve the technology so they can scale up the business.



# KENYAN VILLAGERS USE ‘DIGITAL WELLS’ IN DROUGHT

VOICE OF AMERICA

**K**enya is facing one of the worst stretches of drought in years, causing underdevelopment, fights over water and fears of starvation. However, a village in western Kenya is using a high-tech solution to water scarcity with “digital wells.”

In Nakuru County’s Solai village, people have long been dependent on seasonal rivers and salty Lake Solai for their animals and irrigation. But drought has reduced the local river to a stream.

Residents such as Anne Chesire said the drilling of so-called digital wells has been a lifesaver.

Previously, she said, they would have to wake up early to beat the line at the watering hole, which is kilometers away. The water was salty, Chesire said. But since receiving the new taps, she said life has become so much easier.

World Vision Kenya and the Nakuru County government funded the wells, giving residents access to clean drinking water, and a high-tech solution to prevent waste. Villagers use cards fitted with microchips and loaded with money to dispense and pay for the water, helping to fund the cost of drilling wells.

Charles Kimutai, Chepkulu Water Project chairman, said the card system has been helpful because he no longer has to chase people down to get them to pay their water bill.

The project has brought much-needed water closer to home and extra income for locals, such as mother of two Brenda Chepngetich. She said she is growing vegetables in



A drought in Kenya has forced children to dig deep into a dry river bed to retrieve water. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

her backyard and selling them. It has helped her sustain a comfortable livelihood.

World Vision Kenya project manager John Mwaura said they have built 11 boreholes and water dispensing machines in the area since December 2018.

“Since we entered into the area, life has changed,” Mwaura said. “As per an evaluation we did, water penetration was at 37%. And to date we have gone to 54%. So we can say this is an achievement, and all this achievement is due to the project that World Vision is doing. And we hope to go far with the partnership we are doing with the government.”

## SOUTH SUDAN GETS MOBILE MONEY SERVICE

VOICE OF AMERICA

**S**outh Sudan is celebrating a technological advance with the launch of a nationwide system for mobile money transfers. The new service called M-Gurush — M for mobile and Gurush for money in Arabic — removes the need for a bank account, which most South Sudanese lack.

Lado Kenyi of the National Communication Authority has high hopes for the new system.

“The real success of mobile money is in targeting the people of low income and our rural population,” Kenyi said. “Those are the people we want to reach and include them into the financial system.”

South Sudanese Minister of Information Michael Makuei demonstrated the ease of use by buying a cow with his mobile phone. He said it will take time for rural South Sudanese to trust cashless payments.

“You have a very big task to do,” Makuei said. “You need to sensitize the people of South Sudan. Including me.”

Ravaged by years of war and conflict, South Sudan is wracked by poverty and has one of Africa’s lowest rates of



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

mobile phone penetration at 21%.

“One of the biggest challenges is network coverage,” said Joshua Makuru, a telecommunications specialist in Juba. “Because as we all know after the war, telecom infrastructure was destroyed, especially most of the telecom infrastructure in the villages.”

Mobile money is expected to speed up trade and add thousands of new jobs to South Sudan’s struggling economy. It also puts South Sudan in the ranks of other East African nations using mobile money, such as Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.



# Kenya Launches Biggest Wind Farm in Africa

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Kenya has formally launched Africa's biggest wind power plant, a mammoth project in a gusty stretch of wilderness that already provides nearly a fifth of the country's energy needs.

The \$680 million project, a sprawling 365-turbine wind farm on the eastern shores of Lake Turkana, is delivering 310 megawatts of renewable power to the national grid.

The largest private investment in Kenya's history, the Lake Turkana Wind Power project was beset with delays and took nearly a decade to rise from the arid landscape 600 kilometers north of Nairobi.

The turbines, scattered across Turkana's stark lunarlike landscape and rocky hills, began to deliver their first electricity in late 2018. Today, their giant blades deliver 15% of Kenya's entire installed capacity, connected to the national grid through a 428-kilometer power line.

The project lies in a natural corridor dubbed "the windiest place on earth" and promises to harness this endless power at low cost. The nearly 50-meter turbines were engineered to handle the fierce gusts that tear through the Turkana Corridor, a wind tunnel that generates optimal conditions, year-round.

The winds howling almost constantly through the barren valley deliver double the load capacity enjoyed by similar projects in the U.S. and Europe. The windmills, manufactured by Danish company Vestas, had to be brought one by one overland from the Kenyan port of Mombasa, 1,200 kilometers away.

More than 2,000 trips were needed to bring all the materials from port to plant. About 200 kilometers of road leading to the site had to be tarred to allow trucks through. Another 100 kilometers of internal roads linking the turbines also were constructed.



## SEYCHELLES PLANS TO FARM SEAFOOD

SEYCHELLES NEWS AGENCY

**T**he Seychelles is beginning to support the aquaculture industry by issuing licenses to farm five types of marine species.

At the beginning of this new project, only Seychellois investors will be considered for licenses. Licenses will be for red snapper, grouper, two types of trevally and sea urchins.

"Aquaculture" refers to the breeding, rearing and harvesting of animals and plants in all types of water environments, including ponds, rivers, lakes and the ocean.

Aubrey Lesperance, an official with the Seychelles Fisheries Authority, said the project eventually will be open to foreign investors and will allow for additional species such as crab and "ornamental" fish for aquariums.

"Now, we are in a better position to participate in different markets locally and internationally to actively advertise for investments whilst before we could only do education and promote the project," he said.

This is not the first time Seychelles has tried aquaculture. In 1989, a farm was established in Coetivy to produce black tiger prawns, but it stopped working in 2009.





## Ghana Plans 2020 Electronic Census

VOICE OF AMERICA

Ghana is preparing to conduct its first digital population and housing census beginning in March 2020. It will join Eswatini, Kenya and Malawi as one of the first countries in Africa to collect census data electronically.

Ghana's 2010 census featured paper questionnaires. It took months to gather and assemble the data, and about 3% of the population was left out of the survey.

Now the government will use tablets and satellite images to make sure everyone is counted. Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia said the data would help fight inequality. "We must count everyone and make everyone accountable to pay their fair share in taxes that would be used to target assistance to those who may not have had access to critical social services previously," he said.

The census is expected to cost \$84 million, about 50% more than the previous count. The government has hired about 60,000 enumerators but still is working with the United Nations on how best to get the 65,000 tablets needed to conduct the surveys.

Officials say Kenya may be able to lend some tablets after it completes its first digital census.

Araba Forson, chief statistician for the Ghana Statistical Service, said technology would prevent enumerators from understaffing densely populated areas — a problem encountered in 2010 because population maps were out of date.

"Satellite imagery will tell us that there are people living in this part of the country that the enumerator may not have visited," she said. "Using electronic data collection, we will be able to make sure that everyone has been covered."

Ghana's urban population has more than doubled during the past two decades, rising from 7 million in 1997 to almost 16 million in 2017, according to the World Bank.

Ghanaian electoral officers count votes in an election. Ghana plans to use digital technology in its 2020 census. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## Tanzania Plans Cable Cars for Mount Kilimanjaro

VOICE OF AMERICA

Tanzania is planning to build a cable car service on Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest peak and a World Heritage site. The country wants to boost tourism, but a quarter-million porters and mountain guides worry the quick ride up the mountain will threaten their livelihoods.

Officials say the cable car will cater to the physically disabled, the elderly and children, and it also will help tourists get up the mountain faster. About 50,000 tourists climb Kilimanjaro annually, bringing tens of millions of dollars to the region. Tanzanian authorities say cable cars will increase tourism by as much as 50%.

The deputy minister for natural resources and tourism, Constantine Kanyasu, believes the project will be a big plus for the tourism industry in Tanzania but concedes change is not easy.

"We expect more camping on top of the mountain than this year, and that should not worry our people that they are going to lose their jobs," Kanyasu said. "Of course, changes come with some effects. We should not expect Tanzania to be the same in 100 years to come, and we should not have a nation that is prepared to be porters for a lifetime. We need to have changes."

Jennifer Francis, deputy chairman for the Kili Meru Mountain Guides Society, says the government has not been as transparent as it could be regarding the project. "They only tell us the advantages, but we don't know its negative effects on the current generation and the next generation," Francis said. "This confuses us."

Tanzania is conducting a social and environmental impact assessment before building the Kilimanjaro cable car system.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

# THE KING

## *and the Lice Test*

• ADF STAFF •

The storyteller historians of the Kingdom of Benin say that in about the year 1200, Evian, the kingdom's aging administrator, tried to pass his title on to his son. But the administrator was not of royal blood, so the rule of succession did not apply.

The empire, in what is now southern Nigeria, traditionally had been ruled by kings. After 40 years under the control of Evian, the Edo people of Benin wanted to return to the relative stability of a king's rule. They wanted a king with Edo royal blood.

The Edo chief reached out to a neighboring ruler, King Izoduwa, who was of Edo royal descent. The chief asked Izoduwa to send one of his sons to become the kingdom's new leader. Instead, Izoduwa did something unexpected: He gave him some lice, and asked that the insects be returned to him in three years.

The chief put the tiny insects in the hair of one of his slaves, and after three years, returned the lice to Izoduwa. The king was surprised at how well-developed the lice colony was, and concluded that if the Kingdom of Benin could take care of the lice, it could also take care of his son.

Ever since the kingdom was established in about the year 900, the kings had been known as Ogisos, meaning "rulers of the sky." This first new king would be called an Oba, which means "ruler."

Izoduwa sent his son Oranmiyan to Benin to be the kingdom's first Oba. Legend has it that when Oranmiyan arrived in the kingdom on his horse, he was greeted with astonishment, because no one in Benin had ever seen a horse before.

Not all of the Edo accepted Oranmiyan as their king. Some believed that Oranmiyan was not the first true Oba, in that he had been "appointed" king as an adult. Although he had the support of the Edo elders, he did

not know the Edo language and traditions. He eventually described the kingdom as "a land of vexation." Like the Edo people who resisted him, he came to believe that his son, born to inherit the throne, would be the first true Oba.

Oranmiyan's son, however, was unable to speak as a child. The storytellers say that Oranmiyan sent him seven medicinal seeds — other storytellers say they were marbles — possessing magic powers. After receiving the seeds, the son was playing a game and won. He exclaimed, speaking for the first time, "Owomkia!" which means, "I have succeeded!" That simple exclamation was corrupted to form the word "Eweka," and it became the son's official name.

Oranmiyan returned to his father's kingdom and sent his son as the new Oba. Eweka was a boy when he took the throne. For a time, he ruled the kingdom with the assistance of his maternal grandfather, Ogiegogor.

The boy king inherited the same resistance to his rule that his father experienced. But with his knowledge of the Edo culture and language, he gradually organized his enemies into a council of state. As he matured, Eweka took full control of the kingdom, letting his rivals keep their powers and privileges only by his consent.

Oba Eweka I ruled for 35 years. When he died, his children inherited the kingdom. The Obas of the Kingdom of Benin stayed in

power until the 1600s, when they began to lose control of their people. By the time British colonists arrived, the kingdom was in disarray and was no match for the British Army's invasion in 1897.

The Kingdom of Benin is gone, but the Oba survives as the cultural leader of the Edo in Nigeria. On October 20, 2016, Eheneden Erediauwa was crowned Oba Ewuare II with a crowd of more than 100,000 people celebrating the occasion.



A brass plaque from the 16th or 17th century shows an Oba of the Kingdom of Benin and his attendants.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



# CLUES

- 1 It is an oasis known as “the pearl of the desert.”
- 2 The area has been settled since prehistoric times, and it once was home to a Roman garrison.
- 3 The typical domestic architecture in the town incorporates a vertical functional division: storage on the ground floor, a second floor for family living space and an open-air terrace on top.
- 4 The town has a network of passageways on the ground level.





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