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AFRICA

DEFENSE



BUILDING TRUST

Success in Counterinsurgency
Starts with Civilians

PLUS

An Interview with Maj. Gen. Abdul Khalifa Ibrahim,
MNJTF Force Commander

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ON THE COVER:

This photo collage shows military personnel engaged in various kinetic and nonkinetic activities associated with counterinsurgency operations. It shows that success must include protecting and winning the support of the local population.

CENTER: AFP/GETTY IMAGES, UPPER RIGHT AND MOVING CLOCKWISE: U.S. AIR FORCE, U.S. AIR FORCE, U.S. ARMY, U.S. AIR FORCE



Although most of Africa remains safe, pockets of extremist violence have festered and are spreading. Global terrorist organizations seek to exploit these security weak spots after losing ground in other parts of the world.

These groups see parts of the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and northern Mozambique as places where they are free to recruit, expand and launch attacks.

A 2023 United Nations report called Sub-Saharan Africa the world's "epicenter" for terrorism. Nearly half of all global terrorism-related deaths in 2021 occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa. The most affected were Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Somalia, with 34% of the world's terrorism-related deaths.

This violence not only destroys lives, but it also slows economic progress and reverses democratic gains.

A military response still is the most common answer to the problem. Countries are looking at new ways to quickly assemble coalitions of determined nations to respond to threats either under the banner of the African Union, a regional economic community or through an ad hoc arrangement.

But hard-earned lessons show that military force alone cannot defeat an insurgency. If the underlying factors driving insecurity are not addressed, violence will return.

Countries must learn from each other about the best ways to build long-term strategies against extremism. This includes countering extremist ideology, demobilizing and reintegrating former fighters, and building trust within communities affected by violence.

Above all, countries must look at the factors leading young people toward extremist recruitment. It is no surprise that the areas most easily exploited by insurgent groups are underdeveloped and far from national capitals.

Countries that have had the most success at countering extremism and other types of insurgencies have taken a whole-of-government approach. In these cases, the security sector provides safety and stability in an area so that development and outreach can occur.

As military professionals, we know the complexity of counterinsurgency operations. We know it takes time, requires the buy-in of multiple stakeholders and demands a willingness to try unconventional strategies. By learning from one another and partnering, we can help strengthen the weak spots and prevent insurgent groups from expanding their reach on the continent.

U.S. Africa Command Staff



A Djiboutian Rapid Intervention Battalion Soldier trains during Justified Accord 23 in Isiolo, Kenya.

SGT. 1ST CLASS STEVEN EATON/
U.S. ARMY



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Ghana Acts to Keep Terrorism at Bay



Vice Adm. Seth Amoama, chief of the Defence Staff of the Ghana Armed Forces, spoke on “Ghana’s Military Efforts in Curbing Terrorism” at the first International Defence Exhibition and Conference on October 12, 2022, at Burma Camp in Accra, Ghana. His remarks are taken from an account published by the Ghana Peace Journal and have been edited for space and clarity.



Ghanaian Soldiers provide security during a simulated raid at Exercise Flintlock 2022 in Côte d'Ivoire.

SGT. KACIE BENAK/U.S. ARMY



Ghana in the past few years has deployed a multisectoral all-of-government-and-society approach to

contain any possible spillover of terrorism and violent extremism.

The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) in response has also devised a well-thought-out military strategy and implementation plan to deal effectively with Ghana’s external threats.

Ghana has been relatively stable within a subregion that has been beset with a myriad of security challenges.

In the past decade, the threat of al-Qaida, Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin, Islamic State West Africa Province and others has spread gradually from northern Mali through Niger, Burkina Faso, and more recently northeastern Côte d'Ivoire, and northern Togo and Benin.

The activities of violent extremist organizations (VEO) and terrorist armed groups (TAG) have preoccupied regional and national security discourse. Of major concern is the southward thrust of the VEOs and the TAGs in West Africa and the Sahel into the coastal states along the shared borders of West Africa.

As a founding member of the Accra Initiative, the government of Ghana continues to strengthen multilateral cooperation, [and] information- and intelligence-sharing with Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria and Mali to prevent the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in the subregion through the Accra

Initiative and other bilateral arrangements.

So far, Operations Koudanlou I, II, III and IV have been conducted along the shared borders of the Accra Initiative countries with relative success, and upon the agreement of the parties to the Accra Initiative, a joint border operational plan has been developed. The plan was initiated in the latter part of 2021, and by December 2022, the Headquarters of the Multinational [Joint] Task Force would be established based in Ghana. The force commander has been appointed, and we are working toward establishing the headquarters in Tamale.

One of the key elements of regional security has been the adoption of non-kinetic approaches to security through building resilience and national cohesion. Recently the Ministry of National Security launched a project called “See Something, Say Something” to bring everybody — all aspects of the society — onboard in the fight against terrorism.

Government is also increasing state presence across the country so that there would be no ungoverned spaces anywhere, and also decentralizing development and presence of the security and intelligence agencies across all parts of the country.

Since the formation of the Ghana Armed Forces, the global security landscape has witnessed a significant shift from conventional adversarial engagement to asymmetric warfare. This is characterized by terrorism and insurgency activities, and the GAF’s response strategy to the threats has evolved as well.

• **Changes in doctrinal approaches:**

A shift in training doctrine to accommodate asymmetric threats and warfare will include all levels of training, including personnel development outside the country. Another thing that we have introduced is establishing a Doctrine and Training Command to look at our doctrines and review them in consonance with current threats.

- **A restructuring of the force:** This means a renewed drive toward smarter and smaller agile units capable of responding and conducting surgical operations to meet strategic objectives backed by logistics support structures.
- **Prevention:** The National Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency Strategy outlines the use of intelligence-led operations and information war operations.

The southward thrust of terrorists’ activities, especially from Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and the larger Sahelian region, remain high and likely to persist.

The impact of national and military efforts is yielding the needed results, as such collaboration with strategic partners remains critical and necessary in order to consolidate our gains. Consequently, Ghana’s resolve to maintain bilateral and multilateral relations is grounded on peaceful and democratic states ensuring the survival, safety, and well-being of its citizens from imminent and potential threats.



TASK FORCE WILL ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

ADF STAFF

As food insecurity continued to plague Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) inaugurated a regional group to address the issue.

The Learning Network on Nutrition Surveillance (LeNNS), with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), first met on November 23, 2022, in Nairobi, Kenya, to work toward “effective policies, advocacy and action planning around nutrition in the region,” according to IGAD.

Dr. Patrick Amoth, director-general of Kenya’s Ministry of Health, said LeNNS will help generate timely information and evidence so it can be used to inform effective policies, strategies and programs across the region.

More than 137 million Africans are dealing with acute food insecurity, according to the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). Of that total, 111 million — 81% — live in countries experiencing conflict. Eight of 10 countries facing acute food insecurity also are dealing with conflict.

About 73% of acute food insecurity on the continent is concentrated in eight countries, ACSS reported, including four in East Africa: Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. All four are IGAD member states, and each is embroiled in conflict. The other IGAD members are Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda. Eritrea is inactive.

Hunger is measured on a 5-point scale called the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. Acute food insecurity is a 3 on the scale and occurs when people must sell essential possessions or use essential resources to support a limited diet. The most serious level of hunger is famine, which is a complete lack of access to food.

LeNNS will help improve regional nutrition surveillance by improving links between institutions that conduct it, IGAD reported.

“Malnutrition and food insecurity pose major threats to global, regional and national social economic and development goals,” said John Kuehnle, USAID health director. “USAID is committed to working with countries to strengthen national nutrition information systems, sub-national nutrition data availability and use, and capacity strengthening around nutrition data.”

Villagers collect food aid dropped from a plane in South Sudan.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

STUDY: CHINESE PORT PROJECTS COME WITH ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS



Port of Beira in Mozambique

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ADF STAFF

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) promised huge investments in ports throughout the world. But the environmental and human costs of these projects are only beginning to be understood, according to reports.

Chinese-built ports in Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Mauritania and Mozambique have become examples of how such projects can disrupt aquatic ecosystems and local artisanal fishing communities, according to a report led by Boston University's Global Development Policy Center.

Countries on Africa's Atlantic coast — particularly Angola, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire — face the greatest risk to their local fishing communities from port projects. Cameroon's artisanal fishing communities lead that list, according to researchers.

The construction of Cameroon's Chinese-funded Kribi port destroyed a popular beach area along with the community of Lolabe, throwing the local population and environment into disarray.

Planners can avoid creating conflicts with artisanal fishing communities by ensuring that those residents are included in the development of port projects. That can ensure that those communities are better off, or at least not worse off, afterward, said Rebecca Ray, a senior researcher who worked on the report.

"Ports rank as the highest-risk sector for coastal construction, because of the many possible avenues for environmental and social impacts: beyond the noise, light, and habitat disruption from the construction itself, they also bring the potential for significant changes in local ecosystems through the introduction of invasive species who 'hitchhike' on incoming ships and the depletion of local fish stocks from new fishing fleets who may come to use the port," Ray told Voice of America.

Mauritania's 1980s-era Nouakchott Friendship Port, which was upgraded as part of the BRI in 2018, has come under fire from local communities for bringing in Chinese fishing fleets that have overwhelmed local artisanal fishing crews and damaged the environment, according to Ray.

In Angola and Mozambique, more than 2,000 square kilometers of marine habitats are at high risk from port development.

The renovation and expansion of Mozambique's Beira Fishing Port has put the surrounding marine environment at risk within 10 kilometers, making it one of the most damaging projects in the Global Development Policy Center report.

Reducing the environmental and societal impact of port projects requires countries to impose greater safeguards and set higher standards.

"It is important to be clear that all planners and lenders, regardless of their nationality, should take care with the natural resources that support traditional communities and coastal economies as a whole," Ray told ADF.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE LAUNCHES MAJOR DRIVE TO REVERSE DEFORESTATION

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Côte d'Ivoire, which has lost nearly all its forests in the past half century, has launched a major project to triple its cover by 2030, the government announced in November 2022.

The Forests Investment Project aims to cover 6.5 million hectares — about 20% of the country — said the World Bank, which is financing the \$149 million project.

The project also would help preserve 300,000 hectares of degraded forest land in the southwest, and forests in the northern Savanes zone, said Water and Forests Minister Laurent Tchagba.

The seven-year project will benefit the country's four national parks, including the Tai Forest National Park in the west, classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. It is one of the last remnants of the primary tropical forest of West Africa.

Côte d'Ivoire had 16 million hectares of forest in the 1960s.

That figure has fallen to 2 million hectares, according to official figures, mainly because of the development of cocoa plantations, of which Côte d'Ivoire is the world's main producer, with 40% of the market.

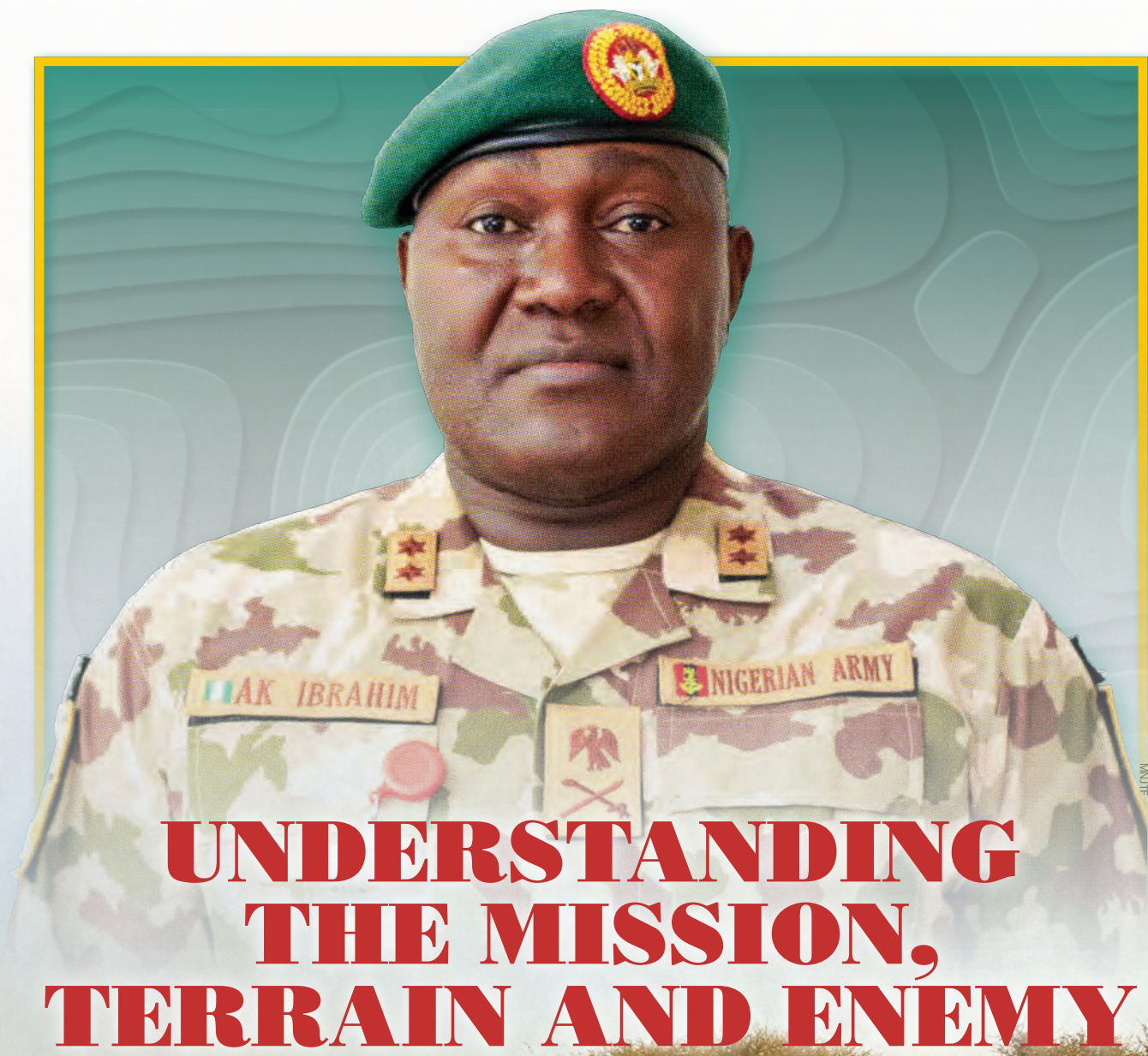
Climate change, natural disasters, soil degradation and population movement also contribute to the loss of forest.

Delegations from other cocoa-producing countries Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Ghana attended the project's launch.



Forest rangers and technicians prepare land for reforestation in southwestern Côte d'Ivoire.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



UNDERSTANDING THE MISSION, TERRAIN AND ENEMY

**Maj. Gen. Abdul Khalifa Ibrahim, MNJTF Force
Commander, Explains Why He Thinks the Lake Chad
Basin Is on Course to Defeat Extremist Groups**



Maj. Gen. Ibrahim of the Nigerian Army has a military career that spans more than 35 years. He holds a master's degree in strategic studies from the University of Ibadan and has participated in international peace support operations in Liberia and Sudan.

Domestically, he has led troops in operations in the Bakassi Peninsula, the Niger Delta and Kaduna. During his career he received honors including the Distinguished Service Star, Field Command Medal of Honour and Operation Lafiya Dole medal. In August 2021, he was named force commander of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), a five-nation regional effort mandated to include up to 10,000 troops with the goal of restoring peace to the Lake Chad Basin. He spoke to ADF from the MNJTF headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad, in March 2023, shortly before the end of his time in command. This interview has been edited for space and clarity.

ADF: *The MNJTF has a unique force structure with four sectors inside the national borders of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) countries. Additionally, MNJTF brigades work with national militaries. How has this structure helped in the fight against violent extremist groups?*

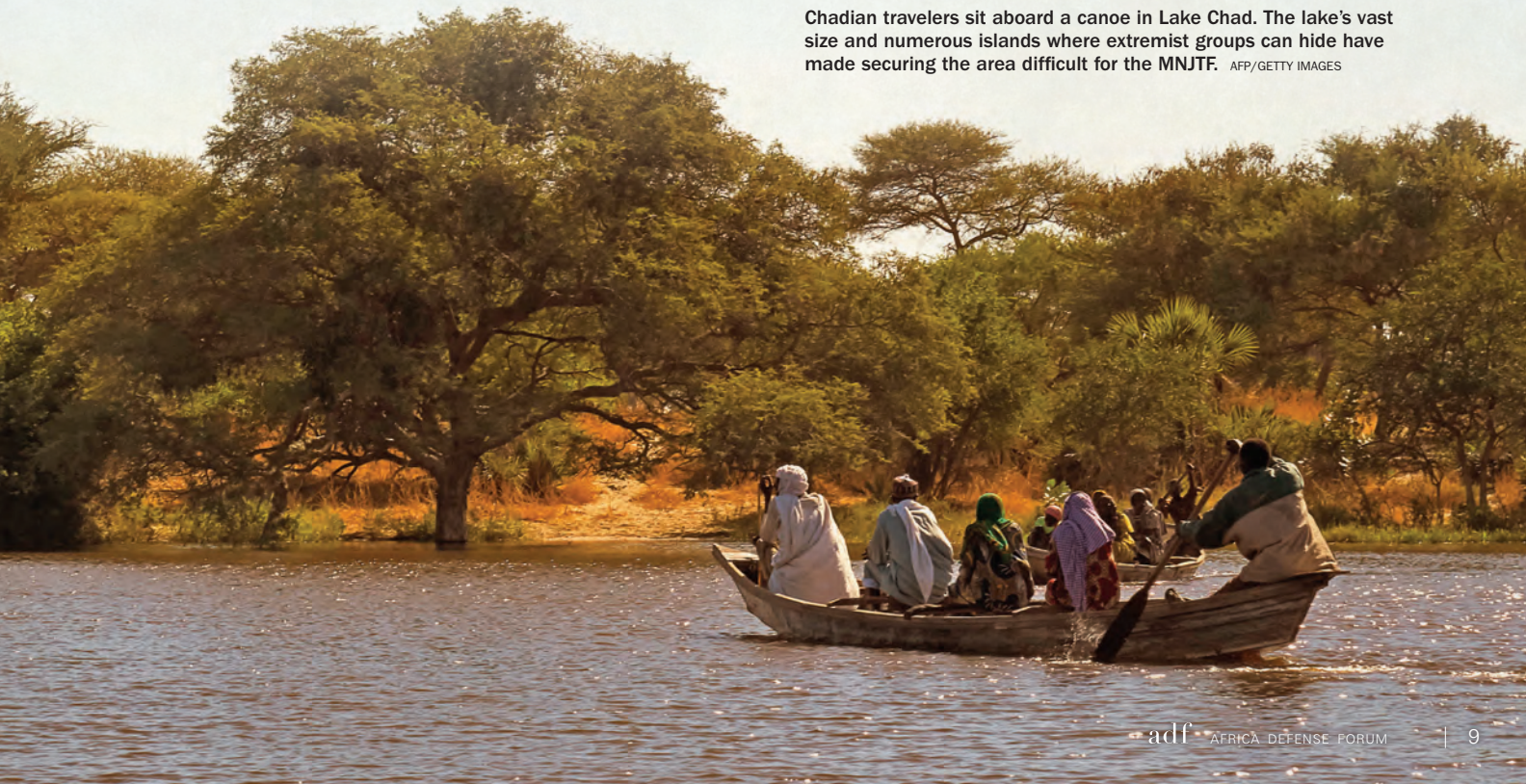
Ibrahim: Since each sector is domiciled within the country around the LCB, this gives us the advantage of keeping our eyes open and looking at the challenges within the areas. The LCB area is very big; the terrain is very challenging. We have massive water bodies. This allows Boko Haram, which doesn't respect any boundary, to move from one country to the other. The fact that we are spread

in the four sectors, across the four countries, has given us mobility, access, reach and allows cooperation amongst ourselves. This has helped us a lot in tackling the menace of violent extremist groups.

ADF: *Do you think this could be a model for other regions of the continent facing insurgencies in border regions?*

Ibrahim: Yes, indeed, the MNJTF is already a model for the continent and even beyond. We have people from the United Nations and other organizations coming to find out, "How are you operating?" The MNJTF is made up of three countries from the Economic Community of

Chadian travelers sit aboard a canoe in Lake Chad. The lake's vast size and numerous islands where extremist groups can hide have made securing the area difficult for the MNJTF. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



West African States — Benin, Nigeria and Niger — while Cameroon and Chad belong to the Economic Community of Central African States. Nigeria is English-speaking while Cameroon, Niger and Chad are French-speaking. And the Chadians also speak a lot of Arabic.

When you look at this mix, it could pose a challenge, but somehow we have been able to go through this by understanding our mission and understanding that the common enemy we have, the violent extremist groups — you can call them Boko Haram, you can call them ISWAP [Islamic State West Africa Province] — carry out operations in one country and run to another. With the concept of operations and the various programs that have been brought out in the MNJTF, we are more flexible. I am able to travel to Cameroon, to Niger, to parts of Chad where my force is domiciled, without any hindrance, so this has affected us positively.

ADF: *What are the latest developments in the region?*

Ibrahim: In the last year, we have thousands of formerly internally displaced [IDP] persons returning to their ancestral homes. The political authority in Borno State closed the IDP camps, and they transported the people back to towns like Baga, Monguno, Cross Kauwa, and they are still there. In Cameroon in the last year, thousands of people have been moved from Minawao Refugee Camp. We also have opened the international route from N'Djamena, Chad, to Kousséri, Cameroon, on to



Cameroon troops with the MNJTF conduct operations designed to disrupt extremist groups' logistical supply networks in January 2023. MNJTF

Maiduguri, Nigeria. This road is open, and people can transport their commercial goods. The number of attacks has dropped significantly. People are able to return to the farms; people are able to engage in commercial activity. In Baga, people are fishing again. When you look at this you'll see that gradually peace is returning to the LCB. More needs to be done, but we are on course.

ADF: *One notable aspect of the MNJTF has been the use of air power. Can you describe how air power has supported ground-based counterinsurgency operations?*



Ibrahim inspects troops at the Sector 1 headquarters in Mora, Cameroon. MNJTF



Ibrahim, left, welcomes Nigeria's Operation Hadin Kai Theater Commander Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Sallau Ali during a visit to the MNJTF headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad. MNJTF

Ibrahim: In modern warfare, one of the dominant themes is the use of air power because it gives an additional reach, it allows delivery in places that ground troops can't easily reach. Air power has been a force multiplier of immense proportion. The troop-contributing countries of the LCB area have invested so much, especially Nigeria, and the result is quite obvious. I'm not at liberty to go into details, but this improvement in the capabilities of the Nigerian Air Force, which we use as both a component of Operation Hadin Kai and the MNJTF, has indeed led to most of the successes that we have achieved. We have a lot of intelligence and information that comes out of the area, and we leverage this information by quickly informing our air component. They are able to quickly use the instruments they have, and a number of high-value targets have been destroyed. We have taken out a number of key Boko Haram and ISWAP leaders, their camps and their equipment, but it is underreported. Air power has been quite central to our success, and it will continue to be.

ADF: *You have spoken about the need for a "whole-of-society" approach in the counterinsurgency environment. What does this mean to you, and how has the MNJTF sought to implement that approach?*

Ibrahim: The whole-of-society approach basically is the employment of government, military, paramilitary,



MNJTF troops operate on the water to dismantle logistics supply networks supporting Boko Haram. MNJTF

police, civil society organizations and the larger society toward preventing insurgency and mitigating its effects. This is done using kinetic and nonkinetic means. The kinetic means are the operations that we carry out, but we came to realize that the operations can, at best, tackle an insurgency at a rate of 20% to 30%. Seventy percent of the work that needs to be done must be nonkinetic. We have the civil-military cooperation desk, which is headed by a senior officer who acts on my directive. And we did not



“We believe to win a counterinsurgency operation is not just a military affair. All other sectors of society must contribute so we can have a better society for the benefit of all.”

stop at that. We also have the civil-military cooperation desk in the Lake Chad Basin Commission, which is the supervisory headquarters of the MNJTF. These two cells come together, and then we find out from the populace, what are the things that we need to do to support these people? How do we build community resilience?

In the last year, we have carried out activities like the renovation of schools, renovation of hospitals and markets, so that the people will have a place to trade. Sometimes our Soldiers are attached to the schools. They teach. Our doctors sometimes offer treatment, along with our nurses. Basically, we believe to win a counterinsurgency operation is not just a military affair. All other sectors of society must contribute so we can have a better society for the benefit of all.

ADF: *How has the MNJTF tried to encourage extremist group defections?*

Ibrahim: Today, I can tell you confidently that within the MNJTF area of operations and our neighboring national operations — Hadin Kai in Nigeria, Operation Emergence in Cameroon and others — over 110,000 individuals have surrendered or defected. This number comprises fighters,

their families, their collaborators and those that they forced to go with them. These are the results of the kinetic operations themselves. We put pressure on them, and they are not able to get the things they normally get to survive. But mostly it's the nonkinetic aspect, which is psychological operations and strategic communications. We make use of international media outlets to talk to them, because we know when we talk in a certain way they listen. We tell them, “If your colleagues have surrendered, and they have not been killed, what are you doing in the bush?” This is not about religion.

There has also been intense infighting between Boko Haram and ISWAP that has resulted in even more coming out. What we do to encourage them to surrender is we treat them well. We don't think that because they are coming out [that] they are enemies and shoot them. We respect the laws of armed conflict; we talk to them, and we appeal to them to talk to other people. We believe that the surrenders could potentially be a strategy to end the conflict. It reduces the population from where they can find fighters.

The officers of the MNJTF headquarters celebrated Christmas Eve with a visit to a local orphanage in N'Djamena where they gave gifts to the children and donations of rice, oil and other provisions. MNJTF



Ibrahim awards medals to MNJTF personnel during a ceremony at Camp Farcha in N'Djamena. SPYETV

ADF: *Insurgent groups thrive in places like the LCB with conditions of high youth unemployment, a difficult climate and a lack of infrastructure. What needs to be done to make sure the LCB is not a fertile ground for extremist recruitment in the future?*

Ibrahim: The LCB area and islands historically have been challenging. The terrain is very difficult. It could be marshy, it could be swampy, it could be sandy. You have huge water bodies. Unfortunately, for a long time, the presence of governments has not been felt there. This is true across the four countries. That created conditions where the people felt deprived and fell easily to radicalization. I think there has to be a special focus on this area, something like the Marshall Plan that came after the Second World War. We have to look at that area and think about how to make it attractive to the people who live there. School facilities, hospitals, markets, even roads are not well developed there. I think we need to look at having infrastructure. But most important, it's educating the people and giving them a sense of belonging.

ADF: *How would you describe the current strength of the insurgent groups?*

Ibrahim: The strength of Boko Haram and ISWAP has been degraded significantly, but we still have some way to go. This could be linked to the problem of the terrain. It is a very challenging environment. Sometimes you think of the area around Lake Chad as a desert, but it's not so. It's thickly forested. There are areas that are very difficult to reach. But we are working toward that. Last year we had

Operation Lake Sanity where we were able to penetrate the Lake Chad islands. We deployed there for several months, and hundreds of hostages were released. Some escaped on their own and when we asked them how they got out, they said it was the effect of our bombing and offensive action that distracted the enemy, allowing them to escape. The next step is to study the lessons learned from that operation.

ADF: *You took over as force commander in August 2021. What have you learned from the experience in terms of the strategy and resolve necessary to defeat an insurgency?*

Ibrahim: This is a counterinsurgency operational outfit, which is different than a peace support operation. For it to succeed you must understand your mission very well. What are we there to do? Once you understand that, you have to understand the terrain. Then you must understand the nature of the enemy. The adversary we are fighting is a highly mobile, highly determined and fanatical foe. If you want to take them out, you must be top notch and very professional. You must treat your Soldiers the way they should be treated.

You must also have the right equipment. These people travel at night. They can move 50 to 80 kilometers in one night. You must have the equipment that shows you when people are traveling when they should not be and then you take them out. And then, of course, the whole-of-society approach that we've talked about is not mainly a military thing. We want the civil society to come in, we want the government and the local populace, because the insurgents live among them. We need them to be on our side. □

A Blueprint For Resolving Conflict

Successful Local Mediations in Nigeria Could Point the Way to Widespread Application on the Continent

ADF STAFF

In the vast agricultural Middle Belt of central Nigeria, Emmanuel Ogbudu has witnessed the power of local interventions.

Ogbudu, a monitoring and evaluation manager for the humanitarian group Mercy Corps, has spent more than 10 years as a peace practitioner. He likes to tell the story of a farmer in Bokkos, Plateau State, who called the police to arrest a herder whose cattle destroyed some of his crops.

Begging the farmer to withdraw the case so they could resolve it at home, the pastoralist contacted his local leader who had been trained by Mercy Corps in negotiation techniques. The leader met with the farmer and persuaded him not to file charges.

Then the mediation began in earnest, Ogbudu said. The result saw the herder pay the farmer a small amount of money for fertilizer.

"The dispute was completely resolved with both parties satisfied," Ogbudu told ADF. "This is an example to show that the community people are really comfortable and confident in the negotiation and mediation skills of their trained leaders and prefer them in resolving disputes rather than escalating it.

"There are a lot of such stories."





Local leader Alhaji Shaibu Bayeru prays in the mosque of the Fulani village of Luggere in Nigeria's Plateau State.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

In Nigeria, where insecurity looms daily like a storm cloud over parts of the country, people are looking at the power of alternative approaches to peacemaking. Experts say developing tools and techniques that fit local culture and traditions are critical to successful mediations.

Based on some highly encouraging results of a recent study, researchers are urging leaders to act locally. The implications, they say, could benefit the entire continent.

'A LOW-COST INTERVENTION'

In 2022, the Global Peace Index ranked Nigeria 143rd out of 163 countries and territories measured.

In addition to an insurgency by violent extremist organizations and rampant banditry and kidnapping, the country suffers from a seemingly never-ending procession of communal disputes along ethnic, religious, cultural and economic lines.

Home to more than 250 ethnic

groups, Nigeria has a population that is largely split with Muslims in the north and Christians in the south.

Tensions between villages, tribes, neighbors, farmers, herders, gangs, vigilantes and others can flare at any time. Disputes over ideology, territory and other resources easily turn into conflict and bloodshed.

"People are seeking justice," Kaltumi Abdulazeez said during a 2021 panel discussion on religion, identity and conflict in Nigeria.

As program officer at the Interfaith Mediation Center in Kaduna, Abdulazeez oversees peace-building programs in six states across northern Nigeria and the Middle Belt.

"There's a saying that the costliest peace is cheaper than the cheapest war," she said. "So I think it's high time we go back to the drawing board to restrategize, analyze the context of this conflict and also provide local context and solutions."

Community leader Yusuf Dayyabu Garga consoles Yahaya Musa, a survivor of bandit attacks in Jos, north central Nigeria. Clashes over land and resources have long battered the region.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





Solomon Achara, a yam farmer in Benue, Nigeria, looks on beside his empty farm storehouse. Threatened by insecurity, farmers in Nigeria's farm belt are increasingly abandoning their land. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Villagers watch as others prepare to evacuate Ganaropp, where Fulani herdsman killed 35 people in the Bari Kin Ladi area near Jos in 2018. Clashes over land use and resources in Plateau State are deepening along religious and ethnic lines.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

One of the keys to conflict resolution is trust. According to Rebecca Jayne Wolfe, lead author of the 2022 Mercy Corps report, trust forms naturally among local, traditional, spiritual, and informal leaders and their communities.

"The state presence [in the Middle Belt] is extremely weak," she told ADF. "If it does show up, it's often not trusted.

"And often when you see outsiders come in, that actually inflames rather than reduces. It can maybe make things stable for a little bit, but as soon as people leave, the conflict just comes back."

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development, the study began with mediation skills trainings in 2019 and was published in 2022.

Researchers selected 340 local leaders from 44 communities in Benue, Kogi and Plateau states to be trained in mediation.

In follow-up surveys comparing those 44 communities to 44 others where local leaders

in the same three states did not receive training, the data showed that mediation skills improved security and trust.

Six months of follow-ups showed a sharp decrease in violence in communities where leaders trained in mediation.

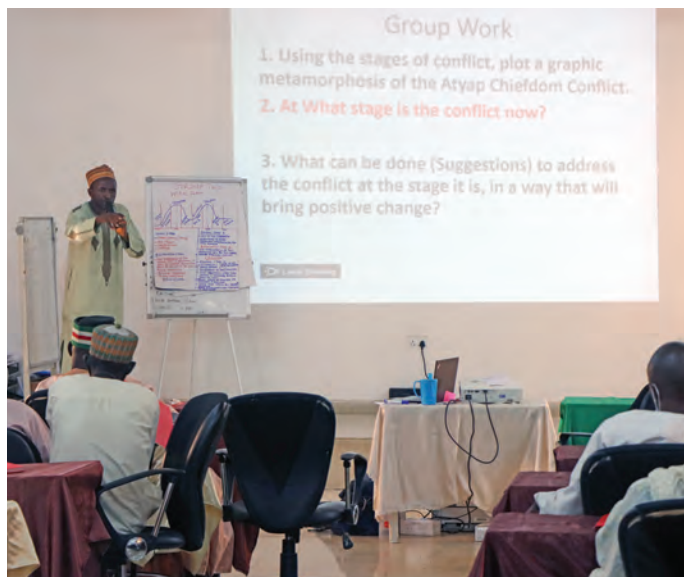
Nearly 30% of survey participants in those communities said they experienced a violent incident in that time, compared to 55% of participants in communities where leaders were not trained.

"The fact that we see this difference, 30% difference, is huge," Wolfe said.

Leaders who received the training felt they had stronger conflict resolution skills. They and the survey participants in their communities felt they were safer.

They also rated their interactions in mediations with leaders from conflicting groups more positively than those who did not receive the training.

"That is really striking," Wolfe said, "and it's such a low-cost intervention."



ADDRESSING CONFLICT AT ITS ROOTS

Preventing local disputes and clashes from escalating would benefit any country.

In Africa, where some of the most violent extremists are terrorizing civilians in multiple regions, improving local conflict resolution could be transformative.

Wolfe calls local mediation an “underutilized” tool.

In developing a bigger and better toolbox in Nigeria, resolving conflicts at a local level with mediation has proven benefits for building and maintaining peace.

Stemming the tide of smaller-scale insecurity also lets authorities shift resources to areas with more complex issues.

Such knock-on effects could help Nigeria better address the terrorism that has devastated the northeast for 14 years.

“Alternative approaches are clearly needed,” Wolfe said. “What’s happening isn’t working.”

Another Mercy Corps research study that she led in northeast Nigeria worked with local religious leaders trying to reconcile with and reintegrate former members of Boko Haram.

“The two studies together really talk about that — the more local approach,” she said. “Those trusted figures have a lot of influence on conflict dynamics.”

Nigeria’s war on terrorism and its intercommunal conflicts have much in common and some staggering differences.

Wolfe noted the lives lost and the harm to the country’s economy.

Mercy Corps spent \$60,000 to train 340 local leaders, while Nigeria’s security budget recently increased by \$500 million to \$4.8 billion.

Intercommunal violence in the Middle Belt cost the economy an estimated \$13 billion and claimed more lives in 2021 than did Boko Haram in the northeast, Wolfe said.

“These conflicts that don’t get a lot of press actually may have larger effects on people’s daily lives,” she said.

Local leaders participate in a mediation training workshop in central Nigeria.

MERCY CORPS

“The costliest peace is cheaper than the cheapest war.”

~ Kaltumi Abulazeez, program officer
Interfaith Mediation Center, Kaduna, Nigeria

Wolfe knows that training local leaders in mediation won’t solve all of a country’s violence, but local conflict resolution can complement other security strategies.

It’s a sentiment Abdulazeez echoes and wants to advance.

She would like to see more members of the community, especially victims of violence, be involved in peacebuilding and mediation.

“It’s also important that we give them the opportunity to own the process,” she said. “They should be part of the planning and the implementation.”

“If we begin to involve them in the entire process, we’re not only building their capacity, we are giving them a leadership role to be able to manage and mitigate conflict and facilitate community dialogue and mediation processes.” □



ADF ILLUSTRATION

KEEPING THE PEACE, ENSURING THE TRUTH

RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION FORCES UNITED NATIONS MISSIONS TO FIGHT LIES

ADF STAFF

Amina Fofana is a member of one of Mali's pro-junta protest groups and serves on the military government's National Transitional Council, the nation's legislative body.

She's prolific on social media. Her Facebook page shows about 5,000 friends and is home to a torrent of posts that appear several times a day. She also is a staunch supporter of Russian influence in Mali and spreads its deceptive propaganda and disinformation.

On December 9, 2021, she posted a 3-minute, 27-second video that showed a white helicopter land in an open field as at least four young men waited. A voice narrated in Bambara as music played faintly in the background. One man got out of the helicopter and unloaded several bags and backpacks to the waiting men. One man took video of the encounter.

Fofana's post claims that the video shows United Nations peacekeepers in Mali "supplying and moving the terrorists by helicopter from point A to point B!"

Nothing could be further from the truth. And yet the assertion is a common one in U.N. peacekeeping missions in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mali. A common element in the CAR and Mali is the involvement of Russia-linked disinformation campaigns and the presence of a Moscow-backed private military force.

"In both CAR and Mali, the rise in disinformation against UN peacekeepers coincided with the deployment of Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group in 2018 and 2021, respectively," wrote Albert Trithart, editor and research fellow at the International Peace Institute, in November 2022. "While it is difficult to identify the origins of this disinformation, researchers have traced much of it to local civil society organizations or media outlets with financial ties to Russia."

Ibrahim Togola, a Malian philosophy student and blogger, made short work of Fofana's lies in a post for Benbere, a blog site that advocates for "reconciliation and appeasement of hearts for a united and open Mali."



Stations such as Radio Guira, created by MINUSCA in Bangui, Central African Republic, help transmit trustworthy information to civilians.

MINUSCA

In his December 14, 2021, post he quotes the video narrator as saying: “They are the ones who kill our people. You say they are coming to help us [...], they bring the equipment down to our bush to kill our rice farmers.”

The best hint that the video had been mischaracterized came from a Facebook user who lives in Bangui, CAR. In a comment on Fofana’s post, he pointed out that the helicopter was not a U.N. aircraft and was not even in Mali. In fact, it was in the CAR and sported an African Parks logo on the front. It was resupplying workers who manage the Chinko Nature Reserve.

African Parks is a South African nongovernmental organization, and an official there confirmed ownership of the helicopter and that it was on a routine resupply mission, according to Togola’s blog.

A LANDSCAPE OF LIES

As violence and political instability persist in the CAR, DRC and Mali, the atmosphere fills with disinformation and lies, much of it at the hands of Russian operatives and their allies. Identifying and effectively countering

these lies is difficult, and U.N. officials have only recently begun to formulate coordinated responses.

Since about 2017, online disinformation against U.N. peacekeeping missions and individual peacekeepers in the CAR, the DRC and Mali has increased. “The most common false claims include that [peacekeeping missions] MINUSCA and MINUSMA are pillaging natural resources and colluding with armed groups or jihadists,” Trithart wrote, referring to missions in the CAR and Mali, respectively.

2022 saw disinformation decrease somewhat against MINUSCA in the CAR as it increased in Mali against MINUSMA, he wrote. The ramp-up in Mali would seem to coincide with the growing involvement of Wagner Group mercenaries and the withdrawal of French forces, who had been in the country for about a decade.

MINUSMA marks its 10th anniversary in 2023. As it does, it finds the challenges before it no less difficult than when it began. It remains the most dangerous peacekeeping mission on the continent. And although not the largest, it operates in one of the most inhospitable and

challenging environments amid an array of violent extremist organizations.

Likewise, the CAR, also home to Russian mercenaries, remains dangerous amid lingering tensions between Muslim and Christian militias. In the DRC, more than 100 armed groups roam the eastern region, 1,500 kilometers from the seat of national government in Kinshasa.

Professional media outlets are scarce in these countries, leaving an “information vacuum” that provides fertile ground for disinformation and rumors, Trithart wrote. That combines with popular anger regarding the intractability of violence and the foreign intervention combating it. Rumors regarding COVID-19 and Ebola, particularly in the eastern DRC, have added to the problem and feed “into and off of” anticolonial sentiment and disinformation efforts.

THE U.N. TAKES NOTE

António Guterres pledged in 2016 when sworn in as secretary-general that the U.N. would “communicate better about what we do, in ways that everybody understands.”

In a July 12, 2022, address to the Security Council, Guterres acknowledged the perilous information landscape facing peacekeeping missions at the hands of bad actors.

“The weapons they wield are not just guns and explosives,” Guterres said. “Misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech are increasingly being used as weapons of war” with a clear aim “to dehumanize the so-called other, threaten vulnerable communities — as well as peacekeepers themselves — and even give open license to commit atrocities.”

Guterres pointed to the need for effective strategic communications to protect civilians and peacekeepers. “Human-centered” strategic communication that helps build relationships is the “best, and most cost-effective” way to counter fake news and disinformation, he said.

“More than just defusing harmful lies, engaging in tailored two-way communication itself builds trust as well as political and public support ... strengthens the understanding amongst the local population of our missions and mandates — and in return, strengthens our peacekeepers’ understanding of the local population’s concerns, grievances, expectations and hopes,” he said.

Several actions are ongoing to improve strategic communications in peacekeeping. The first is ensuring a “whole-of-mission approach” among uniformed and civilian personnel. Second, mission leaders are charged with ensuring that strategic communications are integrated into all planning and decision-making. Training and sharing of best practices will be provided to all

THE ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION DISORDER

ADF STAFF

Lies and rumors can emerge in different forms across varied platforms in peacekeeping missions. Bad information can spread by word of mouth, on social media or at the hands of nefarious outside actors, such as through Russian-backed efforts.

In “Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making,” a 2017 study for the Council of Europe, researchers Claire Wardle, Ph.D., and Hossein Derakhshan define some useful terms:

DISINFORMATION: Such information is false and manufactured to deliberately harm people, social groups, organizations or a country. An example would be falsely creating and spreading an accusation that peacekeepers are supplying weapons to terrorists.

MISINFORMATION: This information also is false, but it lacks the deliberate intent to cause harm. For example, community leaders might unwittingly spread a false rumor they believe to be true.

MALINFORMATION: This type of information, though based in reality, is used to inflict harm. For example, an operative might leak information or data to the public that should have remained private. The category can include hate speech.

“Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making,” 2017, by Claire Wardle, Ph.D., and Hossein Derakhshan

missions, and tools will be deployed to counter disinformation, misinformation and hate speech. The U.N. also is continuously monitoring its information campaigns to make sure they remain effective.

Finally, strategic communications will enhance accountability and end misconduct, such as sexual exploitation. Such behavior can poison the information environment and turn civilians against peacekeepers. Disinformation and misinformation can fester and spread amid a lack of trust.

According to the International Peace Institute Global Observatory, an early 2022 survey of U.N. peacekeepers found that 41% said disinformation and misinformation “critically or severely impeded” mission mandates, and 45% said it similarly endangered peacekeepers’ safety.

COUNTERING DISINFORMATION

Guterres’ July 12, 2022, speech was the first time the U.N. Security Council had addressed strategic communications in peacekeeping operations, according to “Protecting the truth: Peace operations and disinformation,” an October 2022 study

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**AS JOURNALISTS, WE MUST PROVIDE
INFORMATION WITH VERIFIED SOURCES SO THAT
IT BENEFITS THE POPULATION, IN ACCORDANCE
WITH OUR PROFESSIONAL ETHICS."**

— Serge Lambas, editor of Etoile newspaper



Senegalese peacekeepers in Mali provide security in December 2022 on the way to Yawakanda to celebrate a bridge rebuilt by MINUSMA. HARANDANE DICKO/MINUSMA

for the Berlin-based Center for International Peace Operations by Monika Benkler, Dr. Annika Hansen and Lilian Reichert.

The Security Council asked Guterres to produce a review of strategic communications across peacekeeping operations to “assess existing capabilities and impact on local communities, identify gaps and challenges, and propose measures to address them,” according to a U.N. news release.

In the meantime, however, missions have taken some actions on the ground to help improve the information environment and combat misinformation and disinformation.

In the CAR, United Nations Police (UNPOL) personnel conducted information sessions with civilian high school students in Bangui to explain the mission’s mandate and the work UNPOL is doing to support peace in the country.

Young people saw U.N. equipment and heard officials talk about the MINUSCA mission. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the U.N.’s under-secretary-general for Peace Operations, hailed the effort on Twitter, saying, “Fighting #disinformation and #misinformation starts with young people.”

Such outreach can be valuable in equipping civilians, especially young people prone to heavy use of social media, to discern legitimate mission initiatives from rumors and lies.

In June 2021, MINUSCA invited editors and civil society leaders to Bangui for a session on combating disinformation. The Association of Central African Bloggers, the Consortium of Journalists Against Disinformation and the “Fake Check” Association of Central Africa were among those attending.

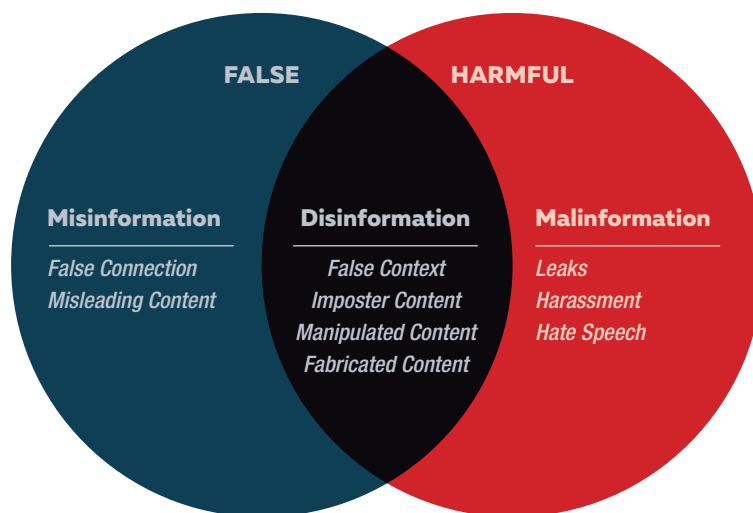
Serge Lambas, editor of Etoile newspaper, urged his journalism counterparts to respect the ethics of their trade. “As journalists, we must provide information with verified sources so that it benefits the population, in accordance with our professional ethics,” he said, according to a MINUSCA news report.

Thibaut Logbama Mokole, secretary-general of an association representing victims of disinformation, said, “After this training, we will go back to our respective bases to show our members how to use social networks, especially Facebook, and how to avoid publishing false information.”

THE WAY FORWARD

As Africa’s population grows and becomes proportionally younger, it’s reasonable to presume that social media engagement will increase. As conflict continues in places such as the CAR, Mali and elsewhere, information vacuums will persist. The U.N., national governments and civil society organizations will have no

INFORMATION DISORDER



Source: “Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making,” 2017, by Claire Wardle, Ph.D., and Hossein Derakhshan

choice but to continue addressing disinformation and misinformation.

Peacekeeping missions will have to develop new ways to counter disinformation to protect their own personnel, according to the Center for International Peace Operations report. It puts forth four areas for improvement:

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: Missions should “map the media landscape” and monitor social media while also educating field personnel on disinformation. Conditions prone to disinformation, such as times leading up to elections, should be monitored for vulnerabilities.

RESPONSE: Each mission should have an overarching communication strategy that tailors approaches to groups vulnerable to disinformation. Mission personnel also should actively share verified, reliable information and “monitor human rights in the digital space.”

RESILIENCE: Missions must constantly analyze weak spots and respond as needed, while also regularly assessing information technology and communications to identify and monitor systems vulnerable to disinformation. Missions also should help host governments regulate online platforms and protect data. Building capacity and knowledge among journalists, young people and civil society representatives is essential.

COOPERATION: Missions should work with host nations and social media companies to appropriately regulate content and exchange information and best practices with other peacekeeping missions. Providing training for troop-contributing nations also would help. □

RETHINKING PEACEKEEPING

PROTESTS, VIOLENCE AND EXTENDED MANDATES
HAVE EXPERTS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO ADAPT



Protesters lit a fire in front of the MONUSCO headquarters in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



ADF STAFF

Peacekeeping missions remain the answer to many of the world's toughest security challenges. But there is a growing consensus that to remain relevant, peacekeeping needs to adapt.

In places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali and South Sudan, United Nations missions have stretched on for a decade or more. These large, multidimensional stabilization missions typically include 10 or more troop-contributing countries and cost as much as \$1.5 billion per year.

Instead of monitoring a cease-fire as many missions did in decades past, peacekeepers are being asked to take on insurgencies, militias or extremist groups. These foes use asymmetric tactics to target peacekeepers and civilians alike. The results have been mixed, and the civilian anger is palpable.

Protests erupted in 2022 in the eastern DRC when rioters attacked five U.N. MONUSCO bases and set fire to vehicles. Protesters decried deteriorating security despite 12,000 peacekeepers and missions that have lasted more than 20 years under several names.

"Why not get angry?" a Congolese protester named William Mbokani told *The New Humanitarian*. "I am 22 years old ... [and I was] born and raised in war, despite the presence of MONUSCO."

Supporters are quick to point to evidence that shows peacekeeping is effective. A collection of 16 peer-reviewed studies publicized by the U.N.

found that peacekeepers reduce civilian casualties, shorten conflicts and help peace agreements hold up. "If we look systematically across the record, most of the time peacekeeping works," said Lise Howard, author of "The Power in Peacekeeping."

But protests such as the ones in the DRC are spurring introspection and new ideas about how peacekeeping can adapt to meet the urgent demands of the 21st century.

Smaller and Shorter

It has become typical for U.N. mission mandates to expand to incorporate "whole-of-society" rebuilding efforts. These can include everything from disarming and reintegrating rebels to training police officers. These sometimes are called "Christmas tree mandates" because goals are added to them like ornaments.

In an article for the Institute for Security Studies, researchers Paul-Simon Handy and Félicité Djilgo argue that it's time to narrow the scope.

A U.N. peacekeeper attends a ceremony for six colleagues who were killed in clashes with militias in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. U.N. missions in Africa frequently expose peacekeepers to attacks in complex security environments. AFF/GETTY IMAGES



Peacekeepers observe protesters outside a MONUSCO base in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

their shape and form to ensure their effectiveness and local legitimacy.”

Handy and Djilo say that mandates should be narrowed to include no more than three goals, mainly in the political and security fields. They also call for a strict time limit on a mission’s presence to “avoid internal complacency” and “ensure professional and ethical conduct.”

“Peacekeeping missions are vital to address international security threats,” they wrote. “But equally important is rethinking

“Long periods in one country often create more problems for peacekeepers to solve,” they wrote.

The idea of smaller, more focused missions is gaining momentum. The U.N. has not launched a large peacekeeping force since 2014 in the Central African Republic. Richard Gowan, the U.N. director of the International Crisis Group, wrote that there is increasing interest in smaller, “one-dimensional” observer missions.

“Bigger U.N. missions have taken on a plethora of tasks ... which they often struggle to implement,” Gowan wrote for *World Politics Review*. “It seems sensible to refocus on achieving a more limited, but realistic, set of goals.”



Ad Hoc and Adaptive

Insurgent groups and extremists do not respect national borders. Often, they operate in porous border regions where they can evade capture. And yet, most peacekeeping operations are mandated to operate within a single country. The African Standby Force also is limited because responding countries are divided by their Regional Economic Communities (REC).

Dr. Cedric de Coning of South Africa is a senior advisor at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). He believes future peacekeeping operations will be coalitions of regionally proximate countries with a vested interest in restoring peace in a

single country or wider region. He calls these “ad hoc” or “just-in-time” coalitions.

“Many of the standard predesigned mechanisms that we’ve come up with work well on paper, but they don’t fit the crystalized needs of the moment,” de Coning told ADF.

There is some evidence of a shift to this ad hoc model. The nations of the Lake Chad Basin Commission formed the Multinational Joint Task Force to address Boko Haram and other extremist groups operating in a place where four nations meet. In the G5 Sahel Joint Force, five nations joined to combat Sahel extremism.

De Coning said these ad hoc missions can be

particularly effective when forces can operate within their own borders or are given permission to cross the border into a neighboring country. This removes some jurisdictional problems, simplifies rules on the use of force and makes it less likely troops will be viewed as invaders.

Other recent coalitions such as the East African Community Regional Force in the DRC and the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique were made up of groups of regional nations motivated to intervene in countries with deteriorating security.

"The neighbors have a vested interest in the security of that region as opposed to a U.N. operation that comes and goes and has troop-contributing countries from far away," de Coning said. "That works well when you're implementing a cease-fire, but when it comes to dealing with insurgencies, you want people with more of a vested interest in a solution."

In the future, there may be a menu of peacekeeping options and models that can be used depending on the threat. De Coning believes there also is momentum

toward the U.N. providing logistical and financial support to African Union or REC missions.

"We will see multiple different types of operations coexisting and people choosing which operations to use depending on the context, what is politically viable and logistically possible," de Coning said.


Local Input

One of the prevailing complaints from DRC residents is that their voices aren't being heard. One Congolese lawyer organizing protests decried "poor communication" from the U.N. mission and said peacekeepers didn't respond to alerts from the public about imminent threats.

The U.N. has mechanisms for civilian input such as local protection councils, community alert networks and mission staff responsible for community outreach. But, according to Fred Carver, an advisor to the U.N. Association-U.K., they are underresourced. He believes future missions need to see the host community as its client. This would mean that community members get to set priorities and goals for the U.N.



A Congolese girl in the town of Kiwanja waves to peacekeepers serving in MONUSCO. Continued insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and deteriorating relations between peacekeepers and civilians have led to a rethinking of strategies. REUTERS



MONUSCO peacekeepers patrol areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's North Kivu province that were attacked by rebel groups.

REUTERS

"U.N. peacekeeping could either become more locally led or continue to be locally resisted," he wrote for the website Pass Blue. "It's time for a big change."

Similarly, Handy and Djilo said that biannual assessments of missions should involve stakeholders from local governments and civil society to ensure "a degree of local ownership of mandates."

The U.N. should make it a priority to understand how it is perceived by the host country and work to address grievances or misunderstandings before they boil over into violence, they say.

"The U.N. should develop a set of measures to assess local acceptance of peacekeeping missions," Handy and Djilo wrote. "These can serve as early warning tools and guide against targeted disinformation campaigns."

Peacekeeping that Supports Peacemaking

One of the lessons from the DRC is that a peacekeeping mission must support a peace process. De Coning pointed to the 2013 creation of the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade. This offensive force, made up of three battalions, was mandated to launch operations against rebel groups.

And the brigade had success, defeating M23 Movement rebels in a series of battles that led to their surrender in November 2013.

But de Coning said the military success was not backed by a political process to solve entrenched problems on the ground. Momentum for peace was lost. By 2022, the M23 had regrouped, returned, and were again attacking villages and occupying territory.

"The lesson learned is that you can defeat a group in the short term, but if the problem is not solved politically the group or another group will eventually come back," de Coning said.

He believes that future U.N. missions should only deploy in support of a viable peace process. In cases where there are multiple, asymmetric actors, it is better to build regional coalitions of armed forces to intervene and restore peace.

"My recommendation to the U.N. would be to focus on consent-based operations, where there is a peace process in place," de Coning said. "And leave the operations that need a security guarantee, that need the use of force, to coalitions of the willing or regional organizations that have that kind of capacity." □



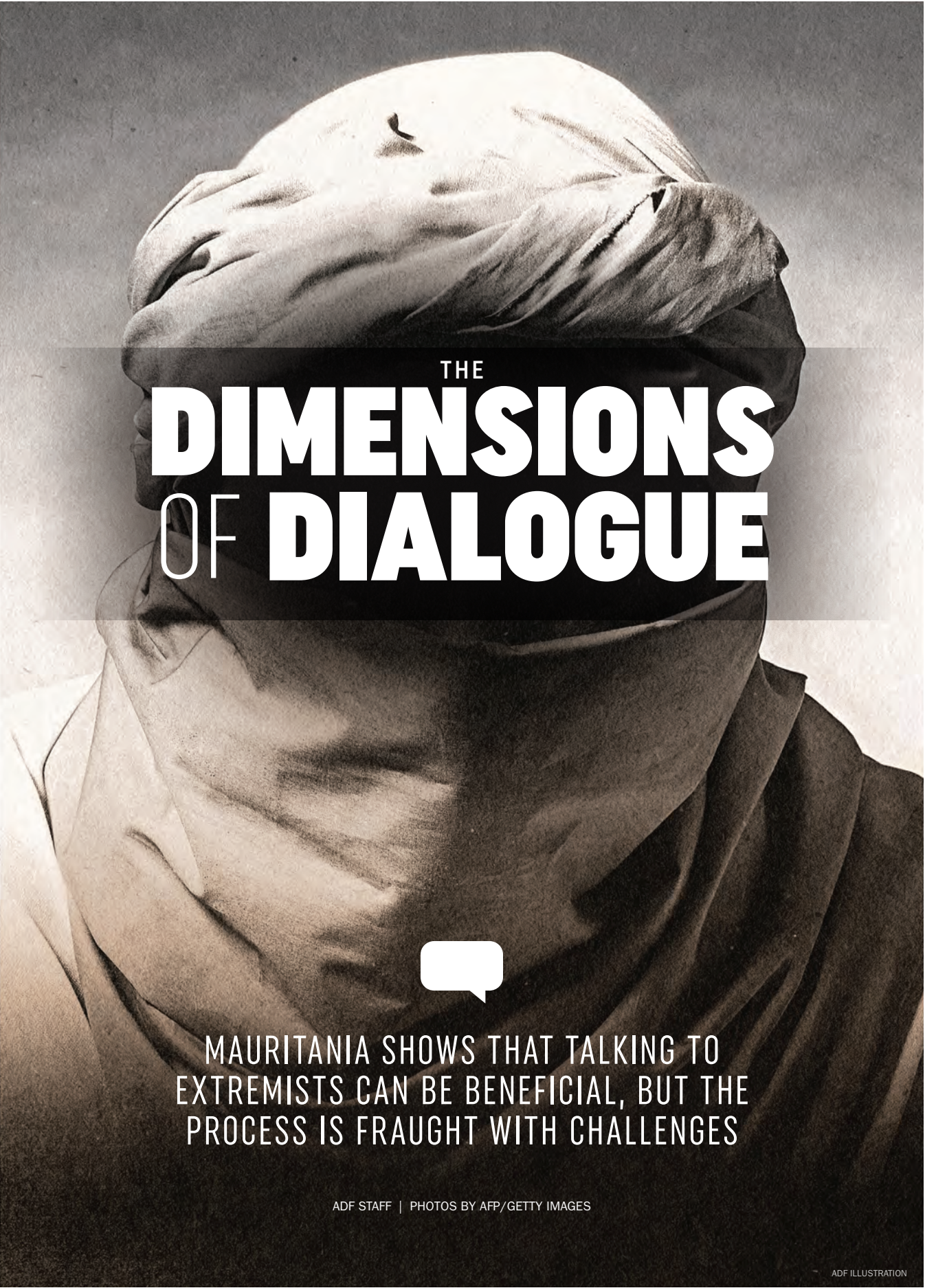
STAFF SGT. SEAN CARNES/U.S. AIR FORCE



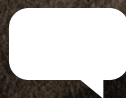
TRAINING TO PRESERVE PEACE

ADF STAFF

Botswana has remained one of the most peaceful countries on the African continent for decades. But stability and prosperity should not lull nations into complacency about security at home or in their regions. The Botswana Defence Force (BDF) already has a contingent serving in the multinational Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique, where extremists have maintained a fierce armed insurgency in the north for years. Keeping forces ready for domestic and regional responses, as well as peace-keeping duties, is essential. To that end, the BDF took part in Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) with U.S. Special Operations Command Africa at Thebephatshwa Air Base in Botswana in August and September 2022. The JCET program helps promote security and stability. Engagements develop and maintain military-to-military connections and improve readiness and the ability to work together. The August-September engagement was the second JCET event between Botswana and U.S. forces in 2022. The first was in March. Training included scouting, advancing on potential enemy positions and analyzing entry points for such objectives.



THE **DIMENSIONS** OF **DIALOGUE**



MAURITANIA SHOWS THAT TALKING TO
EXTREMISTS CAN BE BENEFICIAL, BUT THE
PROCESS IS FRAUGHT WITH CHALLENGES

ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ADF ILLUSTRATION

AS dawn gave way to light on June 4, 2005, a few dozen Mauritanian Soldiers began to prepare for their duties in a remote outpost near the Algerian and Malian borders.

The area, known as El Hank, sits in one of the Sahara's most arid pockets and is known for the comings and goings of bandits and traffickers. It stands as a perfect example of one of Africa's many ungoverned spaces: far from Mauritania's capital, Nouakchott, and far from major population centers in neighboring countries.

More than 150 extremists aligned with the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat swarmed the El Hank outpost, killing at least 15 Soldiers and wounding 17 others before escaping, according to Radio France Internationale. Nine terrorists died in the fighting. The rest stole six all-terrain vehicles and heavy weapons.

The attack, years before the Sahel became synonymous with extremist violence, was among a string of 11 incidents between 2005 and 2011. In the spring of 2005, Mauritanian authorities dismantled an extremist cell. The El Hank attack came a few months later.

There were nine other incidents between 2007 and 2011, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) reported in December 2019.

So, what changed since 2011? How has Mauritania escaped the fate of so many of its regional neighbors for so long?



Spectators cheer in Nouakchott at a military parade during Mauritania's 60th anniversary of independence in November 2020.

First, Mauritania embarked on a campaign to selectively upgrade and provide military hardware, improve infrastructure, and boost training and Soldier pay. Its national military budget quadrupled to \$160 million between 2008 and 2018, according to a 2020 Africa Center for Strategic Studies report by Anouar Boukhars, a professor of counterterrorism and countering violent extremism.

Then the government enhanced its engagement in far-flung regions by establishing small communities to concentrate dispersed rural residents. The move created "defensible positions" near the Malian border while improving living conditions and preserving nomadic culture, Boukhars wrote.



Tribesmen lead a caravan from Tichitt to Aratane. Mauritania has a long history of nomadic culture across its vast desert.

Mauritania also chose to open dialogues with extremist elements, a move that it justified as “defensive and necessary.”

“Some observers assert that one of the ingredients to Mauritania’s security successes could be open channels of communication and contact with armed groups and traffickers,” Boukhars wrote. “Others argue that this is shortsighted and undermines regional efforts to tackle transnational violent extremist groups.”

Conditions and context differ when opening dialogues to foster peace. What works in one place, such as Mauritania, might not succeed elsewhere. Potential tradeoffs often must be weighed against the greater good of a nation and its people.

THE POWER OF TALKING

Amid its yearslong period of extremist attacks, Mauritanian authorities decided to address the causes of religious radicalization, according to an April 2022 report for the ISS by senior researcher Hassane Koné and Ornella Moderan, head of the Sahel Programme for the institute’s West Africa office.

The process began with authorities talking to 70 prisoners to learn why they had become radicalized and to transition them back into civilian society. In January 2010, Mauritania commissioned a series of debates by religious dignitaries who helped the participants agree on “the non-violent ideal of jihad.” As a result, two-thirds of the prisoners agreed to renounce extremism and disarm. In exchange, they got pardons or sentence reductions and financial help with reintegration.

The dialogue also sought to stop violent Salafi Islamic ideology from continuing to spread. Mauritania’s approach highlighted Islam’s “tradition of tolerance,” as Koné wrote in a 2019 ISS report.

Some of the Islamic clerics used in the dialogues

had been imprisoned themselves, according to a 2019 paper by Frederic Wehrey for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Prisoners were told that they could call for Shariah in Mauritania as long as they did so peacefully and that non-Muslim guests in Mauritania should be considered “protected persons” in accordance with Islamic scriptures.

The government also took a census of madrassas (Quranic schools) so they could be monitored and then recruited hundreds of those students and offered vocational training and work in the public sector to avoid exposing them to extremist propaganda, Koné wrote.

Koné and Moderan are quick to add, however, that Mauritania’s experience will not automatically work for its Sahelian neighbors to the east.

Countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali and, to a lesser extent, Niger are beset by a larger and more diverse array of insurgents and extremists. “For it to work there, dialogue will need to extend to leaders, active fighters and individuals associated with violent extremist groups — both men and women,” Koné and Moderan wrote.

Ideology also is not the only driver of extremist participation.

“Many join to protect themselves, their families or their livelihoods or to retaliate against abuses by the national armed forces,” Koné and Moderan wrote. “These motives often reflect frustrations about social injustice, a lack of opportunities and poor access to basic services such as water, education and health. They are compounded by serious deficits in government security services and justice systems.”

Mauritanian Soldiers wait in trucks at a G5 Sahel outpost in the southeast along the border with Mali. Military upgrades between 2008 and 2018 included pickups and other hardware.



Mauritanian anti-terrorism forces ride in an Independence Day parade. The country hasn't had a terrorist attack since December 2011.



For those reasons, ideology will have to be part of a larger strategy that addresses other drivers of extremism, such as economic, security, social and political reasons, they wrote. Also, rank-and-file fighters might have different reasons for remaining in extremist groups than decision-makers and leaders.

THE DANGERS OF TRADE-OFFS

The idea of talking out differences and negotiating appears positive on its face, but the potential pitfalls are numerous, especially when dealing with violent extremist organizations. Many vital questions arise when considering dialogue. Political scientist Alex Thurston lists several in his August 2022 article for *The New Humanitarian*, “Peace talks with Sahelian jihadists? It’s worth a shot”:

- Can extremists be trusted to engage for reasons other than mere tactical gains?
- Would they be willing to renounce ties to global terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State group and al-Qaida?
- Would international pressure constrain the potential success of dialogue?
- And finally, what do local populations facing imminent danger really want?

The idea is fraught with other problems as well. Governments, nongovernmental organizations and other actors often stress the importance of civilian input in peacebuilding, Thurston wrote. But civilians

living in enclaves beset by the constant threat of violence might be willing to agree to conditions unpalatable to national and international actors.

“What if some ‘locals’ are willing to compromise on liberal values, such as secularism, gender equality, or universal access to education, in order to save lives?” Thurston wrote. “Are local voices to be elevated only when they serve liberal peacebuilding goals?”

At times in the past few years, leaders across the Sahel have considered dialogue with extremists. Former prime ministers Christopher Dabiré and Moctar Ouane of Burkina Faso and Mali, respectively, considered it, Koné and Moderan wrote.

In February 2022, Nigerien President Mohamed Bazoum announced that he had released several terrorists in hopes of opening discussions with extremist leaders operating in the Tillabéri region, which borders Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali, according to *Jeune Afrique*.

Thurston, in an October 2018 report for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s *West African Papers*, warned that striking deals with extremists in one country might risk pushing them into neighboring countries. Such settlements reached in Algeria and Mauritania worsened conditions in Mali, he argued.

State involvement also is crucial, Thurston wrote, because civil society — though important participants in any such effort — will have trouble offering “meaningful concessions or enticements” without government backing. □



ADF ILLUSTRATION

MOROCCO FINDS SUCCESS IN REHABILITATING PRISONERS

The Three-Step Moussalaha Program Helps Extremists Rethink Their Views and Reenter Society

ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Morocco is an unlikely place for the rehabilitation of imprisoned extremists. The Global Terrorism Index for 2022 ranks Morocco 76th among countries affected by terrorist threats, making it one of the safest countries in Africa.

A 2003 terrorist attack in Casablanca, in which 45 people were killed, galvanized the country against extremists. After the attack, which consisted of five near-simultaneous bombings, the country tightened its borders and added new laws to its legal counter-terrorism framework, including expanding the definition of terrorism to include incitement.

The 2022 terrorism index noted that “despite more than 1,000 Moroccan nationals joining the Islamic State and other terrorist groups in war zones, the country dismantled more than 200 terrorist cells and made more than 3,500 terrorism-related arrests over the past two decades, thereby possibly avoiding more than 300 planned terrorist actions.”

Since the Casablanca bombings, Morocco has worked to counter radical groups. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace reported that between 2002 and 2018, officials arrested more than 3,000 alleged extremists, with 186 terrorist cells dismantled, including 65 cells linked to the Islamic State group.

Despite the country’s current safety, it has implemented a three-part program for rehabilitating imprisoned extremists. The program is called

“Moussalaha,” which is Arabic for reconciliation. It offers imprisoned extremists mental and social help to rehabilitate them and return them to society, including finding jobs and setting up households.



A prison guard carries keys and handcuffs in Kenitra, Morocco.

The program launched in 2017 and is led by Morocco’s Directorate of Penitentiary Administration and Reinsertion service with several partner organizations, including the Mohammedia League of Scholars and the National Human Rights Council. The program since has begun allowing women to participate.





A man imprisoned in Morocco for 19 years sits in a prison library, where he is participating in the country's Moussalaha rehabilitation program.

Counterterrorism expert Ido Levy was quoted in Morocco World News as praising the country's "scientific approach" to combating terrorism and extremism through religious reeducation, professional training sessions, and what some experts associated with the program describe as security "spiritual immunization."

The goal is to get extremist prisoners to begin to question their own beliefs. The three-month program is based on three main pillars: reconciliation with the

self, with religious text and with society.

According to some participants, the three pillars mean "renounc-

LEFT: A guard locks a prison gate in Kenitra, Morocco, where inmates can participate in the Moussalaha rehabilitation program.

ing violence, accepting pluralistic interpretations of religious texts, and recognizing the legitimacy of the regime," Carnegie reported. "The apparent success of the first cohort in July 2017 — several participants had their prison sentences shortened or even received a royal pardon — encouraged scores of former jihadis to join this initiative in the hope of leaving prison."

ARRESTED AFTER 2003 ATTACK

The story of Mohamed Damir, a 49-year-old Moroccan former extremist and father of three, illustrates how

the program is intended to work, according to a story in The Africa Report.

After the 2003 Casablanca attack, Damir was arrested for his association with extremist groups. He was sentenced to death even though he had not participated in the attack. He was 26 at the time. His death sentence later was commuted to 30 years in prison.

What had gotten Damir noticed was his habit of visiting unarmed groups and mosques where extremists made inflammatory speeches. He now blames his then-radicalization on a "lack of maturity combined with a lack of scientific and cultural background."

"His first years in prison reinforced his radicalisation; he continued to learn passages of the Koran by heart, without trying to contextualise or interpret them," the authors wrote. "Then came loneliness and doubt. Alone with himself, Damir began to question the dogmas he had mechanically memorised and took steps to study at a distance."

He began changing his life by studying international law, but being imprisoned, he could not attend classes. He nonetheless became a committed student and went on to study sociology, psychology and theology. He told The Africa Report that he read more than 1,500 books in three languages during his time in prison.

He became a candidate for the Moussalaha program, which consisted of an extensive economic

GROUPS DEVISE GUIDELINES FOR DERADICALIZATION

A two-day forum in 2010 produced a “best practices” guide for countries to use in drawing up programs for deradicalization of former extremists.

The guidelines were the work of the International Peace Institute, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Arab Thought Forum. The guide, “A New Approach? Deradicalization Programs and Counterterrorism,” drew from programs in eight Muslim-majority countries. The guidelines include:

- **Do not regard deradicalization as a panacea.** Although military and other “hard” counterterrorism programs aren’t an answer by themselves, neither are deradicalization programs. Deradicalization often is described as just one part of a holistic counterterrorism approach; it will meet with only limited success when deployed in isolation.
- **Pay attention to context.** What is appropriate for, and successful in, one context might not be suited to another. The time frame also might be significant: Deradicalization projects that fail or are rejected in some circumstances might be adopted in other times and places with success.
- **Incorporate improved aftercare into programs.** Most successful programs include follow-up or monitoring. This includes frequent contact with program tutors and daily text message reminders not to fall back into radical habits, and counseling and support.
- **Improve vetting of potential beneficiaries.** Recidivism is a persistent problem even for criminals not involved in terrorism. Better vetting of potential beneficiaries and improved aftercare help lower recidivism rates.
- **Devise and improve ways to measure success.** A recurring problem with terrorist deradicalization is measuring and quantifying the successes and failures of programs. It is difficult to compare programs, but it is important to understand reasons for success and failure.
- **Tailor the approach.** It is important to tailor prison policy to the situation at hand to assess whether prisoners should be isolated or allowed to mix with each other and with leaders. This furthers the argument that prospective beneficiaries for deradicalization should be examined on a case-by-case basis.
- **Involve communities affected by radicalization.** If the community doesn’t accept that deradicalized individuals are no longer a threat, programs will fail and will lack credibility. Similarly, successfully deradicalized people can be used in programs to great effect.
- **Use incentives with care.** Many deradicalization programs benefit from enticing people to leave terrorism via incentives that can help stabilize their lives. These incentives can be financial and measures such as reduced prison sentencing. But incentives can fail when societies view them as ways of “rewarding” criminals.

and social rehabilitation curriculum. He also was given a custom-made individual project to become independent and learn how to manage a home.

After completing the program, he was released from prison after serving 15 years. As a condition of his release, he agreed to personal counseling. He said that like almost all of the released inmates in the program, he has found “a path to peace.”

“This is an undeniable success, far from the controversies raised in Europe by de-radicalisation programs,” he said, according to The Africa Report article.

TRAINING IMAMS

Part of the credit for the success of the program goes to Moroccan King Mohammed VI, who has special authority in his country as “Commander of the Faithful,” in developing dialogues for dealing with extremists.

Along with his partners in West Africa and the Sahel, the king set up the Moussalaha curriculum for training imams at the Mohammed VI Institute. The institute is unusual as a Muslim center of learning in that it accepts women as students.

Maghreb Arab Press reported that setting up such a program for convicted terrorists “has a strong social impact, testifying to the particular interest that the King gives to the future of incarcerated citizens.”

The program, the newspaper noted, is an illustration of the king’s “firm determination to ensure convicts, without any discrimination or exception, an adequate socio-professional integration after their release.”

General Delegate for Prison Administration and Reintegration Mohamed Salah Tamek told Morocco World News that the program is based on “the authentic precepts of Islam, as a religion of moderation, middle ground, openness, and tolerance.”

“This is a unique program at the global level, especially since it has been praised by many regional and international partners,” Tamek said.

Damir told Arab Weekly that his reeducation included reading the works of philosophers Jean-Jacques



Rousseau and Voltaire, some of whose ideas “are not far from the spirit of Islam.” He noted that many extremists only realize they need to abandon their violent views “once they find themselves alone” in a prison cell.

LOOKING FOR A JOB

A former prisoner named Abdellah El Yousseoufi, who is now in his early 30s, left Morocco for Tunisia in 2011 looking for a job, according to The Africa Report.

In Tunisia, he became influenced by the preaching of fundamentalist Muslims, who he said were not bothered by local authorities. He said the fundamentalists offered him a job and encouraged him to speak out. He became an outspoken critic of his native country, blaming it for his poverty and his lack of professional prospects.

A video of one of his criticisms came to the attention of Moroccan authorities, who contacted their counterparts in Tunisia. El Yousseoufi says he was arrested and interrogated in Tunisia for 10 days before being sent back to Morocco, where he was sentenced to three years in prison in 2014.

His incarceration, he told reporters, forced him to review his life and reflect on what he had learned during his years in the extremist movement. He saw “the limits of the responses provided by these movements to the political and social problems of our



Citizens protest terrorist bombings in Casablanca, Morocco, in 2003. The bombings led to an overwhelming national backlash against extremism.

countries, as well as their contradictions with Islam and the message of our Prophet.”

El Yousseoufi took part in the Moussalaha program and, like Damir, described it as a maturation process.

“Moussalaha was a chance and a golden opportunity for me to start a new life, on a healthy and balanced basis,” he said. “But it was preceded by a long work of self-questioning, a personal effort to turn the page of this period which is for me a failure at all levels.”

His story also has a happy ending: He now has a degree in computer science. □



A Decade of **MARITIME SECURITY**

*The Yaoundé Code of Conduct Has Had
Successes — and Has Room for Growth*

CAPT. TAHIR NGADA, NIGERIAN NAVY





The importance of the Gulf of Guinea to Africa and the wider world can hardly be overstated. With 6,000 kilometers of coastline touching 19 littoral states from Senegal to Angola, the gulf is rich in natural resources and strategically important.

It is a vital corridor for commerce where shipping volume increased by 59% between 2006 and 2020, according to U.N. Conference on Trade and Development statistics. It also holds energy resources, producing 3.1 million barrels of crude oil per day, or about 3.8% of the global total. It is rich in aquatic life, with fisheries that produced about 3.4 million metric tons of seafood in 2020, up nearly 10% from 2013.

Despite that, the region faces threats that could undercut its potential. Illicit trafficking, illegal fishing and piracy have plagued certain areas. And, historically, countries have struggled to seamlessly share information, exchange knowledge and cooperate across the maritime domain. Bad actors looked for weak spots and exploited them.

In June 2013, the countries of the region attempted to rectify this with the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, a comprehensive response to the need for unified approaches to combat maritime security challenges and transnational organized crime in the gulf. The code, which consists of 21 articles and was signed by 25 nations, established an architecture for multinational, regional and extraregional collaboration in maritime governance. As the Yaoundé

Code commemorates its 10-year anniversary, it's an ideal time to highlight some notable achievements and potential action areas that could improve cooperation and help the code fulfill its great promise.

Legal Reform

The Yaoundé signatories recognized that maritime laws too often were outdated and inadequate to confront evolving threats. The Yaoundé Architecture was intended to support countries as they put in place legal reforms. For instance, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Maritime Crime Programme has worked with nations to examine laws, identify required upgrades and support changes that allow for “legal finish,” a term that refers to moving cases from arrest through the court system toward successful prosecution.

Cabo Verde, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo now have maritime laws to prosecute piracy, a crime that often has gone unpunished due to nonexistent laws. New laws have been used to prosecute pirates in Nigeria and Togo. Other countries such as Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are enacting reforms. In December 2022, Cameroon signed its maritime security law, which targets piracy and maritime terrorism. Other countries such as Angola, the Republic

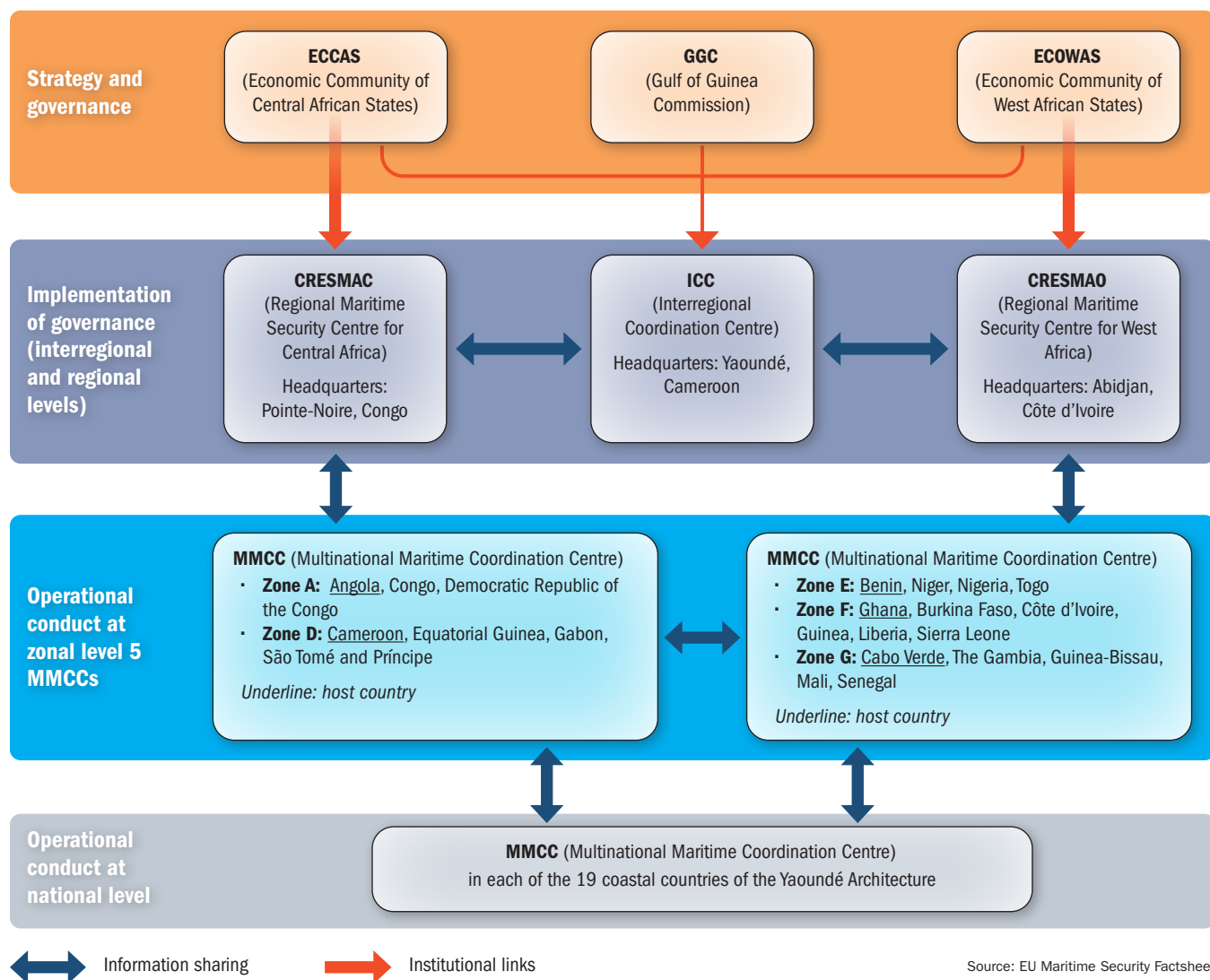
A Sailor and a member of the Special Unit of Maritime and River Police from Benin train in maritime law enforcement.

PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS
MIKAELA MCGEE/U.S. COAST GUARD

Zonal, Regional and International Centers Created by the Yaoundé Code of Conduct



The Yaoundé Architecture for Maritime Security



of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon are trying to upscale maritime legal reforms. Another milestone reform is the Economic Community of West African States Supplementary Act for the transfer of piracy suspects, which would facilitate multinational maritime security operations.

Information Exchange

Before 2013, gaps in information sharing between maritime law enforcement practitioners posed a fundamental problem. Countries had a limited picture of the maritime domain and often were unaware of activity outside their own exclusive economic zones. Conditions have greatly improved, allowing member states to exchange information. This is underpinned by the Yaoundé Architecture, which lets information flow from zonal coordination centers in each of the five cooperation zones up to regional centers (the Regional Maritime Security Centre for Central Africa in Pointe-Noire, Republic of the Congo, and the West Africa Regional Maritime Security Centre in Abidjan,

Côte d'Ivoire, and then to the Interregional Coordination Centre in Yaoundé. Individual national maritime operations centers also are connected to the system.

The Yaoundé Architecture Regional Information System (YARIS), a secure digital monitoring tool developed through partnerships with the European Union Gulf of Guinea Interregional Network, enhanced the capacity for seamless information exchange. It became operational in 2020. YARIS lets members securely share documentation, logs, photos, recordings and other information. It also lets users aggregate data from surveillance systems such as radar and satellites to identify suspicious vessels. Additionally, the system offers secure communication via chat, email and videoconferencing so users can exchange information and coordinate action.

Capacity Building

The Yaoundé Architecture calls for developing and improving the skills, knowledge and abilities of maritime law enforcement practitioners. Centers of excellence

have accelerated training and education and supported exercises by delivering courses tailored to meet identified needs. In 2022, for example, the Yaoundé Architecture Training Organisation delivered more than 520 cumulative days of capacity-building packages across the gulf, covering topics such as maritime domain awareness (25% of training days), maritime governance (12%), maritime law enforcement (35%) and maritime interdiction operations (28%). The increasing commitment to capacity-building initiatives is transforming beneficiaries' attitudes and job performance. In a bid to deepen the coordination of capacity building, the UNODC is supporting the Interregional Coordination Centre with an integrated database management system. It is geared toward guaranteeing data availability, accessibility, accuracy, consistency and clarity.

Combined Operations

Combined operations at sea, which once were infrequent, have been increasing with the support of Yaoundé Architecture centers. For instance, using the instruments of the architecture, combined patrols were conducted in Zone E in late 2021. Cameroon, São Tomé and Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon conducted other surveillance patrols in Zone D. Another model of combined

operation is the fisheries patrol with the subregional fisheries commission of Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Guinea and Senegal that is conducted biannually. Interoperability is improving with the help of multinational exercises such as Obangame Express and Grand African NEMO, along with regional events such as the International Maritime Conference and the Regional Maritime Exercise, which was organized by Nigeria in 2022.

Potential Action Areas

The Yaoundé Architecture not only has stimulated important discussions about improving maritime security, it also has provided platforms for action. Nevertheless, some areas need attention to strengthen cooperation as the code enters its next decade.

Domesticating the Yaoundé Code of Conduct: The Yaoundé Architecture could be embraced by member states so that its requirements are integrated into national maritime law enforcement frameworks. Doing so would deepen

A Nigerian Sailor stands on a vessel during Obangame Express, a maritime exercise that involved 33 countries off the coast of Lagos, Nigeria.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES





Naval officers monitor ships in the Maritime Operations Center in Lagos, Nigeria, during Obangame Express 2023.

PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS CAMERON EDY/U.S. NAVY

the harmonization of maritime strategies, strengthen regional interoperability and reinforce responses.

Strengthening institutional capacity: Much work has been done to strengthen the institutional capacity of maritime law enforcement. However, methodologies and tools must be improved to assist member states as they strive to assure maritime security.

Criminalizing all maritime crimes: Despite progress made in criminalizing some maritime offenses such as piracy, there still is more work to be done to strengthen the establishment of universal jurisdiction by domestically codifying piracy laws to prosecute and punish the crime across the gulf. Likewise, it is necessary to criminalize actions such as armed robbery at sea under national criminal legislation in line with the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea legal framework and other relevant international statutes. Other maritime and transnational organized crimes need to be defined in relevant laws with appropriate penalties. The goal is to ensure that there is an “end-to-end” connection from maritime interdiction operations to prosecution.

Formalizing shiprider agreements: Article 9 of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct allows for maritime law enforcement officers from one country to be aboard another country’s vessel. This coordinated approach enables countries to jointly conduct maritime law enforcement, which is helpful when some countries have limited capacity. The development of shiprider agreements between partners would further consolidate working relationships between countries toward improving critical multilateral collaboration.

Resourcing of Yaoundé Architecture centers: Putting the Yaoundé Architecture centers fully into use remains unfinished, particularly in terms of human and material resources. To effectively optimize the Yaoundé structure, resourcing needs to be well articulated to boost the operational capacity of the centers, while also solidifying multilateral cooperation toward sustainable maritime governance in the gulf.

The Path Ahead

Multilateral cooperation is a potent tool for achieving goals in maritime governance of the gulf. There is evidence that it is effective. Piracy in the gulf is declining with 81 incidents reported in 2020 and only 34 incidents in 2021. In the first nine months of 2022, there were only 13 reported incidents, according to the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. The next decade of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct must expand on the achievements made while paying particular attention to the underlying structural issues that hamper success. The gulf is a precious resource. The partnerships and vigilance made possible by the Yaoundé Code of Conduct and the security architecture it created can ensure that this resource is there to benefit generations to come. □



About the Author: Capt. Tahir Ngada is a seaman officer in the executive branch of the Nigerian Navy. He works as a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Maritime Crime Programme training consultant and is deployed at the Interregional Coordination Centre in Yaoundé. Ngada has a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from the Nigerian Defence Academy, a diploma in national security from the United States Naval War College and a master’s degree in international relations from Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island. Ngada also has a master’s degree in countering organized crime and terrorism from University College London.

Women PLAY KEY ROLE IN COUNTEREXTREMISM

**CAMEROON'S
EXPERIENCE
REHABILITATING
FORMER FIGHTERS
SHOWS THAT
WOMEN'S
VOICES HELP
DERADICALIZATION
PROCESS**



ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

About 100 marauders stormed the Cameroonian town of Mozogo at 1:30 a.m. on January 8, 2021. From the way they dressed and spoke, it was obvious that they were Boko Haram extremists.

They broke into homes and looted them. They shot at fleeing townspeople, who ran into nearby woods. A suicide bomber caught up with some of them and detonated a rigged vest. Twelve people died in the explosion, including eight children. Three more people were injured.

The suicide bomber was a woman. This is not unusual; the Institute for Security Studies says that in some parts of Cameroon, as many as 45% of former Boko Haram members are female.



Cameroonian women gather and chat at a refugee camp in Chad. Boko Haram extremists have forced more than 2.2 million people from their homes.

The use of women as Boko Haram suicide bombers dates to June 2014, when a middle-aged woman riding a motorcycle approached the barracks in Gombe, Nigeria. While being searched, she detonated explosives strapped on her body, killing herself and a Soldier.

“With this act, a new chapter in the destructive history of Boko Haram began: the group joined the ranks of terrorist groups around the world that have incorporated women into their organizational profiles,” researchers Mia Bloom and Hilary Matfess wrote in their study, “Women as Symbols and Swords in Boko Haram’s Terror.”

The Boko Haram conflict, which started in 2009 in northeast Nigeria, has killed more than 35,000 people and displaced 2 million across Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province have focused attacks on the Far North Region of Cameroon. The country also is dealing with armed

separatist groups seeking independence for the country’s minority English-speaking regions.

Several reasons are frequently cited for why women, historically oppressed in many parts of Africa, would join forces with terrorists. Bloom and Matfess say that revenge and retribution can play a critical role in “galvanizing female participation,” noting that there is a prevalence of widows among female militants.

Studies have linked economic problems as incentives for men and women to join extremists out of sheer desperation. Some researchers say that women might join extremists of their own free will simply because of cultural and religious ties. Others say that is not the case. One thing everyone agrees on: Women need more help in breaking the cycle of terrorism, and as civilians, they need to become more involved in helping deradicalize extremists.

Too often, counterterror and counterradicalization efforts focus solely on the men who make up the majority of the fighters. They overlook the role women

Members of a nongovernmental organization teach classes to refugee women and young girls during a visit to Cameroon’s north.



can play in persuading these men to lay down arms and rallying their communities against extremism.

“Boko Haram members still have wives back in their villages and they come eat here at night,” a resident near Diffa, Niger, told the Global Center on Cooperative Security. “Nobody dares denounce them. If you do, they will kill you. They are still enmeshed in our society. The politics of denouncing them doesn’t work unless the women denounce. You can’t denounce a husband, a son or a brother. This war is complicated because of the people on their side.”

OVERLOOKED ASSETS

In their study, “Peacebuilding and Women Employment in Boko Haram Affected Countries,” Eugenie Rose Fontep and Armand Mboutchouang Kountchou say that women need to become more involved in trying to bring Boko Haram to the negotiating table in Cameroon.

“It is only by kidnappings and tortures that girls are used by the Boko Haram group as fighters, some of

Promoting Women IN THE PEACE PROCESS

Political scientist Angela Ajodo-Adebanjoko published a report in the African Journal on Terrorism titled “Women’s Role in Countering Violent Extremism in North East Nigeria” in 2021. She listed these steps to promote women’s participation in countering violent extremism.

- Make legal reforms. Women first have to be recognized, included and protected as full and equal citizens before the law.
- The counterterrorism community needs to recognize that gender is a central issue, not a marginal one.
- Gender-sensitive indicators should include early warning systems, intelligence gathering and the strengthening of prevention strategies relating to violence against women.
- Women must be present at the solution table. They need to help plan any counterterrorism strategy because of their ability to offer a different, but vital, perspective.
- Negotiators must address the issues underlying women’s membership in Boko Haram. It is crucial that the international community engage with women in preventing violent extremism and focus on the gender-related reasons why women become extremists.
- Women’s presence among counterterrorism professionals, including in the military, must be increased. Institutions need to strengthen their efforts to recruit and retain women, including in operational roles, and ensure that obstacles to their career advancement are removed.
- Women must be empowered within the civil and security sectors, all the way to national levels.
- Women should be trained on advocacy skills that take advantage of their positions and localities.
- A gender dimension should be included in efforts to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogues.



Women forced to leave their villages in Cameroon wash clothes in a stream. Extremists and separatists have terrorized the country for years.

A woman works in an onion field in Cameroon's northern region, where Boko Haram terrorists have forced people to flee their homes.



whom become suicide bombers,” they wrote. “Indeed, if it was not by force and malicious persuasions, women may be playing a central role in the peacebuilding process since societies and communities where women enjoy a relatively higher status have greater prospects for successful peacebuilding.”

Women want a voice in bringing peace to their country — they make up more than half of Cameroon’s population — and are protesting what they say is underrepresentation in the country’s efforts. They also want to assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, or DDR, of former insurgents.

A group calling itself Women’s Negotiations for Peace in Cameroon says it plans to meet with fighters and government troops to find a path to peace.

Sonkeng Rachel, one of the organizers, told Voice of America that in crises, women who are regarded as having high moral standards, integrity and discipline should be given opportunities to speak. She said that women have proved that they can even be the main peace negotiators, because they provide humanitarian needs to affected populations, including wounded Soldiers and fighters. Women, she added, educate fighters and government troops on the necessity of building peace.

In a 2022 study for the Institute for Security Studies, researchers Celestin Delanga and Akinola Olojo made their case for having the women of Cameroon encourage Boko Haram members to leave the group and reintegrate with society.

“The needs of these former Boko Haram members are often understood by women in communities affected by violent extremism,” they wrote. “They also know the concerns that exist in host or receiving communities regarding reintegration processes. This knowledge can inform national and regional programming on peace processes in ways that reflect gender sensitivity and inclusiveness.”

The International Crisis Group (ICG) says that Cameroonian women already are involved in working for peace, whether men accept it or not.

“Ignoring women’s views means overlooking key constituencies and new perspectives on the conflict,” the ICG reported in March 2022. “Despite the deeply patriarchal nature of Cameroon’s society, some women command considerable influence, especially at a grass-roots level and within families. Further, the different harms suffered by women require special attention from the government, separatists and international partners.”

Getting women involved in reintegration in Cameroon is all the more necessitated by the fact that so many of the surrendering or captured insurgents, an estimated 20%, are women.

The online news service HumAngle reported in November 2022 that Cameroon had announced a five-year plan aimed at reintegrating Boko Haram insurgents and former fighters into society.

“It will be based on strategies that have been employed in conflicts all over the world that try to

return people who have been armed and told to go and kill, back into a society that might view them with suspicion,” HumAngle reported.

The National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) said it would take “into account the needs and specific interests of women and girls associated with armed groups” in its efforts, particularly at its DDR centers.

“The implementation of this strategy on the ground would be done through training and sensitization campaigns, the increase in the engagement of women and girls in the DDR process, their protection against stigmatisation and violence based on their gender,” said Jean Claude Obam of the committee, HumAngle reported.

As of the end of 2022, Cameroon said there were about 770 female fighters and associates in its DDR centers nationwide.

DOUBLE STANDARD

There is a double standard in reintegrating women into society, Delanga and Olojo say.

“On returning home, some are victimised by their families or communities,” they wrote. “They are stigmatised when they try to remarry and, in some cases, are rejected outright. According to the [International Organization for Migration], in Cameroon, victimisation is higher among female former Boko Haram members than males. If left unaddressed, this can hinder reintegration efforts.”

Delanga and Olojo make these suggestions for using women in Cameroon’s DDR process:

- More women need to be involved in Cameroon’s NCDDR. The committee was established in 2018, but at the end of 2022, only one of 16 members was a woman. The decree that created the committee should be revised so that women can be more involved in managing the country’s DDR centers. “The enactment of these laws would gain mileage if the ministries of justice collaborated with the ministries for the promotion of women and the family, and for social affairs,” the authors wrote.
- Women need to play a role in designing DDR programs for former female members of Boko Haram.
- At the regional level, the Lake Chad Basin Commission should strengthen its focus on gender needs. Key points of the commission already focus on working with women, and the empowerment and inclusion of women and young people.
- The Lake Chad Basin Commission also needs to focus on lessons learned and best practices in reintegration. Committee meetings should highlight themes that prioritize women’s needs.
- “Involving women in Cameroon’s disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process would deliver more effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding,” the authors said. “And by dealing with gender-related concerns, problems of discrimination can also be addressed.” □

MOZAMBIQUE ACQUIRES Transport Aircraft

DEFENCEWEB

Mozambique's armed forces have taken delivery of two refurbished transport aircraft acquired from Paramount Group of South Africa.

The company handed over a Let-410 Turbolet and a CN-235M transport plane to the Mozambican military. Air Force officials said the planes will be used for cargo and troop transport and special forces and paratrooper deployment, Notícias reported.

Mozambican officials said that Paramount, a defense industry company, supplied the aircraft along with training and maintenance.

The Botswana Defence Force operated the CN-235M-10, made in 1987, until 2011. The CN-235 is a medium-range twin-engine transport aircraft that was jointly developed by CASA of Spain and Indonesian manufacturer IPTN. Its primary military roles consist of transport and aerial surveillance.

The Let-410 is a twin-engine short-range transport plane manufactured by Czech aircraft manufacturer Let Kunovice. In addition to its military use, it also has

been used as a small airliner, with a seating capacity of about 18.

Paramount has supplied a variety of equipment to Mozambique's military, including Marauder armored personnel carriers and Mi-8/17, Mi-24 and Gazelle helicopters.

Marauders first were seen in Mozambique in late 2020. The helicopters appear to have been delivered in 2021.

Journalist Nuno Rogeiro in 2021 reported that Mozambique would be getting several upgraded Mi-17 and Mi-24 helicopters from Paramount fitted with weapons, sensors and other equipment.

Paramount delivered at least two ex-United Kingdom Army Gazelles to Mozambique, with additional deliveries possible.

Fifteen Mozambican pilots are believed to have trained at the Paramount Technical Training Academy. Burnham Global has provided training in the operation of the armored vehicles in Mozambique.



CN-235 transport plane landing



NIGERIA USING TETHERED DRONES FOR SECURITY

DEFENCEWEB

Tethered drones are making life easier for Nigerian law enforcement authorities responsible for securing the border and fighting crime and terrorism.

The equipment comes from drone company Elistair, which has supplied Orion tethered unmanned aerial vehicles to Nigerian police, a company statement said.

The company delivered the drones, along with training in Abuja, at the beginning of the year, and “tethered drones are now deployed daily.”

Police use Orions to successfully identify armed terrorist groups, using observation and threat detection during 24-hour flights.

“Drones assist police to monitor active crime scenes, coordinate response operations and provide aerial support to responding officers,” a Nigerian police spokesman said.

Deployable in minutes and easily transportable, Orion drones let operators speedily create a discreet checkpoint with minimal logistical support. The Orion can remain on station for 50 hours and, with a 100-meter Kevlar tether, is immune to jamming. Its dual electro-optical/infrared sensor is suitable for day and night missions and has a detection range of 10 kilometers. The drones have a total takeoff weight of 10.5 kilograms. If the tether fails it can parachute to the ground.

Elistair opened an office in Côte d'Ivoire in April 2021 to increase its presence and proximity to West African customers. The company has supplied drones to more than 70 countries worldwide from its locations in Africa, France and the United States.

Nigerian police have been expanding their drone inventory and have received a small batch of Songar armed unmanned aerial vehicles from Turkey's Asisguard.

Unveiled in 2019, the Songar multicopter can be fitted with an assault rifle, 40 mm grenade launcher or 81 mm mortar. It also can be fitted with a day/night camera stabilizer and laser range finder. An electronic sight and ballistic calculation module help with weapon deployment and recoil management.

Nigerian police are expected to use the Songar against armed gangs and bandits, which have recently caused havoc in several states. The Nigerian Police Force also has taken delivery of ALTI Transition drones from South Africa.

A tethered drone made by Elistair shows its unlimited flight time at a robotics demonstration.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Tunisia Takes Delivery of New TRAINING AIRCRAFT

DEFENCEWEB

Tunisia's Air Force has taken delivery of the first T-6C Texan II training aircraft as part of an order for eight planes.

The U.S. company Textron said all eight planes should be delivered by the end of 2023.

Training of the initial cadre of pilots began in late 2022 at Textron Aviation Defense facilities in Wichita, Kansas, in the U.S. The Tunisian Air Force is relying on TRU Simulation + Training Inc., an affiliate of Textron, for a suite of training devices and related support. The devices, slated for installation at Sfax air base in Tunisia, include a ground-based training system, an operational flight trainer and a computer-based training lab.

The Tunisian contract covers eight aircraft and in-country field service and logistics support, program management support, interim contractor support for the first year, training for pilots and maintenance professionals, spare engines, spare parts, and aircraft support equipment.



The T-6A Texan II is a single-engine, two-seat plane designed to teach Joint Primary Pilot Training students basic flying skills. MASTER SGT. DAVID RICHARDS/U.S. AIR FORCE

In October 2019, the U.S. State Department approved the sale of up to 12 T-6 aircraft to Tunisia for an estimated \$234 million.

Tunisian Air Force students do their basic training on Italian SF-260s. Tunisia received nine SF-260CTs and 12 SF-260WT Warriors between 1974 and 1978. About 18 SF-260s remain in use. Tunisian student pilots then move on to the jet-powered Aermacchi MB-326.

The T-6 is a development of the Swiss Pilatus PC-9 turboprop trainer and was designed to fill the Joint Primary Aircraft Training System role for the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy. The C model is a further refinement of the T-6A Texan II with an integrated glass cockpit, an advanced avionics suite and hard-point wings that can accommodate auxiliary fuel tanks.



Kenya Looks to Skies to Improve Life on Earth

ADF STAFF

The Kenya Space Agency (KSA) is working on using satellite technology to improve the lives of Kenyans.

Brig. Hillary Kipkosgey, acting director of the KSA, said it has invested significantly in projects such as Monitoring for Decisions using Space Technologies to track forest cover, urbanization and for help in planning disaster management.

"KSA believes that space science, technology and applications have the potential to spur economic growth," Kipkosgey told a gathering during Kenya Innovation Week (KIW) in December 2022 at the Sarit Expo Centre in Nairobi.

He gave his keynote address during a KIW side-line event known as the Africa Earth Observation Challenge, an annual continental innovation contest aimed at finding new ways to use satellite monitoring technology. In 2022, Kenya's agriBORA won first prize in the challenge. The agriBORA project uses technology including satellite data to help farmers increase productivity and reduce risk.

"Earth Observation provides reliable, real-time information to support environmental monitoring, which is vital for informed decision-making," Kipkosgey said during his address.

The agency is involved in initiatives to spur space development. It was one of three national agencies selected by the United Nations to launch a remote-sensing payload that will fly onboard the International Space Station (pictured above) to monitor weather and the effects of natural disasters.

Kenya also is collaborating with five other African countries as part of the African Development Satellite Initiative. The program aims to build capacity in space systems engineering and space operations by developing a small satellite, Kipkosgey said.

"I wish to encourage African states to also embrace the joint pursuit of accessing space for sustainable development through regional initiatives," Kipkosgey said during a 2022 address in Vienna to the U.N.'s Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

**The International
Space Station**
EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY



Ghana Provides CYBERSECURITY MODEL as Threats Multiply

ADF STAFF

Ghana is working to position itself as a continental leader in cybersecurity. The country has created a civilian-led cybersecurity network rooted in the country's Ministry of Communication, but with key branches in the security and technology sectors.

On the front line of Ghana's ongoing fight against online threats, the Cyber Security Authority, created in 2021, and the National Computer Emergency Response Team track threats in real time and coordinate the response to major events.

The authority requires all cybersecurity companies to be licensed and, as of January 1, 2023, began auditing owners of critical information infrastructure to ensure that they are operating in line with security mandates.

"Other countries across the continent have much to learn from Ghana's approach, which has brought tremendous growth in cyber capabilities, enabled Ghana to take action to address rising threats, and reinforced trust between the government and citizens," Kenneth Adu-Amanfoh, chairman of the Africa Cyber Security and Digital Rights Organization, and Nate Allen, a cybersecurity expert, wrote in a commentary for the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) also is playing a key role in the country's strategy. During Cybersecurity Awareness Month in October 2022, Vice Adm. Seth Amoama, Ghana's chief of Defence Staff, said efforts are underway to make sure all personnel understand cyber threats, possible vulnerabilities and their impact on mission readiness. The GAF is transitioning to a "paperless" work environment, making cybersecurity all the more important.

"For us in the military, cyberspace has emerged as the fifth domain of warfare alongside the traditional domains of land, sea, air and space," Amoama said, according to Ghana Peace Journal. "It is therefore not surprising that terrorists and violent extremists' groups are using Internet platforms to support their activities."

Ghana's cybersecurity success has boosted it from 89th place to 43rd on the International Telecommunications Union's Global Cybersecurity Index. It is among just seven African countries in the top 50 globally, joining Egypt, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Tanzania and Tunisia.

The CEO of Rwanda's National Cyber Security Authority, Col. David Kanamugire, left, and Dr. Albert Antwi-Boasiako, the director-general of Ghana's Cyber Security Authority, sign a memorandum of understanding pledging to work together to build cybersecurity capacity and fight cybercrime. GHANA CYBER SECURITY AUTHORITY

Drones Prove Their Worth in MARITIME SECURITY

ADF STAFF

Countries are embracing the use of unmanned aerial and surface vehicles to strengthen their ability to patrol and control their coastal waters. These tools allow for the surveillance and identifying of possible acts of piracy, illegal fishing and trafficking.

"One takeaway is the enhanced situational awareness from this technology expanding the range of sight in the field against targets in the field," Nigerian drone pilot Egunoluwa George Ojo-ami, a member of the Nigerian Maritime Academy and a volunteer with the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Institute, told ADF. "Compared to manned aircraft, drones offer relatively cheaper cost and can be designed to be fully autonomous or semiautonomous."

Although drones primarily have been used over land, they're becoming more attractive to overstretched maritime forces tasked with monitoring the vast ocean. Nigeria acquired four drones in 2021 as part of its Deep Blue maritime security project.

Bashir Yusuf Jamoh, director-general of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, announced the new drones on Twitter.

"Our 4 Unmanned Air Vehicles will ensure that we have a sustainable round-the-clock surveillance system from the sky furnishing real-time information for timely action to keep our waters safe for shipping and seafarers," he said.

In October 2022, Ghana acquired unmanned aerial vehicles for use by the Ghana Boundary Commission and the Ghana Navy to enhance patrolling and to demarcate Ghana's maritime boundaries.

The Seychelles has supplemented its patrol boats with drones that use artificial intelligence to monitor fishing vessels operating in its 1.3 million-square-kilometer exclusive economic zone.

"We can see how drone technology works together seamlessly with ground personnel, also integrating into and communicating with their security systems," Ojo-ami of Nigeria said. "Drones are easily adapted to most existing security software, so adding a security drone to an existing operation is a relatively seamless process."

A U.S. Navy unmanned aerial vehicle flies near Bahrain during a naval exercise. Militaries are turning to drones as an affordable and effective tool for maritime security.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



U.S., SEYCHELLES DIVERS TEAM UP TO CLEAR SHIPWRECK

ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY U.S. NAVY

Divers from the U.S. Navy and the Seychelles Coast Guard (SCG) spent up to eight hours a day in December 2022 removing the wreckage of the *Oceans Bounty*, a ship that sank in 2018.

The Seychelles Police Authority's chief executive, Sony Payet, said the wreckage was a navigational hazard near Port Victoria and was blocking valuable pier space. "The removal of this wreck is necessary to clear the seabed in this area as the new key wall to be constructed will reach up to this point, and there will be a lot of boat activities here in the future," Payet said.

The U.S. also assisted with an ocean floor survey of the Seychelles harbor and the SCG pier areas.

U.S. Navy Seabee divers assigned to Underwater Construction Team 1 (UCT1) worked in tandem with SCG divers. This mission lays the groundwork for future diving engagements between the SCG and U.S. forces.

"Working with the Seychelles Coast Guard has been a great experience," said Chief Petty Officer Estephan Lopez. "They are an extremely professional group of divers and were more than willing to contribute their diving expertise throughout the job. I look forward to working with them more in the future."

Seabee divers used exothermic cutting tools to break the wreck into small pieces before removing debris from the water. This let them complete the task with minimal disturbance to the environment.

"This mission was a perfect way for us to practice what we train on," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicholas Ramirez, a diver who participated in the mission. "Underwater cutting is a really specialized part of our job as Seabee Divers, and it's awesome to be able to employ that capability in a way that actually helps the people in Seychelles."

Seychellois divers agreed that events like this help the two nations work together. They also said these joint projects enhance diving skills and expertise.

"It was a great experience for the Seychelles Coast Guard dive team," said Capt. Luigi Loizeau, diving officer with the SCG. "The CTF 68 divers are a

dedicated professional and coordinated team. I wish that these partnerships continue in the future as the collaboration is a great learning opportunity."

In addition to salvage operations, Seabee divers completed an ocean floor survey of the entire port, identifying ship passageways and the underwater landscape. UCT1 mapped more than 1.7 million square meters, providing a clear, concise and detailed map of the Port of Victoria's topography while providing 3D imaging of other underwater hazards.

U.S. Navy personnel use exothermic cutting techniques to take apart a shipwreck during a salvage mission in Port Victoria, Seychelles.



GHANA JOINS INTERNATIONAL NAVAL NETWORK

GHANA NAVY

Ghana has joined an international network of navies that share select unclassified information related to merchant shipping.

On November 8, 2022, the Ghana Navy signed onto the Virtual-Regional Maritime Traffic Centre and the Trans-Regional Maritime Network in a ceremony aboard the Italian Navy Ship ITS Nave Borsini. The information-sharing system is based on commercial hardware and software developed by the Italian Navy.

In a speech before the signing, Rear Adm. Issah Adam Yakubu, Ghana's chief of Naval Staff, said the Gulf of Guinea faces security challenges, and navies must know what is happening and build capacity through at sea and onshore joint training. He called Ghana's joining the network "relevant and timely."

"In our quest to curb these challenges, countries ought to recognize the need for stronger collaborations at all levels to aid the development of sustainable strategies and commitments to deal with these challenges," Yakubu said.

Launched by the Italian Navy in 2004, the program includes 37 navies. Its software allows for real-time, virtual sharing of information about merchant shipping. It also is capable of data analysis and anomaly detection, which makes the work of operation centers easier, the Italian Navy said on its website. Each year, more than 2 million tracks are exchanged on the system among member navies.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, commander of the 3rd Naval Division, Rear Adm. Valentino Rinaldi, a representative of the chief of the Italian Navy, said the traffic center and network enhance maritime situational awareness and security while also strengthening trust among members, building confidence, and creating synergies by sharing information and resources.

Rear Adm. Issah Adam Yakubu, left, presents a plaque to Italian Navy Rear Adm. Valentino Rinaldi commemorating the signing of the "note of accession," signifying Ghana's entry to the Virtual-Regional Maritime Traffic Centre and the Trans-Regional Maritime Network. GHANA NAVY

ECOWAS PLANS REGIONAL FORCE TO INTERVENE IN CRISES

ADF STAFF

Leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed to create a regional force to intervene when member nations are faced with violent extremism or in the event of coups.

The move is intended to "take care of our own security in the region," Omar Alieu Touray, president of the ECOWAS Commission, told journalists at a December 2022 summit in Nigeria.

ECOWAS is "determined to establish a regional force that will intervene in the event of need" to restore constitutional order in member countries, he added.

The proposed ECOWAS force would be tasked with countering the region's violent extremist organizations, such as al-Qaida-linked Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. Extremist groups are determined to spread from the Sahel into coastal countries such as Benin, Ghana and Togo.

Observers still are unsure how the new force will differ from existing intervention tools and how it will be used. They cautioned it might be slow to take shape.

"Instituting this new force will take some time," Emmanuel Balogun, author of the book "Region-Building in West Africa," told The Washington Post. "It will likely involve a lot of other peace and security stakeholders, potentially including civil society groups who are also invested in the peace and security process."

The region's defense ministers were set to meet in 2023 to consider the force's structure. Touray said the ministers were expected to flesh out a plan for the force in the second half of 2023.

Touray said funding could not depend solely on voluntary contributions.

ECOWAS already has a standby force based in Abuja. There also are several ECOWAS peace support operations, including one each in The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.

ECOWAS has a history of supporting missions to counter

coups. Just days after the February 2022 attempted coup in Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS leaders decided to send a stabilization force.

At the time, Ghanaian President Nana Akufo Addo issued a strong warning and used the word "contagion" to describe the region's epidemic of coups.

"The resurgence of coups d'état in our region is a matter of grave concern," he said during an emergency summit called to discuss the issue in February 2022.

"This evolution challenges the democratic way of life we have chosen. Let us address this dangerous trend collectively and decisively before it devastates the whole region."



The ECOWAS flag is displayed alongside those of member nations at a summit in Accra, Ghana. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



South Sudan's Army Says It's Time to Rebuild Trust

UNMISS

"If we want to truly transform and rebuild this country and a national army, we must listen to the voices of our civilians so we can restore public trust and confidence," said Capt. Joseph James Mangar, head of the Department of Training and Advocacy on Military Justice of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces at a January 2023 training session in Juba.

His statement set the tone for a workshop organized by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Its aim was to create awareness, impart skills and knowledge on human rights, and help the army build productive relations.

The workshop, organized and funded by the peacekeeping mission's Human Rights Division, brought together 35 commissioned and noncommissioned officers of the government army, 20 of whom were women.

Bessong Ndip, a human rights

officer working for UNMISS, said the military can't do its job without public support.

"Any failure on the armed forces to consistently uphold human rights when protecting civilians can undermine the trust needed for cooperation between uniformed personnel and citizens," he said.

"The army, and the police, play a key role in safeguarding civilian lives, not least when it comes to preventing sexual and other kinds of gender-based violence, which cause horrible insecurity for women and girls, especially when they see that perpetrators are not held accountable."

Mangar pointed out the need to avoid tribalism and divisive politics to achieve a sense of unity.

Participants not only were educated on human rights, but also on the UNMISS mandate: protecting civilians; creating a conducive environment for humanitarian access; monitoring, investigating, and



Members of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces participate in human rights training. UNMISS

TOP: South Sudanese Soldiers attend a ceremony ahead of their deployment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

reporting on human rights violations; and supporting the implementation of the peace accord.

First Lt. Aluel Bol Deng from the Female Affairs Division of the armed forces enjoyed the training opportunity and pledged to share her new knowledge with colleagues.

"I am going to work hard to bridge the trust gaps that exist between the military and civilians so that we understand each other when we need each other's support," she said.



Somalia Mission Sponsors Journalism Skills

ATMIS

Fifty Somali journalists based in Kismayo, Jubaland State, completed a three-day media training seminar to improve media skills and personal safety, and help them professionally report on security in their home state.

The Jubaland Ministry of Information and Public Awareness facilitated the training with support from the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Journalists from public and private media organizations in Kismayo attended.

Training modules included situational awareness, personal safety, media ethics, evolving dynamics in social media, fact-checking and fake news, editorial policies, media bias, and the protection of news sources.

Miski Yusuf Ali, director general of the Jubaland Ministry of Information and Public Awareness, thanked ATMIS for supporting efforts to help media representatives improve journalism standards.

“When you go back to your respective workstations, I’m confident you will apply the new knowledge and skills acquired to your daily work,” Yusuf said at the end of the training. “We hope to see an improvement in your news reports to enable us to help the public to make informed decisions.”

Abdimajid Abas Adan, a radio producer based in Kismayo, found the sessions engaging and interesting.

“I learned the importance of being a responsible journalist, how to professionally produce news and most importantly how to be fair and balanced in my reports,” Adan said.

Somali journalists at the training session ATMIS

MONUSCO Resumes Joint Patrols With Congolese

MONUSCO

Joint patrols between the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and Congolese security forces have resumed in Goma and its outskirts after being suspended in the wake of violent protests in mid-2022.

The Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and the Congolese National Police are leading the operations.

The joint patrols have three purposes: to secure the city of Goma and its surroundings, to guarantee the free movement of civilians, and to ensure rapid intervention in the event of an attack.

Outside Goma, they also aim to keep armed groups away from main roads.

The FARDC patrol commander and other representatives of the united force interacted with civilians during the first patrols. The objective was to inform people in refugee camps and those in local villages of the importance of their support and safety on the roads.

Joint patrols are carried out three times a day. This includes six to eight vehicles per trip and the rapid reaction force.



MONUSCO peacekeepers are deployed north of Goma in 2022. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Indian Ocean Commission Offers Tech Tools to Fight Maritime Crime

ADF STAFF

Kenya was among seven African nations to receive an array of equipment from the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) to help fishing inspectors battle illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Delivered in December 2022, the equipment includes floater suits, hand-held GPS devices, onboard and waterproof cameras, and laptop computers and tablets. Kenya's marine resources are threatened due to an influx of foreign industrial trawlers.

"The materials and equipment donated will help facilitate their exercise of reporting, to improve their security and to promote transparency in the performance of their mission," Vêlayoudom Marimoutou, secretary-general of the Indian Ocean Commission, said in an IOC news release.

Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania also received IOC donations. The region is along the Mozambique Channel, a major route for the shipment of heroin from Afghanistan. Wildlife trafficking also has increased due to widespread poverty and increased demand for exotic animal products abroad.

The commission's involvement in the region's maritime security began in the early 1980s as cocaine and heroin became major revenue sources for drug traffickers.



Seven African nations received equipment from the Indian Ocean Commission to help fight maritime crime. INDIAN OCEAN COMMISSION

"We all have a common goal, to ensure that our oceans are used and managed in a sustainable and responsible manner, and that the people who depend on them can continue to earn a living and contribute to the well-being of their communities," Milko Van Gool, head of cooperation of the European Union Delegation to Mauritius and Seychelles, said in the IOC release.

Kenya recently has taken several steps to clamp down on illegal fishing and boost its blue economy. In mid-March 2022, the country ratified the Cape Town Agreement (CTA) and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel.

Adopted by the International Maritime Organization in 2012, the CTA outlines fishing vessel

standards and regulations to protect crews and fisheries observers, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Kenya also is building a DNA database of its marine species to conserve its sea resources amid widespread illegal fishing. The exercise involves harvesting species and cataloging them to help the government prosecute illegal fishing cases. Since the program started in 2022, Kenya has produced bar codes for about 115 species.

The project, which is expected to take several years, began after Francis O. Owino, newly appointed principal secretary of the State Department for Fisheries, Aquaculture and the Blue Economy, urged institute scientists to enhance research as the country looked to stimulate its blue economy.



U.S., Tanzania Complete Joint Training

U.S. AFRICA COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Special Operations Forces have conducted a civil affairs joint combined exchange training alongside the Tanzania Marine Special Forces in Dar es Salaam.

The monthlong training let the U.S. and Tanzanian service members develop and maintain critical military-to-military connections and improve joint and allied readiness and interoperability.

“This course is very crucial for our special forces because it enables us to be better prepared for various scenarios and upcoming duties,” said Lt. Col. Athumani Ghamunga of the Tanzania People’s Defence Force. “It is also the opportunity to share experience and knowledge between our special forces.”

Joint combined exchange training, or JCET, primarily lets host government forces give area orientations to U.S. Special Operations Forces. JCET exercises usually are composed of between 10 and 40 personnel.

Although joint exchanges between the U.S. and Tanzania aren’t new, the exercise helped develop different capabilities and incorporate elements from the civil affairs unit.

“This was the first civil affairs focused JCET in Tanzania,” said U.S. Army Capt. Tyler Clarke, a civil affairs team lead. “The training focused on civil affairs and civil military operations to include civil reconnaissance [and] civil engagements. We discussed negotiations, mediations and tactical combat casualty care.”

The JCET program’s primary purpose is to provide partner-nation special operations units specific training to promote security and stability in Africa.

“Joint combined exchange training is the bridge and glue which binds together the relationship between Tanzania and the U.S.,” said Tanzania People’s Defence Force Brig. Gen. Iddi Nkambi.

Tanzanian Marine Special Forces respond to a simulated explosion by establishing a security perimeter and applying a tourniquet to a U.S. Army Soldier.

MASTER SGT. NANCY KASBERG/
U.S. AIR FORCE

France, South Africa Complete Maritime Exercise

DEFENCEWEB

France and South Africa, which share a maritime exclusive economic zone (EEZ) border, have completed the biennial Exercise Oxide.

France and South Africa share one geographical area of interest, the southern Indian Ocean close to the EEZ of the French island Crozet and the South African islands of Prince Edward and Marion.

The aim of the exercise is to enhance cooperation and interoperability between the two forces.

This year’s iteration, which took place around the False Bay area and the West Coast of the Western Cape, ended on November 28, 2022. The exercise included various maritime exercises, with the main objective being search and rescue. Other objectives included surveillance, disaster relief, and hostage negotiations and releases.

South African Navy Capt. N.K. Goboza, joint task force commander, explained that the objective was to conduct joint visit, board, search and seizure exercises, “which is a current challenge to the maritime environment whereby we may be tasked to go and rescue a vessel that has hostages onboard.”

Goboza noted that continuously exercising together would make sure that both navies were “already in sync in terms of tactics, standard operating procedures and communications; we know who to call and what to do.”

French officials noted that the two countries are the only ones in the area with strong navies that have frigates with high-level capabilities.

Every year, French Navy patrol vessels make up to six port visits. During the COVID-19 lockdown, South Africa continued to provide replenishment facilities to French patrol vessels, allowing them to greatly extend their range into the southern Indian Ocean.

Exercise Oxide has taken place every second year for the past 25 years, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exercise had to be canceled in 2020.

The next iteration of the exercise will be hosted by France and take place in Réunion.



South African Sailors participate in Exercise Oxide 2022.

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

ADF STAFF

The kingdom dates to the 13th century, with large-scale migrations of related clans settling in the Lake Malawi region, attracted by its natural abundance. The migrations continued for hundreds of years, peaking probably by the 16th century.

The Maravi kings, called Karongas, had elaborate rituals to mark the passage of time.

A clay-daubed Ngoni warrior, about 1895

A color photograph of a Ngoni warrior standing in a natural, outdoor setting. The warrior is wearing a large, dark, spiky headdress and has white clay daubed on his face and chest. He is holding a long spear in his right hand and a large, round, decorated shield in his left hand. The background shows dry grass and trees.

A clay-daubed Ngoni warrior, about 1895

The trading of ivory and iron was a major part of the Maravi economy, with traders shipping it to Swahili brokers on the southern coast of the continent, and later, to Portuguese merchants. Eventually Arab merchants also became involved.

The kingdom's decline began when some clan leaders started trading directly with Portuguese, Arab and Swahili merchants. The clan leaders became increasingly independent of the central authority of the Karonga. By 1720 the confederacy had broken into several autonomous factions.

Another major blow to the empire came indirectly from Shaka Zulu, the leader of the Zulu people in the 19th century, whose empire grew to 210,000 square kilometers. Two powerful groups, the Angoni and Ngoni, arrived in the Maravi kingdom from what is modern-day South Africa in a great migration known as the Mfecane. They were fleeing Shaka Zulu, and they became a powerful force in the kingdom, marrying Maravi women and recruiting men into their armies.

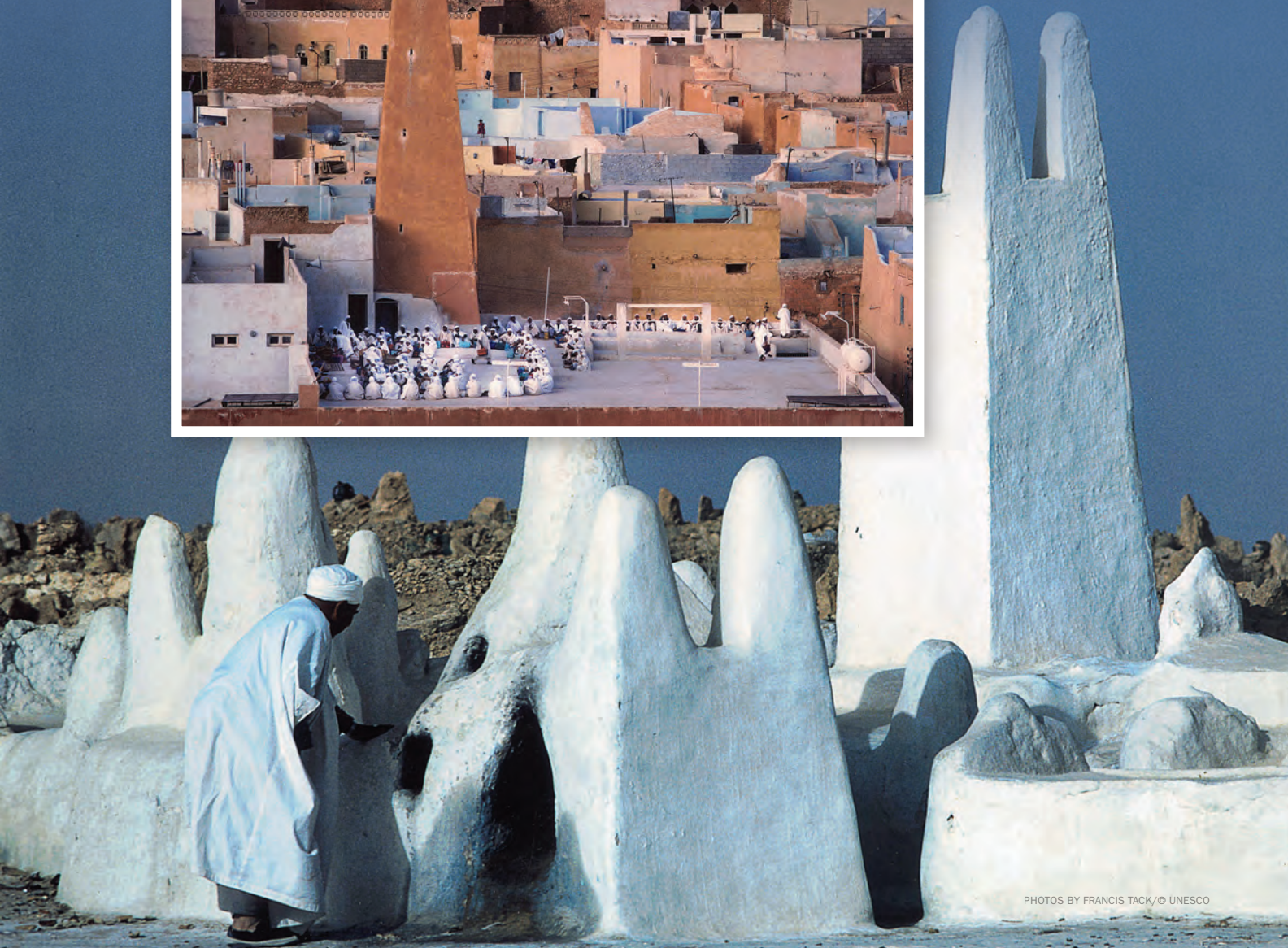
The influence of the region went into a steep decline. Slave trade became a problem. Arab and Christian influences grew in the region, with Protestant missionaries arriving in the 1860s, along with Islam, introduced by Swahili slave traders. A British consul arrived in 1883.

Today, Maravi people, also known as Nyanja people, can be found in Malawi and Mozambique. They speak a Bantu language and are considered to be part of the Chewa ethnic group.



CLUES

- 1 Ibadi Muslims established a community in this region in the 10th century.
- 2 Five fortified villages, or ksour, constitute walled citadels that contain a mosque surrounded by houses built in concentric circles.
- 3 Mosques here were conceived as fortresses. They served as watchtowers and included arsenals and grain storage.
- 4 The settlements have influenced Arab architecture and planning for nearly 1,000 years.



PHOTOS BY FRANCIS TACK/© UNESCO

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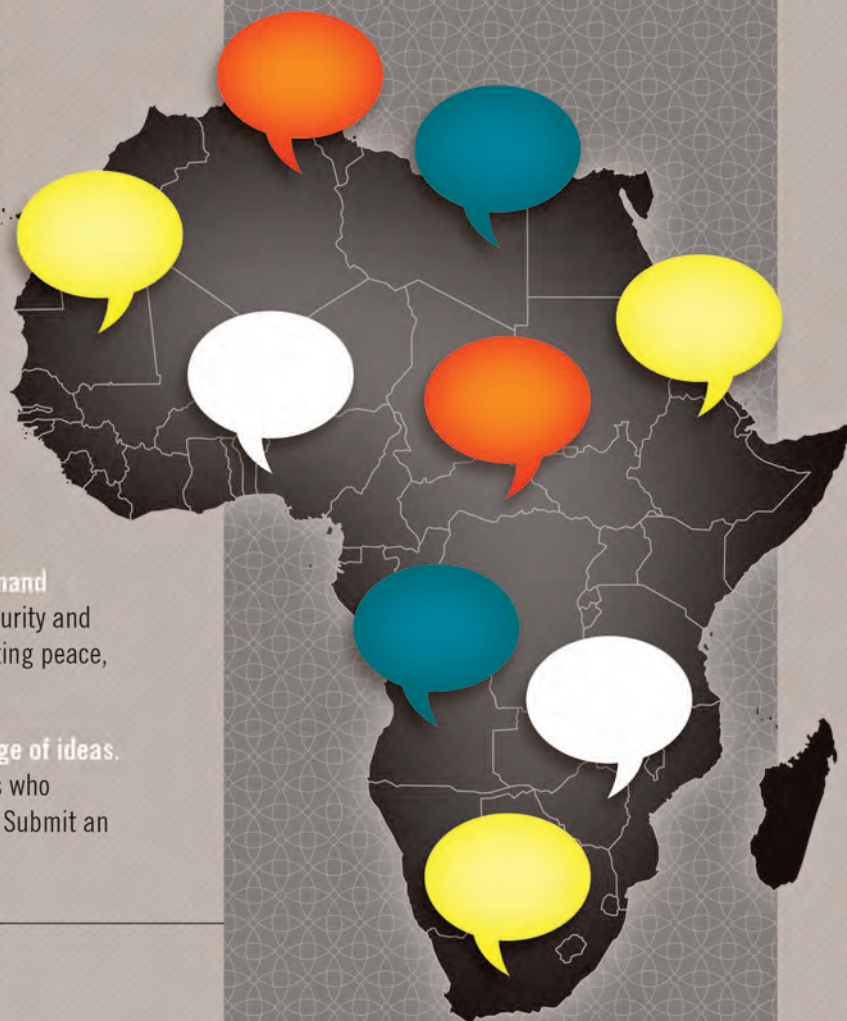
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