

**Forum:** The International Criminal Police Organization

**Issue:** .Addressing Jihadist Networks in Sub-saharan Africa

**Name:** Saksham Verma

**Position:** Deputy Chair of the International Criminal Police Organization

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## **Introduction:**

South of the Sahara Desert is a huge area known as Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the fact that this area is well-known for its history and scenic beauty, it has recently had to cope with a serious problem due to the expansion of jihadist networks. These networks constitute a threat to regional stability and the welfare of the populace because of their violent pursuit of ideological or religious ambitions.

### **What Countries Are Included in Sub-Saharan Africa and Where Is It Located?**

South of the Sahara Desert, a sizable geographic region known as Sub-Saharan Africa is home to a diverse group of nations. This region includes various nations with different cultures, languages, and history, ranging from the western coastlines of Senegal to the eastern reaches of Somalia and from the southern point of South Africa to the northern borders of Sudan.

### **The Emergence of Jihadist Networks**

In recent years, jihadist activity has increased alarmingly in Sub-Saharan Africa. These networks use violent activities to achieve their goals, which are frequently based on extreme interpretations of religious beliefs or political ideologies. These networks' existence has led to major worries about local security, societal stability, and the population's general welfare.

### **Vulnerability-Inducing Factors:**

The region of Sub-Saharan Africa is especially susceptible to the growth of jihadist networks due to a number of causes. Extremist beliefs can flourish in an atmosphere where political unrest is encouraged by corrupt governmental institutions. In addition, economic difficulties including poverty and a lack of possibilities for formal work have rendered many communities disadvantaged and vulnerable to recruitment by extremist organizations.

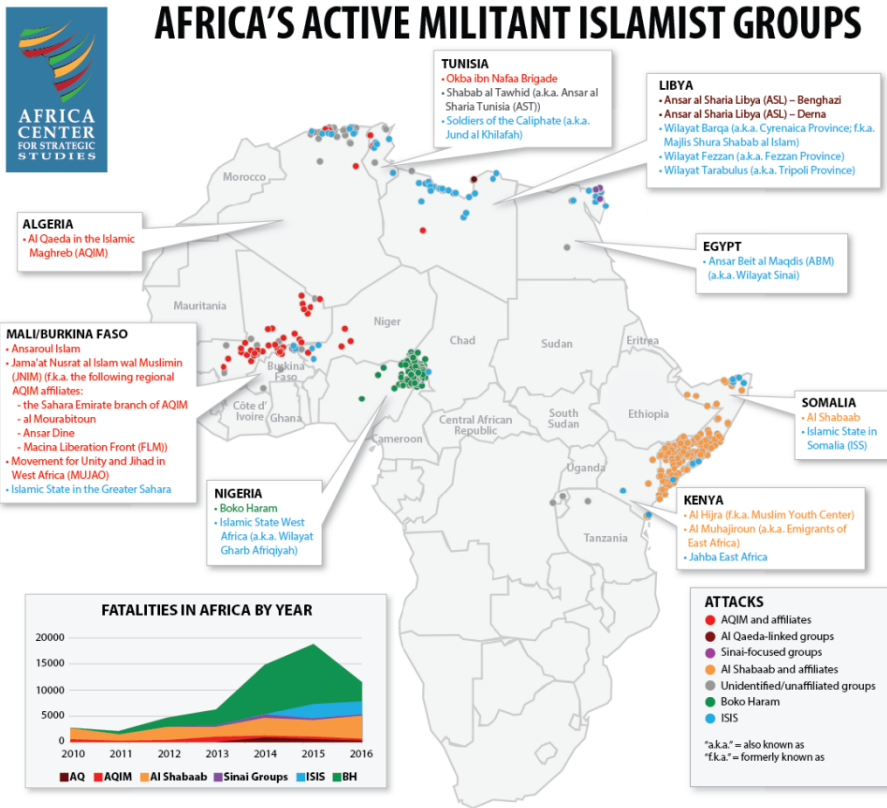


Figure 1: Where are Africa's militant groups

Recently, Sub-saharan Africa has been an area with a lot of Jihadist activity. Now, while there are a multitude of reasons for this, the factors which can be most attributed to the sudden rise in Jihadist activity could be political instability, with corruption among high ranking individuals high.

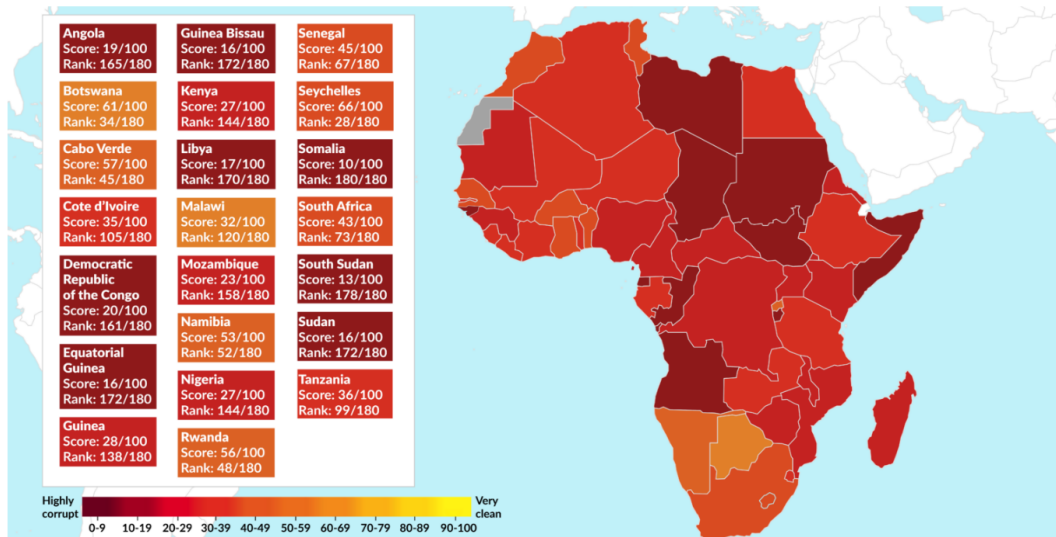


Figure 2: Corruption in Africa

## **Effects on the Population**

Jihadist networks' formation and growth have a significant impact on Sub-Saharan Africa's populace. Daily life is disrupted by violence and instability that are out of control, which results in human displacement, fatalities, and infrastructure devastation. The lack of economic and educational prospects worsens the cycle of instability and poverty. As fear and uncertainty spread, across the country

Understanding the role of elements that lead to the growth of jihadist networks is crucial as international organizations, regional institutions, and impacted countries battle these problems. This problem needs strategies that tackle both current security issues and the root reasons that contribute to their rise.

## **Definition of Key Terms:**

1. **Sharia Law:** A system of legal principles followed by Islamic states. Derived from the Quran serving rules ranging from ethics to criminal courts. The thought of not following the law strictly to the belief of the Jihadist groups is the reason many of them form.
2. **Insurgency:** A revolt or uprising ~~movement~~ trying to overthrow a government, involving violence. This is displayed by the jihadist groups discussed above
3. **Jihadist groups:** Organizations that commit acts of violence to enforce their religious belief (Often their interpretation of sharia law) causing lots of casualties.
4. **Counterterrorism:** Acts performed by militaries and intelligence groups of countries to prevent or stop terrorism from occurring in regions.
5. **Capacity Building:** This is a process where skills are developed and improvements are made. This relates to the topic as capacity building is an important and interesting way to stop the Jihadist groups.”

## **Background Information**

**Why are there so many Jihadist groups in Sub-Saharan Africa?**

Socio economic as well as political factors have all contributed to the rise of jihadist organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Weak governments due to corruption and other factors, lead militaries unfit to battle or prevent destruction and chaos caused by the Jihadist groups. Furthermore, rising Jihadist groups in Sub-Saharan Africa can also be blamed on the poor socio-economic structures in the area, especially in regards to poverty and inequality. Large sectors of the population have been affected by the region's prolonged poverty, economic inequalities, and restricted access to opportunities and basic services. The jihadist groups have recognized this and have taken this as an advantage of the resentments of weak communities in such an atmosphere by promising social justice, economic empowerment, and a feeling of community presenting these fantasies as an outcome of following the sharia law.

### **What are some key moments relating to the rise of Jihadism in SSA ?**

**2002:** The Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) was established and began operating in North Africa, more specifically in the Algeria region as an Al-Qaeda affiliate. To pay for its operations, it carried out kidnappings and smuggling. Moreover, it also tried to spread the Islamic law in Algeria while trying to overthrow the government

**2009:** Boko Haram, a Jihadist group mentioned above started emerging in Nigeria for its violence including deaths, bombings and assassinations

**2012:** Operation Serval, a France operation that was supposed to help Mali against Jihadist groups, but eventually failed. Showcasing the world that it will be tough to combat these organizations.

**2015:** Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was created to coordinate operations against Boko Haram by nations in the Lake Chad Basin, including Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

**2017:** The G5 Sahel Joint Force is formed. Established by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger to counter the rising danger posed by terrorist organizations in the Sahel.

### **What was the impact on the region?**

Jihadist organizations have caused a lot of security and humanitarian concerns in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their violence has caused many people to flee, thousands of deaths, and even more injured. The loss of enterprises and infrastructure has had a negative economic impact and increases the struggles to grow locally. The political system also suffered with the

government struggling to contain and prevent the attacks by these Jihadist groups. Furthermore, education infrastructure was destroyed, preventing many kids from access to education.

## Current Situation

### Where are the attacks taking place?

While attacks are being spread out throughout sub-saharan Africa there is a concentration of attacks happening in The Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and the Lake Chad Basin these areas have been noted by both the USA as well as the European Union. Sub-Saharan Africa is now dealing with major security issues brought on by the actions of the jihadist groups, including ,as mentioned in the introduction, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, have carried out violent actions that have caused displacement, death and injuries of countless civilians

### What's happening?>

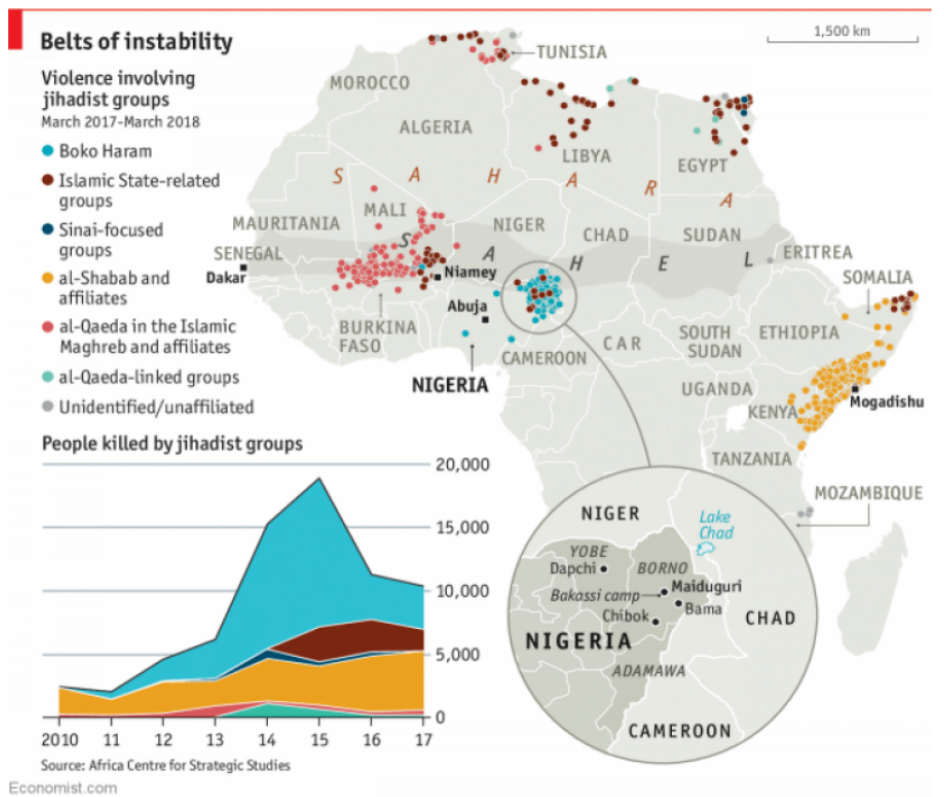


Figure 3: Places impacted the most in Africa

In the present, the jihadist groups have been avoiding and overcoming all obstacles placed on them whether that be counterinsurgency on a nation or international scale with the likes of the UN trying to stop this. The Jihadist groups' abilities to swiftly change the way they operate and attack has left them escaping any punishments while recruiting more and more members each passing day. The underlying root issues as discussed previously of poverty and a flawed and poor governmental structure has aided the jihadist groups current success and is preventing their discontinuance despite the vast amount of resources thrown at the issue at hand. Furthermore, the dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa have changed recently as well as a result of the French military departure from Mali and the wider Western withdrawal from the area. The jihadists have also been able to increase their influence because this void has led to a feeling of instability and unpredictability. To add further issues, unrest in Niger has further worsened the numerous difficulties in defeating these organizations. These incidents demonstrate some regional and global attempts to counter the threat posed by terrorist networks and how such efforts might occasionally fail.

### **How can jihadism be addressed going forward?**

Simply, in order to stop the jihadist groups, an efficient and well thought out strategy that combines successful military action, diplomatic compromises, or sustainable development projects, will be required to meet these problems. In order to stop the expansion of extremist it is essential that impacted nations strengthen their local governments and try to collaborate with fellow countries intelligence-wise and with military or financial aid. This could be a short term solution and if successful prevents the Jihadist groups from creating havoc in these areas. Additionally, it is important to note that addressing some of the underlying issues such pushing disadvantaged groups such as poverty into extreme ideas could be stopped via education and presenting a strong and unified government, which is inclusive of economic growth, and access to education and opportunity. These regions could also benefit from help via the international community that could assist regional actors in reducing the danger presented by jihadist organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa and advancing long-term peace and security in the area by encouraging a cooperative and comprehensive response to any acts or threats of violence.

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

### **United Nation Security Council (UNSC)**

The United Nations security council has had a lot of involvement regarding the Jihadist groups present within the sub-saharan region. UNSC is actively involved in ways such as The UN imposing sanctions on people and organizations with ties to the jihad, classifying them as terrorists and forbidding financial assistance. In Sub-Saharan Africa, peacekeeping operations like MINUSMA (The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) help to stabilize damaged areas and combat Islamist activity. Political as well logistical assistance is always provided by the UNSC for regional collaborations with the G5 Sahel nations (Which are Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.) and the African Union. To combat the problems caused by the Jihadist groups, the UNSC does however still require help, and furthermore encourages intelligence sharing, and addresses underlying issues including poverty and. Through sanctions, peacekeeping deployments, cooperative efforts, and intelligence sharing, UNSC is aggressively battling the growth of jihadist networks in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sanctions target financial means of these extremist groups, however their impact is mitigated through adaptive financing. Regions are stabilized by peacekeeping missions like MINUSMA as discussed above, but their effectiveness depends on community participation and conflict . Efforts to combat terrorism are further aided by political assistance for partnerships between the African Union and the G5 Sahel countries. Sharing of intelligence tackles current dangers, subject to member state cooperation. Overall, while there have been some short-term successes, core problems, governance, and economic growth must be addressed in order to completely eradicate jihadist groups. Hence, to summarize UNSC hasn't effectively got rid of any extremist groups but in the long run, if it comes up with better and more effective approaches it could achieve this goal.

### **African Union**

The African Union has also done a lot to try and combat Jihadist activity in its country. The African Union (AU) sends peacekeeping forces, such as AMISOM (African Union Mission to Somalia) in Somalia, to secure areas, fight terrorist organizations, and aid in peace efforts. The AU works with regional groups to combat terrorism through projects like the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The military prowess and intelligence sharing of member states are improved through capacity building. The AU seeks to boost counterterrorism efforts by fostering regional security cooperation, creating legislative frameworks for the fight against terrorism, addressing underlying problems including poverty and governance concerns, and collaborating with outside partners. Despite the AU's efforts, problems still exist. Like challenges with member nations

cooperation, a shortage of funding, and needing to adapt to the evolving tactics of the extremist organizations limit their attempts to combat terrorism.

### **Jihadist Groups (Boko Haram, Al shabaab)**

Currently, these groups are gaining numbers and resulting in more and more violence. Their ultimate aim is to make everyone interpret and follow the Sharia Law as they see fit and essentially overthrow governments of countries who do not see their way. However, with rising measures trying to combat them. These groups will be forced to try and change their strategies to achieve what they desire. A task which they are doing effectively up until this point, but is unclear how long they can keep this up, with less resources than the UN, USA, EU and the AU all trying to combat the severe issue they present.

### **UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events**

- Resolution 2320 (2016), 18 November 2016 (S/RES/2320)

In tackling issues of peace and security, this resolution emphasizes the value of collaboration between the United Nations (UN) and regional organizations, notably the African Union (AU). It underlines the necessity of strong alliances to boost global security and improve crisis response. The resolution endorses the AU's efforts to fund 25% of peace and security initiatives and recognizes the role the organization plays in averting and resolving crises in Africa. It promotes increased accountability, observance of international law, and openness in AU peace assistance missions. The resolution encourages the Secretary-General to continue working closely with the AU to develop alternatives for further collaboration and affirms the Security Council's willingness to consider AU suggestions for future authorisation and assistance in peace operations. As stated in Resolution 2320 (2016), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) have worked together on several initiatives, with varied degrees of success. While cooperative peacekeeping operations have contributed to promoting stability and security in conflict-ridden African countries like Somalia and Darfur, challenges including insufficient budget and coordination concerns have restricted their effectiveness. Even during times when this capability has been limited, the AU's commitment to regional conflict resolution has been driven by the notion that "African solutions to African problems". Despite these challenges, successful partnerships, like the one in Somalia, highlight the potential of the



alliance and encourage ongoing efforts for improved resource mobilization, coordination, and conflict prevention methods between the two organizations. However, in various situations, the partnership has experienced difficulties and failures. In the instance of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the mission's capacity to adequately protect civilians and end the violence was hampered by logistical issues, a lack of financing, and different objectives between the UN and AU. Similar challenges were faced by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) there as a result of the complexity of the civil war and varying regional strategies. These incidents highlight the need for ongoing efforts to improve collaboration and handle operational obstacles between the two organizations by showing how difficult it is to plan cooperative operations, allocate resources, and respond to developing tensions.

- Resolution 2359 (2017), 21 June 2017 (S/RES/2359):

The Sahel area, notably Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, is the focus of the resolution's discussion of the threats posed by international terrorism and transnational organized crime. It applauds the G5 Sahel Joint Force's (FC-G5S) deployment of up to 5,000 people to reestablish stability. The resolution calls for collaboration between FC-G5S, MINUSMA, and French forces and underlines the importance of women in conflict resolution. The Secretary-General is asked to provide a report on the actions taken by FC-G5S and their effects on civilians. The resolution emphasizes the significance of international collaboration and aid in order to stabilize the Sahel and plans to reassess the deployment after four months.

- Resolution 2378 (2017), 20 September 2017 (S/RES/2378)

- This resolution highlights the role of peacekeeping as an instrument for preserving global peace and security and reiterates the value of political solutions in bringing about enduring peace. The importance of the UN peacekeeping reform, especially improving the safety and security of troops on the ground, is emphasized. The resolution promotes collaboration between the UN and regional

organizations and acknowledges the importance of regional organizations, notably the African Union (AU), in concerns of peace and security. It furthermore goes on to highlight the necessity of supporting the African Standby Force for peace support operations and seeks to enhance the alliance between the AU and UN. The resolution also discusses steps to stop sexual abuse and exploitation in peacekeeping operations.

## **Possible Solutions**

### **Solution 1:** Multilateral intelligence sharing and cooperation in counterterrorism

In order to effectively combat jihadist groups in the Sub-Saharan area, impacted nations and regional organizations must cooperate more on a multilateral basis in the fight against terrorism. The UNSC, independent governments as well as NGOs could help out.

### **Solution 2:** Counterterrorism on a national/ local scale

Relying strictly on the AU and independent as well as state governments to coordinate, share and delegate resources amongst themselves in the most efficient way to combat the violence of the jihadist groups.

### **Solution 3:** Diplomatic and peace talks

A very unlikely, as well as risky option, but one that must be considered. Negotiating directly with the groups, trying to find certain common ground between all parties involved.

### **Solution 4:** Increase the quality of checks and defenses via technology.

Use technology to secure borders, such as drones and biometrics (retina scans, fingerprints etc.). Through vulnerable regional borders, this would aid in preventing the passage of weapons, money, and manpower to the extremist organizations.

### **Solution 5:** Increase investment infrastructure investment

Create development areas with increased security. Concentrated aid and investment programs would be implemented in certain locations. It may disprove extremist propaganda by demonstrably increasing economic circumstances and opportunity.

**Solution 6:** Educate the population on what exactly these Jihadists groups are doing

Start deradicalization campaigns. These might help identify and interact with people who are open to being recruited by terrorist organizations. As alternatives, the programs might provide educational and professional prospects.

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