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A ROADMAP FOR SECURITY FORCES TRANSFORMATION IN NIGER

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Abdou Halidou Nouhou

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Co-Advisors: Cristiana Matei
Carolyn C. Halladay

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This thesis explores how Niger can transform its security sector into an effective tool capable of fighting criminal and terrorist organizations that have threatened the country's stability since the 1990s. The findings show that poor civil–military relations, a deficit of governance, and a lack of adequate coordination have hindered the transformation of the Nigerien security apparatus. Moreover, Nigerien security services are becoming increasingly overstretched. Relying on academic research, government and media reports, and the author's personal experience, this thesis analyzes how Nigerien security services have adapted to evolving security challenges so far. The analysis identifies the reform successes that have contributed to stability in the security environment and the factors that have hindered previous reform efforts. It proposes that Niger should develop adequate mechanisms to prevent military from interfering in politics and to deter political actors from instrumentalizing the military for political gain. Furthermore, it is essential to promote good governance in the security sector through an effective oversight mechanism; to develop smart defense and security forces that are capable of operating effectively and efficiently; to craft a strategy that adapts to evolving threats; and to coordinate internal and external actions. Niger also requires the aid and expertise of its regional and international partners in achieving successful reform of its security sector.

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A ROADMAP FOR SECURITY FORCES TRANSFORMATION IN NIGER

Abdou Halidou Nouhou
Lieutenant Colonel, Niger Air Force
Master 2, University Yaounde II-Cameroon, 2018

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Approved by: Cristiana Matei
Co-Advisor

Carolyn C. Halladay
Co-Advisor

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACD	American Center for Democracy
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
ACOTA	African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance
ACSS	Africa Center for Strategic Studies
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AJUSEN	Appui à la Justice et à la Sécurité au Niger
AQIM	Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
BCL	Bureau de Coordination et de Liaison
BSI	Bataillon Spécial d'Intervention
BSR	Bataillon Spécial de Renseignement
CEMOC	Comité d'État-Major Opréationnel Conjoint
CESA	Center for Strategic Studies for Africa
CIDOB	Barcelona Center for International Affairs
CIGI	Centre for International Governance Innovation
CMJ	Code of military justice
CMS	Conseil Militaire Suprême
CNESS	Centre National d'Études Stratégiques et de Sécurité
CODESRIA	Conseil pour le Développement de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales en Afrique
COGEMA	Compagnie générale des matières nucléaires
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CRA	Coordination of Armed Resistance
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CVE	counter violent extremism
CWD	Conventional Weapons Destruction
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCAF	Democratic Control of Armed Forces

DGDSE	Direction Générale de la Documentation et de la Sécurité Exteriéure
DSC	Defense and Security Committee
ECOCTB	Counter-Terrorism Coordination Bureau
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUCAP-Sahel Niger	EU Capacity Building Mission in Niger
FAN	Forces Armées Nigériennes
FAR	Front d'Action Révolutionnaire
FARS	Forces Armées Révolutionnaires du Sahara
FDR	Front Démocratique Révolutionnaire
FDS	Forces de Défense et de Sécurité
FLAA	Front de Libération de l'Aïr et de l'Azaouad
FLM	Front de libération du Macina
FLT	Front de Libération Temoust
FNIS	Forces Nationales d'Intervention et de Sécurité
FPLS	Front Populaire de Libération du Sahara
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GAR-SI Sahel	Groupes d'Action Rapides – Surveillance et Intervention au Sahel
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIA/NG	General Inspection of the Armed Forces and National Gendarmerie
GNA	Government of National Accord
HDI	Human Development Index
IED	Improvised explosive devices
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISGS	Islamic State in Great Sahara
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
ISWAP	Islamic State in West Africa Province
JAS	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad

JNIM	Jama’at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimeen
LNA	Libyan National Army
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MNJ	Mouvement Nigérien pour la Justice
MNJTF	Multi National Joint Task Force
MNLA	Mouvement National pour la Libération de l’Azaouad
MUJAO	Mouvement Pour l’unification et le Jihad en Afrique de l’Ouest
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-commissioned officers
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONAREM	Office National des Ressources Minières du Niger
PPN-RDA	Parti Progressiste Nigérien du Rassemblement Démocratique Africain
PSI	Pan Sahel Initiative
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SOMAIR	Société Minière de l’Aïr
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TI	Transparency International
TSCTP	Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNSC	UN Security Council
USAF	United States Air Force
USS	Unités Sahariennes de Sécurité

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, the Sahel region has been plagued by several sources of insecurity—particularly transnational organized crime and terrorism—as well as poverty, economic difficulties, and environmental-security issues associated with climate change that all have pushed certain people from the region to join these nefarious transnational networks.[1] Regional insecurity—and consequently, instability—has worsened since the collapse of the Qaddafi dictatorship in Libya in 2011, which generated ungoverned spaces in the southern part of that country, while uncontrolled weapons and ammunition warehouses have fed arms-trafficking organizations in the region and boosted the operational capabilities of the terrorist groups.[2]

The security forces in West African countries, including Niger, lack capable structures, equipment, and skills to combat—either singly or collectively—these security challenges, and remain dependent upon the presence of foreign troops in the region.[3] In response, Niger has undertaken several reforms, which include increasing military expenditures and augmenting the number of military personnel. Nevertheless, several security governance-related obstacles have obstructed progress. Among these obstacles are the lack of strategic leadership in tackling these security threats, coupled with politicization of the chain of command and clan behavior (understood in terms of

[1] The Sahel is a transition zone in Africa between the Sahara Desert to the north and the humid regions to the south. It includes Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Eritrea, Northern Nigeria, Northern Ethiopia, and Northern Somalia. Central Sahel countries, which are among the poorest in the world, have consistently ranked near the bottom of the Human Development Index (HDI) annual reports published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), http://hdr.undp.org/en/faq-page/human-development-index-hdi. Terrorist groups include Al-Qaeda, which emerged after the end of the 1990s civil war in Algeria from various Algerian terrorist groups. Defeated on Algerian soil, the remaining cells of these terrorist groups retreated into northern Mali.

[2] Mali, for one, almost became a failed state after a military coup in 2012 arrested democratic progress and aggravated the spread of terrorist groups throughout the country. Ibrahima Dao, "Instability in Mali: Formulating Effective Responses to Insurgency, Terrorism, and Organized Crime" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2019), 15, http://hdl.handle.net/10945/62776.

[3] Currently, U.S. troops and European troops including the 5,000 French troops of "Operation Barkhane" are indispensable in the Sahel countries' fight against violent extremism groups and other transnational criminal organizations.

favoring small groups or political interests). The effect of Niger's initiatives to improve its security services has been marginally positive in the sense that they have prevented the establishment of permanent terrorist bases within Nigerien territory but increasing threats along its borders recall the fragility of the security environment and the specter of destabilization. The successful attack of December 10, 2019, by the Islamic State in Great Sahara (ISGS) against Nigerien forces near the Malian border serves as a stark reminder of the difficulties Niger's Armed Forces have experienced in unconventional warfare—and their inability to properly deal with the new, multifaceted terrorist threats in the Sahel region.[4]

Against this backdrop, this thesis aims to answer the following research question: How should Niger reform its security services in order to improve these institutions' capacity to combat transnational security threats?

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The security threats posed by terrorist groups can be fatal to a country like Niger, which lacks capable security forces—much like the case of Mali prior to the 2012 coup. To avoid the fate of Niger's neighbor Mali, the government or Niger should prioritize a comprehensive transformation of the security sector, aimed at developing capable forces. This thesis, thus, is relevant to policymakers in Niger—as well as in the Sahel and other regions in the world affected by similar security challenges—as it provides an overview of the main challenges to Niger's national and regional security as well as a roadmap to reform the security sector. Elected and/or appointed officials facing such challenges may want to use this roadmap in their security sector reform endeavors.

It is also relevant to the U.S. policymakers because the United States is engaged in the Sahel region alongside Sahelian countries to fight terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP, also known as Boko Haram, ISGS,

[4] U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2019* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2020), 30, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Country-Reports-on-Terrorism-2019-2.pdf. During this attack, which is the deadliest in country's history, more than 70 soldiers were killed, and military equipment was looted by ISGS to reinforce its military capabilities.

and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). These terrorist groups, which have evolved and gained traction in the region's ungoverned spaces, constitute a threat to U.S. interests in Africa.[5] For instance, in October 2017, four American and four Nigerien soldiers were killed by these terrorist groups in Niger in an attack known as the Tongo–Tongo ambush.[6] The Americans were members of a training team helping Nigerien forces in capacity building. The United States is thus concerned that the ungoverned spaces resulting from local security forces' inability to control borders could make this Sahelian region a haven for terrorist groups.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review mostly centers on the differences between ideal security sector reform (SSR) programs and the weaknesses observed during the implementation of reform initiatives. This literature review considers the following themes: the purpose of SSR and its requirements, the challenges to security sector reforms, and catalysts for successful SSR.

1. Security Sector Reform: Purpose and Role

Scholars often agree that human security, development, and democracy tend to be the main objectives of SSR. In the eyes of Marina Caparini and Philipp Fluri, for example, "the inability or inefficiency of a state in providing the basic security needs for its citizens poses a significant obstacle to stabilization and democratic consolidation."[7] In their view, people's attention cannot be focused on stability and democracy when the state is unable to protect the people and their families, which in turn requires effective

[5] White House, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2018), 8, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NSCT.pdf.

[6] John Vandiver, "AFRICOM Investigates Images Depicting Niger Ambush that Killed Four U.S. Soldiers," *TCA Regional News*, January 24, 2018, ProQuest.

[7] Hans Born and Philipp Fluri, "Introduction: The Relevance of Democratic Control and Reform of the Security Sector," in *Security Sector Reform and Democracy in Transitional Societies*, ed. Hans Born, Marina Caparini, and Philipp Fluri (Geneva, Switzerland: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, November 2000), 8.

and accountable security institutions.[8] Ian Westerman agrees, and further points out: "Ensuring that there is a workable and sustainable security system in place, including a satisfactory and broadly democratic relationship between the legitimate government and the forces of the state, is the primary aim of SSR."[9] In this connection, Caparini and Fluri write that the promotion of democracy and stability requires a qualitative improvement of security services, and further argue that "[s]ecurity sector services must be effective and effectively managed because an army under democratic control, but without professional expertise, understanding and judgement, can be as dangerous to society as a rebelling army."[10] On the same note, for Adedeji Ebo and Kristiana Powell, "SSR contributes to the security of states and citizens, without which there can be no sustainable economic or political development."[11] Similarly, Mark Sedra, the co-founder of the Centre for Security Governance, notes that it is broadly recognized that security sector reforms constitute the foundation for curtailing instability and ensuring continuous progress in fragile states or states emerging from a struggle or from an authoritarian regime.[12] In addition to these fundamental objectives, SSR can certainly play a major role in the consolidation of democracy. Indeed, it has been increasingly evident that new transnational threats constitute a major risk to newly democratic countries due to the weaknesses of their security institutions. According to Anthony Forster, there is a consensus among Western donors regarding the need for SSR in the countries where

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[8] Florina Cristiana Matei, "New Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations,* ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (London, England: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 48, ProQuest.

[9] Ian Westerman, "Too Much Western bias? The Need for a More Culturally Adaptable Approach to Post-conflict Security Sector Reform," *Defense & Security Analysis* 33, no. 3 (July 2017): 276–288, doi: 10.1080/14751798.2017.1351602.

[10] Born and Fluri, "Introduction: The Relevance of Democratic Control and Reform of the Security Sector," 104.

[11] Adedeji Ebo and Kristiana Powell, "Why Is SSR Important? A United Nations Perspective," in *the Future of Security Sector Reform,* ed. Mark Sedra (Waterloo, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation [CIGI], 2010), 48.

[12] Mark Sedra, *The Future of Security Sector Reform* (Waterloo, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation [CIGI], 2010), 16.

these donors intervene. These Western partners also agree that SSR is a high priority for governments and non-governmental actors in these recovering countries.[13]

Scholars also discuss the preconditions—acceptable security environment and organized institutions—that the implementation of SSR requires. For example, Albrecht Schnabel and Hans Born claim that there are some basic elements necessary to undertake an SSR program, including

> the presence of an environment that is conducive to reform, characterised by an absence—or at least low levels—of violence; the availability of basic infrastructure and a working and favourable legal framework; the presence of solid, stable, and well organised domestic security and political institutions; low levels of corruption; and an active and informed civil society.[14]

Particularly, in developing countries like Niger, corruption tends to be a significant impediment to the security sector. Sedra agrees and further stresses that the implementation of SSR requires also "the presence of a minimum level of security."[15]

By contrast, Schnabel and Born remark that "SSR tends to take place in highly volatile and unpredictable environments, far removed from the ideal conditions required for smooth implementation."[16] In other words, the implementation of SSR is more challenging in new democracies or post-conflict states. Countries undertaking SSR often experience an unstable security environment that presents itself as an obstacle to the reforms. Besides these local requirements most of the countries needing SSR programs are unable to undertake them by themselves because as Ebo and Powell note, "few

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[13] Anthony Forster, "West Looking East: Civil-Military Relations Policy Transfer in Central and Eastern Europe," in *Security Sector Reform and Democracy in Transitional Societies* ed. Hans Born, Marina Caparini, and Philipp Fluri (Geneva, Switzerland: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, November 2000), 15.

[14] Albrecht Schnabel and Hans Born, *Security Sector Reform: Narrowing the Gap between Theory and Practice* (Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces [DCAF], 2011), 19.

[15] Mark Sedra, "Towards Second Generation Security Sector Reform," in *the Future of Security Sector*, ed. Mark Sedra (Waterloo, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation [CIGI], 2010), 106.

[16] Schnabel and Born, *Security Sector Reform*, 19.

countries—particularly those emerging from conflict—are in the position to undertake SSR without the strategic, technical and financial support of external partners."[17] Thus, the support of international donors is crucial in the SSR process.

2. Challenges to Security Sector Reform

Among the many challenges that nations may face when implementing SSR, several authors cite internal resistance as being the most severe. One school of thought posits that security-institution reform is challenged by the resistance of certain actors or the inability of the initiator to conduct the intended reforms due to local constraints related to the security environment or/and the shortage of necessary resources. In analyzing the "problems of planned social changes and resistance to change," Kurt Lewin explains that certain groups are reluctant to change when proposed reforms interfere with their interests—for example the removal of a necessary unit for certain command when that unit is more useful elsewhere—brought by either internal or external contingencies.[18] The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) SSR Handbook concurs with Lewin's findings and notes that the attitude of resisters is "logical and rational" because they defend their material, cultural, and political interests, such as keeping a dominant political party.[19] Avigdor Levy reveals that, in the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire undertook many successive military reforms in which the main component of the army—the Janissary corps—resisted the changes in the name of the preservation of its interests and privileges such as the preservation of the existing institutions' funding.[20] Similarly, during the 1990s in Russia, as Alexei Arbatov maintains, military reforms met internal

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[17] Ebo and Powell, "Why Is SSR Important? A United Nations Perspective," 57.

[18] Kurt Lewin, "Frontiers in Group Dynamics: Concept, Method and Reality in Social Science; Social Equilibria and Social Change," *Human Relations* 1, no. 1 (June 1947): 5–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872674700100103.

[19] OECD, *OECD/DAC Handbook on Security System Reform (SSR): Supporting Security and Justice*, (Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2007), 33, https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/478/3015/OECD%20DAC%20Handbook%20on%20SSR.pdf.

[20] Avigdor Levy, "Military Reform and the Problem of Centralization in the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no. 3 (July 1982): 244, www.jstor.org/stable/4282890.

opposition from the Russian military's leadership who believed that these reforms would not result in a military force capable of facing North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in a theaterwide conventional war.[21] In the same vein, Stephen P. Rosen argues: "Military bureaucracies … are especially resistant to change" because of a deeply ingrained and routinized process in which officers enter in the army and follow the rules without expressing their own opinion until the existing ideas become solidly internalized.[22] In sum, there is agreement among scholars that security institutions—in particular the armed forces—may resist reforms.

Another group of scholars debates the concern posed by the lack of local ownership—perhaps the most common challenge to SSR. Indeed, Laurie Nathan argues that reforms cannot be successful if those who are undertaking them are not committed or lack a sense of appropriation.[23] She argues, "A major problem in the area of security system reform in some regions, particularly in Africa, has been a lack of local input to and ownership of the emerging reform agenda."[24] Sedra has a similar view, arguing that a successful implementation of "the SSR model requires a radical change in the modus operandi of donor states in how they provide assistance, something they have been unable or indeed unwilling to embrace."[25] Sedra points out that the most frequent challenges to SSR are the lack of local ownership, the inadequacy of reforms to the local socio-political environment, and the scope of the reforms.[26] These challenges should thus be taken into consideration as early as the planning phase of an SSR process.

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[21] Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia: Dilemmas, Obstacles, and Prospects," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (1998): 83–134, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.22.4.83.

[22] Stephen P. Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2018), 2.

[23] Laurie Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment: a Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform* (Birmingham, England: University of Birmingham, 2007), 1, http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/1530/1/Nathan_-2007-_No_Ownership.pdf.

[24] Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment*, 1.

[25] Sedra, *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, 17.

[26] Sedra, 27.

In addition, some scholars note the ambiguity around the concept of local ownership that excludes certain key local actors from the process. Eleanor Gordon argues that the deficiency of local ownership is "due to lack of clarity concerning who the locals are and what ownership [is]."[27] Moreover, Willem Oosterveld and Renaud Galand highlight the difficulty in reconciling local and international norms. They argue that

> in the area of justice and security sector reform, the local ownership issue brings up a host of dilemmas that often prove to be very difficult if not impossible to balance out. One of these is the divide between local and international norms the issue being to what extent local norms can and should be amended to comply with international standards.[28]

Similarly, Jane Chanaa raises the problem linked to donors' concerns and interests that can hardly be taken into consideration without causing a prejudice to the holistic vision of the SSR.[29]

Certain scholars highlight that even when local ownership is undertaken, challenges to SSR are still present due to the parties' unwillingness to touch certain sensitive issues. Mara Kalin cites the limitations of the U.S. approach arising from Washington's reluctance to interfere in sensitive issues of local armed forces.[30] She believes that in most countries facing tremendous security challenges, "militaries may be structurally unsound and therefore require substantial and disruptive reforms. But they may lack the coherence and the will to undertake such reforms."[31] This style of reform, called "train-and-equip SSR approach," is mostly used by the United States where the

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[27] Eleanor Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, Local Ownership and Community Engagement," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 3, no. 1 (August 2014): 1−18, https://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.dx/?utm_source=TrendMD&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Stability_TrendMD_1.

[28] Willem Oosterveld and Renaud Galand, "Justice Reform, Security Sector Reform and Local Ownership," *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* 4, no. 1 (March 2012): 194–209, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1876404512000115.

[29] Jane Chanaa, *Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002), 55.

[30] Mara E. Karlin, *Building Militaries in Fragile States: Challenges for the United States* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 4.

[31] Karlin, 4.

security environment is volatile and requires urgent stabilization. Nevertheless, this way of reform constitutes a dilemma. On the one hand, this approach can be useful because it mitigates internal opposition, which could be exacerbated when a donor country tries to touch on sensitive issues, making the whole project collapse. On the other hand, in most cases lacking a profound reform effort that affects all segments of the security apparatus, the outcome is generally a failure.[32]

Schnabel also considers corruption as one of the impediments to successful security sector reform.[33] He argues that corruption constitutes one of the major obstacles during the implementation of an SSR program.[34]

3. Catalysts for Successful Security Sector Reform

Two decades of experience in the field of SSR have forged the idea that among other things, having local actors participate fully in the process constitutes an indispensable element. For instance, Sedra argues that "there is a need to close the gap between the aims of the SSR model and the practical strategies required to drive change on the ground."[35] He posits that SSR processes are successful "when rooted with local perceptions of security and driven by local needs and visions of change."[36] Mobekk Eirin concurs with Sedra by arguing that "considerable experience has shown that unless there is local ownership of SSR processes, they will not succeed."[37] Similarly, Timothy Edmunds proffers that in order "to be successful, the actual practice of SSR must

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[32] Karlin, 3−6.

[33] Albrecht Schnabel, "Ideal Requirements versus Real Environments in Security Sector Reform," Security Sector Reform," in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, ed. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Münster, Germany: LIT Verlag, 2009), 16.

[34] Schnabel, 16.

[35] Mark Sedra "Adapting Security Sector Reform to Ground-Level Realities: The Transition to a Second-Generation Model," *Journal of Intervention and State-building* 12, no. 1 (February 2018): 48–63, https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2018.1426383.

[36] Sedra, "Towards Second Generation Security Sector Reform," 105.

[37] Eirin Mobekk, "Security Sector Reform and the Challenges of Ownership," in *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, ed. Mark Sedra (Waterloo, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation [CIGI], 2010), 230.

disaggregate down to focused policy activities and organizational specificities that are sensitive to local context and flexible in the manner in which they are implemented."[38]

Timothy Edmunds agrees with other scholars when he emphasizes that the current problems of SSR "require a reorientation of the SSR agenda from one dominated by top-down conceptual prescription to a more context-sensitive, bottom-up approach."[39] He remarks that "security sector reforms, [and] successful SSR promotion policies are often less about imposing models of best practice from outside, and more about thinking creatively of ways to engage with domestic circumstances to incentivize reformers—and indeed recidivists—to invest political capital in pushing through change."[40] Clearly, instead of imposing a model based on Western norms, Edmunds proposes to design a local-specific SSR concept that can fit with the local conditions of each particular case.[41] Sierra Leone is often cited as an example of successful implementation of SSR not least because most local imperatives have been taken into consideration.[42] Matthew Ford notes that "Sierra Leone, as an example of successful Security Sector Reform, is the contemporary benchmark against which the historical assessments might be interpreted."[43]

Another group of scholars emphasizes the importance of identifying local actors and local conditions to avoid past mistakes related to the exclusion of some key actors in certain SSR processes. According to Eleanor Gordon, for example, a "substantive and inclusive local ownership of the SSR" is indispensable for the accountability of the

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[38] Timothy Edmunds, "Security Sector Reform," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (London, England: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 48, ProQuest.

[39] Edmunds, "Security Sector Reform," 54.

[40] Edmunds, 56.

[41] Edmunds, 56.

[42] Osman Gbla, "Security Sector Reform under International Tutelage in Sierra Leone," *International Peacekeeping* 13, no. 1 (August 2006):78−93, https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310500424843.

[43] Matthew Ford, "Building Stability Overseas: Three Case Studies in British Defence Diplomacy – Uganda, Rhodesia–Zimbabwe, and Sierra Leone," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 3 (April 2014): 584–606, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2014.913618.

security and justice sector institutions and can increase "public trust" by responding to the security requirement of people.[44] She also posits that local ownership should be holistically understood, "both in terms of who the locals are and what ownership constitutes."[45] For Eric Scheye, external actors should be able to identify the local conditions within which the SSR program is being implemented and to seize opportunities to provide support to local security-building initiatives even if the way these actions are being conducted does not respect strictly Western norms and practices.[46] Therefore, as local ownership is crucial for the success of the SSR, Oosterveld and Galand suggest that internal and external actors should agree on "a common strategy and a coordinated implementation framework to ensure that local ownership is respected in a substantive way."[47] Alice Hills concurs when she writes, "The reform of security sectors must be understood in its domestic, as well as international, context."[48]

It is widely accepted among scholars in the security field that democratic civil-military relations form a core element of the SSR process.[49] Furthermore, there is a consensus on the requirement of a democratic control of legitimate civilian authorities over the military to have an effective security sector—i.e., provider of security to the state and its citizens. Arthur Larson writes, "Civilian control is a solution to the problem

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[44] Eleanor Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, State Building and Local Ownership: Securing the State or its People?" *Journal of Intervention and State Building* 8, no. 2–3 (August 2014): 126−148, https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2014.930219.

[45] Gordon, "Security Sector Reform, State Building and Local Ownership," 126−148.

[46] Eric Scheye, "Unknotting Local Ownership Redux: Bringing non-state/Local Justice Network Back In," in *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*, ed. Timothy Donais (Berlin, Germany: Lit Verlag, 2008), 75.

[47] Oosterveld and Galand, "Justice Reform, Security Sector Reform and Local Ownership," 194–209.

[48] Alice Hills, "Defense Diplomacy and Security Sector Reform," *Contemporary Security Policy* 21, no.1 (September 2007): 46–67, https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260008404244.

[49] Peter P. Tapela, "*Civil-Military Relations: The Forgotten Foundation of Security Sector Reform*" (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2012), https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a561965.pdf.

of achieving responsibility in the military bureaucracy."[50] In sum, as Sedra argues, "The professionalism and effectiveness of the security sector is not just measured by the capacity of the security forces, but how well they are managed, monitored and held accountable [by the civilians who control it]."[51] The main objective of governance in the defense and security field remains the building of a robust, coherent, and efficient security architecture dedicated to human security. Thus, Florina Cristiana Matei and Carolyn Halladay believe that civil-military relations should be taken a step further in order to accommodate the changing environment of democratic practices and the difficulties posed by the complex, ongoing security issues.[52] This adaptation should be a fundamental aspect of forthcoming civil-military evolution. Sedra emphasizes that "developing more appropriate and effective approaches for SSR will help to contain the drift in the concept."[53]

The democratic civilian control of the military also requires the active and appropriate participation of the parliament in the process. For instance, Hans Born argues that "the security sector is no exception to the oversight powers of the parliament."[54] Similarly, Maria-Gabriela Manea and Jürgen Rüland claim that "parliamentary oversight is a cornerstone of democratic control of the armed forces."[55] Citing the example of Indonesia, where there is no legislative committee for oversight, Matei and Halladay warn about the typical underdevelopment of these mechanisms of civilian control of the

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[50] Arthur Larson, "Military Professionalism and Civil Control: A Comparative Analysis of Two Interpretations," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 2 (Spring 1974): 57–72, ProQuest.

[51] Sedra, *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, 16.

[52] Florina Cristiana Matei and Carolyn Halladay, "The Control-Effectiveness Framework of Civil-Military Relations," Research (forthcoming).

[53] Sedra, "Towards Second Generation Security Sector Reform," 113.

[54] Hans Born, "Parliamentary Oversight of the Armed Forces," in *Security Sector Reform and Democracy in Transitional Societies*, ed. Hans Born, Marina Caparini, and Philipp Fluri (Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, November 2000), 28.

[55] Maria-Gabriela Manea and Jürgen Rüland, "The Diffusion of Parliamentary Oversight: Investigating the Democratization of the Armed Forces in Indonesia and Nigeria," *Contemporary Politics* 26, no. 2 (December 2019): 165–185, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2019.1703067.

military in new democracies.[56] Manea and Rüland even argue that Indonesians have a narrow understanding of civilian control over militaries as they view "the separation of the military from politics, an apolitical, professional military force" as a foreign norm.[57] In attempting to address these issues, Matei and Halladay propose a conceptualization of "democratic civilian control in terms of authority over the following: institutional control mechanisms, oversight, the inculcation of professional norms, and efficiency."[58] For instance, service members should be trained to respect the rules of engagement, which should be crafted in accordance of international standards. Thus, parliament prevents the executive branch or military institutions from abusing people's right to a comprehensive security architecture.

More broadly, Schnabel and Ehrhardt write that "the overall aim of security sector reform is to enable states to ensure national defense and protect citizens within policy and budgetary constraints that are consistent with national development goals."[59] No matter how well the SSR is implemented, if in the end, the security sector is not able to deal with the identified security threats to citizens and state, the logical conclusion is that SSR has failed. Thus, the effectiveness of security forces in their roles and missions constitutes a fundamental element for a successful SSR program.[60] In this connection, scholars generally agree on the importance of professionalism in the culture of effectiveness in military affairs.[61] A professional security force accomplishes its duty according to instructions and with optimum resources. Matei and Halladay argue that "professionalism

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56 Matei and Halladay, "The Control-Effectiveness Framework of Civil-Military Relations."

57 Manea and Rüland, "The Diffusion of Parliamentary Oversight," 168.

58 Matei and Halladay.

59 Hans-Georg Ehrhart and Albrecht Schnabel, "Post-Conflict Societies and the Military: Challenges and Problems of Security Sector Reform," in *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, ed. Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhart (Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University Press, 2006), 316, ProQuest.

60 Michael Brzoska, *Development Donors and the Concept of Security Sector Reform*, Occasional Paper No. 4 (Geneva, Switzerland: DCAF, November 2003), 13, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/14374/occasional_4.pdf.

61 Robert N. Ginsburgh, "The Challenge to Military Professionalism," *Foreign Affairs* 42, no. 2 (January 1964): 255–268, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20029685.

factors into effectiveness, too, particularly in terms of military expertise and knowledge."[62] They justly note that "civilian control by itself does not lead ineluctably to good policy that culminates in military victories."[63] In this way, the military can play its role with professionalism and efficiency under clear and effective supervision by legitimate civilian authorities.

The SSR literature tends also to suggest the inclusion of more aspects of civil society in the SSR processes.[64] For instance, the involvement of civil society in the SSR processes has been proven crucial.[65] This vital component of any vibrant democracy can have a positive impact on the overall process. Caparini notes that in Western democracies civil society influences governments' actions through groups applying pressure and can provide expertise in security and defense issues.[66] She adds that "civil society can play a role in helping the state to fulfill its responsibilities transparently and accountably."[67] Sedra concurs with Caparini and highlights the crucial role of human rights groups, which provide a useful "external check on policy and action" of the security sector.[68] Furthermore, civil society organizations (CSO) have demonstrated their capacity to mobilize positive energies to support SSR processes. In the case of Liberia, Alexander Loden underscores the fact that "civil society has to some extent become a donor creation and a source of income for some Liberians."[69] The *OECD/DAC Handbook* mentions that

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62 Matei and Halladay, "The Control-Effectiveness Framework of Civil-Military Relations."

63 Matei and Halladay.

64 Karen Barnes and Peter Albrecht, *Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender* (Geneva, Switzerland: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2003) 2, https://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/civil20society20oversight20and20gender20_un20instraw_0.pdf.

65 Barnes and Albrecht.

66 Marina Caparini, "Civil Society and Democratic Oversight of the Security Sector: A Preliminary Investigation," in *Sourcebook on Security Sector Reform*, ed. Philipp Fluri and Miroslav Hadžić (Belgrade, Serbia: DCAF/Centre for Civil-Military Relations, March 2004), 87, http://www.bezbednost.org/upload/document/0707032007_sourcebook.pdf#page=87.

67 Caparini, 93.

68 Sedra, "Towards Second Generation Security Sector Reform," 105.

69 Alexander Loden, "Civil Society and Security Sector Reform in Post-conflict Liberia: Painting a Moving Train without Brushes," *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1, no. 2 (July 2007): 297–307, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijm022.

"the engagement of the civil society groups is often vital in fostering a supportive political environment through genuinely inclusive dialogue."[70] The Nigerien security sector needs the contribution of a vibrant civil society that can help create favorable conditions for such reforms.

C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The approach to civil-military relations proposed by Matei and Halladay and the reorientation of the SSR process recommended by Edmunds are helpful to frame the issue. The goals for developing SSR in Niger are threefold: to fight the transnational threats, ensure human security for Nigerien citizens, and contribute to regional and international security. Thus, this thesis hypothesizes that the appropriate SSR program for Niger should create conditions in which civilian and military elites work closely to institutionalize democratically accountable, transparent, and effective security institutions composed of military forces, the police, and intelligence agencies. In this regard, while the contribution of donors is indispensable, the process requires the input of Nigerien security actors and civil society, as well as an appropriate oversight mechanism.

To this end, this thesis posits three additional hypotheses. First, the military's interventions in Niger's politics have undermined the trust between civilians and military elites, while corruption and mismanagement of resources divert security services from their missions of providing security to the people and the state. Second, transforming Nigerien security services through an SSR process requires that local ownership be the cornerstone of the process. The country's stability is still fragile as the threat is growing and the security forces are increasingly overstretched. Thus, the objective is to create conditions for long-term stability through an effective security apparatus trusted by citizens and capable of fighting current transnational threats. This objective cannot be achieved through the blind imposition of foreign norms and practices without a careful analysis of domestic constraints. Particularly, in Sahelian countries like Niger, where

[70] OECD, "*The OECD/DAC Handbook on Security System Reform (SSR)*," 32.

there is a scarcity of resources and the linkage between transnational security threats, solutions should be more targeted and integrated at the regional level.

Third, Niger still requires external support like the aid granted by the United States and other partners that can help Niger establish long-term capacity-building programs. This support from international partners, of which Ebo and Powell consider technical and financial resources particularly essential, can definitively enhance the capacity of the country to develop a coherent structure for security services under full democratic control and with good planning capabilities as well as the necessary fighting skills. While Niger should pursue a long-term process, however, external actors intervening in the region may have a short-term security agenda. If Niger does not take leadership of the process in designing and implementing the SSR project, the undertaking may lack local ownership and miss the main objectives.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis adopts a single case study (Niger) approach to provide insight into the SSR that may be most effective in building coherent security institutions capable of efficiently combating the transnational threats that Niger and other Sahelian countries are facing. This research project thus analyzes both theoretical studies and empirical cases on SSR to determine which aspects of previous reform efforts have been most effective and would serve to appropriately shape the Nigerien case.

Secondary sources constitute most of the literature consulted to examine how SSR programs have been adequately implemented and maintained. Additionally, the reviewed scholarly works include primary sources on SSR, security governance, and personal experiences. The analysis of these sources gives an overview of the situation Niger is facing and will address the challenges as well as potential opportunities for achieving successful SSR.

E. OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This research study is built around five chapters. Chapter I is the introductory chapter. It presents the problem, the relevant literature, and hypotheses. Chapter II

addresses security challenges in Niger since the collapse of the Qaddafi regime in Libya in 2011. From the historic perspective, Chapter III investigates the interventions of Niger Armed Forces in politics, how these interventions have shaped civil-military relations, and how they have affected the capabilities of Niger's security services to combat multifaceted, transnational threats. Chapter III also focuses on the reforms that Niger has undertaken in the security sector. Specifically, it examines the internal initiatives—adaptation of security services to the current instability—as well as external support provided by Western partners to enhance Nigerien security institutions. Chapter IV analyzes security reform in Niger and identifies the weaknesses and shortcomings that have hampered these reforms. Chapter V tests the hypotheses, presents the thesis findings, and provides recommendations to Nigerien policymakers for successfully implementing SSR in Niger.

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II. SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN NIGER

Niger is located in a region with many ungoverned spaces and subject to intense geopolitical instability. This situation has given rise to internal and external security challenges. Domestically, security concerns arise due to conflicts among different communities who compete for sparse resources in vast ungoverned spaces and who have occasionally participated in rebellions or engaged in criminal and terrorist activities out of necessity. In the last three decades, for example, Niger has experienced two rebellions in its natural resource-rich northern reaches. Moreover, in the Sahel-Sahara region smuggling operations have largely replaced traditional trade—the historical caravan trade—as the main occupation for young adults. In addition to these internal security concerns, new transnational security challenges emerged in the 2000s and have worsened since 2011 with the proliferation of such terrorist groups as AQIM, ISGS, and Boko Haram. These internal and external threats all represent significant security challenges for Niger's security forces.

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of Niger's security challenges, both internal and external, from the time of French colonial rule to the present. The first section discusses internal security challenges linked to armed banditry, intercommunity violence, and rebellions. The second section focuses on the manner in which the insecurity and unrest in certain neighboring countries have resulted in direct terrorist attacks in Niger, as well as in exacerbating local vulnerabilities. Despite some courageous reforms to adapt the Nigerien security sector to asymmetric warfare, the country has struggled to deal effectively with these terrorist attacks. In these conditions of asymmetric engagement, terrorists generally use guerillas tactics with effectiveness.

A. INTERNAL SECURITY THREATS

Since its independence Niger has exhibited a historical pattern of insecurity in the northern parts of its territory that encompasses many ungoverned spaces where non-state actors have prospered for decades. While its geographical vulnerabilities allow the

proliferation of diverse illegal activities, certain members of its population that suffer from natural constraints revolt occasionally or engage in criminal and terrorist activities.

1. Inherent Difficulties to Securing the Vast Nigerien Territory

The immensity of the Nigerien territory, combined with harsh environmental conditions, have made the control of northern Niger difficult for Nigerien defense and security forces, which are limited in number. The Nigerien territory is about 490,000 square miles (1,267,000 square kilometers), making it the largest country in West Africa. Two-thirds of this immense territory is desert and presents numerous ungoverned spaces. In fact, northern Niger is home to any number of spaces populated with only a small number of people because its desert areas are largely unsuited for human life and resources are scarce. It has become an ideal territory for criminal organizations and violent extremist groups.

In certain Sahelian areas where the absence of the state is obvious, the competition for rare resources has often led to conflicts among farming and pastoralist communities. The conflicts stem from lack of resources including water and land.[71] The Sahel region has suffered from a shortage of rainfall and water distribution for decades. Furthermore, the unpredictability of rainfall—likely caused by climate change—often results in floods.[72] As a result, most agricultural lands have been eroded, while nomadic pastoralists have been in a desperate search for fertile pasture—resulting in a deadly competition between farmers and pastoralists for the same spaces.[73] For instance, in November 2016 clashes between farmers and Fulani herders caused 18 deaths among

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[71] Emizet F. Kisangani, "The Tuaregs' Rebellions in Mali and Niger and the U.S. Global War on Terror." *International Journal on World Peace* 29, no 1 (March 2012): 59–97, www.jstor.org/stable/23266590.

[72] Aiguo Dai, Peter J. Lamb, Kevin E. Trenberth, Mike Hulme, Philip D. Jones, and Pingping Xie, "The Recent Sahel Drought is Real," *International Journal of Climatology*, 24, no 11 (August 2004): 1323 – 1331, https://rmets.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10970088.

[73] Nicolò Sartori and Daniele Fattibene, *Human Security and Climate Change. Vulnerabilities in The Sahel*, Policy Brief No. 94, (Lisboa: EuroMeSCo, 2019), 4, https://www.euromesco.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brief94_Human-Security-and-Climate-Change_Vulnerabilities-in-the-Sahel.pdf.

villagers in the northwest of the country.[74] Nigerien authorities have faced difficulties—incapacity to have military presence in vulnerable areas—in preventing these frequent clashes between farmers and pastoralists. In response, some communities have created their own self-defense groups to protect their interests. These armed groups have complicated the security equation for Nigerien authorities as these self-defense groups have often engaged in criminal activities.

As in Mali, the general erosion of the rule of law and the perceived absence of the state, especially in the ungoverned spaces in the northern part of Niger, have created conditions in which people lack legal means to solve their differences and instead rely on non-state actors to provide order, justice, and other basic needs.[75] Robert D. Lamb argues that "where the central government is weak or missing, another governing body tends to emerge to maintain order and deliver needed services."[76] Such terrorist groups as the Islamic State in Great Sahara have cultivated a propensity to fill this deficiency of state authority—often with Sharia Law—and certain communities seem to prefer the terrorists' pseudo-justice to the state's judicial systems, which are decried as corrupt.[77] According to Pauline Le Roux, ISGS has widely exploited popular grievances and ethnic polarization to fuel friction among communities by exacerbating, for instance, tensions between Fulani herders and Tuareg nomads.[78] This strategy of ISGS to exacerbate

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[74] Mahaman Alio, *Les Défis et Enjeux Sécuritaires dans l'Espace Sahélo-Saharien : La Perspective du Niger*, [Security challenges in the Sahel-Saharan region. Niger's perspective] (Dakar, Senegal: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Paix et Sécurité Centre de Compétence Afrique Subsaharienne, 2017), https://www.fes-pscc.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/publications/New_ETUDE_PAYS_NIGER.pdf; Fulani are pastoralists dedicated exclusively to their cattle, which are the basis of their social and economic life. This pan African ethnic group is dispersed in many African countries such as Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria.

[75] Pauline Le Roux, "Responding to the Rise in Violent Extremism in the Sahel," *Africa Security Brief* No 36, (December 2019): 1−8, https://africacenter.org/publication/responding-rise-violent-extremism-sahel/.

[76] Robert D. Lamb, *Ungoverned Areas and Threats from Safe Havens*, Final report of the Ungoverned Areas Project Prepared for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, January 2008), 15–20.

[77] Stig Jarle Hansen Horn, *Horn Sahel, and Rift: Fault-lines of the African Jihad* (London, England: C. Hurt & Co., 2019), 7.

[78] Le Roux, "Responding to the Rise in Violent Extremism in the Sahel," 5.

conflicts among communities seems to work, as clashes between ethnic groups have become recurrent in the region.[79]

2. Insurrectionary Movements in Niger's History

Another security concern in Niger has been recurrent Tuareg rebellions, which also took advantage of the numerous ungoverned spaces in northern Niger to challenge security forces. The successive revolts of the Tuareg community have to some extent been rooted in the Tuareg culture and in a sentiment of abandonment. The Tuaregs feel neglected because Niger's central authority has not exercised effective control over territories inhabited by the Tuaregs.[80] Additionally, Tubus—an ethnic group that straddles Libya, Niger, and Chad—occasionally joined Tuaregs in their revolt, as they have their own grievances that are similar to those of the Tuaregs regarding the way the central government has treated them.[81]

Tuareg insurgencies started during the colonial period when France, once the dominant imperial power in the region, used military force to pacify the region. The Tuaregs resisted the colonization process of the Sahel-Sahara region, especially from 1916 to 1917, when the chief of the Tuaregs, Ag Geda Kaocen (1880–1919), led a revolt against colonial rule.[82] This Tuareg revolt ended in 1917, when Kaocen surrendered to the French officials.[83] The event prompted the French colonial leadership in Niger to establish an administration that favored the promotion into offices of the skilled elite who

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[79] William Assanvo, Baba Dakono, Lori-Anne Théroux-Bénoni, and Ibrahim Maïga, "Violent Extremism, Organised Crime and Local Conflicts in Liptako-Gourma," Institute for Security Studies (ISS) no 26 (December 2019): 1−23, https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1d2e4fe2b4.

[80] Jeremy Keenan, "Uranium Goes Critical in Niger: Tuareg Rebellions Threaten Sahelian Conflagration," *Review of African Political Economy* 35, no. 117, (September 2008): 449–466, http://www.jstor.com/stable/20406532.

[81] Lawel Chékou Koré, "Rébellion touareg au Niger : Approche Juridique et Politique," [Tuareg Rebellion in Niger : Legal and Political Approach], (PhD diss., Université René Descartes - Paris V, 2012), 46, https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01196001/document.

[82] Tor A. Benjaminsen, "Does Supply-Induced Scarcity Drive Violent Conflicts in the African Sahel? the Case of the Tuareg Rebellion in Northern Mali," *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 6 (November 2008): 819–836, www.jstor.org/stable/27640771.

[83] Benjaminsen, "Does Supply-Induced Scarcity Drive Violent Conflicts in the African Sahel?," 828.

mostly originated from the southern part of Niger.[84] This way of appointing administrators led to a further marginalization of Tuaregs, who continued their nomadic way of life and spent most of their time in the desert. Nevertheless, Kaocen's resistance to French troops became a symbol and later inspired new generations in their fight against Niger's central government.

In light of this history, the Tuaregs sought to continue their way of life without observing the laws of the central government located in the country's capital, Niamey, in the south. Delphine Perrin notes that "Tuaregs may consider themselves as geographically and culturally remote from the state on which they depend."[85] Furthermore, when a French company (*Compagnie générale des matières nucléaires* [COGEMA]) started exploiting uranium—Niger's first export product—in 1968, the resentment of the Tuaregs grew as they have not benefited from this resource, which is located in their area. Niger's government and COGEMA create the *Société Minière de l'Aïr* (SOMAIR), of which the French group owns a 63.5-percent majority share, while Niger *(Office National des Ressources Minières du Niger* [ONAREM]) owns only *a* 36.5-percent share.[86] The Tuaregs expected to obtain benefits from the uranium mining industries, but the government, which was itself embroiled in economic and famine crises, could not make substantial efforts to satisfy Tuaregs' demands of better living conditions.[87]

These grievances formed fertile ground for the first rebellion in the history of an independent Niger, but the mismanagement of the return of the Tuareg refugees, who had earlier exiled themselves into neighboring countries, constituted the triggering event for

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[84] Stephen A. Rimamtanung, "Understanding Tuareg Insurgency in Northern Niger: A Study of Nigerien Movement for Justice (MNJ)," *International Journal for Social Studies* 03, no 10 (September 2017): 123−130, https://edupediapublications.org/journals.

[85] Delphine Perrin, "Tuaregs and Citizenship: The Last Camp of Nomadism," *Middle East Law and Governance* 6, 3 (December 2014): 296–326, https://doi.org/10.1163/18763375-00603002.

[86] Grégoire Emmanuel, "Niger: A State Rich in Uranium," *Hérodote* 142, no 3 (March 2011): 206–225, https://www.cairn.info/journal-herodote-2011-3-page-206.htm.

[87] Carolyin Norris, *Mali-Niger: Fragile Stability,* Paper No. 14/2000 (London, England: UNHCR Centre for Documentation and Research, May 2001), 4, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3bc5aaa66.pdf.

the rebellion. These nomadic populations, facing the harsh consequences of drought in Niger in the 1970s, lost most of their livestock and fled to Algeria and Libya. When the situation returned to normal in early 1990, the United Nations in collaboration with Nigerien, Libyan, and Algerian authorities initiated a process designed to help Tuaregs return to Niger.[88] The first group of returnees (18,000 people) were kept in a camp located in the region of Tchin-Tabaraden for about three months in inadequate conditions. They did not receive the promised assistance, which was being diverted from its purpose by those who oversaw its distribution. As a result, young Tuaregs who returned from Libya protested and attacked government facilities on May 7, 1990.[89] The retaliation following the attack on the Tchin-Tabaraden military camp by these young Tuareg protestors caused the loss of hundreds of lives.[90] The frustration and anger experienced by the Tuaregs in their own country was unacceptable for these returnees. According to Carolyin Norris, these clashes ostensibly pushed Nigerien Tuaregs to launch an armed uprising in 1990.[91]

Even though this Tuareg uprising lacked a clear political structure to convey intelligible demands, the unrest seemed to be motivated by the perceived marginalization of the Tuareg people.[92] Despite the effort made by the military regime of Seyni Kountche (1974−1987) to promote the well-being of all Nigerien communities, the Tuaregs still felt marginalized and this apparently led to their revolt of the 1990s.[93] The main demand formulated by Rhissa Ag Boula, commander in chief of the *Front de Libération de l'Aïr et de l'Azaouad* (FLAA), was the decentralization of the

88 Norris, *Mali - Niger : Fragile Stability*, 5.

89 Chékou Koré, "Rébellion Touareg au Niger," 96.

90 Rimamtanung, "Understanding Tuareg Insurgency in Northern Niger," 123−130.

91 Norris, *Mali-Niger: Fragile Stability*, 5.

92 Frédéric Deycard, "Political Cultures and Tuareg Mobilizations : Rebels of Niger, from Kaocen to the Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice" in *Understanding Collective Political Violence*, ed. Yvan Guichaoua (Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 15.

93 Ismail Olawale (Wale) and Kifle Alagaw Ababu, *Nouveaux Arrangements de Sécurité Collective au Sahel: Étude Comparative de la MNJTF et du G-5 Sahel* [New collective security arrangements in the Sahel: A comparative study of the MNJTF and the G-5 Sahel] (Dakar, Senegal: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018), 8, https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/fes-pscc/14509.pdf.

administration to ensure the preservation of Tuareg interests.[94] Yet, Nigerien historian Mamoudou Djibo argues that all Nigerien regions have suffered from the same socioeconomic difficulties such as the lack of suitable schools and hospitals.[95] In fact, as Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, it has been difficult for the successive Nigerien governments to adequately provide basic public services for people.[96] The socioeconomic conditions of the Tuaregs therefore did not improve as expected and their grievances remained unaddressed.

This first Tuareg rebellion of the independence era was characterized by its lack of unity. This heterogeneous movement was composed of numerous small armed groups representing distinct clans.[97] The main Tuareg groups were the FLAA led by Rhissa Boula, the *Front de Libération Temoust* (FLT) led by Mohamed Akotey, the *Front Populaire de Libération du Sahara* (FPLS) led by Mohamed Anacko, and the *Front d'Action Révolutionnaire* (FAR), led by Slimane Hyar. These Tuareg groups were under the umbrella of the Coordination of Armed Resistance (CRA).[98] In addition to the armed Tuareg groups, two other groups claimed to defend the interests of the Tubus, an ethnic group located in the northeast of the country.[99] Tubus created two fronts: the *Forces Armées Révolutionnaires du Sahara* (FARS) and the *Front Démocratique Révolutionnaire* (FDR). While FARS was aligned with Tuareg fronts, FDR tried to be independent in the conduct of its revolt against the government of Niamey. The fragmentation of this rebellion into numerous subgroups created a volatile security

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94 Norris, *Mali-Niger : Fragile Stability*, 6.

95 Mamoudou Djibo, "Rébellion Touarègue et Question Saharienne au Niger" [Tuareg Rebellion and the Saharan Issue in Niger], *Autre Part*, no. 23 (March 2002): 135–156, https://www.cairn.info/revue-autrepart-2002-3-page-135.htm.

96 Sarah L. Dalglish, Pamela J Surkan, Aïssa Diarra, Abdoutan Harouna, and Sara Bennett, "Power and Pro-poor Policies: The Case of iCCM in Niger," *Health Policy and Planning* 30, issue suppl. no. 2, 1 (October 2015): ii84–ii94, https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czv064.

97 Norris, *Mali-Niger : Fragile Stability*, 6.

98 Ibrahim Jibrin, "Political Exclusion, Democratization and Dynamics of Ethnicity in Niger," *Africa Today* 41, no. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1994): 15–39, www.jstor.org/stable/4187000.

99 Tilman Musch, "Territoriality Through Migration: Cases Among the Tubu Teda, Guna (Niger)," *Nomadic Peoples* 17, no. 2, (2013) : 68–81, www.jstor.org/stable/43123936.

environment with many localized clashes between rebels and government forces. Nigerien security forces have encountered difficulties in handling these widely dispersed clashes across northern Niger. Moreover, the competing armed groups, which have different aims and agendas, were not able to present a coherent and unified political demand to the government.

In this unstable period of transition to democracy in the early 1990s marked by numerous social protests, the rebellions generated violence and weakened the fragile economy of the northern part of the country, which was based on tourism. The violence, which started with attacks against police stations, became a low-intensity insurrection involving Nigerien security forces and rebel groups. Rebels retreated into the northern mountainous areas and attacked government forces—gendarmerie brigades and isolated army units, which were not well defended and constituted the favorite targets—and occasionally civilian buses. Lawel Chékou Koré observes that rebels used their mastery of the terrain to move faster and gain the advantage of surprise over government forces and to ensure their attacks were highly effective.[100] The transitional government and the subsequent democratic government struggled to provide a strong military response to the insurrection due to their limited resources and the difficult working conditions of the armed forces.

On April 24, 1995, a peace agreement was signed—the main components of which were the establishment of a decentralized system of administration, the securitization of conflict-affected areas, the strengthening of elite Tuareg representation in public administration, and the socio-economic reintegration of former combatants.[101] In November 1997, the second Tubu front (FARS) and the Tuareg fronts, which were not part of the peace agreement of 1995, signed additional peace accords in Algeria. FDR signed a separate accord on August 21, 1998, in Chad.[102] Peace prevailed but many

[100] Chékou Koré, "Rébellion Touareg au Niger," 163.

[101] Keenan, "Uranium Goes Critical in Niger," 454.

[102] Chékou Koré, "Rébellion Touareg au Niger," 323.

people were displaced, and the economy was devastated, generating the impetus for new turmoil.

Since then, the government has implemented several policies to conform to the accord, but poverty has increased at the same time, creating new challenges for young people. Following the peace agreement of 1995 many former combatants were integrated into the Nigerien security forces and the administration, and the process of decentralizing the administration started in 2004, but other demands such as an equitable share of resources remained unsatisfied.[103] This latter point constituted a concern for the Tuareg leaders because, as Jeremy Keenan argues, "The Niger rebellion is rooted in this growing resentment at the rapacious exploitation of their lands and their exclusion from its benefits."[104]

Despite the efforts of the government to satisfy the requirements of the 1995 peace agreement, a new rebellion, the *Mouvement Nigérien pour la Justice* (MNJ), broke out in 2007 with the attack on the village of Iferouane on February 8, 2007.[105] The Nigerien government of the time led by president Mamadou Tanja refused any negotiations and deemed these rebels armed bandits.[106] The government's stance was motivated by the fact that the peace process was ongoing, and thus, from Mamadou's perspective, there was no reason to engage in additional talks. Moreover, the government considered the new demands—such as the creation of a specific General Staff with autonomous command to oversee security and defense issues in the three regions of Aïr, Azawak, and Kawar—unreasonable.[107] Consequently, a new campaign of violence escalated in northern Niger. In 2009, the Nigerien security forces defeated this revolt and

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103 Keenan, "Uranium Goes Critical in Niger," 457.

104 Keenan.

105 Keenan, 451.

106 Frédéric Deycard, "Le Niger entre Deux Feux. La Nouvelle Rébellion Touarègue Face à Niamey," [Niger Faces Two Crises. The New Tuareg Rebellion Against Niamey], *Politique Africaine,* no. 108 (April 2007): 127–144, https://doi.org/10.3917/polaf.108.0127.

107 Frédéric Deycard, "Les rébellions Touareg du Niger : Combattants, Mobilisations et Culture Politique," [Tuareg Rebellions in Niger : Fighters, Mobilizations and Political Culture], (PhD Diss., Institut d'Études Politiques de Bordeaux, 2011), 437, https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00556639/document.

rebels agreed to cease hostilities after mediation took place in Libya. The government took into consideration the grievances raised, and a real integration process of the Tuaregs started. Currently, the Tuareg community is more integrated in the Nigerien socioeconomic sphere and in the armed forces, too. This new relationship between Tuaregs and the Nigerien government probably helped to prevent the entrenchment of terrorists in the northern Niger.

3. Increasing Criminal Activities in Northern Niger

The northern part of the Nigerien territory has faced a proliferation of organized criminal activities that has been exacerbated by the outbreak of Tuareg insurgencies in northern Mali and Niger in the 1990s. Many former combatants who failed to socially reintegrate have re-engaged in lucrative criminal activities. The regional actors of organized criminal networks mainly focus their activities on the smuggling of illegal arms, illicit drugs, and cigarettes, as well as human trafficking. The illegal spread of light weapons and small arms constitutes a major concern for Nigerien authorities as the illegal circulation of these arms increases criminal activities as well as inter-community and intra-community violence. Lacher Wolfram, writing about the situation in this part of Africa in 2012, argues that "conflicts in Algeria, northern Niger, and Mali turned the region into a major arms trafficking hub."[108] He further highlights the vital contribution of cigarette smuggling in generating networks that have allowed drug trafficking to flourish.[109] Undeniably, this transnational trafficking—first of contraband cigarettes and later of illicit drugs—has quickly become an important source of revenue for rising violent extremist organizations.

Similarly, human trafficking has become a tragedy in the Sahel region. The security vacuum in Libya has created incentives for migrants from sub-Saharan countries

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[108] Lacher Wolfram, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region,* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012), 4, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/fachpublikationen/sahel_sahara_2012_lac.pdf.

[109] Wolfram, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region*, 4.

to travel through Niger to reach Europe via Libya.[110] Thus, the criminal economy around human trafficking has prospered in northern Niger, and an increasing number of young sub-Saharan Africans have engaged in this perilous enterprise. These migrants have often lost their lives when the smugglers left them in the desert without any chance of survival. Nigerien security forces have often rescued abandoned migrants but sometimes they could not save them. For instance, in 2013 the bodies of 92 migrants were found in the Sahara Desert.[111] The increasingly restrictive measures, such as new laws against human trafficking and an increase in patrols, have reduced the number of migrants traveling via Niger.[112]

At the same time, the government's initiatives can have an adverse effect on the stability of the region. The restrictions on migrants' movements have disrupted the economic system related to human trafficking. In Agadez and Dirkou, for example, this disruption of the local economic system may have pushed many former smugglers to join other criminal networks and terrorist groups.[113] The research fellow at the Clingendael Conflict Research Unit Fransje Molenaar argues, "The reality on the ground is that migration and other types of illicit cross-border trade sustain and contribute to people's livelihoods."[114] According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the main occupation of about 60 percent of young people (18 to 25 years old) has been the

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[110] Henry Kam Kah, "'Blood Money,' Migrants' Enslavement and Insecurity in Africa's Sahel and Libya," *Africa Development* 44, no. 1 (2019): 25–44. https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.nps.edu/stable/26873420?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

[111] Luca Raineri, "Human Smuggling Across Niger: State-Sponsored Protection Rackets and Contradictory Security Imperatives," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 56, no. 1 (March 2018): 63–86, http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.1017/S0022278X17000520.

[112] Niger's Ministry of Justice, *Recueil Thématique des Lois et Réglements* [Thematic Compendium of Laws and regulations], vol. 2 (Niamey, Niger: Ministry of Justice, 2020), 601−673, http://www.justice.gouv.ne/images/lois/pdfs/Recueil_thematique_des_lois_et_reglements_Edition%202020.pdf

[113] Virginia Comolli, "Niger: Curtailing Migration Has Unintended Consequences," *The International Institute for Strategic Studies* (blog), November 19, 2019, https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2019/11/csdp-curtailing-migration-niger.

[114] Fransje Molenaar, *Irregular Migration and Human Smuggling Networks in Niger* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', February 2017), 6, https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/irregular_migration_and_human_smuggling_networks_in_niger_0.pdf.

migrant transportation business in Dirkou, the main relay city in the northeast of Niger.[115] Lack of opportunity has made these people vulnerable targets for drug traffickers and terrorists.

B. CURRENT EXTERNAL SECURITY THREATS

Niger is surrounded by countries with serious security problems of their own—most notably Mali, Nigeria, and Libya, as illustrated in Figure 1, and these problems have spilled over into the neighboring countries.

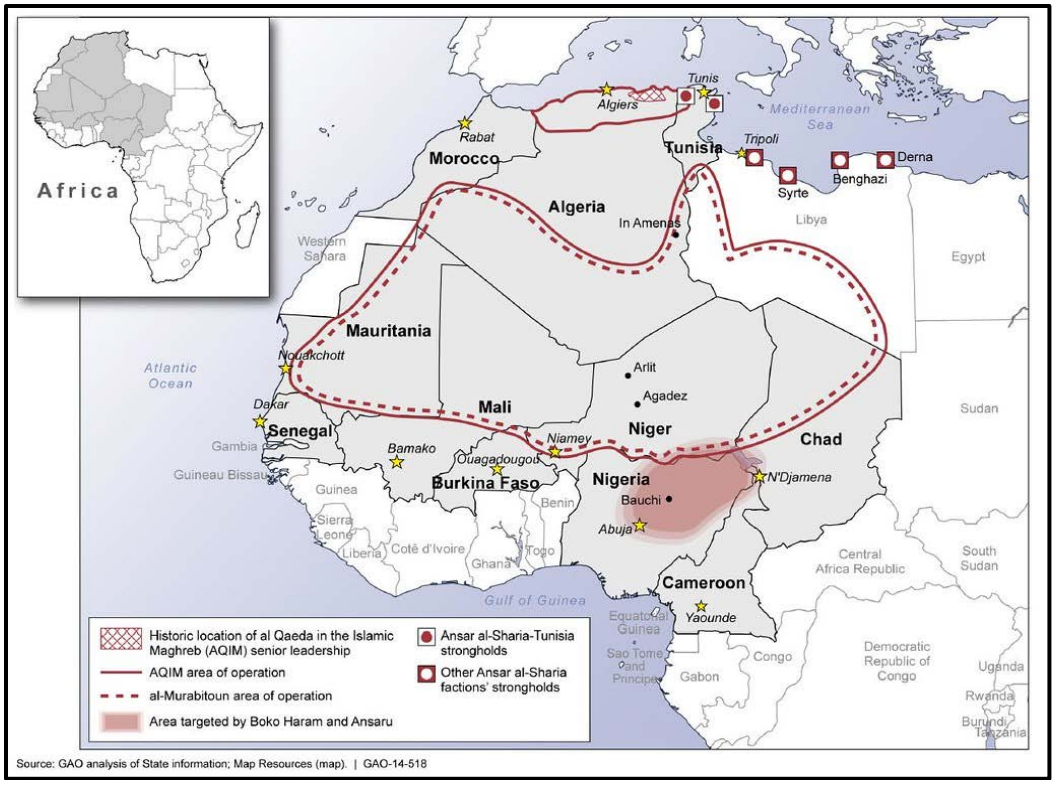

Figure 1. Terrorist groups' operation zones in the Sahel and Lake Chad.[116]

[115] Molenaar, 22.

[116] Source: United States Government Accountability Office, *Combating Terrorism U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management*, GAO-14-518 (Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, June 2014), 5.

In these countries, ungoverned spaces and their permeable borders create permissive conditions for criminal and terrorist activities. As Wolfram argues, "The importance of organized criminal activity in the Sahel-Sahara region stems from the fact that there are few alternative activities that produce similar profits and rapid enrichment."[117] In fact, in the weak Sahelian states like Niger, Mali, and Chad, the capacities of law reinforcement in certain parts of their territories are nonexistent. Thus, the scale of transnational threats that have deeply threatened Niger's stability has become critical. This section analyzes how the security challenges of Niger's neighbors affect Niger's security landscape. These impacts have taken the form of direct attacks against security forces and civilians that have effectively worsened living conditions by hindering socioeconomic activities. Farmers are targeted in their farms and merchants during their return from marketplaces.

1. Growing Transnational Security Challenges

Sahelian countries like Niger with large ungoverned spaces have faced tremendous challenges due to various transnational security threats that have made the region one of the world's most dangerous areas. The connection between criminal and terrorist activities has made the Sahelian security equation more complex and difficult to manage with conventional security tools. While pursuing different objectives, violent extremist movements and organized criminal networks have reinforced each other for decades.[118] Terrorist groups often ensure the safe transport of drugs, and the resources they obtain from this activity are used to purchase arms and ammunition that traffickers have made available in every corner of the Sahel region.[119] Moreover, the transnational dimension of the jihadists' threat in Sahel and Lake Chad has become evident for regional security actors. When analyzing the case of terrorism in the Lake Chad region, Usman A. Tar and Mustapha Mala found that "the transnationalization of these jihadist

[117] Wolfram, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region,* 4.

[118] Erik Alda and Joseph L. Sala, "Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime: The Case of the Sahel Region," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 3, no. 1 (September 2014): 1−9, http://dx.doi. org/10.5334/sta.ea.

[119] Alda and Sala, "Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime," 8.

movements is located within historical and geographical contexts."[120] Also, the involvement of terrorist organizations in such transnational criminal activities as the abduction of foreign nationals to extort ransoms has been a key element of their ascension. According to Jean Charles Brisard, "AQIM is raising annually more than $17M from the K&R (kidnapping and ransom) business."[121] The wealth pulled from these activities has been converted into military capabilities and means of influence over local populations.

In parallel, while the destabilizing impact of transnational threats is growing in Niger as they are across the entire Sahelian region, the structural causes of their expansion remain unaddressed. Long-term poverty and lack of opportunity continue to increase and push some young people to find illegal alternatives for income to alleviate their desperate living conditions. The situation in Niger is a reflection of the entire Sahelian condition. Nicolò Sartori and Daniele Fattibene of the Italian Institute of International Affairs write, "Weak economic performances and high levels of poverty, along with explosive demographic trends—60% of the population is under 25, most non-educated, unemployed and excluded from basic socioeconomic dynamic—make fertile ground for disenfranchisement, grievance and radicalization across the region."[122] The depressed socioeconomic situation makes controlling the security situation nearly impossible. The transformation of violent extremist organizations into a strong, coordinated terrorist force in the last few years appears to have confirmed this assumption.

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[120] Usman A. Tar and Mala Mustapha, "The Emerging Architecture of a Regional Security Complex in the Lake Chad Basin," *Africa Development* XLII, no. 3 (February 2017): 99–118, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ad/article/view/167097; Usman A. Tar is the head of the Center for Defense Studies and Documentation of the Nigerian Defense Academy and Mustapha Mala the head of Political Science Department of the University of Maiduguri.

[121] Jean Charles Brisard, "Terrorism Financing in North Africa," in *Terrorist Threats in North Africa from a NATO Perspective*, ed. Janos Tomolya and Larry D. White (Washington, DC: Ios Press Inc, 2015), 34−36.

[122] Sartori and Fattibene, *Human Security and Climate Change*, 1.

2. Security Vacuum in Libya

The destabilization of Libya in 2011 following the fall of Muhammar Al-Gaddafi's regime was the catalyst of the instability in the Sahel, a region already battered by recurrent rebellions and criminal activities. First, in 2012, Tuaregs who had been trained in the Libyan Islamic legion returned from Libya to Mali and Niger, which created a sudden surge of insecurity. In fact, these Tuaregs, who had solid military training, returned with various weapons and military equipment and, in the case of Mali, refused to disarm. As Yehudit Ronen mentions: "Many Tuaregs fled the chaos of post-Qaddafi's Libya and returned to their native countries, disrupting the sensitive ethnic and political balances in the Sahel belt."[123]

Second, the uncontrolled Libyan arms warehouses fueled the regional arms traffic and enhanced the military capabilities of terrorist groups in the Sahel and the Lake Chad regions.[124] The transfer of arms and ammunition from Libya to Sahel started immediately after Gaddafi's forces lost the control of the southern regions. For instance, on June 12, 2011, Nigerien security forces patrolling the country's northern border captured about 640 kilograms of military plastic explosive (Semtex) and detonators, which were part of unguarded Libyan arsenals.[125] The estimation revealed that a total of more than one million tons of Libyan weapons were illegally transferred in the region.[126] The Sahelian Al Qaeda affiliates that had found refuge in the northern Mali since the end of the civil war in Algeria and the Tuareg secessionists seized the opportunity presented

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[123] Yehudit Ronen, "Libya, the Tuareg and Mali on the Eve of the 'Arab Spring' and in its Aftermath: An Anatomy of Changed Relations," *The Journal of North African Studies* 18, no 4 (June 2013): 544–559, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2013.809660.

[124] Micha'el Tanchum, "Al-Qa'ida's West African Advance: Nigeria's Boko Haram, Mali's Tuareg, and the Spread of Salafi Jihadism," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 2 (July 2015): 75–90, https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2012.11446504.

[125] Laurence Aïda Ammour, *The Sahara and Sahel After Gaddafi*, Notes International CIDOB 44 (Barcelona, Spain: Barcelona Center for International Affairs [CIDOB], January 2012). http://sedmed.org/analisis_ssm/documents/ult_doc/NOTES%2044_AIDA_ANG.pdf.

[126] Francesco Strazzari, "Libyan Arms and Regional Instability," *The International Spectator* 49, no. 3 (September 2014): 54–68, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03932729.2014.937142.

by abundant illegal weapons in circulation in the region to reinforce their military capabilities.[127]

Third, the Libyan civil war in 2011 destroyed Libyan state structure and therefore created a security vacuum in large parts of the country and, by extension, a security threat to Niger. The southern part of Libya, which includes the border with Niger, has become a haven for armed groups and criminal organizations. Since the outbreak of the civil war, southern Libya has been characterized by the absence of any form of government authority. As shown in Figure 2, neither of the two competing centers of power in Libya—the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Fayez al-Sarraj nor Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar—exerts any real territorial control over the southern Libyan region occupied by various militias.

[127] Oumar Diarra, "Insecurity and Instability in Africa: Assessing the Effectiveness of Regional Security Cooperation in the Sahel" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2018), 42, https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/60394.

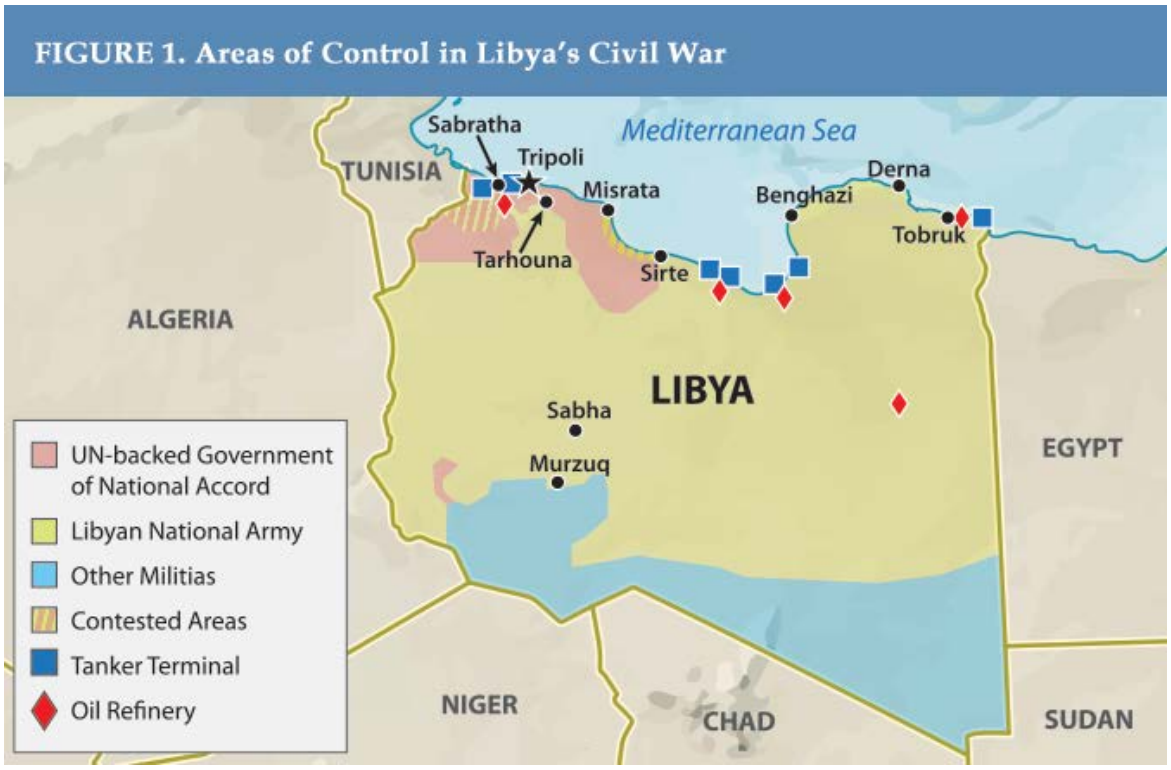

Figure 2. Areas of control in Libya's Civil War.[128]

This situation has allowed illegal activities to flourish and has made the region an environment conducive for violent extremist activities. The three main ethnic groups (Tubus, Tuaregs, and Arabs), all of which have their own militias, have exerted control over certain portions of the southern territories and have conducted smuggling activities between these Libyan territories and the Sahel in an organized manner.[129] Moreover, these criminal and terrorist groups have strong links with the local social fabric: terrorists often get married to locals and provide them basic goods.[130] AQIM and other terrorist groups use southern Libya as a logistics hub, a criminal marketplace where they can carry

[128] Source: Tarek Megerisi, "Geostrategic Dimensions of Libya's Civil War," *Africa Security Briefs* no. 37 (May 2020): 1–10, https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P4-2406984147/geostrategic-dimensions-of-libya-s-civil-war.

[129] Frederic Wehrey, *Insecurity and Governance Challenges in Southern Libya* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017), 9, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12872.

[130] Alda and Sala, "Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime," 1–9.

out all kinds of activities that enhance their core interest of destabilizing Sahelian countries.[131]

The incapacity of Libyan political actors to peacefully settle the ongoing political crisis is an obstacle to the resolution of the instability that has been hurting Sahelian countries. Libya has become a geopolitical battleground in which great powers act to preserve their divergent interests, generating more tensions among Libyans and thus undermining the prospect of peaceful resolution of the crisis.[132] Such direct foreign interventions as the aid Turkey has been providing to GNA or the deployment of Russian mercenaries in support to Haftar's forces have made Libyan unrest more complex and difficult to solve.[133] So long as the main power centers continue to fight each other, southern Libya will remain under the control of non-state actors and thus a base from which these actors can destabilize the Sahel. This deteriorating security situation in the entire Sahel will inevitably continue to alter the security environment in Niger unless the country finds a way to mitigate the effects of the Libyan crisis as Tunisia and Algeria did.

3. Uncertainty in the Lake Chad Region

The Lake Chad region is characterized by many ungoverned spaces from which terrorist organizations and criminal networks have been operating for a long time. As shown in Figure 3, it is composed of hundreds of islands where the four counties that have territories in this area—Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria—do not exercise control.

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131 Wehrey, *Insecurity and Governance Challenges in Southern Libya*, 16.

132 George Joffé, "Where Does Libya Go Now?" *The Journal of North African Studies* 25, no. 1 (December 2019): 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2020.1689806.

133 Megerisi, "Geostrategic Dimensions of Libya's Civil War," 1–7.

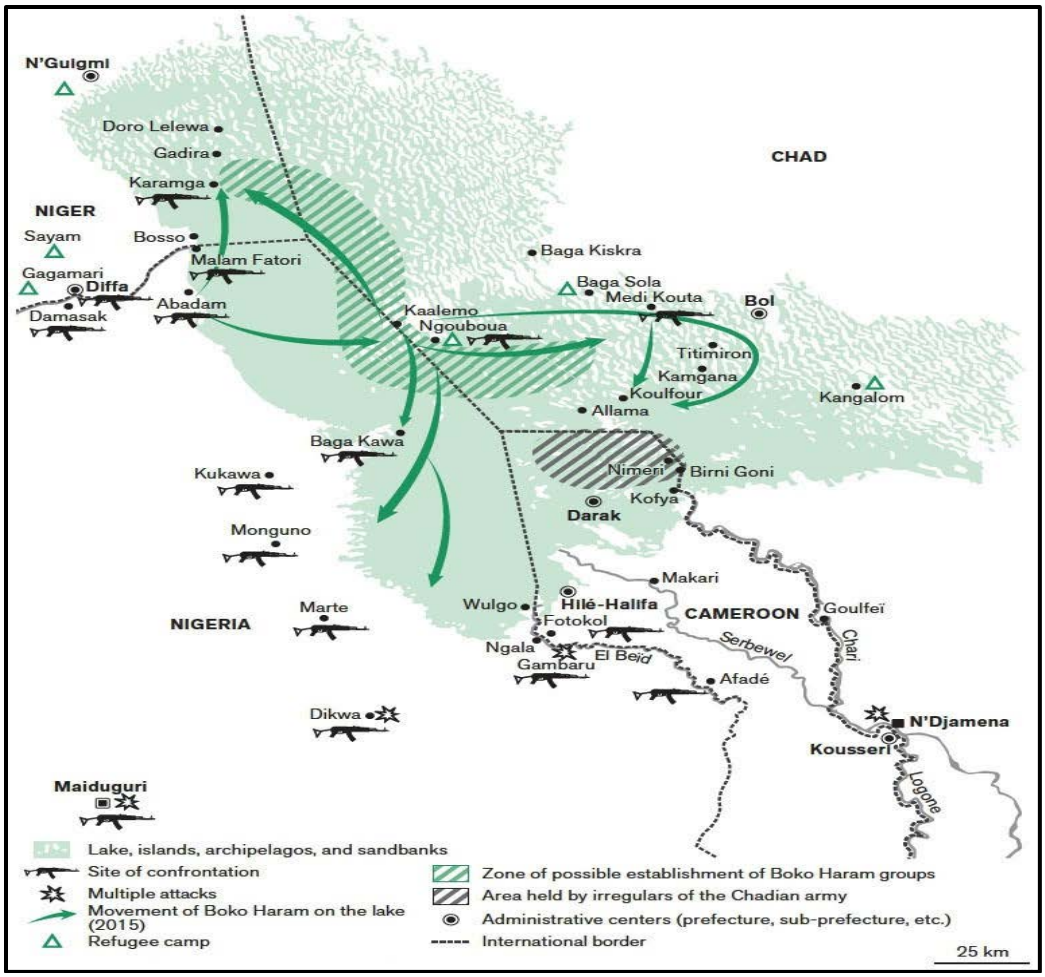

Figure 3. Boko Haram's areas of operation.[134]

During the rainy season, the swampy areas of the lake are almost inaccessible to security forces and other state tools of sovereignty. Hence, these ungoverned spaces in the region have been a refuge for terrorist organizations and criminal networks that pose a threat to regional security. As a result, the threat emanating from these areas has jeopardized Niger's security as well as regional stability. Boko Haram is indisputably the main terrorist group that has taken advantage of the permissive conditions offered by ungoverned spaces in the Lake Chad region.

134 Source: Christian Seignobos, "The Chronicle of a Siege. Boko Haram at Lake Chad, 2015−2016," *Afrique Contemporaine* 259, no. 3 (March 2016): 139−167, https://doi.org/10.3917/afco.259.0139.

Since the 1990s, this area has been known for widespread armed banditry, and in the 2000s, this persistent insecurity reached a new and notable high with the rise of fundamentalist extremism in the region. In 2002, Mohammed Yusuf, a Nigerian Muslim leader, founded the militant Islamist group *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* (JAS) ["People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad"]. The organization is commonly known as Boko Haram, which means "Western education is forbidden" in the regional language, Hausa.[135] In 2009 Nigerian security forces conducted a harsh military campaign against Boko Haram and killed most of its members, including the leader of the group, Mohammed Yusuf.[136] The remaining members led by Abubakr Sekau fled Nigeria for North Africa and Somalia to join experienced terrorist groups (AQIM and Al Shabab) for training.[137] Almost destroyed in 2009, the group rebuilt itself by recruiting massively in local communities and by purchasing new resources and arms from its external backers. In 2010, the return to Nigeria of the remaining members, along with foreign fighters, signaled the beginning of large-scale attacks and a reign of terror. Boko Haram started using sophisticated arms and tactics such as suicide bombings during its attacks.[138] On Christmas Eve 2010, Boko Haram used seven improvised explosive devices (IED) to target Christian communities in Jos, Plateau State in Nigeria. This attack caused the death of 80 people and many others were injured.[139] Subsequently, it became one of the world's deadliest terrorist groups and a major concern for regional stability.

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135 Falode James Adewunmi, "The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010–2015: A Strategic Analysis," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 1 (February 2016): 41–52. www.jstor.org/stable/26297518.

136 Sarah E. Erickson, "Invisible Soldiers: Integration and Motivations of Women within Boko Haram and the Cross-Regional Trends of Female Terrorism" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2019), 41, http://hdl.handle.net/10945/62773.

137 Shannon Connell, "To Be or Not to Be: Is Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization?" *Global Security Studies* 3, no. 3, (Summer 2012): 87−93, http://globalsecuritystudies.com/Connell%20Boko%20Haram.pdf.

138 Adewunmi, "The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War," 41–52.

139 John Peter Pham, "Boko Haram's Evolving Threat," *Africa Security Brief* No. 20 (April 2012): 1−8, https://africacenter.org/publication/boko-harams-evolving-threat/.

Boko Haram has likewise become a pressing problem for Niger, especially since the terrorist group began conducting direct attacks on Niger in 2014. Before then, Boko Haram used Niger for supply and recruitment of new combatants who joined the group in large numbers due to the attractive financial benefits offered to them. Later, fighters started crossing the border to conduct direct attacks on Nigerien territory. The first attack of Boko Haram in Niger was on May 14, 2014, against a Nigerien military patrol in the Diffa region. Three members of the group were arrested during this attack.[140] Boko Haram's aggression against Nigerien interests reached its highest level in April 2015 when it attacked Nigeriens on Karamga Island, killing 74 people, including 28 civilians.

After a decline in violence in 2015 and 2016, the Lake Chad region faced another surge in Boko Haram's attacks in August 2016, which coincided with the organization's split. The incoherence between Boko Haram's ideological claim and the targeting strategy promoted by its leader Abubakr Shekau—systematic violence against civilians—led to its fractionalization.[141] In fact, certain leaders of the group such as Abu Musab Al Barnawi disapproved of unnecessary violence against civilians. Al Barnawi believed that their fight should not be against innocent populations but against "true infidels," which Al Barnawi maintained were the governments of the Lake Chad region and Western interests.[142] According to Jacob Shapiro, this divergence among Boko Haram's leadership "refers to differences in induced preferences, [which] often occurs in terrorist organizations."[143] As the view of Al Barnawi is aligned with the ideology of ISIS, Abu

[140] Freedom C. Onuola, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone: Boko Haram's Transnational Reach and Regional Responses* (Abuja, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, November 2014), 7.

[141] Omar S. Mahmood and Ndubuisi Christian Ani, *Factional Dynamics within Boko Harar* (Dakar, Senegal: Institute for Security Studies (ISS), July 2018), 19.

[142] Mahmood and Ani, 13.

[143] Jacob Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma. Managing Violent Covert Organizations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 29.

Bakr al-Baghdadi named him the head of Boko Haram, and this change of leadership led to the split of the group when Shekau rejected the nomination of Al Barnawi.[144]

The faction ISWAP, led by Abu Musab Al Barnawi, has significantly increased its lethality, and represents the principal threat to stability in the eastern part of Niger. Indeed, while operating in all four countries of the Lake Chad region, ISWAP has demonstrated a strong capacity to increase violent attacks. In fact, violent events linked to ISWAP increased from 27 in 2017 to 83 in 2018.[145] ISWAP's behavior conforms with the argument of Audrey Cronin Kurth, who writes: "Splinter groups are often more violent than the 'mother' organization, as they respond to the imperative to demonstrate their existence and signal their dissent."[146] Additionally, ISWAP constitutes an immediate danger for Nigerien stability due to its strategic approach to civilian populations. ISWAP is concerned about gaining support from local people. Moreover, the geographic distribution of attacks, as shown in Figure 4, indicates that most of the attacks against Nigerien interests were conducted by ISWAP.

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144 Jason Warner, "Sub-Saharan Africa's Tree 'New' Islamic State Affiliates," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* 10, no.1 (January 2017): 28, https://ctc.usma.edu/sub-saharan-africas-three-new-islamic-state-affiliates/.

145 Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Progress and Setbacks in the Fight against African Militant Islamist Groups in 2018," January 25, 2019, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/progress-and-setbacks-in-the-fight-against-african-militant-islamist-groups-in-2018/.

146 Audrey Cronin Kurth, *How Terrorism Ends, Understanding the Decline, and the Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 68.

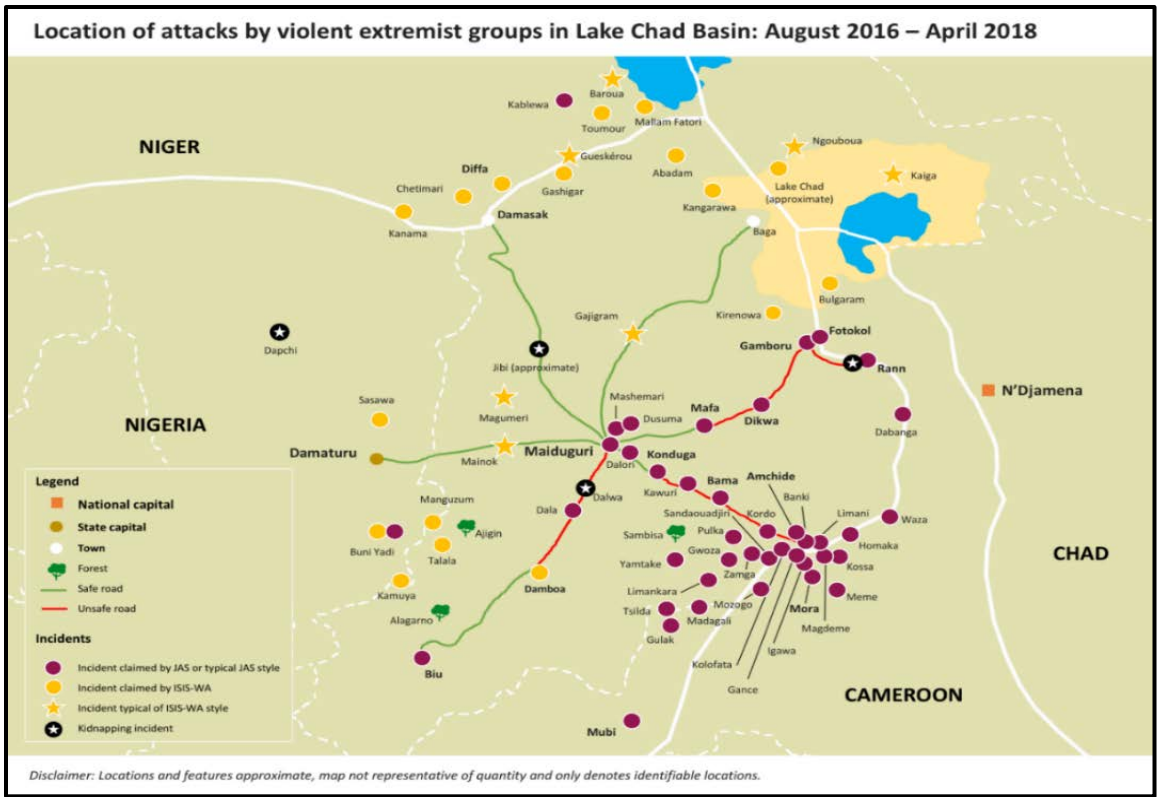

Figure 4. Terrorist attacks in the Lake Chad Basin.[147]

Finally, the complexity and the coordination of ISWAP's attacks suggest that it is capable of launching more effective attacks than JAS.

Another aspect of the regional security landscape that threatens Nigerien stability is the burden of refugees. Since the outbreak of the security unrest in the northeast of Nigeria in 2009, hundreds of thousands of people have fled from Nigeria into the Nigerien region of Diffa, generating a humanitarian crisis in an area already hindered by conflict.[148] Internally displaced persons and Nigerian refugees numbered about 281,000

147 Source: International Crisis Group, *Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province*, Africa Report No. 273 (Brussels, Belgium: International Crisis Group, May 2019), https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province.

148 Youssoufou Hamadou Daouda, "Poverty and Living Conditions with Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin: The Case of Southeastern Niger," *Review of African Political Economy* 47, no. 163 (March 2020): 126–134, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03056244.2020.1722086.

in Diffa region.[149] JAS and ISWA have often conducted raids on the refugees' camp to abduct young boys who are then forced to become child soldiers.

4. Complex Security Challenges in Northern Mali

Since the seizure of northern Mali by a coalition of rebels and jihadists in 2012, the security environment in the northern part of Mali has increasingly become worse. In January 2012, supported by its Islamist militant ally Ansar Dine [Defenders of the Religion], the *Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azaouad* (MNLA) launched a military campaign to capture the northern part of Mali.[150] French military intervention in January 2013 prevented any further advance of these movements toward the south and freed the main towns of the north, but the terrorist groups dispersed into the desert and MNLA occupied Kidal.[151] While AQIM, which emerged from the Algerian civil war of the 1990s, has been the major transnational non-state actor that has threatened the region for more than two decades, many others groups—such as the *Mouvement Pour l'unification et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest* (MUJAO) [the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa], the *front de libération du Macina* (FLM) [Macina Liberation Front], *Al Mourabitoun* led by Mocktar Bel Moctar, and *Ansaroul Islam* led by Malam Ibrahim Dicko—have coalesced to create a complex terrorist network unfortunately linked to MNLA rebels.[152] Later, the divergence among AQIM's leadership over ideology gave rise to a dissident group: the Islamic State in Great Sahara (ISGS) led by Adnan Abu Walid Al Sahrawi. After ISGS broke away, AQIM and other groups aligned with the ideology of Al Qaeda and united to create *Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimeen* (JNIM) [The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims] in 2017.

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[149] Jessica Skinner and Sultana Begum, *Lake Chad Unseen Crisis: Voices of refugees and internally displace people from Niger and Nigeria,* (Oxford, England: Oxfam GB for Oxfam International, August 2016), https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/618488/bn-lake-chad-refugees-idps-190816-en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

[150] Tanchum, "Al-Qaeda's West African Advance," 84.

[151] Diarra, "Insecurity and Instability in Africa," 43.

[152] Barkindo Atta, "The Sahel: A New Theatre for Global Jihadist Groups?" *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 12, no. 2 (March 2020): 21–26, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/26908281.

The reorganization of the terrorist network in the Sahel coincided with a significant increase of violent events in the region. According to Le Roux, "the Sahel has experienced the most rapid increase in militant Islamist group activity of any region in Africa in recent years."[153] Her report notes that "the number of reported violent events linked to militant Islamist groups activity in the Sahel has been doubling every year since 2016."[154] The events of 2019 confirmed this trend, citing 800 violent extremist attacks.[155] The attacks conducted by ISGS alone grew from 50 in 2017 to 205 in 2019, while those committed by AQIM and its affiliates rose from 144 in 2017 to 595 in 2019.[156] These figures show a willingness of both factions to engage in more and more violent activities. Though both ISGS and AQIM have increased their attacks significantly during this period, AQIM and its affiliates claim more total attacks.

In any event, ISGS, which has been responsible for most of the attacks against Nigerien interests since 2016, has represented the most serious security challenge to Niger. According to the distribution of the attacks, as shown in Figure 5, this terrorist group has conducted nearly all attacks in Niger.

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[153] Le Roux, "Responding to the Rise in Violent Extremism in the Sahel," 1–8.

[154] Le Roux.

[155] Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Threat from African Militant Islamist Groups Expanding, Diversifying," January 18, 2020, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/threat-from-african-militant-islamist-groups-expanding-diversifying/.

[156] Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "Progress and Setbacks in the Fight against African Militant Islamist Groups in 2018."

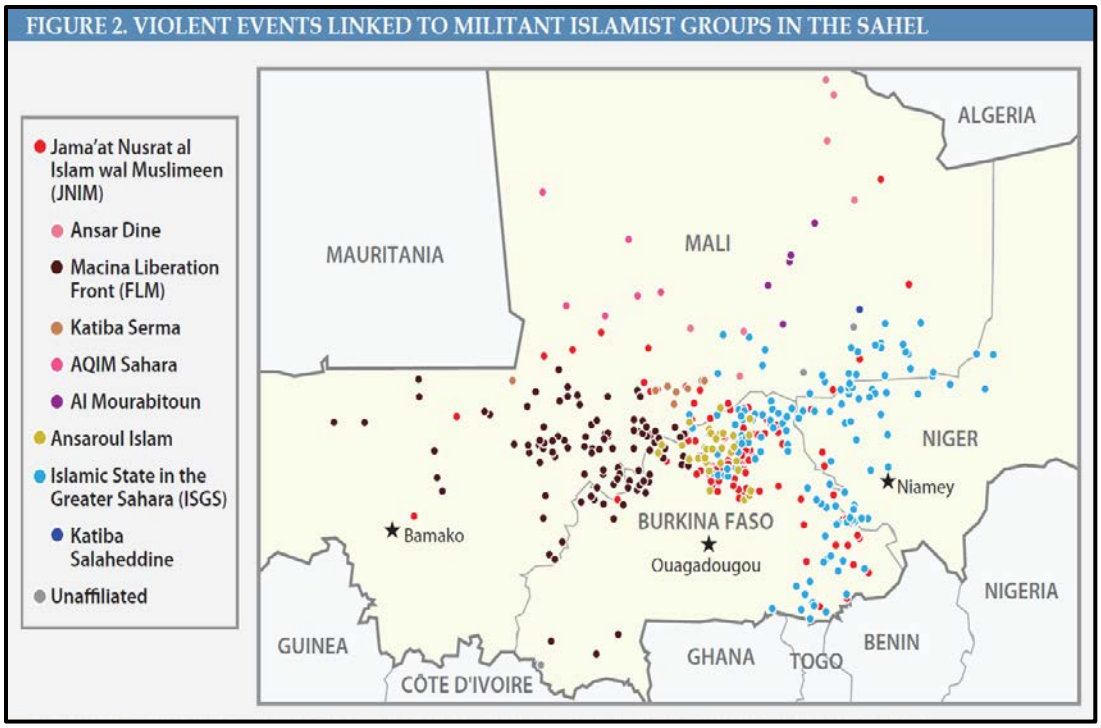

Figure 5. Attacks by terrorist groups in the Sahel in 2019.[157]

In fact, ISGS has succeeded where AQIM has failed in Niger: exploiting local grievances against the Nigerien government. It has successfully convinced the Fulani community dispersed in this area that the enemy is not the Tuaregs who used to threaten their villages but the states of Mali and Niger, which fail to protect them.[158] As a result, hundreds of Fulani youth have been radicalized and have joined terrorist groups in masses.

The scale and sophistication of attacks conducted by this terrorist group have been growing while spreading all over the region. These complex attacks have coincided with the decline of the Islamic State in the Middle East. The complexity of these attacks

[157] Source: Ryan CK Hess (Maj./USAF), "Lassoing the Haboob: Countering Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin in Mali," Air University, August 31, 2020, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JEMEAA/Display/Article/2329317/lassoing-the-haboob-countering-jamaat-nasr-al-islam-wal-muslimin-in-mali/; Points represent violent events involving the designated groups in 2019. Data source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

[158] Le Roux, "Exploiting Borders in the Sahel - the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara," Africa Center for Strategic Studies, June 10, 2019, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/exploiting-borders-sahel-islamic-state-in-the-greater-sahara-isgs/.

suggests that some of ISIS's experienced foreign fighters from Maghreb and West Africa may have returned and joined the Sahelian theater to seek new fighting zones. As Martha Crenshaw observes, "Experienced foreign fighters sometimes return home to commit acts of terrorism."[159] As Algerian and Tunisian returnees can hardly return to their home countries due to the effective counterterrorism measures, the safe haven for them seems to be the Sahelian region where countries still struggle to implement successful counterterrorism measures. The complexity of these attacks indicates that Sahelian terrorist groups have grown in experience and have learned more planning skills, and hence, will constitute a major challenge in the future.

C. CONCLUSION

Since the outbreak of the Tuareg insurgencies in northern Niger during the 1990s, the country has faced recurring internal security challenges largely enabled by the numerous ungoverned spaces in this region. The crises in Libya, Nigeria, and Mali have exacerbated internal security threats and represent a direct security concern for Niger. While these conflicts surrounding Niger have fueled internal criminal networks through drug, arms, and human trafficking, the direct attacks from neighboring countries against Nigerien interests have become more frequent and increasingly lethal. The Nigerien security sector has maintained only a fragile stability by mobilizing internal capacity and maintaining a fruitful cooperation with regional and international partners. Nevertheless, since 2016, the intensity and the frequency of attacks against Niger have overstretched Nigerien security forces. This evolving security situation continues to threaten the stability of the country and constitutes a major challenge for the Nigerien security sector.

[159] Martha Crenshaw, "Transnational Jihadism & Civil Wars," *Daedalus* 146, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 59–70, https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00459.

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III. NIGERIEN SECURITY SERVICES

Niger has avoided the security turmoil that its neighbor Mali has experienced since 2012, in no small part thanks to the efforts of the Nigerien security services. These forces—the Nigerien Armed Forces, National Gendarmerie, National Guard, National Police, and intelligence services—have significantly contributed to the Niger's ability to face complex security challenges leading some external observers to consider the Nigerien security services superior to those of Mali and Burkina Faso.[160]

These Nigerien security services, which have faced internal and external security threats, represent the result of six decades of transformation. The various reforms undertaken at different periods of the Nigerien history reflects the complexity of civil-military relations and the manner in which the political sphere and the military have influenced each other. This chapter gives a historical overview of the Nigerien security services and highlights the key elements of their transformation that can explain their current condition.

A. BACKGROUND OF THE NIGERIEN SECURITY SERVICES

Like in other francophone African countries, the Nigerien security services that emerged from the colonial period were heavily influenced by the manner in which the French used the military to rule its colonies. The newly independent Nigerien security services retained the widespread coercive methods previously employed by the French colonial administration. They also inherited the bad behavior of the "Senegalese *tirailleurs"*—West African infantrymen serving in French military before independence—which was often at odds with Nigerien traditional values and customs. Additionally, unlike in former British colonies, France maintained strong ties with its former colonies and continued to influence security matters in these countries long after independence.

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[160] Sebastian Lischer, *Contemporary Civil-Military Relations in the Sahel*, West African Papers, No. 19 (Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1787/f17713c9-en.

1. Colonial Legacy

The way the French conquered and administered their West African colonies from the 1890s to 1960—through the extensive use of military forces and methods—deeply influenced the security forces that emerged after the independence of these colonies. The Nigerien security services that emerged in the 1960s inherited many characteristics of the French colonial establishments that hindered the emergence of the Nigerien defense and security forces, which include the *Forces Armées Nationales* (National Armed Forces), and *Police Nationale* (National Police), as independent and effective institutions with adequate capacity to perform their duty and to maintain satisfactory relations with the population.

Nigerien forces also inherited the colonial power's penchant for maintaining order in a way that was repressive to the people they were supposed to protect.[161] During the colonial era, individuals faced severe punishment for even the slightest offenses.[162] Furthermore, the introduction of forced labor in the 1900s brought another form of abuse that traumatized Nigerien civilians.[163] At this time, forced labor was used to construct most of the infrastructure such as roads and bridges. French recruiters entered villages randomly and forcibly selected nearly all male adults for conscripted labor, which was considered mandatory military service.[164] French colonial security services supervised this forced labor, which became a general practice in all French colonies in Africa until 1946.[165] Idrissa Kimba, a researcher on political and social history of contemporary

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161 Ruth Ginio, *The Military Reforms: A New Army in French West Africa?* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 75, http://www.jstor.com/stable/j.ctt1hfr1hf.9.

162 Aliou Mahamane, "La Naissance de l'Armée Nationale au Niger : 1961–1974" [The Birth of the National Army in Niger : 1961–1974], in *Armée et Politique au Niger* [Armed Forces and Politics in Niger], ed. Kimba Idrissa (Dakar Sénégal : Le Conseil pour le Développement de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales en Afrique [CODESRIA], 2008), 48.

163 Babacar Fall, *Le Travail Forcé en Afrique Occidentale Française (1900-1945)*, [Forced Labor in French West Africa (1900-1945] (Paris, France : Karthala, 1993), 17.

164 Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts : Les Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa 1857–1960* (Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann, 1991), 25.

165 Ginio, *The Military Reforms: A New Army in French West Africa?*, 43.

Niger, remarks that "military service was not accepted anywhere with enthusiasm."[166] French military repression also occurred through forcible tax collection. For instance, despite serious droughts and famines in western Niger from 1911 to 1914, people were forced to pay colonial taxes.[167]

The main legacy of the colonial era is the prominent presence of French military in Nigerien post-colonial security forces that had been a cause of friction between the French military and their Nigerien equivalents.[168] The use of "Senegalese *tirailleurs*" by the French leadership in the military campaign against Nigerien pre-colonial authorities and the retention of these *tirailleurs* as the intermediary between the colonized and the colonizers left little opportunity to promote Nigerien military elites within colonial security forces.[169] Like in other African armies Niger lacked a significant number of Nigerien officers when independence occurred in the 1960s.[170] As a result, when Niger created its armed forces after its independence on August 3, 1960, it had few officers and non-commissioned officers (NCO) who could be in charge of the security services. Therefore, Nigerien authorities filled most of the leadership positions of these security services by hiring French officers and NCOs during the decade following independence.[171] As a result, even though Niger got its independence, its armed forces remained under the influence of the former colonial power. The lingering influence of the French military in the Nigerien security apparatus was perceived by Nigeriens as a lack

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166 Mahamane, "La Naissance de l'Armée Nationale au Niger," 51.

167 Finn Fuglestad, "Djibo Bakary, the French, and the Referendum of 1958 in Niger," *The Journal of African History* 14, no. 2 (1973): 313–330, www.jstor.org/stable/180451.

168 Chester A. Crocker, "Military Dependence: The Colonial Legacy in Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, no. 2 (June 1974): 265–86, www.jstor.org/stable/159723.

169 Mahamane, "La Naissance de l'Armée Nationale au Niger," 46.

170 James S. Coleman and Brice Belmont Jr., "The Role of the Military in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries,* ed. John J. Johnson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 383.

171 The Gendarmerie is a military institution in France and most former French colonies, and it operates *within* and outside national boundaries. In Niger, this force is often used in military tasks such as defense of the territory as well as in policing tasks in rural areas.

of sovereignty and represented a source of resentment for both service members and the population.[172]

Nigerien military personnel also mimicked certain types of improper behavior committed by colonial security forces, for example, sexual assault and fighting in bars.[173] This inappropriate conduct, anathema to local customs and religion, undermined the relationship between armed forces and Nigerien population. Even today this kind of behavior is associated with Nigerien service members. For example, drinking lots of alcohol is considered to be typically a military behavior.

During the colonial era, the recruitment of military personnel based on ethnic group resulted in an army composed in majority by soldiers from the Zarma ethnic group. This preference was a matter of colonial administration convention. Colonel Maurice Abadié, who conducted a study published in 1927, deemed "*tirailleurs*" from the Zarma ethnic group of western Niger to be better suited for military service than those from other ethnic groups.[174] Specifically, he believed that the physical abilities of the people who inhabit the Nigerien Zarma regions of Djermaganda and Dallol Maouri were more appropriate for military service.[175] Perhaps for this reason, most of the new recruits came from the west. Particularly, members of the Dosso royal family joined colonial forces. This ethnic imbalance of the armed forces generated the first seeds of division.

At independence in 1960, like other African states, Niger inherited soldiers, equipment, and organizational structures from its former colonial power.[176] The Nigerien Armed Forces emerged from an agreement between France and Niger that authorized Nigeriens enrolled in the French Armed Forces to join the future Nigerien Armed Forces. France had also provided equipment that served as the initial endowment for the Nigerien

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[172] Richard Higgott and Finn Fuglestad, "The 1974 Coup d'État in Niger: Towards an Explanation," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 13, no. 3 (September 1975): 383–398, www.jstor.org/stable/159846.

[173] Mahamane, "La Naissance de l'Armée Nationale au Niger," 51.

[174] Mahamane, 48.

[175] Mahamane.

[176] Crocker, "Military Dependence: The Colonial Legacy in Africa," 265–286.

security forces. However, while the transfer of personnel and equipment to the Niger Republic marked the establishment of the Nigerien Armed Forces, in practical terms these forces were very small and did not have any real operational capacity.

2. Reluctance of the Diori Regime to Depart from Colonial Practices

The Nigerien Armed Forces were officially created on August 1, 1961.[177] The original armed forces were composed of personnel from the French Republican guard and Nigerien soldiers who had served in the French army.[178] These initial armed forces lacked consistency and were mainly used to serve in policing tasks rather than defense and security. The French delegate for the defense of Overseas Zone number 1 (former West African colonies), General Michel de Brebisson, rated the Nigerien Armed Forces as a "local militia, small and lacking in professional personnel and a sense of military duty."[179] The deficiency of the Nigerien Armed Forces in military professionalism and the obvious paucity of their operational capacity seemed to be the desire of the Diori regime that depended on former colonial power for its security.

Indeed, the post-colonial period was marked by the tremendous influence of the former colonial power on the military and the main features of Niger's security issues fundamentally remained unchanged. First, most of the units stayed under the command of French officers and these French military personnel also held key military positions.[180] For example, French military personnel who were working as technical support in the Nigerien military administration numbered about 70 officers and NCOs.[181] Despite the efforts to integrate Nigerien officers in the military hierarchy in the years following independence, the most important military positions remained under the control of the

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177 Crocker, "Military Dependence: The Colonial Legacy in Africa," 280.

178 Mahamane, "La Naissance de l'Armée Nationale au Niger," 46.

179 Ruth Ginio, *The French Army, and Its African Soldiers: The Years of Decolonization* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 186, doi:10.2307/j.ctt1hfr1hf.13.

180 Samuel Decalo, "Modalities of Civil-Military Stability in Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 27, no. 4 (December 1989): 547–78, www.jstor.org/stable/161109.

181 Higgott and Fuglestad, "The 1974 Coup D'État in Niger: Towards an Explanation," 394.

French military, whose main purpose was to preserve French interests. This structure of the Nigerien security landscape could hardly generate coherent armed forces dedicated to Nigerien interests.

More importantly, the deployment of two French combat companies that totaled 450 soldiers delayed the prospect of building strong national security forces. These troops based in the capital Niamey stayed in Niger until the 1970s.[182] They concentrated more on military power than on Niger's armed forces of the time. This extraordinary presence of the French military, which resulted from a defense agreement of August 1, 1961, mainly ensured the protection of the Diori regime.[183]

The government of the time led by President Hamani Diori was more concerned about the protection of his regime than the strength of Niger's armed forces. Even the intense disagreement in early 1964 between Niger and Dahomey (the country known as Benin today) over two small islands in the Niger River did not push Nigerien authorities to strengthen the armed forces, which they feared would be a danger to the regime.[184] (Their fears were realized in 1974 when the armed forces overthrew the regime, which is discussed at the end of this section.) Marc Fontrier argues that "the latent anti-militarism that prevails among African political elites did not help to build coherent and effective armed forces."[185] The first successful military coups in Africa, which occurred in 1963 in Togo, Congo, and Dahomey, reinforced the conviction of President Diori to temper any strengthening of the armed forces and rather to strengthen French presence in the country. The fear of a military coup among African political elites was real; as Claude E.

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[182] Abdurrahim Sıradağ, "Understanding French Foreign and Security Policy towards Africa: Pragmatism or Altruism" *Afro Eurasian Studies Journal* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 100–122, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Adem_Goek/publication/277061702_A_Time_Series_Analysis_of_the_Determinants_of_Private_Savings_in_Turkey/links/55605ae008ae6f4dcc92dd67.pdf#page=100.

[183] Jean-Pierre Bat, "Le Rôle de la France après les Indépendances" [The Role of France after Independence], *Afrique Contemporaine*, no. 235 (March 2010) : 43−52, https://www.cairn.info/revue-afrique-contemporaine-2010-3-page-43.htm.

[184] M. J. V. Bell, "Army and Nation in Sub-Saharan Africa," *The Adelphi Papers* 5, no. 21 (August 1965): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1080/05679326508448033.

[185] Marc Fontrier, "Des Armées Africaines : Comment et Pourquoi Faire ?" [African Armies: How and for What?], *Outre-Terre* 2, no 11 (2005): 347–374, https://www.cairn.info/revue-outre-terre1-2005-2-page-347.htm.

Welch argues, "Successful seizure of control in one state may touch off a series of coups."[186] Hence, Nigerien political leadership feared that this trend in some African countries could affect Niger.

In addition, the strategy of Diori's political party to protect the regime constituted a handicap for a comprehensive relationship between Nigerien civilian authorities and the new military elite. In December 1963, a crisis occurred between the Nigerien Armed Forces and civilian authorities. Military personnel mutinied to demand a better salary and to protest against the appointment of a disliked military leadership.[187] This first mutiny, which had been resolved with the support of French troops, deeply undermined the trust of the regime toward its armed forces.[188] President Diori came to the conclusion that he could not count on these security forces to repress the emerging revolt of the opposition party (Sawaba), which had founded an illegal private militia. Consequently, the President Diori's party—the *Parti Progressiste Nigérien du* Rassemblement *Démocratique Africain* [PPN-RDA] (the Nigerien Progressive Party of the African Democratic Assembly)—also created its own militia to ensure the survival of the party and the regime.[189] The creation of this militia was a confirmation that the regime was not willing to base its security on legal armed forces.

In the same vein, President Diori's need of cheap armed forces, meaning weaker ones, and his attempt to divert security services from their main purpose toward non-military tasks undermined their professionalism. Although the few service members of the Nigerien Armed Forces were insufficient to meet the country's security requirements,

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186 Claude E. Welch, "Soldier and State in Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no. 3 (November 1967): 305–322, www.jstor.org/stable/158726.

187 Joel Westra, *International Law and the Use of Armed Force: The UN Charter and the Major Powers, (*London, England: Routledge, April 2007), 180, Doi: https://doi-org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.4324/9780203088913.

188 Klaas Van Walraven, "Opération Somme: La French Connection et le Coup d'État de Seyni Kountché au Niger en Avril 1974" [Operation Somme: The French Connection and the Coup d'État of Seyni Kountché in Niger in April 1974], *Politique Africaine* 2, no 134 (February 2014): 133–154.: https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-africaine-2014-2-page-133.htm.

189 Mirco Göpfert, *Policing the Frontier: An Ethnography of Two Worlds in Niger* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), 34.

the regime preferred to use them in non-military duties. For instance, President Diori called for the use of military personnel as the workforce in agriculture.[190] In these circumstances, the militia of Diori's party and the French troops were, practically, in charge of the protection of the country and the regime.[191] For Nigerien authorities, remarks Aliou Mahamane, "Nigerien Armed Forces were simply used to complement the attributes of sovereignty." Additionally, the shrewd use of Nigerien security forces as a coercive tool against the population had been perceived by the military as a willingness to undermine its relationship with the Nigerien people.[192] Similar to the colonial practices, Nigerien authorities used security for the collection of taxes and repression.[193] The Diori regime's treatment of the military hindered civil-military relations. Thus, there was a real incentive among the officers' corps to find a solution to the continuous deterioration of military status.

Consequently, the Nigerien military elite engaged in a process of defending its corporate interests through nondemocratic regime change. According to Richard Higgott and Finn Fuglestad, the willingness of the armed forces to defend their corporate interests grew as the belief that Diori's regime undermined their position became a painful reality.[194] In their willingness to change their relationship with civilian authorities, the Nigerien Armed Forces attempted to overthrow the regime of President Hamani Diori in August 1973, but French troops intervened to protect the regime.[195] Finally, on April 15, 1974, the first successful military coup in Niger overthrew the regime of Diori and definitively marked a disruption in the relationship between civilian authorities and the armed forces. A new regime led by the military arose. The first head of state of that regime, which lasted 17 years, was Lieutenant Colonel Seyni Kountche.

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[190] Higgott, and Fuglestad, "The 1974 Coup d'état in Niger: Towards an Explanation," 395.

[191] Higgott, and Fuglestad, 389.

[192] Higgott and Fuglestad, 392.

[193] Mahamane, "La Naissance de l'Armée Nationale au Niger," 88.

[194] Higgott and Fuglestad, "The 1974 Coup d'État in Niger: Towards an Explanation," 393.

.[195]Robin Luckham, "French Militarism in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* no. 24, (1982): 55–84, www.jstor.org/stable/3998043.

B. NIGERIEN SECURITY FORCES DURING MILITARY RULE

Among the main priorities the regime put in place after the military coup of April 15, 1974, was the establishment of a security sector capable of handling internal and external threats. This took a particular importance for the new head of state, President Seyni Kountche. He said, "Nothing from this time will be undertaken in Niger that does not consider armed forces, guarantors of national independence, guarantors of the security of Niger and its people. [The] Armed forces will no longer be marginalized as in the past."[196] As defense minister himself, he engaged the security services in reforms to improve their responsiveness and their sense of patriotism. Sociopolitical movements and the economic crisis of the 1990s, however, hampered the security setting of the military regime.

1. Building Effective Security Forces

From the early months of the regime led by the *Conseil Militaire Supreme* (CMS) [Supreme Military Council], the new government demonstrated a clear commitment to make adjustments in security issues concerning the relationship with France. These changes started with the drastic reduction of French influence in Nigerien security issues. A few months after the military coup of April 1974, the French military camp was closed, and French troops based in Niamey left the country. As in many other countries formerly under French control, this departure of the French troops from the country conformed with the determined desire to improve autonomy in the political and military spheres. This decision of the Nigerien authorities intended to allow the promotion of a security sector based on national forces. The departure of French troops marked the beginning of a period that lasted more than a decade in which the Nigerien security sector went through qualitative and quantitative changes that improved their effectiveness.

The military coup opened an era in which the exercise of power led to a profound transformation in the organization, its spirit, and the purpose of the Nigerien security

[196] Seyni Kountché, "Discours à la Nation [Address to the Nation]," accessed on July 18, 2020, Mâh-Rabiou Dansounssou, 22:22, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6x17Y5x-Go.

services. The new regime undertook an ambitious program to strengthen esprit de corps and patriotism within the Nigerien Armed Forces. President Kountché said, "from 1974 to 1983, I had endeavored to raise and cultivate within the Nigerien Armed Forces the notion of patriotism and loyalty to the Nigerien people and to the Nigerien nation."[197] As the defense minister, the president engaged security forces in a reorganization process that permitted the creation of new units and a substantial increase of service members. The new security forces benefited from investments in new equipment as shown in the Appendix. For instance, security services purchased new aircraft, new armored vehicles, and other weaponry. These efforts intended to create coherent and well-equipped security services. Mirco Göpfert wrote, "Gendarmes (but also a considerable share of the population) tend to idealize Kountché and his rule until his death in 1987: everybody was well equipped and well paid; everybody was disciplined and honest; there was no corruption; all in all, everything and everybody worked the way they should."[198]

Additionally, the government promoted military cooperation with Niger's strategic partners to strengthen the capacity of its security services. While France remained an important partner, other partners such as the United States and Germany provided military equipment and technical assistance. The United Stated approved to support Nigerien government with military assistance on June 9, 1980.[199] The United States and Niger had the same security concerns regarding the activities of Libyan head of state Moammar Al Qaddafi in the region.[200] Later, American engineers helped

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[197] Seyni Kountché, "Kountché, Seyni Exaltant son Armée et son Peuple du Niger [Kountche Seyni Exalting his Army and People of Niger]," June 5, 2016, Mâh-Rabiou Dansounssou, 23:09, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJx8cfEdG1M; speech by President Kountché given on August 6, 1983, after the failed attempt of military coup while he was absent from the country. For the president, the way in which different forces reacted to the attempted coup demonstrated that they were prepared to preserve the interests of the nation.

[198] Göpfert, *Policing the Frontier: An Ethnography of Two Worlds in Niger*, 35.

[199] University of Central Arkansas, Department of Political Science, "Niger (1960-Present)." Sub-Saharan Africa, accessed on November 14, 2020, https://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/sub-saharan-africa-region/niger-1960-present/.

[200] "Visit of Niger's president Seyni Kountche," *Department of State Bulletin* (Law Journal Library). 83-[i]-88, https://archive.org/stream/departmentofstat851985unit/departmentofstat851985unit_djvu.txt.

renovate the airfield of Dirkou in 1984.[201] This airfield located near the Libyan border has been strategic for the resupply of Nigerien security forces.

In the 1980s, even though the Tuaregs had the support of the Libyan head of state, the security system put in place was so effective that it deterred the Tuaregs from initiating an insurrectional movement. At the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, Libya provided military training for the Tuaregs, who intended to create a Tuareg nation. But the Nigerien security architecture of the time had good intelligence and could respond promptly to any limited destabilizing action. The Tuaregs' first attempt to launch an uprising occurred in 1985 when an armed group of 14 people attacked the Nigerien city of Tchin-Tabaraden. The immediate and effective intervention of national armed forces and security forces successfully countered the attack.[202] This event demonstrated the responsiveness of security services; ten assailants were apprehended, one was killed, and another injured. After this attempted insurrection, the country did not face any other attack until after the death of President Kountché in November 1987.[203]

The new security architecture of the 1980s relied heavily on a strong intelligence service dedicated both to regime security and state security.[204] The state police *(le Bureau de Coordination et de Liaison* [BCL], called simply *"la coordination")* was the main intelligence service. It had agents and informants throughout Niger and in neighboring countries that made it an effective intelligence agency.[205] The state police benefited from substantial investment that allowed the purchase new equipment. Moreover, members of this organization received high-quality training in different countries such as France and the United States. During military rule, the Nigerien state police was effective in gathering and disseminating intelligence.

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[201] Ames Brooke, "Special to the New York Times. "Niger Head's Death Costs West Ally Against Libya," *New York Times,* November 11, 1987, ProQuest.

[202] Chékou Koré, "Rébellion touareg au Niger," 202.

[203] Chékou Koré, 276.

[204] Mirco Göpfert, "Surveillance in Niger: Gendarmes and the Problem of 'Seeing Things'" *African Studies Review* 59, no. 2 (September 2016): 39–57, https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2016.37.

[205] Mirco Göpfert, *Policing the Frontier: An Ethnography of Two Worlds in Nige,* 64.

Nevertheless, despite the achievements of the regime of President Kountché in dealing with security matters, the lack of accountability and proper oversight led to many abuses that tarnished the image of the regime and the security services. As there was no democratic civilian control of the security services—other than the personal control of President Kountché over the whole system—oppression and repression of political and military elites were common. The protection of the regime had become an important issue since the early years of its establishment, and that led to the removal of nearly all members of the CMS. Throughout Kountché's tenure, certain numbers of CMS were arrested in 1976 and a few were even killed.[206] Moreover, in the years following this purge, the military regime of Seyni Kountché further extended its control over other spheres of the society. His strong and fearful secret police was involved in many instances of misconduct. Like other secret police such as the so-called Stasi in East Germany, the powers of this institution led to increasing abuse. People could be arrested and jailed without any judicial procedure. There were few civil liberties and any attempt to criticize the regime could lead to an arrest.[207] For example, some emerging politicians, for example, Sanoussi Tambari Zackou, were arrested and kept in a military camp in the small desert city of Dao Timmi for many years. As a result, there was a general panic among the Nigerien people and particularly within the administration where any misconduct was immediately reported to the president's office and the people found responsible of misconduct were severely reprimanded. Consequently, the relationship between the military and the civilian elite deteriorated and clear opposition against the military rule started to form among students and bourgeoning civil society.

2. Decay of Security Services during Transition to Democracy

After the death of President Kountche in 1987, the Nigerien security services saw a gradual deterioration of their operational capabilities and the morale of the troops. In

206 Mahamane, "La Naissance de l'Armée Nationale au Niger," 116.

207 Malam Issa, "Le Régime Militaire de Seyni Kountché (1974-1987)" [The Military Regime of Seyni Kountché (1974-1987)] in *Armée et Politique au Niger* [Armed Forces and Politics in Niger], ed. Kimba Idrissa, (Dakar, Sénégal : Le Conseil pour le Développement de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales en Afrique [CODESRIA], 2008), 142.

the context of severe economic crisis and the emergence of social movements that demanded more democracy, many changes in the security setting hindered the Nigerien security services by negating all the achievements since the beginning of military rule. First, the financial difficulties during the tenure of President Ali Saïbou, who succeeded Kountché in November 1987, weakened the ability of the government to maintain the operational capacity of the security apparatus previously put in place. The new government, which was obliged to balance the national budget, had to reduce police and military expenditures.[208] The symbol of this adjustment was the suppression of the powerful intelligence agency established by President Kountche.[209] Second, President Saïbou accelerated the process of transition to democratic rule with full liberalization of the political sphere. To this end, a national conference took place from July 29 to November 3, 1991.[210]

While this conference was an important step in the Nigerien process toward democracy, it negatively affected the cohesion of the Nigerien Armed Forces. The attempt of democratic forces to undermine the military establishment reached an unprecedented level during the national conference.[211] It gave an opportunity for people to express their frustrations about the past behavior of the security services. The national conference set up a committee—the crimes and abuses commission—to investigate the military regime of the time.[212] While the public hearings of this commission revealed the scale and gravity of certain crimes such as the extra-judicial execution of certain actors of attempted coups, its conclusions that led to judicial actions against individual service members disrupted the cohesion among the security forces. Certain officers faced various

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208 Mirco Göpfert, "Security in Niamey: An Anthropological Perspective on Policing and an Act of Terrorism in Niger," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): 53–74, www.jstor.org/stable/41474959.

209 Göpfert, "Security in Niamey," 53–74.

210 Pearl T. Robinson, "The National Conference Phenomenon in Francophone Africa," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 3 (July 1994): 575–610. www.jstor.org/stable/179297.

211 Göpfert, *Policing the Frontier: An Ethnography of Two Worlds in Niger*, 36.

212 Lisbet Ilkjaer and Soumana Boureima Sourghia, "A Model for Developing Performance Indicators in Niger," *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 12, no. 2 (June 2010): 195–205, https://doi.org/10.1350/ijps.2010.12.2.185.

charges for misconduct and human rights violations in the repression of student protests on February 9, 1989, and the brutal retaliation following the attack of young Tuaregs in Tchin-Tabaraden on May 7, 1990. Senior officers, however, did not accept any responsibility in these abuses. Finally, Captain Boureima Maliki was the highest ranked military personnel who faced judicial prosecution for his involvement in brutal repression of the Tchin-Tabaraden revolt. He was arrested along with some lower ranking service members. The way the hearings were conducted and the outcome that had blamed only lower ranking service members disrupted the discipline that was considered sacrosanct within the Nigerien defense and security forces.

The decade of the 1990s was a pivotal period in which Nigerien security services caused political and security unrest that exacerbated the deterioration of discipline and cohesion as well as operational capabilities within those services. The government's delay in paying salaries and the treatment of the security services during the national conference led to numerous mutinies in the 1990s.[213] From 1992 to 2002, Niger experienced six military mutinies.[214] During the first mutiny from February 25 to 26, 1992, soldiers released officers and NCOs who were imprisoned during the national conference even though their prison terms were not complete.[215] They also arrested temporarily some leaders of the transition government and demanded payment of service members' salaries. On August 25, 1992, another munity occurred under the transitional regime. A few months after the new democratically elected President Mahamane Ousmane took over in April 1993, he faced another military mutiny. A military coup led by General Ibrahim Bare Mainassara occurred on January 27, 1996, to end a severe political crisis. The government led by Mainassara also faced a mutiny in October 1998. Another military coup overthrew the regime of Mainassara on April 9, 1999. The new

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[213] Adapted from Abdoulaye Niandou Souley, "Mutineries Militaires en Période de Démocratisation" [Military Mutinies in the Democratization Period], in *Armée et Politique au Niger* [Armed Forces and Politics in Niger], eds. Kimba Idrissa (Dakar, Sénégal: Le Conseil pour le Développement de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales en Afrique [CODESRIA], 2008), 236.

[214] Niandou Souley, "Mutineries Militaires en Période de Démocratisation," 236.

[215] Robinson, "The National Conference Phenomenon in Francophone Africa," 575–610.

transitional government soon had to deal with a military mutiny in September 1999. Finally, the regime of the President Mamadou Tandja, who was elected in November 1999, faced a mutiny from July 30 to August 8, 2000. These events and the resulting attitude of service members, who felt that they did not belong anymore in the Nigerien state apparatus they led for 15 years, generated a certain degree of fear among civilian leadership and reinforced the mistrust between civilian authorities and security forces. A summary of the successive coups and mutinies appears in Table 1.

Table 1. Military coups, attempted coups, mutinies (1960−2020).[216]

	Events		
Regime	**Successful Coups**	**Attempted Coups**	**Mutinies**
Hamani Diori (1960−1974)	4/ 15/1974	-	12/3/1963
Seyni Kountche (1974−1987)	-	8/1975; 3/1976; 10/1983	-
Ali Saïbou (1987−1993)	-	-	2/26/1992 8/27/1992
Mahamane Ousmane (1993−1996)	1/ 27/1996	-	7/10/1993
Mainassara Bare (1996−1999)	4/9/1999	-	10/1998
Daouda M. Wanke	-	-	9/1999
Mamadou Tandja (2000−2010)	2/18/2010	-	7/30/2002 to 8/8/2002
Mahamadou Issoufou (2011−2020)	-	12/16/2015	-

216 Adapted from Addo Mahamane, Ibro Abdou, and Fatimata Sidikou, *État de La Gouvernance En Afrique de L'ouest : Niger* [State of Governance in West Africa: Niger] (Dakar, Sénégal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2011), 11, https://codesria.org/IMG/pdf/GMP-Niger-2011.pdf?3146/b07e3ca55820c8b57b592aed9af7ca97645f61a7.

Consequently, the inadequate equipment and the crumbling cohesion among security forces hindered the effectiveness of the armed forces in the conduct of their missions. The effects of social movements combined with the economic difficulties hampered the operational capacity, the discipline, and the image of the security services. As a result, the Nigerien armed forces struggled to provide a comprehensive response to the Tuareg rebellion of the 1990s. These difficulties were certainly linked to the paucity of adequate equipment, but also to a lack of cohesion and discipline. In fact, officers who remember how their peers had been treated during the national conference lacked motivation and were not inclined to take any risk that could undermine their careers. There was a clear problem in the chain of command. This concern inside the Nigerien Armed Forces was confirmed during the mutinies that occurred in the 1990s as the orders issued by the leadership were not respected.

C. REFORMS FOLLOWING THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

In the 1990s, the Nigerien security services went through limited institutional reforms. The political instability and the economic difficulties of the 1990s delayed any substantial improvement of the Nigerien security services, which consequently lost their operational capabilities and their internal cohesion. The main reforms conducted were those recommended by the national conference regarding the structural reorganization of security services. Prior to the national conference, the "*Forces Armées Nationales du Niger*" (Nigerien National Armed Forces) were composed of the *Armée de Terre* (Army), the *Groupement Aérien National* (National Air Wing), the *Gendarmerie Nationale* (National Gendarmerie), and the *Garde Republicaine* (Republican Guard) and were under the same command. The new organizational reform of 1992 restructured the Nigerien security forces in four distinct components: the Nigerien Armed Forces, the National Gendarmerie, the Republican Guard, and the National Police.

The political stability following the general elections of 2000 gave a new opportunity to conduct substantial reforms in the security sector in a context marked by increasing security challenges linked to the second Tuareg rebellion and the rise of new security threats. Despite the brief interruption of the democratic process in 2010, the

recovery of the security sector continued with the support of Niger's partners that helped to build the security services.

1. Reforms of Armed Forces

In 1992, shortly after the national conference, the Nigerien National Gendarmerie gained autonomy in a new reorganization of the Nigerien security services. The assessment made during the National Conference concluded that the National Gendarmerie and the National Guard could not properly perform their functions under the same command of the armed forces. As a result, the Nigerien National Armed Forces were reorganized, and the National Gendarmerie, which remained under the Ministry of Defense, became an independent corps under a new, separate command structure: The High Command (*le Haut Commandement)* of the National Gendarmerie. Decree No. 92–34 of January 24, 1992, on the organization of the Ministry of Defense placed the high commander of the National Gendarmerie at the same hierarchical level as the chief of staff of the Nigerien Armed Forces.[217] The purpose of this reform was to improve the effectiveness of the gendarmerie in the execution of its core missions of policing in rural areas and enhancing internal security.[218]

After a decade of troubles within the security sector, President Tandja, a retired army colonel, undertook in the early 2000s to strengthen the security services and to reinforce discipline and cohesion. After two successful military coups and six mutinies in a decade, there was a strong incentive to create conditions to prevent another destabilizing event involving security services. Before 2003, there was no specific jurisdiction for military offenses, which were prosecuted in accordance with the provisions of the law No. 61–27 of July 15, 1961 establishing the Nigerien criminal code of justice. This law, however, was not adequate to deal with certain offenses in security sector. As a result, a reform of military justice was conducted in 2003 to deal with

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[217] Yearbook of the World's Gendarmeries, "Gendarmerie Nationale de la République du Niger" [National Gendarmerie of the Niger Republic], Annuaire des Gendarmes du Monde accessed November 15, 2020, 2020, https://www.force-publique.net/sources/Annuaire/Niger-fr.html.

[218] Yearbook of the World's Gendarmeries, "Gendarmerie Nationale de la République du Niger."

increasing mutinies in the security sector. This reform implemented via law No. 2003–010 of March 11, 2003, led to the establishment of the code of military justice, which has provided a comprehensive instrument to deal with matters of military justice. This law also created a military court system.

Nevertheless, since its establishment, this military court system has faced a serious lack of qualified human resources. While civilian judges conducting the trials are professionals, their associate military judges and the military lawyers lack adequate training to perform their duties. These conditions have hindered the ability of military justice to constitute an essential pillar in the building of the Nigerien security services.

Additionally, the rise of transnational security treats such as organized crime and terrorism as well as internal insurrection pushed President Tandja to implement more reforms. First, he restructured the security services. In December 2003 he reorganized the Nigerien Armed Forces in order to strengthen their operational capabilities. This reorganization transformed the National Military Air Wing into the new Niger Air Force (*Armée de l'Air du Niger*), which became the coequal of the Nigerien Army. These two forces now constituted the new Nigerien Armed Forces (*Forces Armées Nigériennes* [FAN]). The main purpose of this reform was to create conditions for a rapid development of the Nigerien Air Force in order to move from a transportation air wing to an efficient tool capable of delivering air power. The growing security challenges required an effective air force that could provide the indispensable air support to ground troops.

2. Reform of Paramilitary Forces within the Interior Ministry

The republican guard, a force mainly dedicated to security and policing in rural areas, was restructured in the new format of the Nigerien security apparatus. In 1992, the reorganization of security forces placed the Nigerien Republican Guard under the Interior Ministry to support policing activities in rural areas and to improve overall interior security stability. In 1997, the National Guard became the *Forces Nationales d'Intervention et de Sécurité* (FNIS) (National Intervention and Security Forces) and

incorporated the newly created *Unités Sahariennes de Sécurité* (USS) (Saharan Security Units).[219] The integration of these units, composed of the former Tuareg rebels, in FNIS resulted from the implementation of the 1995 peace agreement between the Nigerien government and Tuareg rebels.[220] These security units were supposed to provide security in the northern part of the country by using the area expertise of these former rebels.

After 2002, President Tandja undertook to strengthen the FNIS, which has been under the Ministry of the Interior, to balance the increasing power of the FAN. The number of soldiers who had received advanced training rose quickly and the units of the National Guard of Niamey received heavy weapons similar to those used in the army. According to Göpfert, President Tandja and Interior Minister needed to utilize the FNIS as a regime-stabilizing counterforce to the military in order to avoid an eventual coup.[221]

The Nigerien National Police also went through a transformation after the suppression of the state police. In implementing some significant changes in its structure and practices, the Nigerien National Police needed to focus its activities on human security rather than state security. According to Lisbet Ilkjaer and Sourghia Soumana Boureima, the Nigerien National Police conducted successful legal and institutional reforms between 1991 and 1993.[222] They wrote, "The transformation of the police has included its mandate, missions, structure and mechanism of recruiting police officers."[223] Since these reforms, the police has tended to fulfill its mission of protecting civilians and progressively abandoned its excessive repression against civilians.

Thus, the National Police has continued its transformation toward more democratic policing. Since 2003, the Nigerien National Police Academy has provided various seminars on the protection of human rights during initial training and in-service

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219 Göpfert, *Policing the Frontier: An Ethnography of Two Worlds in Niger*, 38.

220 Deycard, "Les rébellions Touarègues du Niger," 437.

221 Göpfert, *Policing the Frontier: An Ethnography of Two Worlds in Niger*, 38.

222 Ilkjaer and Sourghia, "A Model for Developing Performance Indicators in Niger," 195–205.

223 Ilkjaer and Sourghia, 195–205.

training of the National Police.[224] Moreover, the institutional and legal reform program for the National Police—adopted in November 2007 by the Nigerien Parliament and planned for 2008–2012 period—has substantially improved the operational capabilities and the oversight of the police activities.[225] Yet, this oversight has been conducted only internally by the office of the inspector general of the police.[226]

3. Capacity-Building for Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism

The growing terrorist threats in the Sahel region and the outbreak of a second Tuareg rebellion (2007–2009) pushed Nigerien authorities to hasten the strengthening of operational capabilities of the Nigerien security forces. First, the strengthening of security forces focused on the increase of human resources. From the early 2000s, the number of soldiers of the armed forces and gendarmerie rose remarkably. The number of service members in the army increased from 4,000 in 2000 to 14,200 in 2019.[227] Likewise, the number of service members serving in the National Gendarmerie has more than tripled in two decades growing from 2,000 to 7,000 in the same period.[228] The increase of personnel was accompanied by the creation of new units to cover the majority of the Nigerien territory. For instance, the Nigerien Army, the National Gendarmerie, and the National Guard have built special forces capable of dealing with violent extremist groups.

In addition to the increase of personnel in the security forces, Niger has expanded its security expenditure in order to face the asymmetric war imposed by terrorist organizations. In this regard, Niger, which recognized the security challenges in the region at a relatively early stage, has steadily increased its security spending from 0.98 percent of GDP in 2009 to 2.45 percent of GDP in 2018. As shown in Figure 6, this

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224 Ilkjaer and Sourghia, 195–205.

225 Ilkjaer and Sourghia, 195–205.

226 The decree no. 96–100/PCSN/MI/AT of April 16, 1996, created the General Inspection of Police Services and determined the attributions, missions, and the organization of this new structure of the National Police. The purpose this internal oversight body is to reinforce oversight of police activities with respect to the democratic value and accountability.

227 Africa Center for Strategic Studies, "A Review of Major Regional Security Efforts in the Sahel," March 4, 2019, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/review-regional-security-efforts-sahel/.

228 Yearbook of the World's Gendarmeries, "Gendarmerie Nationale de la République du Niger."

growth of security expenditure—a 150 percent increase in a decade—reflects the tremendous efforts made by the Nigerien authorities to respond to the worsening of the security environment.

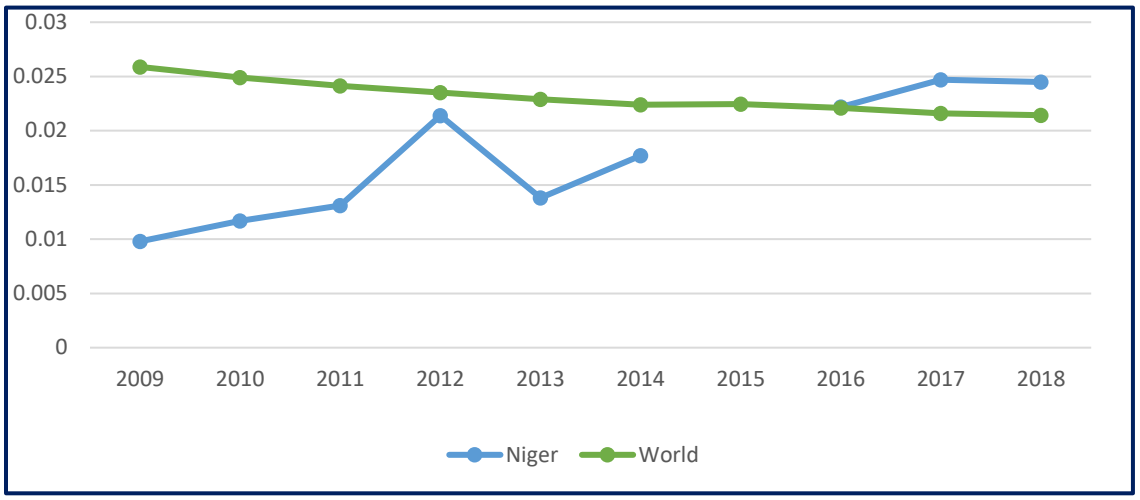

Figure 6. Niger security expenditure by percentage of GDP.[229]

In the same vein, Nigerien authorities have improved the equipment and training capacities of the Nigerien security services. Since the outbreak of the second Tuareg rebellion in 2007, successive Nigerien governments have made considerable investment to equip security forces.[230] Many programs designed to strengthen the security forces led to the acquisition of new helicopters, surveillance aircraft, attack aircraft, armored vehicles, and other various weapons.[231] At the same time, the training of service members significantly increased to generate skilled soldiers competent in fighting violent extremists.

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229 Adapted from World Bank Database (Military expenditure (% of GDP)-Niger, accessed June 10, 2020), https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=NE.

230 Emizet F. Kisangani, "The Tuaregs' Rebellions in Mali and Niger and the U.S. Global War on Terror," *International Journal on World Peace* 29, no. 1 (March 2012): 59–97, http://www.jstor.com/stable/23266590.

231 Cabinet du Premier Ministre, *Bilan des 2 Ans de Mise en Œuvre du Programme de Renaissance* [Assessment of the 2 Years of Implementation of the Renaissance Program] (Niamey, Niger : April 2013), 6, http://www.gouv.ne/docpdf/bilan-an1-renaissance2.pdf.

Nigerien authorities have also demonstrated a willingness to deepen their understanding of the evolving security challenges. To this end, the Nigerien government created a think tank called the *Centre National d'Études Stratégiques et de Sécurité* (CNESS) (National Center for Strategic Studies and Security). Nigerien authorities entrusted the conduct of national security studies to CNESS. Since its creation in August 2016, Niger's CNESS has made a significant contribution to the development of security policy. One of the major programs of the CNESS is the elaboration of a national security and defense policy. In the fulfillment of it missions, the CNESS participated in an Africa security forum organized in Morocco from October 8 to 10, 2017.[232] This forum was on the inter-African cooperation on terrorism, radicalization, and transnational crime. Similarly, the CNESS in partnership with the Center for Strategic Studies for Africa (CESA) organized a training seminar on transnational organized crimes in Africa from January 13 to January 17, 2020.[233] These kinds of forums and seminars give the actors of the Nigerien security sector a better understanding of the Nigerien and regional security landscape and hence improve their ability to produce better security policies.

D. INVOLVEMENT OF NIGER'S PARTNERS IN REFORM EFFORTS

Since its independence, Niger has received the support of foreign powers to meet the requirement of its security sector. Among its numerous partners, the United States, France, and Germany can be considered as traditional partners. They have played an important role in the country's ability to face diverse security challenges for decades. Recently, some other partners such as Nigeria, Algeria, and Morocco, as well as international organizations (such as the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, the European Union, UN, and DCAF) have also contributed to the Nigerien efforts to curtail the rise of instability in the Sahel. The cooperation between Niger and its Western partners has developed quickly and has taken the form of various programs designed to strengthen the

232 CNESS, "Conférence régionale sur le Sahel" [Regional Conference on the Sahel], CNESS, June 25, 2019, http://www.cness.ne/index.php?start=3.

233 CNESS, "Séminaire de formation sur les crimes transnationaux organisés en Afrique" [Training Seminar on Transnational Organized Crime in Africa], CNESS, Accessed on August 27, 2020, http://www.cness.ne/index.php/190-seminaire-de-formation.

Nigerien security sector engaged in a struggle against organized crime, insurgencies, and violent extremism.

1. Evolving U.S. Involvement in Niger

Since the early 2000s, Niger's ungoverned spaces have constituted a security concern for the United States, which has "provided" various forms of support to help Niger build counterterrorism and peacekeeping capacity.[234] After the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, the President George W. Bush administration launched a counterterrorism program termed the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) for Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.[235] The United States has seen in the ungoverned spaces of these countries potential areas where terrorist groups could prosper and hypothetically use them as a base to launch attacks against U.S. interests. The purpose of this program was therefore to assist and advise these countries' militaries in their fight against terrorist and criminal groups in the Sahel region through an effective control of these spaces.[236] The United States provided training and equipment to the first Nigerien special forces unit that was effective in the fight against terrorist groups and the Tuareg rebellion. Before its end in March 2004, PSI demonstrated that the United States could substantially improve the operational capacity of the regional security forces. The positive results of the PSI program led to another, broader program: the Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP).[237]

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[234] Anne L. Clunan, "Ungoverned Spaces? The Need for Reevaluation," in *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*, ed. Clunan Anne and Harold A. Trinkunas (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 5, ProQuest; U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Relations With Niger* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, December 2018), https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-niger/.

[235] Lawrence Cline, "Counterterrorism Strategy in the Sahel, Studies," *Conflict & Terrorism* 30, 10 (August 2007): 889–899, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100701559032.

[236] Cline, "Counterterrorism Strategy in the Sahel, Studies," 889–899.

[237] Global Security, "Pan Sahel Initiative," Global Security, Accessed on July 18, 2020, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/pan-sahel.htm.

As a multiyear program, TSCTP has helped Niger counter violent extremism (CVE) through a comprehensive approach.[238] While encouraging regional security cooperation, this program has tried to develop the resilience of marginalized Nigerien communities and engage in capacity-building of security forces for a long-term counterterrorism endeavor.[239] Since the outbreak of the Malian crisis in 2012, the U.S. support to the Nigerien security services has been consistent. The United States has trained many Nigerien battalions and has significantly improved the logistical capacity of the Nigerien security forces. For example, in addition to the continuous training programs, every year the United States has trained and equipped the Nigerien peacekeeping battalions before their deployment to Mali. The TSCTP program has played a particularly crucial role in the development of the Niger Air Force, which benefited from new aircraft for intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), medical evacuation, and transportation. Additionally, military exercises organized by the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), such as Flintlock and Africa Endeavor, have helped Nigerien security services improve their fighting skills in hybrid warfare.[240]

The United States has also supported regional initiatives in the fight against violent extremism in the Sahel. The indirect and direct U.S. financial support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which has been set up to tackle the increasing security concerns in the Sahel region, has helped to strengthen the operational capabilities of the Nigerien battalions dedicated to this force. In this regard, the bilateral U.S. assistance to the G5 Sahel countries from 2017 to the end of 2018 totaled about $111 million.[241]

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238 Lesley Anne Warner, *The Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership. Building Partner Capacity to Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism* (Washington, DC: Center for Stability and Development CNA Corporation, March 2014), 23, https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/crm-2014-u-007203-final.pdf.

239 Warner, The Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership, 27.

240 Cline, "Counterterrorism Strategy in the Sahel, Studies," 889–899.

241 Moda Dieng, "The Multi-National Joint Task Force and the G5 Sahel Joint Force: The Limits of Military Capacity-building Efforts," *Contemporary Security Policy* 40, no. 4 (April 2019): 481–501, https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1602692.

Additionally, a number of Nigerien officers have already benefited from leadership training in the United States or during the temporary training sessions organized by the United States in Niger. This training has helped Nigerien officers in their daily duties. Moreover, a special program, the Security Governance Initiative, was launched in January 2015 to enhance the transparency, accountability, and legitimacy of the management and oversight of security policy and practice.[242] The ultimate goal for Niger has been the effective management of the human, material, and financial resources in the security sector.[243] Because of committed senior level defense official input in SGI, the government of Niger started to codify many of these changes, and the program is widely seen as successful.[244]

Another example of U.S. engagement in Niger is the Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) program, started in 2015. Through CWD, the U.S. State Department helps Nigerien security forces with securing their weapon stashes, and providing weapons disposal.[245] This program solves a problem for Niger, as secure storage space is severely limited, and thus excess weapons become both a logistical burden and a ripe target for theft.[246] The United States has provided more than $4 million for CWD activities in Niger and the program has funded the restoration of 26 armories to safeguard government stockpiles and enabled the destruction of more than 15 tons of ammunition.[247] Additionally, the CWD program has increased the Government of Niger's capabilities to secure its own munitions by giving technical aid to Niger's National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons, and these efforts were viewed as a success.[248]

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242 Julie E. Chalfin and Linda Thomas-Greenfield, "The Security Governance Initiative," *PRISM* 6, no. 4 (May 2017): 65−77, https://cco.ndu.edu/News/Article/1171855/the-security-governance-initiative/.

243 Chalfin and Thomas-Greenfield, "The Security Governance Initiative," 65−77.

244 Chalfin and Thomas-Greenfield.

245 Michael Tirre, "How Destroying Excess Weapons in Niger Weakens Terrorists in the Sahel and Sahara," *Dipnote U.S. Department of State* (Blog), October 9, 2019, https://www.state.gov/how-destroying-excess-weapons-in-niger-weakens-terrorists-in-the-sahel-and-sahara/.

246 Tirre, "How Destroying Excess Weapons in Niger Weakens Terrorists in the Sahel and Sahara."

247 Tirre.

248 Tirre.

2. European Efforts

France has remained an important actor in Nigerien security matters. Most Nigerien military personnel have received training in French schools, and Niger has benefited from French aid in military equipment and technical training. The growing threat to security has pushed France to increase its military footprint in the Sahel region. Its anti-terrorist operation Barkhane has an important component in Niger. Additionally, France has been engaged in the capacity-building of the Nigerien security services. For instance, France provided three Gazelle SA320 helicopters and other military equipment to Nigerien security forces, and built a Nigerien anti-terrorist unit, which was under the Nigerien intelligence service, the General Directorate of Documentation and External Security of Niger (*Direction Générale de la Documentation et de la Sécurité Exteriéure* [DGDSE]). This unit was very effective in gathering intelligence about violent extremist organizations.

Similarly, Germany has increased it security cooperation with Niger and has worked with Nigerien security services to strengthen their operational capabilities and the safety of military bases. During a visit by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Niger in October 2016, German Ambassador to Niger Bernd von Münchow-Pohl said, "For us, Niger is a central partner and a key country in the fight against terrorism and illegal migration from West Africa."[249] While Germany has not yet provided any lethal armaments to Niger, it has participated in the improvement of the infrastructure of some military schools, the building of the engineer corps, and the tactical training of infantry units. Furthermore, Germany has built a military base in Niamey to provide intra-theater

[249] Jeune Afrique, "Niger : l'Allemagne va construire une base militaire en appui à la MINUSMA au Mali" [Niger : Germany to Build a Military Base in Support of MINUSMA in Mali], October 5, 2016, https://www.jeuneafrique.com/362997/politique/niger-lallemagne-va-construire-base-militaire-appui-a-minusma-mali/.

medical support to its troops based in Mali and to the troops of countries that are fighting terrorist organizations in the Sahel.[250]

Likewise, highly concerned about the complex security crisis in the Sahel, the European Union has also played an increasing role in the capacity-building of the Nigerien security sector. The EU and individual states such as Italy and Belgium have helped strengthen the Nigerien security sector in order to curb violent extremist activities and illegal migration to Europe. The EU has been conducting three programs intended to sustain Niger's effort to build the security sector. First, EUCAP Sahel Niger, which was originally established to "support the capacity-building of Nigerien security actors to fight organized crime and terrorism," shifted from 2014 to focus on migration issues.[251] The Rapid Action Groups (*Groupes d'Action Rapides – Surveillance et Intervention au Sahel* [GAR-SI Sahel])—built in all G5-Sahel countries with the support of the EU—are specialized in border control and counterterrorism. This EU project has a budget of €41.6 million ($49 million) for the five Sahel countries.[252] A multilayer project named Push for Justice and Security in Niger (*Appui à la Justice et à la Sécurité au Niger*) [AJUSEN]) is funded by the EU (€90 million [$106 million]) and intervenes in the justice, security, and border management sectors.[253]

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[250] Bem Japhet Audu and Shuaibu Ibrahim, "Niger Republic: Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency in a Complex Terrain," in *New Architecture of Regional Security in Africa: Perspective on Counterterrorism and Counter-Insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin*, ed. Usman A. Tar and Bashir Bala (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020), 328.

[251] Jair van Der Lijn, *For the Long Run: A Mapping of Migration-Related Activities in the Wider Sahel Region* (The Hague, The Netherlands: Clingendael Institute, 2017), 3, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05494.

[252] Morten Bøås, "EU Migration Management in the Sahel: Unintended Consequences on the Ground in Niger?" *Third World Quarterly* (July 2020): 1−15, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1784002.

[253] Roz Price, *Donor Activities in Strengthening Access to Justice in the Sahel*, K4D Helpdesk Report, (Brighton, England: Institute of Development Studies (IDS), March 2020). https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/15248/767_Donor_activities_in_strengthening_access_to_justice_in_the_Sahel.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

3. International Organizations

International organizations have also played an essential role in the transformation of the Nigerien security sector. The capacity-building of the Sahelian security forces has been one of the core elements of the UN counterterrorism strategy in the Sahel.[254] The United Nations has provided technical support to the Nigerien security forces and has actively participated into the mobilization of financial resources for Sahelian security forces. Moreover, it has delivered sustained logistical support to G5 Sahel Joint Task Force battalions.[255] For instance, UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2391 of 2017 and Resolution 2480 of 2019 have created mechanisms to enhance the capacities of G5 battalions through direct logistical support from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).[256] This support has improved the readiness and the mobility of the Nigerien security forces engaged in the fight against terrorism.

In addition, the United Nations has helped address human rights violations allegedly committed by the Sahelian security forces. The UN has been extremely worried about human rights violations in the Sahel.[257] To address this problem, which can hinder donors' willingness to support Sahelian countries, the United Nations has provided training on the matter through its agencies and has put pressure on the relevant governments to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and security of the civilian populations.[258]

The African Union and Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) have also played an important role in the strengthening of Nigerien security

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254 Dieng, "The Multi-National Joint Task Force and the G5 Sahel Joint Force," 481–501.

255 Dieng.

256 United Nations, *United Nations Security Council resolution 2391*, S/RES/2391 (2017), http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2391.

257 Mireille Affa'a Mindzie, "Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights in the Sahel," *International Journal of Security & Development* 2, no. 30 (June 2013): 1−12, http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.br.

258 United Nations, United Nations Security Council resolution 2391.

forces. Their diplomatic engagement has brought the critical security situation in the Sahel to the attention of the international community.[259] ECOWAS has established a number of counterterrorism organizations such as the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Coordination Bureau (ECOCTB), the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Training Centre, and the Counter Terrorism Technical Assistance Directory to support its member states in their efforts to effectively fight terrorism.[260]

E. CONCLUSION

Niger's security sector transformation has suffered from poor civil-military relations, a colonial legacy, and the militarization of Nigerien politics as well as the politicization of the military, which has undergone various reforms at different periods of Niger's history. Coercive military practices and certain behaviors inherited from the French military have also hindered Nigerien civil-military relations. After independence, the overwhelming influence of the French military in the Nigerien security sector delayed any reform that could have permitted the building of strong security forces. This French influence was needed by Nigerien authorities who feared a military coup. After the realization of their fear on April 15, 1974, the military regime that followed undertook a strengthening of the security sector. Nigerien security forces, which led the country for 17 years, became an important actor in the Nigerien sociopolitical ecosystem. The 1990s and 2000s were decades characterized by three military coups, six mutinies, and two Tuareg rebellions. These events and the rise of terrorism have shaped the Nigerien security sector. The Nigerien government and its partners have made considerable efforts to improve the resilience of the Nigerien security sector in an increasingly volatile security environment. Yet, the relative success of the reforms undertaken reflects the complexity of Nigerien civil-military relations that have thwarted the building of security

[259] Olajide O. Akanji, "Sub-regional Security Challenge: ECOWAS and the War on Terrorism in West Africa," *Insight on Africa* 11, no. 1 (January 2019): 94–112, https://doi.org/10.1177/0975087818805842.

[260] Akanji, "Sub-Regional Security Challenge," 94–112.

services that would be most effective in dealing with violent extremist attacks and other transnational threats.

IV. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE NIGERIEN SECURITY SERVICES

Niger's security services have attempted to adapt to evolving security threats throughout the past 50 years in an endeavor to ensure the stability of the country. These reforms have to some extent improved the effectiveness of the Nigerien security services and have helped them prevent a collapse in security. However, the Nigerien security services have found it difficult to fight violent extremist organizations. Several shortcomings have impeded the fighting capabilities of certain units and thus have hindered the effectiveness of the overall security sector in dealing with new security challenges. Among these shortcomings are the lack of trust between civilian authorities and the military elite, the weak governance in the security sector, the lack of local ownership of programs that are being implemented by foreign partners, and the poor coordination of the security related activities.

This chapter first discusses the strengths that have helped the Nigerien security services address such internal and external security threats as organized crime, rebellions, and violent extremism. Then, the chapter describes the weaknesses that have jeopardized Nigerien resilience in an unstable Sahel.

A. STRENGTHS OF THE NIGERIEN SECURITY SECTOR

The relative success of the Nigerien security services can be attributed to their increasing operational capacity in the Sahel region, the support of the Nigerien population, the engagement of the Nigerien civil society, and the cooperation that Niger has maintained with its strategic partners.

1. Increasing Operational Capacity

The experience that the Nigerien security forces have gained from internal conflicts they have fought and international peace operations in which they have participated, as well as the courageous capacity-building efforts undertaken by Nigerien authorities, have helped to strengthen the security forces' professionalism and their

ability to combat non-state actors. As a general rule, a well-trained and well-commanded armed force that participates in regular military engagements acquires expertise that is difficult to obtain even with the most complex exercises. For instance, the special battalion deployed that has already participated in many military engagements has shown itself more effective than other battalions. The frequent engagements since the 1990s have transformed Nigerien soldiers into experienced fighters in the Sahel-Sahara region.[261] The recurrent armed uprisings in the northern part of the country have helped to strengthen the combativeness of the Nigerien security forces, which have also gained experience in patrolling and fighting in Nigerien desert areas.[262] In comparison to other West African armies, Christopher Griffin remarks that the Nigerien Army "is a force with a great deal of experience in desert warfare, fighting multiple Touareg [sic] rebellions during the 1990s and 2000s."[263] Although Nigerien military leadership did not seek these engagements, they have certainly contributed to the improvement of the Nigerien security forces.

Moreover, the participation of Nigerien contingents in international peace operations has helped to hone the professionalism of the Nigerien security forces. Pre-deployment training has provided the Nigerien troops necessary skills to meet the standards of United Nations peacekeeping operations, and their interaction with other contingents has strengthened their knowledge of complex warfare. For instance, certain Nigerien units have improved their operational capacities since they began participating in the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program in 2005.[264] In all, this program has strengthened the physical and technical skills of the soldiers.

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[261] Christopher Griffin, "Operation Barkhane and Boko Haram: French Counterterrorism and Military Cooperation in the Sahel," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (August 2016): 896–913, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1208283.

[262] Griffin.

[263] Griffin.

[264] Jaya Jyotika, "Africa and the AFRICOM: An Appraisal," *Insight on Africa* 1, no. 1 (January 2009): 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/0975087814411101.

Aware of Niger's vulnerabilities linked to ungoverned spaces, the government has taken the threat of violent extremism seriously since the early 2000s. The 2006 Tuareg rebellion in Mali was a sign for the administration of President Mamadou Tandja that Niger could face the same security challenges.[265] The asymmetric threats associated with these types of engagements quickly became a major concern for the Nigerien security and defense forces. Therefore, Niger authorities have reinforced the security sector. Nigerien military leadership has attempted to adapt security tools to the new context characterized by the rise violent extremist organizations. Increased access to resources, more training, and better equipment have strengthened the Nigerien Armed Forces.[266] The mobility of the Nigerien forces has increased, and the intelligence gathering ability has significantly improved with the introduction of new units dedicated to the collection of intelligence on the battlefield as well as the use of ISR assets.[267]

At the same time, the special forces have gained combat skills and adequate equipment. The first Nigerien unit dedicated to the fight against terrorism, which was developed with the support of the American program, PSI, has demonstrated its effectiveness in fighting asymmetric warfare.[268] This unit played an important role in defeating the MNJ armed uprising. Subsequently, several units—such as the special battalion for intelligence (*bataillon Spécial de renseignement* [BSR]) and the special intervention battalion (*bataillon Spécial d'intervention* [BSI])—of these anti-terrorist forces were created and equipped. In early 2018, Niger had moved ahead in the process of generating special forces with the aim of creating 12 BSI over five years.[269] As a result, Niger has developed some units that are relatively effective in fighting violent

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265 Stephen Emerson, "Desert Insurgency: Lessons from the Third Tuareg Rebellion," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22, no. 4 (September 2011): 669–687, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2011.573406.

266 Le Roux, "Responding to the Rise in Violent Extremism in the Sahel," 1−8.

267 Lawrence E. Cline, "African Regional Intelligence Cooperation: Problems and Prospects, International," *Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 29, no. 3 (April 2016): 447–469, https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2016.1148479.

268 Cline, "Counterterrorism Strategy in the Sahel, Studies," 889–899.

269 Nina Wilén, *Belgian Special Forces in the Sahel: A Minimal Footprint with Maximal Output*? (Brussels, Belgium: Egmont Institute, 2019), 4, www.jstor.org/stable/resrep21376.

extremist groups. Well trained, well equipped, and highly mobile, these units have specific abilities that have bolstered the effectiveness of the Nigerien security forces. Griffin argues that "the Nigerien Army has proved to be surprisingly effective against Boko Haram," as Boko Haram has failed to establish solid bases within Nigerien territory.[270] This observation confirms the improvement of the Nigerien security forces.

2. Public Support of the Nigerien Security Forces

Despite some isolated human rights violations committed by certain service members, the Nigerian population remains largely committed to the Nigerian security forces, perhaps because so many Nigerien families have been touched by violence at the hands of extremists. The ongoing struggle against violent extremist organizations has caused the death of many Nigerien soldiers.[271] Many Nigerien families have also experienced the loss of relatives or friends. This feeling of losing parents or friends due to the barbaric actions of the violent extremist groups has mobilized the people behind their armed forces. This support has taken different forms. On February 15, 2015, hundreds of thousands people participated in marches that were organized across the country to support and encourage Nigerien security forces in their fight against Boko Haram.[272] Moreover, civil society organizations and the media organized a fundraiser for service members that collected more than $4 million in one night during a telethon held on February 20, 2015.[273] When several terrorist attacks against Nigerien military units caused the deaths of more than 200 service members in December 2019, the Nigerien

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[270] Griffin, "Operation Barkhane and Boko Haram," 896–913.

[271] Lucile Medina et Mohamadou Mountaga Diallo, "Les Coopérations Transfrontalières comme Outils d'Intégration Régionale : Analyse Croisée dans les Suds (Amérique Centrale, Afrique de l'Ouest) [Cross-Border Cooperation as a Tool of Regional Integration: a Cross Analysis of two Regions in the Global South (Central American, West Africa)]," Belgeo, April 4, 2020, http://journals.openedition.org/belgeo/43693.

[272] Radio France Internationale, "Niger: Forte Mobilisation à Niamey Contre Boko Haram [Niger: Strong Mobilization in Niamey against Boko Haram]," February 17, 2015, https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20150217-niger-forte-mobilisation-niamey-contre-boko-haram-issoufou.

[273] ECODAFRIK, "Plus de 2 Milliards de FCFA Collectés à l'Occasion d'un Téléthon de Soutien aux FDS [More than 2 Billion FCFA Collected During a Telethon to Support the FDS]," February 23, 2015, http://www.ecodafrik.com/inter-niger-securite-plus-de-2-milliards-de-fcfa-collectes-a-loccasion-dun-telethon-de-soutien-aux-fds/.

people showed their compassion to the security services through a remarkable mobilization during funerals. Prayers were held through the country and certain companies and businesses closed for collective prayers.[274]

3. Engagement of Civil Society in Security Sector Governance

Nigerien civil society organizations have played an important oversight role in the Nigerien security sector, but not to the extent that they alone can prompt good practices. Nigerien civil society has developed capacities in enhancing oversight. In this role they are supposed to complement the executive and legislative branches in charge of the institutional oversight. Civil society has often conducted its own investigations in order to identify wrongdoing in the security sector and to encourage the government to take necessary corrective actions to ensure accountability and effectiveness for the security forces. For instance, on March 15, 2020, Nigerien civil society organizations called for a march to strongly protest the government's initial proposal to only ensure the reimbursement of funds unlawfully used by the perpetrators of an embezzlement scheme within the Ministry of Defense.[275] Nevertheless, despite the engagement of Nigerien civil society, its oversight efforts cannot serve as a substitute for a genuine and effective oversight mechanism, which is primarily the mission of the executive and legislative branches that have more access to the Nigerien security apparatus.

4. Fruitful Cooperation with Regional and International Partners

The cooperation of the Nigerien security sector with its Western counterparts has constituted a central element of Nigerien security forces' resilience. First, Nigerien

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[274] Press Afrik, "Niger: Le Douloureux Hommage aux 71 Soldats Tués à Inates [Niger: The Painful Tribute to the 71 Soldiers Killed at Inates]," December 14, 2019, https://www.pressafrik.com/Niger-le-douloureux-hommage-aux-71-soldats-tues-a-Inates_a209113.html.

[275] Niagalé Bagayoko, "Sahel : l'Indispensable Gouvernance plus Vertueuse des Budgets de Défense. Des Services d'Inspection, la Société Civile et des Parlementaires sont Montés au Créneau pour Révéler et Prévenir des Malversations. Le Signe de la Quête d'une Meilleure Ethique [Sahel : The Indispensable more Virtuous Governance of Defense Budgets. Inspection Services, Civil Society and Parliamentarians Have Stepped up to the Plate to Reveal and Prevent Wrongdoing. The Sign of the Quest for a better Ethic]," *Le Point Afrique*, June 5, 2020, https://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/sahel-l-indispensable-gouvernance-plus-vertueuse-des-budgets-de-defense-05-06-2020-2378599_3826.php.

security forces have benefited from various training opportunities and have improved their professionalism by working with foreign soldiers. The interaction of the Nigerien security forces with professional Western armed forces has contributed to the improvement of the fighting skills and professionalism of the Nigerien troops. Joint operations involving both foreign and Nigerien troops have not only been a powerful tool to curb violent extremists' actions but also a practical method for Nigerien soldiers to learn useful techniques of asymmetric warfare.[276] According to the White House, about 730 American troops including MQ9 drone operators were stationed in Niger in 2018.[277] In addition to the experience sharing, these troops have provided vital strategic intelligence that supports Nigerien engagements against violent extremist organizations.

The cooperation has also created the conditions to build and refurbish military facilities that have improved the operational capacity of the Nigerien security forces. For instance, while Germany funded the construction of a second runway in Niamey, the United States built a $100 million air base in Agadez as well as a runway in Dirkou.[278] These facilities are crucial for operational and logistic planning.

Similarly, Niger has benefited from various types of military equipment provided by donors. The equipment that donor countries provided to Niger has constituted an

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[276] Nicolas Desgrais, *Le G5 Sahel, en Réaction à la Mutation de l'Environnement Stratégique Sahélien Politiques Régionales de Coopération et Niveaux d'Engagement des Etats Membres* [The G5 Sahel, in Response to the Transformation of the Sahelian Strategic Environment: Regional Cooperation Policies and Levels of Commitment of Member States] (Paris, France: Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, June 2008), 44, https://www.frstrategie.org/sites/default/files/documents/programmes/observatoire-du-monde-arabo-musulman-et-du-sahel/publications/76.pdf.

[277] White House, *Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate* (Washington, DC: The White House, June 8, 2018), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/text-letter-president-speaker-house-representatives-president-pro-tempore-senate-4/.

[278] Hans-Georg Ehrhart, "Military Engagement of the U.S., France, and Germany in the Sahel. Towards Liberal Peace by Post-modern Intervention?" in *Sicherheits- und Friedensordnungen in Afrika: Nationale und regionale Herausforderungen,* ed. Hans-Georg Ehrhart and Michael Staack (Berlin, Germany: May 15, 2019), 74.

indispensable complement to those that Niger can purchase with its limited resources. In this regard, the United States has been consistently willing to support Nigerien efforts.[279]

B. WEAKNESSES OF THE NIGERIEN SECURITY SECTOR

Although some progress has been made in building the capacity of the Nigerien security forces, the inability of certain units to handle violent extremist attacks underscores certain weaknesses of the entire Nigerien security sector. The rise of violent extremism in the Sahel has threatened Niger's stability at three of its borders simultaneously. As Cristina Barrios observes, "Niger's own ability to guarantee national security is now in question. The military is relatively strong and disciplined, but it is overstretched."[280] In these circumstances the difficulties of the security sector become obvious. The Nigerien security sector has undeniably suffered from weak civil-military relations, deficit of governance, evident shortcomings in the handling of assistance provided by Niger's strategic partners, and a poor coordination of security-related activities.

1. Weak Governance

The weak governance of the Nigerien security sector has undermined the effectiveness and legitimacy of Nigerien security services. Since the democratic transition in the 1990s, the governance of the Nigerien security sector has become an issue of great concern. The Nigerien security sector has developed an executive-centered system in which oversight and democratic control of the security services remain either relatively weak or non-existent. The Ministry of Defense and Interior Ministry possess inspection directorates in charge of overseeing security services. The General Inspection of the Armed Forces and National Gendarmerie (IGA/GN) is in charge of overseeing the activities of these forces. A similar oversight body within the Interior Ministry is in

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[279] Joseph Guido (Lt. Col.), "The American Way of War in Africa: The Case of Niger," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 30, no. 1 (January 2019): 176−199, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2018.1554337.

[280] Cristina Barrios, *Transit Niger: Migrants, Rebels and Traffickers,* Alert_31_Niger (Paris, France: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2015), https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/192071/Alert_31_Niger.pdf.

charge of the National Police and the National Guard. However, the actions of these oversight bodies have been limited. According to Nigerien law, an internal audit of military procurements should be made every six months.[281] A report conducted by the inspection service of the IGA/GN from October 2, 2019 to February 14, 2020 revealed that these requirements have never been met due to some internal and external contingencies.[282]

Additionally, legislative oversight over the Nigerien security sector has been poor and ineffective.[283] Niger's constitution provides oversight power to the National Assembly, but the parliament has not effectively exercised this oversight power due to several reasons. First, members of Parliament (MP) do not have necessary knowledge to oversee military activities. The Defense and Security Committee (DSC), which is in charge of the legislative oversight of the security forces, lacks a clear understanding of the Nigerien security challenges that it should help address through effective oversight and democratic control. Second, the parliament does not fully exercise its oversight responsibilities. According to Transparency International (TI), despite the existence of oversight functions in the form of parliamentary committees, defense institutions historically have been exempted from the same degree of scrutiny given to other Nigerien institutions.[284] Apart from a bit of involvement during the defense budgeting process, DSC has never conducted true oversight of the spending by the security services. Moreover, as mentioned by TI, "Despite recent promising government initiatives and reforms, attempts to improve defense governance in Niger are hindered by high levels of

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281 Cabinet du premier minister, Décret N° 2013–570/PRN/PM du 20 Décembre 2013 Portant Modalités Particulières de Passation des Marchés de Travaux, d'Equipement, de Fournitures et de Services Concernant les Besoins de Defense et de Security Nationale [Decree No. 2013–570/PRN/PM of 20 December 2013 Laying down Specific Procedures for Awarding Contracts for Works, Equipment, Supplies, and Services Concerning National Defense and Security Needs] (Niamey, Niger: Cabinet du Premier Ministre, December 20, 2013), http://www.armp-niger.org/workspace/uploads/reglementation/code-millitaire.pdf.

282 Transparency International, "2020 Government Defense Integrity Index - Country Overview: Niger," accessed June 15, 2020, https://ti-defence.org/gdi/countries/niger/.

283 Transparency International. "2020 Government Defense Integrity Index."

284 Transparency International.

secrecy and defense exceptionalism, which severely limit oversight and control of defense institutions by parliament and audit mechanisms."[285] These shortcomings are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Risk of corruption indicators in security sector.[286]

Overall Country Score E 22 Very High Risk					
Political Risk	**E**	**31**	**Operational Risk**		**F**
International Instruments	B	75	Corruption Monitoring in Operations	F	8
Budget Transparency & Detail	C	63	Military Doctrine	F	0
Anticorruption Policy	C	63	Operational Training	F	0
Natural Resources	C	58	Forward Planning	F	0
Organized Crime Links	C	50	Controls in Contracting	F	0
Defense Policy Debate	D	44			
Legislative Scrutiny	D	42	**Procurement Risk**	**E**	**17**
Organized Crime Policing	D	42	Procurement Legislation	B	75
Anticorruption Institutions	D	42	Procurement Cycle	C	50
Budget Availability	D	33	Supplier Sanctions	D	33
Budget Scrutiny	E	25	Tender Board Controls	E	31
CSO Engagement	E	25	Business Compliance Standards	E	25
External Audit	E	17	Anti-Collusion Controls	E	25
Defense Committee	E	17	Procurement Requirements	E	17
Acquisition Planning	F	8	Open Competition v. Single Sourcing	F	13
Defense Income	F	8	Contract Award / Delivery	F	13
Risk Assessments	F	0	Procurement Oversight Mechanisms	F	8
Internal Audit	F	0			
Intelligence Services Oversight	F	0			
Lobbying	F	0			

Consequently, this lack of effective oversight and democratic control has led to a serious paucity of transparency and accountability, which has fueled corruption in the Nigerien security sector. Indeed, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of 2019

[285] Transparency International, "High Levels of Defense Corruption Risk Threaten Security and Stability in Niger," December 6, 2019, https://ti-defence.org/niger-defence-corruption-risk-global-defence-integrity-index/.

[286] Adapted from Transparency International, "2020 Government Defense Integrity Index - Country Niger."

suggested that corruption has expanded in Niger despite the apparent determination of Nigerien authorities to fight this calamity. In 2019 Niger was listed among the most corrupt countries in the world, with a score of just 32 points out of 100, where 100 is the least corrupt.[287] Specifically, many scholars have pointed out the corrupt nature of the Sahelian security institutions. Zoë Gorman argues that the stabilization efforts of the Sahel have relied on weak and corrupt institutions.[288] In Niger, the fact that security has been jeopardized by corruption is mainly due to insufficient control and oversight over the security sector. According to TI, Niger has been ranked near the bottom of indices for defense budget transparency in part due to the absence of an effective auditing mechanism.[289] As a result, Niger's security sector has suffered from large-scale mismanagement of defense resources.[290]

The widespread corruption in the Nigerien security sector has seriously undermined the capacity of the security forces to deal with violent extremist groups, which further destabilizes the country. Indeed, the Nigerien security budget has increased significantly during last decade, but funds available for security services are limited in absolute terms. While the Nigerien Armed Forces seem to be relatively well-funded as a percentage of GDP, in absolute terms they remain underfunded. For instance, in 2018, the Nigerien security budget, which was only $230 million, could be considered insignificant in comparison to the budget of countries facing similar security challenges, like Tunisia with $844.23 million.[291]

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[287] Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index,* 2019 *Report*, https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/niger#.

[288] Zoë Gorman, "Pursuing Elusive Stability in the Sahel," SIPRI, March 26, 2019, https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2019/pursuing-elusive-stability-sahel.

[289] Transparency International, "2020 Government Defense Integrity Index - Country: Niger."

[290] Mark Anderson, Khadija Sharife, and Nathalie Prevost, "How a Notorious Arms Dealer Hijacked Niger's Budget and Bought Weapons from Russia," Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), August 6, 2020, https://www.occrp.org/en/investigations/notorious-arms-dealer-hijacked-nigers-budget-and-bought-arms-from-russia.

[291] World Bank Database, Military Expenditure (current USD) – Niger, accessed June 15, 2020, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD?locations=NE.

Most of these funds have been wasted through corruption.[292] There is sufficient evidence to argue that corruption has constituted one of the underlining factors of the Nigerien security sector's relative ineffectiveness. By not allocating contracts to the most efficient provider of services, the Nigerien security bureaucracy has created conditions that undercut state effectiveness in providing necessary equipment to security services. For instance, in 2019, 1,000 unserviceable AK-47 weapons of an old stockpile were provided to the Nigerien security forces.[293] According to a statement made by the Chief of Defense Staff, General Ahmed Mohamed, defective ammunition was also provided to the armed and security forces.[294] These unusable arms have undermined the combativeness and the morale of soldiers during the confrontation with terrorists. In the case of Niger especially, corruption has diverted scarce security allocations and hence has blocked supplies that the military requires to fight violent extremist organizations.

In late 2019, after the deadliest terrorist attack against a Nigerien military unit, the investigation ordered by the president and conducted under the supervision of the newly appointed defense minister, Issoufou Katambé, revealed extensive and organized corruption in the Ministry of Defense. The audit that concerned the contracts awarded from 2017 to 2019 disclosed that about $137 million was lost to corruption.[295] This amount represented nearly 23 percent of the total budget—about $603 million—of the Defense Ministry during the same period.[296]

In the defense and security bureaucracy, the civilian agents' lack of knowledge and expertise about security issues has constituted another important factor that has

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[292] Moussa Aksar, "Défaillance des Armées Face aux Détournements du Budget de la Défense : l'Exemple du Niger [Failure of the Armies in the Face of Misappropriations of the Defense Budget: The Example of Niger]," *Echos du Sahel*, September 27, 2020.

[293] Niger Ministry of Defense, *Rapport sur le Contrôle a Posteriori des Marchés Publics au Ministère de la Défense* [Report on Post Audit of Public Procurement at the Ministry of Defense] (Niamey, Niger: L'Inspection Générale des Armées et de la Gendarmerie Nationale, March 2020).

[294] Moussa Aksar, "Malversations au Ministère de la Défense : 71,8 Milliards de fcfa Captés par des Seigneurs du Faux" [Embezzlement at the Ministry of Defense: 71.8 Billions fcfa Captured by False Lords]," *L'Evénement Niger***,** September 21, 2020.

[295] Anderson, Sharife, and Prevost, "How a Notorious Arms Dealer Hijacked Niger's Budget."

[296] World Bank Database, Military Expenditure (current USD) – Niger.

impeded the governance of the Nigerien security sector. To be handled properly, security matters require skilled personnel. Most of the time, civilian political appointees in the Nigerien security sector lack expertise. Generally, they are not specialists in security issues and they are frequently replaced as the regimes change. This practice conforms with the view of José A. Olmeda, who argues that the micromanagement of the security sector by political appointees who generally have lesser practical experience, diminishes the effectiveness of the security forces.[297]

2. Lack of Trust between Civilian Authorities and the Military Elite

The intervention of the military in the political arena has shaped the relationship between the security forces and other actors of Nigerien society. Since the first military coup in 1974 that ended the one-party regime of the President Diori, Nigerien defense and security forces have remained a major actor in Nigerien politics. After the democratic transition in early 1990s, Niger experienced three successful military coups that interrupted the democratic process, at least two thwarted coup attempts, and six military mutinies. These events have contributed to the deterioration of the civil-military relationship throughout the last three decades.

Unfortunately, the Nigerien people have come to perceive their armed and security forces as an influential actor that can arbitrate Nigerien politics. The military coups have received significant public support and to some extent the backing of some political elites.[298] Despite the fact that this kind of regime change is illegal and anti-democratic, a large part of the Nigerien public seems to accept coups as a means to settle frequent political instabilities that Niger has experienced. As Nadine Olafsson argues,

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[297] José A. Olmeda, "Escape from Huntington's Labyrinth: Civil-Military Relations and Comparative Politics," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil–Military Relations*, ed Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York: Routledge, 2016), 66.

[298] George Derpanopoulos, Erica Frantz, Barbara Geddes, and Joseph Wright, "Are Coups Good for Democracy?" *Research and Politics* 3, no. 1 (January-March 2016): 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168016630837.

such military coups can be considered as an "act of social justice."[299] Thus, it is rooted in the perception of the Nigerien public that the actions of military elites to end these regimes have been necessary. Moreover, political actors seem to believe that a military coup is the easiest way to prompt a regime change. Nigerien political elites have observed that overthrown parties fail to win the subsequent elections. Hence, the military coups tend to favor opposition parties.

Certain Nigerien heads of state have tried different approaches to deal with this situation. While President Diori had simply shown a reluctance to build strong security forces due to fear that such forces could overthrow his regime, President Tandja tried to empower the National Guard to balance the Armed Forces.[300] These two methods failed to prevent military coups as President Diori in 1974 and President Tandja in 2010 were both overthrown by the military. Incapable of alleviating this persistent threat of military coup, successive Nigerien governments have lost confidence in the military and engaged in extensive surveillance of their own military. Conway Waddington remarks, "The arrest of the nine alleged coup plotters in December 2015 came after a month-long surveillance operation. Such surveillance is itself potentially indicative of the deep mistrust and dysfunctional relationship between the executive and the armed forces."[301] It has become difficult for the executive branch to find a balance between the need to strengthen the armed and security forces and the necessity to control the increasing power of these forces that have enjoyed longstanding involvement in politics.

Consequently, the mistrust between the Nigerien executive branch and the military elites has hindered a coherent transformation of the armed forces so indispensable to meeting the growing threats.[302] This lack of confidence affects many

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[299] Nadine Olafsson "When Military Coups d'État Become Acts of Social Justice," E International Relations, January 17, 2020, https://www.e-ir.info/2020/01/17/when-military-coups-detat-become-acts-of-social-justice/.

[300] Conway Waddington, "Niger's Security Threat from within: Regional Analysis - West Africa," *Africa Conflict Monitor* 2016, no. 02 (February 2016): 44−50, https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC185214.

[301] Waddington, 49.

[302] Waddington, 44−50.

aspects of the Nigerien security sector. First, poor civil-military relations have hampered the ability of the executive branch to appoint effective leadership for security forces. As political stability is also crucial for security, the civilian authorities cannot only focus on the building of strong and effective security forces without creating conditions to prevent them from becoming a potential risk for political stability. Therefore, when appointing officers, civilian authorities have often taken into consideration not only the intrinsic values of the officers but also their loyalty to the regime. This concern of decision makers has led to an inappropriate management of Niger's scarce human resources.[303] In these circumstances of poor civil-military relations, the Nigerien security sector has lost its rationality and cohesiveness.

Second, in certain instances, complex civil-military relations have directly impacted the strength of the Nigerien defense and security forces. The lack of professionalism among certain military leaders has generated an incentive to engage in politics, pushing the executive branch to deem that the units they command represent a danger for the regime and hence need to be demolished. For instance, one of the most effective anti-terrorist units, which had operated under the DGDSE, was dismantled in 2016 because its commander, Major Issoufou Oumarou, was involved in the attempted coup of December 2015.[304] Commenting on this military coup attempt, President Mahamadou Issoufou contended that "it is nothing more and nothing less than a high treason not only against the civil institutions of the state but also against the military intuition itself. It is a stab in the back of their brothers assigned to the front of the fighting."[305] In fact, the dismantling of this unit was a clear disappointment. It took many years for the leadership of DGDSE to train and equip this unit with the support of French cooperation. At the time it was dismantled in early 2016, it had established a loose

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[303] Waddington.

[304] Niger Inter, "Coup d'Etat: L'Identité du Civil Impliqué Désormais Connue" [Coup d'Etat: The Identity of the Civilian Involved is Now Known], January 27, 2016, https://nigerinter.com/2016/01/coup-detat-lidentite-du-civil-implique-desormais-connue/.

[305] Voice of America, "Tentative de Coup d'Etat au Niger," December 17, 2015. https://www.voaafrique.com/a/niger-tentative-de-coup-d-etat/3107500.html; Speech of President Mahamadou Issoufou, pronounced during the celebration of 2015 national.

intelligence network in the northwest of the country—the so-called area of three frontiers between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger—and was able to deter the violent extremist movements by conducting quasi-permanent security operations in the region. The dismantling of this unit might be one of the explanations for the deterioration of the security situation observed in this region since 2016.

Third, the deficit in confidence that Nigerien civilian authorities have for the defense and security forces has also led to the establishment of both passive and active measures to protect regimes in Niger. The necessity to protect the regimes from a military coup has compelled the successive regimes to build a strong presidential security force with a robust presidential guard and an intelligence service that have required substantial resources to accomplish their missions. The 2019 general budget allocated nearly $14 million (6,912,784,615 FCFA) to the Security of the Presidency of the Republic.[306] If the security forces did not represent any danger to the regimes, the investment of human resources and equipment dedicated to protecting regimes could better serve to strengthen security forces in their main missions.

Finally, in an attempt to curry favor with the military elites, civilian authorities have been reluctant to exercise full and comprehensive oversight of the security sector. The fear of the military has made civilian authorities less involved in the management and the control of the security forces, which are therefore subject to the mismanagement of resources and inequality among service members.[307] The recent attempt to investigate the Nigerien security sector in 2020 has not yet provided a satisfactory solution to the governance deficiency.

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306 Official Journal of the Republic of Niger, "Loi no 2018,-79 du 17 Décembre 2018 Portant Loi des Finances pour l'Année Budgétaire 2019" [Law No 2018,-79 of 17 December 2018 on the Finance Law for the 2019 Budget Year], *Journal Officiel de la République du Niger-Edition Spéciale*, December 31, 2018.

307 Emile Ouédraogo, *Advancing African Military professionalism*, ACSS Research Paper No. 6, (Washington, DC: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, July 2014), 4, https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ARP06EN-Advancing-Military-Professionalism-in-Africa.pdf.

3. Lack of Local Ownership in Foreign Interventions

Vulnerabilities in the Sahel's ungoverned areas have led to the increasing involvement of international actors in the strengthening of the Nigerien security sector. The problems of ungoverned spaces have also led to overlapping interests in the region. While the Sahelian states are interested in fighting security instability, illegal immigration is the priority for the European Union.

Since the Valletta Summit on Migration organized by the EU in November 2015, the fight against illegal migration from Africa into Europe has become one of the main priorities of the EU in the Nigerien security sector.[308] Bearing in mind the internal European pressure against migration, the EU has undertaken a more active role in curbing migration flow from Africa.[309] To this end, the EU strategy against illegal migration has aimed to stop migrants before they cross such major transit countries as Niger, which has become a strategic country for the EU.[310] Indeed, there is a clear link between migration and security, but the shift of the EU priorities in the Sahel region has hindered its engagement to help build the Nigerien security forces according to the country's priorities. Thus, the European programs in capacity-building—for example, GAR-SI Sahel—tend to put more emphasis on the National Police, the National Guard, and the National Gendarmerie, which are the primary forces intervening in the fight against illegal migration.[311]

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[308] Bøås, "EU Migration Management in the Sahel," 1−15.

[309] Hein De Haas, "The Myth of Invasion: The Inconvenient realities of African Migration to Europe," *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 7 (February 2009): 1305–1322, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590802386435.

[310] Daria Davitti and Anca-Elena Ursu, *Why Securitizing the Sahel Will Not Stop Migration*, FMU Policy Brief No. 02/2018 (Nottingham, England: University of Nottingham, January 2018), 1, https://www.clingendael.org/publication/why-securitising-sahel-will-not-stop-migration.

[311] Eva Magdalena Stambøl, "The Rise of Crime Fare Europe: Fighting Migrant Smuggling in West Africa," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 24, no. 3 (October: 2019): 287–308, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340477538_The_Rise_of_Crimefare_Europe_Fighting_Migrant_Smuggling_in_West_Africa.

The new approach has not given sufficient consideration to Niger's security priority: terrorism rather than migration.[312] In 2018, the G5 Sahel garnered $100 million from the EU.[313] This amount is less than the cumulative budget of $136.5 million of the European Capacity Building (EUCAP Sahel) mission in Mali and Niger dedicated to enhancing interior forces' capacity to fight illegal immigration to Europe. This approach has also overstretched interior forces. In its willingness to satisfy the EU, Niger has made enormous efforts to control the flow of migrants. A substantial number of Nigerien security personnel have been devoted to this task.[314] The interior patrols have increased tremendously, and a certain effectiveness has been observed in the control of the migration flow but maintaining this system has contributed to overstretched security forces.

Additionally, the increasing efforts to stop migration have destroyed the migrants' cross-border smuggling networks that provided important informal economic opportunities for many young people in northern Niger. The EU programs have not offered credible alternatives to these young people who otherwise tend to join transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups.[315] The unintended result has been the strengthening of criminal networks that Nigerien security forces have to fight.

The perceived overlapping interests in the region pose another obstacle to the achievement of the Nigerien project of building a strong security sector. Several experts believe that some countries have used the international organizations (EU, UN) to pursue their own interests in the Sahel. For instance, Eric Komlavi Hahonou wrote that "some European experts even argue that EUCAP-Sahel Niger 'is a French mission under a

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[312] Luca Raineri and Edoardo Baldaro, "Resilience to What? EU Capacity-Building Missions in the Sahel," in *Projecting Resilience Across the Mediterranean*, ed. Eugenio Cusumano and Stefan Hofmaier, (Cham, Switzerland : Palgrave Macmillan, August 2019), 173, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23641-0.

[313] Elisa Lopez Lucia, *The European Union Integrated and Regionalised Approach towards the Sahel* (Montréal, Canada: Chaire Raoul-Dandurand en Études Stratégiques et Diplomatiques, February 2019), https://dandurand.uqam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019_02_Report-Lopez-Lucia.pdf.

[314] Barrios, *Transit Niger: Migrants, Rebels, and Traffickers*, 2.

[315] Bøås, "EU Migration Management in the Sahel," 1−15.

European flag.'"[316] These remarks suggest that EUCAP-Sahel Niger has pursued an agenda different from what EU initially planned. In fact, French companies have gained some profits notably in the security sector and mining industries (Uranium in Niger).[317] There is a perception that France's leading role in the Sahel is motivated by these interests. This view has been reinforced by what Yvan Guichaoua considers as "the unambiguous security-driven agenda that France is pursuing [in the Sahel]."[318] Sahelian elites, mainly civil society actors, have not yet understood the core tenets of foreign interventions in the Sahel.

As in every country, public opinion is crucial in security matters. Failing to understand this has led to protests against foreign military presence in the Sahel. In this regard, Yvan Guichaoua argues that "while France makes its security-driven agenda pretty clear, its operational moves, produced by bureaucratic thinking, are questioned by Sahelian publics who have a different perception of security priorities and sovereignty."[319] As in other Sahelian countries, the assistance of certain foreign partners is not perceived to be in the interest of locals due to poor communication and a poor relationship between civil society and foreign troops.

Lastly, certain bilateral or multilateral programs that have been designed without the participation of the Nigerien security actors have often failed to meet their objectives. Nigerien security forces have been overstretched due to the ongoing operations and various training programs conducted by different partners. The training activities seem to be conducted mainly in Niamey area, overstretching the units in this zone, while other regional defense zones lack these training opportunities for their troops. Moreover, the content of some partner-provided training packages—conceived according to the culture

316 Eric Komlavi Hahonou, *Stabilizing Niger: The Challenges of Bridging Local, National and Global Security Interests* (Copenhagen, Denmark: Danish Institute for International Studies [DIIS], 2016), 9, https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/148328/1/874005965.pdf.

317 Yvan Guichaoua, "The Bitter Harvest of French Interventionism in the Sahel," *International Affairs* 96, no. 4 (July 2020): 895–911, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa094.

318 Guichaoua, "The Bitter Harvest of French Interventionism in the Sahel," 902.

319 Guichaoua, 896.

of these partners without taking into consideration local constraints—has been found inadequate to respond to the requirements of the Nigerien conditions. Hence, the lack of local input in these programs has seriously undermined their effectiveness.

4. Poorly Coordinated Activities

The coordination of activities in the Nigerien security sector has remained challenging. Despite an attempt to coordinate the actions of the Nigerien security forces through the National Crisis Management Center under the authority of the prime minister and unified regional command centers under regional governors, interoperability challenges have made these coordination bodies inefficient. There are inter-service organizations whose purpose has been to coordinate the efforts of different defense and security forces, but on the ground, interoperability does not exist. For instance, in many responses to terrorist attacks, ground forces have failed to effectively communicate with each other. This communication gap is even worse between ground troops and air support units. Consequently, the Nigerien security forces do not operate in close coordination. This situation is not surprising because the procurement of equipment for different forces has not anticipated the necessity of interoperability. And only a few exercises have been organized to strengthen the ability of these forces to operate together. Moreover, the absence of a fusion center that could coordinate the efforts of Nigerien intelligence agencies has also hindered their ability to share intelligence and the responsiveness of the Nigerien security forces. Furthermore, the Anti-Terrorist Center, which is under the Interior Ministry, is not working adequately. It lacks suitable resources to conduct its mission, and the Nigerien Armed Forces, which have been deeply involved in the fight against terrorism, do not even have a representative in this important structure as it is located under the Interior Ministry.

Additionally, the efforts of the Nigerien government and its partners to strengthen the security sector have been poorly coordinated to date. Since 2013, the increasingly numerous multilateral and bilateral actors have been operating in a fragmented manner. Internal and external actors in the Nigerien security sector lack an umbrella under which

they can perform their activities in a coordinated manner for effectiveness and efficiency. As a result, while there are gaps in some fields, other programs have overlapped.

Despite a clear willingness observed at the strategic level to improve the coordination of regional efforts to handle transnational security threats, at the lower level this coordination has been ineffective. For instance, the operational Joint Chief of Staff Committee (*Comité d'État-Major Opréationnel Conjoint* [CEMOC])—created in April 2010 by Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger to coordinate the efforts in fighting transnational security threats, and specifically tasked to improve intelligence sharing—has failed to attend its objectives due to an evident lack of interoperability and coordination at tactical level.[320] The incompatibility of communication equipment and the lack of frequent exercises among regional armed forces have hindered their capacity to conduct successful large-scale joint operations.

5. Limitations of Capacity-Building Efforts

Despite the improvement in Niger's security forces following the reforms undertaken, it must be acknowledged that certain shortcomings persist, especially regarding the disparity between the units in terms of quality, the focus of the reforms on the tactical level to the detriment of the strategic level, and the attitude of certain elements of the FDS that tarnish the image of the entire security sector. These limitations constitute an obstacle to the proper use of the Nigerien security forces.

The strengthening of the Nigerien security forces' operational capabilities has not been homogenous. While the few Nigerien units that have benefited from extensive training and necessary equipment have clearly shown an ability to effectively fight terrorist groups, the majority of the defense and security units have remained undertrained and underequipped. Nigerien special forces and the Niger Air Force have developed effective units suitable for asymmetric warfare, but certain traditional units of the Nigerian Army, the National Gendarmerie, and the National Guard lack adequate preparation and equipment to deal with violent extremist groups. They have often been

[320] Cline, "African Regional Intelligence Cooperation," 447–469.

targeted by these terrorist groups, which have effective intelligence about the Nigerien units.[321] Additionally, the Nigerien security forces have lacked an efficient communication network and have not conducted large-scale training exercises that can improve their interoperability and their ability to effectively support each other. These units have thus been vulnerable to the attacks of the violent extremist organizations.

Furthermore, the support from international partners did not meet its full potential. The capacity-building approach adopted by donors has often focused on the tactical level at the expense of institutional reform and the professionalization necessary to foster good governance in the security sector.[322] Additionally, the overreliance on expensive foreign troops may not be the optimal approach. Sahelian countries can perform many security tasks that do not require advanced technical skills. These countries do not lack human power, but they do lack skilled human resources. Using more Western troops is costly and less effective in the long run as it will not promote the capacity of local forces to deal with security threats alone. For instance, Operation Barkhane costs about $797 million a year for an operation that uses 4,000 French troops.[323] By comparison, the 5,000 troops of the G5 Sahel Task Force cost only $130 million.[324] The way Operation Barkhane is designed to operate in the Sahel is similar to NATO's struggle in Afghanistan where the coalition has heavily relied on Western troops for two decades without a satisfactory solution. Carter Malkasian contends that the failure

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[321] Aichatou Ousmane-Issaka, "Impact of Terrorism on Niger from 2013 to 2019" (master's thesis, Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2019), https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1105216.pdf.

[322] Stephen Tankel, "U.S. Counterterrorism in the Sahel: From Indirect to Direct Intervention," *International Affairs* 96, no. 4 (July 2020): 875–893, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa089.

[323] Moda Dieng, Philip Onguny, and Amadou Ghouenzen Mfondi, "Leadership without Membership: France and the G5 Sahel Joint Force," *African Journal of Terrorism and Insurgency Research* 1, no. 2 (August 2020): 21−41, https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1f5f052500.

[324] Beder D. El Khou, "The G5 Sahel: An Insufficient Organization for a Failed Region?" (master's thesis, Old Dominion University, 2019), doi: 10.25777/nxvk-zj96 https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/gpis_etds/122.

of the United States and its allies to build a strong Afghan Army has facilitated the resurgence of Taliban insurgency.[325]

Yet another shortcoming stems from an eroded relationship between the civilian population and the security forces. In certain areas like the Lake Chad region and the western region, close to Malian border, the inappropriate conduct of certain service members has undermined that good relationship. The lack of professionalism exhibited by failing to respect the rules of engagement or international humanitarian law in certain circumstances can harm the image of the Nigerien security forces. In both Diffa and Tillabery regions unlawful killings of persons suspected of being terrorists were reported.[326] In June 2020, Human Rights Watch reported allegations of human rights violations by Nigerien security forces against local people.[327] Reportedly, 102 civilians were killed in the Inates region.[328] These kinds of allegations clearly undermine the capacity of the armed forces as they simultaneously impede the cooperation of the local population. Moreover, the loss of the local population's support could further hinder the intelligence-gathering ability of the security forces and enhance the capacity of terrorists to boost their recruitment.

C. CONCLUSION

The Nigerien security sector has demonstrated resilience in the Sahelian security turmoil. Nigerien security forces have enjoyed the support of the majority of the Nigerien citizens, the support of foreign partners, and an increasing military capability. Nevertheless, this apparent success of the Nigerien security sector has not been

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325 Carter Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, April 2013), 94–98.

326 U.S. Department of the State, *Niger 2018 Human Rights Report*, (Washington, DC: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2019), https://ne.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/Niger-2018-Human-Rights-Report.pdf.

327 United Nations, *Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force* (New York, NY: Security Council Report, June 2020), https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2020-06/group-of-five-for-the-sahel-joint-force-2.php.

328 Dalatou Mamane, "Niger's Army Accused in Disappearance of 102 Civilians," *The Washington Times*, September 5, 2020, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/sep/5/nigers-army-accused-in-disappearance-of-102-civili/.

comprehensive as it is only linked to a few units that have been well trained and possess the necessary equipment. Additionally, many weaknesses observed across the Nigerien security sector have undermined the prospect for long-term resilience. The poor civil-military relations and the lack of effective oversight and control have created conditions for poor security governance, which has been characterized by widespread corruption and the mismanagement of resources.

Consequently, the stability of the country is increasingly at risk. While the external threats linked to violent extremist organizations is becoming more serious, the Nigerien security forces aim to effectively fight them has yet to be achieved. If this trend persists, the country will undoubtedly reach a breaking point and the situation will go out of control.

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V. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Building effective Nigerien security services requires an approach that takes into consideration the Nigerien context in a volatile Sahelian security environment, the threats that Niger faces, and the opportunities to fulfill the objective of preserving the country's stability. This study has led to some interesting findings regarding the threats that Niger faces and the challenges that hinder the effective transformation of the Nigerien security sector. It also proposes some measures that could help alleviate the impediments to reforming and strengthening the Nigerien security sector.

A. REFORMING THE NIGERIEN SECURITY SECTOR: KEY FINDINGS

For decades, internal and external threats have threatened Niger's stability, but the courageous efforts made by the Nigerien security apparatus and its partners have helped prevent a collapse of the country. Indeed, the threats have evolved and have become increasingly challenging to the stability of Niger's security environment. The Nigerien security environment, dominated by Tuareg rebellions in the 1990s and 2000s, has become volatile since 2012 due to the rise of violent extremism in the central Sahel region. In response to these threats, the Nigerien security services have undergone a qualitative and quantitative transformation. However, some persistent shortcomings in the governance of the Nigerien security sector and poor civil-military relations have put the overall security system at risk and, thus, the stability of the country.

1. Nigerien Security Challenges

Despite the tremendous efforts made by Niger and its partners to ensure the stability of the country, the manifold security threats to Niger have been both internal and external. Internally, Niger has managed to contain the main security threat, the Tuareg insurgency. The integration of Tuareg community into the Nigerien sociopolitical and economic spheres has helped address certain grievances that contributed to the uprisings of the 1990s and the 2000s in the northern part of the country. Still, Niger's internal stability remains threatened by frequent clashes between communities that have been

competing for scarce natural resources in the region. These frequent conflicts between herders and farmers, which constitute a pressing concern for the Nigerien government, are more likely to worsen due to the consequences of climate change and droughts that may continue to hamper the prospect for better life in the region. Additionally, ungoverned spaces in Niger continue to help create an environment conducive to illegal activities such as the trafficking of arms and drugs, the smuggling of immigrants, and kidnappings of Westerners for ransom.

At the regional level, the crises in Libya, Nigeria, and Mali have represented a direct security concern for Niger, which remains under the threat of terrorist groups, notably Islamic State affiliates—ISGS at the Malian border and ISWAP in the Diffa region. In addition to the severe humanitarian crisis that these terrorist activities have generated in the Diffa and Tillabery regions, terrorist groups have often conducted direct attacks against Nigerien people and interests, causing the loss of hundreds of lives. Similarly, transnational criminal activities continue to grow and threaten the fragile stability by fueling violent extremist actions. The Libyan border also remains a significant concern as the chaos in southern Libya continues to make this region a hub for terrorists and an important supply corridor for terrorist groups.

2. Transforming the Nigerien Security Services

Niger's security sector has undergone a qualitative and quantitative transformation since independence in 1960. The first major changes in the Nigerien security sector occurred during the military regime, which tried to strengthen the security sector. Following the recommendations of the National Conference held in 1992, Niger implemented some institutional reforms of the security sector in the mid-1990s. The second Tuareg rebellion and the rise of violent extremism in the Sahel region since the Libyan crisis in 2012 have compelled Nigerien authorities to engage in a vast project of strengthening the Nigerien security sector. The Defense Ministry and Interior Ministry have benefited from substantial funds from the national budget to improve the operational capabilities of the Nigerien defense and security forces.

Additionally, Niger's partners have played an increasing role in the Nigerien security sector transformation through their continuous support of capacity-building and direct support to Nigerien security forces during their security operations. The United States has contributed to improve the resilience of the Nigerien security sector and their ability to tackle the growing security concerns. Many programs—such as the Pan Sahel Initiative and the Trans Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership—have helped improve the operational capacities of the Nigerien security sector. Similarly, periodic exercises (Flintlock, Unified Focus) and direct U.S. funding to support operations conducted by Nigerien defense and security forces have constituted indispensable assistance to the Nigerien security sector. Yet, the picture is not so clear regarding French and EU support to Niger. France, for its part, has maintained its traditional overbearing influence on the Nigerien security apparatus, which some people believe is negative. The European Union and many other European countries have shown an increasing interest to help address Nigerien security challenges that are seemingly linked to illegal migration to Europe.

The results of internal and external efforts have been mixed. While these efforts in building Nigerien security forces have prevented a collapse of the country in a highly volatile Sahelian region, certain terrorist attacks against Nigerien interests constitute a reminder that the situation is far from under control. Certain units—namely special forces and ISR units and the units that have provided close air support—have shown a high level of combativeness during their confrontations with terrorist groups, but others have been incapable to appropriately deal with violent extremist attacks. The fact that security forces have been increasingly overstretched constitutes another concern that signals potential risks in the future regarding the capacity of these forces to effectively protect the stability of the country.

3. Challenges to Nigerien Security Sector Transformation

The military regime had built a relatively strong security sector, but the legacy of its 17-year rule heavily impacted the Nigerien sociopolitical environment. It generated the seeds of poor civil-military relations that have hindered the Nigerien security sector for decades. The successive military coups and mutinies, which Niger experienced during

the transition period and subsequent democratic era, eroded the fragile civil-military relations. The resulting lack of trust between the Nigerien executive branch and the military elite has impeded the efforts of building an effective security sector.

Additionally, the Nigerien security sector has suffered from poor governance. The available control and oversight mechanisms have been poorly implemented, facilitating widespread corruption that has obliterated the efforts of Niger and its partners to build a coherent and effective security sector. Corruption revealed in early 2020 at the Ministry of Defense is a reflection of this deficiency to the security governance.

Another factor that is becoming a major concern in the conduct of the counterterrorism effort is the recurrent allegations of human rights violations. In a context of asymmetric warfare, improper behavior by regular forces hinders the indispensable support of local people. At the regional level, a study conducted by UNDP in 2017 concluded, "A striking 71 percent pointed to 'government action,' including 'killing of a family member or friend' or 'arrest of a family member or friend,' as the incident that prompted them to join" violent extremist groups.[329] Therefore, perpetrating human rights violations against the people constitutes a major impediment to the entire objective of curbing violent extremism. In fact, human rights abuses are often instrumentalized by terrorists to build their propaganda and favor the recruitment of new followers among locals.

Indeed, the support of regional and international partners has constituted a critical factor in the strengthening of the Nigerien defense and security forces, but the potential of this support has not been fully exploited. Certain partners have conducted programs without assessing the actual needs of the Nigerien security sector, leading to a waste of resources. Moreover, certain partners' vision regarding the prioritization of security concerns has diverged from that of Niger. Thus, it has been difficult for Niger and these partners to pursue the same objective in a comprehensive and concerted manner.

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[329] UNDP, *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives, and the Tipping Point for Recruitment, (*New York. NY: UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, 2017), 5, https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf.

Lastly, the construction of the Nigerien security sector has also suffered from a lack of coordination. Internally, there are some structures for coordination, but they do not properly function in a way to enhance security operations. Similarly, regional coordination structures lack appropriate standard operation procedures and effectiveness. The main impediment regarding coordination is the absence of a dedicated structure that could coordinate the activities of foreign forces in Niger.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The prospect for peace and security in Niger requires a mixture of multifaceted measures that can improve the ability of the Nigerien security services to effectively respond to the changing security challenges. The following recommendations do not call for large security forces dedicated to cover each square mile of the huge Nigerien territory; rather the objective is to generate a smarter security apparatus that possesses effective and highly mobile units capable of applying a targeted coercive force when and where needed.

First, the promotion of strong civil-military relations is an essential element in building coherent defense and security institutions. The Nigerien security sector has suffered from the mistrust between the military and the executive branch. In order to restore confidence between the Nigerien executive branch and the military, the latter should definitively be removed from the political arena. Further, civil-military relations bargaining should take into consideration the absolute necessity to create a professional military dedicated to its missions under civilian control. The executive branch should not have any reason to fear its own military. Appropriate institutional control mechanisms should be put in place to prevent military intrusion in politics. At the same time, civilian control does not mean civilian autocracy over the state's security institutions. Civilian authorities should serve as an example in respecting the rule of law by strictly sticking to their assigned role. They should not in any circumstances develop an acquaintance with the military hierarchy for the sole purpose of a political gain. Nevertheless, Huntington's model of military professionalism cannot be strictly applied to the Nigerien security sector as the government's lack of capacity requires that it use its military in various

tasks—tasks generally not assigned to militaries around the world—such as fighting organized crime, participating in infrastructural development through military engineer units, and providing public health support. Additionally, as Matei argues, "Security forces must not only be under control but must also be able to implement the assigned tasks at a reasonable cost."[330] The effectiveness and *efficiency* in conducting military activities are indispensable to deal with internal and external threats in a country like Niger that lacks sufficient resources.

Improving civil-military relations refers not only to the relationship between the military and civilian authorities but also to the rapport between the military and citizens at the local level. Building trust between local communities and defense and security forces is crucial for the fulfillment of Niger's security objectives. Nigerien defense and security forces need to put the protection of civilians at the heart of their operations. The ability of these forces to ensure the protection of the people and their rights and their property is an important element of the overall counterterrorism strategy. Defense and security forces must be, as much as possible, above reproach during counterterrorism operations because unlawful arrests and violence against civilians can quickly erode the trust built with so much effort between the military and the population. To this end, every unit operating in the Nigerien territory should have a *prévôtale* (military police) to enforce judicial processes and to discourage human rights abuses. These mechanisms to preserve a high standard of behavior are crucial for professional defense and security forces seeking to win the hearts and minds of the population. Conforming to professional norms not only strengthens the legitimacy of the Nigerien defense and security institutions but constitutes an indication that they are committed to the respect of the rule of law and aspire to maintain a good relationship with international partners.

Second, Nigerien authorities should enhance the governance of the Nigerien security sector. A major impediment of the Nigerien security sector remains the lack of

330 Florina Cristiana Matei, "A New Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil–Military Relations*, ed. Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 35.

good governance in terms of resource management and oversight, which is reflected by widespread corruption in the security sector and the waste of resources. As a critical priority, good governance is indispensable in building effective security institutions that are accountable and transparent. From this perspective, institutional oversight mechanisms should be implemented to reduce corruption and wrongdoing in the security sector. The fight against corruption in Niger should not only be considered an issue of good governance; it is a matter of survival. While the share of the Nigerien defense and security sector in the national budget appears to be high in percentage of GDP (more than 2 percent), the available resources are limited (less than $250 million annually). Internal security actors should, thus, bear in mind the conditions that the scarcity of resources imposes. Each dollar should be spent with a high degree of responsibility and probity. While it is important to strengthen internal control of defense and security forces to ensure the rights of service members and civilians, the Nigerien parliament members should be granted the access necessary to perform oversight of the security services.

Additionally, civil society organizations must continue improving and playing their critical roles in compelling the executive branch to stick to the principles of good governance in the security sector and improve their capacity to engage in security-related matters. Nigerien civil society has demonstrated a high degree of engagement to fight corruption at the Defense Ministry. In order to continue playing a constructive role in the Nigerien security sector, CSOs should improve their capacity to play their role by training their members in conducting investigations on security matters. Their ability to access non-classified security-related information can enhance accountability and transparency in the sense that it can improve their knowledge of Nigerien security issues and hence their ability to enrich the security policymaking debates. They should also actively participate in the creation and the implementation of new security policies for the benefit of the population.

Third, Niger should design a smart defense and security forces that are capable of operating in the Sahel region with high effectiveness. As the pressing threat to security lies at the border areas, Niger should strengthen the defense capacity of the military

camps in these areas and utilize special forces to search and eliminate violent extremists. The attacks of terrorist groups have targeted traditional units that lack certain expertise and infrastructure necessary for the adequate defense of the camps. These units must be restructured and equipped in order to allow them to firmly maintain the protection of their camps, which can be used as logistic support points for special forces. The flexibility of special forces and their high mobility allow them to operate when and where they are needed. To ensure that each unit will play its role, a committee should be tasked to examine the structure, equipment, and training needs of the Nigerien security services, which should be reorganized according to the security requirements.

Niger should also continue to adapt its strategy in order respond to the threat as it evolves. For this purpose, CNSS should continue elaborating comprehensive joint doctrines for defense and security forces in order to enhance joint operational effectiveness.

Fourth, foreign support remains indispensable for Niger to address current security challenges, but Niger and its partners should create an assistance model in which this support will gradually decrease Nigerien dependence on external support. The objective of the aid should be to improve the overall security sector in a manner that Nigerien security structures could handle security-related issues with more autonomy in the long run. In the same vein, because using Western troops is costly, it is recommended that Niger's security forces operate with Sahelian troops to reduce overall security expenditures and promote the emergence of strong regional defense and security forces. Western troops should only be used in the areas where Sahelian troops lack necessary skills. Priority should be given to training and equipping local security forces as well as providing limited advisers on ground to support these local forces. By doing so, more resources can be made available to local defense and security forces and, thus, the overall security system would be more sustainable in the long run.

Fifth, the activities in the Nigerien security sector should be coordinated at national and regional levels. Internally, Nigerien policymakers must create conditions that favor the proper functioning of the existing coordinating bodies and establish an

inter-ministerial body under the prime minister's office that can coordinate all security-related matters. Moreover, Niger should create a unified anti-terrorist command structure that will be in charge of all counterterrorism operations. The armed forces, which are in charge of defense-related tasks, have been performing interior security responsibilities due to the increasing power of non-state actors. Therefore, as armed forces and security forces are operating in the same environment, it is necessary to coordinate their actions.

Furthermore, Niger must establish a mechanism to coordinate the activities carried out by its partners in the fight against terrorism and irregular immigration. The body that will implement this mechanism should be comprised of the representatives, the Ministry of Defense, the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Transport, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, and Cooperation and any other key actor. Effective coordination of the security efforts of the external donors and the internal actors is indispensable to meet the objectives of building an effective security sector capable of tackling the rising violent extremist threat.

C. CONCLUSION

It is important for Niger to build security institutions that are effective, accountable, transparent, and under democratic, civilian control. These institutions should conform to the principles of good governance and must operate with strict respect for human rights as well as the rule of law. The shortcomings in governance of the Nigerien security sector identified in this thesis should be taken into consideration to improve civil-military relations and create conditions for the emergence of professional and effective defense and security forces. Strong civil-military relations based on democratic norms should be the cornerstone of the development of a robust and effective security sector. To this end, the democratic, civilian control of the Nigerien defense and security forces should be organized according the following attributes identified by Halladay and Matei: institutional control mechanisms, oversight, the inculcation of professional norms,

and efficiency.[331] The construction of an effective and efficient security sector is the foundation for Niger's long-term stability.

[331] Florina Cristiana Matei and Carolyn Halladay, "The Control-Effectiveness Framework of Civil-Military Relations" (forthcoming).

APPENDIX: TRANSFERS OF MAJOR WEAPONS

Table 3. Deals with deliveries or orders made for 1960 to 2019[332]

Supplier/ recipient (R)	No. ordered	Weapon designation	Weapon description	Year(s) of order	Weapon delivery	Year of delivered	No. Comments
China							
R: Niger	(5)	ZFB-05	APC	(2007)	2009	(5)	
	(2)	WZ-523	APC	(2008)	2009	(2)	
	(20)	Tiger	APV	(2017)	2017	(20)	Designation uncertain (reported as 'armoured combat vehicle')
France							
R: Niger	8	M-20	Reconnaissance AV	(1958)	1960	(8)	Second-hand
	(8)	M-8 Greyhound	Armoured car	(1958)	1960	(8)	Second-hand
	1	DC-3/C-47 Skytrain	Transport aircraft	(1960)	1961	1	Second-hand; aid
	4	MH-1521 Broussard	Light aircraft	(1963)	1964	4	Probably second-hand; aid
	1	DC-3/C-47 Skytrain	Transport aircraft	(1964)	1965	1	Second-hand
	1	MD-315 Flamant	Light transport ac	(1964)	1965	1	Probably second-hand; aid
	2	DC-3/C-47 Skytrain	Transport aircraft	(1969)	1969	2	Second-hand
	2	Cessna-337/O-2	Light aircraft	(1970)	1971	2	
	1	DC-4/C-54	Transport aircraft	1974	1974	1	Second-hand; aid
	(22)	M-3 VTT	APC	(1979)	1980	(22)	
	1	Noratlas	Transport aircraft	1979	1980	1	Second-hand
	(4)	MO-120-RT 120mm	Mortar	(1980)	1980	(4)	
	(36)	AML-60/90	Armoured car	1981	1983	(36)	AML-60 and AML-90 versions
	(7)	M-3 VDA	SPAAG	1981	1982	(7)	
	(3)	M-3 VDA	SPAAG	1981	1982	(3)	
	(7)	VBL	APV	1986	1986	(7)	No. could between 3 and 9
	(20)	AML-60/90	Armoured car	(1990)	1991	(20)	Possibly second-hand; AML-60 and AML-90 versions
	(8)	Tétras	Light aircraft	(2009)	2010-2014	(8)	Aid
	3	SA-342 Gazelle	Light helicopter	2012	2013	3	Second-hand but modernized before delivery; armed SA-342L-1 version; part of CFA270 m ($77 m) aid
	4	VAB-VTT	APC	2015	2015	4	Second-hand; aid
	13	Bastion	APC/APV	2019	2019	13	Aid financed by EU

Note: The 'No. delivered' and the 'Year(s) of deliveries' columns refer to all deliveries since the beginning of the contract. The 'Comments' column includes publicly reported information on the value of the deal. Information on the sources and methods used in the collection of the data, and explanations of the conventions, abbreviations, and acronyms, can be found at: http://www.sipri.org/contents/armstrad/sources-and-methods

[332] Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (Trade Registers; accessed on August 17), 2020, http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/trade_register.php

Table 3 Deals with deliveries or orders made for 1960 to 2019 (Cont.)

Germany							
R: Niger	1	Commander	Light transport ac	(1970)	1970	1	
	4	Noratlas	Transport aircraft	(1970)	1971	4	Second-hand
	(3)	Do-28D Skyservant	Light transport ac	(1978)	1978-1979	(3)	
	20	UR-416	APC	1984	1984	20	
	1	Do-228	Light transport ac	1985	1986	1	
Libya							
R: Niger	1	An-26	Transport aircraft	1997	1997	1	Second-hand; aid
South Africa							
R: Niger	(6)	Mamba	APC	(2013)	2014	(6)	Mamba-7 version
	(15)	Puma M-26	APC	(2013)	2014	(15)	
Ukraine							
R: Niger	2	Su-25	Ground attack ac	2012	2013	2	Second-hand
United States							
R: Niger	1	Cessna-337/O-2	Light aircraft	(1969)	1969	1	
	2	C-130H Hercules	Transport aircraft	1979	1979	2	
	2	Cessna-208 Caravan	Light transport ac	(2013)	2013	2	Part of $11 m aid; Cessna-208B version
	1	King Air-350 ISR	AGS aircraft	(2013)	2015	1	Second-hand King Air-350 probably modernized and modified to AGS aircraft before delivery
	2	Cessna-208 Caravan	Light transport ac	2014	2015	2	Cessna-208B surveillance version
	(1)	C-130H Hercules	Transport aircraft	(2015)			Second-hand; aid; delivery planned 2020
	13	Mamba	APC	2019	2019	13	Second-hand; possibly modernized before delivery; aid

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