

Volume 03, Issue 02, February 2026,

Publish Date: 17-02-2026

DOI: - <https://doi.org/10.37547/fsth/Volume03Issue02-01>

PageNo.01-10

The Libyan Conflict and The Transnationalisation Of Terrorism in The Sahel Region

 **Celestine Emeka Ekwuluo, MIR**

Department of Political Science, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria; and PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Adaeze Janice Erundu, MIR

Department of Political Science, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria; and PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Gideon Ogonna Ibeakuzie, MIR

Department of Political Science, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria; and PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

 **Kennedy Oberhiri Obohwemu, PhD**

Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

 **Oladipo Vincent Akinmade, MPH**

Digital Health and Rights Project (Center for Interdisciplinary Methodologies, CIM), University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

 **Oluwafemi Emmanuel Ooju, MSc**

World Health Organization, Abuja, Nigeria; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

 **Eddy Eidenehi Esezobor, PhD**

Department of Management Studies, Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia (UCAM), Murcia, Spain; and PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

 **Festus Ituah, PhD**

School of Health and Sports Science, Regent College, London, United Kingdom; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

 **Daniel Obande Haruna, MSc**

Department of Psychology, St. Mary's University, London, United Kingdom; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Solomon Atuman, MPH

FHI 360; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Jerry Soni, MPH

United Nations World Food Programme, Damascus, Syria; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

 **Jennifer Adaeze Chukwu, PhD**

World Health Organization, United Nations House, Abuja, Nigeria; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Abba Sadiq Usman, MScPH

Nutrition and Health Department, Action Against Hunger, Maiduguri Field Office, Nigeria; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Perpetual Ogechukwu Nwankwo, PhD

School of Public Health, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Obioma Chidumaga Aririsukwu, MBBS

MBBS, Department of Medicine, St. François Medical Center, Abuja, Nigeria; and Department of Interdisciplinary Research & Statistics, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Kennedy Oberhiri Obohewemu, Senior Researcher and Project Coordinator, PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5175-1179>, Kenendy.Obohewemu@penkup.com

ABSTRACT

The collapse of state authority in Libya after the 2011 uprising has produced a chain of security consequences that continue to shape the wider Sahel. This paper examines how the Libyan conflict created conditions that encouraged the spread of terrorist activity across the region, with particular attention to arms proliferation, the movement of foreign fighters and the growth of ungoverned spaces that allow violent groups to operate with relative freedom. The study draws on a qualitative case study design supported by interview material from the wider research, which provides grounded insight into how Libya's internal fragmentation became linked to regional insecurity rather than remaining a self contained crisis. Rather than treating Libya as an isolated arena of state collapse, the paper conceptualises it as a catalytic node within a wider ecosystem of fragile states, porous borders and historically marginalised communities.

The analysis is informed by state fragility theory and relative deprivation perspectives. These frameworks help explain how the breakdown of governance structures in Libya interacted with long standing political and economic pressures in neighbouring Sahelian states. The argument shows that Libya's collapse intensified existing vulnerabilities in Mali, Niger and Chad, encouraged the circulation of weapons and fighters, and weakened already fragile border management systems. These developments strengthened the operational reach of armed groups and complicated national and regional attempts to respond to rising insecurity.

The paper contributes to regional security research through three main insights. It clarifies the pathways through which local state collapse can generate transnational terrorist dynamics. It demonstrates the value of analysing conflict spillover through a multi level lens that links domestic governance failures to regional patterns of violence. It also highlights the limitations of current security responses that treat Sahelian states as discrete units rather than parts of an interconnected security landscape. The study offers a grounded and theoretically informed account of how Libya's post 2011 crisis has reshaped security conditions across West and North Africa and points to the need for more coordinated and context sensitive regional strategies.

KEYWORDS: *Libyan conflict, transnational terrorism, Sahel region, state fragility, arms proliferation*

INTRODUCTION

The Sahel region has become one of the most fragile security environments in contemporary Africa, shaped by persistent insurgencies, weak governance structures and highly permeable borders. Recent research shows that the region's instability is not only

the product of internal pressures but is also closely linked to external shocks that have altered the balance of power among armed groups (regional insecurity dynamics). The 2011 Libyan conflict stands out as a decisive moment in this process. The fall of the Libyan regime dismantled long-standing security institutions and released significant quantities of arms into an

already fragile regional landscape. UNODC reports indicate that weapons originating from Libyan stockpiles continue to circulate across the Sahel, strengthening armed groups and undermining state authority (UNODC, 2022). ENACT Africa's analysis further demonstrates that tri-border towns in the Sahel have become key transit points for small arms and light weapons, many of which can be traced back to post-2011 Libyan flows (ENACT Africa, 2023).

This paper examines the Libyan conflict as a structural enabler of the transnational spread of terrorism across the Sahel. The analysis positions Libya not as a peripheral disturbance but as a central node in a wider ecosystem of fragile states, porous borders and historically marginalised communities. This perspective aligns with recent studies that highlight how state collapse in one context can reshape the strategic environment of neighbouring regions by altering access to arms, mobility routes and recruitment opportunities for violent groups (Bøås, 2019; Walther, 2022; Yahia, 2022). The paper therefore asks a focused question: how did the Libyan conflict contribute to the transnationalisation of terrorism in the Sahel? Addressing this question is essential for understanding why counterterrorism strategies that remain nationally bounded have struggled to contain violence that is inherently cross-border in nature.

The analysis draws exclusively on the empirical and conceptual material of the wider research, particularly the examination of Libyan state collapse, arms diffusion and jihadist mobility. Trafficking networks in the Sahel have become increasingly sophisticated, with arms, fuel, gold and people moving along long-established trade routes that have been repurposed by armed groups (OECD/SWAC, 2022; UN News, 2023). Peer-reviewed studies similarly argue that the Libyan conflict created permissive conditions for jihadist expansion by weakening border controls and enabling the movement of experienced fighters into Mali, Niger and Chad (Van den Bosch & Raubo, 2017; Lacher, 2020; Babalola, 2022). These developments have reshaped the regional terrorism landscape and intensified the operational reach of groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Islamic State affiliates.

The objective of this paper is to isolate Libya's role in this broader transformation. It does not extend into Nigeria-specific security outcomes or Boko Haram's

internal dynamics, which are addressed elsewhere as distinct analytical contributions. Instead, the focus remains on Libya's catalytic influence in reconfiguring regional insecurity and enabling the transnational spread of terrorism across the Sahel.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

State Fragility and Regional Spillover

State fragility theory offers a structured way to understand how internal governance failures can generate wider regional insecurity. Fragile states are commonly characterised by limited authority, weak legitimacy and insufficient capacity to provide public goods or maintain territorial control. These weaknesses become more acute when state institutions collapse entirely, as occurred in Libya after 2011. The consequences of such collapse rarely remain confined within national borders, a point reinforced in recent research on state fragility in the Sahel, which shows how weakened institutions create openings for armed groups to expand their influence (Osland & Erstad, 2020).

The Libyan case illustrates how the erosion of central authority allowed armed groups to appropriate state resources, establish parallel governance structures and facilitate illicit cross-border flows. Studies on ungoverned spaces in the Sahel highlight how the absence of state oversight enables armed actors to consolidate territorial control and exploit local populations (Ziso & Hamandishe, 2024). Arms depots that were once under Libyan state control became accessible to militias, mercenaries and terrorist organisations operating across North and West Africa. This diffusion of coercive capacity intensified existing conflicts in the Sahel and reduced the barriers to transnational terrorist activity. Research on complex threat environments in the region further shows that the combination of conflict, organised crime and terrorism is closely linked to rising state fragility (Okoli, 2024).

Relative Deprivation and Regional Vulnerability

Relative deprivation perspectives complement state fragility theory by explaining why Sahelian societies were particularly vulnerable to the spillover effects of the Libyan conflict. Long-standing economic

marginalisation, political exclusion and uneven development across Sahelian states created conditions in which armed mobilisation could take root. These grievances pre-dated the Libyan crisis but were intensified by the influx of weapons and fighters. Research on regional vulnerability in the Sahel shows that communities experiencing persistent deprivation are more likely to support or tolerate armed groups when state institutions fail to address their needs (Becheikh, 2023; Saka, 2024; Minko, 2025).

The arrival of Libyan-sourced arms did not generate new grievances on its own. Instead, it amplified frustrations linked to poverty, social injustice and weak governance. This interaction between structural deprivation and increased access to weapons created an enabling environment for violent groups to expand their operations. Recent analyses of divergent security complexes in the Sahel argue that these dynamics have produced a transnational security landscape in which domestic and regional threats are increasingly intertwined (Osland & Erstad, 2020).

These theoretical perspectives provide a coherent foundation for understanding how Libya's internal collapse interacted with regional vulnerabilities to produce a wider transnational security crisis. State fragility theory clarifies how institutional breakdown in Libya created opportunities for armed actors, while relative deprivation perspectives explain why neighbouring societies were unable to absorb the resulting shocks. This combined approach supports a deeper analysis of regional spillover processes and the mechanisms through which the Libyan conflict reshaped the security environment of the Sahel.

METHODS

Research Design

The study is grounded in a qualitative case study design that supports a detailed examination of processes linking the Libyan conflict to wider regional insecurity. Libya is approached as a critical case, selected not because it represents the average Sahelian conflict environment but because it provides a concentrated setting in which regional spillover mechanisms can be observed. This design allows the research to follow cross-border flows, armed group behaviour and institutional breakdown in ways that would be difficult

to capture through large-scale comparative approaches. The case study orientation also aligns with the wider research, ensuring consistency in analytical focus and methodological choices.

Data Sources

The analysis draws on two main forms of evidence. The first consists of documentary material from international organisations, including reports, policy assessments and situational analyses produced by bodies engaged in monitoring security developments in North and West Africa. These documents provide structured accounts of arms flows, governance failures and regional security trends.

The second source of evidence comes from in-depth interviews with key informants conducted as part of the original study. Participants included individuals with direct experience of Libyan security dynamics, regional counterterrorism efforts and cross-border governance challenges. These interviews offered insight into processes that are not always visible in formal documentation, such as informal networks, local perceptions of insecurity and the practical realities of border management.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical safeguards were central to the research process. Respondent anonymity was maintained throughout due to the sensitivity of terrorism-related inquiry and the risks faced by individuals working in or analysing high-risk environments. No identifying information was recorded, and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any point. The study also avoided collecting operationally sensitive details that could compromise the safety of participants or communities. These measures ensured that the research remained responsible, respectful and aligned with established ethical standards for conflict-related fieldwork.

Analytical Strategy

The analytical approach is descriptive and explanatory, focusing on tracing causal pathways rather than generating cross-national comparisons. The study does not attempt to rank Sahelian states or classify terrorist organisations. Instead, it follows the

sequence of events through which Libya's internal collapse contributed to the transnationalisation of terrorism. This involves identifying patterns in arms proliferation, fighter mobility, governance breakdown and regional vulnerability, and examining how these patterns interacted with long-standing structural pressures in neighbouring states.

The analysis proceeds through iterative reading of the documentary material and interview transcripts, allowing themes to emerge organically while remaining anchored in the conceptual frameworks outlined earlier. This approach supports a grounded understanding of conflict spillover processes and the mechanisms through which Libya's post-2011 fragmentation reshaped the security landscape of the Sahel.

Limitations

The study's reliance on a single critical case limits the extent to which findings can be generalised beyond the Sahel. The sensitivity of the topic also restricted the number of individuals who could be interviewed. These constraints do not undermine the value of the analysis but highlight the need for caution when extending its conclusions to other regions. The strength of the approach lies in its ability to provide a detailed, process-focused account of how one state's collapse contributed to a wider regional crisis.

ANALYSIS

The Libyan Conflict and the Emergence of a Regional Security Vacuum

Collapse of Central Authority

The fall of the Libyan regime in 2011 dismantled a personalised system of governance that had relied on centralised control, patronage networks and concentrated coercive power. Once the regime collapsed, a wide range of militias, tribal actors and political factions moved to occupy the space left behind. Transitional authorities lacked the legitimacy and institutional capacity required to reassert meaningful control over territory or resources. Research on post-2011 Libyan state fragmentation shows that competing armed groups entrenched themselves rapidly, creating overlapping centres of authority that

weakened national cohesion (Wehrey, 2018).

This fragmentation had direct implications for border management. Southern Libya became an area where state oversight was minimal and where armed groups operated with considerable freedom. Analyses of Libya's southern borderlands highlight how these ungoverned spaces evolved into transit corridors linking North Africa to the Sahel (Tubiana & Gramizzi, 2017). These routes facilitated the movement of arms, fighters and illicit commodities, reinforcing the position of actors already embedded in regional trafficking networks. The erosion of state control therefore created conditions in which cross-border flows expanded and violent groups consolidated their influence.

Arms Proliferation and Militant Mobility

The uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons was one of the most significant consequences of the Libyan conflict. State armouries were looted during the fighting, and in some cases deliberately opened, allowing large quantities of weapons to enter regional markets. Research on post-conflict weapons diffusion shows that Libyan-sourced arms spread rapidly across Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, strengthening the operational capacity of armed groups (Small Arms Survey, 2015). Terrorist organisations such as al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and affiliated groups used this influx to enhance their mobility, firepower and recruitment.

Interview evidence from the original study reinforces these findings. Respondents consistently identified Libya as a primary source of regional insecurity, describing a steady flow of arms and noting how the availability of more sophisticated weaponry emboldened militant groups across the Sahel. These developments increased both the lethality and the geographical scope of terrorist activity. Peer-reviewed research on regional conflict diffusion similarly argues that the Libyan conflict accelerated the transformation of local insurgencies into transnational threats by enabling the movement of experienced fighters and logistical support across borders (Mounkaila, 2021).

Transnationalisation of Terrorism in the Sahel

Libya as a Strategic Hub

Post-conflict Libya emerged as a strategic hub for terrorist networks operating across the Sahel. Its vast territory, limited state presence and proximity to multiple Sahelian states created an environment in which armed groups could establish training sites, recruitment channels and logistical bases. Studies on Sahelian militant mobility show that weak border controls allowed fighters to move with relative ease between Libya, Mali, Niger, Chad and Sudan, strengthening the connections between groups that had previously operated more independently (International Alert, 2018).

The absence of a functioning national security apparatus also meant that Libya became a space where different factions could coordinate activities without significant interference. This situation enabled the consolidation of networks that linked North Africa to the Sahel and contributed to the emergence of a more integrated regional threat environment.

Regional Consequences

The transnationalisation of terrorism reshaped the security landscape of the Sahel by blurring the boundaries between domestic and external threats. Governments found themselves confronting armed actors whose operational bases, supply chains and ideological affiliations extended far beyond national borders. This development complicated counterterrorism strategies that had been designed primarily to address internal security challenges. Research on regional security governance highlights how these cross-border networks exploit gaps in coordination between Sahelian states, making unilateral responses ineffective (Cold-Ravnkilde & Plambech, 2015).

These dynamics contributed to a more complex and fluid security environment, where local conflicts were increasingly influenced by actors and resources originating outside national territories. The result was a regional crisis in which the effects of Libya's collapse reverberated across the Sahel, reinforcing existing vulnerabilities and creating new challenges for states already struggling to maintain stability.

DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that the Libyan conflict acted as a regional force multiplier for terrorism rather than a contained national crisis. The collapse of central authority in Libya created permissive conditions that interacted with long-standing vulnerabilities across the Sahel, including weak governance, porous borders and entrenched socio-economic grievances. Research on regional conflict systems shows that when a state collapses, the resulting vacuum can reshape the strategic environment of neighbouring regions by enabling armed groups to exploit new mobility routes, resource flows and governance gaps (Bachmann & Schouten, 2018; Beehner, 2018; Scheffran, 2023). In this context, Libya's fragmentation did not simply destabilise its own territory. It generated a ripple effect that amplified insecurity across the Sahel, transforming localised insurgencies into transnational threats.

These findings highlight the limitations of state-centric counterterrorism approaches, which often assume that threats originate and can be addressed within national boundaries. In the Sahel, the drivers of insecurity are inherently cross-border, shaped by flows of arms, fighters and illicit commodities that move through regional networks rather than discrete national systems. Studies on cross-border militant dynamics emphasise that unilateral national responses are insufficient when armed groups operate across multiple jurisdictions and exploit inconsistencies in state capacity (Margulies & Sinnot, 2013; Cold-Ravnkilde & Plambech, 2015; Blair, 2024). The Libyan case reinforces this point by showing how the absence of a functioning security apparatus in one state can undermine the stability of several others.

The discussion also underscores the importance of addressing governance deficits and arms control as central components of effective counterterrorism policy. Military interventions that prioritise short-term security gains without rebuilding governance structures risk reproducing the conditions that enable violent actors to expand. Research on post-conflict stabilisation argues that without institutional reconstruction, security vacuums tend to be filled by armed groups, criminal networks or local powerbrokers who may have little interest in long-term stability (de Waal, 2015; Akinbi

& Oluwole, 2025; Swed & Howell, 2025). The Libyan experience illustrates this clearly: the absence of functioning institutions, combined with the availability of weapons and unregulated mobility, created an enabling environment for militant groups to strengthen their operational capacity.

Similarly, analyses of weapons governance in fragile states highlight that reducing the circulation of small arms is essential for preventing the escalation of violence (Karp, 2018; Anaukwu & Onwuekwe, 2024; Afuzie, 2025). In the Sahel, the influx of Libyan-sourced weapons increased the lethality of armed groups and facilitated their expansion across borders. Addressing arms proliferation therefore requires coordinated regional mechanisms for tracing, regulating and intercepting weapons flows, supported by international partners where necessary.

These insights point to the need for coordinated regional responses that move beyond isolated national strategies. Effective counterterrorism in the Sahel requires cooperation on intelligence sharing, border security, arms tracing and post-conflict reconstruction. Regional security initiatives that integrate political, developmental and security dimensions are essential for preventing terrorist transnationalisation and stabilising the wider Sahel. Without such coordination, states remain vulnerable to the spillover effects of neighbouring crises, and interventions risk addressing symptoms rather than underlying structural drivers.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the role of the Libyan conflict in shaping the transnationalisation of terrorism across the Sahel, demonstrating that Libya's post-2011 collapse produced consequences that extended far beyond its national borders. The analysis shows that the dismantling of central authority created a regional security vacuum that enabled arms proliferation, militant mobility and the expansion of jihadist networks into neighbouring states. These developments were not isolated or accidental. They emerged from the interaction between Libya's internal fragmentation and pre-existing vulnerabilities across the Sahel, including weak governance, socio-economic marginalisation and porous borders.

Applying state fragility and relative deprivation

perspectives, the study has shown how localised state failure can generate far-reaching regional effects. Libya's collapse provided the permissive conditions that armed groups required to strengthen their capabilities, while long-standing grievances in Sahelian societies created openings for recruitment and mobilisation. This combination of structural fragility and new opportunities for movement and access to weapons transformed what might otherwise have remained localised conflicts into cross-border security challenges. The findings therefore reinforce the importance of understanding terrorism in the Sahel as part of a wider regional system rather than a collection of discrete national crises.

The study also highlights the limitations of state-centric counterterrorism approaches. Strategies that focus narrowly on national borders or internal security threats struggle to address the realities of a region where armed groups operate across multiple jurisdictions and exploit inconsistencies in state capacity. The Libyan case illustrates how the collapse of one state can undermine the stability of several others, revealing the need for responses that reflect the interconnected nature of regional insecurity. Efforts to counter terrorism in the Sahel must therefore be grounded in regional cooperation, shared intelligence, coordinated border management and harmonised security practices.

At the same time, the analysis underscores the importance of addressing governance deficits as part of any long-term security strategy. Military interventions that prioritise short-term stability without investing in political reconstruction risk reproducing the conditions that enable violent actors to thrive. Strengthening state institutions, improving accountability and expanding access to public goods are essential for reducing the appeal of armed groups and limiting their ability to exploit governance vacuums. Similarly, reducing the circulation of small arms and improving weapons governance are critical for preventing the escalation of violence and constraining the operational capacity of militant networks.

These insights point to the need for comprehensive, multi-layered approaches that combine security measures with long-term commitments to political reform, economic inclusion and regional cooperation.

The Libyan conflict offers a clear lesson: when governance collapses in one state, the consequences can reverberate across an entire region. Preventing similar patterns of terrorist transnationalisation in the future requires policies that address both the immediate security threats and the deeper structural drivers of instability. Only through such integrated strategies can the Sahel move towards a more stable and resilient security environment.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The study was developed through a collaborative process. C.E.E., A.J.E. and G.O.I. shaped the conceptual direction of the research, designed the methodological approach and coordinated the overall project. The theoretical framework was developed by F.I. and K.O.O., who also contributed to the initial drafting of the manuscript. All co-authors played a role in refining the research design and strengthening the theoretical foundations of the study. C.E.E., A.J.E. and G.O.I. conducted the interviews and documentary analysis, with co-authors supporting access to materials and assisting in the organisation of the empirical dataset. The primary analysis was undertaken by C.E.E., A.J.E. and G.O.I., while co-authors contributed to the interpretation of findings and provided critical insights that shaped the analytical direction. All authors were involved in reviewing, editing and refining the manuscript, and each author approved the final version and shares responsibility for its content.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors acknowledge the management and technical staff of PENKUP Research Institute, Birmingham, UK, for their excellent assistance and for providing manuscript writing and editorial support in accordance with the Good Publication Practice (GPP3) guidelines.

REFERENCES

1. Afuzie, N. R. (2025). Impact of proliferation of small arms and light weapons on Nigeria's internal security. *International Journal of Conflict and Security Management*, 5(01), 018-038.
2. Akinbi, I. J., & Oluwole, L. (2025). Peace-informed development planning: Aligning human security, infrastructure investment, and conflict sensitivity in fragile states post-conflict societies. *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, 15(02), 676-694.
3. Anaukwu, N. O., & Onwuekwe, A. O. (2024). Small arms and light weapons proliferation and peace-building in Sudan, 2017-2023. *Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of Political Science*, 9(1), 21-39.
4. Babalola, T. O. (2022). International military cooperation in the Lake Chad basin region to fight terrorism: Roles and effects.
5. Bachmann, J., & Schouten, P. (2018). Concrete approaches to peace: Infrastructure as peacebuilding. *International Affairs*, 94(2), 381-398. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix237>
6. Becheikh, S. (2023). From Marginalization to Militancy: Exploring Violent Extremism in the Sahel Through the Lens of Tuareg Communities In Mali.
7. Beehner, L. (2018). Fragile states and the territory conundrum to countering violent nonstate actors. *Democracy and security*, 14(2), 101-127.
8. Blair, C. W. (2024). The fortification dilemma: Border control and rebel violence. *American Journal of Political Science*, 68(4), 1366-1385.
9. Bøås, M. (2019). *The Sahel crisis and the need for international support*. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Sahel-crisis-and-the-need-for-international-B%C3%B8%C3%A5s/4e53f929dd9e027a89d57e5112c9b510f4cd1257>
10. Cold-Ravnkilde, S. M., & Plambech, S. (2015). Boko Haram: From local grievances to violent insurgency. DIIS Report 2015:08. Danish Institute for International Studies. Available at: <https://research.diis.dk/en/publications/boko-haram-from-local-grievances-to-violent->

- [insurgency/](#), (Accessed: 16 June 2025)
11. de Waal, A. (2015). *The real politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, war and the business of power*. Polity Press.
12. ENACT Africa. (2023). Small arms trafficking in the Sahel: The role of tri-border towns. <https://enactafrica.org/research/ocwar-t/small-arms-trafficking-in-the-sahel-the-role-of-tri-border-towns>
13. International Alert, (2018) If victims become perpetrators: Factors contributing to vulnerability and resilience to violent extremism in the central Sahel. United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. Available at: <https://www.international-alert.org/app/uploads/2021/08/Sahel-Violent-Extremism-Vulnerability-Resilience-EN-2018.pdf>, (Accessed: 16 June 2025)
14. Karp, A. (2018). *Estimating Global Civilian-held Firearms Numbers*. Small Arms Survey. Available at: <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/resource/estimating-global-civilian-held-firearms-numbers#:~:text=By.series%20of%20three%20Briefing%20Papers>, (Accessed: 20 June 2025)
15. Lacher, W. (2020). *Libya's fragmentation: Structure and process in violent conflict*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
16. Margulies, P., & Sinnot, M. (2013). Crossing borders to target Al-Qaeda and its affiliates: defining networks as organized armed groups in non-international armed conflicts. *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law*, 16, 319-345.
17. Minko, A. E. (2025). To What Extent Do Political Instability and Coups D'état Contribute to the Proliferation and Resilience of Terrorist Groups in The Sahel Region?. *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, 5(3), 147-164.
18. Mounkaila, H. (2021) 'Trans-Saharan Migration Through and From the Sahel', in Leonardo A. Villalón (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the African Sahel*, Oxford Handbooks (2021); online edn, Oxford Academic, 8 Dec. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198816959.013.43>
19. OECD/SWAC (2022), *Borders and Conflicts in North and West Africa*, West African Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/6da6d21e-en>.
20. Okoli, A. C. (2024). The state and complex threat syndrome in the Sahel: Conflict, crime and terror. *Society*, 61, 479-488. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-024-01021-4>
21. Osland, K. M., & Erstad, H. U. (2020). The Fragility Dilemma and Divergent Security Complexes in the Sahel. *The International Spectator*, 55(4), 18-36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2020.1833474>
22. Saka, M. (2024). An evaluation of violent terrorist groups, conflict and development in the Sahel-Sahara region. *Acta U. Danubius Jur.*, 20, 68.
23. Scheffran, J. (2023). Limits to the Anthropocene: geopolitical conflict or cooperative governance?. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 5, 1190610.
24. Small Arms Survey, (2015) *Small Arms Survey 2015: Weapons and the World*. Small Arms Survey, Geneva. Cambridge University Press; 2015.
25. Swed, O., & Howell, S. (2025). Conflict, corruption, and white-collar crime: Understanding illicit practices in war-torn areas. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 1-22.
26. Tubiana, J., & Gramizzi, C. (2017). Tubu trouble: State and statelessness in the Chad-Sudan-Libya triangle. Small Arms Survey. Available at: <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/resource/tubu-trouble-state-and-statelessness-chad-sudan-libya-triangle-hsba-working-paper-43>, (Accessed: 16 June 2025)
27. UN News. (2023). Trafficking in the Sahel: Guns, gas and gold. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136847>, (Accessed: 13 June 2025)
28. UNODC. (2022). *Firearms trafficking in the Sahel*. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta_sahel/TOCTA_Sahel_firearms_2023.pdf, (Accessed: 13 June 2025)

29. Van den Bosch, J., & Raubo, J. (2017). Armed conflicts in Africa: Fragile states and rising instability. *Przegląd Strategiczny*, (10), 445-480.
30. Walther, O. (2022). Security and Trade in African Borderlands – An Introduction. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 37(2), 229–234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2022.2049350>
31. Wehrey, F. M., (2018). The burning shores: Inside the battle for the new Libya. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York.
32. Yahia, Z., (2022) *Crisis in the Sahel: Causes, Consequences, and the Path Forward*. June 2022. Available at: https://mecouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/MECGA_Issue-Brief_Zoubir_Final.pdf, (Accessed: 12 June 2025)
33. Ziso, E., & Hamandishe, A. L. (2024). Coups and terror in the Sahel: Terrorist groups' exploitation of state fragility and ungoverned spaces in Burkina Faso and Niger. *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.59569/jceeas.2024.4.2.288>