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Outside sources of terrorist threats in West Africa

Dirk Kohnert ¹

'Mapping violence in the Sahara-Sahel'



Source: Zapiro, [cartooning for peace](#), 2019 ²

Abstract: Fighting terrorism is a complex task, not limited to military options. It also concerns State-building, nationalism and inclusive sustainable development. The roots of underlying conflicts were already laid during colonialism, the slave trade, plundering of resources and arbitrary border establishment. The battle cannot be won by occupation nor by internal efforts of the countries affected alone, particularly not when terrorists enjoy secret support from parts of the army and the country's political elite. There are outside sources fomenting violent conflict through close cooperation between transnational crime and terrorist networks. Money laundering and financing of terrorism in global financial systems are part and parcel of the problem. Also, many activists and combatants are not just driven by religious fanaticism and ideological zeal. Revenge, mere survival and local strives between conflicting groups often play a decisive role too. Ill- and ungoverned spaces favour warlordism, both of radical jihadist and non-religious terrorist movements, driven by localism and informal networks. The military response of some governments and security services degenerated into inadequate state counterterrorism with no regard for local populations. It resulted in challenges to the rule of law and human rights in these countries. Although trans-national military counterinsurgency among ECOWAS governments improved, it remained hampered by the divide between Anglophone and Francophone countries and the vested interest of former colonial rulers France and Great Britain. By now, terrorists also effectively use cyberspace and social media to create fear and spread their violent ideologies. The interactions between crime and terror in West Africa will continue in the foreseeable future. It may even increase, considering the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and famines caused by failing cereal imports as a result of the Russian war in Ukraine. The effects on the social structure are considerable, including the population's dwindling trust in the state administration and the villagers' willingness to side with the terrorists. The fight against terrorism demands viable long-term solutions that take into account the linkages between counterterrorism, the rule of law and human rights and socio-economic development.

Keywords: [Terrorism](#), [counterinsurgency](#), [transnational crime](#), [failed or failing states](#), [dictatorship](#), [governance](#), [autocracy](#), [devolution of power](#), [warlords](#), [sustainable development](#), [cyberterrorism](#), [social movements](#), [social media](#), [post-colonialism](#), [human rights](#), [Islamic state](#), [West Africa](#), [Sub-Saharan Africa](#), [Mali](#), [Niger](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Ghana](#), [Togo](#), [Benin](#), [African Studies](#)

JEL-Code: D31, D72, D74, E26, F22, F35, F51, F52, F54, H26, H56, K14, N47, N97, O17, Z12, Z13

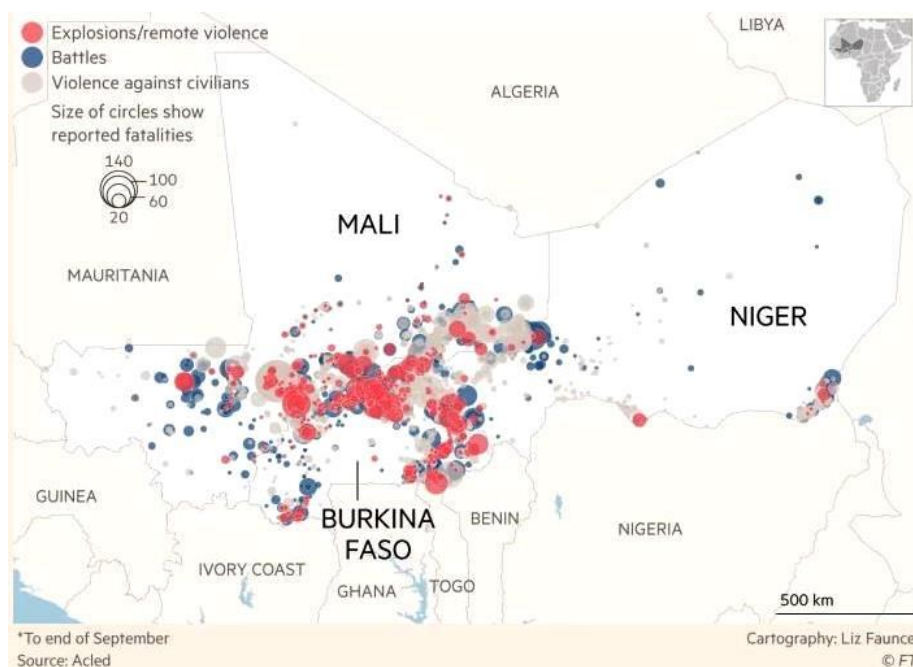
¹ Dirk Kohnert, associated expert, [GIGA-Institute for African Affairs, Hamburg](#). Draft : 10 November 2022.

² Jonathan Shapiro, pen name [Zapiro](#), is a South African internationally renowned cartoonist. © (all rights reserved). The programme [Securities and Borders](#) of the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD) aims to map the changing geography of violence in the Sahel region.

1. Introduction

[Terrorism](#) is on the rise in [Sub-Saharan Africa](#). The West African [Sahel](#) zone harbours the world's fastest-growing and most-deadly terrorist groups. The [Islamic State](#) (IS, ISIS or Daesh) replaced the [Taliban](#) as the world's deadliest terror group in 2021, with 15 deaths per attack in [Niger](#) ([Global Terrorism Index, 2022](#)). The outbreak of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) and the repercussions of [Russia's war in Ukraine](#) still increased the terrorist threat. Activities of violent extremist and terrorist groups in [West Africa](#) augmented. Since January 2021, high-profile attacks by groups affiliated with the Islamic State ([ISIS](#)) and [Al-Qaeda](#) have been recorded in [Burkina Faso](#), [Mali](#), and [Niger](#) (Aubyn, 2021). During the first six months of 2022, violent attacks increased again dramatically in the tri-border region between Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, facing the highest death toll for a decade (D'Amato & Baldaro, 2022; Adeoye, 2022).

Graph 1: Violent attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, January to September 2022



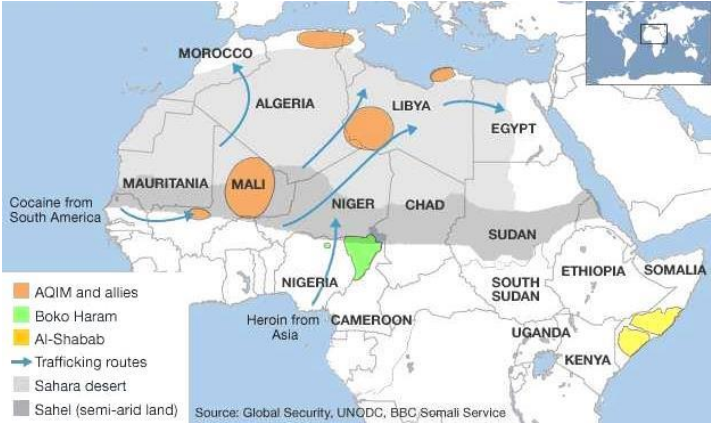
Source: Adeoye, 2022; *Financial Times* © (all rights reserved)

But also in the adjacent coastal West African states, like [Nigeria](#), [Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Ghana](#), [Togo](#) and [Benin](#), the terrorist menace increased (Diarra, 2016; KAS, 2022; Preuss, 2022; Zulkarnain, 2020). Internally displaced persons reached into the millions in the [Western Sahel](#). Over the past two years, multiple military [coups d'état](#) across the Sahel put into question the security strategies and the whole system of [counterinsurgency](#) deployed in the past decade that had been focused too much on 'technical' military aspects and 'quick-fix' approaches (D'Amato & Baldaro, 2022).

The terrorist risk has been amplified by outside sources, both from armed state and non-state actors, notably from [Mali](#), [Niger](#), and [Burkina Faso](#), but also - for decades - from [Libya](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), and the [Arab Emirates](#). Nevertheless, each region affected by the terrorist threat has its own particularities. The articulation of external and internal influences leads to specific conflict dynamics that make one-to-one transfer solutions difficult. However, at least one conclusion is common sense: transnational cooperation in counterinsurgency is imperative

and the spread of terrorist activities is bad for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (HongXing et al, 2020).

Graph 2: Islamist militant groups and their areas of influence in Africa



Source: VOX, [The crisis in Nigeria, in 11 maps and charts](#)³

Graph 3: Sites of recent attacks in West Africa’s coastal states



Source: Kwarkye, 2022

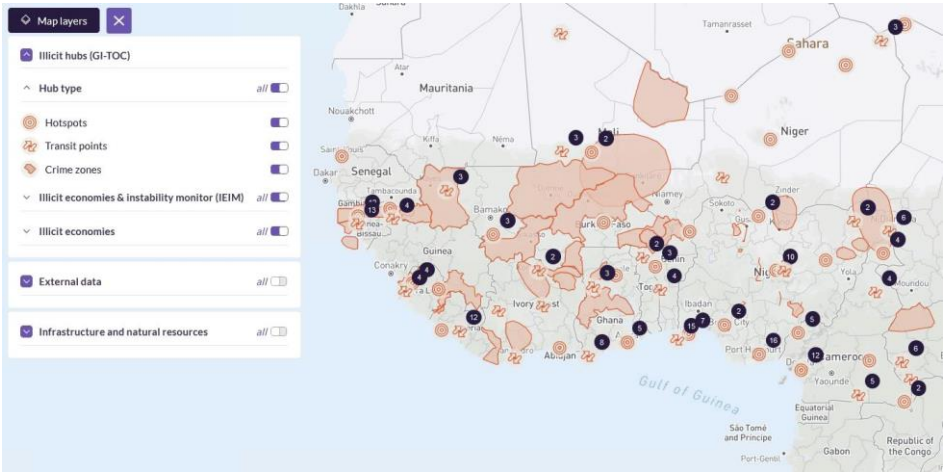
The Joint Force of the Group of Five of the Sahel ([G5 Sahel](#) or FC-G5S), founded in 2014 in [Nouakchott](#), [Mauritania](#), was a first initiative by [AU](#) member states to combat jointly terrorism in the Sahel. It included [Mali](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Niger](#), [Mauritania](#) and [Chad](#) and started [counterinsurgency](#) operations, in cooperation with the French military, in 2017 (Rupesinghe, 2018). Also, the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum ([GCTF](#)), whose 30 member states included [Nigeria](#) as the only West African country, initiated a capacity-building project in the West African region in September 2017 to broaden the scope of the previous GCTF Sahel Working Group ([GCTF](#)).

However, terrorism in West Africa is not a recent phenomenon and it is not restricted to [Islamism](#). Ethno-religious violence has been fomented by Christians, e.g. in the Nigerian ‘[Middle Belt](#)’ too (Ike & Chan, 2022). Infights of the political and military elites that resulted in terrorism were notorious in West Africa’s [fragile](#) and [failed states](#) in the past decades, e.g. in [Liberia](#), [Sierra Leone](#) and [Guinea-Bissau](#) (Kohnert, 2010). Moreover, there exist long-

³ By Zack Beauchamp@zackbeauchamp zack@vox.com, May 13, 2014 © (all rights reserved)

standing common problems fuelling terrorism in nearly all West African countries, such as conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, the political neglect of certain regions of a country for the benefit of others, extra-legal immigration, [xenophobia](#), ethnicization of conflicts, and the instrumentalization of [vigilante groups](#) (Engels, 2021).

Graph 4: West Africa’s illicit hubs: hotspots, transition points and crime zones, 2022



Source: [Global Initiative](#), 2022

Last, but not least, the roots of present terrorism were laid already by the [violence of colonialism](#), with [racism](#) as a decisive means in the construction of the inferiority complex for the colonized, and superiority for the colonizers, as outlined by [Franz Fanon](#) and [Mahmood Mamdani](#). The latter pointed out that the roots of the spread of political terror in Africa and beyond are a result of the ‘unfinished business of the [Cold War](#)’ (Mamdani, 2004) when African [autocrats](#) were built-up and legitimized by both sides to back the post-colonial policies of the global powers concerned. Foreign powers tended to intervene only when their own political, economic, and strategic interests were at stake. The failure to intervene when interests were not at risk had critical consequences (Schmidt, 2019). According to Mamdani, the transition from political Islam to Islamist terrorism developed in connection with the American [Cold War](#) strategy of rolling back ‘communism’ in Afghanistan, Central America and Southern Africa (Obi, 2006). This included all facets of the colonized societies, politics, economy, culture and even social psychology. According to [Franz Fanon](#), the refusal of the ‘[white mask](#)’ will be the prelude to the construction of the conscience of the African self and the other (Fanon, 1952). Besides, to fight terrorism one has also to contest [ethnic nationalism](#), a struggle that cannot be won by occupation, as shown by the outcome of the international struggle against terrorism in [Afghanistan](#) (Mamdani, 2004; Anós Té, 2022).

The main focus of the following desk study, which is based largely on online secondary sources, will be on the outside sources and enabling surrounding conditions of Islamist terrorism in the Sahel. However, non-Islamist terrorism is not negligible, as will be shown later on taking the example of the most affected coastal West African states. A core problem is the linkage of terrorism with [transnational crime](#), [money laundering](#) and [trafficking](#) of all sorts, notably [drugs](#), [human beings](#) (migrants, child and sex labourers) and [firearms](#), [West Africa](#) being a strategic hub for smugglers shipping drugs from Latin America to Europe and the Middle East.

2. Islamist terrorism in the Sahel

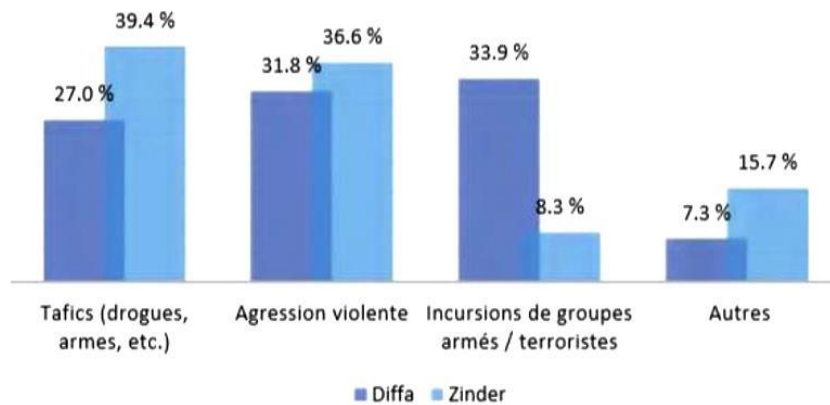
Cartoon 2: Multinational terrorism of the [Islamic State](#) ⁴



Source: Cartoon by [Damien Glez](#), 2020

Radical and violent tendencies are nothing new in [West Africa](#). Its roots were already laid by the [Sokoto caliphate](#) and the [Kanem–Bornu Empire](#) in the 19th century when they terrorised the population in the conquered territories with regular slave raids. The fairy tale of an ordinary 'tolerant' Islam in pre-colonial West Africa apparently is an evasive defence of the ruling elites.

Graph 5: Types of cross-border security problems according to local populations



Source : Ibrahim, 2019

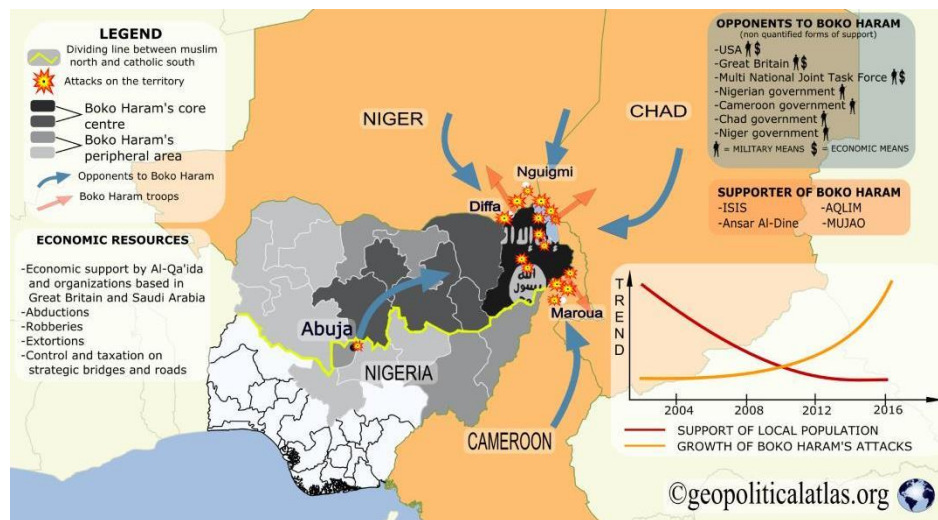
The 'Second Wind of Change' in [West Africa](#), triggered by the [sovereign National Conferences in Benin](#) and other [Sub-Saharan](#) states in the early 1990s, gave birth also to numerous radical Islamic religious organizations which wanted to pose as alternatives to established Islam. Thus, the first generation of non-state Islamic associations was created, e.g. in the [Republic of Niger](#), the Nigerien Association for Islamic Appeal and Solidarity (ANASI), the 'Nigerien Association for Islamic Appeal Unity and Solidarity' (ANAUSI), the 'Niger Association for the Dissemination of Islam in Niger' (Adin Islam) and the 'Association for the Promotion of Islamic Culture' (ARCI) (Ibrahim, 2019). The development of terrorism

⁴ Cartoon translation: "Do you want to pursue a career in the subsidiary of a large multinational?" – [Areva](#) (French multinational, specialising in nuclear power)? – [Daesh](#) (Islamic State). – Source: *Le dessin du jour*: '[In the Sahel, prospects for the future are not very reassuring](#)'. *Courrier international*, 17 January 2020, © (all rights reserved).

was stimulated by additional, separated and interlinked elements like the growth of Arab-Muslim schools ([Madrasas](#)), the implementation of [Islamic banking and finance](#), the evolution of worship practices, etc.

[Boko Haram](#) was one of the deadliest terrorist groups in Western Africa. At its high times, under the reign of [Abubakar Shekau](#), it killed some 20,000 people and abducted thousands, including members of the Nigerian security forces and female schoolchildren. Moreover, it captured fourteen local government areas in North Eastern Nigeria ([Borno state](#)), which were declared part of Boko Haram's [Islamic caliphate](#).

Graph 6: Location and action of Boko Haram



Source: [Mandala Projects](#), *Inventory of Conflict and Environment (ICE), Boko-Haram*
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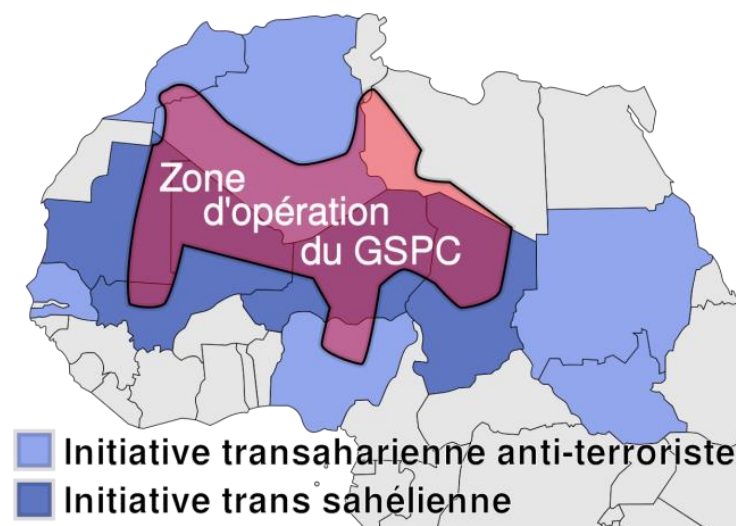
Funding is both the lifeblood of a terrorist organization and one of its most significant vulnerabilities (Cannon & Iyekekpolo, 2018). Boko Haram's initial funding probably came from [Osama bin Laden](#). He had promised and reportedly disbursed three million euros to fund global jihad in [Nigeria's emirates](#) as early as 2002/2003. Later on, especially between 2003 and 2009, the group secured finance by levying dues from members and donations from wealthy businesspeople and politicians. It even added state funds through one of its members, Alhaji Buji Fai, a two-time Chairman of [Kaga local government](#) areas of [Borno State](#) who had served as a member of the [Borno state](#) executive council as commissioner of Water Resources before he was moved to the Ministry for Religious Affairs. He was killed by the state's security services in July 2011 (Sani, 2011). Extortion of 'protection fees' from governors and residents to avoid being attacked, as well as bank robbery and kidnapping for ransom, constituted important further outside finance sources. Trans-border extension and globalization facilitated Boko Haram's expansion. They attributed to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including the smooth flow of illicit arms, weapons systems, funds, training, and operational tactics (Cannon & Iyekekpolo, 2018; Walker, 2012).

This was not a single unidirectional process of radicalisation of Islam, but the radicalisation of religion took place also in [Pentecostal](#) Christian churches and within the Islamic world of different, sometimes competing and even antagonistic factions operating according to their largely local logics. However, the hardening of ideological divisions was reinforced by the growing ambition of the Islamic State affiliate in the Sahel and pressure from the [Islamic State Central](#) for its regional satellites to take on a more confrontational approach toward its

rivals (Nsaibia & Weiss, 2020). The growth of cross-border insecurity in the [Western Sahel](#) and the [Lake Chad Basin](#) was facilitated by the general poverty of the region, [weak and failed states](#) and ineffective international cooperation (Ibrahim, 2019). However, ideological concerns or religious passion were supposedly secondary in the selection of targets, which contradicts a popular but unsubstantiated narrative in terrorism studies. Instead, a rational interest to survive and to retaliate against counterinsurgency efforts grew (Cannon & Iyekepolo, 2018).

In the modern age, Islamist rebels in the [West African Sahel](#), called [al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb](#) or AQIM, stepped up their violence since 2007. In 2012, two radical groups splintered from AQIM, the Al-Mulathamun Battalion and its subordinate unit al-Muwaqi'un Bil-Dima ('Those Who Sign With Blood'), led by notorious [Mokhtar Belmokhtar](#). The latter had fought already with the [Mujahideen](#) in Afghanistan and trained with [Al-Qaeda](#). By the late 1990s, Belmokhtar seized control over lucrative trans-Saharan smuggling routes, reportedly earning millions, among others by trafficking cigarettes. Belmokhtar helped set up the 'Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat' ([GSPC](#)) which evolved into AQIM in 2007 (DNI, 2022).

Graph 7: Area of operations of AQIM (formerly GSPC, in pink)⁵



Source: [GSPC](#), Wikipédia

AQIM is said to be one of the region's best-armed and wealthiest radical groups due to the payment of ransom demands by humanitarian organizations and Western governments (Nossiter & de la Baume, 2012). Already in 2013, it had been estimated that they had raised more than US\$ 50 million in the previous decade (Corera, 2013; [al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb](#), Wikipedia). In 2017, the Sahara branch of [AQIM](#) merged with the [Macina Liberation Front](#), [Ansar Dine](#) and [Al-Mourabitoun](#) into [Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin](#) (JNIM). It thus became the official branch of [Al-Qaeda](#) in Mali ([Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin](#), Wikipedia).

⁵ Map showing AQIM / GSPC area of operations (pink), member states of the [Pan Sahel Initiative](#) (dark blue), and members of the [Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative](#) (dark and light blue) as of 2011. - Source of map : [Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat](#), French Wikipédia, drawn by Mapa_GSPC.svg: Original en:User:Orthuberra. Vector version Chabacanoderivative work: M0tty (talk); — Mapa_GSPC.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17121474> . - Source of map legend: [Islamist insurgency in the Sahel](#), English Wikipedia.

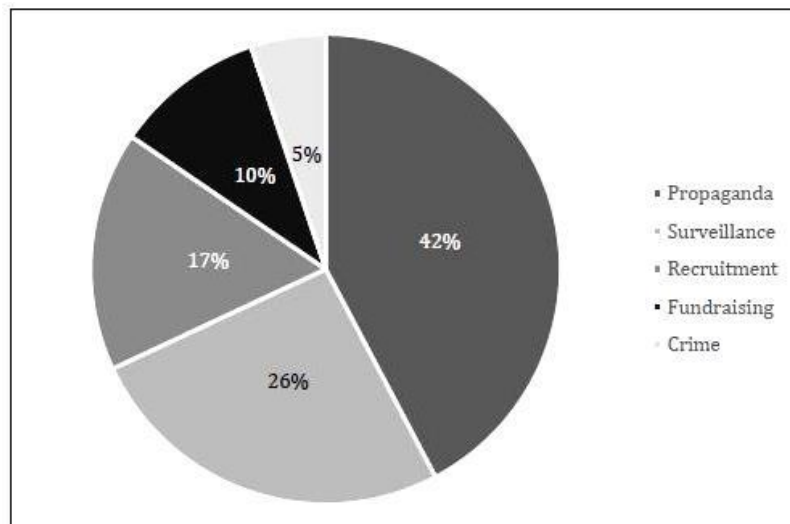
Graph 8: Differences between cyber-terrorists and cyber-criminals

Terrorists (Motives and methods)	Criminals (motives and methods)
Ideology, religion political	Financial or personal gain
Psychological warfare	Data mining: identify theft, credit card scam
Publicity, propaganda, and information sharing	Espionage or competitive advantage
Recruitment and training/networking	Fun, curiosity, or pride
Fundraising, money laundering	Grudge or personal offense
Data mining	Money laundering, fraud
Planning and coordination	

Source: Ogunlana, 2019

The [Islamic State](#), also called IS, ISIS, ISIL or by its Arabic acronym *Daesh*, was estimated in 2015 to have an annual budget of more than US\$ 1 billion and more than 30,000 fighters. Although predominantly active in the [Middle East](#), e.g. in Iraq and Syria, it perpetrated attacks also in [Sub-Saharan African](#) countries with a significant Muslim population, such as [Nigeria](#), [Cameroon](#), [Chad](#), and [Niger](#) (its '[West Africa Province](#)') and in the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) (its '[Central Africa Province](#)') (Mina al-Lami, 2019). Its funding was assured by a variety of sources, including illicit oil sales, trafficking of drugs, extortion, organized crime, selling of ancient works of art and donations from outside sources (U.S. Gov., 2014).

Graph 9: Cyber activities of Nigerian terrorists identified by interviewees



Source: Ogunlana, 2019

However, the financing of Islamist terror groups changed considerably in the last decade. First, because of the proliferation of un- or under-governed spaces that allowed terrorists to exploit local populations and resources. Holding territory considerably increased terrorists' organizational ability to raise funds (Levy & Yusuf, 2021). Second, because of an evolving trend towards self-financed individuals or small terrorist cells, relying on localised terrorist financing. Possibly, they did not rely any more on outside sources but may be self-funding,

either through legal employment or by low-level criminal activity. Moreover, there existed sleeper militant networks that could be activated at short notice. Thereby, also traditional tools used by international ‘[financial intelligence](#)’ to counter financing of terrorism, e.g. by identifying and flagging terror-related transactions and tracking funds movements through bank accounts and investigative reports, might be called into question (Bauer & Levitt, 2020). The reduction of space by modern means of communication apparently favoured the spread of the [jihadist](#) phenomenon in the Sahel (Sambe, 2013). Terrorists used increasingly [cyberspace](#) and [social media](#) marketing as a cheap alternative to communicate and coordinate activities to create fear and spread their violent ideologies. This made [counterinsurgency](#) technologies such as [artificial intelligence](#) crucial with a considerable impact to boost counterterrorism efforts (Ogunlana, 2019).

In March 2017, several high-profile Islamist groups merged under the banner of [Al Qaeda](#) to form a new group, the [Jama’ at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin](#) (JNIM or GSIM) which committed numerous attacks across Western Africa, striking primarily French, UN, and West African security forces (Zimmerer, 2019).

Graph 10: Names of selected terrorist organisations and separatists movements known to be active in the Nigerian cyberspace

Organizations	Categories	Modus (Website/Social media
Boko Haram	Terrorist organization	Uses YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook and has an official web page in the form of a blog ¹² through which it publishes its propaganda and recruits members. http://www.usufislamicbrothers.blogspot.com
Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)	Nigeria government designated IPOB a terrorist organization on September 20, 2017	Active on the social media for recruitment, fundraising, and incitement. The group has official website: www.ipob.org
Islamic State West Africa and the Movement for Unity & Jihad in West Africa	Terrorist groups; both offshoots of ISIS and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb	Social media platform. www.youtube.com
Movement for Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra	Separatist movement	Active on social media: https://www.facebook.com/Massob-170125269761711/ . Website: http://massob.biafranet.com/
Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta	Separatist movement	Social media platform. www.youtube.com

Source: Ogunlana, 2019

3. Non-Islamist terrorism in the Sahel

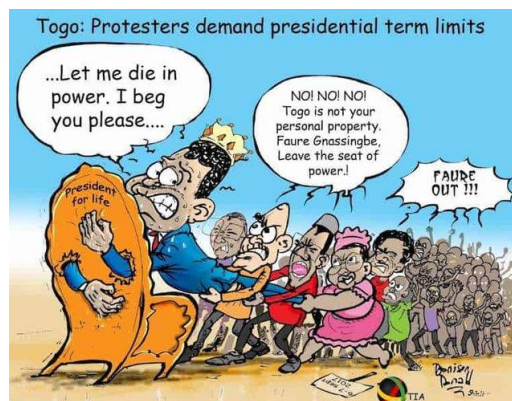
Cartoon 3: ‘State terrorism is as dangerous and contagious as Jihadism’



Source: *L'Alternative*, [iStock](#), 11 August 2022 ⁶

One of the most striking features of Islamist terrorism in West Africa has been its apparent resilience to increasingly large-scale national and international responses. One of the reasons is that state (counter) terrorism can be as dangerous and contagious as [Jihadism](#), [Counterinsurgency](#) or other military responses of the state and the international security framework can paradoxically undermine regional, intra-national human and environmental security. Thus, military top-down solutions often fail to address the asymmetries of power, and the historical, political and social-economic roots of violent conflicts and crises in the region (Obi, 2006).

Cartoon 4: ‘Against the grain ...’ ⁷



Source: Donisen Donald

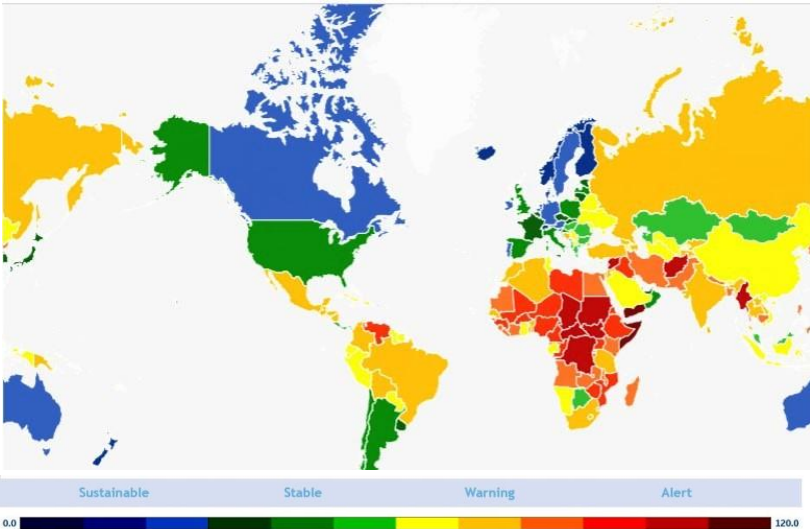
Moreover, West African autocrats like the [Gnassingbé Clan](#) in [Togo](#), employed terrorism against political opponents for decades. For example, [Gilchrist Olympio](#), long-time opposition leader and son of [Sylvanus Olympio](#), Togo's first President, who was assassinated by [Gnassingbé Eyadéma](#) in a 1963 coup, was attacked and seriously injured in an ambush in [Soudou](#), a locality in [Assoli Prefecture](#) in the [Kara region](#), the home region of the Gnassingbé

⁶ Illustration : *iStock* : « [Confiscation du Pouvoir par la Force, Un Terrorisme d'Etat aussi Dangereux et Contagieux Que le Djihadisme](#) ». *L'Alternative* - [www.27avril.com](#), 11 August 2022. © (all rights reserved).

⁷ Cartoon on autocratic reign in Togo: Against the grain. - Togo leader Gnassingbé resists calls for presidential term limits. --- Source: Donisen Donald. - Akllassou-Gana Kossi, alias 'Donisen Donald', caricaturiste du Togo, 2018. © (all rights reserved)

clan, on 5 May 1992, together with 12 members of his entourage. According to investigations of the [International Federation of Human Rights](#) (FIDH) one of Eyadéma's sons, Ernest Gnassingbé, a half-brother of acting president [Faure Gnassingbé](#), had been in charge of the assassination attempt (Kohnert, 2010a; Ribault, 1992).

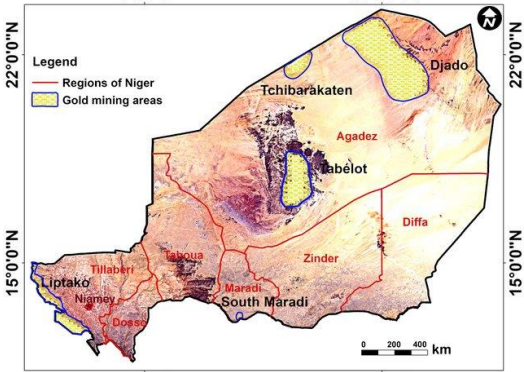
Graph 12: Fragility in the World 2022



Source: [Fragile States Index](#), The Fund for Peace, 2022

The prevalence of the negative public perception of state terrorism is all the more understandable considering the questionable legitimacy and efficacy of African [failed and fragile states](#) (Asafa, 2015). The latter, have been rightly perceived since colonial times as favouring particular religious, ethnic and class-based interests. Many members of [national liberation movements](#) were hunted as ‘terrorists’ by colonial administrations. Even [Nelson Mandela](#) had been labelled a ‘terrorist’ not only by the [apartheid regime](#) of South Africa. Last, but not least, both terrorism and counterinsurgency had far-reaching gender dimensions. Notably, women were perceived as easy and effective prey which reminds of the [Zamfara kidnapping](#) on February 26, 2021 when 317 girls were abducted, all released the following March 2, as well as the the [Chibok schoolgirls kidnapping in 2014](#), when [Boko Haram](#) kidnapped 276 girls from a school in [Borno state](#) in North-Eastern Nigeria. Many are still considered missing today (Busher, 2014).

Graph 13: Main gold panning activity areas in Niger



Source: Saley et al, 2021

In the Republic of [Niger](#), the Minister of Mines intervened in 2021 against suspected terrorist financing by shutting down the gold mining sites at [Djado](#) and in the [Tilabéri region](#) and requesting the eviction of different criminal cross-border networks, mainly composed of foreigners who had invaded the [Tchibarakaten](#) gold mining sites. The local administration also banned the sale of fuel in containers in the three-border region ([Liptako-Gourma Authority](#)) to disrupt the supply of means of transportation (motorcycles) of terrorists as well as the pepper production and fishing activity in the [Lake Chad](#) region, suspected of contributing to terror financing (GIABA, 2021).

4. Islamist terrorism in West African coastal states

Cartoon 5: Grand Bassam shootings, Ivory Coast, 2016



Source : Lassane Zohoré (Ivory Coast) ⁸

Also in the adjacent coastal West African states, like [Nigeria](#), [Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Ghana](#), [Togo](#) and [Benin](#), the terrorist menace increased (Diarra, 2016; KAS, 2022; Preuss, 2022; Zulkarnain, 2020). The [Grand-Bassam shootings](#) of 13 March 2016 in [Ivory Coast](#) brought this to international attention. During the attack on the seaside resort of [Grand-Bassam](#) in Côte d'Ivoire, frequented by expatriates and wealthy Ivoirians, at least 19 people were killed and 33 wounded by AQIM terrorists (Tran & Smith, 2016). New attacks carried out in [Kafolo](#) on 10 June 2020 and the double attack on Kafolo and [Kolobougou \(Téhini Department\)](#) on March 29, 2021, as well as the planting of an improvised explosive device a few days later in the [Kafolo](#) area were interpreted as signaling an offensive against one of West Africa's most important coastal countries, and perhaps as a desire to establish a foothold there (KAS, 2022). The [Kafolo attack](#) took place near the border with [Burkina Faso](#). It was the first [jihadist](#) attack on Ivorian soil since the Grand Bassam attack in 2016.

⁸ Drawing by [Lassane Zohoré](#) (Ivory Coast), published in *Gbich*. Paris: *Le Monde*, published 16 March 2016 by Cartooning for Peace. © (all rights reserved). The cartoon refers to a terrorist attack on Sunday, March 13, 2016, by [AQIM](#) (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) on the seaside resort of [Grand-Bassam](#) in [Côte d'Ivoire](#).

Graph 14: Sites of recent attacks in West Africa’s coastal states



Source: Kwarkye, 2022

In general, the insecurity in most coastal countries was linked to unsolved internal ethnic conflicts, religious and cultural differences, power-sharing disputes, corruption and injustice, undemocratic and weak institutions and border disputes. In [Ghana](#), for example, the threat of home-grown terrorism varied but the most important menace constituted the recruitment of Ghanaian Muslims by ISIS.

Cartoon 6: Grand Bassam shootings, Ivory Coast, 2016



Source: Dieudonné Konan (Ivory Coast)⁹

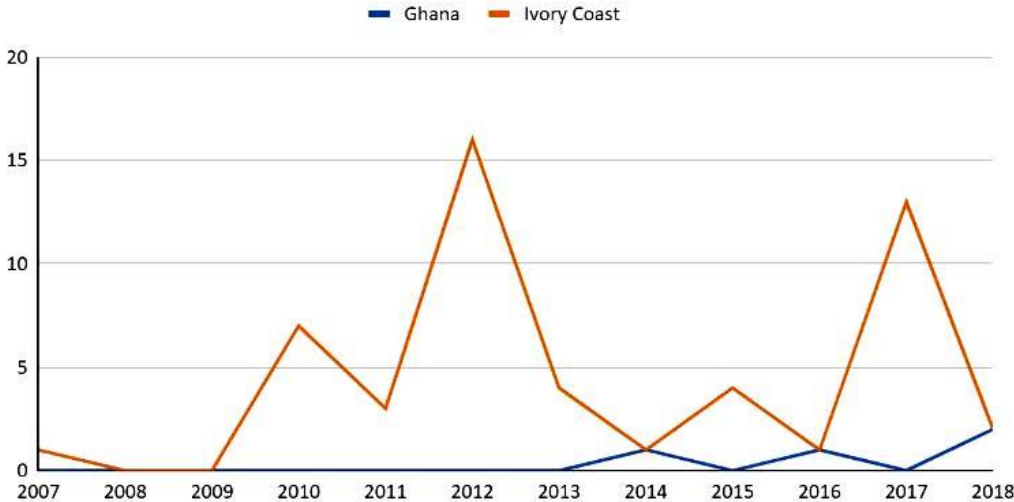
[ISIS](#) returnees from Muslim countries such as [Afghanistan](#), [Libya](#), [Palestine](#), [Iraq](#) and [Syria](#) counted among the crucial factors driving recruitment in Ghana. Its supporters from the region also cited [Togo](#) and [Benin](#) as possible targets (Zulkarnain, 2020). In fact, a group of hitherto unknown terrorists attacked a police post on Togo’s border with Burkina Faso in November 2021 (Preuss, 2022).

Also, in Northern [Benin](#) 7 national park staff and 1 military personnel were killed and 12 people injured on 8 February 2022, when two separate vehicle convoys hit explosive devices in the tri-border region of the [W National Park](#). Shortly before, on 2 December 2021, at least

⁹ Deadly attack by AQIM terrorists in Grand Bassam in Ivory Coast, 2016 --- Drawing by Dieudonné Konan (Ivory Coast), published in 'Gbich'. Paris: Le Monde, published 16 March 2016 by Cartooning for Peace. © (all rights reserved).

2 people were killed by terrorists probably from Burkina Faso, in an attack in the northern border area of [Porga](#) in the [Atakora Department](#) and [Alibori](#) department one week before (VoA, 2021). The [W National Park](#), which extends over [Benin](#), [Burkina Faso](#) and [Niger](#), is attached to the [Pendjari National Park](#) in Northern Benin where two French tourists had been kidnapped by gunmen in 2019. The Park was subsequently classified as a ‘red zone’ for tourists by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Graph 15: Actual and attempted terrorist attacks in [Ghana](#) and [Ivory Coast](#), 2007-2018



Source: Mahajan, 2021

The negligence of ill- and ungoverned territories controlled by informal networks and hybrid quasi-formal arrangements created an enabling environment for [warlordism](#), religious fanaticism and self-defence forces of ethnic and local groups. Also, trans-border trafficking and governance failure to control it stimulated the illegal movement of arms and ammunition, the raw material for bombs, illegal drugs etc. Some experts even cautioned that ungoverned spaces could mutate into production sites for [Weapons of Mass Destruction](#) (WMD) by terrorists (Sunday, 2020). Apparently, the new generation of terrorists was more technologically versatile. It used also [cyberspace](#) and [social media](#) to create fear and spread its violent ideologies (Ogunlana, 2019).

5. Non-Islamist terrorism in West African coastal states

Cartoon 7: ‘don't compare Boko Haram with Niger Delta militants’



Source: Otuchikere, 2012, [allAfrica](#), 2012¹⁰

There are no easy, one-size-fits-all explanations and solutions for non-Islamist terrorism in coastal West African states. The only thing that is certain is that neglect of the poor and impoverished regions by a corrupt power elite prepared the breeding ground for the growth of violent activism. Corrupt and greedy governors and militaries, deeply entangled in corrupt patronage networks, were viewed by marginalized groups as oppressors. Soldiers were often badly educated and paid. They were rarely used to fight external threats but instead to protect the ruling President or governor (Obe & Wallace, 2021).

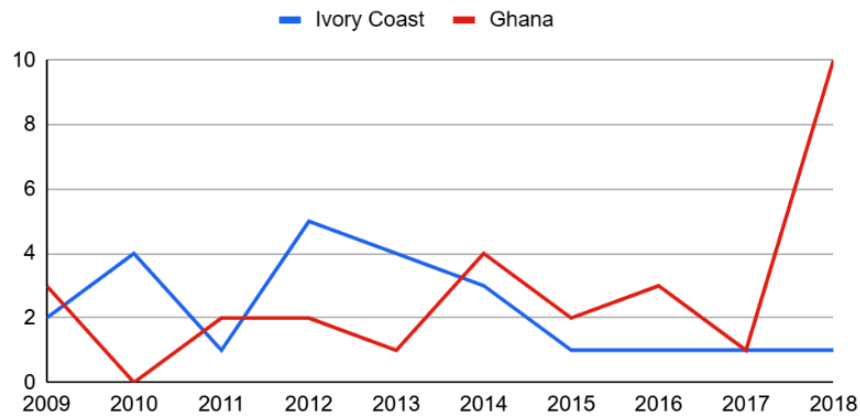
One difference between Islamist and non-religious terrorism might be that the latter's demands were often well-known and based on concrete social grievances of the local people concerned, whereas Islamists like [Boko Haram](#) remained hidden and faceless with equally obscure demands (Otuchikere, 2012). One recent example of [state terrorism](#) which got international attention was the [Lekki toll gate shooting](#) in [Lagos](#) State on 20 October 2020 when the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) tried to halt renewed mobilisation of the '[#EndSARS](#)' movement by violent repression and killing of at least 12 demonstrators. The latter was a grass-roots social movement organizing mass protests against police brutality in [Nigeria](#). It constituted an influential umbrella organization of civil society groups that could prove an influential youth voting bloc in Nigeria's 2023 presidential election (Oxford Analytica, 2020).

Non-religious violence is an old problem rooted in many West African societies but it took new dimensions, for example in the [Niger Delta](#), Nigeria. There, the frustration and anger of the population about the state's ignorance of decades of peaceful protest against environmental pollution by international oil multinationals like [Shell](#) and [BP](#) degenerated into deadly militancy based on a sense of injustice and disregard for developmental issues that sparked the conflict. Moreover, some corrupt political governors had armed militant militias to rig the [2003 gubernatorial elections](#). Later on, these militants became independent criminals who destroyed oil pipelines and kidnapped for ransom. The most important rebel

¹⁰ "The Director of the FCT command of the Nigerian State Security Service (SSS), Mr Okojie Little-John, has said that there is no basis for comparison between the [Niger Delta militants](#) and the [Boko Haram](#) sect. According to Okojie, while the [Niger Delta militants](#) and their demands were well known by all, the Boko Haram sect has remained faceless with their demands equally vague". *Leadership* (Abuja), [allAfrica](#), 26 July 2012. © (all rights reserved).

groups included the [Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force](#), the [Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta](#) (MEND) and the [Niger Delta Liberation Front](#). The Nigerian government offered the Niger Delta militants a multi-billion naira amnesty programme in 2009 (Amaraegebu, 2011).

Graph 16: Piracy attacks, attempted and actual, in [Ivory Coast](#) and [Ghana](#), 2009-2018



Source: Mahajan, R. (2021):

Closely interlinked with the Niger Delta terrorists, was the growth of [piracy in the Gulf of Guinea](#), extending from [Angola](#) in the east up to [Senegal](#) in the West (Kamal-Deen, 2015). It started in 2006 when pirates hijacked a Russian oil tanker about sixty nautical miles off [Guinea](#). Piracy included the hijacking of oil tankers and offshore oil platforms which culminated in June 2008 with an attack on the [Bonga FPSO](#), a major hub of [Royal Dutch Shell](#), about 120 km offshore, and kidnapping of offshore workers for ransom, or extorting money from oil companies (Kamal-Deen, 2015). Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea replaced the [Somali coast](#) as the hotspot of worldwide piracy, especially concerning the violence employed in the attacks (Amaraegebu, 2011). The international shipping industry also blamed the Nigerian government for having no political will to combat the problem of piracy effectively (Kamal-Deen, 2015). This was not least because perpetrators allegedly acted in close cooperation with corrupt governors, officers of the Nigerian Navy ([NN](#)), the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency ([NIMASA](#)) and the police, as well as wealthy businessmen and trans-national criminal networks which shared the booty of ransom money and syphoned oil from the vessels attacked. Arrested pirates revealed that politicians, traditional rulers and corporate interest groups were among their sponsors of piracy, and their collaborators were in top positions in ministries and the Nigerian state oil company (Oyewole, 2016).

Moreover, the [illegal fishing industry](#) in the [territorial waters](#) of West African countries added significantly to [maritime piracy](#) in the region. According to the [International Maritime Bureau](#) (IMB), there has been an 80 % increase in piracy in the [Gulf of Guinea](#) since 2000. The increase was often associated with a decline in local fishing caused by the unfair competition between the legal and illegal international fish industry (Denton & Harris, 2021). The [ECOWAS](#) stated in 2021 that its member states lost US\$ 2 bn p.a. to illegal fishing and other forms of resource theft, such as oil theft by militant groups such as Nigeria's MENT, illegal trade in tropical hardwoods, etc. off the Gulf coast (Kohnert, 2021). However, the national income decline varied considerably. Whereas [Guinea-Bissau](#) experienced a 159 % increase in unreported catch from 2000 to 2014, [Nigeria](#) suffered a 76 % decline in unreported fishing while [Senegal's](#) unreported fish catch dropped by almost 62 % (Denton & Harris, 2021). The

[Chinese commercial fishing fleet](#) was allegedly responsible for more illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing than any other nation. Its fishing activities started in 1985 when [Beijing](#) gained access to new fishing grounds through agreements with West African countries. But illegal fishing operates mostly with vessels out-flagged to states of convenience. Beside China, the EU fishing fleets are very much involved in illegal fishing. The highly subsidized and industrial commercially operated [EU deep-sea fishing fleet](#), notably from Spain, Portugal and Ireland, squeezed local West African fishers out of the market. Floating fish factories, e.g. from Ireland, catch up to 400 tons per day, for what it would take a local small-scale fisherman ten years. The impending ruin drove many fishermen in the business with irregular West African migrants to the [Canary Islands](#) and Europe (Kohnert, 2006).

Also during the [first](#) (1989 to 1997) and [second civil wars \(1999 to 2003\) in Liberia](#) that resulted in the killing of more than 250,000 people, and the [Sierra Leone civil war](#) (1991–2002) the population suffered widespread terrorism. In Sierra Leone, insurgent movements, particularly the [Revolutionary United Front](#) (RUF), waged a campaign of terror against the government and citizens of their own country (Wapmuk, 2021). The latter was closely linked to the trafficking of ‘[blood diamonds](#)’, not only in Sierra Leone, but in the whole stretch of coastal states during the civil wars in [Ivory Coast](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [Liberia](#), [Guinea](#), and [Guinea-Bissau](#).

In the [Anglophone regions](#) of North West and South West [Cameroon](#) agitation against their marginalization by the French-dominated government had a long history. It dated back to independence in 1961 when the political elite installed a Federal state controlled by the French majority. By 2019 the agitation had escalated to an armed conflict between the separatist fighters and the Cameroonian army, involving kidnappings and terrorist actions by combat groups fighting for the independence of ‘[Southern Cameroons](#)’ which considered themselves not as terrorists but as insurgents (Sona, 2022).

The intra-state conflicts in coastal West African countries developed new dimensions since the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars in 1989, including [mercenarism](#), small arms and drug trafficking and the recruitment of child soldiers. Trans-national criminal activities became a widespread, highly sophisticated and lucrative line of business for former combatants and transnational criminal syndicates (Andrés, 2008; Uzuegbu-Wilson, 2019). Thereby, criminal enterprises used similar structures and methods of the [informal economy](#) typical of lineage-based societies like legitimate traders and business people (Kohnert, 2000).

Interactions between criminal and terrorist networks in West Africa were frequently based on a complex mix of aims, capabilities, opportunities and military and socio-economic frame conditions in their operating environment. Their funding was largely assured by rents of crime. As such, the structures and sources of financing demonstrated their capacity for social and economic integration (Diariso, 2019). Apparently, organized crime took advantage of the negative effects of terrorism on the state's capacity and legitimacy in profiting from turbulent situations to expand its activities (Kreiman & Espadafor, 2019).

Graph 17: Transnational crimes in West Africa

Predominant Border Crimes	Country/Border Zones of activity	Groups/Actors Involved	Transit States	Recipient States
Narcotics/Drug Trafficking	Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo	Narcotic/Drug dealers	Ghana/Togo/Benin/Nigeria	Spain, Portugal, UK, USA and South Africa
Internet Crime (Advance Fee Fraud/Money Laundering)	Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone	Advanced Fee Fraud gangs or syndicates/Wealthy business men or government officials	Syndicates commute from the Western part of West Africa (Senegal) across to the eastern parts (Benin/Nigeria)	Nigeria and other countries where the '419' fraudsters are resident
Human Trafficking	All across West Africa but mainly around Benin/Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire/Burkina Faso	Traffickers who serve sometimes as middle men, trade and business partners	Mainly Ghana and Sierra Leone	Other West African countries, and in North America, Europe, and the Middle East
Fire Arms Trafficking	Ghana/Togo/Benin/Nigeria, Sierra Leone/Liberia/Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal	Rebels, local manufacturers of fire arms and middle men	Togo, Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Gambia	Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire
Recruitment of Child Soldiers, Mercenaries	Mano River States including Liberia/Sierra Leone/Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire	Rebel Groups (including LURD, MODEL, RUF, CDF, New Forces (MPCI, MPIGO & MPJ)	Same countries depending on where conflict spills-over	Mano River States and Côte d'Ivoire
Smuggling of illegal goods, minerals and natural resources and cash crops	Côte d'Ivoire/Ghana/Togo/Benin and Nigeria, and Liberia/Sierra Leone	Individuals, business men and women, warlords/civil war combatants	Mainly Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire	In Europe and North America

Source: Adeyemi & Musa, 2015

Addressing only one of the problems would produce only limited results. Joint and transnational countermeasures e.g. by the ECOWAS and WAEMU have been recommended. However, the counter-productive institutional rivalry between the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel obstructed the fight against terror in West Africa. Much time was wasted in competing for visibility, credibility and funding (Théroux-Bénoni, 2019).

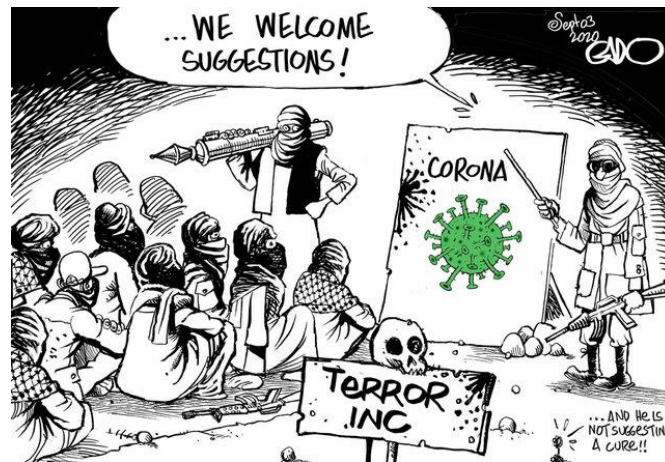
Moreover, the common counterinsurgency resulted in significant challenges for the rule of law and human rights protections in the countries concerned, including human rights violations committed with impunity by security agents, disregard for legal investigation, arrest, prosecution and adjudication of terror suspects (Sigsworth, 2019).

West Africa's [regional security governance](#) is weak. Apart from the Joint Force of the Group of Five of the Sahel ([G5 Sahel](#) or FC-G5S) mentioned above, first small-scale initiatives like the West African Police Information System (WAPIS) to access critical police information from national and regional criminal databases have been established (Forest, 2019). The [African Union](#) agreed on 4 March 2021 to expand the [Multinational Joint Task Force](#) (MNJTF), comprising military and security units from [Benin](#), [Cameroon](#), [Chad](#), [Niger](#), and [Nigeria](#), to 10,000 troops. Its headquarters are in [N'Djamena](#) and its major mandate is to bring an end to the [Boko Haram insurgency](#). Yet, so far the MNJTF has been of limited range and effectiveness. It was hampered by conflicting interests among the member states, lack of political will and commitment, corruption, poor funding, linguistic differences and hegemonic politics as well as by the divide between Anglophone and Francophone countries (see map Grap 26, Appendix) and politics of rival former colonial powers [Great Britain](#) and [France](#) (Abada et al., 2020; Bala & Tar, 2021; Akanji, 2019).

Coastal states hit back mostly through military operations, which they conducted nationally, bilaterally or collectively within the framework of the '[Accra Initiative](#)'. The latter had been launched in September 2017 by [Benin](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Ghana](#) and [Togo](#) with regard to the growing violent extremism in the region. It aimed to prevent a spillover of terrorism from the Sahel and to address transnational organised crime in border areas. The most recent action conducted in November 2021, included Operation Koudanlgou 4, Zone 2, in five regions of [Northern Ghana](#) against organised criminal networks that had the potential to fuel terrorism. Within this operation Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo deployed about 6,000 soldiers, 300 suspected extremists were arrested and large caches of weapons, ammunition, drugs, and bomb equipment were seized (Kwarkye, 2022).

6. Conclusion

Cartoon 8: ‘We welcome suggestions ... and this is not suggesting a cure !!’ ¹¹



Source: [Gado](#), *The Elephant*, Nairobi, 3 September 2020

In the past years, some African observers and security organizations presented studies to back their hypothesis of a de-radicalization of the youth in [Sub-Saharan Africa](#) because of supposed reduced opportunities for recruitment into violent extremism. Yet, this observation was not compatible with the continuing large number of youth believed to have been radicalized. Moreover, the studies failed to establish a baseline, and, thereafter, the percentage of change of those de-radicalized (Norman, 2019).

Also, the importance of the [hinterland](#) to supply terrorist groups in the [Sahel](#) apparently has been largely underestimated. The spread of terrorism to coastal [West African](#) states was just the tip of the iceberg (Kwarkye, 2022). The prevalent view in the coastal states that considered violent extremism only as an external threat derived from assailants from the Sahel, deflected attention from local weaknesses that terrorists could exploit. Under the surface, a covert network of actors ensured that terrorism could continue in the region. Therefore, the focus on continuing military responses would be misleading. Experts of counterinsurgency in the region acknowledged that coastal state radicals have been recruited to fight in the Sahel and beyond. However, detailed knowledge of the organisation, the actors, the locations and the profiles of those recruited, was still lacking. Also, the supply network of violent extremism in the Sahel included various established routes of largely informal long-distance trade in West Africa. Thus, motorbikes, used cars and trucks were trafficked first from the entry point, mostly the deep water ports of [Cotonou](#) and [Lomé](#), to Nigeria and further on to western [Burkina Faso](#) and south-eastern [Niger](#). Furthermore, irregular gold dealers from [Benin](#) and [Togo](#) apparently operated in cooperation with illegal gold mining sites controlled by violent extremists in the Sahel, and explosives used at quarries and road-building sites in coastal states went up north to terror groups (Kwarkye, 2022).

Obvious short-term solutions to disrupt terrorist supply chains, like border closures, curfews, shutting down of markets and restriction of movements might be counterproductive. They would also constrain local communities and breed further resentment against the regional and national administration, notably in remote areas neglected by the state. Therefore, the local

¹¹ Cartoon on ‘Terrorists and COVID-19’. Source: [Gado](#), *The Elephant*, Nairobi, 3 September 2020. © (all rights reserved)

population concerned should be embedded in non-military counterinsurgency on an ongoing basis (Kwarkye, 2022).

The joint combat of [money laundering](#) and financing of violent extremism is a counterinsurgency measure of utmost importance. Money laundering, illegal money transfers and trafficking grew alarmingly in the past years both for the Sahel and coastal West African states (GIABA, 2021). Although the figures on [illicit financial flows](#) (IFFs) are difficult to evaluate and therefore heavily disputed, experts agree that IFFs, including commercial practices that contribute to them, such as trade misinvoicing, transfer pricing, tax evasion and avoidance, exceed the amount of [ODA](#) provided to Africa. The legal and illicit sectors are increasingly interwoven in West Africa, which is largely due to the size of the [informal economy](#), estimated to constitute as much as 60-70% of total economic activity in the region. It is also a product of the elite protection networks that profit from the illicit flows using local powerbrokers as well as criminal and terrorist groups. Financial transactions are often conducted in cash or through informal systems of money transfer because the formal banking system is out of reach for the majority of people (OECD, 2018).

[Togo](#), for example, became a major hub of drug trafficking and money laundering in West Africa related among other things to profits from re-exports of used cars from Western Europe to neighbouring markets (mostly smuggling to Nigeria). The high level of [illicit financial flows](#) (IFF) strongly correlated with money laundering attracted the concern of the international donor community. These IFF came mainly from three sources, i.e. commercial tax evasion, trafficking of bills in international trade and abusive transfer prices, criminal activities such as drug dealing, illegal transactions on weapons, smuggling, active corruption and the conclusion of corrupt civil servants. In comparison, IFF represented almost 500 % of Togo government's tax revenues, which ranked Togo second in the world. According to the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)), the proceeds of trafficking were increasingly used by Islamist terrorist groups. Another domain of illicit trade was the smuggling of African ivory to Vietnam and China. According to an investigation published on 19 September 2018, the trade was dominated by three criminal cartels, one of them based in [Lomé](#) which coordinates the shipment of ivory for the whole of West Africa (Kohnert, 2021).

Meanwhile, violent extremism still increased in the [Sahel](#), particularly in [Mali](#). Counterinsurgency actions in the region over the past ten years remained insufficient, because of the refusal to coordinate effectively internationally and the choice of a security-focused response relying on private mercenaries that made the situation only worse (Borrell, 2022). The fight against terrorism in West Africa is not just an African affair, but the destabilisation of the Sahel constitutes a direct threat to Europe too, not only in terms of security and terrorism but also in many other sectors such as trafficking of all kinds and increasing displacement of people with subsequent transnational migration. The growing geographical spread of these attacks and the increasingly sophisticated operating methods used by the terrorists are alarming. They are increasingly aiming to isolate the populations of the capitals of the countries affected and to disturb the main connections to and from the countries of the [Gulf of Guinea](#). To continue a largely security-focused strategy would be fatal. The fight against terrorism in West Africa is deeply interlinked with enabling outside sources of support, it cannot be won solely on the military front (Borrell, 2022).

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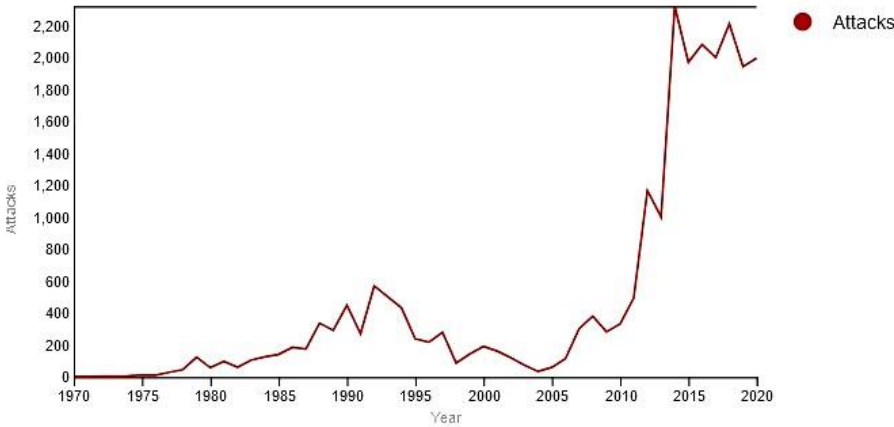
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Résumé: [*Sources extérieures des menaces terroristes en Afrique de l'Ouest*] - La lutte contre le terrorisme est une tâche complexe, qui ne se limite pas aux options militaires. Il concerne également l'édification de l'État, le nationalisme et le développement durable inclusif. Les racines des conflits sous-jacents étaient déjà posées pendant le colonialisme, la traite des esclaves, le pillage des ressources et l'établissement arbitraire des frontières. La bataille ne peut être gagnée par l'occupation ni par les seuls efforts internes des pays touchés, en particulier lorsque les terroristes bénéficient du soutien secret de certaines parties de l'armée et de l'élite politique du pays. Il existe des sources extérieures fomentant des conflits violents par une coopération étroite entre la criminalité transnationale et les réseaux terroristes. Le blanchiment d'argent et le financement du terrorisme dans les systèmes financiers mondiaux font partie intégrante du problème. De plus, de nombreux militants et combattants ne sont pas seulement motivés par le fanatisme religieux et le zèle idéologique. La vengeance, la simple survie et les luttes locales entre des groupes en conflit jouent souvent aussi un rôle décisif. Les espaces mal gouvernés et non gouvernés favorisent le seigneur de la guerre, à la fois des mouvements terroristes djihadistes radicaux et non-religieux, animés par le localisme et les réseaux informels. La réponse militaire de certains gouvernements et services de sécurité a dégénéré en un contre-terrorisme étatique inadéquat sans égard pour les populations locales. La réponse militaire de certains gouvernements et services de sécurité a dégénéré en contre-terrorisme de l'État au détriment de la population locale. Cela a entraîné des défis pour l'état de droit et les droits de l'homme dans ces pays. Bien que la contre-insurrection militaire transnationale parmi les gouvernements de la CEDEAO se soit améliorée, elle est restée entravée par le fossé entre les pays anglophones et francophones et l'intérêt égoïste des anciens dirigeants coloniaux, la France et la Grande-Bretagne. Pendant ce temps, les terroristes utilisent également efficacement le cyberspace et les médias sociaux pour créer la peur et répandre leurs idéologies violentes. Les interactions entre le crime et le terrorisme en Afrique de l'Ouest se poursuivront dans un avenir prévisible. Il pourrait même augmenter, compte tenu des effets dévastateurs de la pandémie de COVID-19 et des famines causées par l'échec des importations de céréales à la suite de la guerre russe en Ukraine. Les effets sur la structure sociale sont considérables, notamment la perte de confiance de la population dans l'administration de l'État et la volonté des villageois de se ranger du côté des terroristes. La lutte contre le terrorisme exige des solutions viables à long terme qui tiennent compte des liens entre la lutte contre le terrorisme, l'état de droit et les droits de l'homme et le développement socioéconomique.

Zusammenfassung: [*Externe Quellen terroristischer Bedrohungen in Westafrika*] - . Der Kampf gegen den Terrorismus ist eine komplexe Aufgabe, die nicht auf militärische Optionen beschränkt ist. Er betrifft auch den Staatsaufbau, Nationalismus und inklusive nachhaltige Entwicklung. Die Wurzeln der zugrunde liegenden Konflikte wurden bereits während des Kolonialismus, des Sklavenhandels, der Plünderung von Ressourcen und der willkürlichen Grenzziehung in Afrika gelegt. Der Kampf kann weder durch Besatzung noch durch interne Bemühungen der betroffenen Länder allein gewonnen werden, insbesondere dann nicht, wenn Terroristen heimliche Unterstützung von Teilen der Armee und der politischen Elite des Landes genießen. Es gibt externe Quellen, die durch eine enge Zusammenarbeit zwischen transnationaler Kriminalität und terroristischen Netzwerken gewalttätige Konflikte schüren. Geldwäsche und Terrorismusfinanzierung in globalen Finanzsystemen sind Teil des Problems. Auch viele Aktivisten und Kämpfer werden nicht nur von religiösem Fanatismus und ideologischem Eifer getrieben. Auch Rache, bloßes Überleben und lokale Kämpfe zwischen verfeindeten Gruppen spielen oft eine entscheidende Rolle. Schlecht verwaltete und unregierbare Räume begünstigen Warlords, sowohl in radikalen dschihadistischen als auch in nicht-religiösen terroristischen Bewegungen, die von lokalen Konflikten und informellen Netzwerken angetrieben werden. Die militärische Reaktion einiger Regierungen und Sicherheitsdienste degenerierte zu unangemessener staatlicher Terrorismusbekämpfung ohne Rücksicht auf die lokale Bevölkerung. Dies führte zu Herausforderungen für die Rechtsstaatlichkeit und die Menschenrechte in diesen Ländern. Obwohl sich die transnationale militärische Aufstandsbekämpfung unter den ECOWAS-Regierungen verbesserte, wurde sie immer noch durch die Kluft zwischen anglophonen und frankophonen Ländern und eigennützligen Interessen der ehemaligen Kolonialherren Frankreich und Großbritannien behindert. Inzwischen nutzen Terroristen auch effektiv den Cyberspace und soziale Medien, um Angst zu erzeugen und ihre gewalttätigen Ideologien zu verbreiten. Die Wechselwirkungen zwischen Kriminalität und Terror in Westafrika werden in absehbarer Zeit fortbestehen. Angesichts der verheerenden Auswirkungen der COVID-19-Pandemie und der Hungersnöte, die durch fehlende Getreideimporte infolge des russischen Krieges in der Ukraine verursacht wurden, könnten sie sogar noch zunehmen. Die Auswirkungen auf die Sozialstruktur sind erheblich, darunter das schwindende Vertrauen der Bevölkerung in die staatliche Verwaltung und die Bereitschaft der Dorfbewohner, sich auf die Seite der Terroristen zu stellen. Der Kampf gegen den Terrorismus erfordert tragfähige langfristige Lösungen, die die Verbindungen zwischen Terrorismusbekämpfung, Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Menschenrechten sowie sozioökonomischer Entwicklung berücksichtigen.

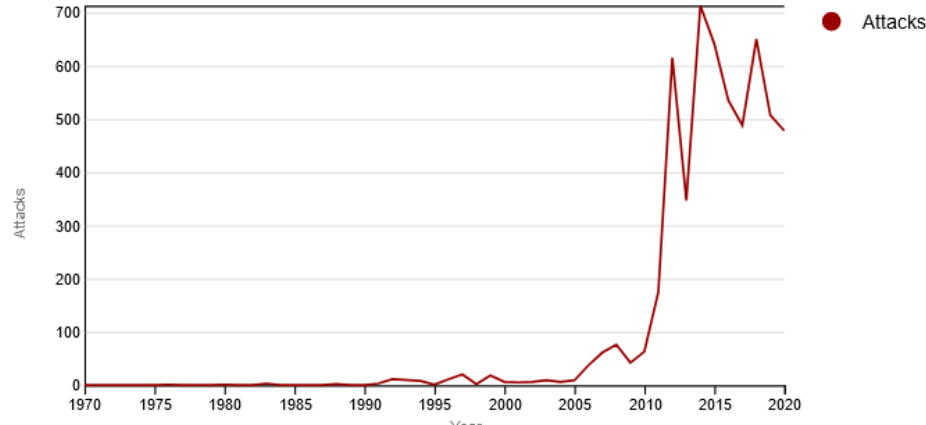
Appendix : Terrorist attacks in selected Sub-Saharan countries, 1970 - 2002

Graph 17: Terrorist attacks in Sub-Saharan Africa



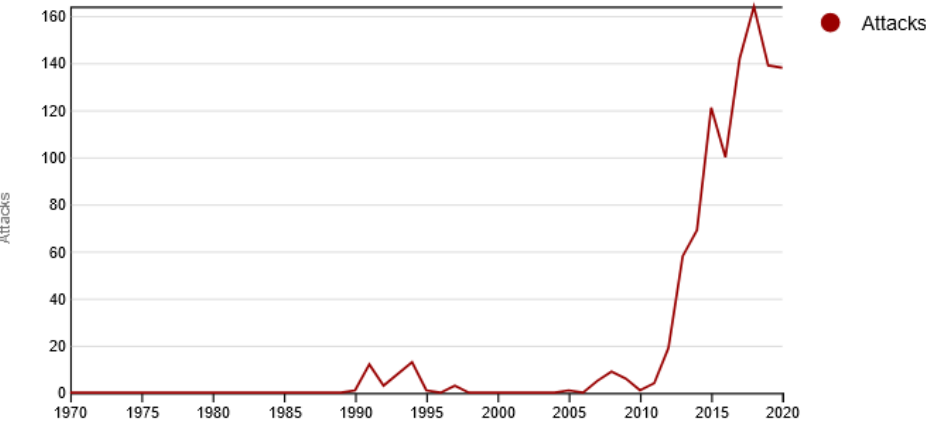
Source: Global Terrorism Database. Online at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

Graph 18: Terrorist attacks in Nigeria



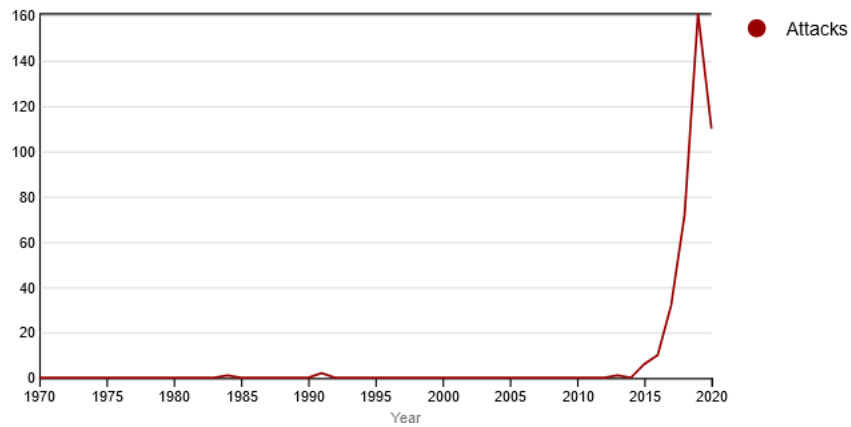
Source: Global Terrorism Database. Online at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

Graph 19: Terrorist attacks in Mali



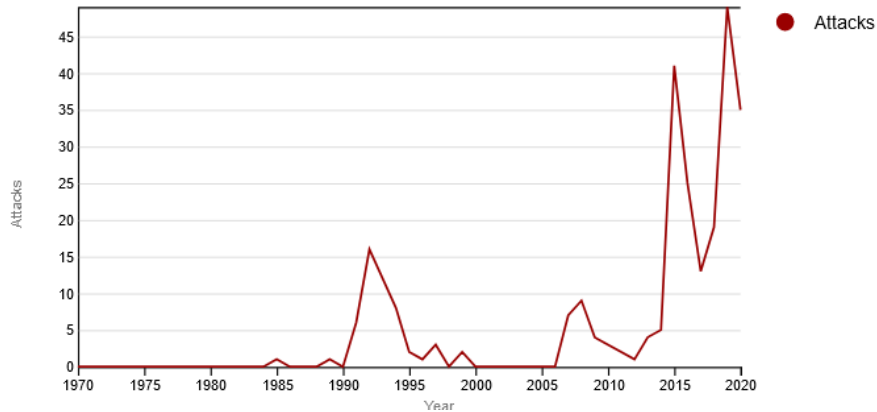
Source: Global Terrorism Database. Online at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

Graph 20: Terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso



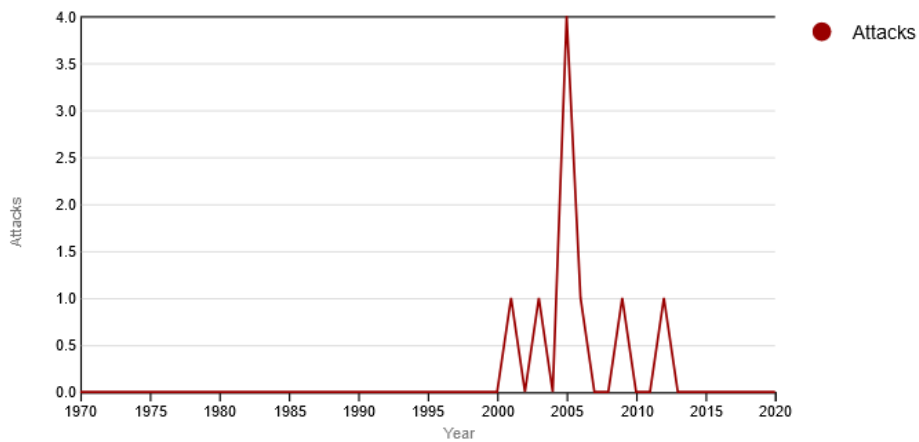
Source: Global Terrorism Database. Online at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

Graph 21: Terrorist attacks in Niger



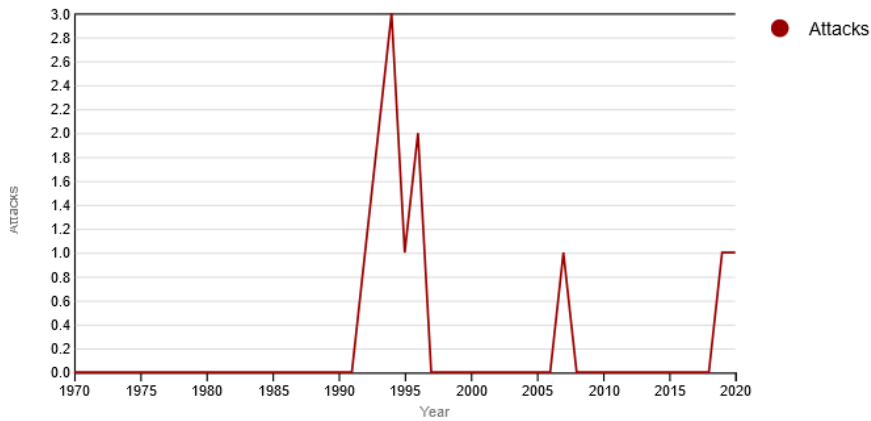
Source: Global Terrorism Database. Online at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

Graph 22: Terrorist attacks in Guinea-Bissau



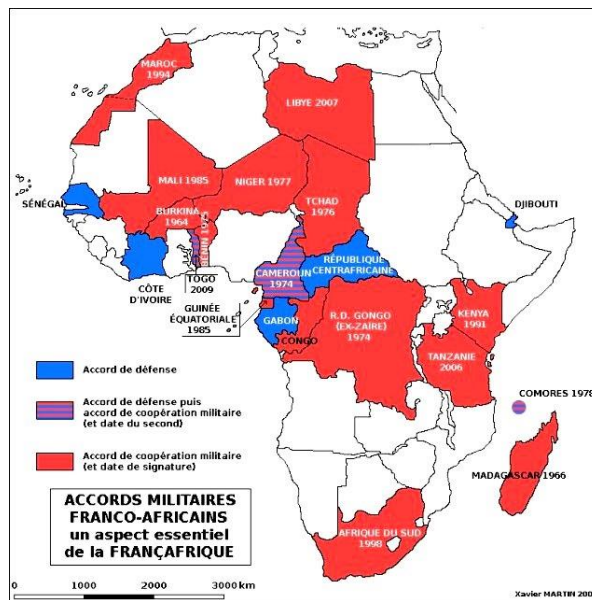
Source: Global Terrorism Database. Online at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

Graph 23: Terrorist attacks in Benin



Source: Global Terrorism Database. Online at: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

Graph 24: French-African military treaties, an important aspect of ‘[Françafrique](#)’



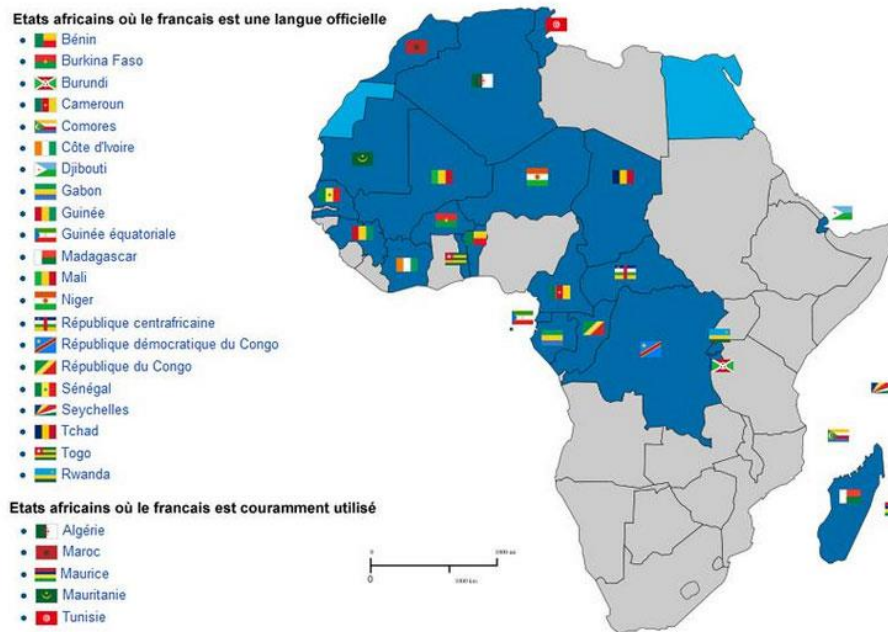
Source: Françafrique, explicit military history, wordpress.com, 19 August 2016

Graph 25: [Opération Barkhane](#), 2019



Source: Ministère des Armées (French defense government), [Dossier de Presse – Opération BARKHANE](#), September 2022, p. 17

Graph 26 : Francophone Africa (26 countries)
 (dark blue, countries usually considered to belong to Francophone Africa;
 light blue, Mauritania and Egypt are sometimes considered Francophone too)



Source: Francophone Africa, Wikipedia