

## Case Study One: The G-5 Sahel

### Background:

G5 Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – face a plethora of complex challenges, including the growing threat of violent extremism, governance deficiencies, climate change and demographic growth. The interconnectedness of these challenges have made it imperative that countries coordinate their efforts to promote regional development and tackle cross-border insecurity. The G5 Sahel, which is an inter-governmental organization established in 2014 in Nouakchott was intended to do exactly that. So far, however, the response of the involved countries has been largely dominated by a security focus.

In 2017, the G5 Sahel launched a Joint Force (Force conjointe du G5 Sahel, FC-G5S). This concept of joint military operations was not new in the Sahel. Rather, this collaboration sought to resurrect a short-lived joint Malian-Mauritanian experiment that had taken place in 2011. In Operation Benkan (Unity), the forces of both countries collaborated to dislodge militants of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) from their base in the Wagadou forest on the Malian side of their border. In 2013, the Nigerian, Malian and French armies conducted Operation Roussette on the border between Mali and Niger. After Operation Roussette, a handful of cross-border military operations were carried out in early 2014 by hundreds of troops from the five armies concerned. Each army operated on its side of the border, but had a right of hot pursuit, and was assisted by French troops who provided support in terms of planning, logistics, intelligence, air cover, and medical evacuations.

After a year of coordinated military action in which the practice of coalition warfare proved promising, the necessity for the affected states to institutionalize their military consultation, planning, and operations became more pressing. On November 4, 2015, the G5 Sahel heads of state signed the Military Cross-border Cooperation Partnership, which regulated the actions of G5 Sahel cross-border military operations. On November 20, at a meeting in Chad, they announced their intent to create their own joint force.

After months of debates about the structure of the joint military force and its possible operations, the heads of state opted in a February 2017 summit in Bamako for a modest approach with a limited aim. The G5 Sahel Joint Force was not to police the whole G5 Sahel region—at least not initially. Its main task was limited to securing the borders of the eastern sector of the Sahel involving Niger and Chad, the central sector involving Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, and the western sector involving Mauritania and Mali. The G5 Sahel Joint Force's first military operation, Operation Hawbi, occurred in November 2017 in the border area of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The second,

Operation Pagnali, took place in January 2018 in the border area between Mali and Burkina Faso.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Examine the characteristics of the G 5 Sahel and its armed force, the FC-G5.
2. Assess the strengths and deficiencies of the G5 initiative, and the narrower FC-G5 project?
3. Consider what improvements need to be undertaken to enhance the sustainability of the G 5 Sahel and its armed force?

### **Readings:**

The G-5 Sahel: <https://www.g5sahel.org/>

ACSS, "The G5 Sahel Joint Force Gains Traction," February 9, 2018.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/burkina-faso/258-force-du-g5-sahel-trouver-sa-place-dans-lembouteillage-securitaire>

*In English:* <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/g5-sahel-joint-force-gains-traction/>

*In French:* <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/la-force-conjointe-du-g5-sahel-prend-de-lenvergure/>

International Crisis Group, "Finding the Right Role for the G5 Sahel Joint Force," December 12, 2017,

*In English:* <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/258-finding-the-right-role-for-the-g5-sahel-joint-force.pdf>

*In French:* <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/258-force-du-g5-sahel-trouver-sa-place-dans-l-embouteillage-s%C3%A9curitaire.pdf>

Anouar Boukhars, "A Different Type of Alliance," Carnegie Diwan, April 9, 2019, <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/78811>

## **Case Study Two: The Multinational Joint Task Force**

### **Background:**

Collective-security regimes such as The Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF) forged to combat specific transnational threats are gradually becoming key features of the African security landscape. Skeptics of these ad-hoc security coalitions see it as undermining the positions and role that the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) play. Proponents of ad hoc forces, however, point to their utility in filling the gaps in the framework for AU deployments of forces. While waiting for AU member states to muster the collective political will to make possible the deployment of the African Standby Force (ASF), ad hoc coalitions such as the MNTJF can be efficient response tools to security challenges.

The MNJTF has been forged out of a genuine desire to collectively address a clear and present threat. After years of regional rivalries and persistent bickering and mistrust among the different heads of states, the fear from the diffusion of terrorism from its stronghold in northern Nigeria ended up galvanizing countries across the Lake Chad basin to collaborate on a joint military response. In April 2012, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and Benin expanded the mandate of the Multinational Joint Security Force that the Lake Chad Basin Commission first established in 1994. In 2014, they renamed it the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF). The AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) has mandated the MNJTF, whose headquarters are located in N'Djamena, Chad. The force is comprised of around 10 000 uniformed personnel and is organized into four national sectors: Mora-Cameroon, Baga Sola-Chad, Baga-Nigeria, and Diffa-Niger.

The military operations conducted by the MNJTF have been aimed at blunting the asymmetrical advantage of terrorist groups, dislodge them from their strongholds, and facilitate the restoration of state authority. Some of the goals of the mission have been achieved, but much more needs to be done to enhance the capacity of the force to not only reclaim territory from terrorist groups but also to stabilize these areas and deliver urgent service delivery to the affected populations.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Examine the characteristics of the MNJTF and the challenges the joint task force has faced?
2. Assess progress and challenges in making the MNJTF fully operational
3. Recommend how troop contributing countries and their international partners can boost the sustainability of the MNJTF and its ability to reclaim and stabilize territory captured by Boko Haram and its splinter group, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP).

**Readings:**

Wendyam A Sawadogo, "Can the joint task force against Boko Haram stay the course?" Institute for Security Studies, January 13, 2017, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/can-the-joint-task-force-against-boko-haram-stay-the-course>

William Assanvo, Jeannine Ella A Abatan and Wendyam Aristide Sawadogo, "Assessing the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram," Institute for Security Studies, September 2016, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war19.pdf>

## Case Study Three: Al Shabaab and Cabo Delgado

### Background:

While terrorist attacks and violent extremist groups are concentrated in a handful of hotspots, these terrorism epicenters have also indirectly affected neighboring nations, including a set of countries on the periphery of international terrorism – a step removed from the crises but not immune to their impacts. At the continental level, Southern Africa and Southeast Africa are, for example, considered less directly caught up in international terrorism and violent extremism challenges than Northern, Western, and Eastern Africa. But as the case of Mozambique illustrates, it is critical that in nations and subregions long thought to be on the periphery of international terrorism to understand the security landscape in their countries, calculate probable threats, and calibrate appropriate responses to terrorism and violent extremism.

Since the October 2017 attacks on police stations in Mocímboa de Prai, an armed Islamist movement in Cabo Delgado has carried out several deadly attacks that killed over a hundred people and displaced thousands more. Little is known about the group that locals refer to invariably as “al Shabaab”, “Ansar al-Sunnah”, or “Swahili Sunnah”. There is no consensus on the exact ties, if any, that link local militants to Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Tanzania, nor is there much clarity about how the group operates, raises funds and recruits. What is clear, however, is that the insurgency has tapped into simmering grievances as it tries to gather momentum. The gas-rich province of Cabo-Delgado is the poorest region in Mozambique. An appreciable number of the province’s 58% Muslims are unemployed and feel they have been deliberately marginalized for decades by state policies. Worse, local communities feel further aggrieved that the recent oil and gas discoveries in their region have not yielded the economic benefits they had hoped for.

The government response has evolved from first minimizing the threat as the work of a few criminal individuals to sounding alarmist warnings about the dangers of a creeping Islamist insurgency in Cabo Delgado. President Nyusi warned the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018 that the insurgents in Cabo Delgado were committing “crimes of a global character”, and their threat “will tend to spread to neighboring countries”. To forestall such eventuality, the government has strengthened cooperation with Uganda, DRC and especially neighboring Tanzania where there are suspicions that Mozambican insurgents have connections. The government has also deployed troops in the gas-rich north of the country, passed an anti-terrorism law, arrested hundreds of suspects and closed and destroyed several mosques. The governments’ security measures, however, have elicited concerns from human rights groups that some of these security-focused interventions might further alienate the local Muslim population that is mostly concentrated in the north of the country. There is plenty of evidence that over-reaching security driven responses that are insensitive and

indiscriminate tend to be counter-productive and produce backlash effects.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Assess whether the insurgency in Mozambique is indicative of a new pattern whereby violent extremism spreads into African states thought to be on the periphery of terrorism.
2. Consider the implications of international terrorism and violent extremism in states on the periphery of terrorism.
3. Consider what states on the periphery of terrorism can do to calibrate appropriate responses to violent extremism.

### **Readings:**

Gregory Pirio, Robert Pittelli, and Yussuf Adam, "The Many Drivers Enabling Violent Extremism in Northern Mozambique," ACSS, May 20, 2019.

<https://africacenter.org/spotlight/the-many-drivers-enabling-violent-extremism-in-northern-mozambique/>

*In English:* <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/the-many-drivers-enabling-violent-extremism-in-northern-mozambique/>

*In French:* <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/nombreux-facteurs-qui-favorisent-extremisme-violent-nord-mozambique/>

Giovanni Faleg, "Conflict Prevention in Mozambique: Can there be peace after the storm?" Institute for Security Studies, April 10, 2019,

[https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%205%20Mozambique\\_0.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%205%20Mozambique_0.pdf)