

STAKEHOLDERS AND LOCAL REALITIES: 360 DEGREES ON SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL

INSTITUTIONAL LEAD

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

MODERATOR

Mamadou Bodian

Researcher, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

OVERVIEW

This small, in-depth workshop brought together decision makers, academics and knowledge brokers from the Global North and the Global South to explore emerging synergies in response to growing insecurity in the Sahel. The discussion sought to address the structural limitations of current approaches and enrich perspectives for collaborative peacebuilding in the region. Building on the forum's theme, the session attempted to challenge conventional wisdom across all development sectors and explored the duality of urgent or rapid responses and long-term mechanisms vital for attaining sustainable peace. The session provided a diversity of perspectives on security and development issues in the Sahel and explored strategies for stabilizing a region of increasing concern among the global community. SIPRI's quantitative findings on the Sahel served as prompts for points of discussion on human security.

OBJECTIVES

The session had three objectives. First was to address structural limitations of current approaches and enrich perspectives for collaborative peacebuilding in the region. Second was to challenge conventional wisdom across all development sectors and explore the duality of urgent, rapid responses and long-term mechanisms vital for attaining sustainable peace. The third objective was to provide a diversity of perspectives on security and development issues in the Sahel and explore strategies to stabilize a region of increasing concern among the global community

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Sahel region faces great complexity. There are confusing situations: they were predictable (created by outsiders as well), require long-term solutions, and will have unexpected effects. The insecurity takes multiple forms: jihadist insurrections, intercommunal conflicts, herders and so on. Insecurity in Niger and Burkina Faso is increasing acutely. There are multifaceted challenges: in addition to security and development issues, are displacement, climate change, droughts, malnutrition, food security, drugs trafficking etc.

There are challenges in coordination. The aid sector is unable to track the flow of money and account for results: despite numerous pledges, little has been shown. Many agencies means many agendas: it is more relevant to seek 'cohesion' rather than 'cooperation'. When resources are scarce, it is not clear how to tackle security issues in a coordinated manner.

The challenges in implementation (other than coordination) are numerous. There is a dilemma over state weakness in general: aid is not delivered if it goes through states. State weakness is also a result of outside interventions, such as structural adjustments and democratic transitions from outside (it is not an accident). States prioritize their military sectors over other issues, such as development (education, health etc.): are they forced to do so? Even if they prioritize, their military capacities are too small to overcome security problems in the region. Security is becoming an excuse for not investing in development. The G5 Sahel's main problems include its problematic foundation (the armies and security sectors of these countries had not been developed for political reasons, and are thus unable to ensure security). Prevailing security concerns and frustration

over them are the primary factor that facilitates recruitment by extremists. Also, these countries have little history of collaboration and military cooperation takes time. It also became a way for donor countries to avoid bilateral aid. There needs to be a common strategy. Human rights and fighting impunity are one priority for the United Nations. The UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) also lacks cohesion and has created a distortion: by asking states with weak capacity to maintain security to reinforce the security in neighbouring countries (and incentivizing them to do so by financial rewards). It also invests more time and money (80 per cent) in its own security (which is often the case in a peacekeeping mission). For localization, the international community tends to define social contracts, but it needs to respect the choices that states make, even if it is not comfortable with them. Regarding inclusivity and integration of women and youth, inclusivity is a key for the state's legitimacy.

However, most of these critiques are common in many similar contexts, such as Afghanistan or Iraq. There have also been some achievements and positive elements. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in Mali means that 2000 ex-rebels are to be integrated in the Malian forces. While it should not be assumed that it will lead to strengthening the Malian armed forces automatically, it is a necessary path and has been a complicated process. It is thus an element of success itself. Democratization in Niger has made some progress. Leadership of traditional religious leaders can keep girls in school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Understand and analyse incentive structures of all stakeholders, including those of international communities (including individual career motivations etc.).
- Decentralize support to bring coordination to regional and national levels, not concentrated at the international level, and to bring local voices upwards. The Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Liptako-Gourma Authority are good examples.
- Conduct locally based projects.

SESSION QUOTES

‘Elections are problems themselves, if not well managed.’

‘Forget coordination, let's try to find a coherence.’

‘We have to focus on the causes of problems, not symptoms.’



Screen capture taken by screenshot.guru on Thu, 16 May 2019 10:46:07 GMT.
Permalink: twitter.com/NiagaleBagayoko/status/1128974071646101504



 **Jaïr van der Lijn**
@JairvdLijn

Jam packed discussion at #SthlmForum on the Sahel. 'We have to be careful that the way we deal with the symptoms is not leading to more causes.' 'The G5 Sahel JF is not the silver bullet, because its foundations are wrong. The state security agents actually drive the resistance.'

♡ 10:01 AM - May 16, 2019

[See Jaïr van der Lijn's other Tweets](#)

Screen capture taken by screenshot.guru on Thu, 16 May 2019 10:37:54 GMT.
Permalink: twitter.com/JairvdLijn/status/1128963737703112704

RESOURCE LINKS AND DOCUMENTS

Gorman, Z., 'Pursuing elusive stability in the Sahel', Backgrounder, SIPRI, 26 Mar. 2019, <<https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2019/pursuing-elusive-stability-sahel>>.

Gorman, Z. and Chauzal, G., 'Establishing a regional security architecture in the Sahel', Backgrounder, SIPRI, 25 June 2018, <<https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2018/establishing-regional-security-architecture-sahel>>.

'Addressing a key challenge in central Mali: the need for local knowledge—new SIPRI film', SIPRI, 3 Apr. 2019, <<https://www.sipri.org/media/2019/addressing-key-challenge-central-mali-need-local-knowledge-new-sipri-film>>.



 **Annelies Hickendorff**
@A_Hickendorff

Human security, inclusivity at the local level and contextualisation are essential elements for security responses in the Sahel #SthlmForum

♡ 1 10:48 AM - May 16, 2019

[See Annelies Hickendorff's other Tweets](#)

Screen capture taken by screenshot.guru on Thu, 16 May 2019 12:05:52 GMT.
Permalink: twitter.com/A_Hickendorff/status/1128975440171941888



This session report was produced onsite at the 2019 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development hosted by SIPRI and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The report aims to reflect the session discussion. The views, information or opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of SIPRI, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs or other institutes associated with the session