

The impact of regional and international transformations in the African Sahel region on Algerian national security

تأثير التحولات الإقليمية والدولية في منطقة الساحل الإفريقي على الأمن الوطني الجزائري

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• Abstract:

Since the beginning of 2020, the Sahel region has witnessed a series of military coups, reshaping its geopolitical balance and impacting security and stability in the region and neighboring countries. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the impact of these political and security developments on Algerian national security, particularly in light of the marginalization of frameworks for security cooperation and coordination.

The study concluded that Algeria faces unprecedented security challenges in its regional environment, in terms of their severity, complexity, and intensity, as a result of the geopolitical transformations taking place in the African Sahel region. This transformation has placed Algeria in a state of security fragility, exposing it to serious challenges that are being exploited to increase sources of threat and destabilize it. This could have an impact on international peace and security.

Keywords: Algerian national security, the African Sahel region, military coups, regional and international transformations, security threats.

• ملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة التغيرات الإقليمية والدولية التي تشهدها منطقة الساحل الإفريقي في السنوات الأخيرة. وتحليل مدى تأثيرها على الأمن الوطني الجزائري في ظل تصاعد التهديدات الالتمائية كالإرهاب والجريمة المنظمة، وعودة التدافع الدولي على المنطقة، بالإضافة إلى تراجع آليات التنسيق الأمني الإقليمية. وقد اعتمدت على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، والمقاربة الجيوسياسية لفهم وإدراك مدى تأثير الديناميكيات والتحولات التي أعقبت الانقلابات العسكرية في كل من مالي النيجر وبوركينا فاسو على الأمن الوطني الجزائري.

خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الوضع الأمني والسياسي المعقد في منطقة الساحل الإفريقي الذي فرضته التحولات الجديدة، يزيد من تعقيد التحديات الأمنية التي تواجه الجزائر، وذلك في ظل الانكشاف الحدودي، ومحاولة استبعاد الجزائر من البناءات والترتيبات الأمنية القائمة في المنطقة، وتقويض المقاربة الأمنية الجزائرية. ومنه فإن الجزائر أصبحت مضطرة لإعادة ضبط سياستها الخارجية ومقاربتها الأمنية بما يتوافق مع التوازنات الجديدة التي تتسم بعدم الاستقرار و بروز التنافس الدولي على النفوذ في منطقة الساحل الإفريقي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأمن الوطني الجزائري، منطقة الساحل الإفريقي، الانقلابات العسكرية، التحولات الإقليمية والدولية، التهديدات الأمنية.

• Introduction

With the beginning of the twenty-first century, the African continent's position in contemporary global politics has become increasingly entrenched. The US-led war on terror following the September 11, 2001, attacks reinforced this position and made security a priority in Western policies toward the continent. Consequently, the United States and France intensified their military presence in Africa as part of efforts to combat terrorism and extremism and achieve international peace and security. This Western security approach has proven ineffective and incapable of achieving its stated objectives. However, in light of current structural shifts in the global order—manifested by shifting international power balances, the rise of emerging powers from the Global South, such as China and India, the return of wars to the international stage (the wars between Russia and Ukraine and Israel and Hamas), and geoeconomic conflicts between major powers—such as Western sanctions on Russia and the trade war between China and the United States—the economic dimension has emerged as a key axis of geopolitical competition in Africa.

This growing interest in the continent stems from its diverse strategic resources, including gold, oil, uranium, iron, and others; the importance of trade routes; its promising growth prospects; and its status as a continental market par excellence, encompassing 1.5 billion consumers, making it a global geopolitical center of gravity. However, the region does not suffer from many structural weaknesses; it is now multifaceted, experiencing internal conflicts, witnessing the presence of the poor, and the unequal distribution of its most pressing challenges.

The Sahel region clearly reflects these opportunities and challenges, representing a microcosm of the security, economic, political, and social issues facing the African continent. In addition to its vast natural resources, which make it an arena for international competition, it also suffers from numerous structural imbalances that hinder efforts to achieve peace, security, and sustainable development. The region is a hotbed of terrorism and transnational crime, as well as a center of violent and unconstitutional change on the continent. Since the beginning of 2020, at least eight military coups have taken place, leading to changes in governments and the consolidation of military power in six countries: Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Guinea, and Sudan. For the purposes of this study, we will focus on the Sahel subregion, which includes Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.

The military leaders of these three countries justified their seizure of power by citing the corruption of previous governments and their desire to achieve security and stability by eliminating terrorism, restoring national independence, and controlling natural resources. To achieve this, they adopted a comprehensive strategy based on withdrawal, expulsion, and the formation of new alliances, exploiting the narrative of regaining sovereignty to justify their legitimacy and consolidate their rule. They formed the Sahel Alliance and forged alliances with non-traditional international actors such as Russia, China, and Turkey. In return, they expelled French and UN forces from their territories, terminated their security partnerships with France and the United States, and escalated tensions in their relations with neighboring countries, including Benin, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Algeria.

This strategy led to a geopolitical restructuring of the region, accompanied by a deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation as a result of escalating security threats. Terrorist groups expanded their military activities in an attempt to fill the vacuum left by the departure of French and UN forces. At the same time, local forces and the African Legion sought to fill this vacuum, leading to violent clashes between the two sides. Terrorist groups expanded into areas they had not previously occupied. As a result, the Sahel region has been classified as one of the most dangerous terrorist zones in the world. This security and geopolitical turmoil in the Sahel has implications for Algeria and its national security, given its geographical location adjacent to the Sahel countries, the economic, social, and cultural ties that connect border regions, and the transnational nature of security threats. This nature has prompted Algeria, like other countries around the world, to redefine its national security to include a comprehensive security concept that combines border security, human security, and regional security. Therefore, the security and stability of the African Sahel region is considered an extension of Algeria's national security.

Accordingly, this study examines the impact of regional and international transformations in the African Sahel region on Algerian national security. It aims to analyze the impact of these transformations on the Sahel region and their repercussions for Algeria. Accordingly, the research question revolves around: What are the implications of regional and international transformations in the African Sahel region between 2020 and 2025 for Algerian national security?

We adopted descriptive, geopolitical, and composite regional security approaches to analyze the impact of international and regional transformations in the African Sahel region on Algerian national security during the period 2020–2025, spanning spatially from Algeria to the countries of the southern Sahel, including Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.

This study is divided into two main sections: the first addresses regional and international transformations in the Sahel region, while the second examines the impact of these transformations on Algerian national security.

1. Regional and international transformations in the African Sahel region:

This part of the study will examine the rise of military coups in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso; the resulting rise of military juntas to power; and the reshaping of geopolitical balances in the region.

1.1 Military coups in the African Sahel region

Military coups are the most common means of changing governments in Africa,¹ and many scholars consider them the norm, while elections and democracy are the exception.² The continent has witnessed more than 214 coup attempts over the past 60 years; nearly half of these attempts

¹ Johnsn Thomas H- Slater Robert O- & McGowan Pat- Explaining African military coups d'état:1960-1982- American Political Science Review- V.78- N 3- 1984-pp 622–640.

² Samuel Decalo- Modalities of Civil: Military Stability in Africa- The Journal of Modern African Studies-1989- V. 27- N 4 - pp. 547-578. P547.

succeeded in overthrowing the government and seizing power.¹ Based on this sheer number of coups, Johnson et al. describe the study of African politics as the study of "military intervention and military rule."² With the marked decline in coups in the early 2000s, some were optimistic that Africa had broken the coup wave and moved beyond this phenomenon,³ especially after the wave of democratization that began in the 1990s. However, the recent spate of coups on the continent has challenged this hypothesis.⁴

The series of coups began in Mali, where a group of military leaders led by Assimi Goïta overthrew President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta on May 24, 2020, following a series of anti-government protests. Thousands of Malians took to the streets to protest government corruption,⁵ the lack of public services, the government's mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the fraud that marred the legislative elections held in March and April 2020.⁶

Following the successful coup, a transitional government was appointed, headed by civilian Bah Ndaw, with Assimi Goïta as vice president. The government was tasked with overseeing the transitional period, which was scheduled to last 18 months. Elections would then be held, and power would be handed over to a civilian government. However, Mali experienced a second coup in May 2021⁷ due to a dispute between the military leadership and President Bah Ndaw following government reshuffles that excluded the coup leaders from the government. The second military coup was led by Goïta, who installed himself as head of government in Mali, arrested President Ndaw and the prime minister, and extended the transitional period to 2022⁸ and then to 2027.⁹

Burkina Faso also experienced a military coup on January 24, 2022, which ousted President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré and replaced the government with a military junta (the National Movement for Salvation and Reform, MPSR), led by Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. The coup was popularly approved, or at least unopposed, given the Roch government's inability to address the country's security crisis. However, eight months after the coup, a second coup took place on September 30, 2022, led by Captain Ibrahim Traoré. The new junta called itself

¹ Fagbadebo, Omololu- Historicising Coup d'états in Africa- In: Akinola A (eds) -The Resurgence of Military Coups and Democratic Relapse in Africa- Palgrave Macmillan- Cham-2024. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-51019-9_2

² Johnson Thomas H- Slater Robert O- & McGowan Pat-op.cit.

³ Ntomba Reginald- Why are Military Coups Going Out of Fashion in Africa? - *New African*- 11 November 2015- Available at: <<https://newafricanmagazine.com/11522/>> [Accessed 1 January 2025].

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ George Klay Kieh Jr and Kelechi Amihe Kalu- Introduction "No Farewell to Arms in Africa?"-in Democratization and Military Coups in Africa Post-1990 Political Conflicts- George Klay Kieh Jr. and Kelechi Amihe Kalu- Lexington Books, Lanham, Boulder, New York, London, 2021, pp 3-24. P4.

⁶ Hamdi Abdel Rahman Hassan- Mali's coup and the death of politics, increasing security risks-African Readings- 25 August 2020. Available at; <https://2u.pw/gSjL0i> [Accessed 1 January 2025].

⁷ Omar Al-Tayyis- Central and West Africa: From Mali to Gabon... Eight coups in three years- France 24 -31/08/2023. Available <https://2u.pw/9JoIPbn> [Accessed 1 August 2025].

⁸ Mohamed Saleh Omar- "Successive Coups and Political Crises... Where Are the Situation in Mali Headed? - Q&A- Al Jazeera -30 May 2021.available at: <https://h1.nu/1es2g> [Accessed 1 August 2025].

⁹ Shola Lawal- West Africa's 'coup belt: Did Mali's 2020 army takeover change the region?- Aljazeera- 27 Aug 2024. available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/27/west-africas-coup-belt-did-malis-2020-army-takeover-change-the-region> [Accessed 1 August 2025].

MPSR2.¹ The transitional period was originally scheduled to end in 2024, but in late May 2024, Traoré announced its extension for another 60 months.

The coup in Niger in 2023 followed the same pattern as previous coups, with the military leadership seizing power. Nigerien President Mohamed Bazoum was arrested, and coup leader Abdourahmane Tchiani proclaimed himself president and established the National Council for the Protection of the Homeland.²

These three countries, along with others that experienced similar coups during the same period, share common security, political, economic, and social contexts, which include government failure, internal conflicts, lack of social justice, fragile national economies, failed economic development, corruption, poverty, terrorism, and instability. Additionally, external factors such as international competition in the region, the presence of foreign forces, the effects of African countries' integration into the political economy, and the colonial legacy also play a role. Generally, we cannot view the causes of coups by focusing on certain determinants to the exclusion of others. Rather, it can be said that military coups are the result of a complex and intertwined interaction between internal and external factors.

Coup leaders often use these factors as pretexts for overthrowing governments, viewing illegal coups as a means of correcting the mistakes of previous governments.³ However, past and present experiences reveal that the reasons given to justify coups are in fact merely excuses to seize power and hold on to it for as long as possible. The coup leaders do not bother to eliminate poverty, fight corruption, achieve a genuine democratic transition, or address any of the reasons they put forward. On the contrary, their actions often exacerbate the situation, opening the door to counter-coups, prolonging their rule, and delegitimising the political process and governance.

1.2 The geopolitical realignment of the African Sahel region following military coups

The military coups sparked a wave of mixed international and regional reactions. The African Union condemned the coups and called for a return to constitutional order.⁴ The Economic Community of West African States imposed a series of sanctions on Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, demanding that they accelerate the transfer of power to civilians. These sanctions included a ban on commercial financial transactions (except for basic consumer goods, medical supplies, and pharmaceutical products); the freezing of assets in the Central Bank of West Africa; the closure of air and land borders; the withdrawal of ambassadors; and the suspension of membership.⁵

¹ Engels B- The Crisis in Burkina Faso and the Coup Belt -Z Außen Sicherheitspolit-V.18- PP 13–23-2025.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12399-025-01022-z>

² Hendrik Sexauer] (3 juillet 2024), Récents coups d'État dans les pays du Sahel : comment les États se positionnent-ils aujourd'hui face aux exigences de la démocratie, Plateforme d'Analyse du Suivi et d'Apprentissage au Sahel, Production Pasas.
<https://pasas-minka.fr.p4>.

³ Bouhania Qawi- The Phenomenon of Coups in Africa: Interpretations and Contexts- 27 September 2022- Al Jazeera Centre for Studies- available at: <https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/5469#a3> [Accessed 1 August2025].

⁴ Hendrik Sexauer- op.cit.

⁵ Hamd Fouad Rashwan – Between popular rejection and international pressure. Will ECOWAS succeed in imposing stability on Mali? – Pharos Centre for Strategic Studies and Consultancy – 16 January 2022 – Available on the website: <https://2u.pw/ArDZXa>

These sanctions did not deter the coup regimes. Rather, they had negative repercussions for the people of these countries, leading to economic slowdowns and severe food shortages, sparking a wave of popular discontent against them, accusing them of collusion with the West. The coup regimes in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger exploited the situation to incite opposition against ECOWAS. In direct response to the organization's threat of military intervention following the coup in Niger, these countries established a new defense and security cooperation body, the Alliance of the Sahel States. Its "Liptako Gourma" charter was signed on September 17, 2023. This alliance is modeled after NATO. In the event of an attack on any of the three member states, it seeks to prevent aggression and provide mutual assistance.

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Furthermore, the coup councils withdrew from the regional organizations of which they were members. On May 15, 2022, Mali announced its withdrawal from the G5 Sahel and its joint force, followed by Niger and Burkina Faso in December 2023. The three countries also withdrew from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on January 28, 2024,⁴ which the coup councils considered subject to the influence of foreign powers and a threat to their countries and peoples.

On July 6, 2024, the coup councils in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso announced the transformation of the Sahel Alliance into the Sahel Confederation, ensuring joint coordination in all political, economic, defense, and security fields. The announcements included the creation of a unified currency, called "Sahel," as an alternative to the West African CFA franc; the unification of the flag and biometric passport; and the formation of a 5,000-strong military unit to counter the terrorist threat centered in the border area between the three countries. Meanwhile, mediation and negotiations continued,⁵ led by Senegalese President Bassirou Diomaye Faye and Togolese

¹ Liptako-Gourma "The tri-border area, where the borders of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger meet.

² Ahmed Ould Wadi- Confederation of the African Sahel: Context, Challenges and Prospects- Dimensions for Strategic Studies -07/08/2024-Available on the website: <https://urli.info/1jfSy>

³ Hassan Zinend, Three countries withdraw from ECOWAS – Who is playing with fire in the Sahel region? – 2 February 2024, Deutsche Welle, available at: <https://urli.info/1jfSj>

⁴ Mahfouz Ould Salek - The Strategy of Withdrawal and Expulsion in the Sahel Countries: Suspended Sovereignty Between Liberation and Dependence - Al Jazeera Center for Studies, October 21, 2025 - Available at: <https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/6339>

⁵ Abdelhak Bassou-From the Alliance of Sahel States to the Confederation of Sahel States: The Road is Clear, But Full of Traps- Policy Brief - N° 19/24 - April 2024

President Faure Gnassingbé, to rejoin the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These countries were given a full year to review their positions, and sanctions were lifted. However, the three countries stuck to their decision, and the deadline expired on January 28, 2025, on which date they officially withdrew.¹

Moreover, the leaders of the military juntas in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso adopted a sovereignist discourse, criticizing failed Western-led international interventions in the region that violated their countries' sovereignty.² They expelled these forces (French and UN forces) from their territories and abrogated previously signed security and military agreements with the United States, France, and the European Union. This led to a decline in Western hegemony in the region, further entrenching military rule and prolonging the transitional period. This sovereignist discourse and criticism of Western colonialism, which had been gaining momentum for years, gained widespread acceptance among large segments of the population. In turn, these military leaders strengthened their ties with emerging international actors such as Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, and the Gulf states, and relied on the Wagner Group—later renamed the Africa Corps—in their confrontations with armed groups active in the Sahel.

2. The implications of geopolitical transformations in the African Sahel region for Algerian national security

2.1 Repercussions on diplomatic relations

Relations between Algeria and Mali are based on complex geographic, historical, and identity factors. The two countries share a long border located in one of the world's hotspots, as well as a long shared history and cultural and customary overlaps, particularly between southern Algeria and northern Mali, which are characterized by shared Berber and Tuareg influences.³ Based on these shared relations and Algeria's foreign policy principles of good neighborliness, regional cooperation, and the pursuit of international peace and security, as well as Algeria's fears of the conflict spilling over into its national borders, Algeria has played a mediating role between Azawad separatist groups and the Malian government since the beginning of the Azawad rebellion in northern Mali in the 1960s, which has resurfaced intermittently.⁴ Following the renewed crisis in 2012, Algerian diplomatic efforts culminated in the signing of a peace agreement in 2015 between the Malian government and movements under the Strategic Framework for the Defense of the Azawad People.⁵

Algerian-Malian relations have recently witnessed escalating tensions due to the rise of a military government in Mali following the ouster of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta in 2020 and

¹ Samir Bhattacharya. Conflicts in Africa | Sahel's strategic drift towards Russia. May 01, 2025. ORF observer Research Foundation. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/conflicts-in-africa-sahel-s-strategic-drift-towards-russia>

² Bøås, Morten, and Viljar Haavik. 2025. "Failed International Interventions and the Making of New Social Contracts in Mali." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, March, 1–18. doi:10.1080/17502977.2025.2461295.

³ Center for African Security Studies- Tensions in Algerian-Malian Relations- 20/23/2025- available at: <https://2u.pw/zYQ0WJ>

⁴ For more on the role of Algerian diplomacy in resolving the conflict in Mali, see: Idris Attia - Applications of Security Engineering in Algeria's African Policy- Dar Al-Umma, Alger, 2019- pp. 313-338.

⁵ It is an alliance of political and military movements in northern Mali, formed on May 6, 2021, as an alliance between the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA). See: African Security Studies Center, Tensions in Algerian-Malian Relations, op. cit.

subsequent military coups in Burkina Faso and Niger. These coups redefined allies and enemies according to the perceptions of the military junta leaders in these three countries, who used the discourse of sovereignty to criticize Western-led international interventions in the region¹, enabling them to gain domestic legitimacy and consolidate their military rule.

Moreover, the reasons for the dispute between Algeria and Bamako stem primarily from differing views on the armed Azawad movements in northern Mali. While the Malian military authorities insist on classifying the armed Azawad movements as terrorist organizations, Algeria rejects this classification, viewing them instead as political opposition movements and advocating for engagement with their leaders and Azawad clerics to resume peace talks between both parties. In a statement made by the Algerian Foreign Minister at a press conference on the results of Algeria's diplomatic activity in 2024, Algeria's position on labeling the armed Azawad movements as terrorist organizations was highlighted. He stated, "...as Algerians, we will not accept that the political movements (the Azawad movements) that signed the Algiers Peace Agreement in Mali transform overnight into terrorist gangs. Future negotiations will take place with these groups. He added that "²Algeria insists on the participation of the Azawad movements in any political process and peace efforts in Mali."³ He also emphasized the necessity of a political solution in northern Mali and the impossibility of a military solution, which has proven unsuccessful in the past.

This statement highlights Algeria's position on the crisis in Mali. Algeria excludes the military option as a priority, given its negative role in exacerbating humanitarian disasters and creating an environment conducive to the escalation of terrorist activity in the region. Instead, Algeria relies on negotiation and dialogue between the Malian authorities and the Azawad forces in the north to manage the crisis in Mali.

Bamako rejects this Algerian view, insisting that the Azawad factions are armed terrorist groups seeking to destabilize the country and must therefore be eliminated militarily. Based on this view, the crisis between Bamako and Algeria escalated, with Bamako summoning the Algerian ambassador to Mali on December 22, 2023, for consultations in protest against what it described as interference in Mali's internal affairs. This came after Algeria hosted leaders of the Azawad movements that signed the peace agreement with Bamako. These included Ghaly Ag Intalla, a member of the National Movement for the Liberation of Mali, and Imam Mahmoud Dicko, a prominent proponent of dialogue with armed groups and an opponent of the current government in Bamako. The aim was to resume dialogue and find a lasting solution.⁴ The coup authorities in Bamako accused Algeria of being a state sponsor of terrorism, while Algeria responded that the visit was part of its mediation efforts and affirmed its unwavering commitment to Mali's sovereignty, national unity, and territorial integrity.

¹ Bøås, Morten and Viljar Haavik -Failed International Interventions and the Making of New Social Contracts in Mali- Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding 2025, pp. 1–18 - doi:10.1080/17502977.2025.2461295

² MFA-Algeria.Channel, Speech by Minister of State Ahmed Attaf at the press conference on the summary of Algerian diplomatic activity for the year 2024, December 30, 2024. Available on the website; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cmWP6OL-Zs>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Crisis group -Algeria-Mali: Defusing a Dangerous Escalation- 18 April 2025- <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali-algeria/algerie-mali-desamorcer-une-dangereuse-escalade>

On January 2, 2024, Mali's ruling military junta announced the cancellation of the 2015 peace and reconciliation agreement between Azawad movements and the Malian government, brokered by Algeria, citing the latter's non-compliance. This was highlighted by a statement from Malian Prime Minister Abdoulaye Maiga, stating that "the Algerian mediator is no longer able to fulfil the guarantees agreed upon in 2015." For its part, Algeria objected to this decision, which was not a result of its non-compliance but rather had been planned for some time. As the head of the international mediation in Mali, it renewed its invitation to the transitional authorities to participate in meetings to discuss the implementation of the agreement, but the latter ignored these calls.¹ Algerian authorities also blamed the coup authorities for the failure of reconciliation and warned of Mali's slide into civil war and the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in northern Mali.

The abrogation of the peace agreement and the security vacuum resulting from the departure of French and UN forces have led to renewed armed conflict in northern Mali between Malian army forces supported by the Wagner Group and Azawad forces in the cities of Menaka, Gao, Timbuktu, and Tinzaouten near the Algerian border.² Malian forces and Wagner mercenaries have suffered heavy losses, with many soldiers and Wagner mercenaries killed and others captured.³ This situation has also led to the expansion of terrorist groups' influence, deepening Mali's internal crises.

The renewed conflict in Mali near the Algerian-Malian border poses a direct threat to Algerian national security, as the national border was subjected to an attempted security breach by Malian drones. Three violations of national sovereignty were recorded, according to a statement from the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁴. The first occurred on August 27, 2024, the second on December 29, 2024, and the third on April 1, 2025, which the Algerian Air Force considered a blatant and direct hostile military manoeuvre. Accordingly, the Algerian Air Force shot down the drone that violated the national border near the border town of Tinzaouten, in the 6th Military Region. According to a statement from the Ministry of National Defence, the drone penetrated Algerian airspace for a distance of two kilometres.⁵ This security breach constitutes a direct violation of national sovereignty and a breach of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation (1944), which Algeria signed on May 7, 1963, and Mali on November 8, 1960.⁶ It is therefore binding on both countries. This agreement recognises the full sovereignty of each state over its airspace, as stipulated in Article 1 of the agreement⁷. This means that each state has the

¹ Algerian Radio - Breach of the Algiers Agreement... Bamako is dragging the Sahel towards an unprecedented security crisis - 01/28/2024 - Available on the website: <https://h1.nu/1jflw>

² Othman Lahyani - Algeria Renews its Readiness to Make Efforts to Stop the War in Northern Mali - Al-Araby Al-Jadeed - July 31, 2024 - Available on the website: <https://h1.nu/1jflf>

³ Chris Ewokor & Lucy Fleming- Mali army admits 'significant' losses in Wagner battle- BBC News- 30 July 2024- <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cq5xvl1111yo>

⁴ Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs- Press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Confederation of Sahel States 07/04/2025, <https://www.mfa.gov.dz/fr/announcements/statement-of-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-confederation-of-sahel-states-07042025>.

⁵ Ministry of National Defense- Statement by the Ministry of National Defense: Securing the Borders... and Shooting Down an Armed Reconnaissance Drone, April 1, 2025, available at: https://www.mdn.dz/site_principal/sommaire/actualites/ar/2025/avril/lutte01042025ar.php

⁶ Convention on International Civil Aviation -Signed in Chicago on 7 December 1944- Available on the website: https://www.icao.int/secretariat/legal/List%20of%20Parties/Chicago_EN.pdf

⁷ Convention on International Civil Aviation (ICAO Convention)- Det juridiske fakultet <https://www.jus.uio.no/english/services/library/treaties/07/7-01/international-civil-aviation.html#history>

right to determine the legal status of the use of its airspace, taking into account the principles and rules set forth in international treaties and international law. article 3, paragraph c, also stipulates that no aircraft of a contracting state may fly over or land in the territory of another state without authorization under a special agreement or otherwise, and in accordance with its provisions.¹ This means that a state has the right to monitor its airspace, impose restrictions on unauthorised flights, and take preemptive measures against anything that poses a military or civilian threat to it. The Algerian position is also based on Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which recognises the right of self-defence, which is considered an inherent right of states.²

Mali's official response to the downing of the drone was to issue a strongly worded statement condemning what it described as a "blatant hostile act" by Algerian forces, which could only be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to undermine Mali's efforts to maintain its internal security.³ It noted that the wreckage of its drone was found inside Malian territory, 9.5 kilometers south of the common border. This argument appears flimsy, given that Malian authorities are unable to access the Tinzaouten border area, which is under the control of Azawad groups, making it impossible to verify and confirm the exact distance. In aviation science, access to the crash site and the aircraft's flight data are the only means of drawing reliable conclusions about the cause of the incident.⁴ Therefore, Bamako's hypothesis regarding the drone incident lacks actual evidence that effectively incriminates Algeria.

Furthermore, Mali, along with its allies in the Sahel Alliance (Niger and Burkina Faso), recalled their ambassadors from Algeria for consultations. Mali and Niger also withdrew from the Joint Operational Command (CEMOC), which brought them together with the Algerian and Mauritanian military forces.⁵ Despite the limited activities of this committee, established in 2010, it served as an effective platform for security coordination and cooperation, particularly thanks to the training support provided by Algeria. This support had positive repercussions, given the vast expanse of the Sahara, a major transit point for weapons, drugs, and migrant smuggling. With this withdrawal, Niamey and Bamako are effectively ending security coordination and cooperation with Algeria, which could have serious security consequences for all parties involved.⁶

Algeria responded to these measures in kind, withdrawing its ambassadors from Mali and Niger and postponing the appointment of a new ambassador to Burkina Faso.⁷ It also closed its airspace to Malian flights starting April 7, 2025, due to repeated Malian violations of Algerian airspace,

¹ Ibid.

² United Nations -United Nations Charter (full text)- <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

³ Asmaa Hassan Muhammad - After the recent disputes between Algeria and Mali: Have relations between them reached the point of no return? - Shaf Center for Crisis Analysis and Future Studies - April 15, 2025 Available on the website: <https://2u.pw/2vTwIK>

⁴ Convention on International Civil Aviation -Signed in Chicago on 7 December 1944- Available on the website: https://www.icao.int/secretariat/legal/List%20of%20Parties/Chicago_EN.pdf

⁵ psc pscreport-Algeria-Mali tensions demand swift attention- 17 June 2025-<https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/algeria-mali-tensions-demand-swift-attention>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs- Press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Confederation of Sahel States 07/04/2025. op. cit.

according to a statement from the Ministry of National Defense.¹ Bamako, in turn, responded by closing its airspace to Algerian flights. These two decisions led Air Algérie to cancel its flights to Mali and remove the country from its reservation system, as did Malian Airlines. International airlines were forced to reroute their flights to these two countries to avoid passing through their airspace, incurring additional costs for companies and passengers.²

Based on the above, the crisis between Mali and Algeria emerges within the context of the ongoing geopolitical restructuring in the African Sahel region. It reveals the lack of trust between the two countries and the collapse of frameworks for dialogue, coordination, and regional cooperation, given the escalatory steps taken by both sides, including the withdrawal of ambassadors, the closure of airspace, and the exchange of accusations in the media and regional and international forums. The crisis also reveals the decline of Algeria's traditional role in the region in favor of new international actors.

Although the crisis is unlikely to escalate into an armed conflict, this is due to the formidable military capabilities of Algeria, the region's leading military power, and the weakness of the Malian army, which is fighting on multiple fronts (against Azawad movements on the one hand, and various terrorist groups on the other), straining its military and financial capabilities, despite support from Russia and Turkey. Opening a new front would be a military gamble with unpredictable results. However, this escalating tension fuels growing instability in the Sahel region, the possibility of it spilling over into North Africa, and its negative impact on Algerian national security, given the absence of frameworks for security and military coordination and cooperation and the preference for military solutions over negotiated and political solutions in the Sahel.

2.2 Security threats

The most significant challenges facing Algerian national security, originating from the Sahel, are the activities of terrorist groups, the growth of cross-border smuggling in various forms, illegal immigration, and arms and drug trafficking. Although these challenges are not new, they date back to previous periods, particularly during the second decade of the twenty-first century. The Libyan crisis (2011) and the crisis in Mali (2012) contributed to transforming them into actual security threats following the terrorist attack on the Tiguentourine gas plant and the kidnapping of Algerian diplomats. Recent developments following the military coups, particularly the strained relations between Algeria and Mali, the withdrawal of the Sahel Alliance countries from regional counterterrorism frameworks, and the expanding influence of new international actors, have exposed Algerian and regional national security to highly complex and multifaceted security threats.

- terrorism

The Sahel region of Africa has been experiencing protracted and increasing terrorist violence for more than a decade, undermining security and stability³. The area is still a hotbed for extremist

¹ Ministry of National Defense, Statement by the Ministry of National Defense: Securing the Borders... and Shooting Down an Armed Reconnaissance Drone, op. cit.

² Othman Lahyani - The repercussions of the crisis with Algeria are evident in the regions of northern and central Mali - Al-Araby Al-Jadeed - April 12, 2025 - Available on the website: <https://urli.info/1esd1>

³ Informal Interactive Dialogue on Enhancing Regional Counter-Terrorism Cooperation in West Africa and the Sahel security council report- Posted Mon 14 Jul 2025-<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2025/07/informal-interactive-dialogue-on-enhancing-regional-counter-terrorism-cooperation-in-west-africa-and-the-sahel.php>

groups, such as the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS).¹ These groups have exploited the structural weaknesses of states and local communities to expand their influence and destabilize the region.

These groups rely on a range of illegal economic activities for their funding, such as cattle rustling, kidnapping and ransom demands, imposing taxes, or providing security and protection to local populations in exchange for money. which boosts their revenues and integration into local communities, in addition to alliances with organized crime groups, by providing protection for various illegal activities, such as drug trafficking and human smuggling.² They have also benefited from new technology and financial innovations that have made their business networks complex and difficult to detect.³

Over the past five years, violence resulting from terrorist activity in the Sahel region has reached record levels, with the Global Terrorism Index estimating the number of deaths at approximately 3,885 in 2024 and over 20,000 between 2019 and 2024.⁴ This significant increase in deaths can be attributed to the intensification of the conflict between local armies and terrorist and armed groups, following a series of military coups in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. These coups have shifted the balance of power within these countries, undermining the roles of traditional international actors in favor of new actors.

These geopolitical developments have created a favorable environment for terrorist groups to expand into areas previously outside their control. These groups have exploited the security vacuum left by the departure of French and UN forces, the inability of local forces supported by Wagner Groups to fill this void, the absence of frameworks for regional security cooperation and coordination, and the collapse of international support for counterterrorism. Statistics indicate that the coup in Mali resulted in the surrender of 40% of its territory to extremist groups.⁵ Furthermore, terrorist groups have exploited the inability of local forces to protect national borders to expand their criminal activities and increase their influence in neighboring countries on the Gulf of Guinea coast, such as Ghana, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo.⁶

¹ Center for Preventive Action- Violent Extremism in the Sahel- September 4, 2025- <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel>

² Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Terrorism Index 2025: Measuring The Impact of Terrorism, Sydney, March 2025. P49. Available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources> (accessed Date Month Year).

³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Speech by Mr. Ahmed Attaf during the high-level meeting of the UN Security Council on combating terrorism in Africa - Available on the website:

<https://www.mfa.gov.dz/ar/press-and-information/video-news/mr-ahmed-attaf-speech-during-the-high-level-meeting-of-the-un-security-council-on-counter-terrorism-in-africa>

⁴ The report adopts the definition of the Sahel countries: the semi-arid region in western, central and northern Africa, which includes parts of ten countries: Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Mauritania, Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Terrorism Index 2025: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, Sydney, March 2025. Available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources> (accessed Date Month Year).

⁵ European Centre for Counterterrorism and Intelligence Studies (ECCI)- The risks of military coups in the African Sahel-August 28, 2023- Available on the website: <https://2u.pw/eGb4sb>

⁶ Elian Peltier- A New Frontline Emerges as Jihadists Eye West Africa Coast- The New York Times - June 17, 2025- <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/16/world/africa/africa-terrorism-trump-ivory-coast.html/> ADF- Creeping Terrorism Now an Emergency in Togo- July 26, 2022- <https://adf-magazine.com/2022/07/creeping-terrorism-now-an-emergency-in-togo>

Since late 2023, terrorist groups have intensified their attacks in the Sahel and West Africa, employing increasingly sophisticated tactics, including missiles, improvised explosive devices, and drones.¹ These groups have demonstrated proficiency in highly skilled military strategies, prompting Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf to describe them as "terrorist armies."² The group most prolific in its use of drone technology is the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), and the rapid proliferation of the group's drone warfare tactics underscores its operational reach, tactical innovation, and strategic intent in the region. It also demonstrates the group's success in monitoring and coordinating its operations outside its traditional strongholds in the Sahel.³

Based on the above, and in light of this turbulent regional context, the expansion of terrorist activity and its operational reach in the African Sahel region has become a real and direct threat to Algerian national security. This scenario raises the possibility of Algeria re-emerging as a renewed target for terrorism, particularly as the Malian and Nigerian regions adjacent to the southern border have transformed into gray zones, witnessing recurring clashes between local forces and armed and terrorist groups. This security vacuum on the southern border raises the possibility of terrorist elements infiltrating national territory, given the fragility of the border and the lack of security coordination between Algerian, Malian, and Nigerian forces, following escalating tensions between Algeria and the Sahel Alliance countries.

The possibility of terrorist elements infiltrating the country raises several scenarios for their potential role within the country: contact with sleeper terrorist cells, arms transfers, attacks on the population, or attacks on pipelines and hydrocarbon facilities, as occurred in 2013, following the armed attack on the Tighentourine gas facility in In Amenas, led by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the armed attack on the gas base in the Khrechba region of Tebessa province in 2016. Furthermore, terrorist groups' possession of advanced military technologies, such as drones and missiles, allows them to carry out attacks on targets within the country without having to cross national borders.

- Drugs:

The Sahel region of Africa is a major drug trafficking route from Latin America to Europe. Drug traffickers have long exploited porous borders, instability, insecurity, and weak states to operate with impunity. Drug seizures have risen sharply in recent years; for example, 1,466 kilograms of cocaine were seized in 2024, compared to 41 kilograms in 2021, according to UN estimates.⁴ Seizures are concentrated mainly in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali. The political and security instability resulting from military coups in these countries, coupled with the situation in Libya, has provided significant opportunities for drug traffickers to smuggle drugs in this part of the region.

¹ Amani Africa media and research services -Insights on the Peace and Security Council (PSC)-Briefing on the Sahel region-Date | 29 September 2025- <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-sahel-region/>

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Speech by Mr. Ahmed Attaf during the high-level meeting of the UN Security Council on combating terrorism in Africa - op. cit.

³ Ladd Serwat- Jalale Getachew Birru-, "Africa Overview: April 2025," Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, April 4, 2025. Available on the website: https://acleddata.com/update/africa-overview-may-2025?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=africa-overview-may-2025

⁴ adf- Statistics Suggest Sharp Increase in Sahel Drug Trafficking- October 31, 2024- <https://adf-magazine.com/2024/10/statistics-suggest-sharp-increase-in-sahel-drug-trafficking/>

The spread of drug trafficking in the Sahel region of Africa poses a multifaceted threat to Algerian national security. Recent reports from the National Office for Combating Drugs and Addiction, along with operational results from the Ministry of National Defense, reflect the scale of this threat. For example, 16,957.964 kilograms of cannabis were seized at national borders in 2024, an increase of 17.46% compared to 2023, while 153,855.6 kilograms of cocaine were seized in 2024, an increase of 201.31% compared to 2023, according to the National Office for Combating Drugs and Addiction's 2024 annual report.¹

- **Transnational organized crime:**

In recent years, transnational criminal networks have expanded rapidly in the African Sahel region,² which has become a key location for them, exploiting the deterioration of security, social, and economic conditions. The illicit activities of criminal networks in and beyond the region take many forms: trafficking in drugs, humans, and fuel; cybercrime; and the illegal exploitation of natural resources such as gold and diamonds.³

The overlap and intertwining of organized crime, terrorism, and insurgency complicates security dynamics in the region, with each feeding off the other: criminal economies provide a financial lifeline to extremist groups,⁴ while terrorist groups provide protection and enforcement mechanisms for criminal networks. The military juntas that rule Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have been tasked with suppressing armed groups, but their failure to do so has led to the expansion and growth of terrorist groups, creating an environment conducive to the flourishing of cross-border organized crime in the region. Leonardo Santos Simao, the UN Special Representative for the Sahel and West Africa, believes that the reason the military juntas have failed to eliminate terrorist groups is because the authorities have failed to stop the illicit trafficking that fuels terrorism.⁵ He adds that the combination of organized crime and terrorism poses a comprehensive threat to the region.

This combination of threats has implications for Algeria and its security. This vulnerability is due to its immediate proximity to the Sahel region, which since the early 1990s has become a haven for smuggling gangs, primarily using routes through northern Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Libya toward North Africa and then Europe. Algeria's geographical location also makes it a convenient transit point for organized crime gangs smuggling their resources to Algeria and the northern shore

¹ National Office for Combating Drugs and Addiction: Drug and Addiction Control Activities: Annual Report 2024, 2025, available on the website:
<https://onlcdt.mjustice.gov.dz/ar/%d8%a5%d8%ad%d8%b5%d8%a7%d8%a6%d9%8a%d8%a7%d8%aa/>

² Amani Africa media and research services- Open Session on Organised Transnational Crime, Peace and Security in the Sahel Region-Insights on the Peace and Security Council (PSC)-13 May 2025. Available on the website:
<https://amaniafrica-et.org/open-session-on-organised-transnational-crime-peace-and-security-in-the-sahel-region/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Africa Defense Forum - Organized crime fuels terror in Sahel nations- 23 December 2024- Available on the website:
<https://defenceweb.co.za/african-news/organized-crime-fuels-terror-in-sahel-nations/>

of the Mediterranean¹ (such as drugs and human trafficking) or those smuggling resources from Algeria to the Sahel (such as fuel and various state-subsidized food items). Although Algeria's borders with Sahel countries are more tightly controlled than those with counterparts such as Libya, smuggling networks have established illegal crossings, often across rugged terrain, to smuggle their resources. The Ministry of National Defense's annual statistics on cross-border smuggling, particularly of fuel, drugs, and food, reveal that these illegal activities are ongoing and increasing, posing a persistent threat to Algeria's national security.

The strategy adopted by the military councils in the Sahel Alliance countries has multiplied the threat of organized crime to Algerian and regional security in general. This strategy is based on withdrawal, expulsion, and the escalation of relations with neighboring countries in the name of sovereignty.² The plan includes withdrawing from the peace agreement, withdrawing from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), withdrawing from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and escalating tensions with several African countries such as Algeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria. This marginalization of regional cooperation and coordination frameworks provides greater opportunities for organized crime networks to move across porous borders. The lack of information flow also hinders anti-crime operations in these countries and contributes to the expansion of their activities. Without regional security cooperation, the security situation in the region is likely to deteriorate further, with repercussions for neighboring countries, including Algeria.

- Illegal immigration:

In recent years, the number of irregular migrants in Algeria has doubled. This increase is attributed to the growing number of military coups in the Sahel countries, the escalation of terrorist activity in the region, the deterioration of security, social, and economic conditions, the civil war in Sudan,³ and the political crisis between the Sahel countries and France, all of which have impacted the migration control measures previously managed by the Sahel states. These factors have been the main drivers of migration from the Sahel to neighboring countries, including Algeria,⁴ which has transformed from a transit country to a host and settlement country. This shift is due to stricter migration controls imposed by European countries and the availability of cheap labor in the Algerian job market. Irregular migrants now work in construction, agriculture, and other jobs that Algerian youth are increasingly reluctant to do. This phenomenon represents a major economic factor in seasonal irregular migration to Algeria.⁵

¹ Hossam Hamza - The Algerian Security Approach to Confronting Security Threats in the African Sahel Region 1991-2015 - A thesis submitted for a PhD in Political Science, specializing in International Relations - Faculty of Political Science and International Relations - Department of International Studies - 2017/2018, p. 135

² Mahfouz Ould Salek - The Strategy of Withdrawal and Expulsion in the Sahel Countries: Suspended Sovereignty Between Liberation and Dependence - Al Jazeera Center for Studies - October 21, 2021 - Available on the website: <https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/6339>

³ Abdelhafid Sejjal - The number of irregular migrants has doubled - Will Algeria adopt a migration policy? - January 18, 2025 - Ultra Algeria - Available on the website: <https://h1.nu/1jfiT>

⁴ BEATRIZ MESA- Dynamiques migratoires dans la région Maghreb-Sahel- Programme régional pour le Sahel- 16 juillet 2025- <https://www.kas.de/fr/web/sahel/titre-unique/-/content/dynamiques-migratoires-dans-la-region-maghreb-sahel>

⁵ Ahmed Mokhtar Lensari- Repercussions of the Sahel crisis: Nigerien families begging in the city of Laghouat in Algeria-16 Oct 2025): African Identities, DOI: 10.1080/14725843.2025.2576012

Figures released by the Ministry of National Defense indicate that 14,814 irregular migrants of various nationalities were apprehended across the country in 2023¹ and 29,587 in 2024.² These figures reflect the scale of the challenge facing Algeria, particularly as it transitions from a transit country to a permanent or long-term residence country for thousands of migrants. The nexus between migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and organized crime networks exacerbates these challenges. Unable to cross borders legally due to strict controls imposed by the Algerian Armed Forces on the borders with Sahel countries, migrants turn to organized crime networks, which continue to exploit their vulnerability by providing transportation services via long, rugged, and expensive routes. Unable to pay for their smuggling, many become indebted and end up exploited in criminal activities such as drug and arms smuggling, sex trafficking, organ trafficking, or collaboration with terrorist groups, contributing to the scale of the challenges facing Algeria's national security.

Algeria has sought to receive migrants from Mali, Niger, and other African countries, driven by good neighborliness and compassion for oppressed peoples. However, the negative behavior of these migrants—such as begging, social ills, the emergence of urban slums, and civilian repression—combined with the economic pressures resulting from receiving and deporting such large numbers of migrants, as well as international pressure, has prompted Algeria to take drastic measures, including large-scale deportations.⁴ During a meeting with his Spanish counterpart, Fernando Grande-Marlaska, during the Algerian-Spanish bilateral meeting, Minister of the Interior and Local Authorities Said Sayoud indicated that curbing the flow of migrants is part of efforts to protect the country's security. These efforts have enabled the deportation of 8,500 irregular migrants to their countries of origin by 2024.⁵ Despite these deportations, large numbers of migrants continue to arrive in Algeria, threatening national security and stability.

Economic repercussions:

Algeria has launched several development initiatives in the Sahel region, aiming to achieve economic cooperation and regional integration. These initiatives include the Trans-Saharan Highway project, linking Algeria with Niger, Chad, Tunisia, and Nigeria, which aims to break the isolation of desert regions, develop trade, and improve the living conditions of the region's inhabitants; the Trans-Saharan Fiber Optic Network project, which aims to develop the digital economy in the Sahel region; and the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline project, which connects Nigeria, Niger, and Algeria to Europe.

¹ Ministry of National Defence- The PNA Operational Report for 2023 Official Statement of MND- 02nd January 2024- https://www.mdn.dz/site_principal/sommaire/actualites/an/2024/janvier/bilan2023an.php

² Ministry of National Defence-Operational report of the PNA during 2024- Official Statement of MND 04th January 2025- https://www.mdn.dz/site_principal/sommaire/actualites/an/2025/janvier/bilan2024an.php

³ Concepcion Anguita-Olmedo- The Convergence of Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in West Africa: Migration Pressure Factors and Criminal Actors- *oc. Sci.* 2025, 14, 447. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14080447>

⁴ Ahmed Mokhtar Lensari- Repercussions of the Sahel crisis: Nigerien families begging in the city of Laghouat in Algeria- To cite this article: Ahmed Mokhtar Lensari (16 Oct 2025): Repercussions of the Sahel crisis: Nigerien families begging in the city of Laghouat in Algeria, *African Identities*, DOI: 10.1080/14725843.2025.2576012

⁵ Zinedine Zedigha revealed that 100,000 illegal immigrants were thwarted in 2024... Saioud: "Algeria does not use the immigration card for blackmail and bargaining," *Al-Massa*, October 21, 2025, available at: <https://urli.info/1jfRL>

Amid diplomatic tensions between Algeria and the Sahel countries and the deteriorating security situation in these nations, obstacles to implementing these economic projects are mounting, particularly given the presence of competing foreign projects, such as the African-Atlantic Gas Pipeline extending from Morocco to Nigeria, and the Moroccan initiative to provide Sahel countries with access to the Atlantic Ocean. Consequently, the geopolitical shifts occurring in the Sahel region are hindering Algeria from achieving its economic objectives and regional integration with the Sahel countries.

• Conclusion

In conclusion, the security and political situation in the Sahel region has undergone significant changes since 2020, with a series of military coups in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, shifting the balance of power in these countries. The new coup authorities have relied on strategies based on expulsion, withdrawal, and the formation of new alliances, exploiting a sovereign discourse to consolidate their rule and gain local legitimacy. More than two years after the last coup in the region (Niger), this strategy has proven ineffective in strengthening the sovereignty of the Sahel countries and ensuring security and stability.

These political and security developments had a negative impact on Algeria and its national security. The results of this study can be summarized as follows:

- A series of military coups in the Sahel region of Africa has led to a geopolitical restructuring of the region.
- This geopolitical restructuring has exacerbated the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, with the region witnessing escalating levels of violence perpetrated by armed groups on the one hand, and violence perpetrated by local forces and the Wagner Group on the other.
- Following military coups, the Sahel region of Africa has witnessed an expansion of terrorist activity within the Sahel countries and its spread to neighboring countries, amid weak border controls and the marginalization of frameworks for intelligence and information cooperation and coordination.
- These developments in the Sahel region have created tensions in relations between Algeria and the Sahel countries, particularly Mali, marginalizing Algeria's role as an active player in the region.
- The strained relations between Algeria and Mali led to the collapse of the 2015 Algiers Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which was considered a fundamental pillar in achieving stability in Mali. The renewed conflict between the Azawad Armed Forces and Malian forces, supported by the Africa Corps (formerly Wagner), has also raised Algeria's previous fears of Tuareg separatism and the infiltration of terrorist groups into the country's borders, which could pose a real threat to Algerian national security.
- The Malian drone's incursion into Algerian territory constitutes a violation of national sovereignty and a serious threat to Algerian national security.
- Security and political developments in the Sahel region, and the marginalization of frameworks for security and military cooperation and coordination, have exacerbated the severity and seriousness of the security threats facing Algeria, particularly illegal immigration, terrorism, and organized crime in all its forms (fuel smuggling, human trafficking, and drug trafficking).

- Algeria faces unprecedented challenges in its regional environment, in terms of their severity, complexity, and intensity, as a result of the geopolitical transformations taking place in the African Sahel region. This transformation has placed Algeria in a state of security fragility and exposed it to serious challenges that are being exploited to increase sources of threat and destabilize it. Indeed, its repercussions will affect all countries and international peace and security.

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