ZFAS
Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik

Check for updates

ANALYSE

The Spread of Jihadism in the Sahel. Part 1

Boubacar Haidara

Abstract Following the occupation of northern Mali by jihadist groups in 2012, the national and international military response failed to counter their influence. Having spread to neighbouring countries of Burkina Faso and Niger, jihadism is now on the doorstep of some countries in the Gulf of Guinea, such as Togo and Benin. This article analyses in three parts the main factors that have been exploited (instrumentalised) by these jihadists groups in the Sahel, a strategy that they could replicate in the countries mentioned above.

Keywords Sahel · Jihadism · Mali · Niger · Burkina Faso · Gulf of Guinea

Wie sich der Dschihadismus in der Sahelzone ausbreitet. Teil 1

Zusammenfassung Nach der Besetzung des Nordens von Mali durch dschihadistische Gruppen im Jahr 2012 gelang es den nationalen und internationalen militärischen Maßnahmen nicht, deren Einfluss zu bekämpfen. Nachdem sich der Dschihadismus auf die Nachbarländer Burkina Faso und Niger ausgebreitet hat, steht er nun vor der Tür einiger Länder am Golf von Guinea, wie Togo und Benin. Der Beitrag analysiert in drei Teilen die wichtigsten Faktoren, die von diesen dschihadistischen Gruppen in der Sahelzone ausgenutzt (instrumentalisiert) wurden – eine Strategie, die sie in den oben genannten Ländern wiederholen könnten.

Schlüsselwörter Sahelzone · Dschihadismus · Mali · Niger · Burkina Faso · Golf von Guinea

✉ Dr. Boubacar Haidara

Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), Pfarrer-Byns-Straße 1, 53121 Bonn, Germany
E-Mail: boubacar.haidara@bicc.de

Les Afriques dans le Monde Laboratory (LAM), Sciences Po Bordeaux, 11 All.
Ausone, 33607 Pessac, France

🎄 Springer

1 Introduction

Since the beginning, researchers and observers of the war in Mali have heard the same explanation several times: when the jihadists arrived in northern Mali from Algeria in the early 2000s, they were a handful and very vulnerable (Guichaoua 2019); only around "300 to 500 people" (Grégoire and Bourgeot 2011, own translation). This is an immediate demonstration of their meteoric development and expansion to the neighbouring countries of Niger and Burkina Faso, and now beyond. Jihadist movements have easily managed to exploit a number of opportunities offered by the Sahelian region, including: the states' difficulty to control their territories; the extreme porosity of the borders, meaning jihadists can carry out criminal activities without hindrance by moving easily from one country to another (Grégoire and Bourgeot 2011; Haidara 2015); demographics with an exponentially growing youth population (Ngom 2021), and lack of work, which represents an inexhaustible pool of fighters for jihadist movements (Haidara and Tounkara 2021). Another major factor is the instrumentalization of old inter-communal conflicts, particularly over access to land and natural resources.

After the crisis spilled over to Burkina Faso, from late 2015 (Guichaoua 2019), an acceleration occurred in 2018, with an increase in incidents in the southwest and the "conflagration" of the east of the country, raising fears of an extension to the coastal countries of the Gulf of Guinea (Tisseron 2019). Côte d'Ivoire [Ivory Coast] quickly experienced its first jihadist attack on March 16, 2016, when a jihadist commando belonging to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) carried out an attack on a beach in Grand-Bassam, injuring 22 people and killing 16, including 14 civilians. This incident had immediately raised the concern of the Ghanaian authorities who – through the National Security Council – already expected the same scenario to be repeated in their country but also in Togo (Le Figaro 2016; Tisseron 2019).

Togo then promptly set up an Inter-ministerial Committee for Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism (CIPLEV) on May 15, 2019 (Amedzenu-Noviekou et al. 2019). But on the night of November 9–10, 2021, an advance post of the defense and security forces deployed in Kpékpakandi (Kpendjal prefecture), in the Savanes region, was attacked without causing any casualties. Six months later, almost to the day, the Jamā'at nuṣrat al-islām wal-muslimīn (JNIM) struck again at the same post, killing eight soldiers and wounding thirteen, a first time occurence in Togo (Gbadamassi 2022). For Benin, the jihadist threat was confirmed on May 1, 2019 (Airault 2019), when two French tourists were kidnapped and their Beninese guide killed in Pendjari Park, on the border with Burkina Faso. Beyond these various armed attacks, other signs for a desire by armed jihadist groups to gain access and establish themselves in Togo and Benin are reportedly multiplying through: the regular passage of armed men, the establishment of logistical networks and the establishment of a presence within local communities (P-KAS 2021).

For a better analysis of the security risks facing Benin and Togo – but also other West African coastal countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana – a retrospective analysis of what happened in the Sahel is essential. The aim of this approach is therefore to identify the factors that enabled the crisis in northern Mali to erupt, spread to the centre of the country, then extend and develop to the other border

countries mentioned above. This will enable us to identify similar situations in Togo and Benin, which could also be exploited by jihadist groups to their advantage. This article aims to analyse the development of Sahelian jihadist groups since the start of the insurgency in northern Mali in 2012, through: their modus operandi, their organizational structure and the way they govern the territories under their control, their relationship with local populations, the various criminal activities providing them with a significant source of income, and by focusing on the various local factors that they have been able to exploit/instrument to their advantage. After taking root in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, it seems increasingly clear today that the coastal countries of West Africa, in particular Benin and Togo, have become the target of Sahelian jihadist groups, in this case the JNIM and the Islamic State in the Sahel (IS), also known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). This research is both the result of fieldwork carried out over several years in northern Mali (Timbuktu), central Mali (Mopti region) and Bamako, and of bibliographical research. The main questions this article seeks to answer are: 1) What are the main factors that have contributed to the development of jihadist groups, and enabled the rapid spread of their sphere of influence and actions to the various Sahelian countries concerned? 2) What are the real risks facing Benin and Togo, and to what extent can the Sahelian experience be useful to them?

2 From the Outbreak of the Crisis in Northern Mali to the Spread to Central Mali

2.1 The Tuareg Rebellion of 2012: Spearheading the Occupation of Northern Mali by Jihadist Groups

Since the independence in 1960, the history of northern Mali has been characterized by recurrent armed rebellions between Tuareg irredentist groups and the central state. Following the waves of drought in the 1970s, many young Tuaregs emigrated to countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Many of them were welcomed in Libya, and obtained Libyan nationality from Colonel Gaddafi, before being inserted into the national army. In March 2011, France launched the Harmattan military operation in Libya, under the command of NATO, to support the armed branch of the Libyan National Transitional Council. It either did not consider or minimized the collateral consequences of such an intervention in terms of destabilization of the region. After Gaddafi's death, these Tuaregs admitted into the Libyan army as auxiliaries invaded the north of Mali heavily armed. From January 2012, they launched a rebellion to claim a secular Tuareg state, in an ill-defined territory they called Azawad (Atallah 2013; Haidara 2015). This was the beginning of the latest Tuareg rebellion, the precursor to a succession of diverse crises.

This widespread crisis situation has resulted in the occupation of the entire north of the country (the regions of Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal, covering 65% of the national territory for only 10% of the population) by armed jihadist groups who have opportunistically used the Tuareg revolt to exploit the weaknesses of the Malian army (Haidara 2015). These include al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the
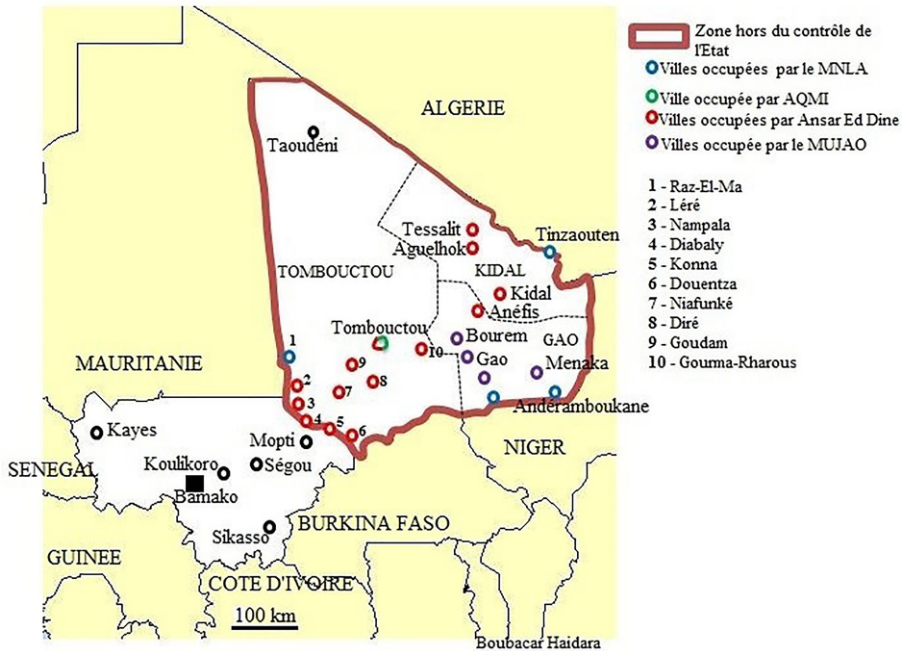
Fig. 1 Towns occupied by the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) and jihadist groups in January 2013 (before the launch of Operation Serval) (Source: own illustration)

Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and *Ansar Dine* (the Defenders of the Faith). A partnership initially linked the two actors, before the jihadists drove the Tuaregs out of several localities they occupied together (Fig. 1).

In this context, at the request of the Malian transitional authorities at the time, the French military operation Serval began on January 11, 2013. It interrupted the progress of jihadist movements towards the south, and allowed the liberation of the three major cities in the north which had been occupied (Savané 2021). But it also led to a displacement of jihadists from urban centers to more difficult-to-access rural centers (Savané 2021), and even beyond the areas they held in 2012 (Guichaoua 2019). The speed with which jihadists have grown is a perfect illustration of their integration into the region's communities, through social and economic porosity between the populations and members of the various armed groups (Haidara 2017; Thiam 2017). Their establishment is the result of a combination of both conjunctural and, above all, structural variables: poverty, poor governance, perceived injustice, land conflict, etc. (Martinez 2019).

2.2 Main Areas of Operation and Organization of Jihadist Groups Operating in Sahel

2.2.1 Central Mali

The regions of Mopti and Ségou represent the central part of Mali. Since 2015, central Mali has become the stronghold of the katiba Macina, a group led by the Fulani preacher Amadou Kouffa (the origin of this and other groups will be explained in the following). The violence perpetrated by this group has dramatically shifted the epicentre of violence in Mali from the northern regions to the central localities, notably Bandiagara, Bankass, Djenné, Douentza, Koro, Tenenkou, Mopti, Macina, Niono (Thiam 2017; Roetman et al. 2020; Haidara 2017, 2021; CESA 2022).

2.2.2 The Tri-Border Area

This area, which corresponds to the Liptako-Gourma, covers parts of northern Mali [Gao, Ansongo], Burkina Faso [Oudalan, Soum, Séno] and West of Niger, region of Tillabéry. Historically, the region is dominated by pastoralist communities, notably the Fulani, but also the Tuareg and Gourma. This area has become the epicentre of violence in the Sahel. Several jihadist groups operate there: whether it is the Burkinabe jihadist group Ansaroul Islam, or other groups fighting under the banner of the JNIM coalition; and others that are rather linked to the ISGS (Beevor 2022; CESA 2022; Ramsamy 2022; Forson 2023).

2.2.3 West of Niger

While jihadist violence in Niger accounts for only 10% of all violence in the region (CESA 2022), there has been a rise in jihadist activity in the West of Niger. The ISGS is the main group operating in the area, controlling Niger's borders with Mali and Burkina Faso. Furthermore, in comparison with the other two countries (Mali and Burkina Faso), violence against civilians is much higher in Niger (ICG 2021; Boukhars 2022). Indeed, the ISGS targets civilians in more than half of its attacks in the area. This is mainly due to targeted communities attempting to resist certain demands of the jihadists (e.g. by refusing to pay the zakat (tax) abusively imposed by the ISGS). The districts of Tillia, Ouallam and Banibangou (region of Tillabéry) have been particularly devastated by the actions of the ISGS. The districts of Gothèye and Torodi (region of Tillabéry) are the only ones where the JNIM operates in western Niger (CESA 2022). The targeting of civilians appears to be a deliberate tactic to intimidate local communities into either cooperating or liberating the area. This gives the jihadist groups more capacity for territorial control.

2.2.4 North-Central Burkina Faso

The area is said to have suffered one of the fastest escalations of violence in the Sahel, led by the katiba Macina, as well as remnants of Ansaroul Islam (Eizenga and Williams 2021; CESA 2022). The violence has reportedly displaced almost 2

million people, who have sought refuge in a camp for displaced people in Kaya, the regional capital and fifth largest city in Burkina Faso. There are also significant gold mines in the region, including at least three industrial mines, and dozens of officially declared artisanal exploitations. These sites represent an important source of revenue for jihadist groups (CESA 2022).

2.2.5 South-West and South-East Burkina Faso

Almost all incidents in south-eastern and south-western Burkina Faso can be attributed to groups linked to JNIM. Since 2019, a surge in violent activity attributable to JNIM has destabilised eastern Burkina Faso along the border with Niger. Since 2021, violence has increasingly focused on the Gourma district. Jihadist groups use the natural parks that extend into neighbouring Niger, Benin and Togo in particular to prepare attacks on these coastal countries (Faivre 2021; P-KAS 2021; CESA 2022).

Three of the five areas mentioned above – namely Central Mali, the tri-border area and North Central Burkina Faso – account for more than half (55%) of the violent events in the region. This underlines the importance of central Mali as a staging ground for attacks on neighbouring countries. ACLED also notes that border localities suffered 65% of the violent incidents counted in 2022.

2.3 The Organisational Structure of Jihadist Groups Operating in the Sahel

Sahelian jihadism is foreign-inspired, having emerged from the "rubble" of the Algerian civil war (Haidara 2015; Pellerin 2020). Even today, many of the jihadist groups are led by "foreigners" (Sahrawis, Algerians, Mauritanians), but are essentially composed of Nigeriens in Niger, Malians in Mali, Nigerians in Nigeria, and Burkinabe in Burkina (Pellerin 2020). The Sahelian jihadist landscape is dominated by two main groups: JNIM and ISGS. It is important to note that since March 2022, ISGS is also known as the Islamic State in the Sahel (EI Sahel).

2.3.1 The Group for Support to Islam and Muslims (GSIM) or (in Arabic) Jamā'at nuṣrat al-islām wal-muslimīn

JNIM, "the largest jihadist force in the central Sahel" (Ayandele and Goos 2021), was founded in March 2017 as a result of the merger of Ansar Dine, katiba Macina, Al-Mourabitoun, and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. They were reportedly already closely linked before their merger, and had already coordinated in various operations (Berthemet 2017; Zerrouky 2017). The JNIM is led by Ansar Dine leader and former member of the Tuareg rebellions in northern Mali, Iyad Ag Ghali. Fulani preacher Amadou Kouffa, founder of katiba Macina, is also an important leader.[1] Several of its leaders have been killed, notably by French forces: Mokhtar Belmokhtar, Djamel

---

[1] 75% of the violence attributed to JNIM is believed to be the work of the katiba Macina, which is predominantly composed of Fulani fighters and is active in central Mali, southern and northern Burkina Faso (Eizenga and William 2021).

Okacha, Ba Ag Moussa, and others. The death of these potential rivals within the coalition have greatly contributed to establishing Iyad's authority.

Each of JNIM's four katibas ("battalions" in Arabic) already had their respective strongholds in northern and central Mali: Ansar Dine in northern and eastern Kidal, katiba Macina in Mopti and Segou regions, katiba al-Furqan in northern and western Timbuktu, and katiba al-Mourabitoun in southeastern Timbuktu and northern Gao. Since 2017, JNIM has increased its influence in these areas, expanded into neighbouring Burkina Faso, and sought to establish itself in parts of southern and western Mali and western Niger (ICG 2021). In addition, the coalition has carried out attacks in northern Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, and Togo, as a demonstration of its intention to expand into the Gulf of Guinea countries. JNIM's initial objectives are very clear: the withdrawal of foreign forces from Mali and the Sahel as a whole, and the establishment of Islamic rule, first in Mali, but also throughout the Sahel (ICG 2021).

2.3.2 Islamic State in the Greater Sahara

On the other hand, we have ISGS, created on May 15, 2015 from a split in al-Mourabitoun caused by the allegiance of one of its commanders, Adnane Abou Walid al-Sahraoui, to the Islamic State (France24 2015). Its main focus is in the Ménaka region of Mali and extends into the Liptako-Gourma area (Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso border area), and now even beyond (Pellerin 2020). Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the former "caliph" of the Islamic State, officially recognised this allegiance on October 30, 2016. As with other Sahelian armed groups, jihadist or any others, the ISGS is also part of a broadly community-based dynamic: "At present, ISGS fighters are divided between two katibas (battalion): one composed mainly of Daoussahak and the other of Fulani" (Bensimon 2019, own translation).

2.4 Divergence in Views and Processes Between JNIM and ISGS

After its emergence in 2015, ISGS existed in an uneasy alliance with the various al-Qaeda factions in the region. Contrary to the usual rule (practiced elsewhere) that al-Qaeda and the Islamic State fight each other in the territories they share, the Sahel has been spared such jihadist fighting for several years, in part due to the personal relationships between jihadists of rival groups (Nsaibia and Weiss 2020). Remember that the origin of the ISGS traced back to the former Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which is also a splinter group that left al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2011.

ISGS and JNIM are separated by many differences, although the two competing movements on the ground have often had opportunistic alliances in the past. The fundamental difference between the two groups is based primarily on their relationship with the local population: "The first practices brutal predation, in contrast to the second's tactic of rooting",[2] which rather requires collaboration with the local

---

[2] See statements by General Bruno Guibert, former Commander-in-Chief of the Barkhane force (L'Express 2018).

population. "They can develop alliances of circumstance, but also compete for the control of territories or the criminal economy, by bringing tribal logics into play" (Macé 2020, own translation). When their interests diverge, they can go as far as direct confrontation.

The year 2019 marked a radical break between the two groups, which went to open war after years of relative "peaceful" coexistence (Bensimon 2020; Nasr 2020; Nsaiba and Weiss 2020). The rise of the Islamic State in Sahel, the defection of fighters from the katiba Macina to the ISGS in the Mopti region, and the announcement of the opening of negotiations between the Malian government and the JNIM are the main elements that provoked the start of hostilities (Weiss 2020; Pellerin 2020; Airault 2022). There is also the issue of payment of pastoral royalties to local elites in the Niger Delta, which the JNIM approves, but which ISGS strongly opposes in the name of equality as inscribed in Islamic law.

3 Basis for and Dynamics of Wider Spread of Jihadist Groups in the Sahel

The expansion of jihadism from the north to the center of Mali has intensified inter-ethnic tensions, with entire communities (particularly the Fulani) accused, rightly or wrongly, of being its "armed arms", making inter-community relations at times highly conflictual and deadly (Thiam 2017; Haidara 2017; Ba-Konaré 2018). Convinced by the fact that Fulani are accomplices and collaborators of the jihadists, the army has repeatedly been implicated in violent exactions against them. In addition, a plethora of community militias have also been created, each community wanting to protect itself from the other. The increased circulation of arms, due to the prevailing insecurity, combined with the state's limited capacity to fully invest in its territory, means that conflicts explode and are settled by arms without the legal forces having had the time or the will to intervene.

3.1 Instrumentalisation of Conflicts Over Land and Access to Resources

The spread of jihadism in central Mali also appeared as a result of JNIM leader Iyad Ag Ghaly's desire to strategically reorganize Malian jihadism, relying on local communities through a distribution of "areas of influence": Kidal to the Tuaregs, Timbuktu to the Arabs (Malians), and the Mopti-Sévaré region to the Fulani (Airault and Marchais 2015). He achieved his goal very easily by effectively instrumentalizing the frustrations of the Fulani communities, through old conflicts which were either poorly resolved or not resolved, and which are linked in particular to access to land and natural resources. Fulani herders, dissatisfied with a government model that favors agricultural expansion at the expense of pastoralism, have reportedly been seduced by the opportunistic pro-pastoral rhetoric of jihadist leaders (Benjaminsen and Ba 2018).

3.2 Social Structure as a Factor in Conflict Analysis

Other authors (Brossier et al. 2018; Thiam 2017) explain that the young Fulani who joined the ranks of jihadist leader Amadou Kouffa belong to the lower social classes. Their enrolment is said to have been less for religious reasons and more to seek protection from Kouffa; a way to restore social justice. They explain how simple frustrations with the social structure and hierarchy within the Fulani community turned into an intra-ethnic war. Indeed, Fulani societies in the Niger Delta, and in other Sahelian countries, are structured according to a statutory hierarchy, composed of different groups that are generally endogamous. The lineages dominating Fulani society politically are those of the "nobles" or "free" in the literal sense (in the Fulani language, they are called *dimo* in the singular; *rimɓe* in the plural). These upper social classes have under their dominance the "caste" categories (*ñeeño* in the singular; *ñeeɓe* in the plural); and the descendants of slaves (singular: *maccuɗo* or *dimaajo*; and plural: *maccuɓe* or again *rimayɓe*) (Brossier et al. 2018; Fay 1999).

Since the early 19th century, the fertile and floodable lands of the Inner Niger Delta have been controlled by a "noble" (or "free") Fulani lineage, and more precisely by *a terroir* chief whose traditional title is *jowro* (plural: *jowro'en*) (Kintz 1985; Barrière and Barrière 2002). The jihadist leader Amadou Kouffa – who set out to lighten the weight of perceived archaic and constraining traditions that weigh on the "oppressed classes" – then appeared to many young Fulani as their "defender" and "liberator" (Sangaré 2016; Thiam 2017; de Bruijn and Both 2017; Brossier et al. 2018). It would therefore be the desire for social elevation that motivated some of the recruits of Amadou Kouffa's group – all from marginalized lineages – to join the katiba Macina (Thiam 2017).

After jihadist groups had established a strong foothold in central Mali, the geographical expansion of their military actions into Burkina, and (to a lesser extent) Niger was impressive (Guichaoua 2019). Violence by jihadist groups in Burkina Faso, Mali and western Niger increased by 70% in 2021, and Burkina alone appeared to be the country where 58% of all violent events in the Sahel now take place (ACSS 2022). The situation has deteriorated further in 2022, according to the recent OCHA report (2023). We learn that between January 2021 and November 2022, the number of attacks in southern Burkina Faso increased by 100%, with a peak in February 2022. This highlights the extent to which the West African Sahel represents an eminently favorable breeding ground for jihadist groups, in large part because of the porous borders that allow them to conduct criminal activities unhindered (Grégoire and Bourgeot 2011). These conditions allowed jihadism to spread to Burkina Faso, which in turn became a target for attacks beginning in late 2015.

References

ACSS – Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2022, 24 Jan). Surge in militant islamist violence in the Sahel dominates Africa's fight against extremists. https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mig2022-01-surge-militant-islamist-violence-sahel-dominates-africa-fight-extremists/. Accessed 28 Dec 2022.

Airault, P. (2019, 7 May). Bénin, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire... les cellules terroristes cherchent à s'implanter dans l'Afrique de l'ouest côtière. l'Opinion. https://www.lopinion.fr/international/benin-togo-ghana-cote-divoire-les-cellules-terroristes-cherchent-a-simplanter-dans-lafrique-de-louest-cotiere. Accessed 18 Aug 2023.

Airault, P. (2022, 22 Sep). L'Etat islamique s'est refait une santé au Sahel. L'Opinion. https://www.lopinion.fr/international/letat-islamique-sest-refait-une-sante-au-sahel. Accessed 30 Dec 2022.

Airault, P., & Marchais, I. (2015, 30 Aug). Au Mali, en territoire peul, la naissance d'un futur Boko Haram. L'Opinion. http://www.lopinion.fr/edition/international/mali-en-territoire-peul-naissance-d-futur-boko-haram-56453. Accessed 30 Dec 2022.

Amedzenu-Noviekou, P. D. D. N., Handy, P.-S., Ella Abatan, J., & Matongbada, M. (2019, 30. Okt.). Le Togo à l'épreuve de la menace terroriste. ISS. https://issafrica.org/fr/iss-today/le-togo-a-lepreuve-de-la-menace-terroriste. Accessed 8 Dec 2022.

Atallah, R. (2013). La révolte des Touaregs et le coup d'État au Mali. *Air and Space Power Journal, 4*(1), 66–79.

Ayandele O. (J.), & Goos, C. (2021, 20 May). Mapping Nigeria's kidnapping crisis: players, targets, and trends. https://acleddata.com/2021/05/20/mapping-nigerias-kidnapping-crisis-players-targets-and-trends/. Accessed 15 Jan 2022.

Ba-Konaré, D. A. O. (2018, 22 Oct). Entre faux djihadistes et faux chasseurs traditionnels, les civils piégés dans le centre du Mali. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/entre-faux-djihadistes-et-faux-chasseurs-traditionnels-les-civils-pieges-dans-le-centre-du-mali-105181. Accessed 5 Dec 2022.

Barrière, O., & Barrière, C. (2002). *Un droit à inventer. Foncier et environnement dans le delta intérieur du Niger (Mali).* Paris: IRD.

Beevor, E. (2022). Le JNIM au Burkina Faso. Un acteur stratégique de la criminalité. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Burkina-Faso-JNIM_NEW-web.pdf. Accessed 5 Mar 2023.

Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2018). Why do pastoralists in Mali join jihadist groups? A political ecological explanation. *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 46*(1), 1–20.

Bensimon, C. (2019, 27 Nov). La zone des "trois frontières", point brûlant de la guerre au Sahel. Le Monde. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/11/27/la-zone-des-trois-frontieres-point-brulant-de-la-guerre-au-sahel_6020752_3212.html. Accessed 17 Aug 2023.

Bensimon, C. (2020, 28 Jun). Le Sahel, nouveau champ de bataille de la guerre entre Al-Qaida et l'organisation Etat islamique. Le Monde. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2020/06/28/le-sahel-nouveau-champ-de-bataille-de-la-guerre-entre-al-qaida-et-l-organisation-etat-islamique_6044481_3212.html. Accessed 5 Mar 2023.

Berthemet, T. (2017, 3 Sep). Trois groupes djihadistes sahéliens s'unissent. Le Figaro. https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2017/03/09/01003-20170309ARTFIG00328-trois-groupes-djihadistes-saheliens-s-unissent.php. Accessed 5 Mar 2023

Boukhars, A. (2022, 18 Feb). Trajectoires de la violence contre les civils par les groupes islamistes militants d'Afrique. Centre d'études stratégiques de l'Afrique. https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/trajectoires-de-la-violence-contre-les-civils-par-les-groupes-islamistes-militants-dafrique/. Accessed 21 Dec 2022.

Brossier, M., Jourde, C., & Cissé, M. G. (2018). Relations de pouvoir locales, logiques de violence et participation politique en milieu peul (région de Mopti). Rapport du projet Stabiliser le Mali. Centre FrancoPaix en résolution des conflits et missions de paix. https://dandurand.uqam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018_05_Rapport-Brossier-et-al_CFP.pdf. Accessed 17 Aug 2023.

Bruijn, M. de, & Both, J. (2017). Youth between state and rebel (dis)orders: contesting legitimacy from below in Sub-Sahara Africa. *Small Wars & Insurgencies, 28*(4–5), 779–798.

Centre d'études stratégiques de l'Afrique (2022). Cinq zones de violence des groupes islamistes militants au Sahel. https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/cinq-zones-de-violence-groupes-islamistes-militants-au-sahel/#zone1. Accessed 10 Dec 2022.

Eizenga, D., & Williams, W. (2021). Le puzzle formé par le JNIM et les groupes islamistes militants au Sahel. Centre d'études stratégiques de l'Afrique. https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASB-38-FR.pdf. Accessed 8 Dec 2022.

Faivre, A. (2021, 17 Dec). Au Burkina Faso, le jihad entre dans le champ. https://www.liberation.fr/international/afrique/au-burkina-faso-le-jihad-entre-dans-le-champ-20211217_REVAM6T3M5CBHISLYM6PNGW2SA/. Accessed 22 Dec. 2022.

Fay, C. (1999). Pastoralisme, démocratie et décentralisation au Maasina (Mali). In A. Bourgeot (ed.), *Horizons nomades en Afrique sahélienne: sociétés, développement et démocratie* (pp. 116–136). Paris: Karthala.

Forson, V. (2023). Seidik Abba: "Comme en Afghanistan, les objectifs n'ont pas été atteints au Sahel". Le Point. https://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/seidik-abba-comme-en-afghanistan-les-objectifs-n-ont-pas-ete-atteints-au-sahel-30-01-2023-2506688_3826.php#11. Accessed 21 May 2023.

France24 (2015, 14 May). Jihadist leader in Sahara pledges allegiance to IS group. https://www.france24.com/en/20150514-north-african-islamists-vow-allegiance-islamic-state-is-Belmokhtar. Accessed 17 Aug 2023.

Gbadamassi, F. (2022, 17 Jun). Togo: comment le jihadisme est devenu un risque sécuritaire dans ce petit pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest. France Télévisions. https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afrique/burkina-faso/togo-comment-le-jihadisme-est-devenu-un-risque-securitaire-dans-ce-petit-pays-d-afrique-de-l-ouest_5199874.html. Accessed 5 Jan 2023.

Grégoire, E., & Bourgeot, A. (2011). Désordre, pouvoirs et recompositions territoriales au Sahara, *Hérodote, 142*(3), 3–11.

Guichaoua, Y. (2019, 24 Feb). Comment le djihad armé se diffuse au Sahel. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/comment-le-djihad-arme-se-diffuse-au-sahel-112244. Accessed 22 Dec 2022.

Haidara, B. (2015). *Les formes d'articulation de l'islam et de la politique au Mali*. Dissertation, Université Bordeaux-Montaigne.

Haidara, B. (2017, 23 May). Conflits armés aux relents de guerre civile dans le centre du Mali. LAMenparle. https://lamenparle.hypotheses.org/606. Accessed 9 Jan 2023.

Haidara, B., & Tounkara, M. K. (2021). Conflits intercommunautaires dans le centre du Mali: genèse, et propositions de sortie de crise. In V. Rouamba-Ouédraogo (ed.), *Crise sécuritaire dans les pays du G5 Sahel. Comprendre pour agir* (pp. 121–139). Paris: L'Harmattan.

ICG – International Crisis Group (2021, 28 May). Niger: éviter l'aggravation des violences contre les civils à Tillabéri. Briefing N°172 / Africa https://www.crisisgroup.org/fr/africa/sahel/niger/b172-murder-tillabery-calming-nigers-emerging-communal-crisis. Accessed 17 Aug 2023.

Kintz, D. (1985). Archétypes politiques peuls. *Journal des africanistes, 55*(1-2), 93–104.

Le Figaro (2016, 15 Apr). Ghana et Togo, prochaines cibles d'attaques? https://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2016/04/15/97001-20160415FILWWW00365-ghana-et-togo-prochaines-cibles-d-attaques.php. Accessed 28 Dec 2022.

L'Express (2018, 20 Apr). "Face a Barkhane, un ennemi aux avois". https://www.lexpress.fr/monde/afrique/face-a-barkhane-un-ennemi-aux-abois_2001343.html. Accessed 17 Aug 2023.

Macé, C. (2020, 27 Jan). A Sokolo, l'escalade de la terreur du jihad sahélien. https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2020/01/27/a-sokolo-l-escalade-de-la-terreur-du-jihad-sahelien_1775573/. Accessed 28 Mar 2022.

Martinez, L. (2019). La déconstruction des États-nations: la revanche des jihadistes. In L. Martinez, *L'Afrique du Nord après les révoltes arabes* (pp. 143–164). Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Nasr, W. (2020, 4 Jun). Sahel: la fin de l'exception entre Al-Qaïda et l'organisation État islamique. France24. https://www.france24.com/fr/20200604-sahel-la-fin-de-l-exception-entre-al-qa%C3%AFda-et-l-organisation-%C3%A9tat-islamique. Accessed 20 Dec 2022.

Ngom, M. (2021, 22 July). Démographie et insécurité croissantes dans le Sahel: trois scénarios d'avenir. iD4D. https://ideas4development.org/demographie-et-insecurite-croissantes-dans-le-sahel-trois-scenarios-davenir/. Accessed 18 Aug 2023.

Nsaibia, H., & Weiss, C. (2020). The end of the Sahelian anomaly: how the global conflict between the Islamic State and al-Qa'ida finally came to West Africa. *Combatting Terrorism Center*, *13*(7), 1–14.

OCHA (2023). Burkina Faso. Rapport de situation. https://reports.unocha.org/fr/country/burkina-faso/. Accessed 20 Apr 2023.

Pellerin, M. (2020, 28 Jan). Qui sont les djihadistes en Afrique de l'ouest? Ifri. https://www.ifri.org/fr/espace-media/lifri-medias/djihadistes-afrique-de-louest. Accessed 6 Jan 2023.

P-KAS – Promediation-Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (2021). North of the countries of the Gulf of Guinea: The new frontier for jihadist groups? https://www.kas.de/documents/261825/13432629/North+of+the+countries+of+the+Gulf+of+Guinea+-+The+new+frontier+for+jihadist+groups.pdf/97cbceda-85c1-33fc-45fd-50f8ddaaa0ab?version=1.2&t=1625138447487. Accessed 6 Jan 2023.

Ramsamy, L. (2022, 11 Aug). Mali: la zone "des trois frontières", épicentre de la violence djihadiste. LaCroix. https://www.la-croix.com/Monde/Mali-zone-des-trois-frontieres-epicentre-violence-djihadiste-2022-08-11-1201228548. Accessed 6 Dec 2023.

Roetman, T. J., Migeon, M., & Dudouet, V. (2020). Les groupes armés salafi-djihadistes et la (dés)escalade des conflits Le cas d'Ansar Dine au Mali. Berghof Foundation. https://berghof-foundation.org/library/les-groupes-arm%C3%A9s-salafi-djihadistes-et-la-d%C3%A9sescalade-des-conflits-le-cas-dansar-dine-au-mali. Accessed 28 Sep 2023.

Sangaré, B. (2016, 20 May). Le centre du Mali: épicentre du djihadisme?, Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité. GRIP. https://www.grip.org/le-centre-du-mali-epicentre-du-djihadisme/. Accessed 5 Jan 2023.

Savané, L. (2021). Trajectoire d'un mouvement "djihadiste local": le cas du Front de Libération du Macina. In V. Rouamba-Ouédraogo (ed.), *Crise sécuritaire dans les pays du G5 Sahel. Comprendre pour agir* (pp. 75–100). Paris: L'Harmattan.

Thiam, A. (2017, 19 Apr). Centre du Mali: enjeux et dangers d'une crise négligée – étude et vidéo HD. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. https://www.hdcentre.org/fr/updates/nouvelle-publication-centre-du-mali-enjeux-et-dangers-dune-crise-negligee/. Accessed 6 Jan 2023.

Tisseron, A. (2019, Mar). Jihadist threat. The Gulf of Guinea States up against the wall. Thomas More Institute. https://institut-thomas-more.org/2019/03/04/jihadist-threat-%E2%80%A2-the-gulf-of-guinea-states-up-against-the-wall/. Accessed 17 Aug 2023.

Weiss, C. (2020, 31 Jan). Jihadists in central Mali pledge allegiance to new Islamic State leader. Long War Journal. https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2020/01/jihadists-in-central-mali-pledge-allegiance-to-new-islamic-state-leader.php. Accessed 12 Jan 2023.

Zerrouky, M. (2017, 4 Mar). Les groupes djihadistes s'unissent au Sahel. https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2017/03/04/les-groupes-djihadistes-s-unissent-au-sahel_5089337_3210.html. Accessed 17 Aug 2023.