



Emerging regional (Forced) Migration Patterns in Africa

REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL RESPONSES TO COUPS AND CONFLICT: THE GROWING INSTABILITY OF FORCED AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN WEST AFRICA.

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OUTLINE



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INTRODUCTION (1)



- Taking into account the fifteen countries of the West African States plus Mauritania, Chad and Cameroon, the population of this region is expected to reach 430 million in 2025;
- In addition, around 65% of this population is under the age of 25, compared with 30% in developed countries;
- It is currently estimated that a total of 38.8 million people suffer from food insecurity, 7.6 million of whom have already crossed the emergency threshold and are in need of immediate food aid.

INTRODUCTION (2)

In West Africa, one person in seven is food insecure, one child in five is malnourished, and there are 4.76 million refugees or internally displaced people. Even more worryingly, food security forecasts for the first quarter of 2023 indicate a slight deterioration for Burkina Faso, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Faced with this situation, we can ask ourselves: What are the leading causes of coups d'état and what solutions can be found?

1. CAUSES OF COUPS AND CONFLICTS

1.1. ROOT CAUSES: THE CONFLICTS LANDSCAPE

- Variables that sustain conflicts are exogenous factors that prolong or reproduce cycles of violent conflict and give them an independent dynamic;
- In some cases, these variables and the immediate causes overlap. Some of the variables that are likely to sustain conflict in West Africa are:
 - the spread of small arms and light weapons;
 - organised crime and criminal networks;
 - inappropriate or failed methods of conflict management;
 - corruption and the exploitation of security operations for personal gain;
 - inappropriate external interventions;
 - and strategic impasses.

1. CAUSES OF COUPS AND CONFLICTS

1.1. ROOT CAUSES: THE CONFLICTS LANDSCAPE

There are two types of security: population-based security and state-based security.

- Population-based (transnational) West African security complex is due, among other things, to :
 - ✓ The mobility of its population: it's a key factor when considering West Africa as a transnational security complex;
 - ✓ Borders which are porous, unmonitored and often unrecognised by local populations: They are however, a source of resilience for the people of the Sahel;

1. CAUSES OF COUPS AND CONFLICTS
1.1. ROOT CAUSES: THE CONFLICTS LANDSCAPE



- Regional security complex based on states:
- The United Nations Secretary-General highlighted the "links between criminal syndicates involved in drug trafficking and related criminal activities and non-state armed groups active in the region", drawing attention to the activities of terrorist organisations and other militant groups. In the view of the African Union Peace and Security Council, the links between terrorism, drug trafficking and cross-border crime give armed and criminal groups the "capacity for regeneration" through the ability of these groups to "thrive by taking advantage of the region's vulnerabilities".

1. CAUSES OF COUPS AND CONFLICTS

1.1. ROOT CAUSES: THE CONFLICTS LANDSCAPE

- ✓ Interventions triggered by insecurity, armed conflict and terrorism have increased the focus of security efforts in West Africa, contributing to the consolidation of West African states into a regional security complex;
- ✓ Approaches focusing on military intervention in the fight against terrorism and insecurity in the Sahel have proved insufficient to overcome the structural dimensions that underpin all the countries in the region. Such approaches are increasingly provoking resentment among Sahelian populations and helping to consolidate the influence of non-state actors in security matters. With their focus on military action, these narrow external interventions are not likely to alleviate the security concerns of either the state or the population.

1. Causes of coups and conflicts

1.1. Root causes: The conflicts landscape

By extending national security concerns to include those arising from West Africans' perceptions of their own insecurity, it may be possible to prioritise issues of existential concern and lead to a qualitative revision of policy and programme responses. This would also lead to a reconfiguration of interests and partnerships in West Africa.

1. CAUSES OF COUPS AND CONFLICTS

1.2. STRUCTURAL CAUSES

Structural causes

- The following structural factors are cross-cutting in nature and come into play in all the regions or countries studied in the Sahel:
 - Environmental stress ;
 - Historical grievances ;
 - Fractured process of state consolidation;
 - Demographic explosion;

1. CAUSES OF COUPS AND CONFLICTS

1.3: IMMEDIATE CAUSES

Immediate causes sustaining armed conflicts and insecurity in the Sahelian region:

- Migration ;
- Food insecurity ;
- Politicization of the army ;
- Rise of jihadism and criminal networks ;
- Regional Islamist links;
- Regional and cross-border dimension of conflicts and insecurity;
- Corruption and socio-economic deprivation;
- Global dynamics and the role of external actors.

- Misunderstanding the interrelationships and links between populations of West African has prevented the formulation of appropriate policies for the region, not to mention the absence of statistics and other reliable indicators;
- Transnationalism in West Africa predates recent conflicts and insecurity in the region, but is often treated only as an attribute of the movement of armed groups and criminal networks, which facilitates conflict and insecurity. This is partly the result of powerful actors' influence who define West Africa in terms of the existential threats they face;
- The responses to what is a regional and transnational crisis are profoundly national in character.

II. RESPONSES

II.1. PERSPECTIVES

- Strategies for West Africa are proliferating, with little synergy, cooperation or coordination;
- The humanitarian approach provides a possible solution and an exemplary framework that could respond to the crisis in West Africa;
- Too much emphasis on the fight against terrorism and crime and on militarised responses by powerful external actors, for whom these are considerable threats, overshadows the threats to human security in West Africa that have existed for centuries;
- If they are to be fully effective in the face of these realities, the African states and institutions of the region must rethink their institutional frameworks and programmes in order to adapt them to the lived experience of their populations.

II.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Implications for policy and programme interventions in West Africa:

- Maintenance of the status quo ;
- Limited presence and reduced interaction with places of conflict and insecurity;
- Artificial separation of humanitarian response from other responses;
- Impact on programmes;

CONCLUSION ET RECOMMANDATION (1)

- The African Union and regional institutions, as well as the United Nations, should adopt a genuinely region-based approach with a transnational focus, in order to bring about convergence between the two security complexes in West Africa;
- Governments along the relevant Sahel corridors should draw lessons from their experience at the regional level and use them for programmes that work at the national level, in order to adapt successful national programmes for application in regional and transnational spaces;
- All agencies attempting to respond to conflict and insecurity in West Africa should see their relationships with unofficial sub-national stakeholders as part of the transnational nature of West Africa.

CONCLUSION ET RECOMMANDATION (2)

- The United Nations, the African Union and regional organisations should reorient their strategies for the Sahel towards regional organisation (targeting African states) and transnational implementation (targeting Sahelian populations across national borders) of policies and programmes;
- Operational agencies active in the Sahel should reorganise their operational presence to bring it into line with trends in population movements in the region;
- There is a need for a comparative analysis of existing policies in West Africa and the Sahel.



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