

# The international and regional multilateral response To counter-terrorism in the African Sahel

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## ملخص:

تعد قضية مكافحة الإرهاب العابر للحدود بمثابة أحد أبرز القضايا ذات الطبيعة المركزية في إطار منطقة الساحل الأفريقي، والتي استحوذت على قدر كبير من الاهتمام من قبل الأطراف الدولية والإقليمية نظراً لأن انتشار الإرهاب بات يشكل أحد أبرز التحديات الأمنية الرئيسية الموجهة لاستقرار البيئة الداخلية في هذه المنطقة، وذلك انطلاقاً لما يشكله من جملة من التهديدات والمخاطر للكيان القانوني للدولة الوطنية وواقع التنمية المستدامة على نحو ما هو وارد في إطار أجندة أفريقيا ٢٠٦٣.

وترتيباً على ما سبق تسعى هذه الدراسة لمعالجة الإشكالية المتعلقة بمدى فعالية وتأثير أطر الاستجابة متعددة الأطراف (المشتركة) بشأن منع ومكافحة هذه الظاهرة على المستويين الدولي والإقليمي في الساحل الأفريقي ولا سيما في ظل تنامي التداعيات متعددة الأبعاد المصاحبة لهذه الظاهرة على مختلف المستويات، وقد تم تقسيم هذه الدراسة إلى محاور رئيسية، والتي ركزت على تناول مفهوم مكافحة الإرهاب، وواقع ومسار تطور الظاهرة الإرهاب في الساحل الأفريقي، وأطر الاستجابة الدولية والإقليمية متعددة الأطراف لمكافحة هذه الظاهرة، قبل أن تختتم الدراسة بقراءة تقييمية ورؤية مستقبلية بشأن تفعيل هذه الأطر.

وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن أطر الاستجابة الدولية متعددة الأطراف للتعامل مع ظاهرة الإرهاب في الساحل الأفريقي شهد تقدر كبير من التنامي بشكل تدريجي ولا سيما مطلع العقد الثاني من الألفية الجديدة، والتي تبلورت بالأساس من خلال الأدوار المرتبطة بكل من الأمم المتحدة والاتحاد الأوروبي، كما تطورت أطر الاستجابة الإقليمية متعددة الأطراف بشكل تدريجي خلال نفس الإطار الزمني تقريباً، ولكنها كانت أقل فعالية من نظيرتها على المستوى الدولي، وقد طرحت الرؤية المستقبلية للدراسة ضرورة التركيز على عدة جوانب رئيسية؛ والمتمثلة في تجاوز الاقتراب التقليدي القائم على التركيز على المدخل الأمني في مواجهة الإرهاب في الساحل الأفريقي، إتاحة الموارد المالية والتكنولوجية والبشرية والمعلوماتية لمواجهة هذه الظاهرة، فضلاً عن تعزيز التعاون المشترك بين دول منطقة الساحل لتقليل الاعتماد على الخارج.

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## Abstract

The Combating cross-border terrorism considered one of the most important issues in the African Sahel, which attracted a great attention by international and regional parties, because of the spreading of terrorism has become one of the main security challenges facing the stability of the internal environment in this region, consequently This study seeks to address the research problem related to the effectiveness and impact of multilateral response frameworks of preventing and combating Terrorism at the international and regional levels in the African Sahel, especially in light of the growing multidimensional impacts of this phenomenon at various levels.

Accordingly, this study was divided into four parts in addition to introduction and conclusion; the first presents the theoretical framework, the second explains the reality and course of the development of terrorism in the African Sahel, and the third & fourth parts provides the frameworks of the international and regional multilateral response to combat terrorism in African Sahel.

Finally this study conclude that the international multilateral response to combat terrorism in the African Sahel witnessed a great attention, especially at the beginning of the second decade of the new millennium, which was crystallized mainly through the United Nations and the European Union, also the Regional multilateral response to combat terrorism in the African Sahel developed gradually on the same period, in order to crystallize a common African Situation toward combating of the terrorism in this region,, so its required to strengthen joint African responses to reduce dependence on the outside on this matter.

**Keywords:** combating terrorism – Multilateral response – African Sahel



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## I. Introduction

Combating cross-border terrorism considered one of the most important issues in the African Sahel region<sup>1</sup>, which attracted a great attention by international and regional parties, as the spread of terrorism has become one of the main security challenges facing the stability of the internal environment in this region, because it poses a set of threats and risks to the legal entity of the national state and the reality of sustainable development as contained in the framework of Africa's Agenda 2063, and its effects also go beyond the geographical borders of this region and affect the European countries located in the north of the Mediterranean sea, especially the growing phenomenon of illegal migration, and this is reinforced by the growing cross-border nature of terrorist groups in this region, as their activities are not limited to the political borders of the national state only, but rather have a cross-border nature, which has resulted in the emergence of many challenges related to not only the deterioration of the security stability, but also the increase in the spreading of organized crimes (smuggling of drugs, smuggling of weapons, ..).

### • Research Problem

This study seeks to address Research Problem related to the effectiveness and impact of multilateral (joint) response frameworks of preventing and combating Terrorism at the international and regional levels in the African Sahel, especially in light of the growing multidimensional impacts of this phenomenon at various levels, and although These frameworks have been implemented on two main levels; The first is individual responses adopted by some international and regional parties, while the second is multilateral (collective) responses through joint coordination. However, the analytical perspective of this study will focus primarily on the second level, this is due to considerations related to the growing reliance on these frameworks significantly since the beginning of the second decade of the new millennium.

In light of this research problem explained above, the study raises **a central Question**: What is the nature of the international and regional multilateral response to combating terrorism in the African Sahel region, and in order to answer this question, the study raises a **number of Sub-Questions**, which are as follows:



1. What is the concept of combating terrorism according to international and regional organizations?
2. What is the reality and development of terrorism in the context of the African Sahel?
3. What are the frameworks for the international and regional multilateral response to combat terrorism in the African Sahel?
4. How effective is the joint international and regional response in dealing with the threat of terrorism in the African Sahel?
5. What is the future of counter-terrorism efforts in the African Sahel?

- **Research Objectives**

This study seeks in the light of the research problem and the various related sub- questions to achieve a set of Main Objectives focused on defining the concept of combating terrorism in accordance with international and regional organizations, identifying the reality and development of terrorism phenomenon in the African Sahel region, shedding light on the frameworks of the international and regional multilateral response, evaluate the effectiveness of this response in preventing and combating this phenomenon, as well as proposed set of future frameworks to develop the effectiveness of this response.

- **Research approach**

This study will use the national interest approach as an analytical framework, which defines the national interest, according to Hans Morgenthau, as “survival in the sense of protecting the physical, cultural and political identity of the state against any aggression by other states.”, This approach identifies the different levels of national interests of states and governing their relations and interactions with other states in the international community. There are many classifications of levels of interests among those concerned with this concept according to many criteria including; the nature (political, economic, Security, social) interests, the Time (permanent, non- permanent) interests, the Importance (vital, extreme important, less important) interests, and the geographic scope (global, regional) interests.

This approach is influential in understanding and analyzing the frameworks of the international and regional multilateral response to combat terrorism in the African Sahel, in light of the fact that these responses are mainly governed by considerations of the interests that



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drive the various parties, and accordingly this study was **divided into four parts** in addition to introduction and conclusion; the first presents the theoretical framework, the second explains the reality and course of the development of terrorism in the African Sahel, and the third & fourth parts provides the frameworks of the international and regional multilateral response to combat terrorism in African Sahel.

## II. Theoretical framework

The issue of combating terrorism has witnessed a great international attention since the beginning of the first decade of the new millennium, and specifically since the terrorist attacks on the United States of America on September 11, 2001, which led to launch an international campaign led by USA during the era of former US President "George W. Bush" called "Global War against Terrorism" (GWOT), whose goal was not only to pursue terrorist groups in various regions of the world, but also to adopt diplomatic, financial and other measures to deprive terrorists of funding or provide them with a safe haven, and The US military interventions in Afghanistan in October 2001 and Iraq in March 2003 considered part of this war<sup>2</sup>.

This campaign was accompanied by the growing attention to issue of combating terrorism within the United Nations, the Security Council took strict measures in the face of this phenomenon, based on its realization that terrorism will continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security in the new millennium, and adopted resolution on combating terrorism, which request from all Member States of the United Nations, separately and collectively, to not allowing safe haven for terrorists or financial support and to cooperate in bringing them to justice, the different security council resolutions stresses the need for adopting Preventive measures of counter-terrorism in line with states' international legal obligations, including human rights law, as well as the need to ensure that non-state actors - such as terrorist groups - are not able to gain access to weapons of mass destruction<sup>3</sup>.

In the same context, UN General Assembly adopted the "Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" on September 8, 2006, which is a joint strategic and operational approach to countering terrorism. It came in the form of a resolution and an action plan was attached to it. This strategy based on four pillars. The first is to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, which includes countering the attraction of



terrorism, preventing and resolving conflicts, promoting dialogue and understanding, as well as promoting economic and social development.

While second pillar relates to the measures of preventing and combating terrorism, which includes law enforcement and border control activities, activities to prevent attacks through weapons of mass destruction, activities to combat the financing of terrorism, and activities to protect key infrastructure, And the third relates to the measures of building states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism, in addition to strengthen the role of United Nations in this regard, this pillar includes facilitating the integrated implementation of the global strategy to combat terrorism, facilitating the implementation of international legal frameworks, providing legal assistance, and the last one relates to measures of promoting the respect of human rights and the rule of law, this pillar includes training and capacity building regarding human rights law enforcement and the prevention of terrorism, support for victims of terrorism, beside enhancing the major human rights frameworks<sup>4</sup>.

This strategy considered the governing and regulating framework for the pillars of combating terrorism in many multilateral institutional frameworks, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which identified a number of strategic focusing areas of counter-terrorism activities; Strengthening the implementation of the international legal framework for combating terrorism and enhancing international legal cooperation in criminal matters related to terrorism, Countering violent extremism and radicalization, Preventing and suppressing the financing of terrorism, Countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes, Strengthening dialogue and cooperation on counter-terrorism issues especially Through partnerships between the public and private sectors as well as civil society and the media, strengthening national efforts to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 of 2004 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, enhancing security of travel documents, as well as protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in context of counter-terrorism measures<sup>5</sup>.

On the African continental level, we find that the issue of combating terrorism began to receive a great attention since the early nineties of the twentieth century, when the Organization of African Unity (African Union currently) adopted a resolution in 28th ordinary session held in (Dakar) in Senegal in 1992, which focused on strengthening cooperation



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and coordination among African countries in order to combat the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism, the organization also adopted the "Declaration of Conduct Rules for Inter-African Relations" in the 30th Ordinary Session held in (Tunisia) in June 1994, on which the organization rejected all forms of extremism and terrorism, and considered them as criminal acts, also stressed the need to strengthen cooperation regarding combating terrorism<sup>6</sup>.

The Regional interesting in this phenomenon gradually grew, especially in the phase following the terrorist attacks against the US embassies in "Dar es Salaam" in Tanzania and "Nairobi" in Kenya in 1998, in that context the Organization of African Unity adopted the "Convention to Prevent and Combat Terrorism" in (Algeria) on July14, 1999 and entered into force on December6, 2002, which is the main legal reference and the governing framework for defining the issue of combating terrorism in Africa, and although it did not adopt a theoretical definition of combating terrorism, but it indicated in its fourth article to the need to adopt legitimate measures by African countries in order to prevent and combat terrorist acts in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and national legislations for state members.

This measures includes prevent states' territory from being used as a base for planning, organizing, carrying out terrorist acts or for the participation or cooperation in such acts in any way, developing and strengthening methods of monitoring and detection of plans or activities aimed at the illegal cross- borders, transportation, importing, exporting, stockpiling and use of weapons, ammunition, explosives and other materials and means that are used to commit terrorist acts. It also includes developing and strengthening the methods of control and monitoring of land, sea and air borders and customs and immigration checkpoints in order to anticipate any infiltration by individuals or groups involved in planning, organizing and carrying out terrorist acts.

In addition to strengthening the protection and security of persons, diplomats, consular missions in accordance with relevant conventions and rules of international law, enhancing the exchange of information and experiences on terrorism and establish databases to collect and analyze information and data on terrorist elements, groups, movements and organizations, as well as adopting all necessary measures to prevent the establishment of terrorist support networks in any form<sup>7</sup>.



In this context the African Union has adopted set of other frameworks that, in turn, have completed the full definition of preventing and combating terrorism at the African level, especially on the institutional level, which are represented in the “Plan of action of the African union high-level inter-governmental meeting on the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa”, that was issued in (Algeria) during the period (11-14) September 2002, which identified three mechanisms to prevent and combat terrorism in Africa, namely African Union the Peace and Security Council, the African Union Commission and the African Center for Research and Studies on Terrorism<sup>8</sup>.

Beside the adoption of the "Protocol to the OAU convention on the prevention and combating of terrorism" in Maputo on July8, 2004, which emphasized on the central responsibility of the African Union Peace and Security Council regarding the co-ordinationof continental efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, with the assistance of African Union Commission and sub-regional organizations<sup>9</sup>, in addition to the “The African model anti-terrorism law” which was approved by the African Union Summit in (Malabo) in July 2011, which aims to assist African countries in implementing all the provisions included within the framework of the various international and continental mechanisms of combating terrorism<sup>10</sup>.

### **III- Reality and development of terrorism in the African Sahel**

The African Sahel region is one of the most prominent regions that suffers from the growing threats and risks of trans border terrorism in Africa, and this is indicated by the Global Terrorism Index Report for the year 2020, which ranked Boko Haram as the second most dangerous and bloodiest terrorist group in the world and the first in sub-Saharan Africa in In 2019<sup>11</sup>, along with the “Mujahideen Youth Movement” in East Africa, the Taliban movement, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), it also indicated that the countries of this region were greatly affected by terrorist acts and activities, as Nigeria ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> globally during the past five years Mali and Burkina Faso came in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> ranking respectively, while Niger and Chad came in 24<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> places respectively, while Mauritania, according to this report, is the least affected country among the countries in the region, As it came in (135) place<sup>12</sup>.

The growth of terrorism in this region linked to a number of structural problems, perhaps among them the high poverty rates, which range





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between (30-40%) according to World Bank statistics in 2019, and the decline in economic growth rates in the countries of the region, reaching in Chad (-0.9 %) Mali (-1.6%), Mauritania (-1.5%), Burkina (0.2%), and Niger (1.5%) according to World Bank statistics for the year 2020. The countries of this region according to the Human Development Index for the year 2020, are among the list of the ten lowest ranked countries except for Mauritania, which comes in (157) place globally, for example, Niger is in last place (189) in the world, and Chad, Mali and Burkina Faso come in (187), (184) and (182) places respectively<sup>13</sup>, in addition to the decline in the rankings of these countries in the ranks of "Fragile States Index" for the year 2021. For example, Chad and Nigeria are ranked 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> respectively out of a total of (179) country at the global level<sup>14</sup>.

The roots of terrorism in this region go back to the nineties of the twentieth century, specifically in Algeria, where the "Armed Islamic Group" (GIA) emerged within the framework of the internal conflict in the state, from which the "Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat" split and was formed independently in 1998 as a result of internal divisions regarding the strategy of attacking civilians, which was then called "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb" (AQIM) and announced its accession to Al-Qaeda in 2006, and the emergence of terrorist groups continued in this region, and the most prominent of this groups was "Boko Haram", which was called "Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna li-Da'wa wa- l-Jihad ", that appeared in 2002 and became active at the operational level after the killing of its leader (Muhammad Yusuf) in Nigeria in 2009, and the "Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa" (MUJAO) in 2010.

The number of terrorist groups has grown significantly in this region in the phase following the collapse of the former Libya regime led by President "Muammar Gaddafi" in February 2011. Most of them spread in the southern part of Algeria, eastern Mauritania, northern Mali and southwestern Niger. This was reinforced by the conditions of internal instability in Mali following the beginning of the national conflict resulting from the outbreak of a rebellion by the Tuareg in the north of the country and the occurrence of a military coup in March 2012. Among these groups "Ansar al-Din" that appeared during 2011, "Al-Mourabitoun" that appeared in January 2013, "Islamic State in the Greater Sahara" (ISGS) in 2015, and "Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin" (JNIM) and others<sup>15</sup>.



The growing negative effects of these groups on the reality of the national state and sustainable development are reinforced by the continuation of the conditions of internal instability – especially military coups - in a number of countries in the Sahel region during the years 2021 and 2022. In Mali, a military coup took place in May 2021, which is the second in less than a year; Where a previous military coup took place in August 2020, and in Chad, former President “Idriss Deby” was assassinated during confrontations with the rebels in the north of the country, after he won the sixth presidential term that took place on April 2021, and his son “Mohamed Idriss Deby” took power through the presidency of The Transitional Military Council within the framework of the transitional period specified for it (18) months<sup>16</sup>.

Niger also witnessed an unsuccessful coup attempt, after the announcement of the victory of President “Mohamed Bazoum” in the presidential elections on March 31, 2021, and Guinea Conakry witnessed a military coup in September of the same year, which overthrew former President “Alpha Condé” who came to power since December 2010, and the wave of military coups continued to escalate in this troubled region in 2022, as a military coup took place in Burkina Faso on January 24, 2022, which led to the overthrow of former President “Roch Marc Christian Kaboré”, and a coup attempt occurred in Guinea-Bissau In early February of the same year, but it did not succeed in overthrowing the ruling president “Umaro Sissoco Embaló”<sup>17</sup>.

#### **IV- The international multilateral response to counter-terrorism in the African Sahel**

This aspect of the study focuses on shedding light on the frameworks of the joint response to combat terrorism in the African Sahel region at the international level, whether at the level of state actors or non-state actors (non-governmental organizations), as follows:

##### **1) Frameworks for the Joint response to counter-terrorism at the state level**

###### **A) Coalition Sahel**

It serves as a new international political, strategic and operational framework to combat terrorist groups in the Sahel by providing a collective response through the combination of actions led by the five Sahel states and their international partners, whether they are countries or organizations that wish to contribute in this regard, whether this



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contribution related to security, political or development issues<sup>18</sup>, and it was announced in the summit held in France(Pau)on January 13, 2020 by heads of state (France, Burkina Faso, Chad , Mali, Mauritania, Niger) with the participation of a group of personalities representing some international organizations, most notably the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the European Council, the High Representative of the European Union, the Chairman of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the Francophone Organization.

This alliance is based on four main pillars that complement each other, as follows<sup>19</sup>:

- **Combating terrorism:** aims to combat armed terrorist groups and confront the unstable security situation and the possibility of threats spreading outside the borders of the five Sahel countries, by coordinating all efforts led by the African armies and the African Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5s) with international partners especially France, the United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the "Takuba" Task Force, with priority given to the Tri-Border Area (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso), to create the necessary conditions for stabilization and development.
- **Strengthening the capabilities of the armed forces of the five Sahel countries:** aims to coordinate all defense capacity-building measures for the five Sahel countries, especially with regard to providing equipment and training to the national armed forces of the Joint Force of the Five Sahel States (FC-G5s), including the armed forces charged with police tasks, This is part of the “Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel” (P3S), which is an integral part of the International Alliance for the Sahel, launched by France and Germany during the G7 summit in France (Biarritz), in the presence of the then President of the G5 Sahel and the President of Burkina Faso "Roch Marc Christian Kaboré" in August 2019, which aims to identify security needs and increase efforts in the areas of defense and internal security<sup>20</sup>.
- **Supporting the return of the power of the state and administrations in the region:** aims to coordinate the various training modalities and equipment needed for the national security forces and the African Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5s), rebuilding the legal capacities and local



administration of the five Sahel countries, giving priority to the most vulnerable areas in order to help in strengthening the sovereignty of the state.

- Development aid: aims to respond to the challenges related to employment, poverty, education, health care and infrastructure in the five Sahel countries. The development aid provided to these countries is coordinated through two main bodies<sup>21</sup>. The first is the Sahel Alliance, which is concerned with receiving mainly international contributions, and its members implement several priority investment programs (PIP) including the Emergency Development Program in Fragile Cross-Border Areas. For example, the members of the coalition provided aid worth (1.8) billion euros, including (266) million Euro to finance the Emergency Development Program on December 6, 2018, while the second is the Community of Sahel States (G5), which was created in 2014, and its Executive Secretariat identifies activities and ensures good coordination between actions, distribution of roles and geographical areas<sup>22</sup>.

### **B) Takuba Task Force (TTF)**

It is part of the Sahel coalition and was officially launched on March 27, 2020, with an initial mandate of (3) years, and the objective of its establishment is to confront terrorist groups, especially the Islamic State in The Sahara in the “Liptako Gourma” region, which is the triple border area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, and providing advice and assistance to the Malian armed forces in their war against terrorism in the Sahel in coordination with other international actors including the United States of America and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Mission to achieve Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA), in addition to training and equipping forces in the Sahel region<sup>23</sup>.

The political statement establishing it was adopted by (11) European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom), along with Mali and Niger, and it actually began in July 2020, and it was supposed to reach full operational capacity in early 2021, but this was not achieved due to the delay in military contributions by some countries, and the philosophy of this force is



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based on the involvement of European countries in the military-security strategy in Mali and the Sahel region as a whole<sup>24</sup>.

It consists of The military of eight European countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden).in addition to France, which commands its own operations, The total number of these forces is about (600), noting that France participates with about (300) members of the Special Forces, also Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom support the initiative politically, but they have not committed to contributing military force, it operates through three military bases for the armed forces in Mali, located in the cities of (Gao, Ansugo, Menaka) and (N'Djamena) in Chad.

The launch of (TTF) came within the framework of French efforts to reduce the numerical strength of its military presence in the Sahel region from (5100) soldiers distributed over the five Sahel countries to (2500) soldiers<sup>25</sup>, by ending the "Operation Barkhane", which began in August 2014 and came after "Operation Serval", which was published in January 2013, although this force was supposed to be deployed during the first quarter of 2022, but that did not happen after France announced that it had withdrawn all its military elements From Mali and redistribute them in other countries in the Sahel region within a period ranging from (4-6) months, within the framework of the "European-African Summit" held in the Belgian capital "Brussels" in February 2022<sup>26</sup>.

This decision comes in light of a number of main reasons, perhaps the most prominent of which is the gradual deterioration of France's relations with the ruling regime in Mali, especially after the military coup in August 2020, when Mali took a decision to expel the French ambassador to it at the end of January 2022, after the latter described the ruling transitional military council. As "illegitimate"<sup>27</sup>, which led to the escalation of popular protests in the face of the French presence, as it came to be seen as a form of neocolonialism, especially in light of its ineffectiveness in dealing with security threats during nearly ten years in the Sahel region. In addition, France will review its military presence in the Sahel region, especially in light of the waste of resources, both in terms of economic and human presence<sup>28</sup>.

This French decision affected the effectiveness of the role of the (TTF) as some European countries participating in its



framework withdrew, such as Estonia and Sweden, while other countries received explicit requests from the Malian authorities not to work in the country, as happened with Denmark and Germany, or to do so in Severe operational restrictions, and European Commission Vice-President Josep Borrell formalized the decision to suspend all EU military training programs in the country on April 11, 2022, which means the decline of Western European roles in this regard in the long run<sup>29</sup>.

## **2) Frameworks for the joint response to combat terrorism at the level of non-state actors**

It focuses on joint efforts to combat terrorism in the African Sahel at the level of intergovernmental organizations, specifically the European Union and the United Nations, as they are the main actors in this regard. This can be addressed as follows:

### **A) European Union**

It is considered one of the international actors in the field of combating terrorism in the African Sahel, as it adopted an approach based on a balance between security issues - including counter-terrorism, of course - and development in this region, which was embodied through the adoption of "Security and Development Strategy in the Sahel" in March 2011 to serve as the main framework for the work of the European Union to assist countries in the Sahel-Saharan region, both individually and collectively, to address key security and development challenges.

The European Union's foreign affairs expanded the scope of the strategy to include (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) in March 2014. The Sahel Regional Action Plan (RAP) was approved - based on the requests of the EU foreign ministers - to implement this strategy on April 20, 2015 and was revised and updated at the beginning of June 2016, which in turn was based on four main priorities: Preventing and combating extremism, creating appropriate conditions for youth, migration and mobility, border management and combating illegal trafficking and transnational organized crime<sup>30</sup>.

The European Union launched an alternative strategy known as "European Union's Integrated Strategy" in the Sahel on April 16, 2021 to develop a more ambitious partnership within the Sahel region, which is based on the political dimension and principles of governance and



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mutual accountability with The partner countries in the Sahel region<sup>31</sup>, as a result of severe criticism directed at “Security and Development Strategy in the Sahel”, including giving priority to short-term European security objectives at the expense of political considerations, in order to try to control African immigration levels and prevent the flow of terrorism from the Sahel to Europe, in addition to the failure of the action plan 2015 in addressing the shortcomings associated with the strategy.

In general, it can be said that the European Union supports the five Sahel countries through three main tracks<sup>32</sup>:

- Political Partnership

The European Union is an influential political partner for the five Sahel countries, which was evident in the establishment of regular dialogues between the two parties, where the Deputy High Commissioner for Security Policy and Foreign Affairs of the European Union held annual meetings with the foreign ministers of the five Sahel countries to enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest such as development and Governance in fragile areas, improving security, as well as combating terrorism and illegal trade, the European Union also participates strongly in the peace process in Mali, and is the guarantor of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed in 2015, and announced the provision of an amount of (500) thousand euros to the monitoring body of the peace agreement.

- Development Cooperation

The European Union considered the largest partner for development cooperation in the African Sahel region, having provided support worth about (8) billion euros during the period (2014-2020) through several instruments such as the "European Union Trust Fund for Africa" (EUTF for Africa), Which aims to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement, irregular migration and contribute to better migration management. In this context, a number of programs have been implemented in (26) partner countries across three regions in Africa (Sahel and Lake Chad, Horn of Africa, and North Africa)<sup>33</sup>, this instrument contributed to allocating about (1.865) billion euros in the Sahel region. In addition to the above, there is another instrument called “Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace” (ICSP), which was established in 2014 with the aim of supporting security initiatives and



peace building measures, within which the European Union has funded several regional programs in the Sahel with an estimated value of about (14) million euros since 2015<sup>34</sup>.

The European Union is also a major supporter of the "Sahel Alliance", which was launched on July 13, 2017, in cooperation with Germany and France, which is a mechanism to enhance coordination between partners to support stability and long-term development efforts in the five Sahel countries. It includes (13) development partners, whether at the bilateral level (Germany, France, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Italy) or multilateral (European Union, World Bank, African Development Bank, United Nations Development Program, Investment Bank The European Union), in addition to (11) observer members. The first session of the General Assembly of this alliance was held in Mauritania (Nouakchott) in conjunction with the summit held by the heads of state of the G5 Sahel on February 25, 2020<sup>35</sup>.

This alliance focuses on six priority areas (sectors), namely: education and youth employment, agriculture, rural development and food security, energy and climate, governance, decentralization and basic services, and internal security, its members have financed more than (873) projects in the Sahel region since 2019, This is with (763) ongoing projects at a cost of (16.9) billion euros and (110) projects under appraisal at a cost of (3.1) billion euros. The main sectors of intervention are decentralization and basic services by (31%), agriculture and rural development and food security by(22%), as well as energy by (18%). The alliance signed a partnership protocol with the Group of Five Sahel States (G5) in Niger (Niamey) on October 30, 2018, in order to strengthen joint efforts to respond to crises<sup>36</sup>.

- Supporting security and stability

It takes place through two main levels; The first relates to providing financial contributions to support regional efforts to combat terrorism in the Sahel, which is done through the African Peace Facility, which is the main financial mechanism of the European Union to support cooperation with Africa in the field of peace and security Since its establishment in 2003 by providing support to African peace support operations in the Sahel region, the European Union Commission has provided, through this facility, about (115) million euros to the Joint Force of the Five Sahel States (FC-G5s) from August 2017 to date. It





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also provided support to the "Joint Multinational Task Force" to combat Boko Haram, estimated at (50) million euros during the period (1 July 2016 - 31 December 2020), in order to support some strategic priority areas represented in peace, security and governance<sup>37</sup>.

The second level is the EU-led security initiatives in the Sahel, as EU launched three missions related to security and the common defense policy: the EU civilian crisis management missions in Mali and Niger, and "European Union Training Mission" in Mali (EUTM), in addition to the deployment of "EU Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell"(RACC) for the Sahel in Mauritania (Nouakchott), This can be explained as follows:

- European Union Training Mission Mali (EUTM)

It serves as the military pillar of the European Union's strategy in Mali, and it consists of about (700) soldiers from (25) European countries, including (22) EU member states (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden), in addition to three Non -EU countries, namely Georgia, Moldova and Montenegro.

It was already published on February 20, 2013 at the request of the President of the Republic of Mali on December 24, 2012, and its first mandate was approved by the Council of the European Union by Resolution of January 17, 2013, which defined the structure and objectives of the mission, It has been delegated five times and the duration of each mandate is two years, with the exception of the first and last mandates, As the first mandate for it extended for a period of (15) months, while the last mandate extended from May 18, 2020 until May 18, 2024, which is the first time that the mandate has been extended for four years.

The mission's objectives, in accordance with its recent mandate, were to contribute to improving the capabilities of the Malian armed forces, maintaining the progress achieved since 2013, enhancing political stability and improving the security situation in Mali by supporting the implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreement signed in June 2015, supporting the restoration of state control and sovereignty law throughout Mali, consolidating and improving the operational capabilities of G5 Sahel Joint Force, and strengthening



regional cooperation to counter common security threats, particularly terrorism and illegal trafficking.

This mission was based on four pillars in order to achieve these goals, which are training the military units in Mali, advising the Malian armed forces at all levels, contributing to the improvement of the military education system in schools up to the ministerial level, and providing advice and training to the headquarter of G5 Sahel Joint Force, This mission has been exercising its tasks under the command of German General "Jochen Dior" since July 7, 2021, who is the sixteenth commander of the European Union forces in Mali, also it presented the first course to the military staff on August 6, 2014, while the first course was given to the staff of the Community of Sahel States on September 25, 2017<sup>38</sup>.

- European Union Civil Crisis Management Mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali)

It was launched on January 15, 2015 at the official invitation of the Malian government to assist the Internal Security Forces in reasserting the authority of the state, following the rebellion that took place in the north of the country and resulted in a military coup in 2012. The mission is located in the capital (Bamako), and it consists of (180) elements; (48) elements from Mali and (132) elements from European countries, The structure and activities of the mission have been modified to suit the operational context and the approach of European regionalism in the Sahel, and its mandate was renewed again in the years (2017, 2019 and 2021), and its last mandate extends from January 11, 2021 until January 31, 2023, with a budget allocation exceeding About (89) million euros for a period of two years, and the mission is under the command of the Commissioner-General of Police "Herve Valhaut"

The mission's main priorities, according to its recent mandate, are improving governance and combating impunity, redeploying the Internal Security Forces and restoring the state and civilian governance, as well as supporting the transitional authorities and the Internal Security Forces in securing the elections scheduled for 2022. There are three tracks for this mission's operations; the first is to support structural capabilities by advising Malian internal security forces and related departments to implement security sector reform in Mali, while the second is to



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strengthen operational capabilities in multiple areas including counter-terrorism and organized crime, border management and good governance, rule of law and counter-terrorism, Impunity, management and leadership, and intelligence techniques, while the third is to promote ethical standards for internal security forces, enhance respect for human rights and gender equality, build trust between security forces and the population, and prevent behavioral deviations by internal security forces and agencies inspection<sup>39</sup>.

- European Union Civil Crisis Management Mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger)

It was published in 2012 in order to achieve stability in Niger and the Sahel region by strengthening the internal security sector and its capabilities in combating serious security threats, and its mandate was renewed every two years until the fifth mandate from October 1, 2020 until September 30, 2022, and it is located in the capital of Niger (Niamey), Its numerical strength amounts to about (185) individuals, including (120) international experts, and sixteen European Union countries contribute to this mission. It has established a permanent field office for it in (Agadez) to implement its mandate in the northern region of Niger<sup>40</sup>.

The main activities of this mission are to provide training in key sectors including forensics, tactical and technical intervention, advise the internal security forces on how to design and organize courses, help them to work together and coordinate their work, and also qualify the personnel of these forces to provide training themselves, in addition to providing equipment such as (Maps of remote areas, human resource programmes, ..), and support for the review of Niger's law on irregular migration and associated organized crime<sup>41</sup>.

The mission's activities are implemented according to four main pillars; which are training, guidance, strategic advice, and equipment delivery<sup>42</sup>. also it provides training in (15) areas such as criminal analysis, drug control, arms and human trafficking, human resources, and professional intervention techniques, about (19,000) internal security personnel and the Nigerian authorities have been trained since 2012, and the mission has shifted its support from individual training to training of trainers in order to transfer knowledge and experience to Nigerian personnel since 2018<sup>43</sup>.



- Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell (RACC)

Its origins go back to the establishment of “Regional Coordination Cell” (RCC) by the European Union, which is based in “EUCAP Sahel Mali” on June 20, 2017, the main objective of which is to identify and bridge the gaps in cross-border cooperation in the Sahel region as well as to organize Training courses for the five Sahel countries, it included seven internal security and defense experts at the mission headquarters and seven other experts attached to the European Union delegations in the five Sahel countries, Its establishment comes as an attempt to regionalize the European Union missions concerned with the implementation of the Common Security and Defense Policy in the Sahel region.

On February 18, 2019, the Council of the European Union agreed to change its name later to “Regional Consultative and Coordination Cell” (RACC), and it also changed the command and control structure by increasing the number of its experts and transferring it from (Bamako) in Mali to (Nouakchott) in Mauritania. Its main objective is to strengthen the regional and national capacities of (G5), particularly by supporting the activation of the components of the joint force of the African Sahel States (FC-G5S) and the police through strategic advice<sup>44</sup>.

## **B) United Nations**

Its role has been crystallized mainly through the “United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali” (MINUSMA), which is one of the ongoing six UN peacekeeping missions in Africa out of twelvemissions at the global level. This mission was established under Resolution No. (2100) of the UN Security Council on April 25, 2013, in the context of the next phase of a rebellion by the Tuareg in northern Mali, which led to a military coup that overthrew former President (Amadou Toumani Toure) on March 22, 2012, which was followed by a period of internal instability in the country<sup>45</sup>, and therefore this mission was assigned tasks related to supporting the political processes in the country, implementing a number of tasks related to the security aspect, and supporting the transitional authorities in order to implement the transitional road map and achieve stability in the country.

Some other tasks were added to the mandate of this mission under Resolution No. (2164) of the UN Security Council on June 25, 2014, which are mainly to support security and stability and protect civilians,



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support national political dialogue and reconciliation, contribute to the re-establishment of state authority, rebuild the security sector, as well as promote and protect of human rights in the country. The headquarters of this mission is located in the capital of Mali (Bamako), and its budget during the period (July 2021-June 2022) is about (1,262,194,200) dollars<sup>46</sup>.

The strength of this mission reached about (17609) elements in April 2022; consisting of (3384) civilians, (1722) police elements, (483) staff officers, (11820) military elements, and (200) volunteers, but It is noticed that the numerical strength decreased significantly by the end of the immediately following month (May 2022) to reach (14029) elements, and the total number of the elements of this mission increased compared to 2016, when it was about (13,107) elements, With regard to contributing forces, whether military or police, to this mission, Chad comes at the top of the largest African countries contributing military forces in May 2022, with a contribution of about (1,430) elements, while Senegal comes at the head of the largest African countries contributing units and police elements, reaching with a contribution of about (325) elements during the same previous date<sup>47</sup>.

Although this mission is a peacekeeping mission, it has been mandated to provide support to the African Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5s), which was officially launched by the five Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) on July 2, 2017, and it includes about (5,000) elements in accordance with Resolution (2391) issued by the UN Security Council on December 8, 2017, This support includes consumables necessary for life (fuel, water), the use of engineering materials and equipment, in addition to the Mission's engineering enabling units needed to assist this force in preparing its operational bases in Mali, this logistical and operational support is included in a technical agreement between The United Nations, the European Union and the five Sahel countries<sup>48</sup>.

As a result of some of the existing challenges that, in turn, reduce the scope of benefit and support provided to this force through the mission, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, "António Guterres" presented three options to the UN Security Council to overcome them in June 2020; The first is the establishment of a United Nations support office to be funded from the assessed contributions of Member States, and the second lies in the establishment of a United Nations support



office to be funded from voluntary contributions through a trust fund, while the third is to expand the mandate granted to this mission so that it operates Within the five coastal countries<sup>49</sup>.

## **V-TheRegional multilateral response to counter-terrorism in the African Sahel**

This aspect of the study aims to shed light on the actual reality of the various multilateral response frameworks initiated and implemented by the African countries in the African Sahel to confront the threats and risks of transnational terrorist groups, as follows:

### **1) Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)**

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is one of the joint regional efforts to confront Boko Haram group, which is one of the transnational terrorist groups in the African continent, specifically in the West African region, as it began practicing its terrorist operations against the central government in Nigeria after the killing of its leader ( Muhammad Yusuf) in 2009, and declared jihad against the government and the United States of America in 2010 at the hands of its leader, "Abubakar Shekau". Although this group focused and intensified its operations in the context of northeastern Nigeria, it has carried out terrorist attacks in some of Nigeria's regional neighbors such as Chad, Cameroon and Niger since 2014, and this group has been ranked as the second most dangerous and bloodiest group in the world and the first in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa in 2019 according to the Global Terrorism Index issued in 2020<sup>50</sup>.

The origins of this force go back to 1994, when it was established by Nigeria to eliminate transnational banditry within the framework of the Lake Chad Basin and to facilitate freedom of movement across the northeastern border of Nigeria. Although this force initially consisted only of Nigerian army forces, it worked in liaison and coordination with the security agencies of member states within the framework of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC)<sup>51</sup>, and Its headquarters were stationed in the city of "Baga" in the Nigerian state of "Borno". This force witnessed a boost by 1998, when it became a multinational force by including forces from Chad, and it was mandated at this stage to face the common cross-border security challenges within the framework of the



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Lake Chad Basin. The establishment of this force led to changing the course of events and the unstable security situation in this region until 2009, before the emergence of Boko Haram on the surface of events, which led to the deterioration of the security situation again.<sup>52</sup>

The scope of this force mandate was strengthened again in April 2012 to include counterinsurgency and sabotage. In March 2014, the defense ministers and chiefs of staff of the Lake Chad Basin Commission countries in "Yaoundé" adopted a resolution on the establishment of a multinational force to achieve peace and security in the region, as a result of the deterioration of the regional security situation in the Lake Chad region and the territorial control of Boko Haram in northwestern Nigeria and an increase in the diffuse impact of violence in Nigeria's regional neighbors since the beginning of 2014<sup>53</sup>.

The (MNJTF) was actually formed based on a decision issued by the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) held in Niamey, Niger on October 7, 2014<sup>54</sup>, and it was published after a decision was issued by the African Peace and Security Council at its meeting no. (484) held in the Ethiopian capital, "Addis Ababa" on January 29, 2015 regarding support for the efforts of the countries of the Commission and Benin in this regard, and its operations have already begun on July 30, 2015. The time mandate related to its deployment was issued for a period of (12) months by the African Peace and Security Council, which recommended that the total number of it be about (7500) elements of military, police and civilian personnel, and its numerical strength has witnessed a gradual increase, as it rose to reach about (10) Thousands of members in the framework of the meeting of the African Peace and Security Council held on March 3, 2015, Then it rose again to reach about (11,150) personnel, within the framework of the meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of the countries of the Commission participating in this force and Benin in August 2015. The total strength in its last form of this force is about (10) thousand military elements<sup>55</sup>.

(MNJTF) includes the member states of the Lake Chad Commission (Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon) in addition to Benin as a non-member state of the Commission. Nigeria contributes the largest part of this force and has been given leadership throughout its work, and its headquarters Within the Chadian capital (N'Djamena), the scope of work of this force includes four main sectors: "Mora" in Cameroon, "Baga-



Sola" in Chad, "Baga" in Nigeria, and "Diffa" in southwestern Niger. This force operates under the command and direct authority of the Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and the African Union -which is a strategic and technical partner in cooperation with the Executive Secretariat of the Commission- contributes to raising the effectiveness of operations related to this force.

There are many programs or mechanisms through which the African Union provides support to this force, which are represented in; The Mission Support Team (MST), which is responsible for planning, prioritizing, managing and coordinating additional support from the African Union and other partners to the force, It also contributes to facilitating the access of integrated services to the force, such as finance, communications, logistics, information system and other forms of support necessary to implement the mandate given to this force. The Information Communication technology (ICT) unit concerned with ensuring the availability of internet service and communication between the force headquarters and its affiliated sectors.

In addition to this is the Procurement Unit is concerned with providing logistical support by providing the requirements and needs for the work of the force, it also prepares and implements formal contractual agreements with service providers. The Finance Unit, which mainly focuses on the day-to-day management of the African Union's financial contribution to the force, and the preparation of reports and other informational documents that may be needed by the financial department at the African Union headquarters in this regard. Moreover, the Civilian Component, which implements the civilian dimension of the force's mandate, contributes to the development of strategic guidance documents needed to ensure priority is given to civilian issues such as the protection of civilians.

And also, the Human Rights Unit, which monitors the human rights situation in the areas of responsibility concerned with this force and prepares reports thereon, It also supports the training of military staff officers on human rights issues, raises awareness of the rules of conduct necessary to protect human rights and prevent violations, and coordinates with agencies or other bodies concerned with respect for human rights. Finally, The Humanitarian Liaison Unit, which is concerned with establishing relations between the force and the parties providing humanitarian aid, as it coordinates and communicates with these parties





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on all relevant humanitarian issues. It also supports the civil and military coordination mechanism necessary for the exchange of information between the force and the various parties. It facilitates the delivery of humanitarian aid<sup>56</sup>.

The mandate given to (MNJTF) was to carry out several main tasks of creating a safe environment within the areas affected by the activity of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, and facilitating the implementation of stabilization programs by the countries participating in this force, including the recovery the full state authority, the return of refugees and displaced persons, the facilitation of humanitarian operations and the distribution of aid to the population within the framework of the areas affected by the activity of Boko Haram, command of military operations in order to prevent the expansion of the activities of the Boko Haram group, the prevention of the transfer of weapons and logistics to it, As well as carrying out specific actions in the areas of human rights, information, media and intelligence<sup>57</sup>. This force works in the framework of coordination and close cooperation with some international partners at the strategic and technical levels, through the so-called "Coordination and Communication Center" (CCL), led by the United Kingdom, France and the United States of America, and it also works in the framework of partnerships with some international organizations, including the United Nations. The European Union and the African Union<sup>58</sup>.

In the context of strengthening the regional capacities concerned with confronting the threat of Boko Haram in the affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin countries, the Lake Chad Basin Commission has adopted the "Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience" (RSS) within the framework of The Ministerial Council of the Commission on August 30, 2018, which was approved by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and aimed to provide a comprehensive regional approach to address the root causes of limited development, violent extremism and conflict within the Lake Chad region.

The scope of this strategy is focused on eight target areas in four member states: three Nigerian states (Borno, Yobe, Adamawa), "Diffa" region in Niger, two provinces in Chad (Lac, Hajar Lamis), and the North and Far North regions of Cameroon, and it is based on nine main strategic pillars of intervention linked to each other, which define the broad perspective of the strategy's work and the objectives to achieve it, which



are: political cooperation, security and human rights, disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals related to the Boko Haram group, humanitarian aid, Governance and social contract, Socio-economic recovery and environmental sustainability, Education, learning and skills, Preventing violent extremism and peace building, As well as empowerment and inclusion of women and youth. Although the responsibility for implementing this strategy rests with the Commission, it is the result of extensive consultations by experts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the African Union Commission and relevant agencies and programs of the United Nations, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)<sup>59</sup>.

The “Regional Stabilization Facility” (RSF) was established on the sidelines of the Second Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum held in (Niger) on July 18, 2019 in order to facilitate the implementation of this strategy, This facility is considered as a financing mechanism through mobilizing an estimated budget of about (100) million dollars to support intervention activities within the framework of the four affected countries (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria). In addition, it was developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with the support of some international institutions such as the European Union and the African Development Bank as well as some countries such as Germany, Sweden, Britain and the Netherlands.

This facility is based on four main pillars of intervention within the framework of the strategy, which are governance and social contract, socio-economic recovery and environmental sustainability, preventing violent extremism and building peace, and empowerment and inclusion of women and youth. And divided into two types of components, and the first is represented in the national windows in the four affected countries, which aim to achieve immediate stability within (18) months, within the framework of some targeted activities and areas (enhancing community security and safety, restoring basic infrastructure and providing basic services, providing employment opportunities for families in affected communities), while the second is the regional window, which aims to strengthen the capacity of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to implement the strategy, enhance cross-border cooperation and coordination, and assist in the development of regional action plans and coordination mechanisms<sup>60</sup>.

## **2) The Joint Force of the Group of Five of the Sahel (FC-G5S)**



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The Joint Force of the Group of Five of the Sahel was officially launched by the five Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger) during the Sahel Summit in (Bamako) in Mali on July 2, 2017, in order to confront the growing terrorist threats in this region, and It has been mandated in accordance with the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union issued on 13 April 2017, for a period of (12) months for a period of (12) months<sup>61</sup>. This mandate was renewed several times, the latest of which was the renewal for a period of (12) months starting on July 13, 2021<sup>62</sup>.

The UN Security Council, in its session No. (7979) held on June 21, 2017, also approved Resolution No. (2359) on the deployment of this force within the regions of the African Sahel, in order to combat the threat of terrorism and cross-border crime within the framework of this region<sup>63</sup>. Based on a French initiative, the Council also adopted Resolution No. (2391) on December 8, 2017 to provide operational and logistical support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five Sahel States through the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Mali (MINUSMA)<sup>64</sup>.

The Joint Force of the Group of Five of the Sahel (FC-G5s) consists of (5,000) soldiers, consisting of (7) battalions distributed in (3) sectors: the western sector (Mali and Mauritania), the central sector (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger), and the eastern sector (Chad and Niger), and areas were established every (50) km along all borders in order to follow up on national military units that lead joint operations or follow up on targets beyond the national borders of countries<sup>65</sup>. The tasks of this force are to combat terrorism, transnational organized crime and human trafficking, to contribute to the development of a strategy for development in the Sahel region, as well as to support the restoration of state authority and the return of displaced persons and refugees<sup>66</sup>.

The headquarters of this force is located in Mali, specifically in the city of "Sévaré" in central Mali, and is led by General "Didier Dacko", the former chief of staff of the Malian armed forces, and there are three other sectoral headquarters affiliated with him; The first is located within the border region of "Liptako-Jourma" between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, while the second is located within the border area between Mali and Mauritania, and the third is within the framework of the border area between Niger and Chad<sup>67</sup>, despite Mali hosting the headquarters of this force But it decided to withdraw from all the organs and bodies of the G5 Sahel, including (FC-G5S) in May 2022, to protest its being rejected to



take over the presidency of conference of heads of state of the G5 Sahel scheduled for February 2022 in (Bamako), and it also announced that this decision would be effective starting from June 30, 2022<sup>68</sup>.

It should be noted that this force is part of the G5-Sahel group, which emerged as an international cooperative framework that brings together (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) in order to put forward a regional response to various challenges on February 16, 2014, at the initiative of the Mauritanian presidency of the African Union To counter the growing threat of terrorism and organized crime. The permanent headquarters of the general secretariat of G5-Sahel is located in (Nouakchott), which is responsible for managing its joint operations<sup>69</sup>.

The organizational structure of G5-Sahel consists of: the Conference of Heads of State, which determines the strategic directions and options, the Ministerial Council, which is responsible for implementing the policy of the Group of Five Sahel states determined by the Conference of Heads of State, and the Permanent Secretariat, which is subject to the authority of the Ministerial Council and manages its decisions, and its term is four renewable years, the Security and Defense Committee, which includes the chiefs of staff and authorized representatives, and finally the national committees to coordinate the work of the G5 Sahel in each member state and are responsible to the permanent secretariat and are subject to the authority of the ministers responsible for development<sup>70</sup>.

The (FC-G5S) has already carried out (17) joint operations successfully, the first of which is the "Operation Hawbi" that was carried out in November 2017 with the armies of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger<sup>71</sup>. While its latest operations are Operation "Sama 3", which was launched in March 2021 to consolidate the results of Operation "Sama 2", which took place in the central sector on August 1, 2020 and ended on January 31, 2021 in coordination with Operation "Barkhan" with the aim of improving the security situation and building confidence between the joint force and civilian population, to facilitate the gradual return of the national armed forces and local authorities and to enable civil and military projects, as well as to consolidate control over the area secured during Operation "Sama 1". In general, it can be said that these operations have contributed to the continuation of pressure on armed and terrorist groups and to the strengthening of confidence between the force and the civilian population<sup>72</sup>.



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The initial budget for the first year of the operations of this force is estimated at (450-500) million euros, which is supposed to cover the expenses of establishing command centers for this force and paying the operational costs for a year, G5 Sahel countries have each pledged (10) million euros<sup>73</sup>. The European Union - which is the largest supporter of this force - pledged to raise its financial pledges to support this force from (61) million dollars to (143) million dollars, and to invest about (9.8) billion dollars in development aid within the framework of the African Sahel region, within a period of time estimated at five years, within the framework of a conference held in Brussels, Belgium, in February 2018.

Moreover, France provides military equipment and training related to this force, estimated at (8) million euros, and pledged to pay an amount estimated at (1.5) billion dollars as development aid during an estimated period of five years. France and Germany also contributed about (21.7) million dollars, and they launched several efforts to collect the financial contributions required to fulfill the needs of this force through bilateral contributions. These efforts resulted in raising the financial contributions coming from (Spain, the Netherlands, Norway, Japan, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia). Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE pledged to pay a sum of money estimated at (100) million dollars and (30) million dollars, respectively, as well as about (60) million dollars from the United States of America<sup>74</sup>.

### 3) Accra Initiative

It is considered as one of the multilateral regional frameworks for combating terrorism in the Sahel region. It was launched by (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo) in September 2017, and the two countries (Mali, Niger) were accepted as observers in the same year, due to their proximity to the coastal states and their experience in confronting terrorism. This initiative depends on a permanent General Secretariat for National Security based in Accra and Contact points in each of the member states, and its main objective is to prevent the spread of terrorism and counter transnational organized crime and violent extremism in the border areas of member countries<sup>75</sup>.

The Accra initiative is based on three main pillars: exchange of information and intelligence, training of security and intelligence personnel, as well as the conduct of joint cross-border military operations. Its meetings are held on two levels; the first is quarterly meetings at the level of heads of security and intelligence services, while



the second is meetings at the level of government ministers responsible for security<sup>76</sup>. The initiative has implemented a joint security operation known as “Koudanlgou I” by (Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Togo) and Benin participated as an observer in May 2018, as well as Operation “Koudanlgou II” by (Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire) and Mali participated as an observer in November 2018, and “Operation Koudanlgou III” by (Togo, Ghana). These operations, in general, led to arrest of a large number of terrorist group members and confiscation of their weapons, in addition to holding a training session for individuals in Côte d'Ivoire in 2020<sup>77</sup>.

It can be said that there are a number of strengths for this initiative, the most important of which is that it does not depend on a huge administrative structure, but on a central coordination mechanism represented in the permanent secretariat and subsidiary focal points located within the framework of all member states, which would reduce bureaucratic constraints and facilitate the process of communication and cooperation between member states, and the contribution of the periodic meetings of the heads of security and intelligence to building confidence significantly among member states, as well as adhering to the initiative being a purely African initiative so that it is funded by member states instead of external funding, which gives it the political independence necessary for the success of its work<sup>78</sup>.

## VI- Conclusion

A number of main results can be drawn, which constitute answers to the questions raised by the study in its introduction, which are as follows:

- 1) With regard to the frameworks of the international multilateral response to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism in the African Sahel, it can be said that it has attracted a great attention, especially at the beginning of the second decade of the new millennium, which was crystallized mainly through the United Nations and the European Union, This has been linked to the multidimensional and cross-border effects of the phenomenon of terrorism in this region. In general, although these frameworks have relatively contributed to limiting the threats and risks associated with terrorist groups in the countries of this region, they have not succeeded in uprooting the root causes of this phenomenon completely, due to their focus mainly on the approach of security treatments, which made them have limited impact on the ground. Reality, especially in the long run.



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The effectiveness of the international response frameworks in this context has also been affected by the decline in the influential roles of Western powers that motivate, support and organize their work, due to the reasons related to the lack of compatibility between these forces and ruling regimes in some countries of the region on the one hand, and the growing of popular disapproval of the traditional roles of these forces On the other, as happened with France in Mali since the beginning of 2022, and was repeated in other cases in the region such as Burkina Faso, Chad and other countries.

This has affected the roles of the other Western powers that share the burdens of anti-terrorism efforts in this region, especially the "Takuba" Task Force, as it has become reluctant to fully participate in long-term plans to combat terrorism abroad, especially in the politically unstable countries,As a result, the role of some non-state actors affiliated with some international powers was allowed to bridge the existing security gap, especially private security companies, such as the Russian "Wagner" group, whose roles have grown significantly in Mali as an alternative to traditional European influence, specifically the French.

2) With regard to the frameworks of the Regional multilateral response to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism in the African Sahel; It can be said that there has been a tendency towards adopting it since the middle of the second decade of the new millennium in order to crystallize a common African Situation toward combating of the terrorism in this region as previously mentioned, although this regional efforts has been able to achieve a relative success from the perspective of improving the security situation in Countries in which transnational terrorist groups are stationed or affected by their activities, by strengthening the authority and control of central governments and reducing the various threats and risks of these groups,However, it can be noted that these efforts are very limited compared to the international(non-African) efforts, which crystallized through a number of frameworks and initiatives launched by international powers - whether individually or multilaterally - within the framework of the African Sahel region.

The limited effectiveness of the regional multilateral response to counter-terrorism in the African Sahel can be explained in light of a set of key factors; Financial constraints, which refer to the limited financial resources available to the regional states in the African



Sahel, whether at the individual or multilateral level, to support regional efforts to combat terrorism, which pushes towards reliance on external funding, that is driven by the interest paradigm of donors, For example, the European Union considered the largest supporter of the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF) through the African Peace Facility (APF), as well as the African Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5s).

In addition to, Operational and logistical constraints, which are embodied in the lack of appropriate means of transportation and the shortage of equipment and supplies necessary to support the deployment of forces on the ground, which leads to a restriction of their efficiency, This pattern of restrictions represents an obstacle to the effectiveness of the Accra Initiative to counter terrorism in the African Sahel, which is crystallized through the limited time and space framework for military operations, and the limited intelligence capabilities of Member States, which leads to poor tracking and effective control of extremist groups movement across the borders, as well as the difficulties related to the variation of languages spoken between countries, such as such as Ghana which speaks English and its counterparts from other countries which speak French, which often hindered effective communication between them.

Moreover, there is Constraints related to the limited solidarity and regional integration, which indicate the weakness of the joint organizational response of the countries of the Sahel region to threats and terrorist risks, as their collective interaction depends on the extent of the direct threat that affects their lands or territories, which makes them prefer to adopt individual or bilateral actions in Confronting these threats, and this is reinforced by the fact that the countries of the region do not all belong to the same regional economic communities (RECs), and therefore there are different types of inter-arrangements concerned with combating terrorism, For example, we find that the participating countries, whether in the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) or the Joint Force of the Five Sahel States (FC-G5s) do not belong to the same sub-regional communities.

3) The future vision for enhancing the effectiveness of multilateral efforts to combat terrorism at the regional and international levels in the African Sahel region puts emphasis on several key aspects; Which includes overcoming the traditional approach based on focusing on the





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security approach (military confrontations) by adopting a comprehensive approach based on preventive measures that address the structural causes motivating the presence of the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism in the region, which based on sustainable development issues (Development approach) and devoting societal cultures based on Moderation and rejection of extremism and violence (Cultural approach)

As well as strengthening the procedures concerned with activating all legal and institutional frameworks, whether at the continental or sub-regional level, related to preventing and combating terrorism in the African Sahel region, alsomobilizing the financial, technological, human and informational resources necessary to prevent and combat cross-border terrorism by strengthening joint cooperation among the countries of the region to reduce dependence on the outside in this regard,in addition to strengthening the coordination and cooperation between the different institutional frameworks concerned with preventing and combating terrorism, whether at the international level (UN Security Council), or the African continental level (African Union Peace and Security Council), or the African sub-regional level ( Economic Community of West African States) “ECOWAS” and (Lake Chad Basin Commission).

**Finally**, it can be said that the fight against terrorism in the African Sahel constitutes one of the issues of high priority, based on its effects on the various indicators of stability in this region, in a way that affects its ability to achieve sustainable development in line with African Agenda 2063, and this requires mainly strengthening joint African responses to reduce dependence on the outside on this matter.



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