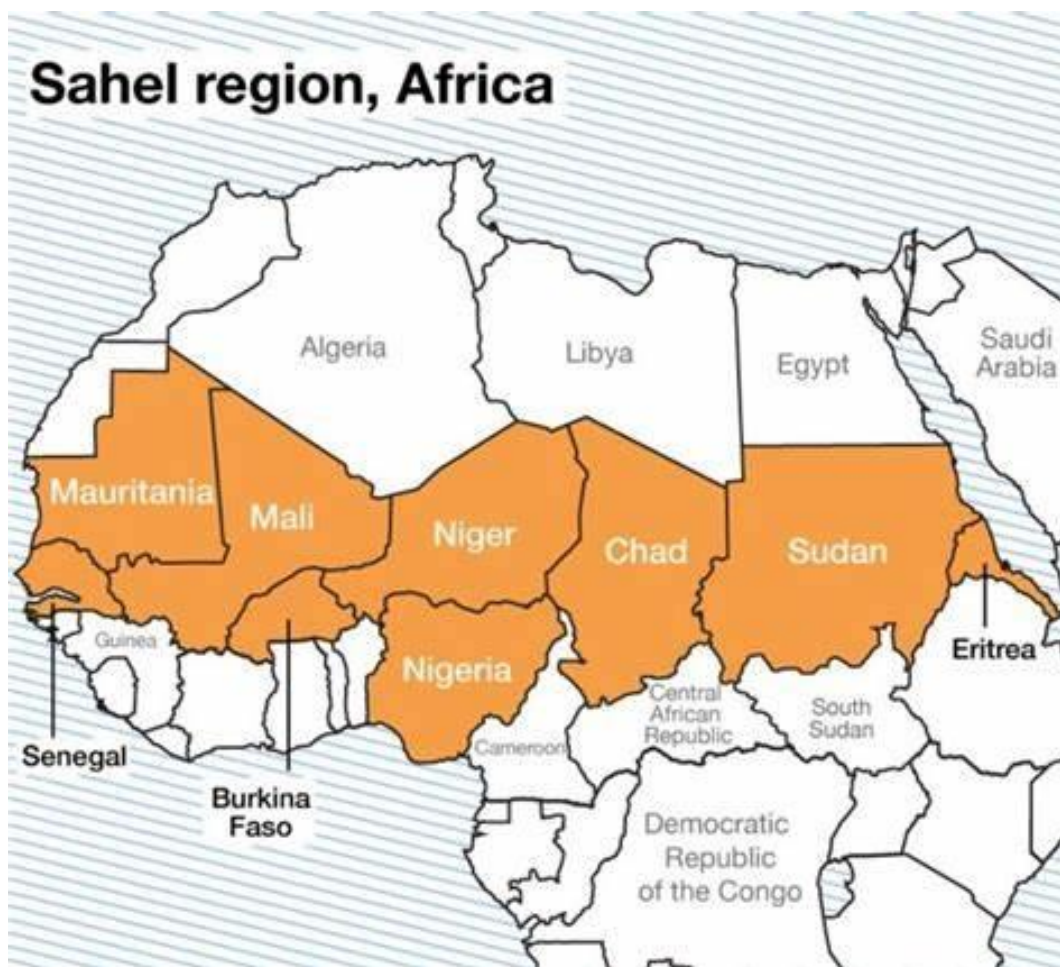**Forum: General Assembly One**

Issue: Addressing the ongoing Geopolitical in the Sahel

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Position: Chair

Introduction

The Sahel is a crowded region from a geopolitical view. There are several different international military missions, and over 7 countries are involved in development and security projects. In Burkina Faso and Mali, violence in 2022 has reach the record high reported by the ACLED.

Figure #1: Area in the Sahel region

The number of reported deaths from political violence increased by 77% in Burkina Faso and 150% in Mali. The total number of conflict and demonstration event has increased in all three central Sahel countries. There are also a lot of non-state actors who are undermining the stability of that region. Due to the number of actor involved the simplistic "description is scramble for Africa" Also due to the geopolitical players in the Sahel are unwilling to implement to long-term solutions to the problem which causes the instability of this problem. There are a lot of issues like economic inequalities, climate change and the poor governance performance. These problem are greatly affecting the stability of the Sahel area, which are affecting the citizen and the civilians who are in that area. So it is very important for the fellow delegate to think of a resolution for this problem.

Key Terminology

Geo-political

Geo-political refers to the relationship among politics and geography, demography, and economics, especially with respect to the foreign policy of a nation.

Non-state actors

Non-state actors are an individual or organization that has significant politcal influence but not allied to any particular country or state.

Economic inequalities

Economic inequalities refers to disparities among individuals income and wealth.

Human rights

Human rights, rights that belong to an individual or group of individuals simply for being human, or as a consequence of inherent human vulnerability, or because they are requisite to the possibility of a just society.

Sustainable development
Economic development that is conducted without depletion of natural resources.

Background

Major Problems

The Sahel region, located in Africa, has been facing a complex geopolitical situation in recent years. The region encompasses several countries, including Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mauritania, and is characterized by poverty, weak governance, and a lack of security infrastructure.

One of the key challenges in the Sahel is the presence of various armed extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). These groups exploit the region's vulnerabilities and engage in activities such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and kidnapping for ransom.

The security situation in the Sahel remains precarious. Armed extremist groups continue to launch attacks, destabilizing the region and causing significant humanitarian crises. The presence of these groups has also led to intercommunal conflicts and displacement of populations, exacerbating existing challenges.

The ongoing geopolitical dynamics in the Sahel are influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, issues such as ethnic tensions, competition over resources, and political instability contribute to the region's fragility. Additionally, weak governance, corruption, and a lack of economic opportunities create fertile ground for radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups.

Addressing the geopolitical complexities in the Sahel requires a multifaceted approach. It involves strengthening governance structures, promoting economic development, and enhancing security cooperation. Regional and international actors need to work collaboratively to address the root causes of the conflict and provide sustainable solutions for the region's stability and prosperity.

The Sahel region's geopolitical landscape is intricately connected to various regional and global dynamics. One of the major factors is the spillover effect of conflicts in neighboring Libya, which has contributed to the proliferation of weapons and the movement of armed groups

across porous borders. The ongoing conflict in Libya has created a power vacuum, allowing extremist groups to establish a presence in the Sahel and exacerbating the security challenges faced by the region.

A significant aspect is the competition for control over resources, particularly water and land. The Sahel is characterized by a fragile ecosystem and a growing population, leading to increased pressure on natural resources. This competition, combined with climate change-induced drought and desertification, has heightened tensions between different ethnic and pastoralist communities, further destabilizing the region.

Efforts to address the Sahel's challenges have been pursued through different initiatives. The G5 Sahel, which includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, was established in 2014 as a regional cooperation framework to enhance security and development. The European Union has also launched the Sahel Alliance, a partnership focused on promoting sustainable development and stability in the region.

Achieving lasting peace and stability in the Sahel remains a formidable task. It requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses not only security measures but also long-term investments in governance, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. It is crucial to involve local communities, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders in the decision-making process to ensure sustainable and inclusive development.

The ongoing geopolitical situation in the Sahel is complex and multifaceted, shaped by internal and external factors. Addressing the region's challenges necessitates a holistic approach that combines security efforts with sustainable development initiatives and inclusive governance. Regional and international collaboration and support are essential to achieve lasting peace, stability, and prosperity in the Sahel.

International Players

International interventions have played a significant role in shaping the geopolitical landscape of the Sahel. The United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), and regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been involved in efforts to stabilize the region and support peacebuilding initiatives. France has also maintained a military

presence through Operation Barkhane, with the aim of combating terrorism and supporting local security forces.

The Sahel's geopolitical dynamics are influenced by external actors with competing interests. Various international powers, such as the United States, European Union, Russia, and China, have been involved in the region, primarily driven by security concerns, counterterrorism efforts, and access to resources. These external interventions have both positive and negative implications, as they can provide much-needed assistance but also create complexities and potential for geopolitical rivalries.

Major Parties Involved

Governments of Sahel Countries

The governments of the Sahel countries, such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mauritania, are key players in the region. They are responsible for maintaining security, addressing development challenges, and tackling the root causes of instability.

Non-State Armed Groups

Various non-state armed groups operate in the Sahel, including jihadist organizations like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and Boko Haram. These groups often engage in terrorist activities, insurgency, and violence, destabilizing the region.

Multinational Organizations

Regional and international organizations play a significant role in addressing the challenges in the Sahel. The G5 Sahel, composed of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, is a regional organization focused on security cooperation and development. The United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), European Union (EU), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) also contribute to peace and stability efforts in the region.

External Powers

Several external powers have vested interests in the Sahel and are involved in the region's geopolitical dynamics. These include France, which leads the military operation Barkhane to combat terrorism, as well as other European countries, the United States, and Russia. These external actors provide security assistance, development aid, and engage in diplomatic efforts to influence the situation.

Regional and International Partners

Various countries and organizations outside the Sahel region provide support to address the challenges. This includes financial aid, capacity-building, and diplomatic efforts. Partners such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the European Union contribute to security, development, and humanitarian initiatives.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description/Note
2011 - 2012	Tuareg separatist groups, such as the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), launch a rebellion in Mali, seeking independence for the northern region of Azawad. The rebellion leads to a power vacuum in northern Mali, which is exploited by Islamist militant groups, including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar Dine.
2013	France launches a military operation, Operation Serval, in January, to counter the advancing Islamist militants in Mali. The French intervention successfully pushes back the Islamists, but the conflict continues to evolve into a complex insurgency.

2014	Islamist militant groups, including AQIM, Ansar Dine, and their affiliates, expand their presence beyond Mali and establish a foothold in neighboring countries like Burkina Faso and Niger. These groups engage in various criminal activities, such as kidnapping for ransom, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling, to fund their operations.
2015-2016	The G5 Sahel Joint Force is established by Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad to enhance regional security and combat terrorism. This joint force seeks to coordinate military efforts, intelligence sharing, and border control operations to counter the growing threat of Islamist extremism.
2017	The security situation in the Sahel deteriorates further, with an increase in attacks by militant groups targeting both military and civilian targets. The violence displaces thousands of people internally and leads to a significant humanitarian crisis, with food insecurity, malnutrition, and limited access to basic services.
2020	Foreign powers, including the United States, France, and United Nations, actively engage in supporting regional efforts to counter terrorism and stabilize the Sahel. The UN deploys the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to support the Malian government's efforts to maintain peace and security.

2021	Mali experiences political instability, culminating in a military coup in May 2021, led by Colonel Assimi Goïta. The coup further complicates the security situation in the Sahel, as international partners express concerns over the political transition and its impact on counter-terrorism efforts.

Previous Attempts/Solutions

United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA): The UN established MINUSMA in 2013 to support the Malian government in stabilizing the country and addressing security challenges. MINUSMA's mandate includes protecting civilians, facilitating political processes, and supporting the restoration of state authority.

French Military Intervention (Operation Serval and Barkhane): In 2013, France launched Operation Serval to counter the advance of Islamist militant groups in Mali. This operation was later replaced by Operation Barkhane in 2014, which expanded its focus to cover the entire Sahel region. The French military has been conducting counter-terrorism operations, training local forces, and supporting regional security initiatives.

Multilateral Partnerships: The Sahel region has seen the establishment of several multilateral partnerships and initiatives to address security challenges. These include the G5 Sahel Joint Force, mentioned earlier, which aims to enhance regional coordination and cooperation in countering terrorism. The European Union has also launched the Sahel Alliance, a platform for international donors to support development projects in the region.

Development and Economic Initiatives: Recognizing the link between underdevelopment and instability, there have been efforts to promote development and economic growth in the Sahel. Projects focused on improving infrastructure, livelihoods, and governance have been implemented to address the root causes of instability and create more resilient societies.

Regional Diplomacy and Mediation: Regional actors, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), have played a role in facilitating political dialogue and mediation efforts in the Sahel. These organizations have supported peace processes and political transitions in countries like Mali and Burkina Faso.

Potential Solutions

Suggests International Assistance: Provide the Sahel region with more financial and technical assistance from abroad. This entails funding development initiatives, enhancing security forces' capabilities, and supporting initiatives aimed at promoting peace and mediating conflicts. In order to guarantee the efficient and effective use of resources and prevent duplication, international funders should coordinate their efforts.

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