

THE U.S. POLICY IN THE SAHEL REGION

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

OF THE

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THE U.S. POLICY IN THE SAHEL REGION
Thursday, November 14, 2019

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Karen Bass [chairwoman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Ms. BASS. This hearing for the Subcommittee on Africa will come to order.

I would note that a quorum is not present, but I am sure it will be soon.

The subcommittee is meeting today to hear testimony on U.S. policy in the Sahel region. This afternoon we are here to discuss the fragile state of the Sahel and the short-and long-term options for peace and stability in the region.

Without objection, all members have 5 days to submit statements, questions, and other materials for the record, subject to the length limitation in the rules.

I would like to thank our witnesses for coming today to speak with us about the U.S. policy in the Sahel region. I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

I have been concerned about the Sahel region for some time, mostly because of the ongoing and increasing violence and what I previously thought was an expanding U.S. military presence in the region. What I am most concerned about was making sure that we were balancing diplomacy and development with the U.S. defense engagement.

Over the past decade, many countries in the Sahel region have experienced unanticipated political transitions caused by local dissatisfaction with political elites in worsening governing conditions. AQIM and Boko Haram have since capitalized on the region's political instability and reportedly merged with locally based and rural extremist groups in Mali and Burkina Faso.

The expanding network of transnational terror groups has led to a proliferation of violent incidents between 2016 and 2018. Within the region, Mali and Burkina Faso appear to be the epicenters of conflict. After a military coup in 2012, and a popular uprising in 2014, both countries are grappling with Islamic insurgencies that threaten State and regional security. Some may think the Sahel may not have direct implications for U.S. national security because most of the armed groups in the region often target locally or regionally.

I also want to acknowledge the four brave soldiers who were ambushed and killed in an advise-and-assist mission in Tongo Tongo in western Niger on October 4, 2017. Violent extremism in the region is escalating at a disturbing rate, but the majority of the actors do not seem to be ideologically motivated, and we would certainly like to hear your opinions about that.

They seem to be drawn in because of governance challenges, including political exclusion or abuse by State actors, widespread poverty, marginalization along ethnic or regional lines, and tensions between farmer and herder communities over land or water.

I raise this because we know that defense and security assistance cannot address the issues emerging out of the Sahel. We have to focus on the root causes, and we know that development is one of the areas that need to be addressed. But with that said, the increased attacks are real. So several weeks back, I led a codel focused on U.S. military engagement across Africa, and we traveled to parts of the Sahel to gain a better understanding of our military assistance in the region.

I spoke with many heads of State, foreign ministers, our own Ambassadors, and military personnel, and security was never far from their minds. U.S. personnel and locally employed staff in the region are operating under very difficult circumstances, but I was always impressed by their hard work and their dedication for their jobs.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses about the safety and security of U.S. Government personnel in the region, and members of the codel also heard that there are in some countries numerous positions that are unfilled within the embassies, and so leaving them short-staffed and them feeling like they really were not able to address the conditions that they confronted, the reasons why they were there, and would love to hear your thoughts on that as well.

So I believe in order to combat the spread of terrorism in the region, the international community should support the efforts of the G5 Sahel force, which consists of troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger by helping to train soldiers and assisting in funding operations, so that the troops are coming from those countries as opposed to outside.

I also believe that the long-term solution is to develop the infrastructure, including access to water, telecommunication, energy, and roads. This will help socioeconomic development and reveal tangible results of a healthier, more educated, food secure, and safer society.

Members of Congress on both sides want to see extreme violence in the Sahel decrease, and we are here to listen and to see how you might provide us insights and recommendations as to how we move forward.

I now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I want to thank you, Chairwoman Bass, for convening this extremely important hearing this afternoon. We, as a subcommittee, last focused on the Sahel as a region in May 2013, though we have addressed fragility in specific States and discrete issues such as food insecurity in the region.

Many of the same threats we dealt with at that time, such as Islamic insurgencies, have grown even greater, so today's hearing is especially timely. Our policy interest in the Sahel encompass counterterrorism concerns as well as humanitarian ones, and it is impossible to address one without addressing the other. Without security, you will see a continuing amount, large amounts of human suffering. And without addressing security, we have got to be sure that it is secure and the humanitarian work can be done.

The reasons for instability in the region are multiple, from failures of governance to Islamic radicalization, from environmental degradation to ethnic conflict, nor can we minimize the consequences of our disastrous intervention in Libya in 2011, which, among other things, led to the influx of arms into the region from the arsenal of former Libyan strongman Colonel Gaddafi following his overthrow and the chaos that ensued.

There is a very comprehensive report, Madam Chair, from the Conflict Armament Research Group entitled Investigating Cross-Border Weapons Transfers in the Sahel from November 2016, and I would ask if it could be made a part of the record.

Ms. BASS. Without objection.

[The information referred to follows:]



INVESTIGATING CROSS-BORDER WEAPON TRANSFERS IN THE SAHEL

November 2016





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Front cover image: Type 56-1 assault rifle manufactured in 2011 and recovered after the attack on the Hôtel Byblos, Sévaré, 7 August 2015

Inside cover image: 122 mm 'GRAD' 9M22U rocket used in a P-IED attack near Ansongo, Mali, January 2015

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AQIM

al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

CAR

Conflict Armament Research

FACA

Forces Armées Centrafricaines (Central African Republic Armed Forces)

FAMA

Forces Armées Maliennes (Malian Armed Forces)

FAN

Forces Armées Nigériennes (Nigerien Armed Forces)

FSA

Free Syrian Army

GATIA

Groupe autodéfense touareg Imghad et allies (Touareg Amghad and Allies' Self-Defence Group)

GPMG

General-purpose machine gun

IED

Improvised explosive device

IS

Islamic State

JEM

Justice and Equality Movement

LAF

Lebanese Armed Forces

LRA

Lord's Resistance Army

MANPADS

Man-portable air defence system

MINUSCA

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

MNLA

Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (National Movement for Liberation of Azawad)

NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

P-IED

Projected improvised explosive device

PRB

Poudreries Réunies de Belgique (United Powder Factories of Belgium)

PSSM

Physical security and stockpile management

RPG

Rocket-propelled grenade (shoulder-launched rocket)

SLA-MM

Sudan Liberation Army–Minni Minnawi

UAE

United Arab Emirates

UN

United Nations

UNOCI

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

YPG

Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (People's Protection Units)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2015 and early 2016, Conflict Armament Research (CAR) conducted field investigations into the proliferation of Qaddafi-era Libyan weapons across eight countries in North and West Africa and the Middle East. The investigations had three primary objectives:

1. to identify the typology of weapons originating in Libyan stockpiles and proliferated into regional conflicts following the 2011 revolution;
2. to identify other sources of illicit military materiel circulating throughout the Sahel region; and
3. to identify groups, methods, and points of transfer that underpin the networks involved in the transfer of illicit military materiel.

During the project period CAR investigators visited Algeria, the Central African Republic, Chad, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Niger, and Syria to establish new investigations and build on findings from previous investigations. Whenever possible, CAR investigators worked in conjunction with local security forces and non-state groups to document illicit weapons seized from armed groups and smugglers or captured on the battlefield.

CAR is grateful for the collaboration of many entities and individuals in its activities in the Sahel region, including in particular the Commission Nationale de Lutte contre la Prolifération des Armes Légères in Mali.



Misratan 3rd Force on patrol, Sebha, Libya, photographed July 2015

INTRODUCTION

Libya has been a centre of weapon proliferation for more than 40 years. Muammar Qaddafi's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya amassed one of the largest and most diverse conventional weapon stockpiles of any African country. The regime used this stockpile in its own border conflicts, and to supply a wide range of governments and rebel groups across Africa, the Middle East, and beyond.

The demise of the Qaddafi regime in mid-2011 following the emergence of armed opposition and a NATO-led multinational intervention released large parts of the national stockpile from government control. Five years later, Libya is no longer a unitary state; there is no government monopoly on violence, nor is there centralised control over the instruments of war.

More than 100 militias with around 125,000 fighters—some originally supported by the NATO-led intervention under the National Transitional Council umbrella, others drawing on tribal and Islamist constituencies within and beyond Libya—continue to control territory and military weapons (ICG, 2011).

By May 2014, factional violence had spawned a fully fledged second civil war, further fracturing the patchwork of territorial and military control. In addition to the primary cleavage between forces loyal to General Khalifa Belqasim Haftar and the Council of Deputies in Tobruk, and those supporting the rival General National Congress in Tripoli, ethnic and Islamist militias of varying degrees of independence have continued to control much of southern and south-western Libya. They are active in areas around Sebha and Ubari, which were traditionally Qaddafi strongholds and thus sites of major pre-2011 national weapon stockpiles.

A PATCHWORK OF MORE THAN 100 MILITIAS WITH AROUND 125,000 FIGHTERS CONTINUE TO CONTROL TERRITORY AND MILITARY WEAPONS





Moreover, the large-scale movement of foreign fighters across Libya's borders has fuelled the commercial and state-sponsored transfer of weapons. In particular, large numbers of Tuareg fighters who had been recruited into Qaddafi's 'Islamic Legion', Maghawir Brigade, and other parts of the Libyan Army left for Mali and Niger in 2011; since late 2014, Libya witnessed an influx of foreign fighters loyal to Islamic State (IS) forces in the region of Sirte.

This report assesses the consequences and regional significance of the proliferation of weapons linked to the upheavals in Libya since Qaddafi's fall five years ago.

1. The evidence presented in the report confirms that the proliferation of weapons from Qaddafi-era stockpiles:

- fuelled the 2012 Tuareg and Islamist insurgencies in Mali;
- has allowed armed actors operating throughout the Sahel region—including in Chad and Niger, and possibly in the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire—to acquire weapon systems including small arms and man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS); and
- permitted armed groups in the early stages of the Syrian revolution to obtain materiel—some of which subsequently reached IS forces.

2. CAR finds, however, that illicit weapon flows in the Sahel since 2011 have not stemmed exclusively, or even predominantly, from Libyan sources. The profile of illicit weapons in the region reflects the consequences of other state crises, particularly in Mali, and of weak control over national stockpiles in the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire. The prevalence of Ivorian-origin small arms across the region is a particularly unexpected finding of this investigation.

3. While weapons continue to proliferate from Libya, flows have diminished somewhat since 2014. Non-state armed groups and security officials in the region indicate that this reduction may be due in part to improved interdiction efforts on traditional transit routes, particularly in Chad and along the Nigerian and Algerian borders. An additional factor is that domestic demand for weapons in Libya has increased as communal conflicts across competing political domains have intensified.

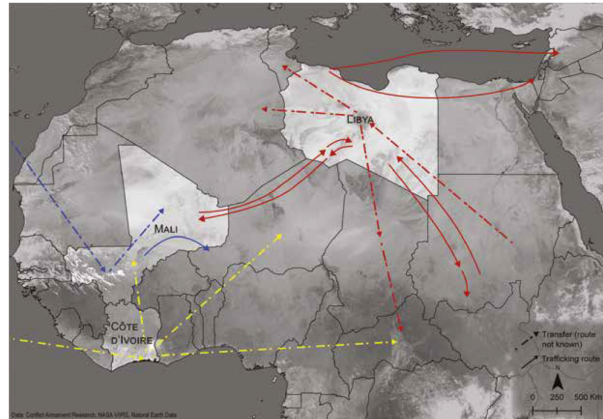
4. Despite a decrease in weapon outflows from Libya, inflows remain steady. Since 2011, Sudan has been a particularly significant source of both combatants and small arms ammunition into Libya. CAR has found that ammunition in Sudanese transfers to Libya since 2014 may have reached non-state actors in the western Sahel as early as January 2015.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to commonly documented legacy weapons that have been circulating for decades, a new set of weapons is in use among Islamist armed groups in the southern Sahel. In 2015–16, al-Qaeda-affiliated groups that were responsible for a spate of prominent attacks on international hotels and national security targets in the southern Sahel—central and southern Mali, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire—used a common set of small arms unlike any previously documented in the sub-region. These include Iraqi-origin assault rifles

and a batch of Chinese rifles manufactured in 2011 whose serial numbers interleave with matching rifles that Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) seized from IS fighters in Syria in 2015. These findings indicate that the Islamist groups responsible for the Sahelian attacks have a common source of supply or constitute a single cell, and point tentatively to possible links or commonalities of supply sources between Islamist fighters in West Africa and those operating in Iraq and Syria.

Map 1
Documented flows of weapons and non-state armed personnel in the Sahel, 2011–present



Sources: CAR field documentation in the Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, and Mali, 2014–15; confidential source, Sudan; confidential source, Côte d'Ivoire; UNSC (2013; 2014a; 2014b; 2016a)

METHODOLOGY

CAR photographically and physically documents illicit materiel *in situ*; GPS-records seizure and documentation sites; and maps contextual information provided during interviews with authorities in possession of illicit materiel, or non-state groups and individuals involved in the trafficking of weapons.

CAR does not rely on information or photographs from social media, since the provenance of such data is often difficult to verify. Moreover, open-source information does not always provide the detailed physical elements—notably external and internal markings—required to trace weapons and ammunition. In general, this information can only be obtained through physical examination.

In the absence of a comprehensive inventory or baseline of Qaddafi-era weapon stockpiles, CAR uses two methods to identify Libyan-origin weapons:

- conventional tracing, whereby weapon exporters and consignees provide CAR with information regarding weapon supplies to (and in some cases from) Libya; and

- cross-referencing of batches, serial numbers, and series of weapons observed across the region with matching types documented in particular locations in Libya.

In many cases, it is not possible to trace documented weapons through their manufacturing countries. Export data is often unavailable for weapons exported to Libya in the 1970s or earlier.¹ In addition, some weapons in CAR's sample originate in exporting countries that do not respond to trace requests—whether sent by CAR or by governmental or intergovernmental bodies.

In these cases, the cross-referencing of matching weapons across CAR's data set reveals the likely provenance of weapons that would otherwise be untraceable. Such cross-referencing can only provide a minimum indication of the prevalence of Libyan-origin weapons in the region, since, in the absence of a comprehensive inventory of Libyan stockpiles, many Libyan-origin weapons will remain unidentified. Nonetheless, the cross-referencing of matching weapons can indicate the likely geographical scope of Libyan weapon proliferation.



Crate of 12.7mm ammunition, Sabha, Libya, photographed July 2015

KEY FINDINGS

- CAR documented weapons in six countries throughout Africa and the Middle East that either certainly, or very probably, originated in Libyan stockpiles. These findings confirm the wide dispersion of Qaddafi-era materiel. These weapons include:
 - » Russian-manufactured SA-7b MANPADS with matching lot and quasi-sequential serial numbers documented in southern Libya, Lebanon, and Mali;
 - » North Korean-manufactured 40 mm F7-type rockets with matching lot numbers (5-82-T) documented in the Central African Republic and Lebanon;
 - » M79 90 mm HEAT rockets with semi-sequential serial numbers documented in Tripoli, Libya, and Rmeilan, Syria;
 - » a number of Polish assault rifles with Arabic markings manufactured during the second half of the 1970s and documented in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, and Mali (rifles in the Central African Republic, Libya, and Mali had semi-sequential serial numbers, and the Government of Poland has confirmed that it only exported this type of rifle to five countries, including Libya); and
 - » Belgian- and French-manufactured 60 mm and 81 mm mortar rounds used by unidentified insurgents in attacks on United Nations (UN) bases in northern Mali since mid-2014, matching mortar rounds documented in Sebha, Libya.
- Armed violence in the Sahel region also appears to be fuelled by weapon and ammunition flows originating outside Libya. These supplies reflect the progressively decreasing availability of Qaddafi-era materiel since 2012 and rising Libyan domestic demand for weapons. Flows into Libya and other conflicts in the Sahel region include military equipment such as:
 - » recently manufactured (2011, 2013, and 2014) Sudanese small arms ammunition in circulation in southern Libya and Mali;
 - » recent Russian (2012) and Chinese (2011 and 2012) small arms ammunition in circulation in southern Libya; and
 - » ammunition used by Islamist combatants in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and central and southern Mali that matches legal and illicit ammunition circulating in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, suggesting the existence of supply chains in the southern and western Sahel that do not originate in Libya.
- Islamist combatants have used new, externally sourced materiel in a string of prominent attacks in central and southern Mali since mid-2015, including:
 - » Chinese Type 56-1 assault rifles manufactured in 2011 that are newer than most other rifles documented in the region, that have semi-sequential serial numbers, and that are of the same type and year of production as rifles captured by YPG forces from IS forces in Kobane, Syria; and
 - » Iraqi-manufactured and -imported assault rifles.

SECTION 1

WEAPON OUTFLOWS FROM LIBYA

CAR visited Tripoli, Misrata, and Sebha in July and August 2015 to confirm linkages between Libyan stockpiles and illicit weapons in the wider region. CAR documented materiel obtained directly from Qaddafi-era stockpiles, captured from IS forces in Sirte, and seized or purchased from local ethnic militias or smugglers. The largest and most significant sample of weaponry in CAR's data set is from the southern city of Sebha, where the Misratan 3rd Force possessed weapons seized from smugglers and armed members of local ethnic

communities, including the Awlad Suleiman, Qadhaffa, Tebou, and Tuareg.

These weapons provided CAR with a partial baseline of weapons in western and southern Libya, which allowed for the identification of Libyan-origin weapons among samples documented in the Central African Republic, Lebanon, Mali, and Syria. This baseline also helped CAR to identify weapons that have entered Libya since the imposition of a UN embargo in 2011.



Crates for 120 mm "GRAD" 9M22U rockets in abandoned Forces Armées Malienne (FAMa) weapon store in Gao, Mali, photographed March 2015

BOX 1: POLISH KBK-AKMS RIFLES

A simple example illustrates the possibilities and limitations of cross-referencing matching weapons across the region. In July 2015, CAR investigators documented a distinctive Polish-manufactured Kbk-AKMS assault rifle that Misratan 166th Brigade forces had captured from IS fighters in Sirte in March 2015. The weapon featured Arabic rear-sight markings.

Although export records for individual rifles of this type are not available, Polish authorities confirmed that Poland had exported Arabic-

marked Kbk-AKMS rifles to Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen during the last half of the 1970s.²

It is likely, therefore, that rifles whose serial numbers are sequentially close to the serial numbers of rifles documented in Libya are also of Libyan provenance. Rifles with serial numbers that are sequentially distant or whose years of production differ from those of the Libyan samples may come from one of the other four importing countries.

Figure 1

A Polish Kbk-AKMS rifle seized from IS forces in Sirte, Libya, photographed July 2015



© Conflict Armament Research

CAR's data set includes nine Polish Kbk-AKMS rifles with Arabic rear-sight markings in the possession of the following non-state combatants across the Sahel (see Table 1):

- In northern Mali, an unidentified armed group used such a rifle in a suicide attack in Tessalit in 2013; international forces seized others from an unidentified armed group in Kidal, Mali, in June 2014, and from a weapon cache north of Gao, Mali, in December 2014.³
- In 2014–15 former Séléka fighters in Bouca and Bangui, Central African Republic, handed

over such rifles to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) peacekeeping operation, while Ugandan forces captured others during operations against 'janjaweed' militias and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Obo, Central African Republic, near the border with South Sudan.⁴

- Peacekeepers from the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) recovered a significant batch of Arabic-marked Kbk-AKMS rifles during the disarmament of Forces Nouvelles fighters in Côte d'Ivoire in October 2012.⁵

BOX 1: POLISH KBK-AKMS RIFLES (contd)

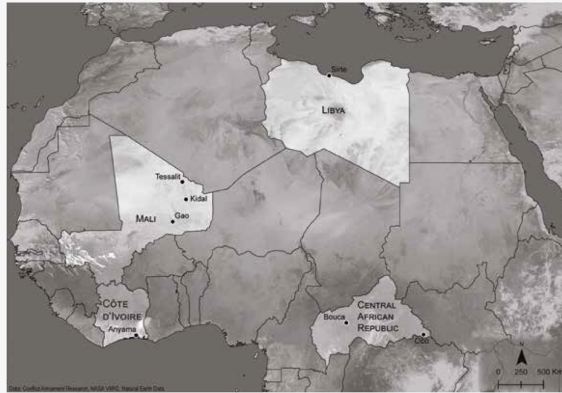
Table 1
Polish KbK-AKMS rifles documented in the Sahel region, 2012–present

Date documented	Location	Country	Armed group	Year of production	Serial number	Rear-sight markings	Context
Oct-12	Anyama	Côte d'Ivoire	Forces Nouvelles	1978	GL 04681	Arabic	Disarmament exercise
Oct-12	Anyama	Côte d'Ivoire	Forces Nouvelles	1977	CK 07848	Arabic	Disarmament exercise
Oct-12	Anyama	Côte d'Ivoire	Forces Nouvelles	1976	KP 17280	Arabic	Disarmament exercise
Oct-12	Tessalit	Mali	Unknown	1978	MO 21441	Unknown	Suicide attack
Dec-14	North of Gao	Mali	Unknown	1978	MG 21529	Unknown	Weapons cache
June-14	Kidal	Mali	Unknown	1976	HT 16389	Arabic	Seized by international forces
Apr-15	Obo	Central African Republic	'Janjaweed' or LRA fighters (uncertain)	1976	HT 19508	Unknown	Seized by international anti-LRA forces
Apr-15	Bouca	Central African Republic	Ex-Séléka	1977	PP 01802	Arabic	MINUSCA seizures
July-15	Sirte	Libya	IS	1976	HT 13907	Arabic	Seized from IS fighters



BOX 1: POLISH KBK-AKMS RIFLES (contd)

Map 2
Locations of Arabic-marked Polish Kbk-AKMS rifles among non-state armed groups, 2012–2015



Three of these rifles manufactured in 1976 are from the same batch (1976 HT). Although the rifles were recovered in three different countries, their serial numbers are only 2,500 and 3,000 apart in sequence, which makes supply in the same consignment plausible. Given that Poland reports supplying neither the Central African Republic nor Mali, it is likely that Libya was the original export destination.

At this stage, however, it is impossible to prove with absolute certainty that Poland supplied all three rifles to Libya, since exporters may have split batches of weapons among recipients. Further, it is also possible that IS fighters in Sirte obtained the rifle from another location outside Libya. The documentation of additional Kbk-AKMS rifles in Libya, together with their original packaging and export documentation, might help to exclude these alternative possibilities.

COMMON SOURCES FOR DIFFERENT TRAFFICKING ROUTES

Commonalities among seizures in the Sahel and the Middle East suggest that particular Libyan locations may be significant common sources of weapons transferred along several different trafficking routes, including those to the south and east. For example, CAR documented three SA-7b MANPADS with the same lot number that Russia manufactured in the late 1970s and early 1980s:

1. seized by Lebanese authorities while en route from Libya to Syria by sea;
2. captured by international forces in northern Mali and probably trafficked via the Nigerien and Algerian borders; and
3. seized by the Misratan 3rd Force in Sebha, Libya.

The fact that these MANPADS share the same lot numbers may suggest that they derive from a single source in the region.

Table 2**SA-7b MANPADS tubes in Libya, Lebanon (en route to Syria), and northern Mali, 2012–15**

Date documented	Location	Country	Armed group	Year of production	Lot number	Serial number	Context
July-15	Sebha	Libya	Unknown; seized from traffickers in Sebha, Libya	1976	10-76	10724	Seized by Misratan 3 rd Force at Gwert Mal checkpoint north-west of Sebha, Libya, July 2015
July-15	Sebha	Libya		1978	08-78	08920	
July-15	Sebha	Libya		1981	03-81	031798	
July-15	Sebha	Libya		1981	03-81	031797	
Mar-15	Louaizé	Lebanon	Unconfirmed; reportedly en route to Free Syrian Army (FSA) forces in Syria	1977	10-77	10931	Letfallah II cargo seized in Lebanon en route to Syria, April 2012
Mar-15	Louaizé	Lebanon		1978	08-78	08496	
Mar-15	Louaizé	Lebanon		1978	08-78	081214	
Mar-15	Louaizé	Lebanon		1978	08-78	081629	
Mar-15	Louaizé	Lebanon		1978	09-78	09328	
Mar-15	Louaizé	Lebanon		1981	04-81	041201	
Mar-15	Louaizé	Lebanon		1981	04-81	04569	
Dec-14	North-east of Gao	Mali	Unknown armed group	1977	04-77	04428	Weapons cache uncovered by international forces north-east of Gao, Mali, Dec 2014
Dec-14	North-east of Gao	Mali		1977	10-77	10147	
Dec-14	North-east of Gao	Mali		1978	09-78	09548	

Notes: Colours indicate weapons with the same years of production and lot numbers.

SECTION 1
WEAPON OUTFLOWS FROM LIBYA

One possible source for some of the MANPADS documented in Libya in Table 2 is the arms depot in Barak Shati (55 km north of Sebha). This is the hometown of Abdullah Senussi, Muammar Qaddafi's former intelligence chief and brother-in-law. Commanders of the Misratan 3rd Force stated that Barak Shati was the origin of the four SA-7b MANPADS reportedly seized from smugglers at the Gwert Mal checkpoint (15 km north-west of

Sebha) that CAR examined in Sebha in July 2015. The fact that the three lots inspected in Libya, northern Mali, and Lebanon (en route to Syria) match strongly suggests that all are of Libyan provenance. It also suggests that all derive from the Barak Shati stockpile facility, although an examination of the depot would be required to confirm this assumption.

Figure 2
SA-7b MANPADS tubes documented in Libya, July 2015; Lebanon, March 2015; and Mali, December 2014



Sources: Conflict Armament Research; Operation Barkhane



The following sections discuss weapon flows from Libya to non-state actors in Mali, the Central African Republic, the Chad–Libya border area, Lebanon and Syria. CAR has identified these

weapons either through formal weapon traces or by comparison with weapons of known or suspected Libyan provenance.

WEAPON OUTFLOWS FROM LIBYA TO MALI

CAR has examined recovered weapons in Gao, Sévaré, and Timbuktu, and also acquired verified captured weapon data from the Gao (Ménaka and Touzzek), Kidal (Kidal and Tessalit), Mopti (Dialloubé), and Sikasso (Misséni) regions. This combined data provides a partial overview of weapons and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used by pro-government, separatist, and Islamist armed groups in Mali's southern border area

with Côte d'Ivoire, and its north and east regions neighbouring Burkina Faso.

CAR has confirmed that small arms,⁶ large-calibre ammunition, MANPADS,⁷ and anti-vehicle landmines from Libya have been supplied to both Islamist and separatist armed groups in Mali. This materiel includes:

PRB NR160 106 mm ammunition

Since the start of its operation to retake northern Mali (Opération Maliba) in mid-2013, the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) recovered Belgian-manufactured 106 mm rounds from armed actors and caches in the Gao region.⁸ According to Belgian arms export licences, the manufacturer, Poudreries

Réunies de Belgique (PRB), never exported 106 mm ammunition to Mali. The company did, however, export a significant quantity of NR160 rounds to Libya during the 1980s, with lot numbers close in sequence to those documented in Mali.

Figure 3
NR160A1 round with lot number 8-9 (1980) documented in Sebha, Libya, July 2015 (left); NR160A1 round with lot number 8-8 (1980) among post-2013 Opération Maliba seizures in Gao, Mali, documented September 2015 (right)



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PRB M3 anti-vehicle landmines

Armed groups in northern Mali regularly construct IEDs using PRB M3 anti-vehicle landmines. The Qaddafi regime held large quantities of this type of landmine during the 1980s.⁹ CAR has documented PRB M3 mines with lot numbers BMP 1-19 and BMP 1-21 in Sebha, Libya, and a PRB M3 mine with lot number BMP 1-20 recovered near Kidal, northern Mali, in June 2015.

It remains unclear whether the M3 landmines prevalent in Mali derive from Libyan stockpiles or from minefields along Libya's borders. Chadian officials confirmed that the Libyan Army deployed PRB M3 mines extensively along the border during the Chad–Libya conflict and the occupation of the Aouzou Strip in the 1990s.¹⁰ Residents in northern Chad's Tibesti region allege that minefields in this region occasionally serve as sources for mine trafficking networks transiting through northern Niger, and for the supply of armed groups operating in the Sahel region.¹¹

Figure 4

PRB M3 anti-vehicle landmines with lot numbers BMP 1-19 and 1-21, documented in Sebha, Libya, July 2015 (left, centre top, centre bottom), and lot number BMP 1-20 (right), documented near Kidal, Mali, June 2015 (right)



Left/centre top/centre bottom © Conflict Armament Research; Right © confidential

Since before the fall of Qaddafi, the primary transit route of weapons and armed groups between Libya and northern Mali has historically run through the Salvador Pass area, along the Algerian and Nigerien border. This route then crosses the Taoua and Tillabéry regions of western Niger, entering Mali around the Niger–Mali–Burkina Faso tri-border area. Tuareg fighters and civilians in particular have used this route to move between Ubari and Sebha in southern Libya, and to the Kidal region of northern Mali (Lacher, 2014).¹²

Tuareg combatants of the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) allege that they have also received materiel and logistical support on commercial terms from Tebou convoys between Sebha and Kidal.¹³ Interviews with Tuareg members of both loyalist and separatist armed groups, along with seizures by international forces, indicate that this route has become more difficult to transit due to increased surveillance. Yet, convoys carrying combatants, weapons, and other supplies continued to use it until at least mid-2015 (although in smaller numbers and convoy sizes compared with 2011–13).¹⁴

These movements continue to be orchestrated through a combination of communal and commercial loyalties. For example, Tuareg combatants from all sides of Mali's separatist conflict allege that immediately after the (pro-government) Imghad Tuareg-dominated Groupe autodéfense touareg Imghad et alliés (GATIA) captured the strategic town of Anefis in mid-August

2015 from the (anti-government) Ifoghas Tuareg-dominated MNLA, a significant convoy of both Imghad and Ifoghas Tuareg personnel left Sebha in Libya to resupply their Tuareg counterparts in Mali. These combatants reportedly travelled together as far as Aguelhok before splitting into two groups, one supporting GATIA forces and the other the opposing MNLA forces.¹⁵

Table 3
Significant illicit convoys and convoy interdictions in the Salvador Pass region, January 2014–April 2016

Date	Location(s)	Seized/destroyed materiel	Notes	Source of information
10 Oct-14	Unspecified ('northern Niger')	Reported seizure of 3 tonnes of weapons, including anti-tank weapons, SA-7 MANPADS, machine guns, 23 mm anti-aircraft weaponry, and ammunition	Opération Barkhane in northern Niger; according to the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, convoy occupants subsequently testified that the arms were provided by an Algerian member of the Tareq Ibn Ziyad branch of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb who was based in Ubari, and that they were destined for Ansar Dine in northern Mali (UNSC, 2016a, p. 166)	
4 Feb-15	Unspecified ('northern Niger')	6 vehicles containing arms, ammunition, and more than EUR 500,000 in cash	Opération Barkhane and Forces Armées Nigériennes (FAN); convoy reportedly included MNLA combatants	Plateforme Tuareg leaders, Bamako, interviewed August 2015; UNSC (2016a)
4 Mar-15	Near Arlit, northern Niger	13 assault rifles, two PKM-pattern general-purpose machine guns (GPMGs), one heavy machine gun, one shotgun, one handgun, one mortar tube, about 1,700 rounds of ammunition from 7.62 x 39 mm to 23 x 115 mm.	Alleged MNLA unit moving from southern Libya to northern Mali	Regional source
2 May-15	Unspecified (northern Niger); reportedly seized by 24th Battalion <i>interarmées</i> (joint battalion) based at Dirkou with a company in Madama	1,700 'assault rifle' rounds, one 82 mm mortar tube, 27 60 mm mortar rounds, 11 107 mm rockets, one PKM-pattern GPMG, 60 radios	Abandoned vehicle found by FAN	Report of the UN Panel of Experts on Libya (UNSC, 2016a, pp. 166–67)
14 May-15	Southern Salvador pass, 100 km north-west of Madama, Niger	2 vehicles, 1.5 tonnes of drugs, PKM-pattern GPMGs, and AK-pattern rifles		Opération Barkhane
17–19 Aug-15	Sebha to Anefis via Algerian border and Aguelhok	N/A	Tuareg elements from Sebha region moving to support and resupply fighters of both the Plateforme and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad around Anefis	MNLA combatants based in Kidal, interviewed September 2015

Sources: Opération Barkhane; testimonies of armed group members, Bamako and Gao, September 2015; UNSC (2016a)



Although the intended end users of these transfers are in most cases difficult to confirm, two pieces of evidence support allegations that Libyan sources have resupplied northern Malian armed groups, at least with ammunition, since 2011–12:

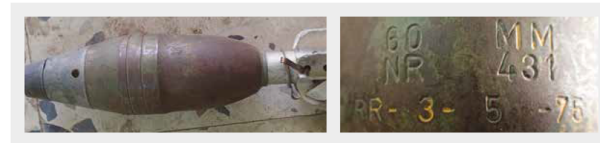
- 2014 Sudanese small arms ammunition:**
 In March 2015, international forces seized a crate of Sudanese 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition that had been packaged in 2014 from a cache concealed by an unidentified armed group to the south-west of Bakasso. Neither CAR nor international observers had previously seen Sudanese ammunition manufactured so recently in the Sahel region. While CAR cannot definitively confirm Libyan provenance, evidence shows that Sudanese weapons were supplied to forces in Tripoli and Kufrah during 2014 and 2015.¹⁶

CAR also documented the presence of recently manufactured Sudanese small arms ammunition in southern Libya in mid-2015 (see page 26).

- New sources of ammunition for mortar attacks:**

In mid-2014 armed groups started to employ smaller, more accurate 60 mm and 81 mm mortars in attacks on international forces and facilities in northern Mali.¹⁷ The mortars include Belgian-manufactured NR431 60 mm rounds produced in 1975 and 1976, which are new to the conflict in northern Mali. CAR identified NR431 60 mm rounds manufactured in the same period in circulation in Sebha, Libya, in July 2015, although it has not yet documented examples with precisely the same batch and lot numbers.

Figure 5
NR431 60 mm mortar round documented in Sebha, Libya, July 2015



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Regional security officials report that the Libya–Niger–Mali flows outlined above may not have just decreased, but reversed in part. Although CAR has not seen physical evidence to support these assertions, Nigerien police officials responsible for counter-terrorism and anti-trafficking operations claim that since 2014, small arms have been trafficked primarily in small destabilising quantities from Mali via the Mali–Niger–Burkina

Faso tri-border area into the Tillabéri region of western Niger.

These supplies are reportedly driven by demand from armed pastoralists. In November 2015, Nigerien police seized boxes containing around 20,000 Malian-manufactured 12-gauge shotgun rounds that smugglers were transporting by road between Niamey and the Burkinabé border.¹⁸

LIBYAN OUTFLOWS TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Materiel from Qaddafi-era Libyan stockpiles does not appear to account for a significant proportion of weapons or ammunition used by the former Séléka coalition. This coalition seized power in the Central African Republic between December 2012 and March 2013, precipitating the current political crisis in the country. Although CAR documented ammunition in Bangui that was similar to that identified elsewhere with confirmed and suspected links to Libya, it cannot confirm—either through witness interviews or formal weapon traces—the existence of specific trafficking networks connecting suppliers in Libya directly with armed groups in the Central African Republic.

Holdings of both former Séléka and anti-Balaka community defence militias contain far more weapons that originated in Chad and Sudan—two countries that have played significant political roles in the Central African crisis—and weapons consistent with the Bozizé regime's pre-Séléka imports into the country. Additionally, Central African military personnel familiar with pre-crisis state stockpiles suggest that the limited equipment consistent with Libyan stockpiles could have been supplied to the Central African Republic by the Libyan Army in the late 1990s and the early part of the following decade. During this period

Qaddafi's Presidential Guard had provided a close protection unit to the then-president, Ange-Félix Patassé.²⁹

Equally, Central African rebels could have obtained Libyan weapons indirectly in other countries in the region—particularly Chad and Sudan. Another possibility is that small-scale and opportunistic flows arrived from Libya between the fall of the Qaddafi regime and the end of the Séléka regime in March 2013.

CAR observed two specific weapons of possible Libyan origin that the MINUSCA peacekeeping mission and French Opération Sangaris stabilisation force had collected from armed actors:

- Polish-manufactured Kbk-AKMS assault rifles from the same lot (1976 HT) as a rifle seized from IS fighters in Sirte in March 2015 (see Box 1); and
- North Korean-manufactured 40 mm F7 rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) that Opération Sangaris forces seized from armed combatants in Bangui in 2014. The RPGs are from the same lot (5-82-T) as F7 RPGs that were documented in Lebanon (see Figure 6).

Figure 6
F7 RPG seized by Opération Sangaris in Bangui, Central African Republic, documented in September 2014 (top), and F7 RPG documented in Louaizé, Lebanon, March 2015 (bottom)



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LIBYAN OUTFLOWS TO AND VIA CHAD

The large region of Tibesti, near the Chad–Libya border, constitutes a strategic location along the major trafficking routes that cross the Sahel close to Libya. It has ethnic and historical commonalities with southern Libya and northern Niger, both of which are populated by Tebou groups.

Considered a desert buffer zone by N'Djaména, Tibesti also has a long history of conflict—the most recent between the government and the Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad, which only demobilised in 2011. The region plays a key role in trans-border trade, both legal and illicit, between Chad, Libya, and Niger, underpinned primarily by Tebou commercial networks.

Interviews with combatants and local authorities in Tibesti confirm that there were three major weapon trafficking routes from Libya into and across Chadian territory between mid-2011 and late 2012:

- an east–west route along the northern border to Niger, Algeria, and northern Mali;
- a south/south-east route following the border with Sudan, supplying the Sudan Liberation Army–Minni Minnawi (SLA–MM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), including some of the heaviest weapons in the current inventories of these groups;²² and
- a south-west route transiting through Chad to the Lake Chad Basin region. Many of the illicit transfers undertaken in this period involved Tebou traders from Chad, Niger, and Libya as intermediaries and transporters.

Chadian authorities have seized weapons that confirm the patterns above, including not only small arms and light weapons and artillery, but also 35 SA-7b MANPADS that Chadian authorities

seized from Tebou traders at Chad's northern border in July 2012.²¹

From the second half of 2012 onwards, Libyan weapon outflows transiting through Chad diminished. This trend persisted into late 2015, although Tebou militias controlled most of Libya's southern border with Chad, and despite the fact that Tebou commanders, such as Barka Wardougou, Allatchi Mahadi, Issa Abdelmajid Mansour, and Ramadan Suleiman, enjoyed significant control in the southern Libyan cities of Murzuq, Qatroun, Sebha, and Ubari (while a more volatile balance of forces persists in Kufrah, in southern Libya).²³

Border communities and combatants attribute the diminished outflow of weapons primarily to the eruption of inter-communal armed conflicts in the areas of Kufrah, Murzuq, and Ubari (largely, although not exclusively, involving opposing 'Arab' and 'African' tribes). These conflicts have generated internal demand that appears to have outweighed the importance of external demand for intermediaries and traffickers, despite the fact that trading routes connecting Chad and Libya are now more easily passable than during the Qaddafi era. Correspondingly, Chad's weapon seizures at its northern border have declined significantly, with approximately 600 individual weapons seized in 2015, mostly in small quantities.²³

Local authorities and residents also report that the political dynamics in southern Libya have affected an east–west trafficking route for narcotics and tobacco.²⁴ This route previously transited northern Niger, northern Chad, and southern Libya en route to Egypt, and then led onwards to Europe. The route primarily ran through northern Chadian territory until the 2011 Libyan regime change, when it shifted north to take advantage of the resulting lawlessness in Libya.²⁵



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Ammunition crates at a warehouse, Gao, Mali, photographed March 2015

LIBYAN WEAPON OUTFLOWS TO LEBANON AND SYRIA

CAR has documented large quantities of military materiel that YPG forces seized from IS fighters in northern Syria since mid-2014. Additionally, in March 2015, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) granted CAR access to weapons seized from the *Letfallah II*, a ship that the LAF had interdicted off the coast of Lebanon in April 2012. The ship was carrying more than 150 tonnes of military equipment, including materiel from Libyan stockpiles, which was suspected of being destined for Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters in Syria.

The case of the *Letfallah II* highlights Lebanon's role as a conduit for weapons into Syria and provides linkages to materiel documented by CAR in the Central African Republic, Libya, and Mali, including the matching batches of Soviet-origin MANPADS and North Korean RPG rounds described above. The UN Panel of Experts on Libya traced other materiel found on board the *Letfallah II*, including Russian-manufactured SA-24 surface-to-air missiles, to Libyan stockpiles (UNSC, 2014a, p. 43 and 89).

CAR documented the following weapons and ammunition (Table 4) found on board the *Letfallah II*.

Table 4
Weapons and ammunition found on the *Letfallah II*

Type	Quantity remaining in Lebanese custody as of March 2015	Type	Quantity remaining in Lebanese custody as of March 2015
FN FAL rifle	12	9M141 anti-tank guided missile	1
AK-pattern assault rifle	9	SA-7b MANPADS	10
Vz 58 P assault rifle	4	SA-24 surface-to-air missile	2
Dragunov-pattern sniper rifle	1	Propellant charge	10
FN MAG GPMG	1	TBG-7V thermobaric rocket	9
KPV 14.5 mm heavy machine gun	1	MK2 hand grenade	7
RPG-7-pattern rocket launcher	3	RDG5 hand grenade	2
SA-7 MANPADS gripstock	1	RPO-Z incendiary rocket	2
Scope	8	PRG-75 rocket launcher	1
GPV-2 fuse	1,678	155 mm Simmel artillery round	1
23 mm ammunition	264	SNEB-68 (66 mm) air-to-ground unguided rocket	22
F-7 PG-7-pattern rockets	82	Air-to-ground firing pod for 57 mm S5 rockets	1
U5TC 115 mm tank ammunition	34	Air-to-ground firing pod for 68 mm F1 rockets	1
130 mm rocket	11	Air-to-ground firing pod for 72 mm rockets	1
107 mm rocket	9		
Konkurs anti-tank guided missile	12		
Metis anti-tank guided missile	3		

SECTION 1
WEAPON OUTFLOWS FROM LIBYA

The relative contribution of Libyan materiel to Syrian armed groups' holdings is difficult to quantify, but CAR has documented weapons with particular military significance in both Libya and Syria that likely share common sources. For instance, Yugoslav-manufactured M79 90 mm armour-piercing anti-tank weapons, used by the FSA and other Syrian rebel forces, as well as by IS forces in Iraq, have proved particularly significant against government armour.

In 2014 and 2016, CAR investigators documented several M79s in Syria and Iraq that anti-IS forces had captured from the group. Some carried a

lot number that is two digits from an M79 that in July 2015 CAR observed in stockpiles collected by the Libyan Mine Action Centre and held in the Janzour neighbourhood of Tripoli. Although international media has reported that M79 munitions were provided from Croatia to Syrian rebels in 2013 (Chivers and Schmitt, 2013), CAR traced a number of M79s it documented and can confirm connections between a rocket bearing the lot number TB8606, documented in Libya, with rockets bearing the same lot number in Slovenian Army stocks. Slovenia exported the rockets for destruction by a Slovak company, in 2005. CAR cannot confirm whether the Libya rocket originated from Slovenian Army stocks, because the rockets were controlled by the Yugoslavian Army and therefore could have been held by any former Yugoslavian state.²⁸

Figure 7
M79 90 mm anti-tank weapon documented by CAR in Rmeilan, Syria, July 2014 (left) and in Tripoli, Libya, July 2015 (right)



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SECTION 2

POST-2011 WEAPON INFLOWS TO LIBYA

A comprehensive account of Libyan state and non-state groups' weapon supply sources is beyond the scope of this report.²⁷ Nevertheless, weapons observed and witness testimonies attained from Libya and surrounding countries, indicate significant inflows from the Sahel region and a recent reversal of some of the outflows detailed in Section 1.

Notably, Sudanese government and anti-government groups provide weapons and fighters to all sides in Libya's conflicts. These inflows of weapons and fighters contrast with fears widely voiced in 2011 that *outflows* of Libya's unsecured arsenals would destabilise rebellion-hit areas of western Sudan and eastern Chad.²⁸

Darfuri armed group members, combatants, and residents in northern Chad report that fighters present in Libya in 2015 include:

- Darfuri armed opposition groups, particularly SLA-MM and JEM, fighting alongside the Tobruk forces;
- Darfuri 'janjaweed' and Arab militias that were previously aligned with the Sudanese government, but are now fighting alongside forces loyal to the Tripoli government, and with

'Arab' Awlad Suleiman and Zway militias in southern Libya; and

- Chadian armed opposition groups previously backed by Sudan, including the Gorane group led by Mahamat Nouri and the Zaghawa group loyal to Tom and Timane Erdimi.²⁹

The Libyan conflict has provided opportunities for both Chadian and Sudanese armed groups to procure weapons and secure financial resources that may eventually be returned to Sudan and Chad. Some of these groups also report that their members were drawn by the gold rush that has emerged in Darfur, northern Niger, northern Chad, and southern Libya since mid-2012.

A sample of post-embargo small arms and light weapons ammunition that CAR documented in southern Libya in July 2015—which local forces had seized or purchased from Awlad Suleiman, Qadhaffa, Tebou, and Tuareg combatants—is consistent with Sudanese ammunition production and stocks. This ammunition included 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition found in Sebha that was manufactured in 2011 and 2013 and bore markings consistent with ammunition produced by Sudan's state-owned Military Industry Corporation (see Figure 8).



Figure 8
Embargo-year and post-embargo Sudanese-manufactured 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition documented in Sebha, Libya, July 2015



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CAR also documented post-embargo 7.62 x 39 mm, 7.62 x 54R mm, and 12.7 x 108 mm ammunition with marks indicating Chinese production in 2011 and 2013. The 12.7 x 108 mm Chinese ammunition was packed in crates and black plastic bags

consistent with Sudanese ammunition packaging, suggesting that parties in Sudan repackaged the ammunition prior to its illicit transfer to Libya (see Figure 9).³⁰

Figure 9
Chinese-manufactured ammunition packed in Sudanese ammunition packaging, documented in Sebha, Libya, July 2015



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Figure 10
 Embargo-year and post-embargo Chinese-manufactured ammunition documented in Sebha, Libya,
 July 2015: 7.62 x 54R mm (top row), 7.62 x 39 mm (middle row), and 12.7 x 108 mm (bottom)



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SECTION 2
POST-2011 WEAPON INFLOWS TO LIBYA

CAR also documented post-embargo Russian-manufactured 7.62 x 54R mm ammunition produced in 2012 by the LVE Novosibirsk Cartridge Plant JSC (see Figure 11). In the absence of packaging, CAR has yet to confirm this ammunition's chain of custody.

Figure 11
Post-embargo Russian-manufactured 7.62 x 54R mm ammunition documented in Sebha, Libya, July 2015



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THE LIBYAN CONFLICT HAS PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH CHADIAN AND SUDANESE ARMED GROUPS TO PROCURE WEAPONS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES THAT MAY EVENTUALLY BE RETURNED TO SUDAN AND CHAD.



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Crates of 23 mm mortar-piercing incendiary ammunition seized from Lefthab by the Lebanese Armed Forces in April 2012

SECTION 3

OTHER SOURCES OF ILLICIT WEAPONS IN THE SAHEL: STATE CRISIS AND STOCKPILE PROLIFERATION

Since 2011, research and media narratives about illicit weapon proliferation in the western Sahel have focused primarily on weapons originating in Libyan stockpiles or trafficked by Libyan armed groups.³¹ Sections 1 and 2 of this report demonstrate that such flows remain significant, but that they are diminishing and, in some cases, being reversed. While these changes are partly due to border security enforcement and convoy interdiction by national and international forces, they also reflect rising internal Libyan demand—particularly in the southern areas of the country.

Equally prominent in the illicit weapons sample that CAR examined across the Sahel, however, are arms originating in the national stockpiles of at least two other states that have suffered partial or major state crises: Mali and Côte d'Ivoire.

In Mali, separatist and Islamist armed groups gained control of substantial stockpiles of the Malian security forces as they took control of northern towns and cities in 2012.³² The MNLA, likewise, seized substantial FAMA stocks at the headquarters of the *7e région militaire* in Kidal in



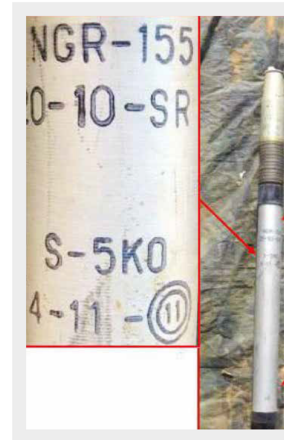
An aerial view of the desert near Sabha, Libya, photographed July 2015.

May 2014, including ammunition ranging from 7.62 x 39 mm to 14.5 x 114 mm, RPG rockets, 120 mm mortar rounds, 122 mm artillery rounds, and at least one BTR-60 armoured personnel carrier.³³

Although difficult to confirm quantitatively, the evidence presented below suggests that such wholesale seizures during the 2012 and 2014 crises have been more substantial supply vectors of illicit weapons to Malian armed groups than post-crisis thefts, sales, or smuggling. Likewise, Malian armed movements have employed an increasing proportion of heavy weaponry from Malian government stockpiles—particularly ammunition for larger weapon systems such as rockets and artillery—as opposed to Libyan or other foreign sources. This materiel includes small arms and aircraft ammunition legitimately imported into Mali in 2012 to combat the Tuareg/Islamist insurgencies, which was subsequently recovered from anti-government armed groups' weapon caches in northern Mali in late 2014 and early 2015 (see Figure 12).³⁴

MALIAN ARMED MOVEMENTS HAVE EMPLOYED AN INCREASING PROPORTION OF HEAVY WEAPONRY SEIZED FROM MALIAN GOVERNMENT STOCKPILES AS OPPOSED TO LIBYAN OR OTHER FOREIGN SOURCES.

Figure 12
Bulgarian-manufactured 57 mm S5-KO rocket recovered from a weapon cache north-east of Gao, Mali, in January 2015



Notes: The Bulgarian firm Metalika AB Ltd delivered this rocket to the Malian Ministry of Defence in 2012.

Sources: Opération Barkhane; correspondence with the Government of Bulgaria, 8 June 2015



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Malian Army armoured personnel carrier abandoned south of Gao, Mali, photographed March 2015

BOX 2: NON-CONVENTIONAL ROCKET ATTACKS IN MALI, 2013–16

One indicator of the growing significance of captured domestic stocks in the arsenals of Mali's armed groups is the prevalence of artillery shells and rockets used in projected IED (P-IED) attacks in Mali. The majority of this artillery ammunition originated in Malian stockpiles, despite the same weapon systems and ammunition having entered Mali from Libya, according to UN reports.³⁵

Improvised rocket attacks, typically either launched manually or using cell-phone timer triggers, have become a prime modus operandi of attacks against international forces and national security personnel across northern Mali since 2013.³⁶ These attacks primarily use 'GRAD' BM-21 122 mm rockets and occasionally repurposed S-5 57 mm air-to-ground rockets (see Figure 13).

The majority of eighty 57 mm and 122 mm rockets either used in P-IED attacks or recovered from weapon caches in Mali between March 2013 and April 2016 are of Soviet origin, whose original exporters do not provide tracing information.³⁷ Only one rocket has therefore been traced directly to Malian state stockpiles, using information provided by its exporter. However, comparison of the rocket motor and warhead lot and batch numbers suggest that a much larger number are attributable to Malian state stockpiles. These lot numbers either match those of rockets in Malian state stockpiles (indicating that they are very likely from state stocks themselves), or are sequential to them (indicating that they are probably from state stocks).

Figure 13
122 mm 9M22U 'GRAD' rocket set up for use in a P-IED attack, discovered at Inélou, Ansongo, Mali, 28 February 2015



Source: Confidential

BOX 2: NON-CONVENTIONAL ROCKET ATTACKS IN MALI, 2013–16 (contd)

Figure 14
122 mm rocket crates at abandoned FAMA storage facility, 3 km south of Gao, Mali, documented in March 2015



Notes: The lot number corresponds with the rocket found at Inélou (see Figure 13).
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This is an opportunistic and fairly small sample. However, the proportion of rockets that probably (and, in some cases, near certainly) derive from Malian state stocks is never less than 20 per cent of the total sample. This figure rises over time, exceeding 60 per cent

in 2015 and reaching 100 per cent in the first three months of 2016 (see Table 5). These are minimum figures, since CAR does not have an inventory of national stockpiles against which to match illicitly held rockets.

BOX 2: NON-CONVENTIONAL ROCKET ATTACKS IN MALI, 2013–16 (contd)

Table 5
Rockets used in P-IED attacks or recovered from weapons caches, Mali, documented in March 2013–March 2016

Date	Type	Date	Type	Date	Type	Date	Type
Mar-13	S-5		9M22U		9M22U	Apr-15 (Contd)	9M22?
	S-5		9M22U		9M22U		9M22?
	S-5		9M22U		9M22U		9M22?
	S-5		9M22U		9M22U		9M22?
	9M22U	Jan-15 (Contd)	9M22U	Apr-15 (Contd)	9M22U		9M22?
May-14	9M22M		9M22?		9M22U		9M22?
Oct-14	9M22M		9M22?		9M22?		9M22?
Dec-14	9M22U		9M22?		9M22M		9M22?
	9M22U	Feb-15	9M22?		9M22M	May-15	9M22?
	9M22U		9M22?		9M22M		9M22?
	9M22U		9M22?		9M22M		S-5KO
	9M22U		9M22?		9M22M		9M22U
	9M22U	Mar-15	9M22?		9M22M		9M22U
	9M22U		9M22M		9M22M		9M22?
	9M22?		9M22U		9M22M		9M22?
Jan-15	S-5MO	Apr-15	9M22U		9M22M	Jan-16	9M22U
	S-5MO		9M22U		9M22M		9M22M
	S-5MO		9M22U		9M22M		9M22M
	S-5MO		9M22U		9M22M		9M22M
	S-5KO		9M22U		9M22?		9M22M

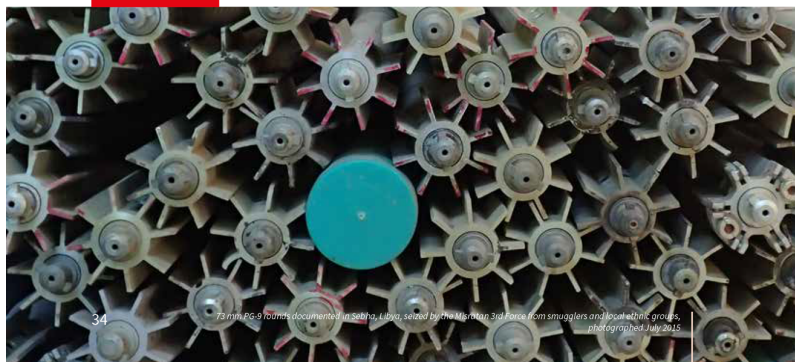
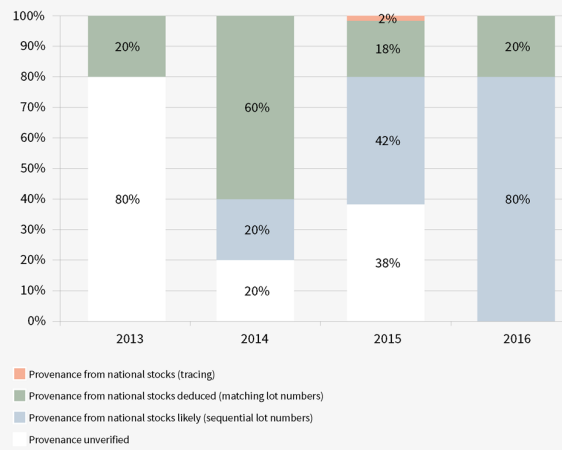
KEY

- Rockets directly traced to Malian state stocks through accompanying documentation or tracing
- Rockets very likely from Malian state stocks (matching lot numbers)
- Rockets probably from Malian state stocks (sequential lot numbers)

Sources: CAR documentation; Opération Barkhane; confidential sources, Mali

Box 2: Non-conventional rocket attacks in Mali, 2013–16 (contd)

Figure 15
Rockets seized or recovered from armed groups' caches or P-IED attacks, Mali,
March 2013–March 2016





CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Outflows from Ivorian state stockpiles are less well understood than those from Mali. Weapons that likely originate in Ivorian stockpiles are prevalent as far afield as the Central African Republic, which is a significant unanticipated finding of this research.

Without a baseline of Malian and Ivorian state stockpiles of arms and (particularly) ammunition, it is almost impossible to quantify the prevalence of arms from Ivorian state stockpiles among illicit weapons across the region. However, use of the 'isotope' method—whereby one weapon type serves as a marker for larger flows—at least indicates the geographical spread of these weapons. In this case, the isotope weapons are a distinctive series of Type 56-2 assault rifles.³⁸

All such rifles originate from a single Chinese factory and feature serial numbers in the range 3700000–3732000. Although the Chinese government has not responded to trace requests regarding specific rifles, it has confirmed to the UN that 13 rifles in this range (3703417–3731808)—which UNOCI collected from Forces Nouvelles personnel during formal disarmament and

demobilisation processes in 2012—were originally lawfully exported to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire prior to 2004. Since Chinese Type 56-2 assault rifles are usually exported in crates containing very close serial numbers,³⁹ rifles documented outside Côte d'Ivoire whose serial numbers fall between those known to have been exported to Côte d'Ivoire are very likely (although not certain) to have been supplied during this transfer to Côte d'Ivoire.

CAR has documented small numbers of rifles in this range in Mali, but larger numbers in the Central African Republic. In the latter case they constituted 20 per cent of all illicit AK-pattern rifles that CAR documented in the country from 2014–15 and more than 35 per cent of illicit Type 56-2 rifles. This is a significant proportion, given that the Type 56-2 is also the standard service rifle of the Forces Armées Centrafricaines (FACA).⁴⁰

CAR has also confirmed that two rifles in this serial number range were captured from alleged al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) fighters near the Nigerien–Libyan border in September 2011 and August 2013.⁴¹

Table 6

Type 56-2 assault rifles manufactured in Factory 26 with '37XXXXX' serial numbers, documented in Mali and the Central African Republic, 2013-15

Serial number	Date documented	Location	Country	Armed group?	Notes
3700791	May-14	Bamingui	Central African Republic	n/a	Seized by armed elements from Ecofaune* (legitimate user); originally from the FACA
3704979	Apr-15	M'Poko Opération Sangaris Camp, Bangui	Central African Republic	n/a	Provenance unknown; among various stocks collected from armed groups and civilians
3710972	Apr-15	Bria	Central African Republic	n/a	Voluntary civilian collection (MINUSCA Police)
3711122	Apr-15	Obo	Central African Republic	n/a	International operation against 'janjaweed' and LRA elements
3711633	May-14	Bamingui	Central African Republic	n/a	Seized by armed elements from Ecofaune (legitimate user); originally from the FACA
3717862	Apr-15	Mbaiki	Central African Republic	Ex-Séléka	Seized by MINUSCA forces
3718199	May-15	Gao-Gossi road	Mali	n/a	Seized from two armed men on a motorcycle
3718854	Apr-15	Bangui	Central African Republic	n/a	Voluntary civilian collection point
3725797	Apr-15	Obo	Central African Republic	n/a	International operation against 'janjaweed' and LRA elements
3728850	Apr-15	Bangui	Central African Republic	n/a	Voluntary civilian collection point
3729769	Apr-15	Bria	Central African Republic	Ex-Séléka (Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement)	Opération Big Boumou (MINUSCA-Opération Sangaris)
3730237	Mar-13	Gao	Mali	Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest	Recovered after departure of armed groups from town

* See EU (n.d.).

Figure 16

Type 56-2 Factory 26 assault rifle captured from former Séléka (Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement) fighters in Bria, Central African Republic, during a joint MINUSCA–Sangaris operation 11 February 2015, documented on 16 April 2015



© Conflict Armament Research

Without more detailed information from the Chinese and Ivorian governments about the original export of these rifles and their distribution to Ivorian forces, it is difficult to be certain about the precise point at which they were diverted. Indeed, legal onward transfers from Ivorian stockpiles may have preceded the (illegal) diversion.

For example, CAR identified two such rifles in the looted inventory of Ecofaune—the European Union-funded wildlife protection force in northern Central African Republic—which the FACA had originally donated to Ecofaune (EU, n.d.; see Table 6). It is thus possible that Côte d'Ivoire disposed of some of the rifles by retransfer to the Central African government. A senior FACA military intelligence officer and a wildlife service stockpile officer confirmed that such a transfer took place in early 2012, although it remains unclear which Ivorian authority authorised the transfer and how

the rifles were physically delivered to the Central African Republic.⁴²

International forces in Mali seized another rifle from the same serial number sequence from armed civilians who were travelling from the Burkina Faso border towards the Gao region in May 2015, suggesting that traffickers may have smuggled it from Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso, possibly as a result of cross-border movement of Forces Nouvelles elements or other non-state actors.

CAR continues to seek more detailed information on the status of these rifles in Ivorian stockpiles in order to verify the accuracy of these hypotheses. Yet the fact that the rifles entered Mali as late as mid-2015 indicates that they continue to constitute new supply sources for armed actors in the region, even if their original diversion from Ivorian state stockpiles may have occurred several years ago.

INTERNATIONAL FORCES IN MALI SEIZED ONE RIFLE IN THIS SAMPLE FROM ARMED CIVILIANS TRAVELLING FROM THE BURKINABÉ BORDER TOWARDS THE GAO REGION IN MAY 2015, SUGGESTING THAT TRAFFICKERS MAY HAVE SMUGGLED IT FROM CÔTE D'IVOIRE TO BURKINA FASO.

SECTION 4

MIDDLE EASTERN SMALL ARMS IN SAHELIAN ISLAMIST ATTACKS: AN EMERGING TREND

TRANSNATIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS

Although most successfully traced illicit weapons in the Sahel region derive from Libyan, Malian and Ivorian state stockpiles, armed groups' supply and logistics networks appear to extend well beyond these countries.

One case in point are supplies of the Nokia 105 mobile telephone, which is commonly used as a timer device to launch 122 mm rocket attacks against international and national forces in northern Mali (see Box 2). CAR examined seven such telephones that were recovered from two separate attacks near Ansongo on 28 February 2015 and 6 January 2016, and from the site of a suspected IED factory that exploded in the Chateau district of Gao town on 23 March 2015.

Five of these telephones and three of their SIM cards have so far been traced. All three SIM cards were for a network operator that does not operate in Mali, and all five telephones were originally supplied to a Nigerian distributor in four separate shipments to Nigeria and Senegal just months before their recovery in northern Mali.⁴³

CAR continues to investigate their chain of custody.

Similarly, separatist armed groups' 4 x 4 vehicles appear to have been procured outside Mali, despite the prevalence of thefts of such vehicles from civilians and security forces in the country. CAR traced the supply routes of five Toyota Land Cruiser vehicles captured by GATIA forces from the MNLA in Ménaka, northern Mali, on 27 April 2015.⁴⁴ None of the five vehicles had been legally imported into Mali.⁴⁵ Two had originally been imported into Algeria in 2008; two into Saudi Arabia by a major Saudi importer of Toyota vehicles that supplies several other countries;⁴⁶ and one by an Omani importer that subsequently sold the vehicle to a Dubai-based import-export dealer operated by two Libyan nationals.⁴⁷

Although CAR has not yet reconstructed these vehicles' full chains of custody, it is clear that either the MNLA or the individuals or groups from which the MNLA obtained or captured these vehicles originally obtained them outside Mali.



Misratan 3rd Force on patrol, Sebha, Libya, photographed July 2015

A GROWING BODY OF EVIDENCE POINTS TO A DISTINCTIVE SET OF SMALL ARMS THAT FIGHTERS FROM AQIM AND AL-MOURABITOUNE HAVE USED IN 'MARAUDING' ATTACKS AGAINST CIVILIAN AND GOVERNMENT TARGETS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN MALI, BURKINA FASO, AND CÔTE D'IVOIRE SINCE MID-2015.

SMALL ARMS OF MIDDLE EASTERN PROVENANCE

A growing body of evidence points to a distinctive set of small arms that fighters from AQIM and al-Mourabitoune have used in 'marauding' attacks against civilian and government targets in central and southern Mali, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire since mid-2015. The weapons used—AK-pattern Type 56-1 assault rifles—are a type which are readily available from local sources in the region but which seem instead to have been sourced transnationally. These rifles are not of obvious Libyan or Malian provenance, and CAR had not documented them anywhere else in Mali or the sub-region before these attacks.

- Al-Mourabitoune and the allied Force du Libération de Maçina used, amongst other weapons, three Chinese Type 56-1 assault rifles carrying semi-sequential serial numbers in the format '560XXXX' in attacks against the Hotel Byblos in Sévaré (Mopti region) and the Hotel Radisson Blu in Bamako in August and November 2015, respectively.⁴⁸
- CAR understands that AQIM has used rifles also carrying '560XXXX' serial numbers in at least three other attacks: (1) at the Hotel Splendid and Le Cappuccino café in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso, on 15 January 2016; (2) in Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, on 13 March 2016; and (3) against the EU Training Mission headquarters in the ACI 2000 district of Bamako on 21 March 2016.

In all cases, codes normally indicating the manufacturer and year of manufacture on the rear-sight blocks of the eight rifles had been deliberately erased, although in the case of the rifle from the Hotel Byblos attack, they were still partially readable, and suggested that the rifle was manufactured in Chinese State Factory 26 in 2011. Evidence from other Factory 26 rifles manufactured from 2010-13 indicate that the

serial number prefix '560XXXX' corresponds to manufacture in 2011. These rifles are therefore of considerably more recent manufacture than any other rifles so far documented in the hands of non-state actors in the region.

The Chinese government has not yet responded to trace requests sent by either CAR or UN bodies regarding these rifles, but has specifically denied any supplies of Chinese weapons to Libya since 2011, when these rifles were likely manufactured. Significantly, however, CAR has documented two Chinese Type 56-1 rifles from the same '560' serial number series in January 2015 in Kobane (Syria), following capture by the YPG from IS forces (see Table 7 and Figure 18). These corresponding serial numbers suggest that China may have originally transferred all the Type 56-1 rifles used in these attacks to the same legal end user and that Islamist fighters responsible for the West African attacks may share a common source of supply with IS forces in Syria.

Another possible scenario may be that corresponding rifles in West Africa and Syria reflect the movement of individual fighters travelling with their own weapons. This view would support the theory that a single cell was responsible for recent attacks in Sévaré, Bamako, Ouagadougou, and Grand-Bassam. This cell may have either procurement or personnel connections to combatants in Syria, even though its attacks were claimed by groups ostensibly allied with al-Qaeda rather than IS forces.

These findings merit further investigation as possible indicators of changing acquisition networks for Islamist armed groups operating in—and possibly between—the Sahel and the Middle East.

Table 7

Type 56-1 Factory 26 rifles of 2011 manufacture (series '560XXXX' serial numbers) with similarly erased rear-sight block markings documented in Mali and Syria, 2015

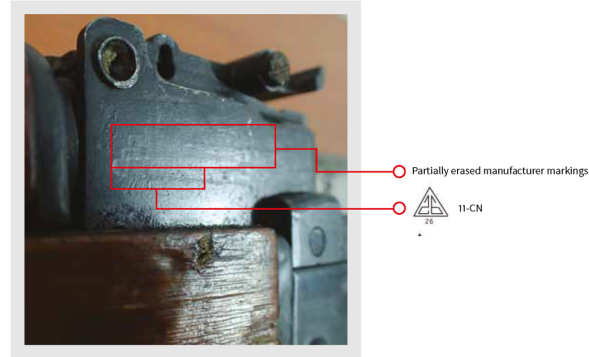
Serial number	Date documented	Location	Country	Armed group claiming attack or possession?
56011258	Feb-15	Kobane, Aleppo Governorate	Syria	IS Forces
560XXXX	Nov-15	Hôtel Radisson Blu, Bamako	Mali	Al-Mourabitoune
56037724	Feb-15	Kobane, Aleppo Governorate	Syria	IS Forces
560XXXX	Aug-15	Hôtel Byblos, Sévaré	Mali	Al-Mourabitoune/ Force de libération du Macina
560XXXX	Nov-15	Hôtel Radisson Blu, Bamako	Mali	Al-Mourabitoune

Note: CAR has the full serial numbers of all of these rifles but has only listed partial numbers for certain rifles in view of ongoing law enforcement investigations.

Sources: Conflict Armament Research; AFPTV

Figure 17

Type 56-1 assault rifle manufactured in 2011 and recovered after the attack on the Hôtel Byblos, Sévaré, Mali, 7 August 2015



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Figure 18
Type 56-1 assault rifle (2011 manufacture) seized by the YPG from IS after the battle of Kobane, Syria



Notes: This weapon was documented by CAR on 22 February 2015.
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The al-Mourabitoune-aligned Front de libération du Macina, which has claimed responsibility for other recent attacks in the Mopti region of central Mali, and has also used rifles of Middle Eastern provenance. These include a Hungarian-manufactured AK63 bearing an Iraqi import mark, used in an attack in Tenenkou in January 2015.

It also used a 1987 Iraqi-manufactured Tabuk AKMS rifle—a type not previously documented in the sub-region—which Malian security forces recovered after an attack on a gendarme patrol close to Dialloubé on 19 January 2016. CAR is currently tracing these rifles with the assistance of manufacturing governments.

THESE CORRESPONDING SERIAL NUMBERS SUGGEST THAT CHINA MAY HAVE ORIGINALLY TRANSFERRED ALL THE TYPE 56-1 RIFLES USED IN THESE ATTACKS TO THE SAME LEGAL END USER, AND THAT ISLAMIST FIGHTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WEST AFRICAN ATTACKS MAY SHARE A COMMON SOURCE OF SUPPLY WITH ISLAMIC STATE FORCES IN SYRIA.

The prevalence of weapons of Eastern European provenance in these recent attacks in the central/southern Sahel should not be overstated. For instance, a second rifle recovered after the Grand-Bassam attack in March 2016 bears a serial number matching a batch previously documented in both FAMa and Ivorian stockpiles (and also matching a rifle seized by the Nigerien security agencies following a confrontation with armed AQIM combatants in 2013). This match is not conclusive proof that the rifle originated in Malian or Ivorian stocks, but unlike the 'Middle Eastern' rifles discussed above, it is not significantly different from the regionally prevalent small arms detailed in Section 3.

In addition, materiel of Middle Eastern provenance existed in the region prior to the spate of attacks that began in mid-2015. In mid-2014, for example, international forces recovered a crate of Polish armour-piercing PG-7M rounds from MNLA forces near Kidal. The Polish government confirmed to CAR that the rounds were likely supplied to the Polish peacekeeping contingent in Lebanon in the early 1990s and then transferred to the Lebanese authorities after the contingent's withdrawal.⁴⁹ Since the Polish contingent withdrew from Lebanon in 2009, the appearance of this item among non-state actors in northern Mali suggests that it was trafficked from the Middle East to Mali in a relatively short period of time.

Figure 19
Polish-manufactured 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition with headstamp 21_81



Notes: This type of ammunition was documented in use by Malian Garde Nationale personnel in northern Mali, August 2015. CAR has confirmed that ammunition with the same headstamp was used in the attack claimed by AQIM in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, in March 2016.

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CONCLUSION

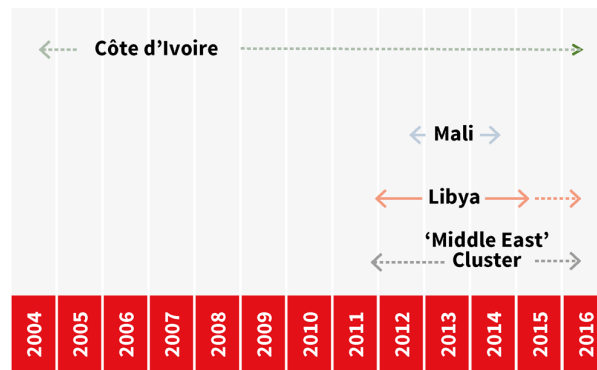
Evidence presented in this report indicates significant outflows of state-held weapons not only from Libya, but also from Côte d'Ivoire and Mali into the Sahel region. Flows of weapons and ammunition that are fuelling armed conflicts in this region can largely be traced back to the breakdown of physical stockpile security following state collapse or to the wholesale seizure of government arsenals by non-state actors as in Mali.

On a smaller scale, illicit weapons across the region have been diverted from poorly controlled security agency stockpiles in fragile states such as

Côte d'Ivoire, possibly over a longer period of time (see Figure 20).

In addition, since mid-2015 Islamist combatants responsible for unconventional attacks in the southern Sahel region have used much newer small arms that match those documented among Islamist combatants in Syria. These small arms cannot have entered the Sahel region before 2011, and since CAR did not document them in the region prior to mid-2015, they may have entered much more recently.

Figure 20
Time ranges of major weapon outflows from state stocks and other sources



Notes: Solid arrows represent confirmed time ranges when outflows were occurring; dotted arrows represent possible time ranges within which observed illicit weapons in the region could have left their respective national stocks.

WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION FUELLING ARMED CONFLICTS IN THIS REGION ORIGINATE PRIMARILY FROM THE BREAKDOWN OF PHYSICAL STOCKPILE SECURITY FOLLOWING STATE COLLAPSE OR FROM THE WHOLESALE SEIZURE OF GOVERNMENT STOCKS BY NON-STATE ACTORS.

What do these modalities and timings of weapon flows in the region mean for arms control efforts in the Sahel? The design of such interventions is beyond the scope of this report, but five key findings might influence the planning of these interventions:

1. Outflows from state stockpiles other than those in Libya provide a significant proportion of the region's illicit weapons.

An exclusive policy focus on securing Libyan stockpiles, even if it were logistically or politically feasible, would not be sufficient. Physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) efforts elsewhere in the region—particularly in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali—remain important to curb and prevent regional trafficking.

2. Recent inflows into Libya are likely flowing out again within a matter of months, at least as far as Mali.

Controlling and interdicting these new inflows may be as important for regional stability as securing existing Libyan stockpiles.

3. Outflows from countries such as Mali have resulted not from inadequate stockpile management or piecemeal leakage from state stocks, but primarily from events when state control of a region has collapsed entirely and non-state groups have taken over the stocks of state security forces.

Better PSSM practices, although important, are unlikely to prevent such events.

4. The significant weapon outflows from Côte d'Ivoire detailed above could have taken place at any time since 2004. Further investigation is required to determine whether such outflows are still continuing.

The identification of small quantities of small arms ammunition of likely Ivorian state provenance used in attacks against Malian security forces in southern Mali during 2015 underlines the need for investigation of such leakages from state stockpiles. While the UN Mine Action Service and non-governmental organisations have successfully secured 40,000 tonnes of Ivorian state weapons and 40 per cent of state armouries since 2011,⁵⁰ unaccounted Ivorian stockpiles represent a serious challenge. Particularly in northern Côte d'Ivoire, large volumes of light and heavy weapons and ammunition remain under the control of formally reintegrated, but semi-autonomous ex-rebel commanders, constituting potential points of diversion.⁵¹

5. CAR has not yet been able to attribute the weapons used in the spate of unconventional attacks by Islamist groups in the south-western Sahel since mid-2015 to existing stockpiles in the region, in contrast to much of the weaponry used in armed violence in the region from 2011 to 2014.

Although it remains possible that these weapons derive from a Sahelian source that CAR has yet to document, their correspondence with weapons of Iraqi manufacture or originally in Iraqi state stocks, and with those documented in Syria in the hands of IS fighters further suggests that they may not be from the Sahel region. This inference emphasises the limits of PSSM as a means with which to combat Sahelian weapon trafficking and underscores the need to supplement PSSM efforts with intelligence-led tracking of trafficking networks, including those beyond the boundaries of the Sahel itself.

ENDNOTES

- 1 This is the case, for instance, for Polish assault rifles exported to Libya in the 1970s, a period for which Polish export records have not been preserved. Data is also unavailable for a range of Belgian ammunition exported to Libya in the 1960s and 1970s by Poudreries Réunies de Belgique SA, for which government export records do not exist and for which only partial records survive in the (now bankrupt) company's archives.
- 2 Correspondence with the Government of Poland, 29 December 2015; UNSC (2013, para. 62).
- 3 Documentation provided by Opération Barkhane.
- 4 CAR documentation, 2015.
- 5 Documentation from a confidential regional source.
- 6 See the discussion on Polish Kbk-AMNS rifles in Box 1.
- 7 See details of SA-7b tubes recovered from caches north-east of Gao in December 2014, (Table 2 and Figure 2).
- 8 Interviews with Opération Maliba personnel, Gao, September 2015; inspection of seized weapons in FAMA custody. Unfortunately, available records do not disaggregate seized weapons by location or date, nor do they identify the individual or group from which they were seized.
- 9 Interviews with international counter-IED personnel in Bamako and Gao, June 2015; documentation obtained by CAR from PRB archives, Belgium.
- 10 Interviews with local officials, Aouzou, Chad, November 2015.
- 11 Interviews with local residents, Tibesti, November and December 2015.
- 12 Brigades present in Ubari and Sebha have personal connections to both separatist and Islamist Tuareg-based groups in northern Mali. Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) personnel move regularly between Kidal and Ubari/Sebha, including the MNLA's chief of staff, Mohamed Ag Najem, who was previously based in Sebha as a colonel in the Libyan Army. The leader of Ubari's Brigade 315, Cheikh Ahmed Omar al-Ansari, is reportedly a relative of the Ansar Dine leader Iyad Ag Ghaly.
- 13 This reportedly includes a significant Tebou convoy from Sebha in May 2015 via Anefis and Aguelhok. A small number of mercenary Tebou fighters are allegedly present in MNLA ranks, particularly in the personal unit of Moussa Ag Nagem, brother of the MNLA chief of staff. CAR has not independently confirmed these claims (CAR interviews with MNLA combatants, location undisclosed, September 2015).
- 14 Interviews with MNLA and GATIA combatants, locations undisclosed, August and September 2015.
- 15 Interviews with combatants, locations undisclosed, August and September 2015.
- 16 For a summary, see UNSC (2016a, paras. 160–62).
- 17 Interviews with international counter-IED personnel, Bamako, June 2015. The shift should not be overstated: 122 mm 'GRAD' artillery rounds and 120 mm mortar rounds remain the dominant munitions for IED attacks in northern Mali and have been used as recently as September 2016.
- 18 Interviews with police officials and observations, Niamey, Niger, September and December 2015.
- 19 Interviews with FACA senior military intelligence officers, Bangui, July 2015. Other foreign forces deployed to the Central African

ENDNOTES

- Republic to provide presidential protection include units from Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Africa; Chad in particular could have obtained Libyan weapons since its conflict with Libya began in the late 1970s.
- 20 Interviews with SLA-MM and JEM representatives in Sudan and Uganda, 2012–14.
- 21 Interviews with Chadian authorities, Tibesti region, November–December 2015.
- 22 Interviews with Tebou community leaders, combatants, and traffickers, Tibesti region, November–December 2015. This control coincides with the Chadian government's long-standing preference for relying on local Tebou communities—and their traditional non-permeability to external influences—to maintain stability in northern Chad and to act as a bulwark against the possible southward expansion of the Libyan Islamists' sphere of influence.
- 23 Interviews with Chadian authorities, Tibesti region, November–December 2015.
- 24 Interviews with Tebou community leaders, combatants, traffickers and Chadian authorities, Tibesti region, November–December 2015.
- 25 Interviews with Chadian authorities, Tibesti region, November–December 2015.
- 26 For further details, see the reports of the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, since 2012.
- 27 On 29 June 2016, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia responded promptly to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 24 May 2016. In its response, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia stated that it delivered 132 M79 rockets with lot number TB8606 (the same lot number as the item documented by CAR) to the Slovak end-user Vojenský Oprávněný Podnik, Podnik 015, (with end user certificate number č. D502/0041, dated 14 February 2005) for demilitarisation. Slovenian authorities issued an export licence to the company Viator & Vector d.d., Ljubljana, Slovenia. The Vrankar d.o.o company shipped the consignment by road between 13 May 2005 and 9 August 2005, to the declared end-user in Slovakia. The Slovenian authorities cannot confirm that the item CAR documented was part of this shipment however, as the rounds were initially in the custody of the Yugoslavian Army, and therefore it is likely that another former Yugoslavian state retained items with the same lot number.
- 28 See, for instance, Small Arms Survey (2011).
- 29 Interviews with combatants and residents based in Tibesti, Kampala, and South Kordofan, 2012–15.
- 30 CAR weapon dataset from field observations in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile states in Sudan; South Sudan (among equipment captured from or handed over by anti-government rebel movements); the Central African Republic (in stockpiles recovered from former Séléka combatants); and Côte d'Ivoire (as part of materiel delivered in violation of the UN arms embargo), 2012–2016. See also Leff and LeBrun (2014).
- 31 See, for example, UNODC (2013, pp. 33–37). For a typical summary statement of this view of Sahelian weapon flows, see Richards (2016, p. 7).
- 32 Interviews with personnel from Opération Maliba, FAMa, Gao, September 2015.
- 33 Interviews with international personnel who were present in Kidal during May 2014, Bamako, June 2015. Members of the Coordination des mouvements et forces patriotiques de résistance, and members of the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad section within of the pro-government Plateforme armed group coalition reported that they had seized four ex-FAMa BTR-60 armoured personnel carriers from MNLA forces in Anefis in August 2015; these claims have not been confirmed.
- 34 Photographs of weapon caches recovered by international forces north and east of Gao during December 2014 and January 2015; correspondence with the Government of Bulgaria, 8 June 2015.
- 35 The UN Panel of Experts on Libya in particular has reported that between four and six BM-21 122 mm rocket systems—the type that is most

- prevalent in the rocket attacks discussed here—entered Mali from Sebha in 2012, although it does not identify the transporters or intended users of these systems (UNSC, 2016a, p. 168).
- 36 Interviews with UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali personnel, Bamako and Gao, June and September 2015.
- 37 This figure includes complete rockets recovered from caches or failed attacks and identifiable remnants of rockets recovered after attacks.
- 38 For a description of the idea of an 'isotope' weapon—a distinctive type, lot, or series of weapon potentially indicative of the provenance of an illicit shipment or cache—see Chivers (2012).
- 39 Observations of crates of Chinese Type 56-2 assault rifles in state stockpiles of an undisclosed East African country, October 2015; responses of the Chinese government to trace requests from the UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic regarding Type 56-2 assault rifles (UNSC, 2014, p. 122).
- 40 CAR documentation, Bangui, Bria, and Bambari, September 2014 and April 2015.
- 41 Confidential regional source.
- 42 Interviews, Bangui, July 2015.
- 43 CAR is currently investigating the onward commercial chain of custody of these telephones.
- 44 On 7 September 2015, Toyota Motor Corporation responded promptly to a formal tracing request issued by CAR on 10 August 2015. In its response, Toyota Motor Corporation confirmed the following: 1) the Toyota Land Cruiser with VIN number JTFLJ71J498017965, was delivered in September 2008 to Abdul Latif Jameel Import and Distribution Co. Ltd. (P.O. Box 248, Jeddah 21411), Saudi Arabia; 2) the Toyota Land Cruiser with VIN number JTFLB71J388016673, was delivered in April 2008 to Abdul Latif Jameel Import and Distribution Co. Ltd. (P.O. Box 248, Jeddah 21412), Saudi Arabia; 3) the Toyota Land Cruiser with VIN number JTFLJ71J900012993, was delivered in February 2008 to Toyota Algeria S.P.A. (Lotissement Muchacho No. 2, Haut Site, D'Hydra 16035), Algeria; 4) the Toyota Land Cruiser with VIN number JTFLJ71J300012732, was delivered in December 2007 to Toyota Algeria S.P.A. (Lotissement Muchacho No. 2, Haut Site, D'Hydra 16036), Algeria; 5) the Toyota Land Cruiser with VIN number JTFLJ71J448007414, was delivered in March 2004 to Saud Bahwan Automotive LLC (P.O. Box 3168, Ruwi, Postal Code 112), Oman and 6) none of the vehicles listed above were exported as part of a larger consignment.
- 45 Email correspondence with a source in Bamako, February 2016.
- 46 Toyota vehicles that were originally imported by this supplier have also been used by the Sudan Armed Forces in Darfur and South Kordofan.
- 47 Communication from Omani importer, 28 December 2015. The Dubai-based purchaser is Tummo Trading LLC, which is directed by and 49 per cent of which is controlled by Abed al Menzem Mohamed and Mohamed Shadi, both Libyan nationals. It is reasonable to assume that these individuals are the true owners of the company, since United Arab Emirates (UAE) company regulations require that a majority of the shares of a UAE-registered company be nominally owned by a UAE citizen.
- 48 CAR examination of weapons recovered from the Hôtel Byblos attack, Sévaré, 26 August 2015; footage of the forensic examination of weapons recovered from the Hôtel Radisson Blu attack, Bamako, 25 November 2015 (AFPTV, 2015).
- 49 Malian armed forces personnel recovered this crate of PG-7M/7MW armour-piercing rocket-propelled grenades in a fighting position of the MNL (Mouvement National de Liberation de Azawad) in Kidal, northern Mali, on 31 May 2014. On 29 December 2015, the Government of Poland responded to a formal trace request issued by CAR on 14 May 2015. This response stated that these grenades were produced in 1991 by Zakłady Sprzętu Precyzyjnego "Niewiadów", and that this crate was assigned to a unit of the Polish Army. The Government of Poland believes it is likely that in the early

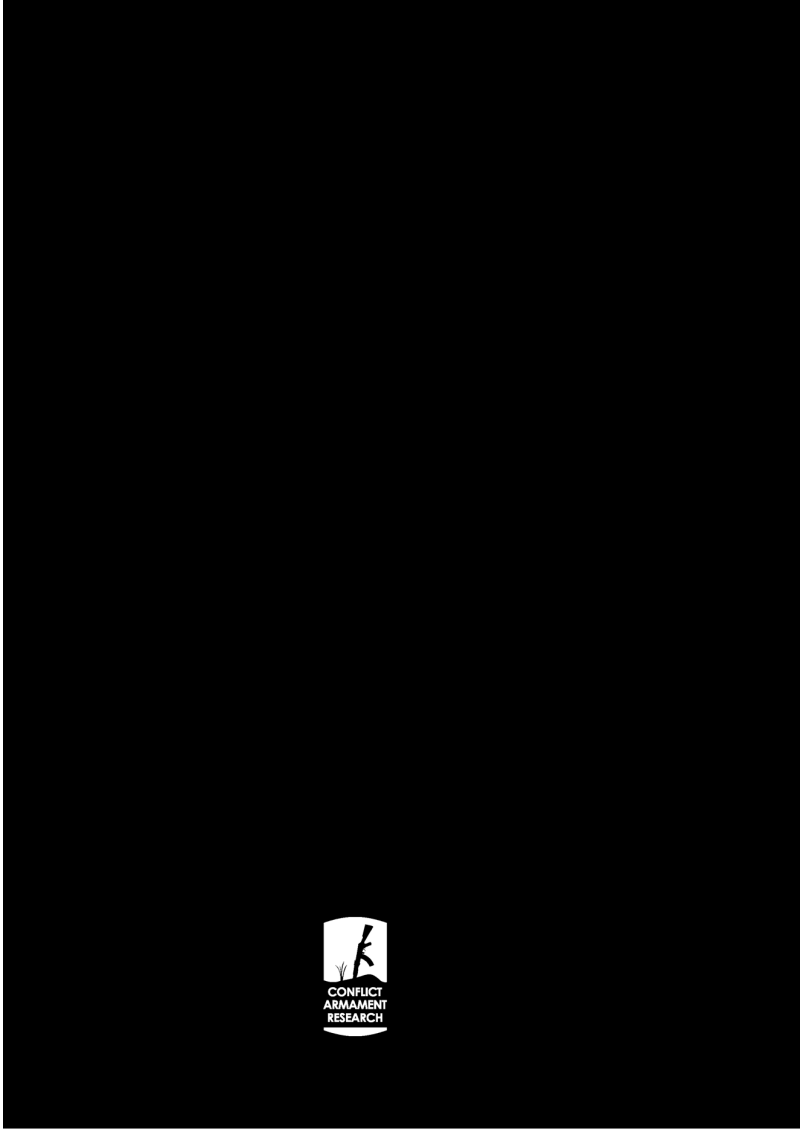
ENDNOTES

1990s the crate was transferred to a Polish peacekeeping contingent in Lebanon, which they believe likely gave it to the Lebanese authorities when they withdrew. CAR continues to investigate its onward chain of custody.

- 50 Presentation by Pierre Lemelin, UN Mine Action Service Côte d'Ivoire, Lomé, 16 March 2016.
- 51 UN and international observers are particularly concerned about the large arsenal of light and heavy weapons held by the Fourth Infantry Battalion at Korhogo under the control of the sanctioned former Forces Nouvelles ComZone commander Martin Kouakou Fofié (email correspondence with UN officials, Abidjan, September 2015); details are reflected in UNSC (2016b).

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Mr. SMITH. I appreciate that. This report details how “The demise of the Gaddafi regime in mid-2011 following the emergence of armed opposition in a NATO-led multinational intervention released large parts of the national stockpile from government control.”

The report goes on to state how “The proliferation of weapons from Gaddafi era stockpiles fueled the 2012 Tuareg and Islamic insurgencies in Mali and has allowed armed actors operating throughout the Sahel region, including in Chad and Niger, and possibly in the Central African Republic and Cote d’Ivoire, to acquire weapons including small arms and man-portable air defense systems, or MANPADS.”

The report also notes how large numbers of Tuareg fighters who have been recruited into Gaddafi’s Islamic Legion, the Mag Oer Brigade, and other parts of the Libyan army, left for Mali and Niger in 2011, and that is just the portion of the report dealing with the Sahel.

A tremendous amount of arms also found their way into Syria and into the hands of ISIS fighters, who carved out their channel house caliphate around Raqqa. The collapse of Libya into civil war also fractured its oil-based economy, which in turn led to a drying-up of economic opportunity for young men from the nations—and women—of the Sahel.

Thus, we think we need to confront the fact that while many of the problems in the region are endemic, our policy failures and misbegotten adventurism in 2011 helped fuel the crisis which you must address today. A regional multi-disciplinary approach to this crisis is necessary. Of course, there is a military aspect to our engagement in the region.

The deaths, as you pointed out, Madam Chair, of the four American soldiers in 2017 near the village of Tongo Tongo at the hands of a group which has declared an affiliation with the Islamic State and the Islamic State of Greater Sahara underscores the sacrifices that are being made to counter terrorism.

I understand that efforts were made to get Defense Department participation in today’s hearing, but they asserted jurisdictional issues, and that prevented it. Thus, I look forward to the State Department briefing us on our counterterrorism efforts, in addition to overall efforts of bringing stability to the region, so I do look forward to their expert witness. And I yield back.

Ms. BASS. Thank you, Mr. Smith.

I would now like to introduce our witnesses. Whitney Baird assumed duties as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for West Africa and Security Affairs in September 2018. Previously, she served as Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Western Europe and European Union and Regional Affairs in the European Bureau.

She was Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in London from 2014 to 2017. In addition to a number of positions in DC, she has also served overseas in Spain, Senegal, Togo, Canada, and Cameroon.

Our second witness, Cheryl Anderson, is the Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Africa, where she has been responsible for West Africa and development planning. Before that, she served as Acting Assistant Administrator for Africa.

Ms. Anderson joined USAID as a foreign service officer in 1988 and has extensive field experience. She served as the USAID Mission Director for south and southern Africa, Ghana, and East Africa, and as Deputy Mission Director for East Africa.

Before that, her overseas assignments included Sudan, eastern and southern African regional, Uganda, and the DRC. She began her career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ghana. We thank you both for your service. We have several Members of Congress that were also Peace Corps members.

Ms. Baird? Let me mention that we do have your full testimony, and so we would like for you to speak for 5 minutes. And I believe you can see that. When the light turns yellow, you have a minute. When it turns red, time is up. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF WHITNEY BAIRD, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR WEST AFRICA AND SECURITY AFFAIRS, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ms. BAIRD. Perfect. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Bass, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the subcommittee. It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the complex challenges in the Sahel and our approach to them.

First, I want to thank you for the interest and support we receive from Congress and from this subcommittee. Your willingness to visit the region and engage directly with the men and women at our embassies across Africa is greatly appreciated.

The rapidly spreading instability in the Sahel threatens U.S. national security and undermines our diplomatic goals. It enables the spread of terrorism, stifles economic growth, and thwarts democratic institutions. We are focused on three lines of effort—greater coordination with international and regional partners, bolstering State legitimacy in the region, and implementing the Algiers Accord in Mali.

Despite our efforts, the situation the Sahel continues to deteriorate. In Mali, signatories of the Algiers Peace Accord underperform on efforts to implement it. Terrorist groups exploit intercommunal attentions to further undercut tenuous government presence. And yet the government has largely failed to take the steps needed to reestablish State legitimacy and address insecurity.

We engage at every level with the Malian government, with its neighbors and international partners, to encourage progress and to hold bad actors accountable. Burkina Faso faces its own terrorist threat, compounded by cross-border incursions from neighboring violent extremists, but its ability to respond is limited. We employ diplomatic defense and development initiatives to help respond to the crisis and prevent violence and insecurity from spreading further.

On the other hand, Niger has managed to prevent extensive terrorist incursions in spite of instability on four borders. Niger is a good partner in a bad neighborhood. However, the security response we think is unsustainable. Niger is spending close to 25 percent of its budget on security, and that really precludes its investing in its people's needs.

We focus on coordinating with partners and shoring up State legitimacy. We are also aware of the possibility that instability could take root in the coastal States, directly threatening the heart of U.S. economic interest in the region. We are exploring ways to help these countries develop accountable, stable security institutions, and promote human rights and good governance.

We approach this litany of challenges through a comprehensive and balanced approach. Security-focused solutions are necessary but not sufficient in and of themselves. Development tools help government provide vital services to their citizens and improve economic opportunities for populations. Diplomatic engagement encourages good governance, improves coordination with our partners and other donors, and advances cornerstone objectives, such as implementing the Algiers Accord.

Our embassies maintain robust dialog with civil society organizations that play a crucial role in stabilizing the region and holding governments accountable. Our African partners also play a vital role, and the Sahelian countries have exercised greater leadership in addressing their fragility and security challenges.

For example, as you had mentioned, the G5 Sahel takes a holistic approach to security, and the coastal States have launched the Accra Initiative to improve security coordination and information-sharing in their military and security services. We also appreciate the increased role played by ECOWAS in coordinating the broader region's response to the crisis.

Thank you again for the opportunity, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Baird follows:]

Whitney Baird
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Human
Rights, and International Organizations
Hearing on the Sahel
November 14, 2019

Good afternoon members of the subcommittee. It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the complex, multifaceted challenges in the Sahel and our approach to them. I want to thank you for the bipartisan interest and support we receive from Congress and this Subcommittee, in particular. Your willingness to visit the region and engage directly with the men and women at our Embassies across Africa is greatly appreciated.

This Administration recognizes that the rapidly-spreading instability in the Sahel threatens U.S. national security and undermines our broader diplomatic goals. The fragility of these states and the instability they face enable the spread of terrorism, facilitate transnational organized crime, stifle economic growth, thwart democratic institutions, allow the spread of pandemic disease, and prompt further destabilizing migration flows. To address these challenges, and to restore security to the troubled region, State is focused on three lines of effort: greater coordination across the U.S. Government and with international and regional partners; bolstering state legitimacy; and implementation of the Algiers Accord in Mali.

The broader Sahel is an immense, sparsely populated territory, covering more than 3,300 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. Farmers, herders, traders, traffickers, and terrorists all share this enormous expanse. I focus on the western end of this area, which is a vast, largely unpopulated and undergoverned region, and which several HFAC members have visited recently. I have traveled there several times to see the situation on the ground, and the heroic work our people do in challenging circumstances. I also engage routinely with stakeholders, including the Europeans, international actors such as the UN, regional organizations like the G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) and ECOWAS in order to encourage greater action and attention to the creeping instability. I remain in close contact with our ambassadors on the ground to ensure unity of action between Washington and the field.

As some of you have seen, despite our efforts the situation in the Sahel continues to deteriorate. In Mali, signatories of the 2015 Algiers peace accord underperform

in their efforts to implement the agreement. Terrorist groups in central Mali exploit intercommunal tensions to further undercut tenuous government presence. These and other groups enjoy freedom of movement within northern and most of central Mali, and capitalize on porous borders to move between Libya, Niger, and Burkina Faso to resupply, conduct raids, and engage in illicit trafficking along trade routes. In spite of these threats, the Government of Mali has largely failed to take the urgent steps needed to reestablish state legitimacy and address insecurity. We are engaging at every level with the Malian government, and with the UN, the French, the European Union, and others to incentivize progress and to hold bad actors accountable, for example through sanctions regimes.

Burkina Faso faces its own rising terrorist threat, compounded by cross border incursions from neighboring violent extremist organizations. Although the Government of Burkina Faso understands the dire nature of the growing crisis, its ability to respond is limited. To that end, we are employing diplomatic, defense, and development initiatives to help respond to the crisis and prevent violence and insecurity from spreading further. In one example, our proactive engagement on human rights vetting caused the Government of Burkina Faso to suspend officers from an anti-drug unit after eleven individuals in their custody died and to open an investigation. Prompt action in this case helped keep the situation from turning into a flash point. Our programs are a microcosm of what is needed across the Sahel: greater state legitimacy, including by building effective, rights-respecting and citizen-responsive security services, and coordination across the U.S. Government and with our partners.

On the other hand, Niger has managed to blunt threats and prevent extensive terrorist incursions, in spite of instability on four borders. Niger is a good partner in a bad neighborhood, and has the political will and growing capacity to respond. However, this response is unsustainable. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world and spends close to 25 percent of its budget on security. This expenditure on security precludes investing in health, education, and other basic needs of the population. Niger has deftly managed ethno-regional tensions to discourage terrorist groups' recruitment within the country. The situation remains tenuous, and we should not assume long-term success without sustained support and engagement. We focus on coordinating with partners and shoring up state legitimacy, especially in underserved, remote, or otherwise marginalized regions.

Mauritania and Chad bookend this core, and have been impacted less directly. Mauritania has not had a terrorist attack on its territory since 2011, and continues to pursue avenues to rehabilitate and reintegrate its citizens who have been

involved in violent extremist activity. However, Mauritania is dealing with underlying ethnic and political tensions while simultaneously working out how to share proceeds from natural resource finds equitably. Chad's security services thus far have curtailed violent extremist activity within the country's borders. Chad faces internal divisions and threats from Libya and the Lake Chad region that tear at national cohesion. This underlying fragility makes both Chad and Mauritania vulnerable, and we continue to engage diplomatically to keep fragility from turning into fracture, for example, by encouraging these governments to engage with all parties as they chart a course for an inclusive future.

Beyond the Sahel, we are aware of the possibility that this instability could take root in the coastal states of West Africa, directly threatening the heart of U.S. economic interests in the region. Ghana, Guinea, Benin, Togo, Cote D'Ivoire, and Senegal are all at risk. To address this vulnerability, we are expanding our assistance to help these countries develop accountable, stable security institutions and promote human rights and good governance. We also applaud and continue to support the efforts these countries have undertaken through the Accra Initiative to improve coordination and information sharing among their military and security services.

We approach this litany of challenges through a comprehensive and balanced approach. Again, state legitimacy and coordination are key. Security-focused solutions, including military, intelligence, and law enforcement tools, are necessary, but not sufficient in and of themselves to address the insecurity that plagues the region. Development tools help governments provide vital services to their citizens and improve economic opportunities for populations. Both DoD and USAID activities provide invaluable diplomatic leverage, both with our host countries and with our European partners as we formulate sustainable divisions of labor. Diplomatic engagement likewise bolsters rights-respecting, citizen-responsive governance, improves coordination with our partners and other donors to ensure complementarity of effort, and advances cornerstone objectives, such as implementing the Algiers Accord in Mali. Our embassies maintain robust dialogue with civil society organizations that play a crucial role in stabilizing the region, holding governments accountable, and linking citizens to their institutions. Further, I am pleased to report that we are exploring new ways to ensure women have the tools they need to speak out on countering violent extremism.

Our African partners play a role in addressing their own challenges. We are encouraged that the Sahelian countries have individually and collectively exercised greater leadership in addressing their fragility and security challenges, with support

from the United States and other international partners. In 2017, the G5 Sahel launched a Joint Force to coordinate counterterrorism efforts. African troop and police contributions are likewise critical to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. The coastal states launched the Accra Initiative to ~~to~~ improve coordination and information sharing among their military and security services. These efforts are noteworthy, but U.S. leadership nurtures and strengthens them over the long-term.

Thank you again for allowing me to appear before you today and I look forward to answering your questions.

Ms. BASS. Wonderful.
Ms. Anderson.

STATEMENT OF CHERYL ANDERSON, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR AFRICA, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. ANDERSON. Good afternoon, Chair Bass, Ranking Member Smith. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Sahel and the rising violence we are seeing there. The dynamics underpinning violence in the Sahel are caused by a mix of persistent instability, poverty, deteriorating environmental conditions, governance challenges, and lack of economic opportunity, all fertile ground for extremists determined to advance their ideology.

USAID Administrator Mark Green has emphasized the urgency of addressing this violence. I appreciate the chance to share with you what we are going to respond to the crisis, to help reduce the violence, and to support resilience and eventual self-reliance.

As you have heard from Deputy Assistant Secretary Baird, the Sahel is a vast and complex region with rapidly spreading insecurity. We have seen an increase in violent extremist activity, inter-communal conflict, and violence related to criminal networks and other armed groups. Just last week, a deputy mayor who is also a member of Parliament in Burkina Faso was assassinated. We were deeply saddened by this news. He was well-known for his personal commitment to peace and good governance.

The escalation in violence has increased humanitarian needs, particularly in the tri-border area of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. At the same time, the presence of armed groups along those border areas has limited our humanitarian access. Population displacements are on the rise with more than 270,000 refugees and more than 900,000 internally displaced people in those three countries.

The situation is especially worrying in Burkina Faso. When I visited in March, we were alarmed that the number had just surpassed 100,000. That number now is close to 500,000. Despite the enormous security challenges, we are responding to these humanitarian needs. USAID has provided over \$130 million in humanitarian assistance in the three countries during Fiscal Year 2019, which includes emergency food aid and health services.

Such humanitarian assistance is central to USAID's mission. We will always stand with other countries when a humanitarian crisis strikes. But we also want to help our partner countries move toward the day when they no longer need our assistance. In the Sahel, USAID has developed a strategic vision and will work with our partners to address priority issues, countering violent extremism, building citizen responsive governance, and strengthening resilience.

I would like to give you a few examples. In countering violent extremism, USAID's Voices for Peace Program features broadcast radio and video programming on themes of peace, tolerance, good governance, and human rights, all in local languages and locally produced in partnership with respected local leaders and institutions. Voices for Peace generates positive local narratives and constructive dialogs about extremism.

One of the results has been an 18 percent jump in listeners who now feel confident that working in partnership with security forces can be an effective way to combat violent extremism. In the area of citizen responsive governance, with USAID's help, one example is that local governments are now better able to manage their natural resources and community conflicts.

Last year, USAID activities strengthened the effectiveness of almost 900 water user associations in Burkina Faso and Niger. USAID also supported the development of conflict mediation, which has helped reduce tensions in the region. These kinds of activities are critical to building stable, free societies and decreasing the appeal of extremist ideologies.

Finally, on resilience, in Burkina Faso and Niger, USAID's resilience program, known as RISE, helps individuals and communities to better manage crises, feed their families, and invest in their futures. Over the past 5 years, households and communities reached by RISE have diversified livelihoods and rely less on government assistance to cope with shocks. One measure of success is that participants in RISE agricultural activities have seen their incomes grow by an average of 45 percent.

While the situation in the Sahel presents a complex set of challenges, one thing we are sure of is that the situation will not get better if the United States looks the other way. Left unaddressed, extremist violence in the region will likely spread elsewhere affecting security and well-being of U.S. economic partners and allies. That is why our efforts are vital.

USAID is expanding our presence in the region, and we thank you for your support in that effort. We endeavor to leverage all available resources with our interagency colleagues and other partners to ensure the most effective and sustainable solutions to the challenges in the region.

Thank you for your time, your interest, and your leadership. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Anderson follows:]

Written Statement of Cheryl L. Anderson, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa
 United States Agency for International Development
 Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global
 Human Rights, and International Organizations
 November 14th, 2019

Good morning, Chair Bass, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Sahel and the rising violence in many parts of that region.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Mark Green has for many months emphasized the urgency of addressing the events unfolding in the Sahel. The region experienced a massive spike in deadly violence in the first half of 2019, and this violence shows no signs of letting up.

Many assume that extremism only is driving this conflict. Yet the dynamics that underpin violence in the Sahel is much more complex: a mix of persistent instability, extreme poverty, deteriorating environmental conditions, weak and often corrupt governments, and lack of economic opportunity. These factors and the conflict they give rise to offer fertile ground for extremists determines to advance their own ideology and power.

In response, USAID not only is providing humanitarian aid, but also programming assistance aggressively to focus on building the capacity of governments and local communities in the Sahel. We are also enhancing access to financial services and markets and generating employment opportunities. As USAID Administrator Mark Green always says - the purpose of foreign aid is to end the need for its existence. In the Sahel, USAID's investments promote resilience and self-reliance, with the eventual aim of diminishing the need for such assistance.

The Situation in the Sahel

Throughout Africa, instability and the emerging forces of violent extremism threaten USAID efforts to create economic opportunity while advancing our national security and prosperity. In recent years, violence and conflict across the Sahel have compounded the impact of emergencies such as food insecurity, malnutrition and epidemics, and have undermined efforts to uplift communities from chronic vulnerability.

To understand what is driving conflict in the Sahel, we have to first recognize the size and complexity of the region. It encompasses an enormous area that stretches from west to east across the breadth of the African continent, from southern Mauritania to northern Ethiopia. Its borders are porous and its vast spaces are often beyond the reach of the governments.

The people of the Sahel are frequently on the move, as they migrate along trade routes and follow seasonal herding and grazing patterns. While the region's land and resources have always been precious and limited, recent population growth, shifting weather patterns and environmental

degradation have all increased the competition for these resources. This increase in competition has led to an increase in violence.

In the past, customary arrangements and swift mediation from local leaders restrained such violence. But traditional systems for managing disputes have crumbled in recent years, and the modern government institutions that have taken their place have failed to mediate conflict effectively.

The Sahel has also become home to international criminal groups and political movements that add to the volatility and complexity of the region. We have seen an increase in jihadist activity, a resurgence of Boko Haram, inter-communal conflict, and criminal and armed groups. In fact, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, there has been a notable escalation in deadly violence across the Sahel. From November 2018 to March 2019, reported fatalities linked to direct attacks that targeted civilians have increased by roughly 7,000 percent in Burkina Faso, 500 percent in Niger and over 300 percent in Mali. And on March 23, 2019 an unprecedented massacre took place in the village of Ogossagou in the Mopti region of Mali, which left 174 men, women, and children from the Fulani ethnic group dead. The rising tide of extremist and intercommunal violence that is gripping the Sahel shows few signs of stopping. This is a global phenomenon, and no part of the world is immune.

USAID in the Sahel

In the face of instability and violence in the Sahel, the temptation is for us to look for sweeping solutions that have the capacity to address all of these problems at once. However, history and experience have shown us that the drivers of violent extremism are very often localized. While we should be nimble and prepared to respond to local problems and triggers, we should also broadly reinforce economic, social, and governance institutions so they can withstand potential exploitation by malign actors. We need to help governments grow stronger by investing in their economies, governance, and people.

We design our activities and interventions to reduce extremists' opportunities to exploit social injustice, economic inequality, religious persecution, and ideological extremism to recruit followers. It is in our interest to be on the side of those who are working to end violence in places like the Sahel. Helping governments get stronger, respond to their citizens, and offer their people a better future is a smart investment in our own security.

Across the Sahel, USAID has developed a strategic, regional vision to address priority issues -- countering violent extremism, improving citizen-responsive governance, and fostering resilience. We bring our development expertise and more than a decade of experience in countering violent extremism programming to bear — harnessing the full range of tools to design, support, and measure programs that build government legitimacy, help reduce popular grievances, and increase economic opportunity for those most vulnerable to extremist recruitment.

USAID works through partner governments, local civil-society and faith-based organizations, and regional economic communities to strengthen capacity and provide African-led solutions to African development challenges. Through our work, we help reduce sympathy and support for Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (known as AQIM), the so-called Islamic State,

and similar organizations by addressing the structural conditions conducive to the rise and spread of violent extremism. We recently collaborated with both the Governments of Mali and Niger to help draft inclusive national strategies to counter violent extremism.

USAID's programs in the Sahel help reinforce institutions and governments so they can better respond and preempt local drivers of conflict. For example, through the Voices for Peace activity, we use local-language radio programming to increase community cohesion and prevent the spread of violent extremism. By partnering with respected leaders, institutions, and networks we address the drivers and root causes of violent extremism such as marginalization, exclusion, and poor governance. Our program empowers locally influential voices, establishes interactive media platforms, and engages at-risk youth, women, and communities. This increases social cohesion and solidarity, one of the most effective ways to promote resilience to increased radicalization and violence in the region. The project initially targeted Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, but expanded in February 2018 to northern Cameroon and in April 2018 to eastern Mali. By amplifying moderate voices of peace and tolerance and strengthening positive local narratives, our program expands access to information, and increases dialogue and exchange to promote peace and counter violent extremism.

USAID's interventions have also allowed the Government of Niger to revise its state of emergency measures that have been in place since 2015, which had limited economic activity and further exacerbated the violent extremism problem. The Government of Niger's response included lifting the ban on fishing and the sale of fish in Diffa, as well as the ban on farming and commercialization of pepper - both important sources of livelihood for the communities in the region.

Though the lifting of these fishing bans has helped the Diffa communities, the economic situation remains dire. Severe flooding aggravates the humanitarian crisis in the region, having destroyed livelihoods of people already suffering from year-long conflict and the persisting insecurity. In addition, the August 20 closure of the Nigerian border increasingly hinders trade in the region. Finally, the continued prevalence of kidnappings and attacks from Boko Haram hamper local communities and authorities out of fear they may become a target.

In Burkina Faso and Niger, USAID's Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced program reduces humanitarian caseloads and creates partnerships with governments, community groups, and the private sector. Now in its second phase, the United States will commit more than \$540 million in Niger and \$190 million in Burkina Faso over the next five years to help the most vulnerable populations build resilience to climatic and other shocks and permanently escape poverty.

In Mali, our peacebuilding and reconciliation activities start with small projects to strengthen community level governance, civic engagement, and conflict resolution. The grass-roots approach serves to develop a nuanced village-by-village understanding of conflict dynamics for greater inclusion and better buy-in to create social cohesion and trust from the bottom up.

You may ask how we know if our programs to counter violent extremism are actually working. In late 2018, a rigorous impact evaluation demonstrated that one USAID project successfully changed attitudes and perceptions, lowered justification for violence, heightened

understanding of poor governance as a key threat to the country, and increased the likelihood that communities collaborate with security forces. This success tells us we are on the right path. And we are constantly evaluating, learning, and adapting our programs to reflect current realities.

The Future of the Sahel

Recently, the United States Government started the process of building integrated programming (humanitarian, stabilization, and development) in areas of Burkina Faso and Niger most directly affected by cross-border instability from Mali. These efforts will focus on food security, water, income generation, health, community cohesion, and citizen-responsive governance. USAID's investments will strengthen governments and local communities; promote resilience and self-reliance to eventually diminish the need for long-term assistance. This is part of a broader national security partnership with the Governments of Burkina Faso and Niger and affected communities implemented in coordination with the U.S. Departments of State and Defense, and other U.S. Government Departments and Agencies.

Left unaddressed, the extremist elements that have taken root in the Sahel will likely expand elsewhere, affecting U.S. partners and allies. That is why our efforts are vital. Through assessment, implementation, and evaluation, we are learning what works and what does not. The United States is a leader in this area, and we consult closely with local and international partners to create the most effective and sustainable solutions to address violent extremism. Because trends in extremism are fluid, we constantly reassess our priorities, our progress, and our policies to ensure we base our work on the realities of today.

These are challenging issues. But one thing we know for sure is that the situation will not get better if the United States looks the other way. It is not the time to turn our backs but rather to double down, as we are doing in Niger. Congress recently approved, in a bipartisan manner, the upgrade of our office in Niger to a full USAID Mission, and our presence in Cameroon to a USAID office, and we are in the process of selecting new staff and establishing these new operating units. This is another powerful step that exemplifies the commitment of the United States to not only to the region, but to Africa as a whole.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Ms. BASS. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate it.

We are now going to begin questions. I will go for 5 minutes, and then refer to my ranking member here.

I really wanted to get a sense from both of you about what more needs to be done. I mean, I do not doubt that you are doing everything you can. But from your perspective, what more needs to be done? And then I also would like to know how we engage other countries, especially France.

What impressed me about Burkina Faso was the number of violent attacks have increased several thousand percent since May, and it was not—you know, and I mentioned the fact that the embassy is understaffed. And so I wanted to know if you could comment to that. Does that—look surprised, Ms. Anderson? Maybe I will not say—maybe let me rephrase that and say that there are numerous positions unfilled. That, to me, is understaffed, but say it differently.

Yes, go ahead.

Ms. BAIRD. Chairwoman Bass, thank you very much. I will take these on in turn. On what more needs to be done, so if we look at the situation across the region as a whole, I think each country, if we look at the G5 Sahel and take each country is a little bit of a different case, so I will start with Mali, and then maybe talk about Burkina, and we can go from there.

With Mali, really, I think that there is the question of both political will and coordination. I think political will is an internal question for the Malian government in making continued progress and implementing the Algiers Accord. The Algiers Accord is the instrument that we have blessed by the United Nations, and undergirded by MINUSMA, to move forward really the political stalemate with the three signatory parties.

And we think it is very important that the government continue to make progress in meeting the benchmarks, and we really do believe that renewed political stability in Mali is one of the things that will help reduce the level of violence elsewhere in the region.

You know, we have seen also an increase in intercommunal violence in the center of Mali, although what we have seen is that the government has taken some efforts to stem that, and it has had some positive effect. So with intervention by the government, it can take progress.

What I will say in a greater sense is I think that we have many donors and many international partners with interests who are putting assistance of various kinds, whether it is security development, humanitarian, as well as diplomatic efforts in the region. What I think we do not need is more. I think what we do need is better focus and better coordination and better organization. We are not the only ones who feel this way. It is clear in our interactions with the French, with the European Union, and others, that others are feeling this as well. And we are seeing a convergence, and I am hoping that by doing that that we will have a better coordinated effort to assist the Malian government, if the Malian government will show the political will to move forward, that we can look at what does a post-MINUSMA Mali look like? What fills that security space—

Ms. BASS. Didn't the French just—

Ms. BAIRD [continuing]. In an objective way?

Ms. BASS [continuing]. Send in troops?

Ms. BAIRD. Sorry?

Ms. BASS. Didn't the French just send in troops to Mali?

Ms. BAIRD. The French had troops there as part of Operation Burkhane.

Ms. BASS. Yes. But I mean increased.

Ms. BAIRD. Actually, they have—

Ms. BASS. In the last few weeks, I thought.

Ms. BAIRD [continuing]. They have more, but they have shifted a good bit of their focus to Burkina Faso to really take on the jihadist—the surge in jihadist violence in Burkina.

At the risk of going over my time, in Burkina, I think it is providing assistance and helping the Burkinabe organize their efforts to combat the attacks, I think. And I would pass to my colleague, I think really in Burkina part of what will have a long-lasting effect, positive effect, is sort of that—is that grinding work at a community level to rebuild State presence and State services to the population. That is the kind of work that USAID is doing on a community level, and I think that in Burkina, in the long run, is what will help them push back on the violence.

Ms. BASS. Go on.

Ms. BAIRD. Okay. On staffing—actually, I would like to talk about Niger just briefly because, again, I have noted that I think Niger has been an excellent partner for us. They have been quite serious in their work, both to combat the violence inside their borders, but also to do so in an effective and accountable way.

The reality for us, again, what more can we do? We continue to partner with them. We continue to carry out our efforts in the broader region because they are beset on really every border. But, again, it is through kind of the community development and humanitarian assistance that USAID and other donor partners that allow Niger to deliver the kind of services to their population that builds State legitimacy, and that is really important for long-term success.

On staffing, it is absolutely true, if I had a magic wand I would probably bump up staffing at all of these embassies. Their workload has increased greatly with, of course, the increase in violence. We are continually looking at ways to assist and backfill positions. These are austere operating environments, even in the best of times. We have people who unexpectedly have to leave because of medical emergencies and other issues. That is a fact of working in that part of Africa. What we do from Washington is try to look for additional TDY support and ways to ensure, you know, that we can lighten their load.

Ms. BASS. TDY? Is that what you said?

Ms. BAIRD. Sorry?

Ms. BASS. TDY?

Ms. BAIRD. TDY. Sorry. Temporary duty. So try to send people out, 6, 8 weeks, maybe 2 months, 6 months.

Ms. BASS. So it is not a question of your funding?

Ms. BAIRD. That would not be a question that I could actually answer. I would probably defer that to our Undersecretary for Management.

Ms. BASS. Okay. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you both for your great testimony and your leadership. Deeply appreciate it.

Just a few questions. One of them, you know, with 20/20 hindsight, could you tell us briefly what went wrong with Mali? Because that was back in 2012 before the coup, touted as a democratic government model or an example.

Second, if you could, you know, religion and ethnicity are core concerns with respect to questions of identity among people in the Sahel, and are also factors that fuel conflict. And I know we always talk about other things, too, but how would you rate the importance of those two issues—religion and ethnicity? And what can be done to mitigate that, so there is greater understanding across those barriers between the two?

If I could, too, as well on the issue of some diseases, and we know Burkina Faso is among the 10 countries, according to USAID, with the highest malaria disease burden in the world, and I am wondering, are we—how is our funding being directed toward that in Burkina Faso? And what about the other Sahel countries, how bad off are they, you know, given the unpredictability of their climate, which very often can lead to this?

Mali, you know, you have highlighted the Feed the Future Program there, and of course food insecurity is big everywhere. But maybe you can spend a little time talking about what our efforts are. Is there a concern of an approaching drought that might need some, you know, prior thinking? Which I am sure you are doing.

Is the first 1,000 days being implemented in these countries to ensure that both mother and baby are as healthy as they can be during pregnancy and then up until usually the second birthday? Of course, after that is important, too. But as we all know, that is critically important.

Mali is the only country that is in PEPFAR, and I am wondering if you could just speak to that briefly, and whether or not other countries are perhaps in the queue to be put into the PEPFAR Initiative. We did reauthorize it, as you know, last year. I was the author of that bill. It was totally bipartisan, and it is authorized for 5 years.

Of course, we always worry about the appropriations side of it. But if you can speak to—you know, because I think PEPFAR is one of the greatest successes, just like the Malaria Initiative, in saving lives and mitigating morbidity among so many.

Protection of health and humanitarian workers, you know, the distinguished chairwoman and I, you know, have been talking over and over with all of the key players in DR Congo and the threats to the lives of health workers. We know that is always a problem. How big of a problem is it in the Sahel?

Ms. BAIRD. Thank you very much. So that is quite a lineup of questions. I think I will try to take on a bit of the first two, and then I will pass it to my colleague who has a great deal more information on the intervention in health and humanitarian assistance.

With Mali, I think what went wrong, I think that what we saw was the result of many years of frustration of lack of State presence. I think for us the Department of State and our work with

countries that we think that it is absolutely crucial that the State is viewed in general as part of the solution, not part of the problem, and that they are in fact a State presence delivering services to their population, if security services are deemed to be accountable and transparent and respecting of human rights.

I think that in 2012, in Mali, you saw a breakdown in many of these and a lack of State presence in large parts of the country, and an expression of dissatisfaction on parts of the population, and absolutely as well the spillover effects of the events in Libya, you know, absolutely.

We can go back and revisit that. I think we are much more focused at this point now on——

Mr. SMITH. Getting past the prologue, the idea is, you know, what we can learn from——

Ms. BAIRD. Right.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. All of this sometimes prevents the next crisis.

Ms. BAIRD. So I think that you touched on some of the issues—religion, ethnicity. I think intercommunal competition, competition for resources, in an area undergoing desertification, food insecurity, an unequal distribution of resources, and, again, lack of State presence. For us, in any of these countries, religion and ethnicity are important. These are all multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities, and, again, the best antidote are transparent, accountable, and democratic institutions.

Ms. ANDERSON. Thank you very much. You touched on a number of very important issues. And if I miss any, we will be sure to get back to you with more details.

Yes. This is a really high-disease burden, so we are responding with our humanitarian assistance to health issues. But we are not—we cannot forget the long-term commitment to building health systems in the Sahel. And that is an important part of building resilience and building institutions for eventual self-reliance in those countries.

We have had a long-term commitment in health in Mali, as you know, but also in Burkina we have a particular emphasis on malaria. That is the biggest killer of children under 5 is Malaria now, and we are seeing some good advances, which I saw when I was on my trip.

Also, we do have PEPFAR activities in Burkina Faso where we are working toward the 90–90–90 goals of PEPFAR. And as part of a regional program that we have that is relatively small, because we are talking about relatively small populations, but there is a lot in common across a number of the West African countries on their efforts to get to epidemic control of HIV.

So we are pretty proud of that small program, and we are seeing pretty good progress there, despite all of the challenges. On our food security work, and addressing drought, that is always a central part of what we have been doing. We have especially important programs in Mali and Niger for Feed the Future, and we are constantly using whatever technology we can find to predict what is coming up. But also, our efforts are very strong on building resilience to whatever next shock is coming. We know that there are constant shocks from drought in the Sahel.

I think I have covered most of those questions.

Mr. SMITH. And first 1,000 days?

Ms. ANDERSON. The first 1,000 days, that is also really important for us, including in the Sahel. I would be happy to provide some more detail—

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. I would appreciate that very much—

Ms. ANDERSON [continuing]. In writing.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. If you would. Let me just ask you, if I could—and I thank the gentlelady from California—for some additional time.

So we can better understand and adjust the problems of the Sahel, can you give a little more specific—be a little more specific in addressing the grievances of the Tuareg and the Fulani? How is that being addressed to try to mitigate, again, their bouts of violence?

On the issue of Russia and China, what is the footprint of China these days in the Sahel? We know what they have done in much of Africa, and have a general sense of what they are doing there but would love to see your current insights, particularly with the debt burden that they place on countries, and in many cases, the fleecing of their natural resources at bargain basement prices. So if you can speak to that as well.

Ms. BAIRD. Thank you. So, I mean, further on grievances of individual communities, I think, again, overall I think that we do—so I would say we would view with some concern that competition—I think our view is competition for resources has pushed a level of intercommunal violence that is creating a situation where it is easy to and often there is a demonization of herder communities, certainly the pull of the Falani among them.

I think from our perspective there is no good to be come from this. This is an area where there needs to be continued community building and intervention, both by civil society and State institutions, to ensure that communities are continually communicating on how they share resources, share space, and share economic opportunities.

And I think only with those kinds of interventions and those kinds of conversations do you get to a long-term solution to those kinds of grievances. I think there is a reality that desertification/climate change is creating a situation, along with demographic pressure, that this competition for resources is not going to reduce. It is going to increase. So, again, a State presence that is effective and community organizations, civil society intervention in building that kind of dialog is really the only way in the long run to get at those underlying grievances.

Mr. SMITH. Excuse me 1 second. And religious community, are they playing a vital role?

Ms. BAIRD. I think it is very important that the religious community—I think that one of the ways that jihadist extremists break down community structures is by breaking down that communication, that role that traditional leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, play in resolving community-level conflicts.

And maybe before passing to Russia and China, I will pass to my colleague, and she may have some intervention as well.

Ms. ANDERSON. Thanks. I would just briefly say on that topic that our efforts locally in the Sahel to build peace and to encourage that kind of dialog are very important in building that link between the people and their government in addressing grievances. And I agree that religious communities and, in fact, any partners on the ground who can play an important role, we are looking to talk to them and involve them, and that does include religious communities.

Ms. BAIRD. One last thing I would say is, as part of those community conversations, not just broader civil society, but more specifically engaging with women and women's groups and ensuring that women are part of those dialogs, and community interventions, is absolutely crucial. What we do know is, of course, women and children bear, really, the burden of this kind of violence, and of the displacement that occurs because of it.

Just passing very quickly to Russia and China, absolutely, Russia and China, particularly China present throughout the region in an economic way, and increasingly I think with some—with interest in security cooperation with Russia, our sense generally is its presence has been primarily with an interest to sell products.

Our view is—with China is that there is a certain caveat emptor that with each of these governments that they should examine any and all deals that are offered to them very carefully, and they should weigh, obviously, the long-term potential burdens of taking on these deals.

We certainly do not walk in and just say, you know, everyone else good, China bad, because I think that they are there and they are competing to give resources. On the other hand, we view with, I would say, consternation deals that do tie up critical resources and strategic minerals and other things, and that we remain in dialog with governments to try to make sure at least that they feel that they are making informed decisions.

We do have—you know, we have details on presence, and we would be happy to get back to you with details on what some of the—

Mr. SMITH. I you could for the record, it would be very, very helpful.

Ms. BAIRD. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Because there is not—we look at so many of the other countries that are being malaffected by Chinese influence with the ag governance model. We do not have a whole lot on the Sahel, so that would be great.

Ms. BAIRD. Okay.

Mr. SMITH. Madam Chair, thank you for that very generous extension of time. I do ask unanimous consent that remarks by ranking member of the full committee, Michael McCaul, be entered into the record.

Ms. BASS. Without objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE AT PRESS TIME.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ms. BASS. One of the things that was noted over and over again on our visit a month or so ago was that there have been very few visits by high-level U.S. diplomatic personnel to the Sahel in recent

years. And unlike the EU, the U.S. does not maintain a high-level diplomatic envoy to the region.

So I wanted to know what your thoughts were about any changes that should be made to U.S. diplomatic engagement in the Sahel. Both of you, if you could respond to that.

Ms. BAIRD. Thank you very much. Since I have been to all of the countries, I assumed you were saying that my level is not quite high enough, but I do not disagree. I would say that Undersecretary of Political Affairs David Hale has taken a great deal of interest in the Sahel.

And based after his visit, which I accompanied him on to Niger last February, he actually arranged for us to brief the Secretary on what we saw as the problem set and what our engagement could look like, which we did.

Coming out of that, the Undersecretary has also directed us to go back and relook at our diplomatic engagement strategy for the Sahel and looking at ways that, (a) he can play a larger role, and we, the United States, can play a larger role. And we have been working on that and reviewing that with the Undersecretary.

As regards the potential for a special envoy on Sahel issues, I know that many of our European partners do have a special-hatted envoy. I think that our Assistant Secretary, in talking to other officials, have taken on that question. And when there is a decision, you know, I think that there would be an announcement one way or the other, but it certainly is under consideration. We are looking at whatever ways are possible to help influence the situation there in a positive way.

Ms. BASS. Do you think that would be helpful? Is that being pushed for in the—

Ms. BAIRD. I think it is a possibility, and I would then defer to my boss, the Assistant Secretary, for a decision.

Ms. BASS. I am sorry. Say that last part again.

Ms. BAIRD. So I would say, I would defer to my boss, the Assistant Secretary, for a decision on that. I think we have weighed in, but I think I would leave that to him to decide, and if they made a decision to announce.

Ms. BASS. Ms. Anderson, thoughts?

Ms. ANDERSON. I would just say, yes, that is an area where we could do better in terms of high-level visits to the region, and I would hope that—

Ms. BASS. You know, I mean, I mention that in terms of diplomatic, but it is also the same thing with congressional as well. And so one of the things that we are going to really try to work on is to get more congressional delegations to go as well.

Ms. ANDERSON. And maybe there could be a joint visit.

Ms. BASS. Well, there you go. Nice idea. We will propose that.

Ms. ANDERSON. I would hope we could have a visit—some visits in the not-too-distant future. You are always welcome, and I think it is always a big boost, not only diplomatically in advancing our agenda, but also to our staff who are working under, as you know, very difficult circumstances.

Ms. BASS. Well, I always try to, when I travel abroad, pay particular attention to that because when I go to country team meetings, to me it is quite visible people are demoralized and need to

know that we respect the work they do. We know the work that is going on, and I think it is very important to offer that type of solidarity.

Ms. ANDERSON. Thank you.

Ms. BASS. What has been the impact of worsening security conditions in Mali, Burkina Faso, and parts of Niger on the ability of U.S. civilian personnel and assistance implementers to administer and oversee diplomatic and foreign aid activities?

And I had asked Ms. Baird about the staffing situation, and I do not know if that is one of the reasons why positions are unfilled, but I would like for you to respond to that, too, Ms. Anderson.

Ms. ANDERSON. We are actually increasing our efforts in Niger and Burkina Faso, and yet it is getting in some places increasingly difficult to get out to the field and do the kind of oversight that we need to do.

We work where we can, and there are cases where diplomatic security keeps us closer to the capital. And we are not actually able to send our staff out into the field, so we look for any innovations that we can find. We do a fair amount of third-party monitoring of our activities, and we have our partners implementing activities.

We never want to put anybody into direct danger, and we have very many courageous partners who are out there. So we do third-party monitoring using—getting information from people who are already in the local locations and can send us information. We use technology to do that monitoring.

Our staff—turning to the question about unfilled positions and the challenges in staffing USAID in the Sahel, it is hard to staff those positions sometimes. We have worked on something we are calling a difficult-to-staff incentive differential, which we have piloted. It seems to be having—

Ms. BASS. What is it?

Ms. ANDERSON [continuing]. An impact.

Ms. BASS. What is it?

Ms. ANDERSON. It is additional differential payment for people who are willing to go to those posts, so that we align better with the State Department's policies, actually.

Ms. BASS. Are there any other incentives that could be offered, such as more frequent return visits home, you know, back to the States? I mean, is there a package of benefits that could be put together?

Ms. ANDERSON. These are things that we have been thinking about because we offer that in some other places, and I think that has—

Ms. BASS. Where is an example of where you offer that?

Ms. ANDERSON. For example, in Afghanistan, Pakistan, South Sudan.

Ms. BASS. And so there is a difference, so what you offer for those countries you do not offer for people that are at Burkina Faso?

Ms. ANDERSON. Yes. And then we have worked with—in our bidding system for foreign service officers ways to require people to bid on the priority positions that we establish, and those often include the Sahel. So we are looking at—

Ms. BASS. Do you think that makes a difference? I mean, in Afghanistan, for example, do you have trouble getting people to go to Afghanistan?

Ms. ANDERSON. We think the incentives are—actually, the financial incentives are working quite well.

Ms. BASS. So that could be a big possibility, then, correct?

Ms. ANDERSON. Yes.

Ms. BASS. So what does it take to make that happen?

Ms. ANDERSON. Yes. That is something that is ongoing in our review of the incentive that we have already provided. And then, as we go through the next round of assignments, we will have a look and see how it is working. If we can get the right people into the right places, great. If not, we will have to turn to the next step.

Ms. BASS. So I am not sure if that sounds very promising. I mean, that does not sound like anything that is getting ready to happen anytime soon. Go ahead.

Ms. BAIRD. Those considerations are also sort of a constant conversation that we have. One of the things I would say is if you make the sorts of changes that provide the incentives that are present in a place like Afghanistan, Somalia, some others, then you are taking on a 1-year post and you are making a change in whether dependents can also travel to post.

So it changes the tenor of the post. So I think that is an ongoing conversation and a balance with post leadership and the Undersecretary for Management in the Department and our other agencies that you review, because you are—you know, there are tradeoffs on any of these decisions when you are making that kind of calculation.

Ms. BASS. You know, I understand that. I guess, you know, being in a place that had a 7,000 percent increase in attacks in 6 months, and what you just described, I just do not know what that means in terms of an ongoing conversation, and this and that. It just sounds like nothing is getting ready to happen soon.

Ms. BAIRD. We have a constant conversation with our post, with their—in the case of Burkina Faso, with Ambassador Young and the Deputy Chief of Mission, with their management staff. They review. They hold Emergency Action Committee meetings regularly, town hall meetings to ensure that they are keeping in touch with the dependent community, and, in fact, the unofficial American community that is present there to ensure that they feel comfortable with the security situation.

In fact, in Burkina, they held Emergency Action Committee meetings this week and a town hall this week, and, you know, we continue a robust conversation. Absolutely, the safety and security of the American staff and family members is really our top priority. Beyond anything else, that is our first responsibility overseas.

Ms. BASS. So let me just state for the record that when I was in Burkina Faso, the staff made absolutely no complaints, didn't say they were looking for more staff. That was my opinion, especially when I see all of the violence that has increased, and it must be very frightening to work there. So they were not pushing for that, but empty chairs are empty chairs. They do kind of speak for themselves.

So I guess I am still not quite clear what moves the dial, so that a decision is made.

Ms. ANDERSON. I could also add that we have the option, when we have vacancies, whether it is caused by somebody departing unexpectedly or inability to fill a position, we can also turn to hiring people as personal services contractors, and we have done that pretty frequently.

For example, in Niger, at the moment we have someone who is serving as a personal services contractor as the acting head of the operating unit there until we are able to fill the position. And that is sometimes more flexible for us, often more flexible.

Ms. BASS. Yes. Sure, I understand that. So one last question before I move to Representative Houlahan. So do you think that the violence in Burkina Faso—I know some of it is ideological—but overall, do you think it is ideological or is it economic-based?

Ms. BAIRD. I would say that it is a combination. I think that there are certainly—

Ms. BASS. 50/50?

Ms. BAIRD. I do not know. I think that there are elements of probably, again, frustration with the lack of State presence and service provision. I think that there are economic difficulties, poverty, competition for resources, and in fact there are—I think there is probably some fluidity, but I think there absolutely are committed jihadists in the region, and people who are very vulnerable to recruitment.

Ms. BASS. Identified with one of the larger groups, like AQIM or Boko Haram?

Ms. BAIRD. Indeed, or Ansar al Islam, which appears to be more of a homegrown Burkinabe group. And so I think it is a mix, and I think it is—

Ms. BASS. And, again, I was just talking about Burkina Faso initially.

Ms. BAIRD. Right. It is an unholy mix, and that probably is what made it so difficult to get—you know, to get your arms around and for the Burkinabe government and security forces to take it on in any kind of effective way.

Ms. BASS. Representative Houlahan.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you. And thank you, ladies, for coming today. I understand earlier, Ms. Baird, that you were talking a little bit about the importance of engaging women, particularly in extremism and violent situations in terms of security. Can you give us some detail about that possibly? What does engagement look like, and how are you encouraging it in terms of peace and security?

Ms. BAIRD. Thank you. I will answer briefly, and then pass to my colleague, because USAID also I think is heavily engaged. From the point of view of the Embassy or the Department of State, we do outreach on many levels to reach women's groups, to ensure that our public outreach and our community-building activities include civil society but particularly women's groups.

I think, you know, just as a policy matter it is really important in these very economically challenged regions where there is large demographic pressure that every member of society feels that they have a legitimate voice. Our public diplomacy efforts and efforts in

outreach try to reach at sort of micro level these small groups but also at a macro level.

In our discussions with the host governments, to ensure that their policies are inclusive, it is just a basic part of our DNA and the way that we work. Additionally, I think one of the best programs we have in Africa is the Young African Leaders Initiative, the YALI Program, which seeks to—which these young people nominate themselves for and helps them come to the United States or go for regional training in Dakar and begin to build networks, so it is not exclusively women but I think we work very hard to ensure that there is good representation of young women, so that they get the exposure and the network opportunities to take back, whether in entrepreneurship or whether they themselves are moving into civil society or government positions, that they have that feeling of power, so that they can contribute moving forward. We think that is very important to success of any of our policies there.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And in your particular function—and then I would love to hear from you, Ms. Anderson, too—it also is important that people see what they hope to be in a sense when you are looking at your own staff in the region. Is there a good diversity represented in terms of gender as well as other diversification?

Ms. BAIRD. Absolutely. In all of our embassies in the region, I think we look to recruit—if you are talking particularly about professional, locally engaged staff, where possible, you want to have inclusion, not just gender inclusion but also ethnic inclusion.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Sure.

Ms. BAIRD. In countries where often there is a great deal of scratchy relationships perhaps between ethnic groups, or there may be competition for power, it is very important that the embassies model to the best of their ability the inclusive nature that should exist in each of the countries.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Yes. And the only reason I ask is in my very limited time here in Congress I did have the opportunity to go to the Middle East and sat with the State Department there and was really pretty displeased, displeased with the ratio of men and women there in our own, you know, core. And thank you.

Ms. Anderson, if you have anything to add to that, I would love to hear, too.

Ms. ANDERSON. Thank you. Women and youth are central to all of our planning and our programming in USAID. They have to be, especially in the Sahel for us to be successful. So when you think about, for instance, countering violent extremism, women can play a very positive role in peace and security, and they can also be co-opted to play terrible roles.

So this has to be a part of our planning, and it is part of our policy in terms of how we plan our programs. And engaging women in youth, when you think about the opportunities that we can present for women to create peace in their communities, one thing we are doing with our program that we call Voices for Peace, it gives women in tech a special effort to incorporate technologies, so that women can have their own radio programming and speak to larger numbers of people.

In education, for example, in Niger, there is an 18 percent gap in enrollment between girls and boys. So we are always focusing on how can we ensure the equality and equities in our programs.

Food security, we have to make sure that women are engaged and that women can have access to the kinds of—to land, to land tenure, documentation of the land, to the inputs they need, the financing, and also have control over those resources because they play a really important role in food security in the Sahel, as well as in their household, food security and resilience.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And I know that I have run out of time, so I would love it if I could have another opportunity when we finish with everybody. That would be great. I apologize. thank you.

Ms. ANDERSON. I also think, in terms of our diversity and staff, I think we are doing pretty well. It is important also to think about, we also look at our own—our local staff, our foreign service national staff, and that is also important to us.

Ms. BASS. But on that note, though, I would say there is definitely more that needs to be done on the racial diversity on the U.S. staff. I understand the local staff, but the U.S. staff, there is a pretty sharp lack of diversity.

Ms. BASS. Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for the courtesy of being part of this program, this hearing.

And I am appreciative of the service of both of you. If I could just ask, is there an Assistant Secretary for West African Security Affairs in place?

Ms. BAIRD. We have an assistant. Our Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Tibor Najy, is in place, yes. He—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And is that a permanent appointment?

Ms. BAIRD. It is a permanent appointment.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Has been confirmed?

Ms. BAIRD. He was a career foreign service officer and had retired and was appointed by the Administration and has been in place since I believe it is July 2018.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And is there an Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Africa? I think that is—you are Deputy Assistant, Ms. Anderson. Is there an Administrator in place?

Ms. ANDERSON. For Africa, the head of our Africa Bureau is Ramsey Day. And his title now is Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, as the head of the Bureau.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And he is in place.

Ms. ANDERSON. Yes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. What is the person's name?

Ms. ANDERSON. Ramsey Day.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Okay. And that has been in place since how long?

Ms. ANDERSON. I think he has been in place since September 2018.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Okay. So at least a year they have been in place. I think that is important because I was able to join the codell that Congresswoman Bass led to Djibouti and Burkina Faso and Niger, and certainly to Germany.

One of the strongest proponents of friendship that I think we have in the competition to snatch Africa into one corner or the

other, rather than treating the continent as respected future leaders of the world, frankly, in an economy that is going to surpass many economies, is a question of security.

The level of conflict is going to continuously undermine, I think, the potential for growth. So my question is: in your work, are you aware of the Africa Command and its work, and are there briefings that you all engage in to discern what the security level of the country—of some of the countries that I have mentioned?

Every one of these countries, except Djibouti of course, was concerned about security, and it was a detriment to any economic growth that they could have. So what is the relationship between, in particular, the Africa Bureau, the Assistant Secretary, and Africa Command?

Ms. BAIRD. Thank you very much for that. In fact, part of my responsibility, it is not just West Africa, but my other responsibility is regional peace and security issues for the continent, for the Africa Bureau.

We have a very close relationship with AFRICOM, with the Africa Command. I was there in October meeting with the officials there, as well as with Ambassadors from four of the five G5 Sahel countries. Our Ambassadors from Mauritania, from Niger, from Mali, and Burkina Faso all came, and we came together to discuss our joint security concerns and the ways that we could respond to that.

And, in fact, I will be going out in just a few weeks to—again, to AFRICOM to meet with our Ambassadors from Ghana, Togo, and Benin to talk about some of the issues associated with security in those coastal countries. I absolutely agree with you that the security concerns are thwarting countries' economic ambitions.

I think for our Assistant Secretary the growth—the potential growth in markets and the youth bulge in these countries is one of the most important aspects that should inform our relationship with countries. The reality in the Sahel is in many cases humanitarian development concerns and the security concerns outweigh the potential economic development. I think we have a more encouraging story to tell in the short term with countries like Ghana, with Cote d'Ivoire, with Senegal, and others, but we stay engaged with all of them. And so we very much appreciate your interest and your visits there, and we continue to coordinate.

It is absolutely a 3D approach—development, defense, and diplomacy. It is absolutely crucial.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And I appreciate that. I think it is important. I am not suggesting boots on the ground. I am not suggesting engaging in war, but I do think it is important for—at the highest level of the State Department, the Secretary of State, to realize the—"detraction" is too light a word—that occurs for the success of Burkina Faso, if the head of State is spending a great amount of time and it looks as if that should be a pronounced policy of the State Department to work with the continent and countries on dealing with—you know, the African Union and others are dealing with this mounting violence that occurs, decapitation, the taking of young girls just recently.

It is certainly rampant in Nigeria where, in particular, I just met the mother of Rebecca Sharibu, a Christian girl, that I would request what we are doing to help secure her freedom.

But the point is, the violence is extensive. You sit in these countries and meet with their presidents, and they are consumed with it. And I just think it needs to be a high-profile issue at the State Department level to be able to engage with either other African countries that can be of help to let—it is a humanitarian crisis—but to let Africa know that we stand with them against this violence.

And we want to assist them in those countries taking charge of this violence, because it is destabilizing, but it is also interfering with all of the young leaders that are really trying to—when I say “leaders,” I am talking about young people who are trying to create a new Africa. So—

Ms. BAIRD. Thank you very much. For us, our engagement, we absolutely agree that it is important for us to remain engaged with the countries that are facing violence, but also, frankly, with their regional partners to look at ways to help them push back on that.

Additionally, a great deal of our assistance is in trying to help these countries build, secure, and accountable security services that are viewed by their populations as part of the solution and not part of the problem, to work with them so that they are able to meet the security challenges and the violence without, in fact, inflicting violence, further violence on innocent members of their own population.

And so I appreciate your interest and your continued interest. It absolutely is a priority for us.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the chair, and I would appreciate it if I could get some report back on Rebecca’s standing. You were shaking your head as you know the story out of—and there are several of us engaged. It seems like she is being particularly brutalized, and we hope she is alive and wish that she is alive, and praying for her, but we need to know anything that we are able to do.

Ms. BAIRD. Thank you very much. We will be happy to get back to you with details. I do not have them with me right now. Yes, Nigeria is within my area of responsibility, and absolutely our embassy is consistently engaged with the Nigerian government and with other partners to see what we can do to encourage her release, and to ensure her well-being. I appreciate your interest.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you. I yield back. Thank you.

Ms. BASS. Representative Houlahan, you are welcome.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you. I want to just followup on some of those questions. And I believe, Ms. Anderson, you would be probably most appropriate to answer this question. We talked a little bit about women and their engagement helpfully and in a harmful way in terms of peace and security, but no women could be—or girl can be helpful or harmful if they are not alive, if they are not healthy.

And one of the things that I have been struck by is the defunding on the United States’ side of the UNFPA. And I wanted to understand from you, Ms. Anderson, what is USAID doing to help make sure that maternal mortality continues to be addressed, to make

sure that women and girls are healthy in the absence of UNFPA support in that area?

Ms. ANDERSON. Thank you. Maternal and child health is of critical importance to us in the Sahel, and we also recognize that almost 65 percent of the population is under 25, and we recognize the challenges posed to maternal and child health by unhealthy child spacing.

So we are investing in the latest Fiscal Year approximately \$29 million across the Sahel in maternal and child health, and about \$24 million in family planning, voluntary family planning.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And I helped lead a letter that basically implored this Administration to continue or recontinue the funding for UNFPA. Is there anything else that a Member of Congress, that we here in this body, can do to be helpful, to continue to advocate for that? Is there anything else that we can be doing to be more helpful on this issue that is clearly very worrisome for many of us?

Ms. ANDERSON. I think I would say that was a policy decision.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Ms. Baird, do you have anything to add?

Ms. BAIRD. No.

Ms. HOULAHAN. My last question for you all has to do with all of this schools that I understand have been being closed, 9,000 schools have been closed across the Sahel and Central Africa, and people are in tenuous situations in terms of their ability to access education. What are the alternative efforts that are ongoing? Where are these kids and young people able to seek education, if anywhere?

Ms. BAIRD. So I think, first, I will take that on as, really, a larger policy issue. I know that when I was in Burkina Faso, President Kabore made an absolute point that is one of the most worrisome aspects for him was at that point there were well over 1,000 schools that had been forced to be closed because of violence which created situations where the teachers in most cases had had to flee.

It is an aspect of the lack of State presence, which again reduces State legitimacy and the sense of the government delivering services to the population, and, indeed, it makes young people ever more vulnerable.

I think, you know, in the first instance, I think in all of these countries there is intent and desire for the security services to retake and then try to hold some of these areas in order to bit by bit, in an incremental way, get schools back open, begin to get community and local and regional governmental operations going again.

But I think, you know, I would be lying if I said this would be anything but an incremental effort that will take a good bit of time because security services can go in and take a village, you know, clear it out, but what is required to actually hold it in the sense of rebuilding the community is that State presence, the police, the gendarmes, you know, the judges, I mean, just all of the elements of a community that operates, including teachers and the families and the kids.

So one of the aspects of this that I think is most destructive is the closure of schools and the what we would call "annee blanche," the situation where children are missing years of their education

because it is very difficult to make that back. It is part of our effort and intervention, and I know USAID is engaged as well.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Speaking of the USAID, what kind of efforts are you using, maybe with UNICEF, to create alternative learning? You guys mentioned something about radio programming, faith-based learning. Is there any other alternative opportunities for people to seek education?

Ms. ANDERSON. It is incredible to see how much communities and families value education. And even when the children are in danger by being in school because the school is associated with the government and it is a target of attack, the value of that education is so important.

And one of the things that we are doing is we are, as part of our resilience efforts, is to help schools be prepared. So if there is an attack, how do you quickly build back? How do you quickly get back into action with your school? We are targeting out-of-school youth as well, so that we can find ways that they can have alternatives to actual formal school learning.

And we are part of a network of other development partners that is called Education in Emergencies. So we are learning from each other, and we are using any kind of technology that is available to be able to provide education to the kids who are affected by violence and they have been, for whatever reason, not able to go to their actual schools.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you. And I am out of time, sadly, but I would like to emphasize that although I do understand that UNFPA lack of funding or funding is a policy decision, it is present in all of the Sahel region. And as a result, the fact that we are not actively engaged in funding the issues that you are talking about with women's reproductive health and health in general means that people are dying as a consequence, particularly women.

Thank you so much for your time today. I really appreciate it.

Ms. BASS. I just have a couple more questions and we will be finished. I wanted to ask you, to what extent has a lack of transparency surrounding natural resource extraction in Burkina Faso driven political grievances in the country? What do you know, in general, about the natural resources and the contracts?

Ms. BAIRD. I think I will have to get back to you with details on that. I think in a general sense, obviously, lack of transparency in disposition of critical resources in resource-challenged countries is always an area of potential grievance.

I know that Burkina Faso is blessed with critical minerals, but the specifics beyond the companies that I know are operating in the region and how those—

Ms. BASS. Do you know if there are any American companies?

Ms. BAIRD. Sorry?

Ms. BASS. Do you know if there are any American companies?

Ms. BAIRD. Not major mining companies. The Canadians are very present, however.

Ms. BASS. How about the French?

Ms. BAIRD. In mining, I do not have that detail. The Canadians I know about because, of course, it was the Canadian mining company's convoy that was attacked late last week where, you know,

39, 40 people were killed. It was really an egregious attack, very worrisome.

Ms. BASS. So I had asked earlier, but I do not think you guys responded, about our relationship with the French, how we cooperate, especially on the security situation. And also, I mean, I asked about the natural resources because, you know, obviously, to address the root causes in these countries, we have to look at their natural wealth.

And while we address the surface issues, I just always wonder what we are doing around those issues as well. If they had control of their resources with better contracts, or good contracts, maybe they would have more resources to do things, like education, all the schools you talked about being closed, be able to actually respond to their own security situation.

Ms. BAIRD. No. I would be happy to talk about our cooperation with the French, and then maybe I will pass it to Cheryl, who can talk a bit about our donor coordination with the French, which I think is also quite robust.

Both in diplomacy and in security, we have a very close relationship with the French. Certainly, in the Sahel, through Operation Barkhane, the French counterterrorism efforts, we have supported that. We view their efforts in pushing back on Jainem and other jihadist actors is very much in our own interest in promoting stability in the region.

We consult very closely with the French. We have a P3 process where we have regular conversations with our French and British partners. In fact, our Assistant Secretary does regular secure video teleconferences with—

Ms. BASS. Do you think their financial investment is close to ours in terms of their embassy? Do they have difficulties staffing it like we do? Do they have their counterpart to USAID, do they put in an equal amount? More? Less?

Ms. BAIRD. I think the French are very present in each and every one of these countries, obviously, and most of them, the francophone ones, they have these long-term post-Colonial relationships, and they are—

Ms. BASS. And that is why I am asking. I just want to know the—

Ms. BAIRD. The question of how they staff and how—

Ms. BASS. Doesn't mean they are—

Ms. BAIRD [continuing]. Easily they can staff, I do not have the detail. I do not have the detail on that. I do know, you know, on an individual level in each of these countries there is very close coordination between our chiefs of mission and our diplomatic and our security personnel. And certainly from Washington, with Paris, we keep in very close touch.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

Ms. ANDERSON. By some measures, in the Sahel we are the largest donor, especially in humanitarian assistance. But across the Sahel, actually altogether we are the second largest bilateral donor, and we are No. 2 to the French. So it is really important for us to be coordinating with the French on humanitarian as well as development in all our resilience work.

We have structures set up in each country so that we have got coordination across the bilateral and multi-lateral donors, preferably with the government, with a partner government involved. And so there we are ensuring that we have the appropriate division of labor and that we are not working at cross-purposes, not duplicating efforts. We also coordinate at the headquarters level.

There is another structure that has been set up as well, and that is called the Sahel Alliance, so part of the G5 Sahel alliance on security and development. We are an observer. Our status is observer in the Sahel Alliance.

And there was a very large meeting of the Alliance last December, including the partner countries represented, and I think there has been a lot of—at least a lot of pledging of support. I think what is important now is the real coordination, and actually delivering what has been promised.

And I have to say, we are not a full member partly because there was an expectation of being part of the mechanisms that were set up, and those can be sometimes cumbersome and slow and hard for us, given the requirements that we have for delivering development assistance.

But, anyway, it provides us a platform for coordination that I think is very important, and it also is a very important statement by the G5 Sahel members that, yes, security actions are important, and our armed forces are important, but development and building resilience is also very important, and preventing violent extremism and preventing violence in the region is very important as well.

Ms. BASS. Well, I just want to thank both of you for your time today, and of course for your service. And anything that I can do, we can do here to be supportive of your efforts, we would very much appreciate hearing your recommendations and advice.

So with this, the committee stands adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:41 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

**SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International
Organizations**

Karen Bass (D-CA), Chair

November 14, 2019

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>):

DATE: Thursday, November 14, 2019

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: The U.S. Policy in the Sahel Region

WITNESS: Ms. Whitney Baird
Deputy Assistant Secretary for West Africa and Security Affairs
Bureau of African Affairs
United States Department of State

Ms. Cheryl L. Anderson
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Africa
United States Agency for International Development

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations HEARING

Day Thursday Date 11/14/2019 Room RHOB 2172

Starting Time 2:00pm Ending Time 3:41pm

Recesses 0 (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Rep. Karen Bass

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

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Stenographic Record ☒

To select a box, mouse click it, or tab to it and use the enter key to select. Another click on the same box will deselect it.

TITLE OF HEARING:

The U.S. Policy in the Sahel Region

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached.

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

Rep. Smith, IFR

Rep. Smith, QFR

Rep. McCaul, SFR

Rep. Jackson Lee, QFR

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 3:41pm

Clear Form

Note: If listing additional witnesses not included on hearing notice, be sure to include title, agency, etc.

Naomia A. Suggs-Brigety
Subcommittee Staff Associate

WHEN COMPLETED: Please print for subcommittee staff director's signature and make at least one copy of the signed form. A signed copy is to be included with the hearing/markup transcript when ready for printing along with a copy of the final meeting notice (both will go into the appendix). The signed original, with a copy of the final meeting notice attached, goes to full committee. An electronic copy of this PDF file may be saved to your hearing folder, if desired.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
COMMITTEE HEARING

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
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STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

Rep. Michael T. McCaul Statement for the Record

The U.S. Policy in the Sahel Region

Thank you, Chairwoman Bass and Ranking Member Smith, for calling this important hearing. I also want to thank our witnesses here today. I remain deeply concerned about the security situation in the Sahel.

As we have been successful in defeating the physical Caliphate in Iraq and Syria, we have seen ISIS looking to expand influence in other parts of the world, taking advantage of ungoverned spaces and instability.

Across the Sahel, violence and terrorist attacks are drastically increasing. In Burkina Faso, there has been a 7,000% increase in attacks since last year. ISIS and Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups continue to wreak havoc – killing innocent civilians and overwhelming local armed forces. Schools are closed, entire communities displaced, and the humanitarian need continue to grow. We must do more to address this urgent security threat.

That is why I introduced **H.R. 192, the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Act**, with my friend from across the aisle, Rep Keating. I was very pleased that it was one first bills to pass the House in January and I hope the senate takes action on it soon.

This bill codifies an interagency effort to address terrorist threats in the Sahel, and requires increased coordination of our diplomatic, development and security assistance efforts. It also requires an updated strategy to adjust U.S. efforts to the changing dynamics on the ground.

This bill also supports the goals of the **H.R. 2116, the Global Fragility Act**. I am proud to join my friend Chairman Engel, Senator Graham and Senator Coons in leading this legislation, which passed the House in May.

By training partner forces through the TSCTP program, the U.S. is supporting the ability of host countries to combat terrorists themselves. This is critical to preventing further U.S. involvement in the future.

However, there is no military solution to the increasing violence and terrorist activity in the Sahel. These are some of the poorest countries in the world. Lack of economic opportunity, weak governance, and corruption have marginalized populations and fueled terrorist recruitment.

We must address the root causes of the problem, through coordinated and effective development assistance to stabilize these countries. I applaud USAID and their work to launch the Sahel Development Partnership.

The U.S. must remain focused on security threats emanating from the Sahel and be proactive about our investments to stabilize the region. I strongly urge the administration to prioritize U.S. engagement in the Sahel.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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Representative Smith
Page 26
Lines 612-696

Representative Smith: On the issue of Russia and China, what is the footprint of China these days in the Sahel? ... If you could for the record, it would be very, very helpful... Because there is not -- we look at so many of the other countries that are being malaffected by Chinese influence with the ag governance model. We don't have a whole lot on the Sahel, so that would be great.

DAS Baird: We do have -- you know, we have details on [Chinese] presence, and we would be happy to get back to you with details on what some of the...

Answer:

As in other parts of Africa, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is active in the ICT, energy and infrastructure sectors in the Sahel. However, its presence is not limited to commercial engagements. In addition to humanitarian assistance, Chinese development assistance supports the education, agriculture, and health sectors. On the security front, PRC has contributed troops to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA. There are examples of public diplomacy efforts, including cultural and educational exchanges.

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Representative Jackson Lee
Pages 46-47
Lines 1098-1135

Representative Jackson Lee: I thank the chair, and I would appreciate it if I could get some report back on Rebecca's [Sharibu] standing. You were shaking your head as you know the story out of -- and there are several of us engaged. It seems like she is being particularly brutalized, and we hope she is alive and wish that she is alive, and praying for her, but we need to know anything that we are able to do.

DAS Baird: Thank you very much. We will be happy to get back to you with details. I don't have them with me right now.

Answer:

In February 2018 ISIS-West Africa abducted 110 students from their school in Dapchi, Yobe State. In March, ISIS-West Africa returned all but one Dapchi student: Leah Sharibu. According to Nigerian press, Sharibu was not released due to her refusal to convert to Islam. Since President Buhari came into office, more than 108 of the Chibok girls have been freed, and President Buhari has made clear his commitment to freeing Leah Sharibu and all others abducted by these terror groups. The kidnapping of thousands of civilians exemplify the inhumane brutality of Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. To prevent future kidnappings and work toward the release of those currently held, we continue to work closely with the Nigerians in their efforts to fight Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa.

OPENING STATEMENT SUBMITTED FROM CHAIRMAN BASS

**Congressmember Karen Bass
AGH Subcommittee Hearing
Opening Statement
“U.S. Policy in the Sahel Region”
November 14, 2019**

This hearing for the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations will come to order.

I note that a quorum is present.

The subcommittee is meeting today to hear testimony on “U.S. Policy in the Sahel Region.”

This afternoon, we are here to discuss the fragile state of the Sahel and the short and long-term options for peace and stability in the region.

Without objection, all members may have five days to submit statements, questions, and other materials for the record, subject to the length limitation in the rules.

I would like to thank our witnesses for coming to speak with us today about United States policy in the Sahel region.

I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

I have been concerned about the Sahel region for some time, mostly because of the ongoing and increasing violence, and what I previously thought was an expanding United States military presence in the region. What I was most concerned about was making sure that we were balancing diplomacy and development with United States defense engagement.

Over the past decade, many countries in the Sahel region have experienced unanticipated political transitions caused by local dissatisfaction with political elites and worsening governance conditions. AQIM and Boko Haram have since capitalized on the region's political instability and reportedly merged with locally-based and rural extremist groups in Mali and Burkina Faso. The expanding network of transnational terror groups has led to a proliferation of violent incidents between 2016 and 2018. Within the region, Mali and Burkina Faso appear to be the epicenters of conflict. After a military coup in 2012, and popular uprising in 2014, both countries are grappling with Islamic insurgencies that threaten state and regional security.

Some may think the Sahel may not have direct implications for U.S. National Security because most of the armed groups in the region often target people locally or regionally. However, AFRICOM identified "supporting partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region" as one of the six key lines of effort for its mission in Africa.

I also want to acknowledge the four brave soldiers who were ambushed and killed during an "advise and assist" mission in Tongo Tongo, in western Niger on October 4, 2017.

Violent extremism in the region is escalating at a disturbing rate but the majority of the actors do not seem to be ideologically motivated. They seem to be drawn in because of governance challenges including political exclusion or abuse by state actors, widespread poverty, marginalization along ethnic or regional lines, and tensions between farmer and herder communities over land or water. Cash crops used to be a means of people feeding their families and earning a living, but now they are dwindling because of desertification and rainy seasons becoming increasingly scarce. This has a direct effect on people's lives and impacts food security in the region.

I raise this because defense and security assistance alone cannot address the issues emerging out of the Sahel. Development is also key to addressing violent extremism, so I want to make sure that the root causes are being addressed.

With that said, the increased attacks are very real.

Several weeks back, I led a CODEL focused on US military engagement across Africa and we traveled to parts of the Sahel to gain a better understanding of our military assistance in the region. I spoke with many heads of state, foreign ministers, our own ambassadors and military personnel, and civil society groups—and security was never far from any of their minds.

United States Personnel and locally employed staff in the region are operating under very difficult circumstances but I was always impressed by their hard work and love for their jobs. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses about the safety and security of US government personnel in the region. Members of the CODEL also heard that there are several unfilled positions in some countries, and I want to know what if anything is being done to fill those positions. We need to make sure that our embassies have the staff they need to get their jobs done.

Terrorist groups have strengthened their foothold across the Sahel region, making large swaths of territory unstable and stoking ethnic violence, especially in Burkina Faso and Mali.

According to the United Nations, since January more than 1,500 civilians have been killed in Burkina Faso and Mali, and more than one million people have been internally displaced across the five countries - more than twice the number of persons displaced in 2018.

I believe in order to combat the spread of terrorism in the region, the international community should support the efforts of the G5 Sahel force

which consists of troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, by helping train soldiers and assisting in funding operations. I also believe the long-term solution is to develop infrastructure including access to water, telecommunications, energy, and roads. This will help socio-economic development and reveal tangible results of a healthier, more educated, food secure, and safer society.

Members of Congress on both sides want to see extreme violence in the Sahel decrease and we are here to listen to you and help where we can.

I now recognize the Ranking Member for the purpose of making his opening statement.

Statement by Ramsey Day
Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Africa
United States Agency for International Development
Before the
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
June 25, 2019

Chairwoman Bass, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. We greatly appreciate the Subcommittee's support for the people of Sudan and for drawing attention to this important issue.

USAID is outraged about the brutal crackdown by Sudan's security forces on unarmed civilians who for months bravely gathered peacefully in the streets of Khartoum and other Sudanese cities and towns, seeking to establish a representative and inclusive government after 30 years of oppression, division, and corruption under Omar al-Bashir. After decades of unwavering partnership between USAID and the people of Sudan, we are also gravely concerned that this non-violent, well-organized, and massive effort by the Sudanese people to demand a democratic and representative government has been met with violence. We appreciate the decisive action of the African Union to suspend Sudan's membership, and its strong message on the need to transition quickly to a civilian-led government.

The umbrella opposition coalition Forces for Freedom and Change was negotiating in good faith with the Transitional Military Council (TMC) on a transition to civilian-led government following Bashir's ouster in April 2019. However, attacks by TMC forces had the effect of 'clearing the streets' on June 3rd, the last day of Ramadan and, for most Sudanese, the holiest month of the year. In this brutal attack, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and other security elements shot and beat unarmed civilians, reportedly killing more than 100, including children, and injuring hundreds, including an American citizen. According to credible reports, they burned tents where peaceful protesters were sleeping; attacked medical staff in hospitals assisting the wounded; raped women and men, including health workers; and blocked the Internet and phone services across Sudan, silencing the Sudanese public and cutting their connection to the world.

United Nations human rights experts warn of Sudan sliding into a "human rights abyss" and have joined other voices calling for an independent outside investigation into human rights violations and abuses against peaceful protesters, which the TMC has rejected. I remain deeply concerned about the violence since the start of this year. I would note that one of the key factors exacerbating this risk, in addition to existing instability, human rights violations, abuses, and oppression, is the presence and activity of the RSF, which evolved from the very forces that *already* committed mass atrocities in Darfur, who are now in the capital Khartoum. It is this force, with its reprehensible track record, that the TMC chose to deploy in their 'street clean-up'

efforts on June 3. We have seen this story before in Sudan—the devastating aftermath of mass violence, including dire humanitarian needs. Darfur has still not recovered from the mass killing, mass displacement, and atrocities that began in 2003, the aftermath of which USAID responds to with humanitarian assistance on a daily basis. Nearly 1.8 million remain displaced by conflict in Darfur.

As a show of good faith that it can operate in the interests of the Sudanese people, the TMC should allow for an independent and credible investigation of the human rights violations and abuses committed in Khartoum and hold accountable those responsible. We call on the TMC to protect the human rights of those in Sudan, allow peaceful protests and respect freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. In addition, the TMC should negotiate with the Forces for Freedom and Change to expeditiously form a civilian-led transitional government.

On June 3, the TMC unilaterally announced that elections would be held in nine months. We agree with our State colleagues that such a timeline is not realistic for credible elections. We also agree that the Forces for Freedom and Change are their negotiating partner and a civilian-led transitional government should be formed with them.

Humanitarian Needs

Upheaval in Khartoum is exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Darfur at a very precarious time, as the United Nations-African Union joint peacekeeping operation in Darfur, UNAMID, is in the process of drawing down toward a planned exit a year from now. We are fully against the May 13 decree from the TMC demanding that UNAMID bases are turned over to the RSF. UNAMID continues to play an important role in the protection of civilians in Darfur, a role that cannot be filled by the RSF.

Again this month, violence erupted, leaving a reported 17 people dead, 15 injured, and 100 homes burned in Central Darfur. Witnesses said the attackers were the Rapid Support Forces—formerly the Janjaweed responsible for genocide in Darfur—the same brutal forces who killed, beat, and raped people in Khartoum.

The international community assesses that more than eight million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, including one million refugees and asylum seekers in Sudan who need assistance, most of them from South Sudan. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the TMC's decision to cut off the Internet and telephone networks has significantly hampered humanitarian operations.

We will continue to call on the TMC to ensure unfettered access for humanitarian actors to effectively and efficiently help Sudanese people in need of life-saving assistance—regardless of who and where they are—in keeping with international standards of independence and impartiality. The current restrictive operating environment for humanitarian assistance must be changed now to ensure timely delivery.

USAID Response

The United States is the largest donor to the people of Sudan. We continue to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to Sudanese people in need, including in areas where people have long suffered the impacts of conflict—Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile. In FY 2018 and 2019, the U.S. Government has provided nearly \$340 million in humanitarian assistance as of March 2019, reaching more than 2.5 million people in Sudan. Current programming focuses on emergency food distributions, meeting critical gaps in health and nutrition, and improving access to safe drinking water for vulnerable populations. To a lesser extent, and where appropriate, our teams are working to expand upon integrated food security, livelihoods, and protection programming.

Food security needs this year are higher than normal, exacerbated by poor macroeconomic conditions that are driving extremely high food prices. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) estimates that in 2019, nearly 5.8 million Sudanese people will experience Crisis (IPC 3) level of acute food insecurity, including more than one million people facing Emergency—IPC 4—levels of food insecurity. Inflation and high cereal prices have significantly reduced household purchasing power, while economic conditions have also led to decreased income-generating opportunities and the availability of goods and services. In addition to the spikes in need, cash shortages across the country continue to hamper humanitarian operations as relief actors struggle to access sufficient cash to pay staff and contractors, causing significant delays in programming.

USAID is also providing approximately \$5 million in development assistance, which supports conflict mitigation at the community level and support for civil society, including women, youth, and people with disabilities.

As we consider how best the United States can positively influence events in Sudan at this crucial and volatile time, and make a positive impact on the lives of Sudan's 40 million people, USAID is well placed to expand and adjust our assistance.

For decades, we have supported Sudan's civil society, despite limited space in an authoritarian environment. Brave Sudanese people, including thousands of young women, who repeatedly defied the state of emergency and took to the streets demanding freedom from authoritarian rule, are some of the beneficiaries of the civil society support we have provided for years. This is why it continues to be essential that the United States provide support for civil society as a cornerstone of our foreign assistance.

We continue to help mitigate conflict at the local level by working with communities to address grievances and alleviate competition for scarce resources.

USAID is already expanding support to Sudanese civil society through existing mechanisms and new funding, including funds from USAID's Elections and Political Processes Fund and

\$170,000 from the Human Rights Grants Program. We are also exploring other means to mobilize funding and programs to augment these efforts. While we have concerns about a rapid move to elections, we stand ready to support civil society to engage in a free and fair electoral process, should there be an agreement on an appropriate timeline. USAID has supported many elections in Africa and we know that genuinely free and fair electoral processes needs adequate time. We continually assess how best to use our existing conflict mitigation assistance to help support civil society and resolve community-level conflict.

Conclusion

The people of Sudan have been united by a vibrant, inspirational, and massive public demonstration for democracy and civilian rule—a government of the people that has eluded the country since 1989. A military government will not resolve Sudan's divisions, end decades of conflict, repair its broken economy, and transform Sudan into an inclusive, prosperous, and productive country. On the contrary, we have seen military rule in Sudan produce decades of war, violence, a genocide, and regional instability. A transition to civilian rule with an empowered civil society inclusive of all Sudanese is essential in order to stop the cycle of conflict and oppression and chart a new course for the people of Sudan and their neighbors.

We will do all we can to help the Sudanese people achieve their dreams of an open and democratic society and we thank the committee for working with us in this effort.

