



DISEC  
STUDY GUIDE

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TEDMUN

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ANKARA  
TED ANKARA COLLEGE  
FOUNDATION HIGH SCHOOL  
MODEL UNITED NATIONS

## **DISEC Study Guide**

### **Disarmament and International Security Committee**

**Agenda Item: Impact of illegal arms trade routes to the Sahel region and the surrounding states**

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## I. LETTERS

### A. Letter from the Secretary General

Dear participants of TEDMUN 2024,

My words could not start without a quote that enlightens and motivates the whole spirit of this conference: “Peace in home, peace in world.” Although Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is known to be a great military commander and a brilliant government man, he was unique. At that time, while most of the leaders had rather aggressive views regarding the importance of International Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk knew that the future of the modern world and a future modern Türkiye must be tenant to diplomacy. It must be reminded that, our hearths and opinions lie within his words, and this conference is assembled through his enlightenment.

TED Ankara College Policy Diplomacy Club has assembled 9 conferences since 2014, and this year we are proud to be the part of the 10th TEDMUN Conference. Becoming a part of the PDC, being an MUN’er and organizing TEDMUN at the end of the 11th grade has turned into a long-lasting tradition of every TED Ankara College member. We are proud to be a part of this long-lasting tradition and glorifying our club. The TED Ankara College Policy Diplomacy Club has a rich history of fostering such principles, organizing conferences that serve as platforms for meaningful discourse and collaboration. As we continue this tradition with the 10th TEDMUN Conference, we stand as proud torchbearers of our club's legacy, committed to upholding the values of diplomacy, mutual respect, and cooperation.

For each of us, participating in Model United Nations represents more than just a simulation; it is an opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives, to forge connections, and to contribute to the collective pursuit of peace and prosperity. As Secretary-General, I am deeply inspired by the dedication and passion that each of you brings to this conference. I hope the best for your contributions to the Model United Nations, and I wish you to enlighten yourselves by recovering the embedded solutions



in each conflict. In my opinion, your youth and perspectives will make this conference shine like the North Star in the Arctic.

As we embark on this journey together, let us remember the words of Atatürk and the legacy of TED Ankara College Policy Diplomacy Club. Let us approach our deliberations with open minds, empathy, and a shared commitment to building a better world. I am confident that through our collective efforts, we will not only honour our advisors but also reaffirm our belief in the power of diplomacy to transcend borders and unite humanity.

With warm regards,

Buğra Ermihan

Secretary-General of TEDMUN 2024



## B. Letter from the President Chair

Dear participants, I would like to warmly welcome you all to the 12th annual edition of TED Ankara College Model United Nations. My name is Nehirnaz Tunca, and I will be serving as the president and chair of the Disarmament and International Security Committee during TEDMUN'24. TEDMUN has had a special place in my heart ever since my first participation in TEDMUN'23, so being able to reunite with the TEDMUN team for the second year in a row fills me with great pride and pleasure. Of Course, I can not move on before mentioning that the organization team and we, as the academic team, have dedicated an outstanding amount of sincere efforts in order to create the best possible experience for your esteemed participants. Therefore, I would like to respectfully thank everyone for their beneficial contributions, as I am confident that with the help of our conjugated efforts, TEDMUN'24 will live up to its tradition of being an enriching experience that one can never forget. With that being said, I hope you will find this through the study guide we prepared for you to be beneficial. I strongly advise you participants to read this study guide in detail in order to get a firm understanding of the agenda item as well as research and study your country's position and policies regarding the agenda item and to fully immerse yourselves in your committee in order to create an enjoyable and fruitful experience for yourselves. Please keep in mind that as your chairboard we are here to guide you through any complications you may face regarding the committee. Thus, if you are ever in need of assistance, do not hesitate to contact me or fellow chairboard members. Now, I would like to once again welcome you all to TEDMUN'24, and may you all create remarkable memories!

My Kind Regards, Nehirnaz Tunca ([nehirnaztunca@gmail.com](mailto:nehirnaztunca@gmail.com))



### C. Letter from the Vice Chair

Dear participants, I am pleased to welcome you all to the 12th annual session of Ted Ankara College Model United Nations. My name is Çağın Aras İncel, and I will be serving as the Vice President of the Disarmament and International Security Committee. As a member of the Ted Ankara College, TEDMUN has always had a special place in my heart. I won my first award at this conference on the same committee I will be serving as a vice president. During the conference, I will also be the Head of IT. Having seen the countless efforts and hours dedicated to making this conference possible, I would like to thank the academic and organizational teams. Secondly, I would like to thank my president chair, Nehirnaz, who made the preparation process look like a child's play. If it wasn't for her, this committee wouldn't have the success it would have. I strongly believe that the study guides offer all you need to know. However, a little more research wouldn't hurt. Lastly, I am beyond excited to be able to experience the pleasure of working with this committee. Feel free to contact me or fellow chairboard members. Welcome to the TEDMUN'24, where you will create unforgettable moments.

### D. Letter from the Vice Chair

Most Esteemed Participants, my name is Beril Yüksel, and I am delighted to be serving you as the vice chair of the Disarmament and International Security Committee in the 12th annual edition of TED Ankara College Model United Nations.

First of all, I would like to thank the organization and the academic team for their remarkable efforts in making this conference possible for us. My second thank you is to my president chair, Nehirnaz, who helped me throughout the whole process and made this experience delightful. I sincerely believe that this study guide will be beneficial for you throughout the committee. Lastly, I would like to welcome you all to TEDMUN'24, where you will create remarkable memories.





## II. INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA ITEM

The Sahel region is a large semi-arid area that extends across Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. This region includes countries like Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and portions of Sudan and Senegal. The Sahel region, characterized by its semi-arid climate and fragile ecosystems, faces an array of interconnected challenges, ranging from poverty and underdevelopment to political instability and ethnic tensions. Historically marginalized and neglected, the Sahel countries struggle to address the root causes of conflict and insecurity, exacerbated by rapid population growth, climate change, and resource scarcity. Against this backdrop, the proliferation of illegal arms emerges as a critical factor exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and perpetuating cycles of violence and instability. There are several issues facing the Sahel region, but the most critical one is the spread of illegal weapons. Wide-ranging effects arise from this phenomenon, affecting the Sahel region and the states surrounding it. In order to combat the underlying causes of insecurity, instability, and humanitarian crises in the region, it is critical to recognize the effects of illegal arms trade routes on the Sahel region and the states bordering it. Transnational organized crime, poor governance institutions, and weak borders facilitate the illegal trafficking of weapons, ammunition, and military equipment, which is an essential component of the illegal arms trade in the Sahel. This illicit activity poses serious risks to the region's peace, security, and development since it feeds armed disputes, insurrections, and terrorist attacks. Furthermore, the challenges caused by the proliferation of illicit weapons are rendered worse by the Sahel's strategic location as a conduit for the passage of weapons from conflict zones in North Africa and the Middle East. Illegal arms trade channels have a broad spectrum of implications for the Sahel region, including socioeconomic, humanitarian, and security risks. Illegal arms-fueled armed conflicts aggravate underlying vulnerabilities and prolong periods of instability and violence by generating extensive displacement, fatalities, and breaches of human rights. Persistent insecurity further hinders investments, regional integration initiatives, and economic growth, which impedes the journey to long-term peace and prosperity. The implications of illicit arms trade routes transcend the borders of the Sahel region, impacting adjacent nations in addition to the larger global community. The Sahelian armed conflicts and general insecurity have created regional instability that threatens regional peace and security and presents severe challenges to neighboring nations. Security issues are further exacerbated by the interconnectedness of networks involved in the illicit arms trade, which encourages the growth of other types of transnational crime, such as drug and human



trafficking and money laundering. Given these factors, it is imperative that national, regional, and international efforts be coordinated to address the scourge of illegal arms trade routes to the Sahel region and neighboring states. Increased collaboration, capacity-building, and focused measures are necessary for disrupting networks of illicit arms trafficking, strengthening border security, and advancing peace, stability, and development in the Sahel region and the surrounding states.

### **III. SUMMARY OF THE INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Impact on the Sahel Region**

The impact of illegal arms trade routes on the Sahel region is profound and multifaceted, manifesting in various dimensions:

- **Security Threats:** Illicit arms fuel armed conflicts, insurgencies, and acts of terrorism, posing grave threats to the safety and security of civilians and exacerbating humanitarian crises.
- **Humanitarian Consequences:** The proliferation of illegal arms leads to widespread displacement, loss of life, and human rights abuses, undermining the resilience and well-being of communities across the Sahel.
- **Socio-economic Impacts:** Persistent insecurity and instability hinder economic development, investment, and regional integration efforts, perpetuating cycles of poverty and underdevelopment.

#### **B. Impact on Surrounding States**

The impact of illegal arms trade routes extends beyond the borders of the Sahel region, affecting neighboring states and the broader international community:

- **Regional Instability:** The spillover effects of armed conflicts and instability in the Sahel pose significant challenges to neighboring countries, threatening regional peace and security.
- **Transnational Crime:** The interconnected nature of illicit arms trade networks facilitates the proliferation of other forms of transnational crime, including drug trafficking, human trafficking, and money laundering.



- **Global Security Concerns:** The proliferation of illegal arms in the Sahel region contributes to global security challenges, including the spread of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and threats to international peace and security.

#### **IV. Further Detailed Impacts**

##### **A. Security Implications:**

The proliferation of illegal arms in the Sahel region exacerbates existing security challenges, including armed conflict, insurgency, and terrorism. Armed groups, including terrorist organizations like Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda affiliates, capitalize on the availability of weapons to carry out attacks, recruit fighters, and expand their influence. The presence of illicit arms further destabilizes fragile states and undermines efforts to maintain peace and security in the region.

##### **1. Armed Conflict and Insurgency:**

- The proliferation of illegal arms fuels armed conflict and insurgency in the Sahel region, exacerbating existing tensions and grievances. Armed groups, including rebel movements and terrorist organizations, exploit the availability of weapons to wage violent campaigns against state authorities and rival factions.
- Armed conflict disrupts civilian life, displaces communities, and undermines state sovereignty, leading to a breakdown of law and order in conflict-affected areas.

##### **2. Terrorism and Extremism:**

- Terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) capitalize on the availability of weapons to carry out attacks, recruit fighters, and expand their influence in the Sahel region.
- Illicit arms trade provides terrorist groups with the means to acquire sophisticated weapons, including small arms, light weapons, and explosives, which they use to perpetrate acts of terrorism and destabilize the region.

##### **3. Organized Crime and Violence:**

- Criminal networks engaged in illegal arms trade contribute to the proliferation of violence and organized crime in the Sahel region. These networks traffic



weapons alongside drugs, human trafficking, and other illicit goods, creating a cycle of violence and lawlessness.

- The presence of illegal arms fuels inter-communal violence, feuds between ethnic groups, and disputes over land and resources, exacerbating social tensions and undermining community cohesion.

#### 4. Border Insecurity and Transnational Threats:

- Weak border controls and porous borders in the Sahel region facilitate the smuggling of illegal arms across international boundaries, creating challenges for border security and law enforcement agencies.
- Transnational criminal networks exploit porous borders to traffic weapons, evade detection, and circumvent legal regulations, posing a significant security threat to neighboring countries and the broader international community.

#### 5. State Fragility and Governance Challenges:

- The influx of illegal arms undermines state authority and governance structures in the Sahel region, weakening the capacity of governments to maintain law and order and provide basic services to their populations.
- Fragile states, characterized by weak institutions, corruption, and political instability, are particularly vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of illegal arms trade, as they lack the resources and capacity to combat arms trafficking and address its underlying causes effectively.

## B. Humanitarian Consequences

The illegal arms trade has dire humanitarian consequences, leading to civilian casualties, displacement, and human rights abuses. Civilians bear the brunt of armed violence, with women and children disproportionately affected. Moreover, the widespread availability of weapons perpetuates cycles of violence, making it difficult for communities to rebuild and recover from conflict-related trauma.

### 1. Civilian Casualties and Injuries:



- The proliferation of illegal arms in the Sahel region leads to an increase in civilian casualties and injuries as a result of armed violence, including armed conflict, inter-communal violence, and criminal activities.
  - Civilians, including women and children, are often caught in the crossfire between armed groups, leading to indiscriminate attacks, bombings, and shootings that result in death or serious injuries.
2. Displacement and Forced Migration:
- The presence of illegal arms exacerbates insecurity and fear among civilian populations, leading to forced displacement and internal migration in the Sahel region. Communities flee their homes to escape violence, persecution, and human rights abuses perpetrated by armed groups and criminal networks.
  - Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees face dire humanitarian conditions, including lack of shelter, food, clean water, and access to basic services, as they seek safety and protection in host communities or makeshift settlements.
3. Humanitarian Access and Assistance:
- The proliferation of illegal arms restricts humanitarian access and assistance to conflict-affected populations in the Sahel region, as aid organizations face security risks, logistical challenges, and bureaucratic obstacles in delivering life-saving aid to those in need.
  - Humanitarian workers and aid convoys are targeted by armed groups and criminal elements, leading to disruptions in relief operations and delays in the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance, including food aid, medical supplies, and emergency relief supplies.
4. Human Rights Abuses and Violations:
- The presence of illegal arms contributes to human rights abuses and violations committed against civilians in the Sahel region, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, torture, sexual violence, and forced recruitment of child soldiers.
  - Armed groups and criminal networks perpetrate atrocities with impunity, exploiting the availability of weapons to intimidate, coerce, and terrorize civilian populations, particularly women, children, and marginalized communities.



## 5. Psychosocial Impact and Trauma:

- The pervasive insecurity and violence resulting from illegal arms trade in the Sahel region have profound psychosocial effects on individuals and communities, leading to trauma, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Children, in particular, are vulnerable to the long-term psychological consequences of armed conflict and violence, including impaired cognitive development, emotional distress, and social alienation, which hinder their ability to recover and rebuild their lives.

## C. Regional Stability

The influx of illegal arms into the Sahel region undermines efforts to achieve sustainable peace and stability. The proliferation of weapons fuels inter-communal violence exacerbates ethnic tensions and weakens state institutions. Moreover, the presence of armed groups exacerbates existing governance challenges, hindering development initiatives and exacerbating socio-economic disparities.

### 1. Inter-communal Conflict and Ethnic Tensions:

- The proliferation of illegal arms exacerbates inter-communal conflict and ethnic tensions in the Sahel region as rival groups compete for control over land, resources, and political power.
- Disputes over grazing land, water access, and natural resources escalate into violent confrontations, fueled by the availability of weapons, leading to cycles of revenge attacks, reprisals, and communal violence.

### 2. State Fragility and Governance Challenges:



- The influx of illegal arms undermines state authority and governance structures in the Sahel region, weakening the capacity of governments to maintain law and order, provide public services, and uphold the rule of law.
  - Fragile states, characterized by weak institutions, corruption, and political instability, are particularly susceptible to the destabilizing effects of illegal arms trade, as they lack the resources and capacity to effectively combat arms trafficking and address its underlying causes.
3. Border Insecurity and Transnational Threats:
- Weak border controls and porous borders in the Sahel region facilitate the smuggling of illegal arms across international boundaries, creating challenges for border security and law enforcement agencies.
  - Transnational criminal networks exploit porous borders to traffic weapons, evade detection, and circumvent legal regulations, posing a significant security threat to neighboring countries and the broader international community.
4. Impact on Governance and Development:
- The presence of illegal arms undermines efforts to promote good governance, democracy, and development in the Sahel region, as armed groups and criminal networks challenge state authority and hinder development initiatives.
  - Corruption, collusion, and complicity within state institutions exacerbate governance challenges, erode public trust, and perpetuate impunity, creating fertile ground for illicit activities such as arms trafficking, drug trafficking, and human smuggling.

#### D. Economic Instability and Livelihoods

The proliferation of illegal arms disrupts economic activities and livelihoods in the Sahel region, as communities are forced to divert resources towards security and self-defense measures rather than investments in productive sectors such as agriculture, trade, and commerce.



- Insecurity and violence deter foreign investment, undermine business confidence, and impede economic growth and development, exacerbating poverty, inequality, and social exclusion in conflict-affected areas.
  -
1. Disruption of Economic Activities:
    - The proliferation of illegal arms disrupts economic activities and livelihoods in the Sahel region, as communities face increased insecurity and violence, hindering their ability to engage in productive activities such as agriculture, trade, and commerce.
    - Farmers, herders, and small-scale entrepreneurs are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of illegal arms trade, as they rely on access to land, water, and markets to sustain their livelihoods, which are often disrupted by conflict, displacement, and insecurity.
  2. Diversion of Resources to Security:
    - Insecurity and violence resulting from illegal arms trade force communities to divert resources towards security and self-defense measures rather than investments in productive sectors and social services.
    - Scarce resources that could be allocated to poverty reduction, education, healthcare, and infrastructure development are instead channeled towards purchasing weapons, hiring security personnel, and fortifying defenses, exacerbating poverty, inequality, and social exclusion.
  3. Impact on Trade and Commerce:
    - Illegal arms trade disrupts trade and commerce in the Sahel region, as border communities face challenges in transporting goods, accessing markets, and conducting cross-border trade due to insecurity, smuggling, and extortion by armed groups and criminal networks.
    - Restrictions on movement, checkpoints, and roadblocks erected by armed actors impede the flow of goods and services, increase transaction costs, and undermine regional integration and economic cooperation initiatives.
  4. Decline in Foreign Investment and Business Confidence:
    - Insecurity and violence resulting from illegal arms trade deter foreign investment, undermine business confidence, and impede economic growth and development in the Sahel region.





- Investors are reluctant to commit capital to conflict-affected areas due to perceived risks, uncertainty, and instability, leading to a decline in job creation, entrepreneurship, and private sector development, which are essential for sustainable economic development.
5. Loss of Livelihoods and Displacement:
- Conflict, insecurity, and violence fueled by illegal arms trade lead to loss of livelihoods and displacement of communities in the Sahel region, as individuals and families are forced to flee their homes in search of safety and protection.
  - Displaced populations face challenges in accessing employment, education, healthcare, and social services in host communities, exacerbating their vulnerability and dependence on humanitarian assistance and support.

#### V. Historical Context of Illegal Arms Trade:

Illegal arms trade has been a persistent challenge in the Sahel region, with historical precedents dating back to colonial and post-colonial eras. The proliferation of weapons intensified during the Cold War era as rival powers vied for regional influence and armed various factions to further their geopolitical interests. Arms flowed into the Sahel through illicit channels, fueling internal conflicts, civil wars, and insurgencies.

#### VI. Post-Cold War Dynamics:

Following the end of the Cold War, the collapse of authoritarian regimes, and the spread of political instability across Africa, the Sahel region witnessed a surge in illicit arms trade. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including surplus weapons from past conflicts, contributed to a cycle of violence, insurgency, and terrorism in the region. Criminal networks, armed groups, and non-state actors exploited weak governance structures and porous borders to traffic weapons and expand their influence.

#### VII. Recent Developments:



In recent years, the Sahel region has faced escalating security challenges exacerbated by the spread of terrorism, organized crime, and inter-communal violence. Illicit arms trade remains a key driver of insecurity, with weapons flowing into the region from conflict zones in Libya, the Sahel-Saharan belt, and other neighboring areas. The Sahel has become a strategic transit route for arms trafficking, facilitating the movement of weapons to insurgent groups, terrorist organizations, and criminal networks operating in the region.

## VIII. International Response:

### Existing Mechanisms:

The international community has adopted various mechanisms and initiatives to address the issue of illegal arms trade, including the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and United Nations Security Council resolutions. These instruments aim to regulate the legal arms trade, prevent diversion to illicit markets, and enhance transparency and accountability in arms transfers.

### Effectiveness:

Despite existing mechanisms, challenges persist in combating illegal arms trade in the Sahel region. Weak institutional capacity, porous borders, and corruption undermine efforts to enforce regulations and control the flow of weapons. Moreover, the transnational nature of the illicit arms trade requires coordinated action and cooperation among affected states and international partners.

### Role of Stakeholders:

Addressing the impacts of illegal arms trade requires the collective efforts of governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector. Governments in the Sahel region must strengthen legislative frameworks, enhance border controls, and improve law enforcement capacities to combat illicit arms trafficking. International partners should provide technical assistance, financial support, and capacity-building initiatives to bolster regional counter-trafficking efforts.



### Arms Trade Treaty (ATT):

- The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013, is a legally binding instrument aimed at regulating international trade in conventional arms and preventing their diversion to illicit markets.
- States parties to the ATT are required to establish national control systems, conduct risk assessments of arms transfers, and enhance transparency and accountability in arms transactions to prevent illicit arms trade and promote responsible arms transfers.

### United Nations Security Council Resolutions:

- The United Nations Security Council has adopted several resolutions aimed at addressing the issue of illegal arms trade in the Sahel region and neighboring states, including resolutions targeting specific armed groups and criminal networks involved in arms trafficking.
- These resolutions call for enhanced cooperation among affected states, regional organizations, and international partners to disrupt illicit arms trafficking networks, strengthen border controls, and address the root causes of instability and conflict in the region.

### Regional and Sub-Regional Initiatives:

- Regional and sub-regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the G5 Sahel



have established initiatives and mechanisms to address the challenges posed by illegal arms trade in the Sahel region.

- These initiatives include joint border patrols, information-sharing mechanisms, capacity-building programs for law enforcement agencies, and regional cooperation frameworks aimed at promoting peace, security, and stability in the region.

#### Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance:

- International partners, including the United Nations, European Union, and bilateral donors, provide technical assistance, training, and capacity-building support to affected states in the Sahel region to strengthen their ability to combat illegal arms trade.
- Assistance programs focus on enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies, border security forces, and customs authorities to detect, interdict, and seize illicit arms shipments, as well as improve legal frameworks and regulatory mechanisms to prevent arms diversion and trafficking.

#### Sanctions and Enforcement Measures:

- The United Nations Security Council imposes targeted sanctions, including arms embargoes, asset freezes, and travel bans, against individuals, entities, and groups involved in illegal arms trade, proliferation, and diversion of weapons in the Sahel region.
- Sanctions regimes aim to deter illicit activities, disrupt illicit financial flows, and hold perpetrators accountable for their involvement in arms trafficking and related criminal activities.



## Public Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns:

- International organizations, civil society groups, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) conduct public awareness campaigns and advocacy initiatives to raise awareness about the impacts of illegal arms trade on peace, security, and development in the Sahel region.
- These campaigns mobilize public opinion, promote policy dialogue, and advocate for stronger political commitments and international cooperation to address the root causes of illicit arms trafficking and promote responsible arms control measures.

## IX. Recommendations

1. Legislative Measures and Regulatory Frameworks:
  - Strengthen national legislation and regulatory frameworks to criminalize illegal arms trade and establish robust mechanisms for enforcement, prosecution, and punishment of perpetrators.
  - Implement and enforce existing international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), to enhance transparency and accountability in arms transfers and prevent diversion to illicit markets.
2. Capacity-Building and Training Programs:
  - Provide technical assistance, training, and resources to enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies, border security forces, and customs authorities to detect, interdict, and seize illicit arms shipments.
  - Strengthen cooperation and information-sharing mechanisms among affected states and international partners to improve coordination and response to illegal arms trade activities.
3. Border Security and Control Measures:



- Enhance border security and control measures, including the deployment of advanced technology, surveillance systems, and personnel training, to prevent illicit arms trafficking and smuggling across international boundaries.
  - Establish joint border patrols, intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and cross-border cooperation frameworks among neighboring states to disrupt illicit arms trade networks and enhance regional security.
4. Demand Reduction and Disarmament Initiatives:
- Implement community-based initiatives to promote disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs aimed at reducing the demand for weapons and addressing the root causes of armed violence and conflict.
  - Support initiatives to combat illicit arms trafficking through public awareness campaigns, community engagement, and outreach programs targeting at-risk populations, including youth, women, and marginalized communities.
5. Enhanced Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms:
- Strengthen monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track and document illicit arms trade activities, including the establishment of national arms registries, database systems, and tracking mechanisms for arms transfers and transactions.
  - Enhance cooperation with international organizations, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and INTERPOL, to exchange information, intelligence, and best practices in combating illegal arms trade.
6. Promotion of Regional Cooperation and Collaboration:
- Foster greater cooperation and collaboration among affected states, regional organizations, and international partners to develop comprehensive strategies and joint action plans to address the illicit arms trade and its impacts on regional stability and security.
  - Strengthen regional mechanisms, such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to facilitate dialogue, coordination, and cooperation on arms control and disarmament initiatives in the Sahel region.
7. Promotion of Responsible Arms Transfers:



- Encourage responsible arms transfers and promote adherence to international norms and standards on arms control and non-proliferation through diplomatic efforts, advocacy campaigns, and multilateral dialogues.
  - Enhance transparency and accountability in arms transfers by promoting end-user certification, risk assessment procedures, and due diligence measures to prevent diversion to illicit markets and unauthorized recipients.
8. Support for Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention:
- Provide support for peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts in the Sahel region, including mediation, dialogue, and reconciliation initiatives aimed at addressing the underlying drivers of conflict and violence.
  - Invest in sustainable development, poverty reduction, and social inclusion programs to promote resilience, stability, and peacebuilding in conflict-affected communities and regions

## X. Sustainable Solutions:

1. Conflict Prevention and Resolution:
  - Invest in conflict prevention and resolution initiatives that address the root causes of conflict and instability in the Sahel region, including historical grievances, socio-economic disparities, and political marginalization.
  - Support inclusive dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation processes that involve local communities, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders in resolving conflicts and building sustainable peace.
2. Strengthening Governance and Rule of Law:
  - Strengthen governance institutions, promote transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, and combat corruption to address governance gaps and reduce opportunities for illicit activities, including arms trafficking.
  - Enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies, judiciary systems, and anti-corruption bodies to investigate and prosecute cases of illegal arms trade and related criminal activities.
3. Promoting Socio-Economic Development:



- Promote socio-economic development and poverty reduction initiatives that address the underlying drivers of conflict and insecurity in the Sahel region, including unemployment, inequality, and lack of access to basic services.
  - Invest in education, vocational training, and job creation programs to provide alternative livelihoods for youth and marginalized communities, reducing their susceptibility to recruitment by armed groups and criminal networks.
4. Community-Based Approaches:
- Support community-based approaches to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) that empower local communities to address the proliferation of weapons, resolve conflicts peacefully, and build resilience to violence.
  - Promote community-led initiatives for arms collection and destruction, small arms control, and conflict resolution mechanisms that engage grassroots organizations, women's groups, and youth networks.
5. Border Management and Security:

### Impact on Security

1. **Armed Conflict and Instability:** The proliferation of illegal arms exacerbates armed conflicts and insurgencies in the Sahel region. Armed groups, including terrorist organizations and rebel militias, exploit access to weapons to wage violence against governments, communities, and rival factions.
2. **Humanitarian Crisis:** Heightened insecurity resulting from the influx of illicit arms contributes to a humanitarian crisis in the Sahel, displacing populations, disrupting livelihoods, and exacerbating poverty and food insecurity. Civilians bear the brunt of violence and instability, facing displacement, human rights abuses, and loss of life.
3. **Regional Destabilization:** The cross-border nature of illegal arms trade routes amplifies regional destabilization as conflicts spill over into neighboring countries, undermining peace and security across the Sahel and surrounding states.





Interconnected security challenges require coordinated responses and regional cooperation to mitigate the spread of violence and extremism.

## 6 . Mitigation Strategies

1. **Enhanced Border Security:** Strengthening border management capacities through improved infrastructure, technology, and training is essential for combating illegal arms trade routes. Investing in border surveillance, intelligence sharing, and inter-agency cooperation can help detect and disrupt illicit arms shipments.
2. **Legal Frameworks and Enforcement:** Enforcing existing laws and regulations governing arms trafficking, including international conventions such as the Arms Trade Treaty, is critical for deterring illicit activities. Enhancing legal frameworks, prosecuting traffickers, and dismantling criminal networks are essential components of effective enforcement strategies.
3. **Regional Cooperation:** Promoting regional cooperation and dialogue among Sahelian countries and neighboring states is vital for addressing transnational security threats. Collaborative efforts to share intelligence, coordinate border patrols, and harmonize policies can strengthen collective responses to the challenges posed by illegal arms trade routes.
4. **Community Engagement and Conflict Resolution:** Engaging local communities in conflict prevention and resolution efforts is essential for addressing the root causes of violence and instability in the Sahel. Supporting community-based initiatives, promoting reconciliation, and addressing socio-economic grievances can help mitigate the impact of illicit arms trade on vulnerable populations.

## 7. Diplomacy:

- Foster greater regional cooperation and diplomacy among affected states, regional organizations, and international partners to address the transnational nature of illegal arms trade and its impacts on regional stability.



- Support regional initiatives, such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in promoting peace, security, and development in the Sahel region through dialogue, mediation, and conflict prevention efforts.

#### 8. Promotion of Responsible Arms Transfers:

- Advocate for responsible arms transfers and adherence to international norms and standards on arms control and non-proliferation, including through diplomatic efforts, arms control treaties, and export controls.
- Strengthen end-user certification, risk assessment procedures, and due diligence measures to prevent diversion to illicit markets and unauthorized recipients, promoting transparency and accountability in arms transfers.

#### 9. Public Awareness and Advocacy:

- Raise public awareness and advocate for greater attention to the issue of illegal arms trade in the Sahel region, highlighting its impacts on peace, security, and development.
- Mobilize civil society organizations, media outlets, and advocacy groups to promote public dialogue, policy debate, and citizen engagement in addressing the root causes of arms trafficking and promoting peacebuilding initiatives.

By implementing these sustainable solutions, the international community can work towards addressing the root causes of illegal arms trade in the Sahel region, promoting peace, security, and development, and building resilience to armed violence and conflict.



## XI. COUNTRY STANDS

### NIGER

Niger's approach to the Sahel crisis is deeply rooted in its historical engagement with the region's challenges. Over the years, Niger has dealt with the consequences of insecurity, humanitarian emergencies, and developmental setbacks. The emergence of new authoritarian powers in the Sahel region marked the start of a difficult period for Niger. It has been directly affected by terrorist groups like Boko Haram, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and al-Qaeda in the past, as well as civil unrest. The country has seen firsthand how terrorism and extremism can devastate communities, disrupt livelihoods, and jeopardize national security. All this conflict led to the uprising of July 2023. On 26 July 2023, a coup d'état occurred in Niger when the country's presidential guard detained President Mohamed Bazoum, and Presidential Guard commander General Abdourahamane Tchiani proclaimed himself the leader of a new military junta shortly after confirming the coup a success.

Niger aims to stabilize the Sahel region as soon and efficiently as possible and once again establish democracy.

### USA

The United States of America provided intelligence to countries in the Sahel region, especially Niger, to combat terrorism and stabilize the region. Through USAID (US Agency for International Development) and many international organizations, the USA was able to become a major contributor to the Sahel region. Supporting economic, educational, agricultural, and medical developments such as the Fulbright Program, The USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub, and The West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP), the USA aimed to bring stability and peace to the Sahel region.



On top of these, the United States has also taken part in multiple military operations to combat extremist groups in the Sahel regions. Helping its allies Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger to address security challenges and promote stability in the Sahel. However, the political changes, such as the coupon

transitions to civilian rule in Burkina Faso and Mali, are making it more difficult to establish a well-coordinated communication line. The US Department of Defense (DoD) recently announced to withdraw a majority of its forces from Chad and Niger under the requirements of the transitional governments of these two African countries. According to the plan, the US will pull back around 75 troops of its Army Special Forces from Chad and above 1,000 deployed troops from Niger. While hoping for a more civilized region, the USA has no options other than retreating.

## China

China is implementing a new diplomatic strategy in the Sahel region by engaging with the United Nations in order to challenge traditional powers like France and the United States. While Africa is primarily seen as a political and economic concern for China, the security aspect is becoming increasingly important, especially in terms of protecting Chinese nationals in the region. Additionally, China's economic growth relies on access to resources and stability in Africa. China has historically made significant economic investments in the manufacturing industries of Sahelian countries. In Niger, China has invested in energy, mining, and real estate sectors.

While Mauritania and Chad have limited military capabilities, they possess intelligence services and rapid intervention units and have not been directly involved in significant conflicts for years. This presents an opportunity for China to increase its influence in the region as many traditional powers(USA and France) are creating a void.



China plays a role in peacekeeping operations in Mali and has provided financial support to the G5-Sahel joint force. Beijing has also used its economic power to gain special treatment and support political allies in the region. Its influence in the regional security landscape is steadily growing, thanks to the economic investments and maintains privileged relations with Sahelian states to challenge traditional powers.

## UAE

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has increased its engagement in the Sahel region dramatically, emphasizing security cooperation, development support, and humanitarian relief. The UAE provides humanitarian aid to nations like Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Chad. The UAE is also engaged in several development projects that seek to advance infrastructure, healthcare, education, and agricultural methods in order to better local populations. The UAE is strongly committed to supporting local initiatives aimed at tackling terrorism, insurgencies, and transnational crime. They actively work to promote peace and prosperity in their region by engaging in diplomatic relations with Sahel governments and regional organizations. These efforts aim to address shared challenges and promote progress for all involved.

## Russian Federation

Over the past years, Russia has intensified its focus on Africa's Sahel region. The military regimes that have emerged in the French-speaking Sahelian countries since 2020, such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, seem to be forming a noticeable alliance with Russia. Furthermore, Russia has supported the military governments in Burkina Faso and Mali over time. This support included security assistance, diplomatic support, and information operations support.

These relations with countries in the Sahel region contribute to Russia's foreign policy goals in the region. These goals will be in jeopardy in case of instability in the region caused by illegal arms trade.



## France

France had a colonization history, with most Sahelian countries just like Britain. However, unlike Britain, France maintained strong ties with its former colonies, collaborating in various fields such as economics, defense, and resource extraction. Today, France still has the privilege to purchase natural resources found in all its former colonies. However, recent events in Francophone countries and growing anti-French sentiment in Africa had made relations with France tense. Despite these events, France seeks to maintain its control over the region, especially regarding military collaboration and resource exploitation. Despite these countries ending military alliances, France has been reluctant to remove its military presence from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

## Mauritania

Combating illegal arms trade is also of significant importance for Mauritania in order to stabilize the region and ensure security. Fieldwork reveals that there are several key trafficking routes in the Sahel region. Weapons trafficking from Libya through Niger and Algeria has increased to supply weapons markets in northern Mali. However, political conflict in Libya and Operation Barkhane, a French anti-insurgent operation, has decreased arms flows since 2014, affecting the illicit trade route. Other externally sourced weapons flows include routes that enter Mali from Mauritania, with the arms having either been trafficked from coastal West Africa, including Senegal, or originating in the disputed territory of Western Sahara. They are then taken across the river, which delineates the border, and enter Mauritania. The weapons then traverse Mauritania to enter Mali via the southeastern border of Mauritania, traveling toward the small town of Foïta, where they converge with arms flows from Western Sahara.



The Organised Crime: West African Response to Trafficking (OCWAR-T) Project has begun the destruction of over 105,400 arms, ammunition, and explosives collected from Liberia's counties. The event, held at Edward Binyah Kesselly Military Barracks, was attended by various stakeholders, including the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, State Security Operatives, representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), Mine Advisory Group (MAG), Foreign Missions, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Traditional Leaders, and the public. The destruction event is seen as a significant step towards transitioning from crisis to sustained peace in Liberia. The OCWAR-T Project supports ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania in reducing transnational organized crime by strengthening national and regional structures, fostering evidence-led policy, supporting criminal investigations and prosecution, improving small arms control, and reducing human trafficking.

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