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THE STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT IN THE WESTERN SAHEL AND THE LIMITATIONS OF SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Abstract

The main objective of this analysis is to give a general and graphic overview of the political, economic, demographic, and social situation of the countries in the Western Sahel sub-region. This paper analyses the main factors affecting the global security and development situation of the region as well as other potential negative impacts, especially on the Maghreb and Europe. In view of the main threats and conflicts, it appears that these countries are unable to manage and address the major security and development challenges facing them, calling for involvement by the international community. This paper analyses the different initiatives and official development aid strategies used over many years, particularly by the EU, and argues the need for new international strategies and action.

Keywords

Sahel, conflict factors, jihadist terrorism, organised crime, international cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION

This analysis is based on a combined approach taking into account both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The quantitative analysis reflects a strong bias in favour of a wide range of sources, all of which are of an official nature. Thus, the statements and claims are based on empirical data, as opposed to the majority of security analyses of the Sahel that do without such documentary support. The analysis is underpinned by a balanced contribution of primary as well as secondary sources, fulfilling the scientific requirements generally applied to this field of studies, i.e. a combination of International Relations, in a narrow sense, and studies of Security and Defence¹. The approach follows the tenets of the Realist School in studying a region exposed to multiple challenges, risks and threats².

The African Continent has been invariably linked to instability and conflicts, especially since most countries obtained their independence during the 1960s. Among the multiple factors of instability one might highlight ethnic, religious and geopolitical rivalries as well as ideological extremism or extreme climatic conditions and a population explosion. Together, these factors have given rise to poverty, famine, systemic corruption, organised crime and terrorism. Likewise, the political instability caused by frequent violent³ government changes has harmed the economic and social development of most of these countries.

The existing situation of instability in the Middle East due to the conflict between Israel and its neighbours has only been heightened by the post-war situations in Afghanistan and Iraq and the surge of the Islamic State -a situation that was aggravated by the so-called “Arab Spring” which, far from achieving its goals, has generally provoked more instability in the Maghreb. The fall of Colonel Gaddafi’s regime has practically turned Libya into a failed state allowing the Islamic State to also gain a foothold.

In sub-Saharan Africa the situation does not appear to be better. The fall of the Gaddafi regime caused the return of thousands of Tuareg soldiers to Mali which in turn fuelled the independence revolt rising out of the Azawad. This was joined by groups following a jihadist ideology, thus endangering not only Mali but the region as a whole.

In the north of Nigeria and around Lake Chad, for years the population has been suffering Boko Haram’s terror with successive military actions seemingly unable to remove its threat.

1 CUETO NOGUERAS, Carlos; JORDÁN ENAMORADO, Javier. (2001). “Introducción a los estudios de seguridad y defensa”. Granada, Comares.

2 GARCÍA PICAZO, Paloma. (2012) “La investigación del medio internacional. Fundamentos teóricos y conceptuales, métodos y técnicas”. Madrid, Tecnos.

3 BALLESTEROS MARTÍN, Miguel Ángel. “Análisis geopolítico del Sahel”. *Cuadernos de Estrategia 176. Sahel 2015, origen de desafíos y oportunidades*. IEEE. Spanish Ministry of Defence, p. 11. On http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/cuadernos/CE_176.pdf. Date of reference 15/01/18.

These conflicts are viewed from Europe and the Western Countries as international security threats because of the proliferation of criminal and terrorist groups, as seen with the exportation of jihadist terrorism and the severe crisis of ensuing massive migratory flows.

In view of the data shown in this analysis and the unfolding of events over the past years, the conclusion is that the majority of the countries in the region have been unable to successfully confront the serious structural and security-related challenges they are facing.

Therefore, our hypothesis in the face of this evidence is that the only viable alternative to guarantee an adequate development of these countries lies in the commitment and support of the international community.

STRUCTURAL FACTORS OF INSTABILITY

It would neither be fair nor sensible to wholly blame the processes of decolonisation for the instability present in these countries, considering the latter's lack of a true democratic tradition and the continued overarching effect of local culture and strong ethnic rootedness. Nevertheless, there are objective factors that are helpful in understanding many of the problems originated in the past and determining their future. In this sense, a quick glance at a map reveals the artificial nature of the borders separating the countries in the region, especially in the Sahara, as a result of a decolonisation marked by a disregard for the local ethnic, cultural and social realities.

The Sahel, Arabic for “seashore” in reference to “the ocean of sand” of the Sahara, is the name given to the vast region that joins this desert with the tropical savannahs and forests to the south, stretching over nearly 5,000 miles from Senegal to Eritrea. Scanty annual rainfall only allows very limited agricultural activity, but plant growth is sufficient for grazing. In addition, it is the region that acts as a bridge for the transit of goods and trade with the regions of the Maghreb, connecting nomadic populations and tradespeople from the north, mainly Tuaregs, to the populations of the south, i.e. black sedentary farmers who traditionally held political power⁴.

Islam is the predominant religion in the majority of the countries, with some presence of animist minorities from the original population as well as other Christian minorities. Arabic is the most widely spoken language, though French is also an official language in almost all of the countries, in addition to a number of other languages and local dialects.

4 LECOQUIERRE, Bruno. “Le Sahara dans la mondialisation: un désert en crise”. *La revue géopolitique*, p. 4. (2016, March 12). On <http://www.diploweb.com/Le-Sahara-dans-la-mondialisation.html>. Date of reference 03/01/18.

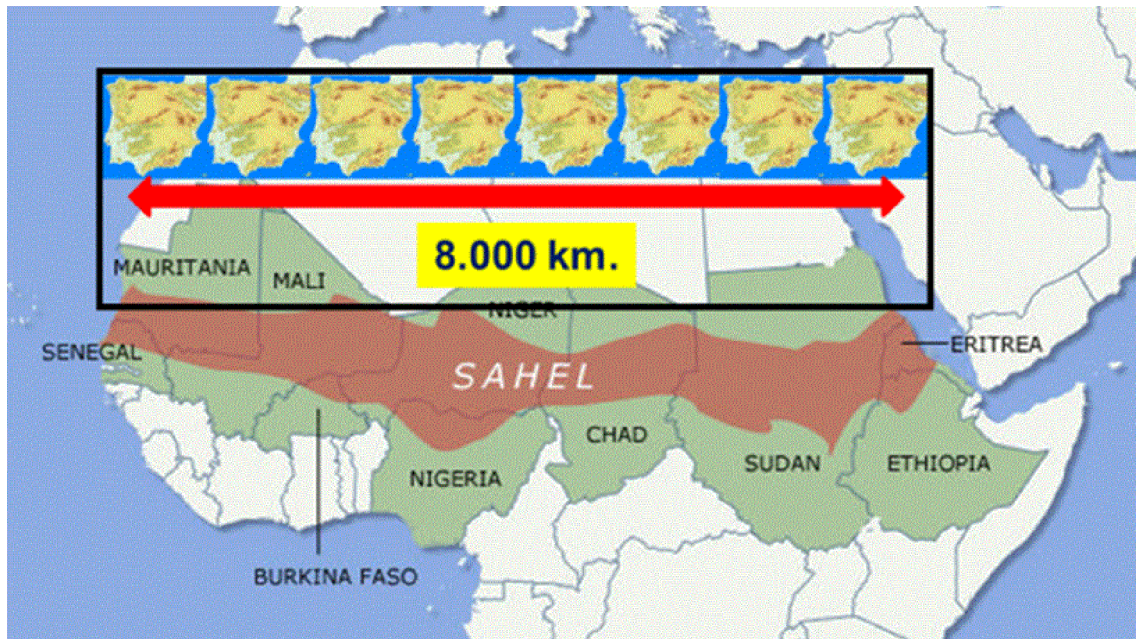
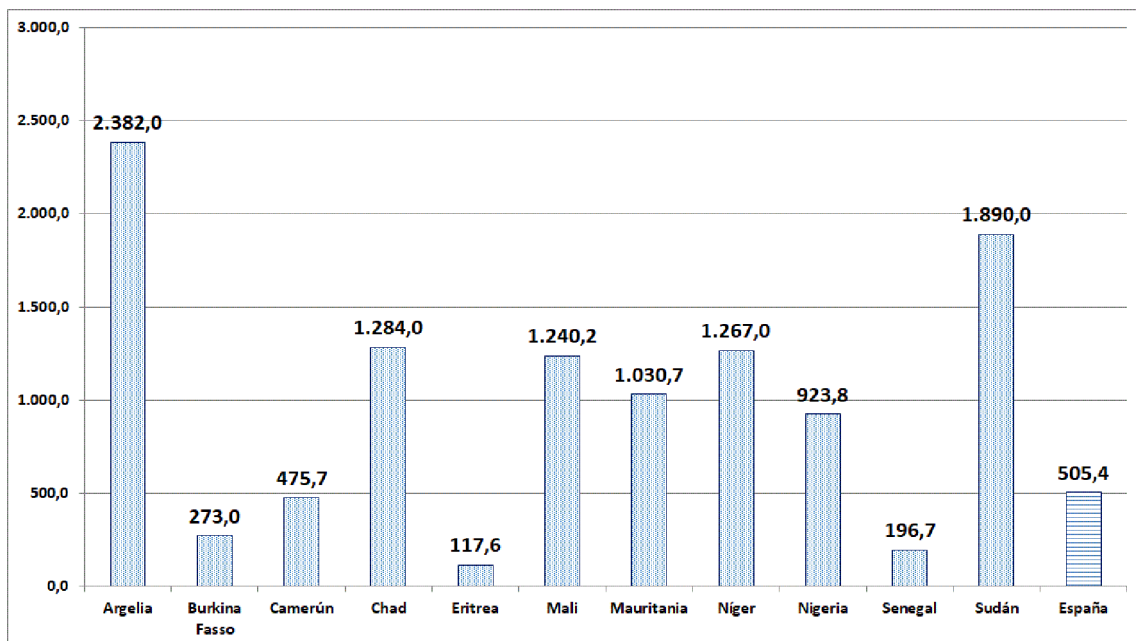


Figure 1. The Sahel and its size compared to the Iberian Peninsula. On <https://accionhumanitaria.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/sahel4.jpg> and author's own work. Date of reference 15/03/18.

As important as the religious diversity is the enormous ethnic variety even within countries, where Berbers, Arabs and black sub-Saharan Africans live together. The creation of the new states left many ethnic communities fragmented across various countries, such as the Tuareg (in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso). In other countries, certain ethnic majorities predominate, sharing with a number of minorities.

The following pages show a series of comparative charts containing the most relevant indicators for these countries with respect to Spain, created by the author⁵ using



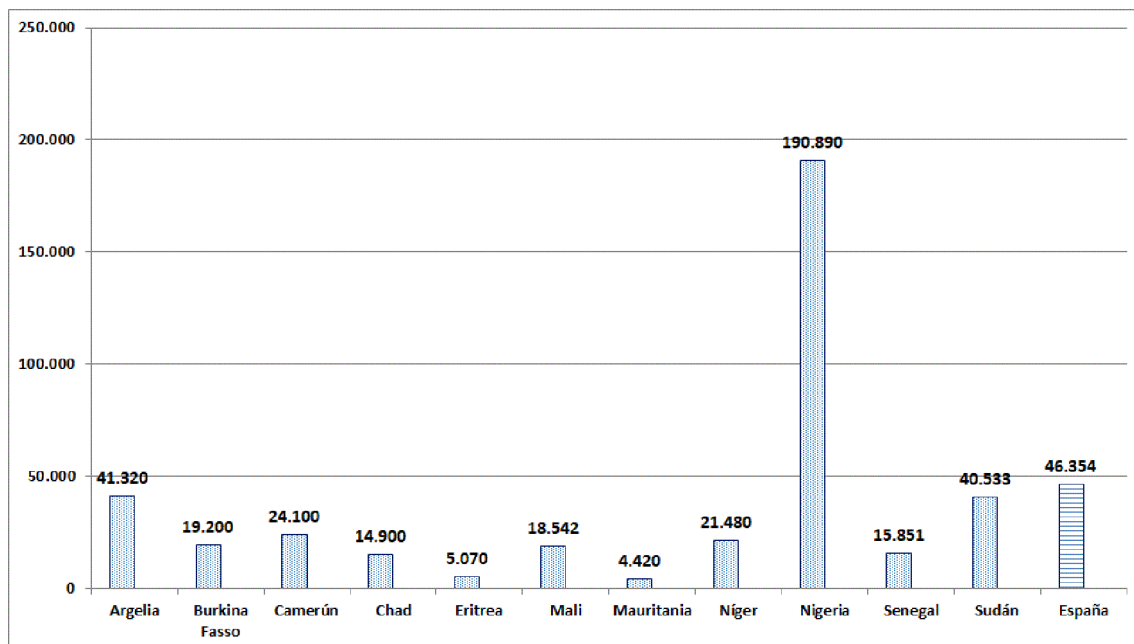
Graph 1. Surface in thousands of square kilometres. Author's own work based on data obtained from the UN website, corresponding to 2017. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 25/02/18.

⁵ As of the date of this analysis, April 2018, unless indicated otherwise, the available data is from 2017.

websites belonging to official institutions. Algeria has been included on account of its relevant role in the security of the Western Sahel.

In general, the countries are huge in size. Apart from Eritrea, Burkina Faso and Cameroon, all are larger than Spain.

From approximately 1,256,268,000 inhabitants on the continent in 2017⁶, “the population of Africa could rise to 2 billion inhabitants by 2050”⁷. It could even reach 4 billion by the end of the century assuming current birth rates.



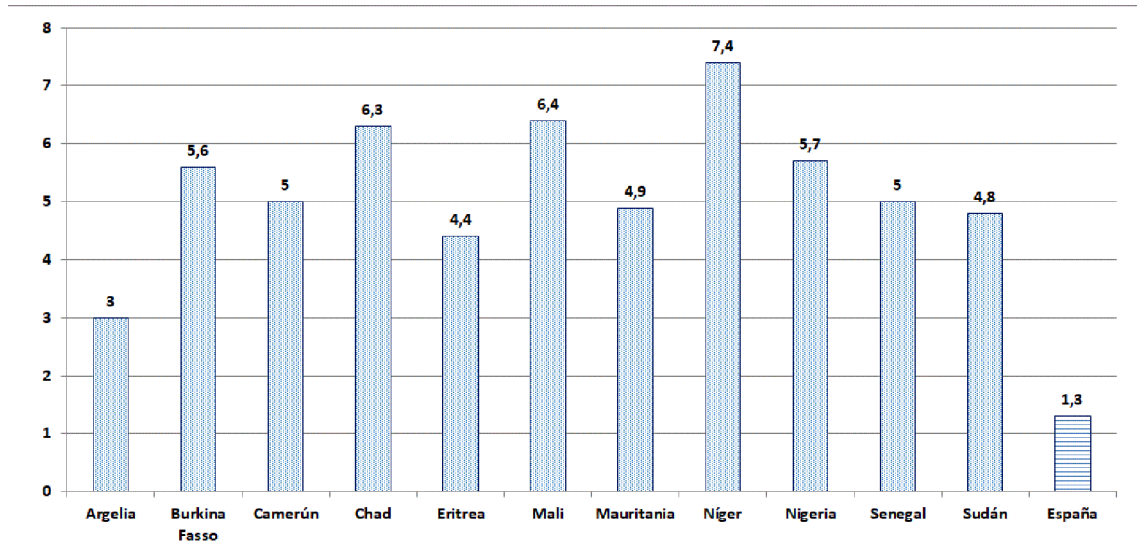
Graph 2. Population in thousands, author's own work with data obtained from the UN website corresponding to 2017. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 25/02/18.

Except Nigeria, the African economic powerhouse and population leader, the large size and generally sparse population of these countries mean that their population density is very low, with small towns and villages scattered over the semi desert region. Mauritania has a population density of barely 4.3 inhabitants per km², Chad of 11.8, while Nigeria has 210 compared to Spain's 92.3. This, together with little developed state structures, implies that a large part of the population is deprived of basic services, such as communication infrastructures, health, schooling, and, of course, security. The latter aspect is one of the factors which have most contributed to the proliferation of criminal and terrorist groups that can move freely around extensive regions without control by state security forces.

6 “ONU demografía”. On <http://data.un.org/en/reg/g2.html>. Date of reference 15/01/18.

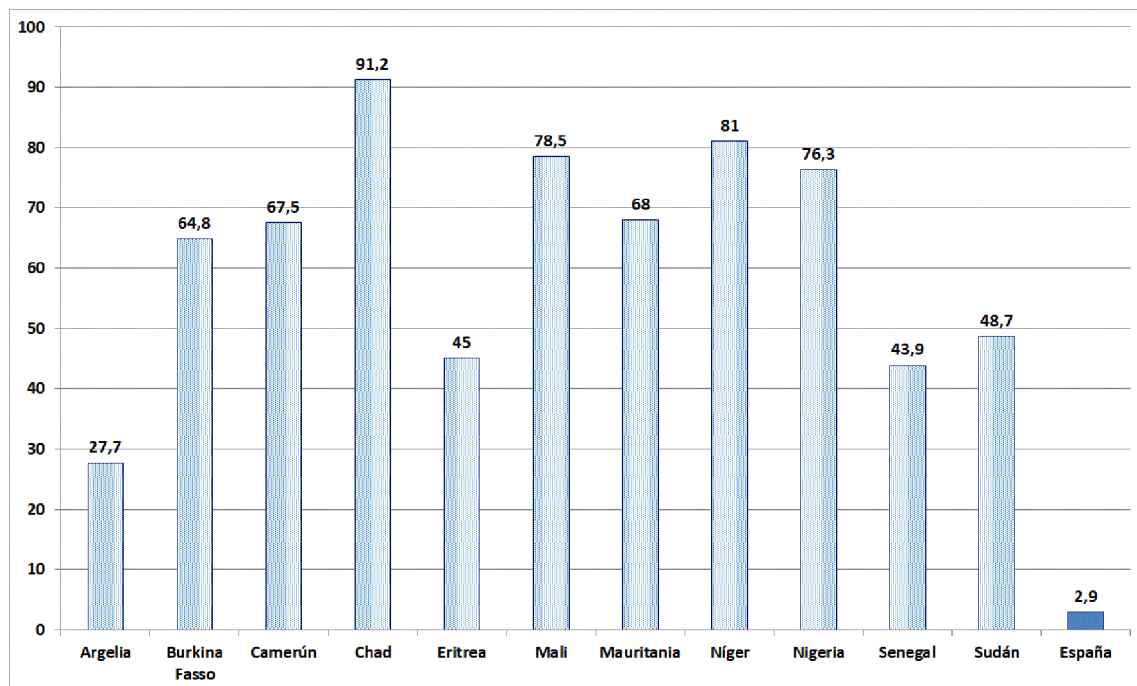
7 BONAGLIA, Federico. Report from Casa África. On http://www.casaffrica.es/po/detalle_notas_prensa.jsp%3FDS13.step=3&DS13.PROID=889968.html. Date of reference 15/01/18.

These countries stand out for having the highest birth rates per woman of childbearing age in the world (Niger having the highest). This is particularly striking when comparing to Spain, which has one of the lowest in the world (1.3).



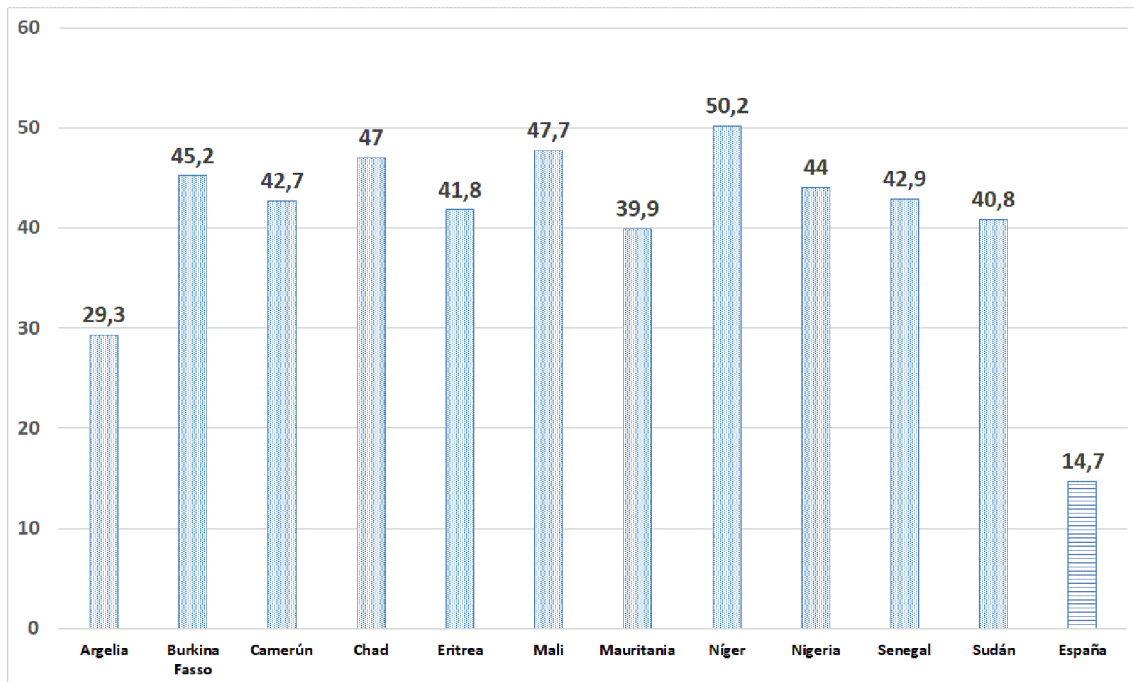
Graph 3. Fertility rate per woman in childbearing age. Author's own work with data obtained from the UN website corresponding to 2017. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 25/02/18.

These high birth rates also offset the high rates of infant mortality compared to Spain, which has one of the lowest in the world (2.9). It is worth mentioning that the rate in Germany, for example, is 3.4, and in the USA 6.



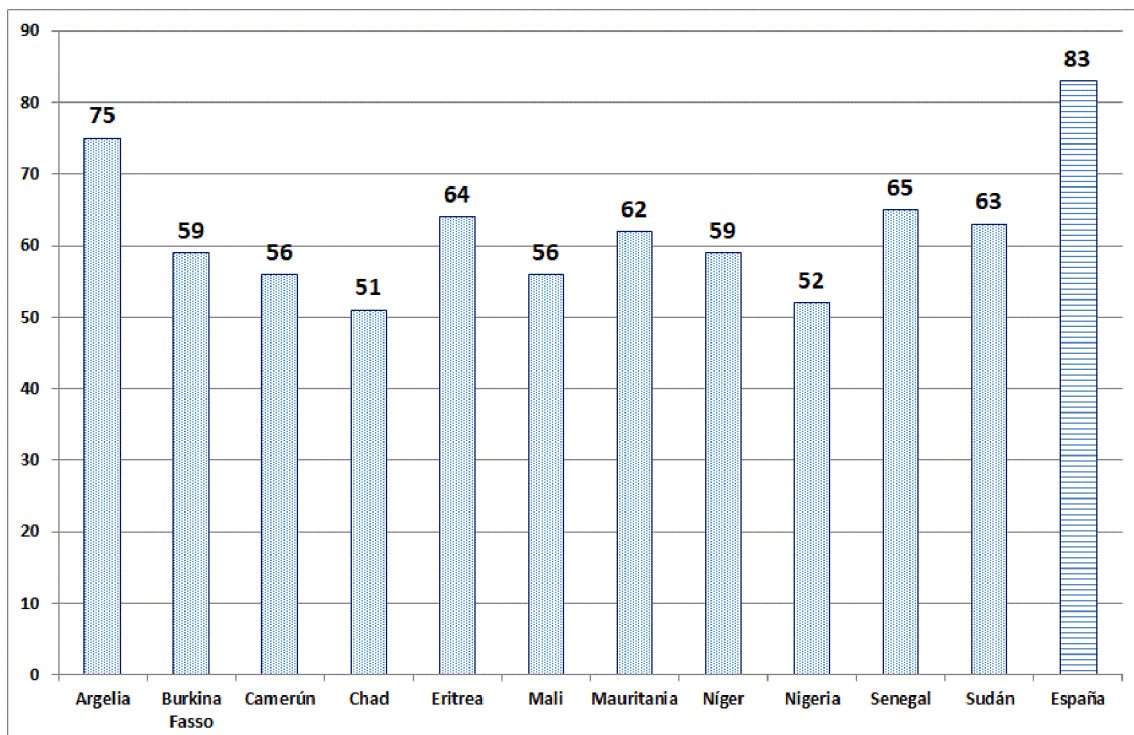
Graph 4. Rate of infant mortality. Number of deaths in a given year of children aged less than one year, for every 1000 live births during the same year. Author's own work with data obtained from the UN website corresponding to 2017. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

This also results in almost half their populations being less than 14 years old (except in Algeria, 29.3%), whereas in Spain this proportion lies at 14.7%.



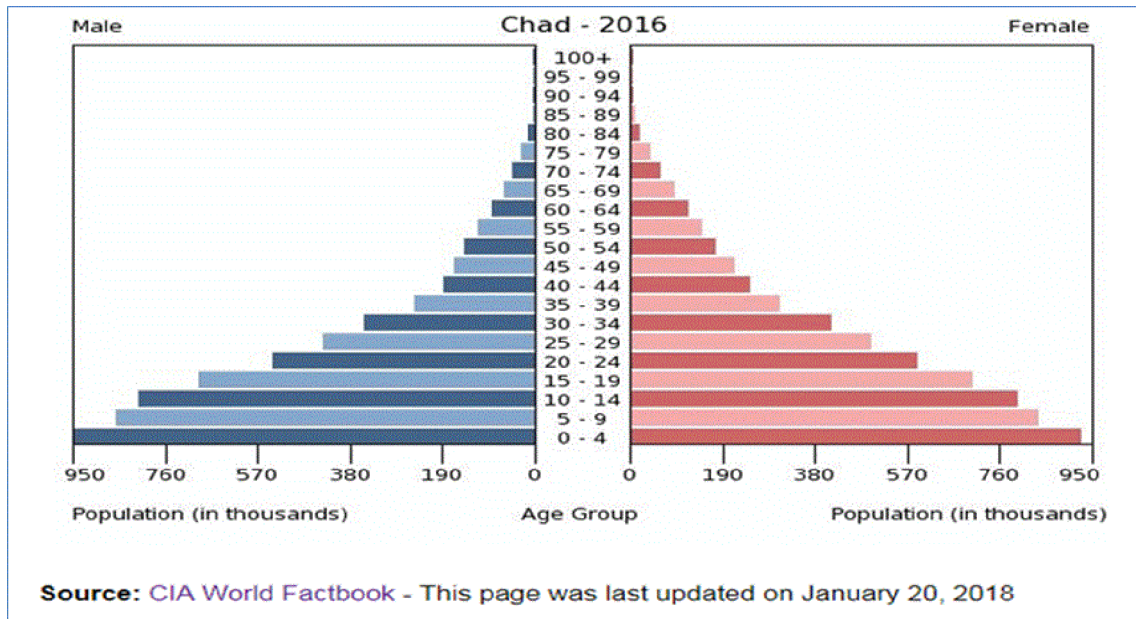
Graph 5. Percentage of population aged less than 14. Author's own work based on data obtained from the UN website corresponding to 2017. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html> Date of reference 25/02/18.

Likewise, the high birth-rate counterbalances the low life expectancy of these countries' inhabitants, with Chad and Nigeria scoring particularly low. The population of Spain is among the longest-living in the world.



Graph 6. Life expectancy in years, average between men and women. Author's own work based on data obtained from the UN website corresponding to 2017. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

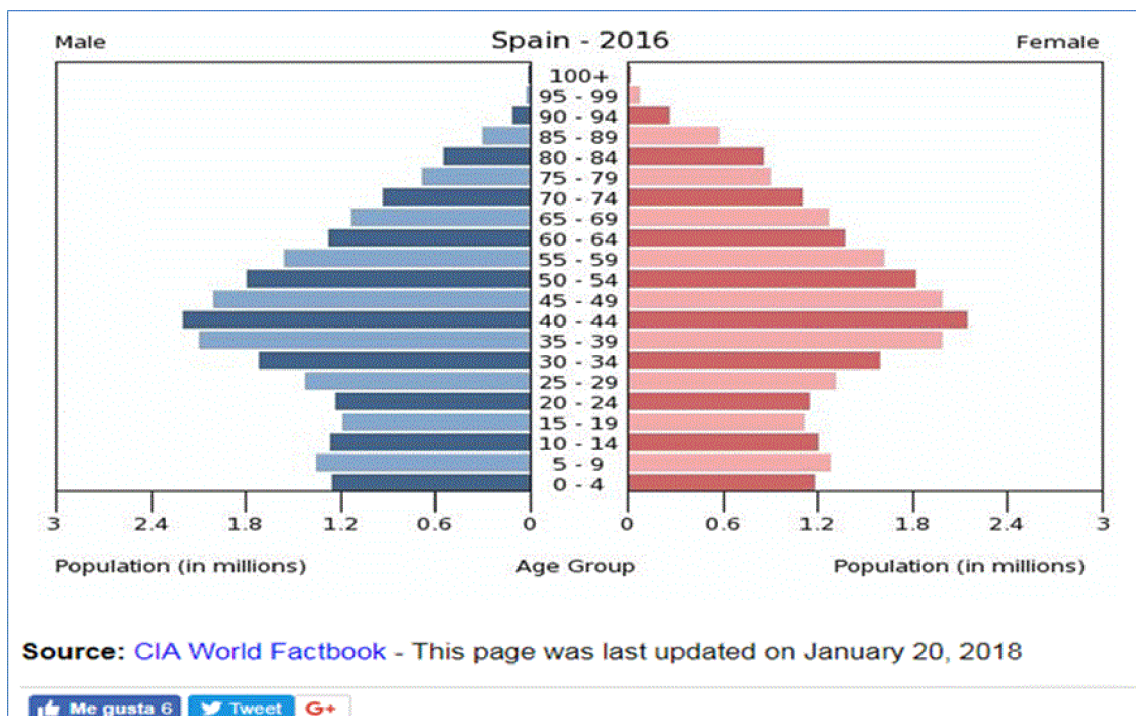
The following graph illustrates the marked pointed shape of Chad's population pyramid due to a mostly young population.



Graph 7. Population pyramid of Chad in 2016. On http://www.indexmundi.com/chad/age_structure.html. Based on the website of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, CIA. On <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2010.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

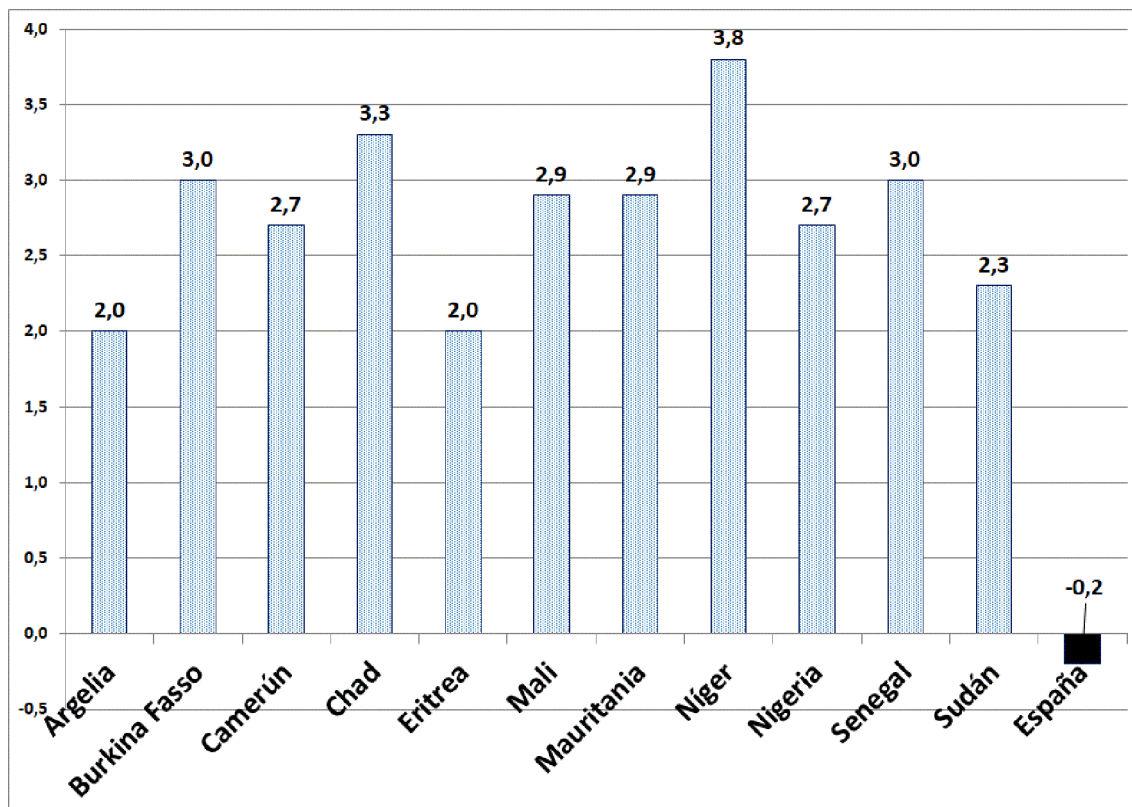
In clear contrast, the distribution of age ranges in the Spanish population shows a higher proportion of citizens aged between 30 and 60 years.

The result is a considerable increase in the population of these countries, in contrast to the negative rate of natural increase of 0.2% for Spain in recent times, as



Graph 8. Population pyramid of Spain in 2016. On http://www.indexmundi.com/spain/age_structure.html. In turn this is based on the website of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, CIA. Available on <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2010.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

deaths outnumber births⁸. However, as of 2017 immigration has been on the rise again in Spain.



Graph 9. Annual population variation. Author's own work based on data corresponding to 2017 obtained from the UN website. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

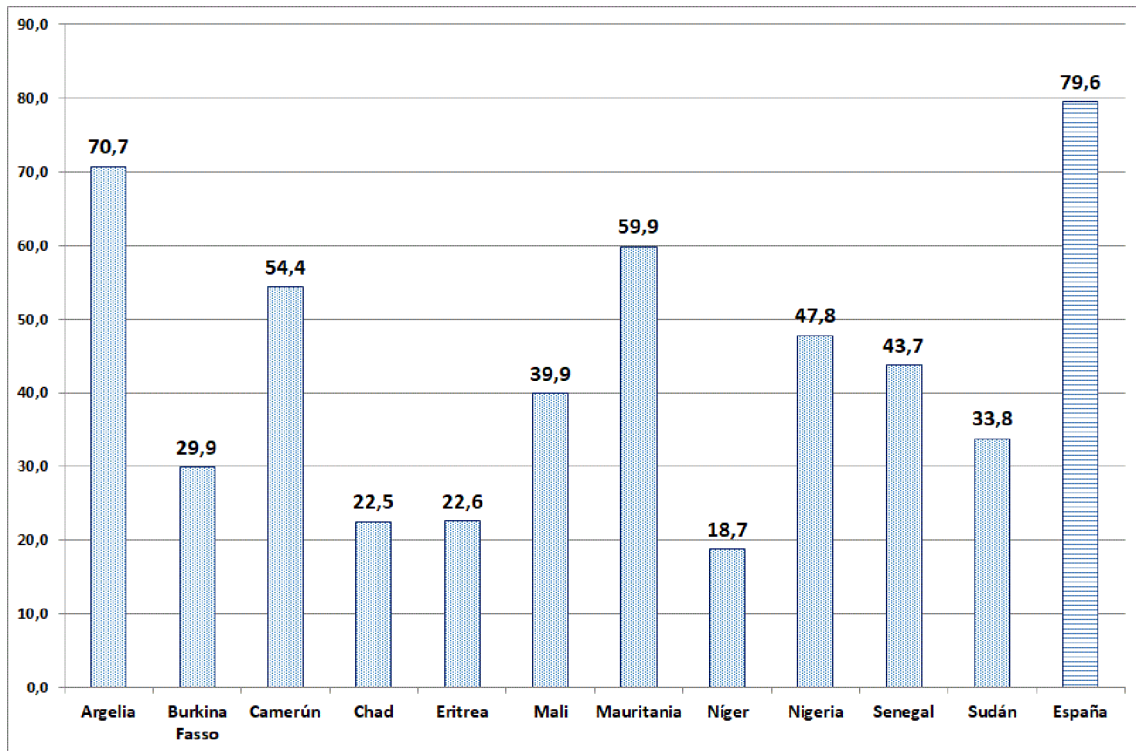
Population growth over the last years and the bad economic situation are giving rise to a historic increase of urban development in the region. According to data supplied by Casa África, town-dwelling populations have doubled between 1995 and 2015, with the Sahel reaching 472 million inhabitants⁹. Due to lack of resources and poorly organised and ineffective administrations, the regions have not been able to cope with this flood of people by providing adequate infrastructures, resulting in areas of poverty and unhealthy conditions where the population is packed inside genuine ghettos, grouped according to ethnic origin, religion, family-ties or acquaintances from their places of origin under absolutely insalubrious conditions (known as “Bidonvilles”)¹⁰.

The following charts show the enormous disparities of income in these countries. Nigeria stands apart because of its significant revenues from fossil oil as well as its population size compared to the other countries. Even so, there is a visible difference compared to Spain.

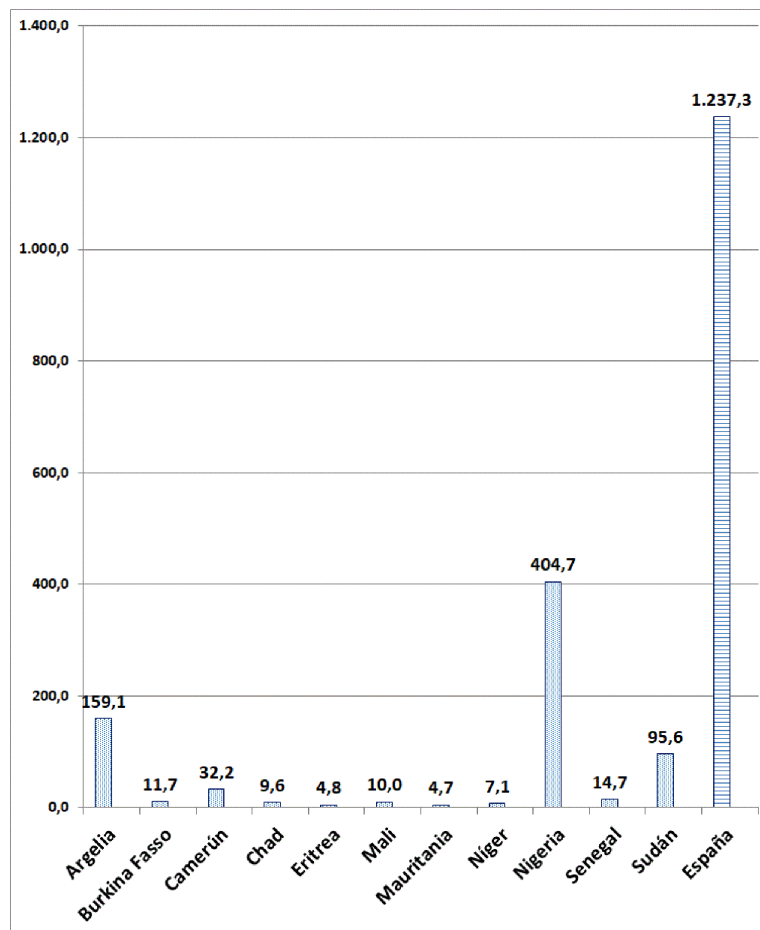
⁸ According to provisional data provided by the National Statistics Institute (INE) for the first half of 2017 there were 219,835 deaths against 187,703 births. On http://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736177007&menu=ultiDatos&cidp=1254735573002

⁹ Casa África. On http://www.casafrika.es/po/detalle_notas_prensa1.jsp%3FDS13.step=3&DS13.PROID=889968.html. Date of reference 16/01/18.

¹⁰ Literally “shanty towns”. On <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais-espagnol/bidonville/9063>. Date of reference 16/03/18.

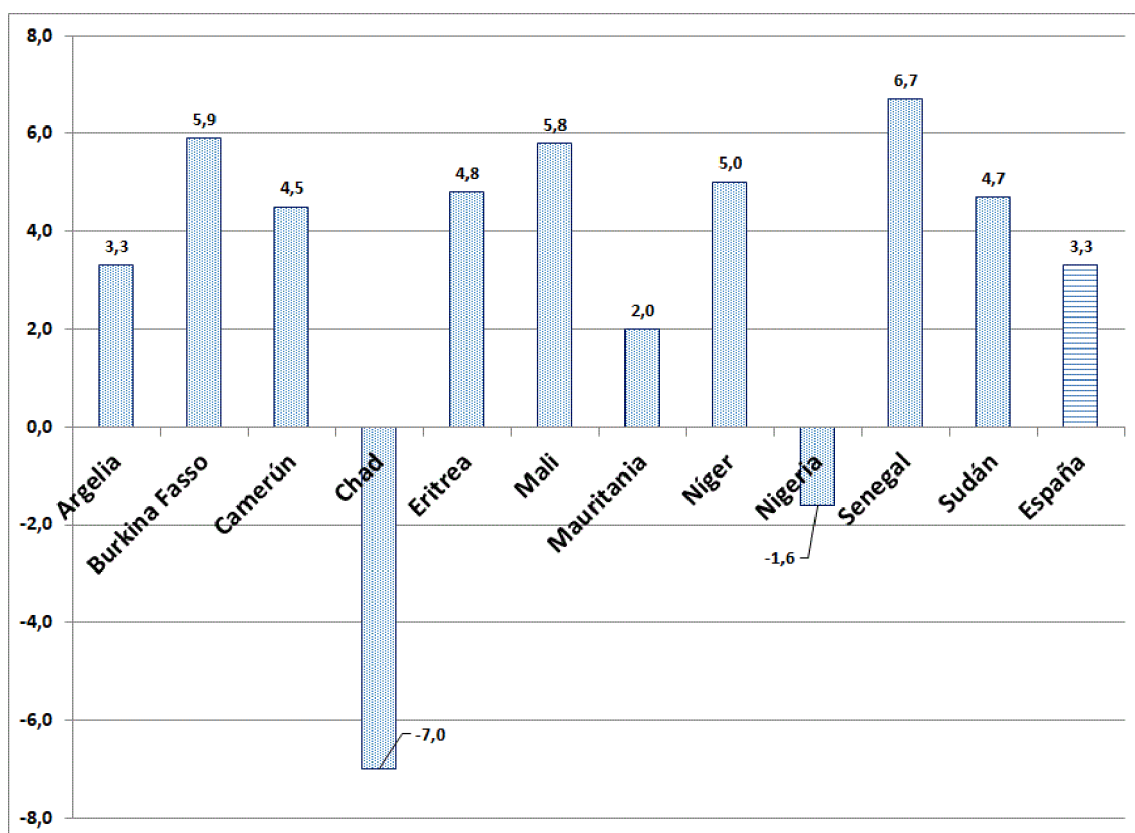


Graph 10. Share of urban population. Author's own work based on data obtained from the UN website corresponding to 2017. On <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.



Graph 11. GDP in thousands of US dollars. Author's own work based on data obtained from the World Bank's website corresponding to 2016. Available on <https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?view=chart>. Except Eritrea and Níger, data as of 2015 on the UN website. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

The absence of any powerful industry and the deficient structure in terms of economic, agricultural and livestock activities condemns these regions to an economy based on family and subsistence farming with limited added value, or to exporting of raw materials. The damage caused to their agriculture as a result of western protectionism and the competition of Asian textiles (Mali is a major cotton producer), together with frequent droughts, aggravated by the growing impact of climate change, has led to mass migration towards cities. The recent drop in the price of oil has caused a plunge in the GDP of Chad (-7%) and Nigeria (-1.6%). Likewise, foreign investments are conditioned by the political and social instability of the countries. As a result, GDP growth has not been sufficient to guarantee a minimum development enabling these countries to pull out of the extreme poverty they find themselves immersed in, and still less to support the population at the current birth rates.



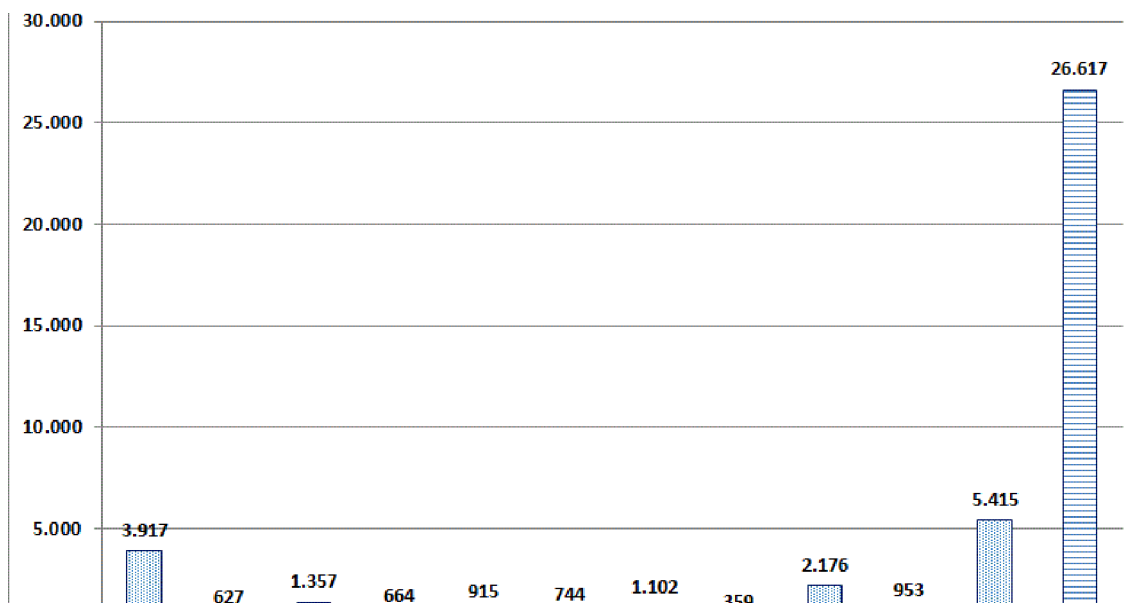
Graph 12. Annual variation of the GDP. Author's own work with data obtained from the World Bank's website corresponding to 2016. Available on <https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?view=charten>. Except Eritrea and Niger, data as of 2015 on the UN website. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

The following table shows the main data regarding foreign trade of the G5 Sahel countries, extracted from the 2017 report of the World Trade Organisation. The report underlines the pivotal role of the EU, China, South Africa and Switzerland. For the purposes of this study, the only countries with any significant values are Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. The scant trade between these six countries is included under the heading "others", except Niger, which exports 5.6% of its total to Mali. The heading "others" represents values above a quarter of the total exchange, but below 5% on an individual level.

Burkina Faso	Exports: Switzerland (50.6%), India (10.3%), Singapore (10%), EU (6.5%); South Africa (3.9%); others (18.7%), including neighbouring countries.
	Imports: EU (28%); China (11.1%); Côte d'Ivoire (8.4%); USA (6.5%); Ghana (4%); others (36.3%).
Chad	Currently suffering a profound economic crisis as a consequence of the drop in oil prices, its main source of revenue since 2003. In this report no exchange data is presented, but it reports an economic downturn of -13% from 2010 to 2016, with an annual variation of -32% from 2014 to 2015, and of -38% from 2015 to 2016.
Mali	Exports: South Africa (51.8%); Switzerland (11.6%); China (7.8%); Malaysia (5%); EU (4.6%); others (19.3%).
	Imports: Senegal (25.1%); EU (19.7%); China (10.6%); Côte d'Ivoire (8.3%); Benin (5%); others (31.4%)
Mauritania	Exports: China (36.9%); EU (21.4%); Switzerland (13.5%); Japan (7.6%); Russia (4.8%); others (15.8%).
	Imports: EU (35.3%); USA (13.4%); United Arab Emirates (11.9%); China (8.9%); Morocco (6.3%); others (24.1%).
Niger	Exports: EU (32.7); Thailand (11.6%); Malaysia (11.1%); Nigeria (9.5%); Mali (5.6%); others (29.5%)
	Imports: EU (36.6%); China: (16.2%); USA (7.8%); Nigeria (5.8%); Thailand (5.8%); others (27.9%).

Table 1. Percentage relation of exports and imports of the G5 Sahel countries. World Trade Organization 2017 (WTO). *Trade profiles 2017*. Available on https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/trade_profiles17_e.pdf. Date of reference 03/04/18.

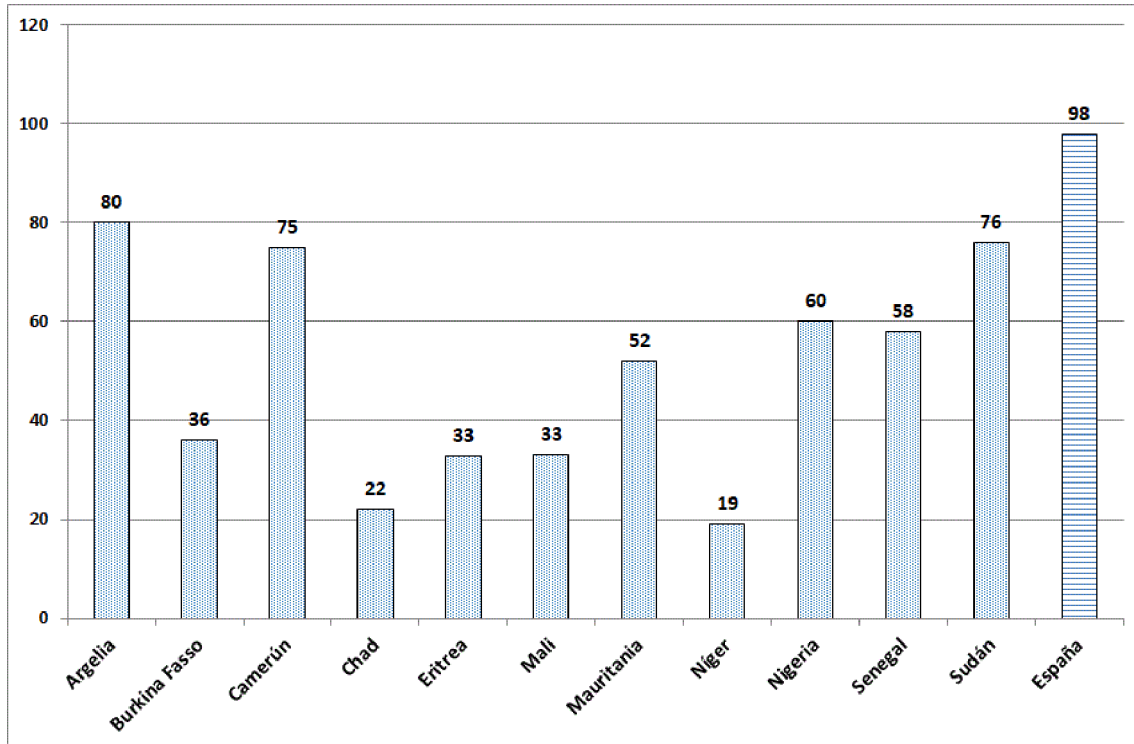
Apart from the low revenues of these countries, GDP growth is clearly insufficient to herald a significant improvement of the living conditions of a growing population. As a whole, this data shows the greatest socioeconomic divide in the world existing between to neighbouring regions, in this case, the separation between the Sahel and the northern shores of the Mediterranean. It is only comparable to the gap between the two Koreas¹¹.



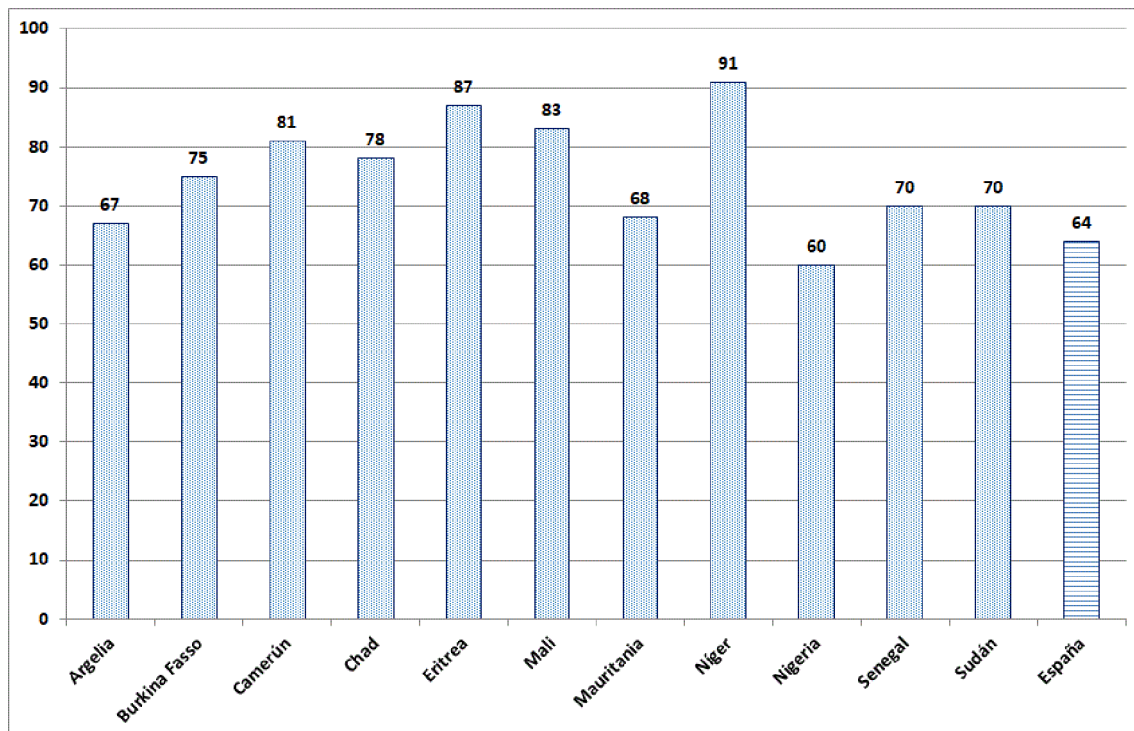
Graph 13. Per capita income in US\$. Author's own work with data obtained from the World Bank's website corresponding to 2016. Available on <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?view=chart>. Except Eritrea and Niger, on the UN website <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

¹¹ On <http://data.un.org/en/iso/kr.html> and <http://data.un.org/en/iso/kp.html>. Date of reference 16/01/18.

While economic growth plays a vital role in guaranteeing the quality of life in these countries, the potential of education for their future is no less important. Values as low as the ones seen in Niger (16%) and Chad (22%) give an idea of the scale of the effort required to reach a minimum level of education so as to enable adequate development in the future.



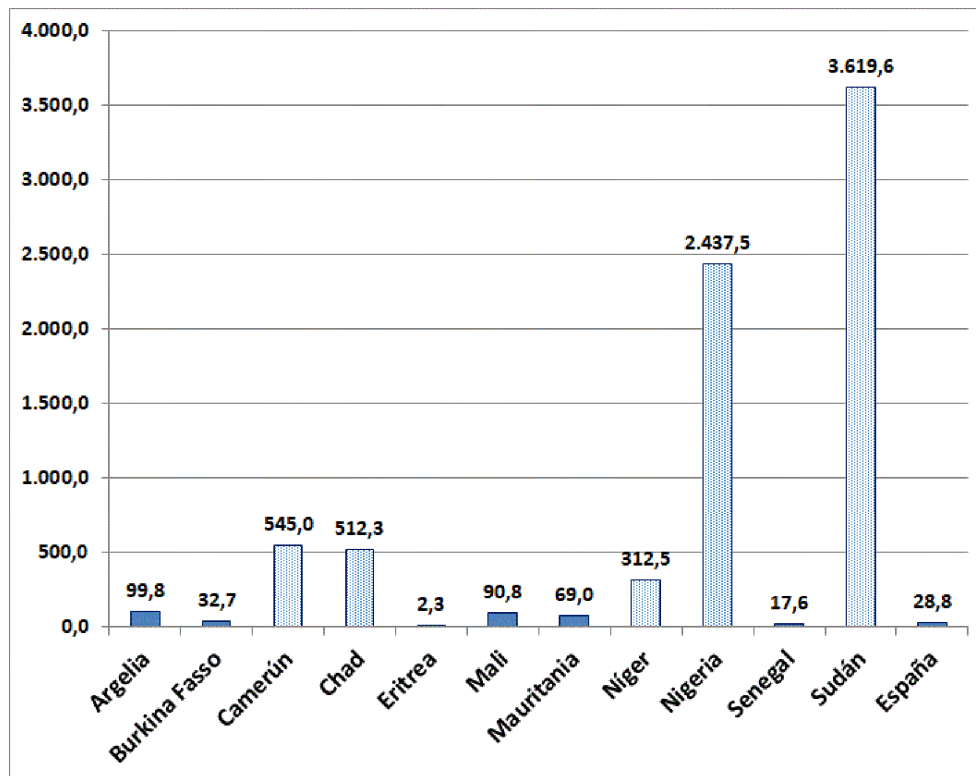
Graph 24. Literacy rate. Author's own work based on data obtained from the website of Indexmundi corresponding to 2018. Based on the ability to read and write at a specific age. Available on <https://www.indexmundi.com/map/?v=39&l=es>. Date of reference 30/03/18.



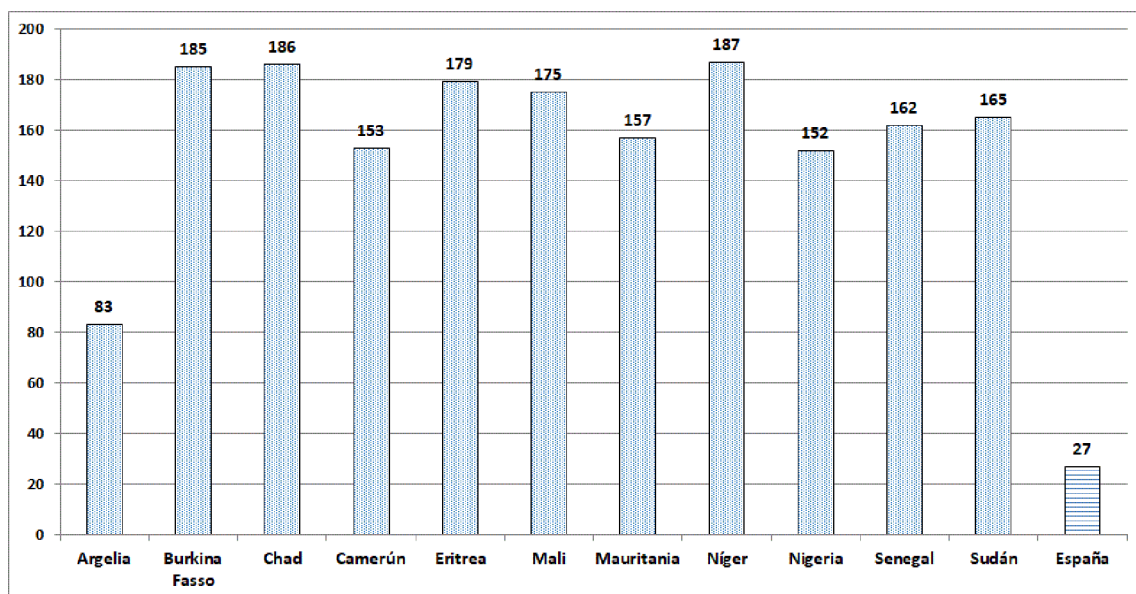
Graph 15. Labour market participation rate for 2017, males (% of the male population aged over 15), according to a model estimate of the International Labour Organization ILO. Available on <https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/SL.TLFCACT.MA.ZS?view=chart>. Date of reference 30/03/18.

The relatively high values relating to the data on the labour force can be misleading due to the low educational level of the population. Thus, most of the employment registered could be qualified as “low-quality employment” in activities with only very marginal added value.

The high levels of conflict in the region have caused the displacement of thousands of citizens to safer regions. This is best illustrated by the situation in Sudan due to the conflicts in the Darfur region and South Sudan, but also in Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria, because of Boko Haram’s involvement in terrorist activities.



Graph 16. Number of refugees and displaced persons accepted by each country, in thousands, according to ACNUR criteria. Available on <http://data.un.org/en/index.html>. Date of reference 30/03/18.



Graph 17. Human Development Index for 2016 (HDI), according to a UNDP report for 2016. Available on http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/HDR2016_SP_Overview_Web.pdf. Date of reference 30/03/18.

Finally, all the values and indices presented are clearly reflected in the United Nations' Human Development Index (HDI), of a total of 188 countries.

VIOLENT CONFLICT AND JIHADIST TERRORISM: MALI AND BOKO HARAM

Because of poor implementation and lack of recognition, state authority is replaced by local warlords or leaders who impose their own law, giving rise to a variety of criminal activities or radical ideologies. These in turn appeal to young people (who represent a large proportion of the population) with very limited education and hopes for a dignified way of earning a living. That way they can obtain lucrative earnings in a few months, far outstripping those obtained by the large majority of citizens by legal means over a long time. Under such circumstances of shortcomings and conflict, the expression referring to the excessive population growth in these countries as a “demographic time bomb” is more than appropriate.

It is neither the object nor the scope of this analysis to delve deeper into the conflicts ravaging the region, as they have already been dealt with in detail by other studies. Therefore, the two main hotspots of conflict in the Western Sahel are only briefly described below.

The conflict in Mali

The fall of Gaddafi's regime resulted in the return of thousands of Tuareg soldiers to the north of Mali. The latter had received excellent military training and salvaged plenty of army material scattered across various parts of Libya¹². In 2012, these soldiers incited the rebellion of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). Soon this rebellion was hijacked by various Islamist groups such as Ansar Edine (Defenders of the Islamic Faith), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), whose leaders impose their own idea of Islamic faith, resulting in thousands of displaced persons¹³. The French-led operation *Serval*¹⁴ managed to push the rebels back to the north of

12 “¿Quién controla el armamento de Gadafi?” (2011, 25 de agosto). *BBC Mundo*. On http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2011/08/110825_libia_conflicto_gadafi_armas_arsenales_mostaza_g.shtml. Date of reference 16/03/18.

13 FAGÍN TABOADA, José Carlos. “El Sahel, amenazas de la nueva frontera”. *Documento de opinión 15/2017*. IEEE. Spanish Ministry of Defence, p. 6. (2017, February 13). On http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2017/DIEEEO15-2017_Sahel_FaginTaboada.pdf. Date of reference 16/03/18.

14 “Operación *Serval*”. On <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/operations/autres-operations/operations-achevees/operation-serval-2013-2014>. Date of reference 16/03/18.

the country. The peace treaties with the MNLA, in June 2013¹⁵, led to presidential elections that in turn have brought relative stability to the country, with the crucial support of the international community, for example the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA¹⁶) backed by the UN, replaced by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)¹⁷ in July 2013; operation *Barkhane*¹⁸, successor to operation *Serval* since August 2014; operation EUTM Mali¹⁹, since the middle of 2014, and the EUCAP Sahel Mali mission, both within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union (CSDP).

The threat of Boko Haram Nigeria and the Lake Chad borderlands

Another of the main threats in the region is the presence of the Boko Haram group (BH) which originated in the state of Borno, in the northeast of Nigeria. *Boko*²⁰ *Haram*²¹, whose name derives from the original meaning in Hausa and Arabic, is often—albeit somewhat inaccurately—translated as “Western education is forbidden” or “Western education is a sin”.

The violence exercised by this group has turned it into one of the cruellest in recent history, with over 20,000 murders and more than 2 million displaced persons and refugees. However, allegations of abuse by government forces have also been numerous²². The news that made international headlines was the spectacular kidnapping

15 “Acuerdos de paz entre el gobierno de Mali y los rebeldes tuareg”. On <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22961519>. Date of reading 18/03/18.

16 AFISMA. African-led International Support Mission to Mali; Available on <http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/sc10870.doc.htm>. Date of reference 24/03/18.

17 “MINUSMA. Misión integrada multidimensional para la estabilización de Mali de la ONU”. UNSC Resolution 2100 (S/RES/2100). On <https://minusma.unmissions.org/en>. Date of reference 18/03/18.

18 “Operación *Barkhane*”. On <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/operations/sahel/dossier-de-presentation-de-l-operation-barkhane/operation-barkhane>. Date of reference 18/03/18.

19 “EUTM Mali”. On <http://eutmmali.eu/en/>. Date of reference 18/03/18.

20 *Boko*, in Hausa means “impostor, fraud, deception and lack of authenticity”. Paul Newman. *The Etymology of Hausa boko*. On <http://www.megatchad.net/publications/Newman-2013-Etymology-of-Hausa-boko.pdf>. Date of reference 19/03/18.

21 *Haram* in Hausa means “what is illegal, unjust”, as opposed to *halal*, “what is permitted or legal”. Robinson, Charles H. (Charles Henry), 1861-1925. *Dictionary of the Hausa language*. On <https://archive.org/details/dictionaryofhauso1robiuoft>. Date of reference 19/03/18.

22 “Región del lago Chad: La intensificación de la campaña de Boko Haram provoca un fuerte aumento de las muertes de civiles”. *Amnesty International*. (2017, September 5) On <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2017/09/lake-chad-region-boko-harams-renewed-campaign-sparks-sharp-rise-in-civilian-deaths/>. Date of reference 19/03/18.

of 276 Christian girls from their boarding school in Chibok in 2014, the majority of which have been freed over the years²³. In February 2018, Boko Haram again kidnapped 110 girls from a state school in Yobe State. Most were freed later, although five died²⁴.

The spreading of Boko Haram's activities towards the land surrounding Lake Chad²⁵ and neighbouring countries Niger, Cameroon and Chad²⁶ provoked a reaction of the latter along with Benin, leading to the formation of a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)²⁷, backed by the UN and under the auspices of the African Union²⁸. Successive offensives have weakened Boko Haram and part of the territory has been recovered, a fact which—as Professor Echeverría²⁹ rightly points out—may have played in favour of a split into another faction more inclined towards establishing links with the Islamic State and its possible expansion to Central Africa.

Currently, organised crime—which existed previously—, violent conflicts and terrorism according to jihadist ideals, “constitute a pernicious circle”³⁰, severely endangering the stability of the whole region and putting the actual existence of the states

23 “Boko Haram libera a 82 niñas de Chibok a cambio de la excarcelación de dos milicianos”. *El Europapress*. (2017, May 7). On <http://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-boko-haram-menos-medio-centenar-ninas-chibok-20170506222840.html>. Date of reference 19/03/18.

24 “Nigeria confirma la liberación de la mayoría de las niñas secuestradas por Boko Haram”. *La Vanguardia*. (2018, March 21). On <http://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20180321/441776825369/nigeria-confirma-liberacion-ninas-secuestradas-boko-haram.html>. Date of reading 22/03/18.

25 “Región del lago Chad: La intensificación de la campaña de Boko Haram provoca un fuerte aumento de las muertes de civiles”. *Amnesty International*. (2017, September 5). On <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2017/09/lake-chad-region-boko-harams-renewed-campaign-sparks-sharp-rise-in-civilian-deaths/>. Date of reference 23/03/18.

26 NARANJO, Jesús. “Boko Haram lanza su primera ofensiva en Chad”. *El País* (2015, February 13). On http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/02/13/actualidad/1423853729_194966.html. Date of reference 23/03/18.

27 “Fuerza multinacional mixta (FMM)”. Approved by the the African Union. Includes forces from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin. On <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/es/fichas-de-paises/africa/eventos/article/africa-union-africana-movilizacion>. Date of reference 23/03/18.

28 . On <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/es/fichas-de-paises/nigeria/eventos/article/nigeria-union-africana-lucha>. Date of reference 23/03/18.

29 ECHEVERRÍA, Carlos. “Consecuencias de la enésima escisión de Boko Haram para el futuro del grupo terrorista”. *Documento de investigación 03/2017*. IEEE. Spanish Ministry of Defence, p. 7. On http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_investig/2017/DIEEEINV03-2017_Escision_BokoHaram_CEcheverria.pdf. Date of reference 19/03/18.

30 DÍEZ ALCALDE, Jesús. “Desafíos de seguridad en el Sahel: conflictos armados y terrorismo yihadista”. *Cuadernos de Estrategia 176. Sahel 2015, origen de desafíos y oportunidades*. IEEE. Spanish Ministry of Defence, p. 28. On http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/cuadernos/CE_176.pdf. Date of reference 23/03/18.

at risk. These groups' main revenues are obtained through illegal trafficking³¹ of drugs, arms and human beings³², activities which have increased since Gaddafi's fall. Therefore, a convergence or "hybrid threat" emanating from both groups³³ can be observed, and these factors will continue causing instability in this region over the near future³⁴.

ASSESSMENT OF THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES TOWARDS GUARANTEEING SECURITY AND CONSOLIDATING STABILITY IN THE REGION. THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The situation described in the majority of the Sahel countries and particularly its western region, together with the experience of the last years, shows that they are unable to tackle their own economic, social and security challenges and guarantee an effective development to serve the needs of their citizens. On the other hand, the political and trade relations between these countries are not at all consolidated, despite their membership of the African Union and the ECOWAS.

It is against this background that external support from the international community is vital. The following pages offer an analysis of the main international initiatives, highlighting their key characteristics and goals and how the latter and ensuing actions can contribute to stability and development in the Western Sahel. Particular emphasis is placed on the European Union.

African initiatives

African Union, AU

In July 2002, the African Union (AU)³⁵ succeeded the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) and today includes all 55 countries of the continent, including Morocco

31 "La nueva ruta de la droga". *XL Semanal*. (2014, August 31). On <http://www.xlsemanal.com/actualidad/20140831/nueva-ruta-coca-7550.html>. Date of reference 23/03/18.

32 "El tráfico de personas, especialmente mujeres y niños en África Central y Occidental". *UNICEF*. On <https://www.unicef.es/noticia/el-trafico-de-personas-especialmente-mujeres-y-ninos-en-africa-central-y-occidental>. Date of reference 23/03/18.

33 FUENTE COBO, Ignacio. "La amenaza híbrida: Yihadismo y crimen organizado en el Sahel". *Documento de Análisis 57/2014*. IIEE. On http://www.iece.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2014/DIEEA57-2014_AmenazaHibridaSAHEL_IFC.pdf. Date of reading 23/03/18.

34 LÓPEZ, Guillermo. "Sombrero Rojo: hacia un Estado Islámico en el Sahel". (2017, October 23). *Análisis GESI, 38/2017*. On <http://www.seguridadinternacional.es/?q=es/content/sombrero-rojo-hacia-un-estado-isl%C3%A1mico-en-el-sahel>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

35 African Union. On <https://au.int/en>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

since 2016. The actions of the AU in the Sahel can be seen as part of the Nouakchott process and within the framework of the principles and objectives of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)³⁶. This process includes a series of milestones such as: drafting and distributing information about terrorism in the Sahel; work seminars to improve border control; dispatching evaluation missions to monitor and strengthen the countries' capacities; and monitoring the implementation of security agreements between the countries. November 2013 saw the appointment of the first permanent representative of the AU as head of the Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL).

As a result of this process, support has been given to the transition in Mali, the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the G5 Sahel Group.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The ECOWAS strategy for the Sahel, in addition to proposing security as a transversal element, envisages three core areas: improving the infrastructures linking the region with the rest of the continent; improving food safety and protecting natural resources; and encouraging education, religious tolerance and a culture of peace as well as promoting vocational training. With the aim of optimising the actions between the different agents and countries involved and seeking to materialise the objectives and tools of the Strategy, a “concertation mechanism” has been created.

The crisis in Mali in 2012 put the efficacy of this organisation to the test and saw important mediation initiatives which led to the creation of the aforementioned AFISMA. However, this mission did not have the knowledge or the means to respond adequately to the great challenge of confronting the rebels, and finally, the situation of serious danger was solved thanks to the direct intervention of France through operation *Serval*.

The G5 Sahel Group

The result of the Nouakchott summit in February 2014 was the creation of the G5 Sahel Group³⁷, comprising Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad, countries that according to their own descriptions share similar geographical and socio-economic characteristics. During the extraordinary summit in Nouakchott in December of the same year, the G5 became an international organisation with its own regulatory framework.

The main objective is to coordinate its development and security policies and strategies. It is no coincidence that the motto of its emblem reads “Security and Development”. An essential factor is sharing of information and coordinating their actions in the fight against terrorism and organised crime as well as contributing to the critical development of their populations. But its objectives go beyond, for instance building

36 “Informe del SG sobre formas de reforzar la asociación entre la ONU y la UA en cuestiones de paz y seguridad en África, incluida la labor de la Oficina de la ONU ante la UA”. On <http://www.refworld.org.ru/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opedocpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=57df907b4>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

37 “Grupo G5 Sahel”. On <http://www.g5sahel.org/>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

an integrated, socially prosperous and culturally rich economic space while fulfilling all the inherent imperatives of good governance of their countries. The G5 Sahel maintains a permanent secretariat based in Niamey.

To enhance the group's effectiveness in the field of security and defence, concrete actions were agreed, for example setting up a centre for the analysis of threats and advance warning along with the creation of a Defence College for advanced military studies, both in Nouakchott; the consolidation of the Sahel Security Academy, which up to the present offers virtual training; and progressing in the development of capacities such as the creation of "gendarme" units led by the Spanish Guardia Civil.

With the aim of strengthening security within their territories and borders, it was decided to create a "Permanent G5 Sahel Joint Task Force", modelled after the African Standby Forces (ASF). The ill-fated EU Battle Groups would appear to favour the assignment of *ad hoc* forces, according to the operations required. Apart from the French and German-backed initiatives to secure European support for this force, it has also been backed by the UN Security Council³⁸, leaving the door open for other bilateral and multilateral partnerships.

A total of around 5,000 troops are estimated to be fully operational by 2018, which implies operational costs of around 423 million euros. The USA has also decided to directly contribute 51 million euros³⁹, given the lack of trust of the Trump administration in the UN.

The high-level conference between the EU and the G5 Sahel Group held in Brussels in February 2018 has given an impulse to this group, focussing on three main areas of cooperation: the political and diplomatic plan, financial support for security and the plan for development aid⁴⁰. Support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force has been unequivocal, with an initial EU contribution of 50 million euros, followed by another 50 million, in addition to the summit participants approving 414 million euros to achieve full operational capacity, of which 176 million will be contributed by the EU.

United Nations initiatives

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the USA, the UN created the International Counter-Terrorism Committee, amongst other measures. In June 2013, Ban Ki-Moon,

38 Res. 2359, of June 2017, of the UNSC. On <http://www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/594d1dfa4.pdf>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

39 GLADSTONE, Rick. "U.S. Pledges \$60 Million for Antiterrorism Force in Africa". *The New York Times*. (2017, October 30). On <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/30/world/africa/sahel-force-joined-united-nations.html>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

40 EEAS press release. Sahel: the EU mobilises €414 million in international support. Brussels 23/02/18. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/40320/sahel-eu-mobilises-%E2%82%AC414-million-international-support_en. Date of reference 25/03/18.

UN General Secretary at the time, presented the Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS)⁴¹, in response to a request from the UNSC (S/RES/2071), whose aim is to draw up and drive—with support from regional African organisations—a global response of the aforementioned organism to the challenges of security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian issues in the Sahel. The UNISS strategy pursued three main objectives: strengthening governance to make it more inclusive and effective; tackling cross-border threats by means of national and regional security mechanisms; and integrating the humanitarian and development plans in long-term consolidated projects.

Its implementation has been entrusted to the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)⁴² which coordinates its work with the Sahel countries and regional organisations such as the AU, ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States (EECAS), the G5 Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and the Mano River Union.

Within the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Border Security Initiative⁴³ of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism aims at assisting the member states with integrated and cooperative border management. The goal of the initiative is to guarantee border surveillance, tackling transnational organised crime and preventing the movement of foreign terrorist fighters.

Some specialised UN organisms have designed their own action plans for the Sahel within the framework of the Integrated Strategy. For example, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)⁴⁴, which has its own strategy to fight these threats, using support actions on the legislative, judicial and law-enforcement front with a regional focus.

In a more global context, the UN runs its Development Programme (UNDP)⁴⁵, within a worldwide network to provide the knowledge, experience and resources to help countries build a better life. To do this, it tries to attract and use financial aid efficiently, promoting the protection of human rights and supporting a stronger role for women while stimulating countries to find their own solutions to global and national

41 “Informe del Secretario General de la ONU sobre la situación en la región del Sahel”. On <http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/2013/354>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

42 On <https://unowas.unmissions.org/supporting-implementation-united-nations-integrated-strategy-sahel>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

43 On <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/es/uncct/border-security-initiative>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

44 On <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/index.html>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

45 On <http://www.onu.cl/onu/sample-page/agencias-fondos-y-programas/pnud/>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

development challenges. It includes 166 countries where 90% of the poorest world citizens live, including all the inhabitants of the Sahel.

In the specific case of Mali, the UN has already approved the MINUSMA mission mentioned above.

Initiatives and actions of the European Union

EU strategy for Africa

As set out in the introduction of the EU website on this topic⁴⁶:

“The Strategy for Africa is the European Union’s response to the challenge of getting Africa back on the track of sustainable development and of meeting the Millennium Development Goals⁴⁷ (MDGs) by 2015. As a long-standing partner and close neighbour the EU is well placed to help Africa provide a decisive boost to this process”.

The history of the different EU actions in Africa can be traced back to the Cotonou Agreement⁴⁸ between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP countries), whose objective was to promote and accelerate the economic, cultural and social development of the states, contribute to peace and security, and to promote a stable and democratic political climate. The overall, long-term goal was to eradicate poverty in line with the Objectives of Sustainable Development. The result was the approval in October 2005 of the document “EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa’s development”⁴⁹ which underlines the development-security nexus as well as four basic pillars:

1. Development, good governance and internal conflict resolution
2. Political and diplomatic action for conflict resolution
3. Strengthening security and the rule of law
4. Prevention of and fight against violent extremism and radicalisation.

46 On <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Ar12540>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

47 “Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio”. On <http://www.un.org/es/millenniumgoals/mdgmomentum.shtml>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

48 “Acuerdo de asociación entre los Estados de África, del Caribe y del Pacífico, por una parte, y la Comunidad Europea y sus Estados miembros, por otra”. Signed in Cotonou, Benin, in June 2000. On [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22000A1215\(001\)&from=ES](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22000A1215(001)&from=ES). Date of reference 25/03/18.

49 “Estrategia de la UE para África”. On <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52005DC0489&from=ES>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

In June 2007, the Commission drew up a communication “From Cairo to Lisbon – the EU-Africa strategic partnership”⁵⁰, which showed the progress made since the previous document and in consonance with unfolding events. Four objectives were defined as a basis for the subsequent Lisbon summit, held in December of the same year, in order to strengthen the relations between the EU and African countries in the interest of improving the latter’s situation in a number of aspects: energy, climate change, migration, mobility and employment, and, finally, governance, to improve the joint political and institutional architecture between the EU and Africa.

As a result of the successive summits between the EU and Africa (Cairo 2000; Lisbon 2007; Tripoli 2010), action plans were agreed that coincided in defining partnerships in eight priority areas:

1. Peace and security
2. Democratic governance and human rights
3. Regional integration, trade and infrastructures
4. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
5. Energy
6. Climate change and environment
7. Migration, mobility and employment
8. Science, information society and space

All of the above led to the adoption of the “EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel in 2011”⁵¹. 2006 had already seen the adoption of the Strategy for the Horn of Africa⁵², and in 2014 a strategy was adopted for the Gulf of Guinea⁵³. Both reflect the main factors responsible for conflict in the region (basically the ones already discussed in this analysis) and the unequivocal commitment of the EU to a work programme in support of the AU and the different regional organisations in order to achieve peace, security and good governance, as well as food safety and institutional

50 “De El Cairo a Lisboa – la Asociación estratégica UE-África”. On http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:d20abf19-b86a-4ab4-8dc5-3c3c010dfc1d.0004.02/DOC_3&format=PDF. Date of reference 25/03/18.

51 “Estrategia de la UE para la seguridad y el desarrollo en el Sahel”. On http://www.eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf. Date of reference 25/03/18.

52 “Una asociación política regional de la UE para la paz, la seguridad y el desarrollo en el Cuerno de África”. On <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=URISERV:r13004>, and <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52006DC0601&from=ES>. Date of reference 25/03/18.

53 “Estrategia de la UE para el Golfo de Guinea”. On http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/141582.pdf. Date of reference 25/03/18.

development, while underlining the fact that security and development are inseparable and indispensable in this pursuit⁵⁴.

Implementation of the 11th European Development Fund and Sahel Regional Action Plan of the EU, 2015-2020

The adoption of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF)⁵⁵ for the period 2014-2020, within the framework of the agreements between the ACP countries and the European Community and its member states (ACP-EC Partnership Agreement), allocated a total budget of 30.5 billion euros, contributed directly by the member states, which includes the adoption of the Financial Regulation that applies to this fund⁵⁶. In the previous framework, an essential document of the EU's commitment is the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020⁵⁷ (RAP Sahel 2015-2020), which includes the current G5 Sahel member states whilst remaining open to other countries of the region and the Maghreb, within the framework of the processes of Rabat and Khartoum on development and migration⁵⁸.

In any case, the plan envisages full ownership and responsibility of the countries involved, supporting local initiatives and coordinating with international and regional organisations. In March 2013 and at the height of the crisis in Mali, a Spanish ambassador was appointed as the special envoy of the EU for the Sahel and whose work has been essential in the reinforcement of the EU actions in the region on a political, security and development level.

With the adoption of the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)⁵⁹, for the period 2014-2020, the foundations for the EU's foreign policy commitment

54 HERMOSO ORZÁEZ, Emilio. "Misiones de entrenamiento y monitorización de las Fuerzas Armadas. Lecciones aprendidas y su aplicación en el Sahel". *Cuadernos de Estrategia 176. Sahel 2015, origen de desafíos y oportunidades*. IEEE. Spanish Ministry of Defence, p. 125. On <http://www.ieee.es/Gal> <https://eucap-sahel-mali.eu/index.html>erias/fichero/cuadernos/CE_176.pdf. Date of reference 25/03/18.

55 "Reglamento (UE) 2015/322 del Consejo, de 2 de marzo de 2015, sobre la aplicación del 11º Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo". On <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015R0322&from=EN>. Date of reference 26/03/18.

56 "Reglamento (UE) 2015/323 del Consejo, de 2 de marzo de 2015, por el que se aprueba el Reglamento Financiero aplicable al 11º Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo". On http://www.dgfc.sepg.minhfp.gob.es/sitios/dgfc/es-ES/rpue/pue/Normativa/Reglamento_UE_2015-323.pdf. Date of reference 26/03/18.

57 "Conclusiones del Consejo de la UE sobre el Plan de Acción Regional para el Sahel 2015-2020". On <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21522/sto7823-en15.pdf>. Date of reference 26/03/18.

58 "Procesos de Rabat y Jartum sobre desarrollo y migración". On http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-6026_es.htm. Date of reference 26/03/18.

59 "Regulación (EU) No 230/2014, de 11 de marzo, del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, por el que se establece un Instrumento para Contribuir a la Estabilidad y a la Paz (IcSP)". On http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/documents/140311_icsp_reg_230_2014_en.pdf. Date of reference 26/03/18.

were clearly laid, providing greater coherence and efficiency when responding to crisis situations, preventing conflicts, restoring peace and dealing with interregional threats, with financial and technical backing and support in setting up the G5 Sahel Defence College, amongst others. In case of exceptional need in the Sahel, the EU would also be able to resort to the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

As a result of the Strategy's lines of action and the different initiatives, and following identification of the main conflict factors, the RAP Sahel 2015-2020 envisages the need to develop four strategic areas, from an integral perspective and including control instruments:

1. Preventing and countering radicalisation. Drawing up and coordinating programmes that promote social integration in those areas with the greatest risk of radicalisation, dealing with different religious ideologies, the impact of the media and support for local authorities and NGOs.
2. Creating adequate conditions for youth. Identifying indicators to control their education and training, even using own programmes in EU countries, in order to widen the range of employment opportunities, taking into account the significant population growth and encouraging gender equality. "Investing in youth for a sustainable future" has been the main topic of the 5th AU-EU Summit in November 2017⁶⁰.
3. Migration and mobility. Fighting against irregular immigration and trafficking in human beings, fostering the link between development and migration as a deterring factor. Population growth represents a challenge for food safety while it must favour legal and controlled migration within collective action based on the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility and the Process of Rabat. The EUCAP Sahel Niger mission plays a positive role, Niger being the main transit country.
4. Border management, fight against illicit trafficking and transnational crime. Fostering actions for integral border protection and management, supporting local initiatives in coordination with other international initiatives⁶¹.

Implementation of the strategy in 2011 coincided with half-time for the period envisaged for the 10th European Development Fund (EDF 10, 2008-2013), which had already allocated 1.5 billion euros to Mali, Mauritania and Niger for help in social domains.

The budget allocated to EDF 11 for the five Sahel countries totals 2.47 billion euros, which has enabled many of the programmes already in the pipeline to be adapted to

60 "5^a Cumbre Unión Africana-UE". On <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/meetings/international-summit/2017/11/29-30/>. Date of reference 27/03/18.

61 Among others, UNODC and ECOWAS, as well as the EU instruments, as agreed at the European Council in December 2013 and in the declaration of the 4th EU-Africa Summit.

the implementation of this RAP, for instance in the case of funds derived from other regional initiatives such as the Regional Indicative Programme for West Africa⁶², the Pan-African Programme⁶³ and the Development Cooperation Instrument⁶⁴, as well as the rules and procedures for the implementation of EU instruments in its external action⁶⁵.

Practically all EU countries (except Slovenia and Malta) contribute direct aid, either financial or in the form of personnel, with the financial contributions of France, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK topping the ranks.

In view of the limited scope of this analysis, the following sections will focus on initiatives with Spanish participation during those years, extracted from Addendum III of the document containing the conclusions of the Council relating to the PAR 2015-2020⁶⁶.

- Mali. 2.56 million euro budget for support programmes in the areas of health, agriculture and food, training of security forces in crime prevention and border management. Spain provides personnel for EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUTM Mali, a support transport aircraft for operation *Barkhane* and, since 2013, the EU special envoy for the Sahel.
- Mauritania. 2.86 million euros, in development programmes for fishing and agriculture, support to the National Commission on Human Rights, health improvements on a local family level and training for its security forces in crime prevention and border management.

62 “La acción exterior de la UE 2014-2020. guía práctica de su financiación”. On <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/es/SalaDePrensa/Multimedia/Documents/GUIA%20PRACTICA%20FINANCIACION.pdf>. Date of reference 27/03/18.

63 “Programa Panafricano de la UE”. On http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-908_es.htm. Date of reference 27/03/18.

64 “Reglamento (UE) No 233/2014 del Parlamento y del Consejo, de 11 de marzo de 2014, por el que se establece un Instrumento de Financiación de la Cooperación al Desarrollo para el período 2014-2020”. On <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0233&from=ES>. Date of reference 27/03/18.

65 “Reglamento (UE) No 236/ del Parlamento y del Consejo, de 11 de marzo de 2014, por el que se establecen normas y procedimientos de ejecución comunes de los instrumentos de la Unión para la financiación de la acción exterior”. On <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0236&from=ES>. Date of reference 27/03/18.

66 “Reglamento (UE) 2015/323 del Consejo, de 2 de marzo de 2015, por el que se aprueba el Reglamento Financiero aplicable al 11º Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo”. On http://www.dgfc.sepg.minhafp.gob.es/sitios/dgfc/es-ES/rpue/pue/Normativa/Reglamento_UE_2015-323.pdf. Date of reference 27/03/18.

“Conclusiones del Consejo de la UE sobre el Plan de Acción Regional para el Sahel 2015-2020”. On <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21522/sto7823-en15.pdf>. Date of reference 28/03/18.

- Niger. 1.81 million euros for programmes relating to food safety, health and capacity-building of its security forces for crime prevention and border management, in addition to police officers for EUCAP Sahel Niger.
- Spain contributes a total of around 29 million euros to the different international and regional organisations for conflict prevention and management initiatives (AU); food safety and protection of the population at risk (ECOWAS and FAO); energy infrastructures and development (ECOWAS); diplomatic support towards dialogue in the region, as well as support of the security sector reforms (SSR) of various countries.

A key factor for the control of all these programmes and initiatives has been the presentation in June 2017 of the final report of the external evaluation of EDFII⁶⁷, which analyses the responses to six questions about their results.

- (EQ1) Findings on relevance. Positive in terms of poverty eradication, though less aligned with the preferences of the countries when compared to its predecessor, EDFIO, and lower level of participation of the main parties involved.
- (EQ2) Findings on effectiveness and (EQ3) efficiency. Resource management procedures have been considerably simplified and better adapted to local requirements. However, deficiencies in terms of government commitments to reforms and in the communication of concrete results are apparent, which limit control capacity.
- (EQ4) Findings on added value and (EQ5) complementarity. These have been positive considering the size of and differences between the countries, the large range of areas affected and of financing modalities, as well as medium-term predictability. The coordination of the projects at different levels and in the long term needs to be improved (due to the nature of the Plan itself), as well as dealing with overlap with other initiatives in some areas.
- (EQ6) Findings on final leveraging and possible influences. Although the EDFII has tools to leverage further funds, results have not always been positive. Resorting to other options such as trust funds might therefore be advisable. However, this could go against the EDF principles of partnership and ownership of the parties involved.

The overall evaluation of these programmes and initiatives is positive, except for certain areas in need of improvement over time. With respect to EDFIO, EDFII has not been able to take better advantage of the concept of partnership to adapt to the specific needs of some territories and countries. This may have been due to the fact that some programmes were managed directly from Brussels without sufficient involvement of local agents such as trade unions, religious entities or cooperatives.

67 “Informe final, de junio 2017, de la evaluación externa del 11º Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo (2014- mitad 2017)”. On https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/edf-evaluation-final-report_en.pdf. Date of reference 28/03/18.

However, the challenge is huge in countries facing so many needs, having so few resources and marked by such cultural differences. Moreover, there is recognition of the fact that it is too early to see conclusive results. On the other hand, the actual fact that results can be periodically controlled will precisely allow taking advantage of the system's flexibility to gradually adapt it to the needs and optimise available resources. In any case, an unquestionable added value of the EFD is the large geographical area it serves and the variety of options it allows while simultaneously promoting the values of the EU.

The adoption of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS)⁶⁸ at the European Council of October 2016 has shifted the EU position towards a more realistic view of the risks present in its strategic environment, while stating that the commitment to peace and development requires support in building resilience in these countries via integral approaches and multilateral actions.

Of the five lines of action that the EUGS sets out for the Mediterranean, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, the fourth refers to reinforcing the interconnections and exchanges between the North of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, and also between the former two and the Horn of Africa and the Middle East. The fifth advocates the involvement of the different regional organisations such as the AU, ECOWAS, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in East Africa (IGAD), the East African Community (EAC) and the G5 Sahel Group, favouring their initiatives to stimulate security and development.

Again, the coherence of the EUGS with the policy adopted by the EU through its strategies and initiatives towards the African continent is apparent. There is clear awareness of the serious challenges the continent faces—particularly sub-Saharan Africa—with the EU showing a firm commitment in all of these areas, in the interest of the region and of Europe itself.

Missions of the European Union within the framework of the Joint Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

Another result of the EU commitment to reducing conflict and enhancing development in Africa are the various peace missions within the scope of the CFSP and the CSDP. EUTM Mali is a mission specifically designed for military capacity-building of the Malian Armed Forces to carry out their own operations and progressively recover Mali's territorial integrity in coordination with other missions deployed in the area (UN and ECOWAS). It comprises 581 soldiers from 27 countries: 22 EU member states, in addition to Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and South Africa. Spain initially contributed 110 military instructors, brought up to 292⁶⁹ in January 2018, after a Spanish army general took command of the mission.

68 “European Union Global Strategy” EUGS. Available on <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/press/press-releases/2016/11/14/conclusions-eu-global-strategy-security-defence/>. Date of reference 28/03/18.

69 “España se hace cargo, oficialmente, del mando de la misión de EUTM en Mali”. On <http://www.emad.mde.es/MOPS/novoperaciones/noticias/2018/02/Listado/180202-relevo-mali.html>. Date of reference 18/03/18.

EUCAP Sahel-Niger⁷⁰, launched in 2011, and EUCAP Sahel-Mali, since 2015, are eminently civilian missions set within the strategy framework for the Sahel. Their main purpose is to offer guidance and advice for the modernisation of the states' security forces and law-enforcement agencies and to ensure their continued presence and effective control of the country.

U.S. initiatives and actions

The US presence in Africa received an impulse in the wake of President Barak Obama's visit⁷¹ to Ghana in 2009, whose parliament witnessed his famous statement: "Africa doesn't need strongmen, it needs strong institutions"⁷². Important milestones include the adoption of the "New Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa"⁷³ and the US-Africa summit held in Washington in the summer of 2014, although these had been preceded by the creation of the US Command for Africa (AFRICOM)⁷⁴ in 2007.

The "New Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa" identifies the main challenges and threats to the continent, but also the development opportunities for its future⁷⁵. In collaboration with regional organisations it sets the goals of strengthening democratic institutions; stimulating economic growth, trade and investment; making progress towards peace and security and promoting opportunities and development.

AFRICOM plays a decisive role in the contribution to security and stability in the Sahel, offering advice for training of military officers as well as participating in exercises such as Exercise Flintlock⁷⁶.

70 "EUCAP Sahel-Niger". On https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eucap-sahel-niger_en. Date of reference 28/03/18.

71 OBAMA, Barak. On http://elpais.com/diario/2008/08/24/domingo/1219549953_850215.html. Date of reference 28/03/18.

72 On https://elpais.com/internacional/2009/07/11/actualidad/1247263203_850215.html. Date of reference 28/03/18.

73 "Nueva estrategia para el África Subsahariana". On <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/06/14/fact-sheet-new-strategy-toward-sub-saharan-africa>. Y en https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/africa_strategy_2.pdf. Date of reference 28/03/18.

74 "AFRICOM. African Command". Headquartered in Germany, it is one of six U.S. regional unified commands. Created on 01/10/07. On http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/programas/terrorismo+global/publicaciones/publ-politicas+anterrorista+democs/ari+53-2007. Date of reference 28/03/18.

75 BOLAÑOS MARTÍNEZ, Jorge. "El África subsahariana en la política exterior norteamericana". *Documento informativo del IEEE 38/2012*. (2012, June 20). On http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_informativos/2012/DIEEEI38-2012_Estrategia_USA-Africa_JBM.pdf. Date of reference 28/03/18.

76 "FLINTLOCK 18". On <http://www.africom.mil/media-room/pressrelease/30484/africom-announces-flintlock-2018>. Date of reference 06/04/18.

The presence of US forces is particularly significant in Niger on account of its position as a crossroads for jihadist groups⁷⁷. More than 800 troops for training of the Nigerien armed forces have been deployed in addition to a squadron of reconnaissance drones based in Agadez. However, the tragic outcome of various operations raises doubts about the real work they are doing in the country⁷⁸.

As mentioned, in October 2017, the U.S. Secretary of State pledged a direct contribution of 51 million euros to the G5 Sahel Joint Force⁷⁹.

NATO initiatives and actions

NATO only plays a minor role in the region, with Mauritania having been included in the Mediterranean Dialogue (since 1994), together with Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Every year a political meeting is held within the NATO-7 MD council, in addition to others dealing with military aspects to coordinate joint activities, for example individualised cooperation programmes, visits to NATO organisms, participation in training courses or as observers during exercises, as well as participation in NATO-led operations.

The commitment of France to its former African possessions

The policy of France regarding its former colonies in the Sahel has been variously described as “confusing”, “relatively opaque”, “centralised” and, on occasion, “bordering on the illegal”⁸⁰. Despite repeatedly shifting its stance over the years, France’s commitment to the security and development of the region is nevertheless unequivocal, as was demonstrated during operation *Serval* in Mali.

77 “Pourquoi les Etats-Unis ont fait du Niger leur tête de pont en Afrique”. *Le Monde Afrique*. (2017, October 25). On http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/10/25/pourquoi-les-etats-unis-ont-fait-du-niger-leur-tete-de-pont-en-afrique_5205803_3212.html#mR3jeeGUrVBcaKBp.99. Date of reference 28/03/18.

78 TIMM, Trevor. “Niger is the perfect example of the US state of perma-war”. *The Guardian* (2017, October 27). On <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/oct/27/niger-perfect-example-us-permanent-war-posturing>. Date of reference 28/03/18.

79 BOURREAU, Marie. “G5 Sahel: les Etats-Unis s’engagent sans l’ONU”. *Le Monde Afrique* (2017, October 31) On http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/10/31/g5-sahel-les-etats-unis-s-engagent-sans-l-onu_5208170_3212.html. Date of reference 29/03/18.

80 LE GOURIELLEC, Sonia. “La política de Francia en el Sahel”. *Cuadernos de Estrategia 176. Sahel 2015, origen de desafíos y oportunidades*. IEEE. Spanish Ministry of Defence, p. 88. On http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/cuadernos/CE_176.pdf. Date of reference 29/03/18.

More recent French actions include lending financial help and providing personnel to the Support for Cross-Border Cooperation in the Sahel project (ACTS)⁸¹, launched in 2013, supporting Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso in protecting their borders. Of a non-military nature, its scope of activity covers security, development and governance.

However, France's greatest contribution to the fight against terrorism and organised crime in the Sahel has been operation *Barkhane*⁸² (successor to operation *Serval*) since August 2014. Headquartered in the capital of Chad, it contributes nearly 4000 troops of its *Armée de Terre* and *Armée de l'Air*, also deployed across Niger and Mali, and collaborates closely with these countries' armed forces.

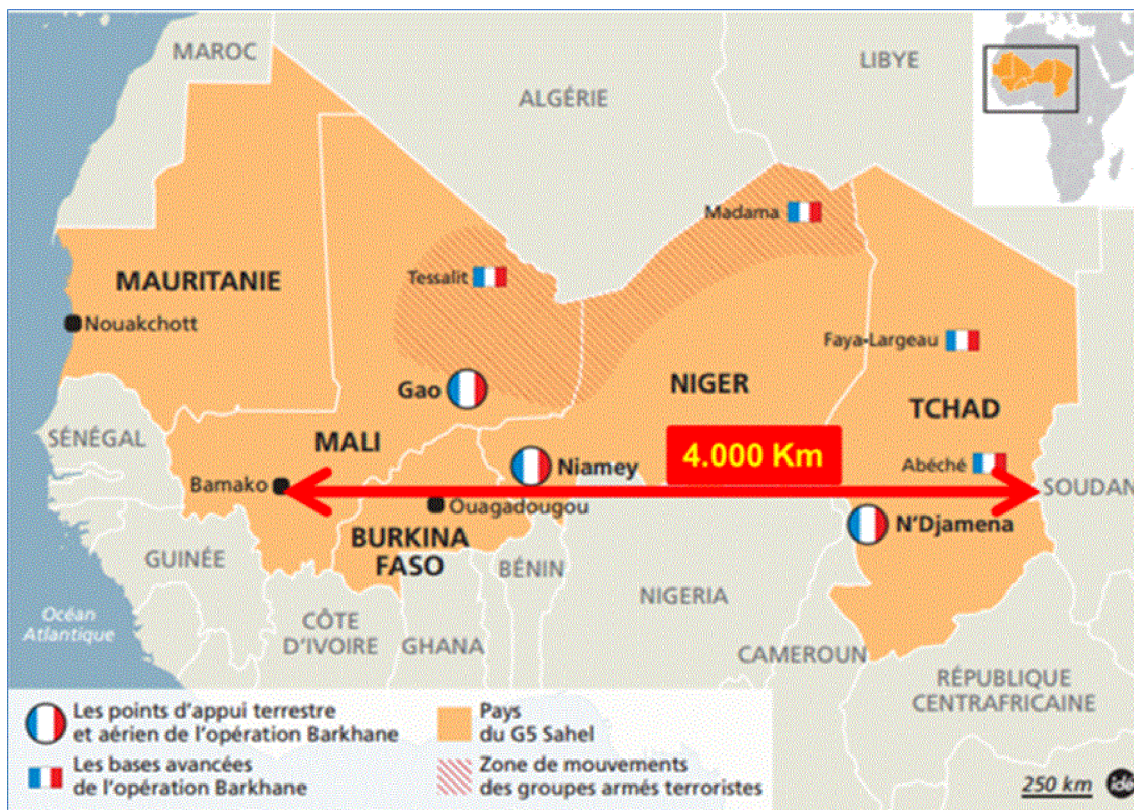


Figure 2. Deployment of French forces during operation Barkhane. Available on <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/articles/le-numero-de-juin-d-armees-d-aujourd-hui-est-en-ligne2>, p. 14, and author's own work. Date of reference 30/03/18.

Spanish initiatives and actions

The Sahel is classed as high priority within the Programme of Defence Diplomacy, along with the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, as was already reflected in the

81 "ACTS. Apoyo a la Cooperación Transfronteriza en el Sahel". On <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/es/asuntos-globales/ayuda-al-desarrollo/actualidad/articulo/apoyo-a-la-cooperacion>. Date of reference 29/03/18.

82 "Operación *Barkhane*". On <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/operations/sahel/dossier-de-presentation-de-l-operation-barkhane/operation-barkhane>. Date of reference 29/03/18.

National Security Strategy 2013 (ESN 2013)⁸³, in successive security reports on the subject⁸⁴ and in the new National Security Strategy 2017 (ESN 2017)⁸⁵, which also considers terrorism and organised crime as real threats to our security. In this context, the Spanish Minister of Defence, accompanied by the Chief of the Defence Staff (JEMAD) and the Secretary General for Defence Policy visited the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa in March 2014.

As mentioned before, Spain participates in the EUTM Mali mission within the framework of the CFSP of the EU, providing military personnel for the purpose of training the local armed forces.

The support of the Spanish Air Force to France is especially significant. The “Marfil” detachment with a Hercules T-10 aircraft of the Spanish 31st Air Transport Wing at Dakar Airport (Senegal) has been flying transport missions in support of operation *Barkhane* since January 2013, which have been extended to in-flight refuelling missions since 2017. The “Mamba” detachment with a T-21 aircraft of the 35th fighter wing has been performing air transport missions from Libreville (Gabon) to Central African Republic since March 2014.

Spain has backed the G5 Sahel Group since its inception. In November 2014, the Minister of Defence visited Mauritania requesting his ministry to be included as observers at the group’s meetings in addition to the representatives of the Interior Ministry who had participated hitherto. Thus, the Secretary General for Defence Policy (SEGENPOL) attended as an observer at the meeting held in Chad in March 2016 where he reiterated our country’s offer to collaborate in the creation of the Regional War College of the G5 Sahel Group. During that meeting, the chief of the defence of Chad asked for Spain’s support, leading to his invitation to a visit in Spain. Spain could also provide occasional support by sending instructors for specific modules forming part of the G5 Defence College’s syllabus in Nouakchott.

With the Council of Ministers’ approval in June 2014 of the Third Protocol of Amendment of The Agreement On Defence Cooperation (ADC) Between The United States Of America And The Kingdom Of Spain (of December 1, 1988), the *Morón de la Frontera* Air Base has become the permanent base for AFRICOM⁸⁶, with a mili-

83 “Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional. Un proyecto compartido”. *Gobierno de España*, p. 25. On http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/documents/seguridad_1406connavegacionfinalaccesiblebpdf.pdf. Date of reference 15/04/18.

84 “Informe anual de seguridad nacional 2016”. *Gobierno de España*. On <http://www.dsn.gob.es/documento/informe-anual-seguridad-nacional-2016>. Date of reference 15/04/18.

85 “Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional 2017. Un proyecto compartido de todos y para todos”. Pp. 25, 48, 49. On http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/presidenciadelgobierno/Documents/2017-1824_Estrategia_de_Seguridad_Nacional_ESN_doble_pag.pdf. Date of reference 03/04/18.

86 AFRICOM. Referencia del Consejo de Ministros Madrid. (2015, May 29). On <http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/consejodeminstros/referencias/Paginas/2015/refc20150529.aspx#moron>. Date of reference 29/03/18.

tary contingent for crisis response on the African Continent of up to 6,600 troops and 26 aircraft with scope for reinforcements in case of emergency⁸⁷.

Traditionally, Spain has participated with special operation troops of the Armed Forces and the Guardia Civil, in addition to aircraft, during the above-mentioned Exercise Flintlock⁸⁸. As of 2018, it contributes units of the Special Naval War Force of the Spanish Navy.

At the end of 2016 and as part of the EU strategy for the Sahel, the project “Rapid Action Groups - Monitoring and Intervention in the Sahel” (GAR-SI Sahel) was approved. Led by the Guardia Civil, it is a consortium including Italian Carabinieri, French Gendarmerie and the Guarda Nacional Republicana of Portugal. The main objective is to create six rapid action units (similar to the GAR of the Guardia Civil) inside the Gendarmerie forces of the G5 countries. The initial budget is 42 million euros, financed by the Emergency Trust Fund of the European Commission.

The presentation in the Spanish Congress of the Strategic Revision of Defence in December 2002 entailed the introduction of the concept of “defence diplomacy”, set out in July 2011 in the “Plan for Defence Diplomacy”. This lists the activities based on cooperation and dialogue that the Ministry of Defence undertakes bilaterally with member and allied states, aimed at preventing conflicts and at capacity building in the area of security.

In this context, based on the National Security Strategy 2013 and as part of what has come to be called “cooperative security operations” (OSC)⁸⁹, different military collaboration initiatives have taken place with West African countries such as Cape Verde⁹⁰, Mauritania, Gabon, Ghana and Senegal, Burkina Faso and recently Tunisia.

The new National Security Strategy 2017⁹¹ defines sub-Saharan Africa as “an arc that concentrates cross-border challenges and threats of an interrelated nature, in addition to relevant economic and energetic interests”. With regard to the Sahel, it states that

87 AFRICOM. “EEUU tendrá un máximo de 6.600 militares en España con el nuevo convenio. (2015, June 1). *The Diplomat*. On <http://thediplomatinspain.com/eeuu-tendra-un-maximo-de-6-600-militares-en-espana-con-el-nuevo-convenio/>. Date of reference 29/03/18.

88 “La Fuerza de Guerra Naval Especial de la Armada participa en el ejercicio “Flintlock” en Mauritania”. On http://www.armada.mde.es/ArmadaPortal/page/Portal/ArmadaEspañola/conocenosnoticias/prefLang-es/oonoticias--2017--03--NT-051-finaliza-ejercicio-flintlock-es;jsessionid=gpWXh60BvsD1XXGyNZ66WzJ7FK2cJcPdLT1F3174HFWF21grXzID!-1794688207?_selectedNodeID=2963147&_pageAction=selectItem. Date of reference 06/04/18.

89 “Seguridad Cooperativa en Senegal”. On http://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/seguridad-cooperativa-senegal.html. Fecha de consulta 06.04.18.

90 “Cooperación en el Golfo de Guinea”. On http://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/diplomacia-defensa.html. Fecha de consulta 29.03.18.

91 ESN2017.P.48. On http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/presidenciadelgobierno/Documents/2017-1824_Estrategia_de_Seguridad_Nacional_ESN_doble_pag.pdf. Fecha de consulta 29.03.18.

an integral perspective is required that links security and development via cooperative security, diplomatic activities and participation in international missions.

As a result of the International Conference on the Sahel in February 2018, the president of the Spanish government⁹² announced a Spanish contribution of 106 million euros for the period 2018-2021 to enable “the Sahel countries to leave behind poverty”, since “guaranteeing the security and development of the Sahel countries is vital for both Spain and the European Union”⁹³. For 2018 Spain is expected to exceed 100 million euros in spending on Africa, including the cost of the missions in Mali, Senegal and Gabon, support to the Sahel Defence Academy and additional financing of the Gender Equality Platform of the Permanent G5 Secretariat. For the Mauritanian battalion of the G5 Joint Force, Spain will supply protection material worth one million euros.

CONCLUSIONS

The fall of the Gaddafi regime is at the origin of the exponential increase of instability in the Sahel, a fact that has been exploited by both separatist rebel movements and groups of organised crime and terrorists, while the lines between them become increasingly blurred. The situation of instability in Mali caused by jihadist groups, and in the Lake Chad region with Boko Haram, continues to pose a threat to the security of the population, hampering its development. Moreover, the converging interests of these groups, made enormously rich by illegal trafficking and outdoing the official authorities in terms of resources, are seriously questioning the weakened states' ability to govern.

The consequences of not achieving adequate levels of security and stability are almost unimaginable at the moment, but do certainly not bode well for the future of the region. The possible existence of a string of countries to the south with government institutions taken hostage by criminal organisations or terrorist groups and acting as “safe havens” for all kinds of illicit activities is perceived as a constant threat to security both in the Maghreb and in Europe. Therefore, the situation could be described as constituting the perfect breeding ground for instability and conflict in the short, medium and long term.

The results of this study therefore support the initial hypothesis, namely that under the circumstances described, and given the countries' own inability to successfully

92 CALLEJA, Mariano. 23.02.18. EFE. Available on http://www.abc.es/espana/abci-lapsus-rajoy-paises-sahel-201802231254_noticia.html. Fecha de consulta 24.02.18.

93 Rajoy refuerza cooperación con el Sahel porque es “vital” para España y la UE. 23.02.18. EFE. Available on https://www.elconfidencial.com/ultima-hora-en-vivo/2018-02-23/rajoy-refuerza-cooperacion-con-el-sahel-porque-es-vital-para-espana-y-la-ue_1449314/. Fecha de consulta 24.02.18.

tackle the major challenges facing them, there is a need for joining resources as well as for the crucial support of the international community.

The international commitment is demonstrated by the numerous strategies, projects, initiatives and missions described to date and planned for the future, which—though based on contributing organisational, material and human resources with specific goals and control measures—do so from a stance of “empowerment” of the countries themselves in order to achieve their engagement and ultimate responsibility for the desired results.

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