

# The Sahel States Military Intervention in Politics: The Conflict of Vested Colonial Interest and National Security

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## Abstract

The earth-rocking military interventions in the politics of Sahelian states constitutes a critical challenge to democratic consolidation and national sovereignty. Despite transitions to civilian rule in many African countries, the Sahel continues to experience recurrent military takeovers, raising concerns over underlying causes and external influences. This paper examined the Sahel States Military intervention in politics: the conflict of Vested Colonial interest and National Security. The objective is to explore the root causes of military intervention, assess the influence of former colonial powers, analyze, and recommend strategies for democratic strengthening. The Theoretical framework for the study is anchored on 'Neo-colonialism Theory' propounded by Kwame Nkrumah (1965), methodologically the study is hinged on a descriptive-historical research design to trace the patterns and implications of foreign interference and military dominance in post-colonial Sahelian politics. Data were gathered through secondary sources, including scholarly journals, books, archival records, and credible internet sources. The data were qualitatively analyzed using content analysis to interpret recurring themes and patterns relevant to the research question. Research findings revealed that weak democratic institutions, elite corruption, ethnic tensions, and foreign strategic interests particularly those of former colonial powers are significant drivers of military coups. Furthermore, military regimes often undermine governance quality and restrict national sovereignty, while external actors perpetuate instability under the guise of security cooperation. The study concludes that for the Sahel to achieve political stability, regional governments must address internal governance deficits and reduce foreign dependency. The paper recommended strengthening democratic institutions, promoting inclusive governance, enhancing youth political engagement, and limiting foreign political manipulation.

## Keywords

Sahel, Military, Intervention, Politics, Conflict, Colonial, and National Security

## Introduction

The Sahel region, stretching across parts of West and Central Africa, has historically grappled with fragile political structures, underdevelopment, and widespread insecurity. Over the past two decades, several countries within this zone such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have witnessed frequent military takeovers, which have disrupted democratic transitions and constitutional governance. These military interventions are often presented as attempts to restore order and protect territorial integrity in the face of terrorism and weak civilian leadership. However, they also reflect deep-rooted structural weaknesses within the post-colonial state that make democratic governance vulnerable to collapse (Ibrahim, 2022).

Colonial legacies continue to shape political dynamics in the Sahel, particularly the enduring influence of France, which once controlled much of the region. Although formal colonialism ended in the 1960s, France maintains military bases, economic interests, and political alliances that significantly affect the sovereignty of Sahelian states (Mendy, 2020). The presence of French troops under operations like Barkhane has sparked both support and opposition, with many locals seeing it as a form of neo-colonialism rather than partnership. This persistent foreign military footprint complicates the internal power struggles and creates suspicion around the motives of both foreign and domestic actors (Abubakar, 2021).

In this context, military juntas have capitalized on public dissatisfaction with both foreign influence and weak civilian rule to legitimize their seizures of power. Soldiers often frame their interventions as necessary steps to reclaim national dignity and security, accusing civilian governments of being puppets of Western powers. This narrative resonates strongly in states where foreign-backed governments have failed to address insecurity, corruption, and poverty (Doumbia, 2023). The framing of military rule as patriotic resistance against external manipulation has gained increasing traction among disillusioned populations in the region (Obaje, 2022).

At the same time, national security in the Sahel faces unprecedented threats, especially from jihadist insurgencies linked to groups like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). These groups exploit local grievances, porous borders, and weak institutions to expand their operations (Boubacar, 2019). The inability of both foreign interventions and national governments to contain these threats has led to growing frustration and disillusionment with traditional governance models. Consequently, the military often emerges as the default response mechanism, even though such responses are rarely sustainable in the long term (Nwoko, 2021).

The conflict between vested colonial interests and national security becomes more pronounced when foreign powers are seen to prioritize geopolitical influence and economic access over the actual safety and stability of Sahelian states. For instance, France's strong interest in maintaining uranium supplies from Niger and counter-terrorism control zones across the region has drawn accusations of self-interest cloaked in humanitarian and security rhetoric (Adeoye, 2023). As a result, any military intervention whether by local armed forces or foreign allies tends to be viewed through the lens of hidden agendas rather than genuine peacekeeping or state-building efforts (Usman, 2024).

Ultimately, the interplay of internal instability, colonial vestiges, and strategic foreign interests has created a dangerous cycle of coups, insecurity, and democratic backsliding in the Sahel. The militarization of politics not only undermines state institutions but also exposes the fragility of sovereignty in post-colonial African states (Onuoha, 2021). A deeper interrogation of these power dynamics is necessary to understand whether these military interventions serve the national interest or merely perpetuate the region's dependence on foreign actors and authoritarian solutions. Without resolving the root causes of this conflict, lasting peace and democratic governance in the Sahel may remain elusive (Yaro, 2022).

### Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous regional and international efforts aimed at promoting democratic governance and security in the Sahel, military interventions in politics continue to escalate, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. These interventions are often justified on the grounds of restoring national security amidst widespread terrorism and state fragility. However, underlying these actions are unresolved tensions between the national quest for sovereignty and the lingering influence of colonial powers, especially France, whose vested interests in the region ranging from military to economic often complicate internal political dynamics. Existing studies have largely focused on either the security dimensions of the Sahel crisis or the role of external actors in maintaining regional stability, but few have critically examined how the interplay between colonial interests and national security imperatives drives recurring military takeovers. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how the conflict between lingering colonial influence and internal security concerns shapes the militarization of politics in the Sahel, a perspective that is crucial for formulating more sustainable governance and peacebuilding frameworks. **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the Sahel States Military intervention in politics: the conflict of Vested Colonial interest and National Security. The specific objectives of the study is:

- i. To examine the causes of military intervention in Sahelian politics

### Research Questions

- i. What are the primary causes of military intervention in the politics of Sahelian states?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual framework Military Intervention in Politics

Military intervention in politics is the direct or indirect participation of the armed forces in the decision-making process of the political system, often through coups or exerting undue influence over civilian authorities (Finer, 2022). Huntington (2023) asserted that military intervention in politics is the involvement of the military institution in political authority, where the professional military violates the norm of civilian supremacy in governance. Janowitz (2020) viewed military intervention as a disruption of the democratic process through the seizure or manipulation of political power by military leaders, often justified by claims of national interest or security. Luckham (2021) opined that military

intervention in politics entails the use of coercive power by the armed forces to alter, dominate, or control political processes, particularly in post-colonial states. Huntington, S. P. (2023). *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Welch (2024) described military intervention in politics as a situation where the armed forces assume an overt role in governance, often leading to authoritarian rule and suppression of civilian liberties.

Military intervention in politics refers to the direct or indirect involvement of the armed forces in the political affairs of a country, often through coups or undemocratic seizures of power. In the Sahel region, military interventions have become recurrent, driven largely by political instability, corruption, weak governance structures, and growing insecurity from insurgent groups. Countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have witnessed multiple coups within the past decade, often justified by the military as necessary actions to restore national order and security. The frequent involvement of the military in governance has led to a cycle of political volatility that undermines democratic institutions and civilian rule (Fombad & Inegbedion, 2021).

One of the major triggers of military takeovers in the Sahel is the failure of civilian governments to address mounting security threats, particularly from jihadist and separatist insurgencies. The inability of these governments to provide safety for citizens or respond effectively to crises often leads to widespread public dissatisfaction, creating a vacuum that the military exploits to seize power. In countries like Mali, the military justified their coups by citing the government's failure to contain terrorism and restore law and order. While such takeovers may enjoy short-term popular support, they frequently fail to produce lasting solutions to underlying governance challenges (Cook & Sanderson, 2021).

Moreover, international actors have played inconsistent roles in either legitimizing or condemning military regimes in the Sahel. While regional bodies like ECOWAS have imposed sanctions and called for a return to democratic rule, some foreign powers have continued to engage militarily or diplomatically with coup-installed governments for strategic interests such as counterterrorism or resource access. This selective engagement creates mixed signals and undermines the legitimacy of democratic norms. The lack of coordinated international responses has, in some cases, emboldened military leaders to retain power beyond transitional periods (Tull, 2021).

## **Vested Colonial Interests**

Vested colonial interests refer to the enduring economic, political, and strategic stakes that former colonial powers maintain in their ex-colonies. In the Sahel, countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have experienced continued influence from France and other Western powers even after gaining independence. These influences manifest in the control of natural resources, military alliances, and economic dependencies. France, for instance, retains significant economic and military presence in the region through frameworks like the CFA franc and Operation Barkhane, which critics argue serve more of France's interests than those of the host nations (Keenan, 2020).

The persistence of colonial legacies has complicated the political landscape of Sahelian states, where foreign powers are often perceived as supporting certain political elites or regimes to secure their interests. This dynamic has undermined local sovereignty and trust in national governments, especially when foreign-backed leaders fail to deliver public goods. The military, at times, exploits this distrust by portraying itself as a liberator from neocolonial influence. Such narratives have gained traction among populations frustrated with corruption, poverty, and perceived foreign exploitation of national resources (Bøås, 2019).

Economic interests are particularly critical in sustaining colonial influence in the Sahel. Multinational companies based in former colonial countries control significant portions of the region's uranium, gold, and oil industries. These companies often operate under agreements that favor foreign profits over local development. For example, Niger's uranium sector has long been dominated by French companies, leading to public outcry over environmental degradation and resource mismanagement. This economic arrangement perpetuates inequality and fuels local resentment, which can destabilize governments and invite military interventions (Pigeaud & Servenay, 2021).

## National Security

National security in the Sahel region encompasses the protection of territorial integrity, political stability, and the safety of citizens from internal and external threats. In recent years, the concept has taken center stage due to rising insecurity caused by terrorism, insurgencies, armed banditry, and transnational organized crime. Groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and Boko Haram have capitalized on weak governance, porous borders, and economic deprivation to establish a foothold in several Sahelian countries. These threats have overwhelmed state capacity, prompting a redefinition of national security beyond traditional military defense to include human security and state legitimacy (Thurston, 2020).

The insecurity in the Sahel is not only a domestic issue but also a regional and global concern. Weak border control and fragile institutions have turned the region into a breeding ground for cross-border terrorism and migration crises. As a result, national security policies are often shaped by international cooperation involving foreign military interventions, intelligence sharing, and financial aid. However, these interventions sometimes prioritize the strategic interests of donor countries over the long-term security needs of the local population, leading to questions about ownership and accountability in national security strategies (Cold-Ravnkilde & Plambech, 2021).

Military regimes in the Sahel frequently cite national security crises as a justification for their intervention in politics. Coups in countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have been rationalized by military leaders as necessary to confront terrorism and restore stability. However, while such regimes may initially focus on security, prolonged military rule often lacks transparency, weakens civilian institutions, and marginalizes public participation in governance. This undermines democratic accountability and may even exacerbate the very security issues the military claims to address (Koné, 2022).

## **The Sahel States Military Intervention in Politics: The Conflict of Vested Colonial Interest and National Security**

Military intervention in the politics of Sahelian states has become a defining feature of the region's political landscape, marked by a wave of coups in countries such as Mali (2020, 2021), Chad (2021), Burkina Faso (2022), and Niger (2023). These military takeovers have often been justified by claims of addressing rampant insecurity, weak governance, and external manipulation. However, the recurrence of such interventions raises deep concerns about democratic backsliding, legitimacy, and the role of military elites in governance. Analysts argue that the structural weakness of political institutions and electoral systems in the Sahel has created opportunities for the military to assume control during crises under the guise of national salvation (Aning & Abdallah, 2022).

Colonial legacies continue to shape political and military dynamics in the Sahel. Former colonial powers—most notably France—maintain strategic interests in the region through military bases, extractive industries, and monetary systems such as the CFA franc. These interests have been accused of prioritizing foreign economic and geopolitical gains over local development and self-determination. As a result, resentment toward external actors has grown, with military leaders and segments of the population accusing former colonial powers of meddling in domestic affairs, backing unpopular governments, and perpetuating economic dependency (Charbonneau, 2021).

This enduring colonial presence intersects with national security concerns. While foreign military interventions such as France's Operation Barkhane and EU security missions claim to support counterterrorism, critics argue they often reinforce elite control, trigger anti-foreign sentiments, and inadvertently intensify the grievances exploited by armed groups. This complex interplay between foreign interests and local security has contributed to the militarization of politics, where national armies present themselves as guardians against both terrorism and neocolonialism, even when their rule undermines civilian authority and democratic norms (Wing, 2022).

The conflict between colonial interest and national security creates a paradox for Sahelian states. On one hand, security threats necessitate international cooperation; on the other, this reliance exposes states to foreign influence that can erode sovereignty and fuel nationalist backlash. Moving forward, scholars suggest that addressing this tension requires rebuilding state legitimacy, investing in local capacity for peacebuilding, and restructuring international partnerships to be more equitable and accountable. Without this recalibration, military regimes may continue to exploit nationalist rhetoric while perpetuating governance challenges that undermine long-term stability (Rupesinghe & Krishnan, 2023).

### **Case Study**

#### **Mali – Coups and the Rejection of French Influence**

Mali has experienced repeated military coups, most notably in August 2020 and May 2021, led by the National Committee for the Salvation of the People (CNSP). These coups

were justified by the military as a response to widespread insecurity, jihadist insurgencies in the northern regions, and the civilian government's inability to maintain stability. The military capitalized on popular frustration to justify the suspension of democratic rule, claiming the need to "restore order" in a failing state (Ba, 2021).

The coups coincided with growing public resentment toward France, Mali's former colonial ruler, which had stationed troops in the country under Operation Barkhane to combat Islamist insurgents. Many Malians believed the French presence was more about protecting foreign interests than improving local security, especially as violence continued to spread despite years of intervention. In response, the Malian junta expelled French troops and began cooperating with Russian security actors, including the Wagner Group (Charbonneau, 2022).

This shift reflects how military regimes in the Sahel manipulate nationalistic sentiments and security crises to justify their rule. While claiming sovereignty and independence, the turn to Russian mercenaries raises questions about substituting one form of external influence for another. The Mali case illustrates how the intersection of national security concerns and postcolonial frustrations is exploited to erode democracy and reshape foreign alliances (Wing, 2022).

### **Burkina Faso - Military Takeover amid Escalating Insecurity**

Burkina Faso saw two successive military coups in 2022 due to the government's failure to stem Islamist violence. The first coup, led by Lt. Col. Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba in January, ousted President Roch Kaboré. However, after months of continued attacks and public frustration, Damiba himself was deposed in September by Capt. Ibrahim Traoré, who also cited deteriorating national security and the need for stronger leadership (International Crisis Group, 2022).

Following the coups, anti-French sentiment surged. Protesters demanded an end to France's military presence, accusing it of neocolonial interference and ineffectiveness. Eventually, the junta suspended military cooperation with France and began seeking closer ties with Russia. This aligned Burkina Faso with its neighbors, Mali and Niger, forming a bloc of Sahelian military regimes that challenged the traditional Western presence in the region (Reuters, 2023).

Burkina Faso's trajectory illustrates how Sahelian militaries leverage both real and perceived failures in foreign-led security strategies to gain legitimacy. By invoking national security and sovereignty, they garner public support while weakening democratic structures. Yet, turning to alternative powers like Russia may risk perpetuating dependency in a different guise, rather than fostering autonomous national development (Zoubga, 2023).

### **Niger – The 2023 Coup and the Struggle for Sovereignty**

In July 2023, Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum was overthrown by the Presidential Guard under General Abdourahamane Tchiani. The military cited insecurity, corruption, and foreign influence as motivations for the coup. Prior to the takeover, Niger had hosted multiple Western military bases, making it a central node for U.S. and French counterterrorism

operations in the Sahel. The coup marked a turning point in Niger's foreign relations and its internal political dynamics (Al Jazeera, 2023). Post-coup, the junta demanded the immediate withdrawal of French troops and suspended military agreements, citing violations of sovereignty. Public demonstrations in Niamey supported the coup and echoed anti-French, anti-Western sentiments. The junta began signaling openness to Russian engagement, following a pattern set by Mali and Burkina Faso. These moves were widely interpreted as a reorientation away from postcolonial dependency toward alternative alliances (BBC News, 2023).

Niger's case highlights the complexities of balancing national sovereignty with international security assistance. Although military rulers present themselves as defenders of the nation, their actions often replace democratic processes with authoritarian rule. The challenge remains how to build national security capacity without compromising sovereignty or allowing foreign alliances colonial or otherwise to dictate national priorities (Matfess, 2023).

### **Theoretical Underpinning :**

This study is anchored on Neo-colonialism Theory propounded by Kwame Nkrumah (1965)

### **Neo-colonialism Theory (Kwame Nkrumah)**

Neo-colonialism theory was profoundly developed by Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, in his 1965 seminal work, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. Nkrumah introduced this theory to describe how, after achieving formal political independence, African nations continued to experience domination by former colonial powers through economic and political means. Unlike classical colonialism that relied on direct control, neo-colonialism operates through indirect methods such as foreign aid, trade imbalances, multinational corporations, and military alliances (Nkrumah, 1965).

Nkrumah asserted that neo-colonialism was more dangerous than old-style colonialism because it created a deceptive sense of independence. He argued that African leaders were often complicit in perpetuating foreign dominance by accepting economic arrangements that undermined national sovereignty. Through institutions like the World Bank, IMF, and bilateral agreements, former colonial powers continued to manipulate the economies of developing nations to their own advantage, thereby keeping African countries economically dependent and politically weak (Nkrumah, 1965).

A central premise of the theory is that foreign capital is used for exploitation rather than development. Nkrumah noted that although neo-colonial states appear sovereign, their economic systems are controlled externally. Investments and profits are often repatriated to foreign countries, while local industries remain underdeveloped. This results in persistent poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment, leading to cycles of dependency that benefit external actors more than the host nations (Amin, 1976).

The theory also emphasizes the role of military and political influence in maintaining neo-colonial control. Nkrumah warned against foreign military bases and alliances, arguing

that they serve as tools for suppressing dissent and propping up puppet regimes favorable to foreign interests. Such dynamics are particularly visible in post-independence Africa, where external powers continue to wield influence through security partnerships and peacekeeping missions that often protect strategic interests rather than promote genuine stability (Rodney, 1972).

In contemporary African politics, especially in the Sahel region, neo-colonialism theory remains relevant. The enduring presence of foreign troops, the economic grip of Western corporations, and the reliance on foreign aid suggest that many African states are still navigating a landscape shaped by neo-colonial forces. Understanding Nkrumah's theory is therefore vital to interpreting the link between external interests, national insecurity, and political instability in post-colonial African societies (Fanon, 1963).

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive-historical research design. This design was considered appropriate because it gives a better and deeper understanding to phenomenon on the basis of an in-depth study of the phenomenon.

### Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were derived from secondary source of data collection. Secondary source include archival works such as encyclopedia, textbooks, journal articles, magazines, internet and other library materials related to the subject matter of the study.

### Method of Data Analysis

Data for this study were analyzed qualitatively in line with the research questions to the study and set to validate the hypotheses of the study through contents analysis approach.

## Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

### Evaluation of Research Questions

#### Research Question :

What are the primary causes of military intervention in the politics of Sahelian states?

#### 1. Escalating Insecurity and Jihadist Insurgencies:

One of the foremost catalysts for military interventions in the Sahel is the persistent and escalating insecurity, primarily due to jihadist insurgencies. Groups such as Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) have intensified their operations across Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, leading to significant loss of life and

displacement. For instance, a recent attack in northern Burkina Faso resulted in over 100 fatalities, underscoring the severity of the threat (AP News, 2025). The inability of civilian governments to effectively counter these insurgencies has often been cited by military leaders as justification for seizing power, claiming that their intervention is necessary to restore security and order. However, the military takeovers have not necessarily led to improved security. Despite the juntas' promises, extremist violence has continued unabated, with some reports indicating a surge in terrorist activities post-coup. This suggests that while the military cites insecurity as a rationale for intervention, their governance does not inherently resolve the underlying security challenges, and in some cases, may exacerbate them due to lack of comprehensive strategies and potential human rights abuses (AP News, 2025).

## **2. Endemic Corruption and Governance Failures**

Endemic corruption within civilian administrations has significantly eroded public trust and provided a pretext for military interventions. In Mali, for example, former President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta's tenure was marred by allegations of nepotism and mismanagement, including the appointment of family members to key governmental positions. Such practices have fueled public discontent, leading to mass protests and creating an environment ripe for military coups, as seen in Mali's 2020 and 2021 coups. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, high-profile corruption cases, such as that involving former Minister of Transport Vincent Dabilgou, who was convicted of embezzling public funds, have highlighted systemic issues within the government. These instances of corruption undermine the legitimacy of civilian governments and are often leveraged by military factions to justify their takeover, presenting themselves as agents of anti-corruption and reform (Charbonneau, 2022).

## **3. Constitutional Manipulations and Democratic Erosion:**

Attempts by incumbent leaders to manipulate constitutional provisions to extend their tenure have been a significant trigger for military interventions. In Guinea, President Alpha Condé's bid for a third term through a controversial constitutional referendum in 2020 led to widespread protests and ultimately a military coup in 2021. Such actions are perceived as democratic backsliding, prompting military actors to position themselves as protectors of constitutional order. In Mali, the military government's recent dissolution of political parties and suspension of political activities have raised concerns about the erosion of democratic institutions. These measures, often justified as necessary for national stability, effectively suppress dissent and consolidate military power, undermining the prospects for a return to civilian rule and democratic governance (Reuters. 2025).

## **4. External Influences and Neo-Colonial Dynamics**

The legacy of colonialism and ongoing external influences, particularly from former colonial powers like France, have contributed to political instability in the Sahel. France's military presence and economic interests in the region are often viewed with suspicion, leading to accusations of neo-colonialism. In Niger, for instance, the recent coup was partly fueled by

anti-French sentiments, with the junta accusing France of interfering in domestic affairs. These perceptions have prompted some Sahelian countries to seek new alliances, notably with Russia, as seen in Mali's engagement with the Wagner Group. Such shifts reflect a desire to assert sovereignty and reduce dependency on traditional Western partners. However, aligning with alternative powers introduces new dynamics and potential dependencies, complicating the geopolitical landscape and potentially undermining long-term stability (The Mail & Guardian, 2023).

### **5. Socioeconomic Hardships and Public Discontent**

Widespread poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services have fueled public dissatisfaction with civilian governments, creating a fertile ground for military interventions. In countries like Niger, where a significant portion of the population lives in poverty, the government's failure to address socioeconomic challenges has led to public support for military takeovers. The military often capitalizes on this discontent by promising to address economic grievances and improve living conditions. However, the effectiveness of military regimes in delivering socioeconomic improvements remains questionable. Without comprehensive policies and inclusive governance, the underlying issues persist, potentially leading to further instability and cycles of intervention (Matfess, 2023).

### **Discussions of Findings**

For objective one, the study sought to examine the causes of military intervention in Sahelian politics. The study posited that escalating insecurity and jihadist insurgencies, endemic corruption and governance failures, constitutional manipulations and democratic erosion, external influences and neo-colonial dynamics and socioeconomic hardships and public discontent among others are the major causes of military intervention in Sahelian politics.

### **Conclusion**

The political instability in the Sahel region, characterized by frequent military interventions, is a multifaceted issue rooted in a complex interplay of historical, political, economic, and security dynamics. The lingering influence of colonial powers continues to shape the political trajectories of Sahelian states, often undermining the growth of stable democratic institutions. Military interventions, frequently justified on the grounds of national security, have contributed to the erosion of democratic norms and weakened governance structures. These interventions are further complicated by the presence of foreign interests seeking to maintain strategic and economic advantages in the region, leading to a persistent cycle of political upheaval and governance failure.

Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that includes strengthening democratic institutions, promoting inclusive governance, and limiting foreign interference. Key strategies include implementing electoral reforms, decentralizing political power, empowering civil society, promoting youth participation, and fostering regional cooperation. By adopting these measures, Sahelian countries can build resilient democratic systems capable of withstanding internal and external pressures. Ultimately, the stability and

sovereignty of the Sahel depend on the political will of its leaders and the collective efforts of regional and international actors to support democratic consolidation and sustainable development.

### Recommendation

National governments across Sahelian states should prioritize reforming the civil-military relationship by clearly defining the constitutional role of the armed forces. This includes regular civilian oversight, professional military training, and the depoliticization of armed forces to prevent arbitrary takeovers and enhance loyalty to democratic governance.

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