



The S.W.O.T Analysis of the
European Unions' New
Peace and Security Funding
Policy in Africa and Its
Possible Impact on the
Terrorism Situation in Sahel



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Executive Summary

The European Union has recently introduced European Peace Facility, partially replacing African Peace Facility and restructuring its peace and security operations funding policy in Africa for the past sixteen years. Before the European Peace Facility, the European Union had financially supported CSDP-related initiatives in the Sahel by using African Peace Facility as a distributing tool to allocate funds to the African Union. The latter then managed the allocation in the Sahel. The recent European Peace Facility enables the European Union to bypass the African Union and allocate its funds directly to national or regional security initiatives in the Sahel. The European Peace Facility also allows the European Union to provide national armies in the Sahel with the necessary funding to purchase adequate weaponry. The new initiative grants the European Union more agility. However, given the previous military experience in the Sahel and the current unstable security context, including two coups in Mali and Burkina-Faso and terrorism-related threats in the Lake Chad Basin, Niger, and Nigeria, a concise political plan is a must to build the resilience of these vulnerable countries. The following paper supports the oversight function of the African Union, which can give the European Union additional safeguards to make sure the resources are efficiently-spent. S.W.O.T analysis of the new funding policy advocates maintaining the African Union's oversight role, conducting regular risk assessments, and developing monitoring protocols to prevent regimes that suffer from terrorism and violent extremism from gaining access to deadly weaponry.

Keywords: the EU, the AU, APF, EPF, CSDP, Sahel, VE, Terrorism, S.W.O.T Analysis.

List of Abbreviations:

AU - The African Union

APF - The African Peace Facility

AQIM - Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the

CSDP - Common Security and Defence Policy

CTO - Counter-Terrorist Operation

EU - The European Union

G5S - G5 Sahel

ISIS - Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

ISIS-GS - The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara

ISWAP - The Islamic State in West Africa Province

JAES - Joint Africa-EU Strategy

JNIM - Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin

MNJTF - Multinational Joint Task Force

PKO - Peacekeeping Operation

VE - Violent Extremism

S.W.O.T - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Introduction

The Sahel region has been relevant to the violent extremism and terrorism context ever since the 9/11 attack in 2001 (See Figure 1).

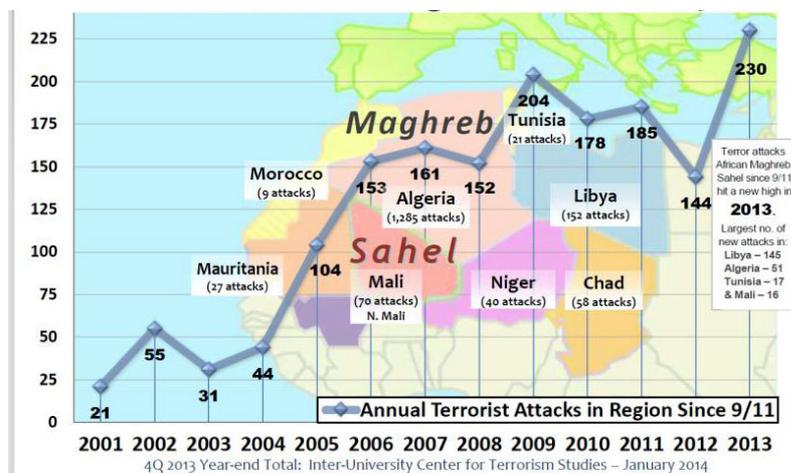


Figure 1. Terrorist Attacks in Maghreb & Sahel from 9/11 to 2013. Source: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies

Countries in the region involuntarily host several violent extremist and terrorist organizations varying from – JNIM and Ansar Ul-Islam to ISIS and Al-Qaeda affiliated groups such as – ISIS-GS, ISWAP, Boko-Haram⁴, AQIM to the small street gangs like – the remnants of Casamance groups. However, the rising terrorism context in the Sahel has also drawn the attention of leading peace contributors and urged them to intervene.

The European Union has been a key financial contributor to the general African peace and security situation since 2004 and gave authorization to CSDP missions in such Sahel countries as Mali and Niger (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. CSDP Missions in Africa. Source: EEAS

Furthermore, the European Union has also provided its moderate political approval to the French-led Barkhane CTO operation, the costs of which have been estimated €1.6 billion for France.⁵ However, the two recent coups in Mali and Burkina-Faso, and growing skepticism towards the European presence in the region, have urged the EU to revisit its approach to the Sahel region.⁶



⁴ * The group formerly aligned itself with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant*.

⁵ European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). Operation Barkhane. Available at: https://ecfr.eu/special/sahel_mapping/operation_barkhane#:~:text=Operation%20Barkhane%20is%20France's%20largest,left%20by%20an%20absent%20government.

⁶ Sany, J. (2022). A Sixth Coup in Africa? The West Needs to Up Its Game. U.S. Institute of Peace. Available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/02/sixth-coup-africa-west-needs-its-game>

In 2021, the European Union discarded the African Peace Facility (APF), which served as a bridge for channeling funds to the African Union for its military efforts. The European Union is now able to bypass the African Union and directly fund the African countries for military and defense operations and developmental aid.⁷

The following paper considers the growing threats and security context in the Sahel and analyzes the EU's new peacekeeping funding policy appealing to its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The paper offers its readers a S.W.O.T analysis of the aforementioned political decisions and presents actionable policy recommendations.

⁷ European Commission (n, d). *European Peace Facility*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/what-we-do/european-peace-facility_en

From APF to EPF – A brief overview of EU's African Peace and Security Funding Policy

The Sahel region has held strategic value for European security. The establishment of the African Union in 2002 further enhanced the partnership between the two continents and was ratified with Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) in 2007.⁸ The EU has both - financially and politically contributed to the security and stability of the Sahel region since 2004.⁹

The previous 18-year-long funding experience of the European Union in Africa comprises two different phases: 1. the APF phase or the 2004-2019 period and 2. the EPF phase, referring to the replacement of APF with the newly-established European Peace Facility in 2021 and giving the latter a broader scale, discarding financial instrument that had exclusively funded the Sahel region and Africa.

African Peace Facility – An Exclusive Instrument for Funding Peace in Sahel

The African Peace Facility (APF) was Europe's response to the AU's request for external financial and political support in 2004. Since the African Peace Facility had been an unparalleled tool to promote peace in the Sahel, it soon became the central instrument in the Euro-African peace and security cooperation. APF has helped the African Union financially sustain its PKOs and CTOs throughout the continent.

AU and its sub-regional institutions enjoyed their designated recipient status in the past. EU channeled € 2.7 billion to AU through APF from 2004 to 2019. The allocations had flown in three main directions: 1. African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) - a continental security institutional architecture, 2. Early Response Mechanism in APF - responsible for rapid fund gathering for conflict prevention, and 3. mediation efforts to facilitate adequate procedures for conflict resolution. The European funds channeled through APF are also available for sub-regional subjects through AU's Peace and Security Council Mandate.¹⁰

AU spent 90 percent of the European funding on peacekeeping and counter-terrorism efforts

⁸ European Commission (n, d). *Africa-Eu Partnership*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/africa-eu-partnership_en

⁹ International Crisis Group (2017). *Africa Report N255, Time to Reset African Union-European Union Relations*. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/255-time-reset-african-union-european-union-relations>

¹⁰ European Commission (n, d). *African Peace Facility Annual Report 2019*. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4ce12dc7-d5f9-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1>

in different regions, including - the Sahel (See Figure 3).

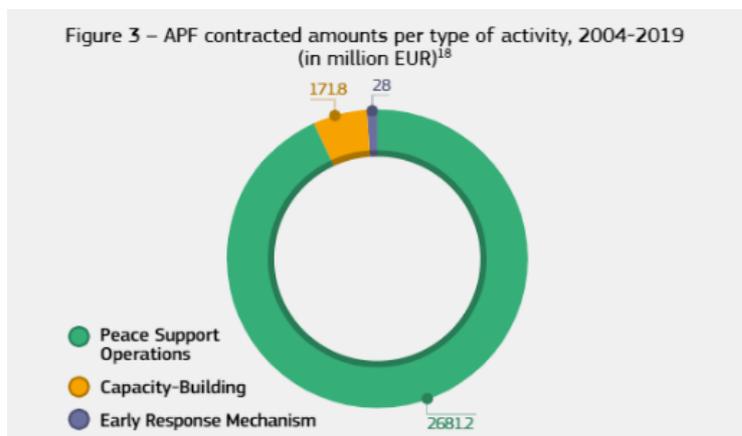


Figure 3. APF Contracted Amounts Per Type of Activity, 2004-2019. Source: *European Commission*

APF used the resource to establish several African-led missions in and near the Sahel region, including the democratic transition mission in Gambia and the fight against Boko-Haram in Lake Chad. AU covered the

logistics and military-related expenditures, such as transportation, troops maintenance, and infrastructural maintenance with APF resources. However, the European funding did not finance the salaries, weaponry, or training for military personnel.¹¹

On the other hand, the limited Early Response Mechanism budget funded over 40 different crisis management projects in Africa and was more productive.¹² It is widely due to the EU's fast-track process, enabling AU to prepare early-stage peace support operations and quickly mobilize human rights observers, fact-finding missions, and measures to prevent violence.¹³

Discarding Exclusive Funding Instruments – European Peace Facility

The emerging security issues related to the spread of jihadism in the Sahel region and other security challenges in Africa have vast importance for European security. Therefore, the European Union reformed its funding mechanisms for Africa by discarding APF to boost the impact of European funding on the Sahel security.

The European Union decided to split APF in two and incorporate the splinters into two worldwide funds - European Peace Facility (EPF) and The Neighborhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument. The decision has left Brussels without a financial instrument that exclusively funded African peace and security, including counter-terrorism efforts in the Sahel. However, the EPF will spend €5 billion in 2021-2027 - twice as much as the APF from 2004-to 2019. The Neighborhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) allows the EU to direct its development aid worldwide.¹⁴

¹¹ ^ *ibid.*

¹² ^ *ibid.*

¹³ *International Peace Institute (2012). Preventing Conflicts in Africa: Early Warning and Response. Available at: https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/ipi_e_pub_preventing_conflicts.pdf*

¹⁴ *ibid.*⁷

The European Peace Facility promises to make the European foreign policy more agile and allows it to be present in external military and defense cooperation, which would have been impossible previously as the members of the EU had engaged in such activities only through NATO or military cooperation initiatives. **The EPF also allows the EU to improve its limited financial support for regional CT coalitions - meaning the EU could boost its financial support for Task Force Takouba, which currently runs under the French-led Barkhane CT operation in the Sahel.** By discarding the APF and adopting EPF, the EU can directly aid the security forces in the Sahel and even provide militaries with security with deadly weaponry.¹⁵

The new Neighborhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument starts running only in 2024, meaning the APF will still be in charge for the time being. Therefore, it's still unclear how further the new development instrument will aid the previously endorsed early warning systems and conflict prevention instruments.¹⁶

Explanations Behind EU's New Peace and Security Funding Policy in Africa

The EU's strategic goal to increase its leading role as a global foreign policy actor and the experience in Africa with such peacekeeping projects as AMISOM, or more precisely - its involvement in the Sahel, including the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad Basin, and the G5 Sahel Joint Force has pushed EU to gain more funding capacities for its African and Sahelian recipients. The essential rationale behind the establishment of EPF is as follows:

1. **The growing jihadist groups in the Sahel** region are alarming for the European Union.¹⁷ Furthermore, relatively more success of nationally-administered regional counter-terrorist coalitions in the Sahel, such as MNJTF and G5 Sahel Joint Force, that have no affiliation with the African Union has further persuaded the European Union to restructure their previous peace and security funding policy in the Sahel and all of Africa.
2. Despite having a bigger budget than the APF, the EPF allows the EU to promote short-term aid packages instead of turning to long-term initiatives. Therefore,

¹⁵ *ibid.*⁷

¹⁶ *International Crisis Group (2021). Report N297 / Africa - How to Spend It: New EU Funding for African Peace and Security? Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/african-union-regional-bodies/297-how-spend-it-new-eu-funding-african-peace-and-security>*

¹⁷ *Perouse, A, M. (2021). Rethinking the Response to Jihadist Groups Across the Sahel. Chatham House. Available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/03/rethinking-response-jihadist-groups-across-sahel>*

potentially decreasing the EU's total costs.

3. **AU's role as a mediator** in Euro-African relations has cost the European Union additional expenditures due to the **irrelevant bureaucracy**. An example of such a flaw is the MNJTF deployment in 2015 when the military personnel suffered inadequate supplements during the first phase of their mission.¹⁸

4. **The experience with shortcomings** while providing help for Mali, Somalia, and the Central African Republic, or more recently the two coups in Burkina-Faso and Mali have also fueled the skepticism of the members of the European Union regarding the APF pushing towards searching the new alternatives or policy amendments.

5. **The Cotonou Agreement** has also played a leading role and served as a legal basis for the EU's active engagement with African countries. Therefore, the Cotonou Agreement was sort of a legal base for APF. However, the expiration of the Cotonou Agreement was yet another reason to look toward the new peace and security finance policy in Africa and by extension the Sahel.¹⁹

¹⁸ Fabricus, P. (2021). *EU Peace and Security Funds Can Now Bypass the African Union*. Institute for Security Studies. Available at: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/eu-peace-and-security-funds-can-now-bypass-the-african-union>

¹⁹ European Council (n, d). *Cotonou Agreement*. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/cotonou-agreement/>

Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis of EU’s New Finance Policy in Africa

As already noted, the EPF grants the European Union funding greater flexibility. However, the execution and the implementation of the new funding initiative also have challenges. This paragraph delivers the S.W.O.T analysis of EPF and gives the basis for actionable policy recommendations (See Table 1).

Table 1. *SWOT of EU’s New Finance Policy in Africa*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>As the impromptu regional alliances similar to MNJTF and G5 Sahel Joint Force, which have no affiliation with AU, have proved to be more effective against jihadi terrorist organisations in the Sahel, the additional flexibility that the EPF grants the EU will bring a broader capacity in peace and security funding in Africa.</p> <p>Since the EPF allows the European Union to bypass the AU, it saves Europe unnecessary bureaucracy and decreases its expenditures. Furthermore, the evasion of bureaucracy lets the European Union be swifter and shrinks the likelihood of such shortcomings, as in the case of MNJTF in 2015.</p> <p>By relying on shorter-term national or regional military initiatives in the Sahel region, the European Union can save its resources in the longer run.</p>	<p>Although the budget of EPF compared to APF is larger, the list of beneficiaries of the EU resources has become longer as well. Therefore, a larger budget doesn't necessarily mean the increased capacity for all regions. Regional military initiatives in the Sahel could potentially experience shortcomings in EU funding.</p> <p>Since the Neighborhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument starts running in 2024, the future of current non-military components of the APF - such as the Early Response Mechanism, is not clear.</p> <p>As the EPF turns the European Union funding more inclined towards short-term regional and national initiatives, the overall long-term strategic goals of the European Union in the Sahel region and Africa could become vaguer.</p> <p>While AU is broadly dependent on external (primarily European) funding, the EPF partly endangers AU's oversight role on the continent. Because AU has no current competitor in terms of management, the EPF that enables the EU to bypass the AU leaves it without a relatively well-instrumentalized ally.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>The EPF leaves a financial gap for its continental counterpart - African Union. Therefore, canceling APF could also serve the AU as the final trigger to break its economic dependence on the European Union.</p> <p>The gap in funding could also serve as an opportunity for other actors interested in African peace and security, such as the People’s Republic of China, to engage more in the African peace and security architecture.</p> <p>While EU authorities recognize that they will not be able to eradicate the possibility of funding abuse, they place a high value on the protections the EU will implement, such as the International Small Arms Control Standards and related risk mitigation measures.</p>	<p>The regions like the Sahel that are prone to terrorism risks require extra care and attention from the European Union once it has decided to channel funds through the EPF. Miscalculating the context could result in EPF allocating its funds toward the wrong entity. The August 2020 military coup in Mali, which came after more than seven years of European (and other foreign) investment in training and advising the Malian armed forces, points out how the EU could miscalculate its assistance.</p> <p>The threats posed by corruption are yet more challenges to the EPF initiative. Countries with high corruption rates, such as Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso, can't fully harvest European funding. In addition to Nigeria suffering from shortages in equipment and logistics, making it hard to fight Boko Haram and ISWAP, the former president of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, improved his security power by transferring army personnel to Presidential Security Regiment.</p>

Actionable Policy Recommendations for the European Union

The transition from the APF to EPF creates potential risks related to the terrorism situation in the Sahel region and therefore requires extra political consideration. The following paragraph presents a humble list of actionable policy recommendations to mitigate the risks which might emerge during the transition:

- Despite EPF naturally being an instrument that allows the European Union to bypass the African Union and channel sources directly to the nations in the Sahel region, the 18-year-long European investment in the African Union left the organization as currently the most instrumentalized and the best-equipped oversight entity. Therefore, the EU promoting the AU monitoring over EPF fund expenditure in the regions could help the transition process and mitigate the threats posed by local corruption.

- As the EPF potentially increases the commitment of the European Union to short-term national and regional security projects, a concise long-term policy and conduct protocol will be necessary to make sure the European funding serves its purpose.

- The case of Mali showed that careful consideration is required to correctly evaluate potential risks of providing financial assistance to countries with unstable social, economic, and political situations.

- Since the EPF represents a new instrument that will help direct the EU's peace and security finance policy, it requires a well-developed apparatus and capacity building. Careful inclusion of APF's relevant portion into EPF requires active deliberation among the EU members on the roles and responsibilities of the EPF personnel and instruments.

- Considering the 18-year-long partnership between the European Union and the African Union, the latter could facilitate informing relevant entities on the continent, such as governments in different regions (including the Sahel) about the newly established EPF, its capacities, and partnership opportunities.

Conclusion

The European Union has recently established new funding instruments to assist the peace and security situation in Africa. The European Peace Facility replaced African Peace Facility exclusively designed to fund the continent.

The larger budget in the European Peace Facility and its approach grants the European Union a quicker reaction and more flexibility and a potential to decrease its expenditures in a longer run. However, the enabling character also includes the risks of mis-directing the funds, which can have dire negative consequences similar to the case of Mali.

The EU needs to carefully evaluate the risks and help sustain AU's oversight or at least monitoring role in the implementation of EPF for the years to follow.

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