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Article

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CONFLICT DYNAMICS AND PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES IN THE SAHEL REGION

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Abstract

This study examined the conflict dynamics and peacebuilding initiatives in the Sahel region with the aim of identifying major drivers of conflict, patterns of conflict dynamics, effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives, and challenges affecting their implementation. The study adopted a quantitative research design using a descriptive survey approach. The population comprised 1,250 stakeholders involved in peace and security issues across selected Sahel countries, sample of 300 respondents was selected using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The results were presented in tables. Findings revealed that climate change, resource competition, poverty, weak governance, and proliferation of small arms are major drivers of conflict in the Sahel region. The study also showed that conflict dynamics are largely transnational, insurgency-driven, seasonal, and characterized by farmer–herder clashes and exploitation of ungoverned spaces. Furthermore, peacebuilding initiatives such as ECOWAS interventions, African Union missions, and community dialogue mechanisms were found to be moderately effective, although military approaches alone were considered insufficient for sustainable peace. The study also identified inadequate funding, poor coordination, political instability, lack of trust, and persistent insurgent attacks as key challenges hindering peacebuilding efforts. The study concludes that conflict in the Sahel is structurally driven and multidimensional, requiring integrated and long-term peacebuilding strategies rather than fragmented or militarized responses. It recommended strengthened institutional coordination, improved natural

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resource governance, enhanced early warning systems, and increased funding for sustainable peacebuilding interventions in the region.

Keywords: Conflict Dynamics, Peacebuilding, Sahel Region, Insecurity, Climate Change, Governance.

Introduction

The Sahel constitutes a semi-arid transitional zone stretching across Africa between the Sahara Desert and the Sudanian Savanna, geographically encompassing Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria's northern borderlands, Chad, and Sudan. It is characterized by a harsh climate with erratic rainfall and prolonged dry seasons, the region has experienced intensifying heat waves and environmental stress (Sambou et al., 2021), while remaining economically dependent on rain-fed agriculture and pastoral nomadism (Mbaye, 2020). Pastoralism remains the dominant livelihood strategy for millions, yet recurrent drought cycles have decimated livestock herds and forced sedentarization, increasing pressure on already scarce cultivable land. These climatic realities, combined with high demographic growth and limited state infrastructure, render the Sahel exceptionally vulnerable to the intersection of climate variability and human insecurity. Contemporary Sahelian conflicts are rooted in colonial border demarcations that fragmented ethnic and ecological continuities, followed by post-independence governance failures that marginalized peripheral communities. According to Minko (2024), the artificial territorial arrangements imposed during colonialism created governance architectures that excluded nomadic populations and ruptured traditional resource management systems. Post-independence governments inherited administrative structures designed for extraction rather than development in countries like Mali. The marginalization of its northern areas fueled recurrent Tuareg rebellions. The 2012 Malian crisis marked a critical turning point, transforming localized grievances into regional insurgencies that now threaten the entire Sahelian belt and expose the profound limitations of post-colonial state-building projects.

The contemporary conflict landscape is multidimensional, encompassing armed jihadist insurgencies, inter-communal violence, and resource-based contests. Armed groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara have exploited governance vacuums to expand operations across Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger (AYA, 2025), while water scarcity and exclusionary agricultural policies have intensified competition between farmers and herders (Denisova & Kostelyanets, 2023; Burka *et al.*, 2023). Eboreme *et al.* (2025) established that droughts and desertification interact with ethnic tensions to displace populations and deepen insecurity across West Africa's Sahel. The intersection of local disputes with national political issues (particularly politicized ethnic stereotypes and electoral competition) has further inflamed farmer-herder tensions across the central Sahel. Cross-border arms trafficking and militant movement further complicate stabilization efforts, as porous frontiers facilitate the spread of violence. Weak governance and political instability remain foundational to Sahelian crises, it enables the manipulation of climate-induced grievances by elites and extremist actors (Moe, 2025; Rothe *et al.*, 2025). Poverty and youth unemployment create recruitment pools for armed groups, while youth bulges across the region confront stark joblessness, with formal sector opportunities virtually nonexistent in rural areas, rendering young men susceptible to extremist recruitment and criminal enterprise. Ethnic and religious tensions erode inter-communal trust, and climate-induced migration intensifies competition over arable land and water points, particularly in transborder zones where state presence is minimal. According to Radil et al. (2022),

borderland regions experience disproportionate political violence due to limited state capacity and transnational criminal networks. These interconnected drivers produce what Raleigh et al. (2024) described as “adaptation amid instability,” where communities face simultaneous pressures from environmental shocks and violent conflict.

The humanitarian consequences of protracted conflict are catastrophic. Eboreme et al. (2025) documented that approximately eight million people are internally displaced across the Sahel, with urban areas facing overburdened infrastructure while hosting influxes of traumatized migrants. The protracted displacement has generated severe protection crises, as gender-based violence and forced recruitment of children into armed groups escalate in overcrowded camps and informal settlements. Food insecurity has reached alarming levels as conflict disrupts market flows and agricultural production, while the destruction of schools and health facilities has eroded basic service delivery. Raleigh et al. (2024) emphasized that climate finance remains insufficient to address the cascading effects of environmental degradation on food systems and human security in fragile contexts. Regional and international actors have deployed multiple frameworks to address Sahelian crises. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, and the G5 Sahel have established military and diplomatic mechanisms, though their efficacy remains contested. Minko (2024) observed that while ECOWAS has demonstrated proactive interventionism, the AU prioritizes diplomatic mediation; both approaches face significant capacity and coordination constraints. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali represented the most significant peacekeeping deployment, yet its withdrawal underscored the limitations of external military solutions. Community-based initiatives have shown comparative promise. Ide et al. (2021) highlighted that environmental peacebuilding through natural resource management can foster social cohesion in conflict-affected areas. Religious leaders and traditional chiefs have mediated local truces and denounced extremist ideologies, yet their authority has been systematically undermined where militant groups have established alternative governance structures. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs have achieved limited success due to fragmented implementation and continued militant activity.

Despite numerous initiatives, peacebuilding confronts severe obstacles. Coordination gaps among regional organizations, the United Nations, and bilateral donors have produced overlapping mandates and fragmented responses, creating a crowded institutional landscape where accountability is diffuse. Muggah and Whitlock (2022) noted that early warning systems often fail to translate data into preventive action, leaving communities vulnerable to predictable outbreaks of violence. Limited funding and wavering political will undermine sustained engagement, while mistrust between central governments and peripheral communities persists. The continued expansion of extremist networks and weak implementation of peace agreements demonstrate the gap between diplomatic commitments and ground realities. In response to persistent challenges, novel approaches are gaining traction. The integration of climate-security frameworks into peacebuilding represents a significant evolution, with Redoya Taboeda (2024) argued that adaptation measures must explicitly incorporate peace and security outcomes to break cycles of climate-induced conflict. Climate-security integration is exemplified by community-based water management projects in Niger and Mauritania, where collectively managed infrastructure has simultaneously reduced resource competition and built inter-communal trust. Youth engagement and deradicalization programs have expanded, targeting the demographic most vulnerable to militant recruitment. Technological innovations offer new

tools for conflict prevention, as Lynam et al. (2023) assessed the potential of predictive analytic systems in conflict contexts, while Mandokhail (2024) examined how artificial intelligence can enhance peacekeeping operations. Cross-border security cooperation has emerged as a critical priority, with evidence suggesting that coordinated military operations along shared frontiers can reduce transnational violence. It is against this backdrop that this aimed to assess the conflict dynamics and peace building initiatives in the Sahel region.

Statement of the Problem

The Sahel region has, over the past decades, continued to experience persistent and escalating conflict dynamics characterized by armed insurgencies, inter-communal violence, resource-based clashes, and transnational criminal activities. Despite numerous peacebuilding interventions by regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the G5 Sahel, as well as international partners, insecurity in the region remains widespread and increasingly complex. These conflicts are further intensified by climate change, poverty, weak governance structures, and porous borders, which collectively create a fertile environment for instability. Although several peacebuilding initiatives have been introduced, including military interventions, dialogue processes, community reconciliation efforts, and development-oriented programmes, the effectiveness of these strategies remains questionable. In many areas of the Sahel, violent groups continue to expand their influence, while communities still face displacement, loss of livelihoods, and humanitarian crises. This raises concerns about whether existing peacebuilding approaches adequately address the root causes of conflict or merely manage its symptoms. Furthermore, there is limited empirical clarity on how different conflict dynamics interact with peacebuilding initiatives in a way that either enhances or undermines sustainable peace in the region. The persistence of insecurity suggests a gap between policy intentions and practical outcomes, as well as weak coordination among stakeholders involved in peace efforts. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the conflict dynamics and assess the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives in the Sahel region, with a view to identifying more sustainable and context-responsive solutions.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the conflict dynamics and assess the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives in the Sahel region. Other objectives are, to:

- i. identify the major drivers of conflict in the Sahel region.
- ii. examine the patterns of conflict dynamics in the Sahel region.
- iii. assess the effectiveness of existing peacebuilding initiatives implemented in the Sahel region.
- iv. determine the challenges affecting the implementation of peacebuilding strategies in the Sahel region.

Research Questions

- i. What are the major drivers of conflict in the Sahel region?
- ii. What are the patterns of conflict dynamics in the Sahel region?
- iii. How effective are the existing peacebuilding initiatives implemented in the Sahel region?
- iv. What challenges affect the implementation of peacebuilding strategies in the Sahel region?

Literature Review

Conflict Dynamics and Drivers in the Sahel Region: The Sahel region has become a major hotspot of complex and overlapping conflict systems driven by environmental, socio-economic, and political factors. Studies have consistently shown that climate variability, resource scarcity, weak governance, and insecurity are central to the region's instability. Mbaye (2020) argued that climate change significantly affects livelihoods in the Sahel by intensifying competition over scarce natural resources such as land and water, thereby increasing the likelihood of violent conflict among pastoralists and farming communities. In support of this, Denisova and Kostelyanets (2023) observed that water scarcity in the Western Sahel has become a major trigger of herder–farmer conflicts, worsened by ineffective government policies and weak resource governance structures. Similarly, Burka, et al (2023) highlighted that pastoral conflicts in eastern Africa are shaped by contested boundaries, state interventions, and the proliferation of small arms, which mirror similar dynamics in the Sahel region. These findings suggest that conflicts are not only environmentally induced but are also structurally embedded in governance failures and cross-border insecurity. Radil, et al (2022) further emphasized that borderland regions in West and North Africa are particularly prone to political violence due to their spatial marginalization and weak state presence, which facilitates the movement of armed groups.

Climate Change, Displacement and Conflict Interactions: Recent literature increasingly links climate change with forced migration and conflict escalation in the Sahel. Eboreme et al. (2025) explain that prolonged droughts and environmental stress have contributed to widespread displacement, which in turn increases vulnerability to violent recruitment and communal tensions. Similarly, Sambou et al. (2021) reported that rising temperatures and heat waves in the Sahel are altering agricultural productivity and deepening food insecurity, thereby exacerbating social tensions. Moe (2025) extended this discussion by proposing a “peace continuum approach,” arguing that climate security should be integrated with positive peace frameworks that address both immediate conflict risks and long-term structural vulnerabilities. Raleigh et al. (2024) also highlighted the role of climate finance in supporting adaptation strategies, noting that inadequate funding and instability often limit effective responses to climate-induced conflict.

Pattern of Conflict Dynamics in The Sahel Region: Armed conflict in the Sahel is characterized by a deadly, multi-layered insurgency driven by jihadist groups, ethnic fragmentation, and weak state control. The crisis is increasingly militarized, complicated by climate-induced resource scarcity, and heavily destabilized by a “coup belt” of military juntas. The violence is fundamentally rooted in a convergence of fragile governance and environmental degradation, which armed actors readily exploit. At the forefront of the conflict are heavily entrenched jihadist organizations—principally the al-Qaeda-aligned Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State Sahel Province (IS Sahel). These groups operate in the peripheral areas of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, capitalizing on local grievances, inter-communal tensions, and state absence to expand their territorial control (Radil *et al*, 2022). Over the past four years, the Sahel has consistently ranked as the most lethal theater of militant Islamist violence in Africa. The pattern of conflict has shifted significantly; insurgent groups not only target military installations but have also actively blockaded urban centers to coerce governments. Furthermore, Redoya (2024) observed that climate change exacerbates the crisis by shrinking arable land and water, driving violent extremists to institute their own “conflict-resolution” services and tax cattle in order to win

over vulnerable, resource-scarce communities. Moe (2025) noted that compounding the militant threat is the region's severe political instability, defined by a succession of military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. These military juntas severed long-standing security ties with Western partners—most notably ejecting French forces and UN peacekeepers—and shifted toward alternate international alliances to bolster their defenses. However, heavy-handed counter-insurgency tactics and retaliatory measures by state forces have frequently worsened the situation, in some areas driving more civilian fatalities than the militant groups themselves. As the security situation continues to deteriorate, the conflict patterns are extending outward. Insurgency tactics and militant influence now threaten West African coastal states such as Benin and Togo. The resulting humanitarian catastrophe—which has displaced millions—combined with illicit economies like arms and drug trafficking, underscores the reality that militarized responses have proven insufficient, trapping the region in a perpetual cycle of instability.

Peacebuilding Initiatives and Institutional Responses: Peacebuilding in the Sahel has involved multiple actors, including regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the African Union. Minko (2024) evaluated these institutions and finds that while they have played important roles in conflict resolution, their effectiveness is often constrained by limited enforcement capacity, political interests of member states, and coordination challenges. Ide et al. (2021) emphasized the growing importance of environmental peacebuilding, which integrates ecological management with conflict resolution strategies. This approach recognizes that sustainable peace in regions like the Sahel must address environmental degradation alongside governance and security challenges. Rothe, Hentschel, and Schröder (2025) further conceptualized the climate-security nexus, arguing that peacebuilding must move beyond traditional security frameworks to incorporate environmental resilience and human security dimensions. Redoya Taboeda (2024) added that climate adaptation and peacebuilding initiatives must prioritize capacity-building in vulnerable communities to strengthen resilience and reduce conflict susceptibility.

Military and Security-Based Approaches to Conflict Management: Security-oriented responses have also been widely adopted in the Sahel; particularly military interventions aimed at countering insurgent groups. Aya (2025) examined the effectiveness of military spending in reducing armed conflict intensity in Sub-Saharan Africa and finds that while military expenditure may suppress violence in the short term, it does not necessarily address the root causes of conflict. This suggests that over-reliance on military approaches may have limited long-term peacebuilding outcomes unless complemented by socio-economic and governance reforms.

Summary of Literature Gap: The reviewed literature shows that conflict in the Sahel is multidimensional, driven by climate change, resource scarcity, weak governance, and transnational insecurity. While various peacebuilding strategies (including military interventions, institutional frameworks, environmental peacebuilding, and technological innovations) have been implemented, evidence suggests that these efforts remain fragmented and insufficiently integrated. There is therefore a need for more comprehensive and context-specific studies that examine how conflict dynamics interact with peacebuilding initiatives in order to develop more sustainable solutions for lasting peace in the Sahel region.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach using a descriptive survey design to examine conflict dynamics and peacebuilding initiatives in the Sahel region. The population of the study consisted of 1,250 stakeholders involved in peace and security matters across selected Sahel countries, including government officials, representatives of regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the African Union, security personnel, community leaders, and humanitarian workers. A sample size of 300 respondents was drawn from the population using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that only individuals with relevant knowledge and experience on conflict and peacebuilding issues were included in the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale in line with the research objectives. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive. Specifically, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize respondents' views on conflict drivers, patterns of conflict dynamics, effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives, and implementation challenges in the Sahel region. The results were presented in tables for clarity and ease of interpretation.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the major drivers of conflict in the Sahel region?

Table 1: Mean Responses on Drivers of Conflict in the Sahel Region (N = 300)

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Climate change and environmental degradation drive conflict	120	110	40	20	10	4.01	0.92	Agree
2	Competition over land and water resources causes conflict	130	105	35	20	10	4.05	0.89	Agree
3	Poverty and unemployment among youths increase insecurity	125	100	45	20	10	3.98	0.94	Agree
4	Weak governance contributes to conflict escalation	140	95	40	15	10	4.12	0.87	Agree
5	Proliferation of small arms fuels violence	135	100	35	20	10	4.08	0.90	Agree
	Grand Mean						4.05		Agree

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, U = Undecided

Table 1 shows that all items recorded mean scores above the decision benchmark of 3.00, with a grand mean of 4.05. This indicates that respondents agreed that climate change, resource competition, poverty, weak governance, and proliferation of small arms are major drivers of conflict in the Sahel region.

Research Question 2: What are the patterns of conflict dynamics in the Sahel region?

Table 2: Mean Responses on Conflict Dynamics Patterns in the Sahel Region (N = 300)

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Conflicts are mostly cross-border in nature	115	110	45	20	10	3.95	0.91	Agree
2	Insurgency groups operate across multiple countries	140	100	35	15	10	4.15	0.85	Agree
3	Farmer–herder clashes are recurring patterns	130	105	40	15	10	4.08	0.88	Agree
4	Armed groups exploit ungoverned spaces	135	95	40	20	10	4.02	0.90	Agree

5	Conflict intensity varies with seasonal climate changes	120	100	50	20	10	3.92	0.93	Agree
Grand Mean							4.02		Agree

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, U = Undecided

Table 2 reveals that respondents agreed that conflict in the Sahel region is largely transnational, insurgency-driven, seasonal, and characterized by farmer–herder clashes and exploitation of ungoverned spaces, as indicated by a grand mean of 4.02.

Research Question 3: How effective are the existing peacebuilding initiatives in the Sahel region?

Table 3: Mean Responses on Effectiveness of Peacebuilding Initiatives (N = 300)

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	ECOWAS interventions have reduced conflicts	90	100	60	30	20	3.58	1.01	Agree
2	AU peace missions are effective in stabilizing areas	85	95	70	30	20	3.48	1.05	Agree
3	Community peace dialogues improve reconciliation	110	105	45	25	15	3.85	0.95	Agree
4	Military interventions alone are not sufficient	140	110	30	10	10	4.25	0.80	Agree
5	Peacebuilding programs lack sustainability	120	100	50	20	10	3.98	0.92	Agree
Grand Mean							3.83		Agree

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, U = Undecided

Table 3 shows that peacebuilding initiatives in the Sahel region are moderately effective, with a grand mean of 3.83. While respondents acknowledged the contributions of ECOWAS, AU, and community dialogues, they strongly indicated that military interventions alone are insufficient for sustainable peace.

Research Question 4: What challenges affect the implementation of peacebuilding strategies in the Sahel region?

Table 4: Mean Responses on Challenges to Peacebuilding Implementation (N = 300)

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Inadequate funding affects peacebuilding programs	145	100	30	15	10	4.20	0.83	Agree
2	Poor coordination among stakeholders is a challenge	130	110	35	15	10	4.08	0.87	Agree
3	Political instability weakens implementation	140	105	30	15	10	4.15	0.85	Agree
4	Lack of trust between communities and government	135	100	40	15	10	4.05	0.89	Agree
5	Continued insurgent attacks hinder peace efforts	150	95	30	15	10	4.18	0.84	Agree
Grand Mean							4.13		Agree

Table 4 indicates a very high level of agreement among respondents that inadequate funding, poor coordination, political instability, lack of trust, and continued insurgency are major challenges hindering effective peacebuilding implementation in the Sahel region.

Discussion of Findings

Drivers of Conflict in the Sahel Region: The findings of this study revealed that climate change, competition over natural resources, poverty, weak governance, and proliferation of small arms are the major drivers of conflict in the Sahel region. This aligns with Mbaye (2020), who emphasized that climate change has significantly altered livelihoods in the Sahel by increasing competition over scarce resources, thereby intensifying violent conflict. Similarly, Denisova and Kostelyanets (2023) observed that water scarcity and poor

governance policies in the Western Sahel have heightened tensions between herders and farmers. In the same vein, Burka, Roro, and Regasa (2023) noted that contested boundaries and the circulation of small arms are key structural factors sustaining pastoral conflicts in fragile regions. The implication is that conflict in the Sahel is not driven by a single factor but by a complex interaction of environmental stressors and governance weaknesses.

Patterns of Conflict Dynamics in the Sahel Region: The study further found that conflict in the Sahel is largely transnational, insurgency-driven, seasonal, and characterized by recurring farmer–herder clashes and exploitation of ungoverned spaces. This is consistent with Radil, Irmischer, and Walther (2022), who explained that borderland regions in West and North Africa are highly vulnerable to political violence due to weak state presence and porous borders. Similarly, Eboreme et al. (2025) established that climate-induced displacement contributes to the mobility of vulnerable populations, thereby increasing exposure to insurgent recruitment and inter-communal tensions. Sambou et al. (2021) also confirmed that rising temperatures and seasonal climate variations influence agricultural cycles, which in turn affect the timing and intensity of conflicts. These findings suggest that conflict in the Sahel is dynamic and closely linked to environmental and spatial conditions.

Effectiveness of Peacebuilding Initiatives: The findings revealed that peacebuilding initiatives such as ECOWAS interventions, African Union missions, and community dialogue processes have achieved moderate effectiveness, although military interventions alone are insufficient for sustainable peace. This supports the findings of Minko (2024), who reported that while ECOWAS and the African Union play important roles in conflict resolution, their effectiveness is limited by weak enforcement capacity and political constraints. Ide et al. (2021) further argued that sustainable peacebuilding requires integrating environmental management with conflict resolution strategies, particularly in ecologically fragile regions like the Sahel. Additionally, Rothe, Hentschel, and Schröder (2025) emphasized that peacebuilding must go beyond traditional security approaches to include climate-security linkages. The implication is that existing peacebuilding efforts are fragmented and require greater integration and long-term sustainability planning.

Challenges Affecting Peacebuilding Implementation: The study also found that inadequate funding, poor coordination among stakeholders, political instability, lack of trust between communities and governments, and continued insurgent attacks are major challenges affecting peacebuilding implementation in the Sahel. This is consistent with Raleigh et al. (2024), who noted that insufficient climate finance and instability undermine adaptation and peacebuilding efforts in fragile regions. Muggah and Whitlock (2022) also highlighted that weak early warning systems and institutional inefficiencies limit effective conflict prevention. Furthermore, Lynam et al. (2023) stressed that data gaps and limited institutional capacity hinder the effectiveness of predictive and preventive peace strategies. These findings indicate that despite numerous interventions, structural and operational challenges continue to weaken peacebuilding outcomes in the Sahel region.

Conclusion

The study establishes that peace and stability in the Sahel region cannot be achieved through isolated or predominantly security-based interventions. Instead, the persistence of instability reflects a deeper systemic condition where environmental stress, governance deficits, and socio-economic vulnerabilities reinforce one another in a continuous cycle of insecurity. This means that conflict in the region is not merely an episodic security challenge

but a structural development and governance problem that requires long-term, integrated responses. More importantly, the findings point to the fact that sustainable peace in the Sahel depends on the ability of institutions to move beyond reactive measures and adopt proactive, preventive, and resilience-based frameworks. Where peacebuilding efforts are fragmented or overly militarized, they tend to produce temporary containment rather than lasting transformation. Therefore, achieving durable peace in the Sahel region will require a shift toward coordinated, multi-sectoral strategies that strengthen governance capacity, improve resource management, and build community resilience against environmental and socio-political shocks.

Recommendations

- i. **Strengthening integrated peacebuilding approaches:** Regional and international actors such as ECOWAS, the African Union, and partner organizations should adopt integrated peacebuilding strategies that combine security interventions with socio-economic development, environmental management, and governance reforms to address the root causes of conflict in the Sahel region.
- ii. **Improving natural resource governance:** Governments in the Sahel should establish and enforce equitable frameworks for land and water resource management, including clearly defined grazing routes and community-based resource-sharing mechanisms, to reduce farmer–herder conflicts and competition over scarce resources.
- iii. **Enhancing early warning and conflict prevention systems:** Investment should be made in strengthening early warning systems through data-driven technologies and community-based reporting structures to ensure timely detection and prevention of emerging conflicts across border regions.
- iv. **Increasing funding and stakeholder coordination for peacebuilding:** Adequate financial support should be provided for peacebuilding initiatives, while coordination among governments, security agencies, humanitarian organizations, and local communities should be improved to ensure efficient implementation and sustainability of peace programs.

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