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An Analysis of EU's Counter-Terrorism Policies and Cooperation in the Sahel (2011-2020)

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Table of Contents

The Introduction

The African Sahel is a semi-arid zone between the southern and Central Sudanese steppes of the Sahara. The region faces the problems of poor natural environment, backward economy and extreme poverty. The security situation in the Sahel has become more volatile in recent years because of the frequency of regional conflicts, such as coups d'état in the north. Because of resource scarcity, corrupt and weak governments and rapidly growing populations, African Sahel faces one of the most volatile security in the globe.

To prevent the spread of Sahel terrorism and ensure the security of the international community as well as EU Member States, the EU has issued a number of counter-terrorism policies and measures, trying to build a comprehensive counter-terrorism policy framework. In 2011, the European Union adopted the Sahel Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, and in 2014 developed the framework for Action for the Strategy, the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020. The strategy establishes the overall framework for EU strategic action in the Sahel, with security and development as its two main objectives. However, there are different opinions about the progress of EU in the field of anti-terrorism cooperation. While some acknowledged that the EU's counter-terrorism cooperation in Sahel had achieved phased results and effectively curbed the spread of terrorism, many others were negative and skeptical of the EU's counter-terrorism efforts, it believes its policies are flawed and co-operation faces many challenges in effectively containing the threat of terrorism in Sahel. Based on these views, we could put forward three research questions: what is the status of EU counter-terrorism policy and cooperation in the Sahel? How effective is the EU in preventing the threat of terrorism? Has EU counter-terrorism action and cooperation met expectations? These are questions worth thinking about.

According to the anti-terrorism policy, the EU began to build cooperation with G5 Sahel in three main areas: political cooperation, security cooperation and development cooperation, aiming at combating terrorism and organized crime, trafficking and illegal migration in this region. It seems that the EU has built a lot of programs and projects to implement its counter-terrorism policy, still, there are many difficulties waiting to be solved.

Literature Review

Scholars in China and abroad have studied the security governance of the Sahel since the conflict. Among them, the research on counter-terrorism in the Sahel is rich in western scholars, and the research on EU counter-terrorism in this region is frequently discussed, while Chinese scholars pay less attention to this field. Overall, the research fruits fall into three categories: Research on response to Sahel security crisis, research on EU counter-terrorism policy, and research on terrorism and extremism in this region.

1. Research on Sahel security crisis responses by multiple actors.

Chinese and foreign scholars have explored Sahel security governance from the perspectives of counter-terrorism cooperation among various actors of the international community. Wang Xiaojing, in the article *An analysis of peace-keeping operations in Mali*, combed the background of the conflict in Mali, and emphasized the multi-actors in the peace-keeping operations in Mali, and emphasized the important role of the United Nations and France in dealing with the conflict (Wang, 2014). In "An analysis of the dilemma of joint counter-terrorism operations by the five African Sahel countries," Hou Yuqiong argues that Sahel's joint forces are short of funds and personnel (Hou and Qi, 2021). The guerrilla tactics of Sahel groups also pose a challenge to counter-terrorism operations in the region. However, Zhang He pointed out the shortcomings between G5 Sahel and ECOWAS in terms of "Institutional competition" and human rights scandals, as well as the challenges it faces in its future development (Zhang, 2022). In addition, Peng Shuyan analyzes the French Maqueron administration's policy towards Africa, and points out that the French anti-terrorism policy has a clear European tendency, and its anti-terrorism effect is not significant (Peng, 2020). Laurence Aïda Armour, whose article "Regional Security Cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel: Algeria's Pivotal Ambivalence" focuses on Algeria's counter-terrorism efforts, argues that a lack of trust is the main reason for the lack of Regional Cooperation (Armour, 2012). Robert M. Perito analyses the role and role of the UN in Sahel peacekeeping operations, proposes the restoration of public order and the establishment of the rule of law, and demonstrates the importance of the UN's participation in peacekeeping operations in the fight against transnational terrorism and crime, but also exposes the lack of UN capabilities (Perito, 2015). Olajide O. Akanji

Economic Community of West African States the positive role of ECOWAS in the fight against terrorism in West Africa, but the effectiveness of its counter-terrorism efforts has not been in line with expectations due to a lack of political will on the part of ECOWAS member states and a lack of commitment to implement counter-terrorism actions (Akanji, 2019). In "The peacekeeping, peacebuilding and security architecture in The Sahel," Virginie Baudais explains The role of various actors -- external forces, state involvement, and regional frameworks -- in resolving regional crises, and explores (Baudais, 2021). The effectiveness of new coordination strategies in addressing Sahel through an analysis of three levels of peacebuilding: national, regional, and local.

2. Research on the EU's anti-terrorism policy

Chinese and western scholars have done some research on the EU's anti-terrorism policy. Most Chinese scholars pay attention to the anti-terrorism research in the EU, while the western scholars have done more comprehensive research on this issue. Liu Yi analyzes the effect of anti-terrorism practice with the help of EU anti-terrorism policy framework in the study on the implementation effect of EU anti-terrorism strategy (Liu, 2022). In the new situation of the anti-terrorism struggle of the European Union, Fan Juanrong discusses the root cause of the"Failure" of the anti-terrorism cooperation among the member states of the European Union (Fan, 2021). In particular, the difficulty of integration, along the lines of the n hegemony, has been a major factor in the difficulties of counter-terrorism co-operation within the EU. With the emergence of the radicalization of terrorism, Wang Yan focused the EU anti-terrorism issue on the radicalization strategy of anti-terrorism, pointing out that the strategy has become an important part of the EU terrorism prevention and the central pillar of the anti-terrorism strategy (Wang, 2018). Li Heng and Ran Tao discussed the possibility of future bilateral anti-terrorism cooperation between China and the EU (LI and Ran, 2022). Even though there are some differences between the two sides on counter-terrorism, with the clear concept of terrorism and the improvement of various mechanisms, the china-eu counter-terrorism cooperation system has reached a new height. Bossong gives a historical perspective on the impact of terrorist attacks on EU counter-terrorism policy and changes in policy (Bossong, 2012). In "Evaluating the EU approach to tackling the conflicts Sahel," Isabelle Ioannides provides an overview of the EU's current Sahel strategy, identifying possible challenges to the EU's Sahel

operations and recommending its future policy direction (Ioannides, 2020). Ingo Peters responds to the effectiveness of EU policy by analysing the EU's common security defence policy in North Africa and West Asia and its reforms (Peters, 2018). According to Bernardo Venturi, the current Sahel policy of the European Union has entered a fourth phase -- the era of security -- in which foreign policy focuses on security, development and migration (Venturi, 2019). However, the policy appears to be aimed at strengthening EU border controls in order to reduce the flow of migrants into Europe, rather than solving the refugee problem in Africa. In addition, in "An EU Integrated Approach in The Sahel: The Role for governance", The author analyses The EU's governance Sahel, demonstrating that governance strategies are only The product of short-term needs and revealing their short-term effectiveness.

3.   Research on terrorism and extremism in the Sahel

Chinese and western scholars have made some achievements on the terrorism and extremism in the Sahel. Among them, some scholars are concerned about the issue of terrorist organizations and terrorist attacks in the region. Liu Qingjian and Fang Jincheng argue that both internal and external factors contribute to the spread of Sahel terrorism in the Sahel region of Africa (Liu and Fang, 2014). Political, economic and cultural factors within the Sahel provide the social ground for the spread of terrorism, the US War on Terror, the changing Sahel and outside military intervention are aggravating factors in the spread of terrorism. Wang Tao and Li Jie, in their essay "The Division and reorganization of Sahel extremist groups in a sociocultural perspective" argue that Sahel's extremist groups are deeply influenced by tribalism, it is a product of conflicts between the agricultural and pastoral mode of production and different groups of people working in the area (Wang and Li, 2022). If we want to eliminate the extremist organizations, we need to fundamentally resolve the contradictions in the development of local agriculture and animal husbandry. Xin Yuanyuan, on the other hand, provides useful references for solving the country's terrorist attacks by examining the causes of the frequent Burkina Faso of such attacks (Xin, 2022). Shu Meng focuses on the transformation of al-qaeda in Maghreb and its implications for regional security (Shu, 2021). Luciano Pollichieni, who has studied the violence of the branch of Islamic and Muslim support groups in Mali's civil war, said it should be seen as a"War of limitation", not"Wars of conquest" (Pollichieni, 2021). At the same time, Sahel security co-operation needs to be strengthened. Eduardo Berizzo Bardaro has

studied the conflict between Katibat Macina, an al-qaeda offshoot in central Mali, and the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara (ISGS) , it was noted that the conflict between the two could lead to a crisis of violence in central Mali (Bardaro, 2020). Luca Raineri, who has studied the evolution of ISIL in the Sahel, argues that the political ecology of the Niger border has led to violence in the region (Raineri, 2020). In addition, some scholars have focused on the links between terrorism and changes in the overall security situation in the region. Wang Zhihao, in the post-cold War security challenges and responses to development in West Africa, one of the main reasons for the deterioration of the security environment in West Africa during the post-cold War period is the non-traditional security problems represented by extremism and terrorism (Wang, 2015). At the same time, some scholars are concerned about the link between climate change and terrorism. Signe Marie analyses the factors that trigger terrorism from the perspective of climate change, arguing that climate change issues such as desertification and floods and droughts are breeding grounds for terrorism (Marie, 2022). But Luca Raineri argues that even if climate change is the immediate cause of increased terrorism, the promotion of environmental protection programs will not only fail to mitigate terrorist activity, it will also lead to a continued escalation of regional conflicts (Raineri, 2020).

A review of the existing literature shows that there is a relatively small number of studies on Sahel safety in China, and the level of concern is relatively single, much of the research focused on Sahel terrorism in Africa, counter-terrorism policy research in the European Union and Single European countries, and counter-terrorism research by African actors. From the perspective of anti-terrorism in the EU, even though many domestic scholars have discussed the EU's anti-terrorism policy, most of the studies have only examined the EU's anti-terrorism actions at home, the low degree of concern about EU's participation and coordination in extraterritorial counter-terrorism has split the internal and external links of EU's counter-terrorism strategy. In Sahel's case, while some studies have examined the governance of African regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the group of five in Sahel in relation to security challenges in West Africa, but as an important external player in the fight against Sahel terrorism in Africa, there has been little research into a comprehensive introduction and analysis of EU counter-terrorism policy and cooperation in the region. As far as the foreign literature is concerned, although the research topics are relatively rich and many scholars are concerned about the EU's counter-terrorism policy studies in neighboring countries

such as West Africa and the Middle East, but little has been said about counter-terrorism co-operation between the EU and Sahel regional organisations. It is not difficult to find that western scholars on this field of research there is a certain expansion of space.

Chapter I
Terrorism in the Sahel and EU's Counter-Terorism Policy

1. Terrorism in the Sahel

Since the 21st century, terrorism has undoubtedly become one of the most important non-traditional security threats come across by many countries in the world. Understanding the basic meaning of terrorism and the main features of Sahel terrorism in Africa is the foundation of the fight against terrorist forces. It is helpful to understand the anti-terrorism background of EU and to determine the target of anti-terrorism.

1.1 The Definition of Terrorism

With the increasing number of terrorist cases in many regions such as Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, terrorism has not only become a major concern of the international community, it has been recognized as one of the important factors that pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The specific connotation of terrorism is the basis of analyzing the object of this paper. Given that the types and characteristics of different terrorist organizations vary greatly from country to country in their perceptions of the threat of terrorism, the issue of"What is terrorism" has yet to reach a consensus among the major state and non-state actors in the world. Statistics show that in the 200 years after the emergence of the word"Terrorism", there have been more than 100 definitions from the authorities and scholars. (Zhu, 2006) Li Shaojun believes that terrorism is non-governmental in nature and has a strong political nature, it is"The systematic use or threat of violence by perpetrators against unarmed persons for political purposes, with the aim of terrorizing the target by special means and forcing it to do something it would not otherwise do."(Li, 2019) on the contrary, the Encyclopedia of Blackville politics argues that "Terrorism is a form of political violence used against governments, but often against ordinary citizens. The aim is to create a climate of terror in which the aims of the terrorists will be recognized by the governments concerned. Sometimes, the term terrorism is extended to actions taken by governments themselves in order to instil fear in their citizens."(Miller, 2011) the definition states that terrorism is not limited to terrorist acts committed by individuals or groups, sometimes there are acts of government terror.

As early as 2002, the EU adopted the"Framework Resolution on combating terrorism", and in 2008 the resolution was amended to attempt to provide a unified definition of the concept of Terrorism. The main reasons for using the EU's definition of terrorism in this paper are as follows: first, as the whole of Europe, the security and anti-terrorism needs of European countries are homogeneous. The anti-terrorism policies of European member states are carried out under the standards of resolutions reached by the European Union. Secondly, from the perspective of research object, the main body of anti-terrorism cooperation is EU. In a word, using EU to define the concept of terrorism is closer to the study of this paper.

The core content of the resolution framework is the definition of terrorism. In short, the EU has broken down the overall concept of terrorism into three sub-concepts: Terrorist Offences, Offences Relating to a Terrorist Group and Offences Linked to Terrorist Activities, and carry on the detailed explanation to the three respectively. Specifically, the first part analyzes the core concept of terrorism, propose three types of operational objectives that can be classified as terrorist offences: those designed to threaten or intimidate civilians, those attempting to use improper means to compel governments or international organizations to take or abstain from any action, and those that seriously undermine the basic political, institutional, economic and social structures of states or international organizations. The perpetrators of violence seek to pose a threat to the security of individuals or states through any of the following acts, with the aim of undermining the security of individuals, societies and states. The acts include endangering the lives of civilians; causing serious bodily harm to individuals; committing an abduction or hijacking incident; and damaging the normal functioning of a government, public infrastructure and the transport system of a state, destruction of public space and private property; seizure of ships, aircraft or other means of transport; manufacture, possession, acquisition, transport or use of weapons (firearms, biological, chemical) and explosives of all types; Release of dangerous substances, intentional ignition of fires or ignition of explosives; interference with or interference with the supply of natural resources such as fresh water and energy; and threats to commit all of the above-mentioned crimes. The second part aims to explain what is a terrorist organization crime. The framework states that a terrorist organization is a structured group of two or more persons that has been in existence for some time and is designed to carry out terrorist activities jointly. For the member states of the European Union, any act of leading or participating in the activities of a terrorist organization is

unlawful. The third part defines terrorist activities. The EU notes that activities related to terrorist offences include: The Commission of any terrorist act under the definition of the terrorist offence; extortion for the purpose of committing a terrorist act; and the production of false administrative documents, a person who attempts to commit a terrorist act or leads or participates in any act of a terrorist organization. The core concept of terrorism as defined by the EU applies not only within the EU but also among third states or other international organizations threatened by terrorist acts. (Dumitriu,) In general, the European Union considers terrorist crimes to be terrorist activities of a non-governmental nature planned by criminal organizations composed of individuals or groups of individuals, which may harm civilians, and constitute a widespread and serious threat to the security of the state. The framework of the resolution lays the cornerstone for the EU to combat the forces of terrorism.

1.2 Terrorism in the Sahel: Background and Characteristics

African Sahel is a strip of semi-desert in northern Africa, usually referring to a strip of land between sub-saharan Africa and the northern Sudanian grassland. The region spans Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, Sudan, north-west Nigeria, and northern Cameroon, which can be shown from the image.[1] After the 2011 upheaval in the Middle East, the destabilization of North Africa provides an opportunity for the spread of terrorism not only Sahel but across the continent. At the same time, terrorism has become more extreme and violent as Islamic extremism has spread in the region, due to the Sahel countries' limited resources and slow economy.

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[1]   Retrieved from https://controversia.com.br/2017/02/27/o-sahel-concentra-todas-as-crises-do-mundo/

Overall, the Sahel has two of the worst security situations. One is an area centred on the Malian and Malian-niger-burkina Faso borders. Extremist forces operated in the region include Al-Qaeda's North African affiliate, Al-Qaeda in Maghreb (AQIM) , Al-Qaeda's Malian affiliate, JNIM, the Islamic State of Greater Sahara (ISGS) , affiliated with the Islamic State, and the Burkina Faso Ansaroul Islam. The second is the Lake Chad region. Extremist forces' actions in the region are represented by Nigeria's Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West African province (ISWAP) . This poses significant security threats and challenges to the security of Sahel peoples and nations. Specifically, African Sahel terrorism has three important characteristics.

First, decentralization enhances survival and resilience of terrorism. The development of Sahel terrorism and extremism is manifested in the marginalization of areas of activity and the decentralization of organizational forms. The french-led operation serval broke the jihadist group and hold on the main cities, then jihadist groups were scattered into the desert. Despite the presence of remnants of extremist groups in the urban centres of West Africa, the deployment of national security forces in the urban centres, current extremist forces in West Africa tend to take root in remote and underdeveloped areas where domestic and international security forces are less deployed, and to integrate their own organizations by recruiting local populations, increase their influence by providing public services to local people. For example, "Ansar al-Din" has set up some form of governance in the areas they control, take on public order duties, and set up Sharia courts to sponsor charities. [2]In addition, morphological decentralisation is also common among extremist Sahel.

Second, participating in illegal economic activities enhances economic resilience. The escalation of Sahel terrorism has also contributed to the growth of criminal activity in the region, in particular the illicit cross-border trade run by organised criminal networks. Sub-saharan Africa has long been plagued by transnational crime, thanks to weak governance in the Sahel states and lax border controls, drug smuggling, small arms smuggling, human trafficking, kidnapping and other criminal activities are rampant. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and crime (UNODC) , transnational crime in Africa can generate a profit of one trillion million dollars a year.[3] Among them, the ISGS focuses on the control of higher-yielding economic activities

[2] International Crisis Group, "Mali: Avoiding Escalation," Africa Report, No. 189, July 2012, p. 16.
[3] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Transnational Organized Crime (Quick Facts).
https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/organized-crime.html.

on the border of Burkina Faso. The group controls the smuggling routes from the region to the West African coast, and is able to pillage local gold-mining communities for economic gain that contributed to ISGS's rapid expansion. The huge economic gains have given terrorist groups the means to bribe border officials and government officials. In this context, the lines between terrorist and criminal organizations have become more blurred, and terrorists' sources of funding have become more diversified.

Third, the use of local ethnic conflicts to enhance survival resilience. The terrorism has the ability to navigate local political, economic, religious and ethnic tensions and demands for political power is key to its resilience against government forces and international forces. In 2012, Tuareg people and Fula people clashed in the Burkina Faso border region, the rebellion in northern Mali has renewed tensions between Tuareg people and Fula people in the border region, where the Fulani are vulnerable. Sahrawi, the leader of the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara (ISGS) , subsequently provided fire support to the tribe and recruited Fula people into his own MUJWA, that includes Nampala Ilassou Djibo, one of Salawi's top Fula people in the organization. (Chen, 2022) As a result, the ISGS has gained broad civilian support in the border areas by supporting nomadic groups.

2. EU's Counter-Terrorism Strategy

The EU has adopted a series of strategies to make counter-terrorism an important element in safeguarding the security interests of the EU and its member states. As the situation of Sahel terrorism in Africa is more serious, the EU has developed an African Sahel counter-terrorism policy on the basis of its overall counter-terrorism strategy, security, development, immigration and governance are the priority areas of governance.

2.1 EU's Overall Counter-Terrorism Strategy

It is well known that the fundamental values of a country are closely linked to its interests, and core interests constitute the principle and basis of the EU's external action. To promote the realization of common security and the spread of the values of the EU, the EU has adopted the 2005 EU counter-terrorism Strategy, the EU security agenda, and the 2016 European Union Global Strategy, these three strategies form the EU's policy framework for participating in global counter-terrorism efforts.

First of all, the EU in 2005 in the formulation of the counter-terrorism strategy for the first time the EU and third countries to counter-terrorism assistance and cooperation needs. The fight against terrorism and extremism is a global issue, and it is difficult for a single state or organization to successfully address this challenge, which requires not only cooperation among state actors, cooperation between state and non-state actors is also required. In response to global terrorism, the EU has placed the value of"International co-operation" among the four commitments of its counter-terrorism strategy -LRB-prevention, protection, enforcement, response) , it attempts to deepen counter-terrorism consensus and develop counter-terrorism capacity through working with the United Nations and other international organizations and third countries, thus strengthening international counter-terrorism cooperation. More specifically, on the preventive side, the EU is actively involved in third-country aid programmes to combat radicalism. At the protection level, the EU proposes to strengthen international cooperation in the field of transport safety, non-proliferation of CBRN materials and small arms and light weapons, and to provide corresponding technical assistance to third countries. In terms of implementation, in cooperation with international actors such as the United Nations, the EU will strengthen international consensus through political dialogue and the signing of agreements; at the same time, it will introduce the necessary mechanisms to third countries, and then disintegrate the terrorist crime. At the response level, the EU needs to provide its citizens in third countries with the necessary assistance aimed at protecting and supporting the security of its military and people. [2] the strategy clarifies the importance of EU participation in international counter-terrorism cooperation. To strengthen international counter-terrorism efforts by providing technical, political and institutional assistance to third states threatened by terrorism on the basis of cooperation with the United Nations.

Second, the EU has further emphasised the importance of international co-operation in the"European security agenda", placing external and internal security on an equal footing because they are interdependent. The EU believes that strengthening cooperation with international organizations and preventive intervention in third countries is the key to resolving international security problems. Among them, terrorism and radicalization are listed as one of the three priority issues that threaten continental security. Through the Radicalization Awareness Network, the EU aims to develop cooperation with third-country shareholders in the Middle East, North Africa

and other countries, and to expand broad communication between societies in order to combat terrorism.

Finally, the EU explicitly considers counter-terrorism as an important element in its global strategy for the maintenance of peace and security in the EU. Four principles and five primary objectives for external action were formulated. The EU considers security to be holistic. A country's internal security and external security are interdependent and closely related. Without a stable external environment, internal security can not be realized. The internal security of the EU can not be achieved without the peace and stability of the surrounding regions and neighbouring countries. Therefore, it is in the security interests of the European Union and the world to take measures to prevent conflicts, to achieve human security and to address potential sources of instability. The struggle against terrorism and cooperation are necessary because terrorist attacks bring great social panic and security threat to Europe. Within the EU, the EU encourages information-sharing and intelligence cooperation between member states and EU institutions, including the sharing of alerts on violent extremism, terrorist networks and terrorists abroad. Externally, the EU has strengthened counter-terrorism cooperation with North Africa, the Middle East and other regions, and developed joint projects to jointly combat terrorism and violent extremism. The European Union believed that the application of its values at home and abroad was an important way of combating terrorism. In general, to ensure common internal and external security, the EU needs to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation with its member states and surrounding regions respectively.

2.2 EU's Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the Sahel

In recent years, the security situation in the African Sahel has not been good, and the rampant terrorism and violent extremism there pose a serious security threat to the region. As a result, West Africa has become an important area for the European Union to maintain global security. Building on the overall counter-terrorism strategy, the EU has developed counter-terrorism goals and policies for African Sahel. Since the African Sahel is made up of many countries, and not all of them are facing the threat of terrorism, this article will first describe the EU's counter-terrorism partners in the Sahel. In 2011, the European Union launched its first "Strategy For Security and Development in the Sahel", known as the Sahel Strategy. In the strategy, the EU focuses its assistance on three Sahel countries -- the Mauritania, Mali and Niger. The

EU then included the Burkina Faso and Chad in its counter-terrorism co-operation in the Sahel Regional Action Plan, a framework for Action drawn up in 2014. As a result, the EU has drawn up a Sahel of counter-terrorism co-operation with the Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad.

The strategy identifies four core themes for Sahel counter-terrorism. First, Sahel security and development go hand in hand. National security can only be achieved by ensuring economic growth and reducing poverty in the region; secondly, regional cooperation is a prerequisite for achieving security and development, and the European Union is an important link for promoting regional cooperation; and thirdly, strengthening national capacity-building in the region, in particular core government activities, including security provisions and the development environment, and, finally, the EU playing an important role in promoting Sahel peace. The protection of the interests of European citizens and the encouragement of local economic development require a relatively safe social environment, which relies on the support and assistance of the European Union. To address the challenges and dilemmas faced by the Sahel, the strategy sets out short-term and long-term vision goals around social development and national security. In terms of short-term goals, the EU proposed that, within three Sahel, basic services including roads, education and social services need to be secured, more economic and educational opportunities can be created, and the number of regional terrorist attacks and kidnappings can be reduced, the government's ability to combat terrorism had been enhanced, relations between the target country and the host country had been eased and political trust between local and central authorities had been strengthened. In terms of long-term objectives, Sahel's political stability and national security will be enhanced in five to 10 years, good governance will be achieved, social cohesion will be strengthened, and economic development will enjoy momentum, people's access to education will be increased so that enabling the sustainable development of regions and countries. It follows from this that the EU believes that economic and social development and the guarantee of people's safety are the fundamental ways to solve the threat of Sahel terrorism.

In the strategy, the EU identifies four strategic priority areas: security, development, migration and governance, trying to provide assistance in promoting peace and security in the Sahel, both in terms of "Support" and "Participation.". First, on the security front, the EU plans to support Sahel's security and action initiatives at the national, regional and international levels. At the national level, the EU supports the Malian, Niger and

Mauritania frameworks for counter-terrorism policy and action. Each of the three governments has established a counter-terrorism system. The government of Mali has established a national policy framework aimed at combating the forces of terrorism in northern Mali. In addition, the office against drug trafficking had been established; while Niger's counter-terrorism policy was still at the consultative stage, it had developed a strategy and an action plan for the reform of the judicial system; at the same time, the Mauritania of a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy is under way, and the introduction of a counter-terrorism law provides the basis for a comprehensive legal framework on judicial counter-terrorism. At the regional level, the existing legal framework and political dialogue between the European Union and the countries of the Maghreb region can lay the foundation for coordinated action between Sahel and the Saharan region, the three countries have established a "Joint military command" in Damascus to co-ordinate Sahel counter-terrorism operations. In addition, the EU and the Economic Community of West African States (hereafter referred to as "Western community") have also established a good relationship of cooperation. The European Union supports law enforcement cooperation between ECOWAS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and crime through the geo-cooperation tool. Good political relations and co-operation between the EU and the "Western community" help to implement Sahel's strategy. Internationally, The Joint EU-Africa Strategy was agreed in 2007, the strategy provides a long-term guiding framework for cooperation between the EU and Africa in the four areas of security, democratization, migration and economic development. Underscoring the importance of security issues on this basis, including the establishment of long-term peace, conflict resolution, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, requires that conflicts be contained at their root causes. The AU is an important partner of the EU in implementing Sahel's strategy.

Third, crack down on illegal immigration and strengthen border management. With the Sahel in a prolonged state of conflict, civilians in the area have sought refuge through immigration. However, the process of cross-border movement of individuals has created a series of problems: transnational crime, illegal migration, human trafficking and smuggling and other illegal activities emerge in an endless stream. Accordingly, the EU has put forward four border management policies in the strategy: first, to crack down on illegal migration, human smuggling and trafficking; second, to organize legal migration and movement; and third, to promote international protection of civilians; Fourth, focus on development-migration hub, to maximize the impact of

migration on development. The policy aims to regulate the cross-border movement of Sahel people while protecting legal immigration and promoting border development, thereby maintaining social stability and security in Sahel's border areas and in Europe.

Fourth, promote Sahel economic development and social governance, and provide financial support accordingly. In the area of development, the European Union was committed to overall local economic and social development, the creation of economic opportunities and the mitigation of the effects of climate change; efforts were being made to create educational opportunities and employment opportunities for local communities; Promote the development of local social infrastructure. In terms of governance, the policy calls for the re-establishment of the state's administrative presence in an effort to build a responsible and credible government. Through its foreign policy, the EU is committed to the maintenance of Global security and the achievement of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Chapter 2

EU's Counter-Terrorism Cooperation with the G5 Sahel

In 2014, the Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger established the G5 Sahel to strengthen cooperation among Sahel countries. The group is an intergovernmental framework for co-operation aimed at co-ordinating development and security policies among member states in response to the acute regional problems currently facing the Sahel five. In 2017, in response to the growing Sahel of armed groups and terrorism, the Sahel G5, with the support of the European Union, agreed to establish the Sahel G5 Sahel Joint Force, which aims to strengthen regional military deployments and implement goals such as Sahel's counter-terrorism program. On Sahel's counter-terrorism issue, however, G5 Sahel's cooperation with the EU is necessary for two reasons, [1] First, Sahel's own vulnerability makes it difficult for the G5 to carry out an independent counter-terrorism operation in the face of funding shortfalls, structural weaknesses and strategic uncertainties, and had to seek the support of international forces. Second, as one of the global strategic priorities of the EU and its member states, the EU needs counter-terrorism cooperation and assistance with the Sahel group. Mogherini, the EU's top delegate, has said the EU is an important security partner for the Sahel and that EU aid to Sahel's security, stability and prosperity is key to the EU's own security and stability.[4]

From the perspective of counter-terrorism cooperation measures, the cooperation between the EU and the Sahel G5 can be summarized into three areas of collaboration, which are political cooperation (bilateral high-level political meetings) , security co-operation (Army formation and military force assistance) and development co-operation (governance and development) . On that basis, the European Union has sought to address the problem of terrorism in the Sahel by convening a number of meeting of leaders, equipping and supporting the reconstruction of the military and helping to rebuild societies in the region.

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[4] European Union External Action, The EU and G5 Sahel: key partners to secure stability in the region and beyond, July, 12, 2019. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/65335_en. 2023-01-12

2.1 EU's Political Cooperation with the G5 Sahel

Political dialogue is an important security tool for bilateral coordination and exchange of political demands. The EU has held meetings with the G5 on Sahel's counter-terrorism, governance and development issues and has reached consensus on Sahel's security. Emphasizing the issue of developing bilateral cooperation and integrating security and development is an important way to improve the Sahel security environment.

In recent years, the EU and Sahel have held a series of dialogues and meetings. The 2015 EU-G5 Sahel meeting Sahel discussed co-operation on regional security, migration control and sustainable development. The European Union's G5 meeting in Sahel in 2017 focused on joint efforts to combat terrorist groups and criminal activities. The 2018 High-Level International Conference on the Sahel confirmed the EU's long-term political commitment to Sahel and stressed the need for greater political coordination and sustainable development in the region. In the same year, the EU-G5 Sahel meeting between the two sides raised the need for co-operation and a comprehensive approach to the crisis. The EU gave an additional $125m to the members of G5 Sahel at the Partner and Donor Coordination Conference, mainly for basic social services. In 2019, the two sides expressed concerns regarding security at the "Fifth ministerial meeting" and strengthened coordinated action on counter-terrorism, human rights and the military. In the April 2020, EU-G5 Sahel video conference reaffirmed the commitment to promote Sahel security, stability and development.

Overall, the series of meetings between the EU and Sahel G5 have focused on four sections: first, maintaining regional security and combating terrorism, second, emphasising the importance of Sahel's G5 partnership with the EU, and strengthening bilateral political coordination; third, rebuilding basic services and facilities in vulnerable areas and reshaping government governance capacity; and fourth, making efforts to promote sustainable development in the region. In general, a range of issues for political dialogue between the EU and Sahel are characterized by equal emphasis on security and governance. On security issues, the EU coordinates Sahel's military action in order to combat terrorism, organised crime, human trafficking and smuggling, and to strengthen immigration management and control. In the area of governance, the European Union is called upon to provide financial support, humanitarian assistance

and guarantee the basic material and living needs of the people; and to promote the sustainable development of society, to alleviate extreme poverty caused by climate change and economic backwardness, and to eliminate the root causes of terrorism so as to maintain human security.

2.2 EU's Security Cooperation with the G5 Sahel

Security co-operation between the EU and the Sahel is aimed above all at strengthening the operational capabilities of the armed forces in order to strengthen the G5's power in counter-terrorism operations and border controls. On the one hand, the European Union and its member states strongly support the creation of the G5 coalition force. On the other hand, In order to maintain its security, the European Union, in the framework of its Common Security and Defense Policy, lunched a series of actions to address Sahel's security challenges: the European Union Mission in Mali, the European Union Military Training Mission in Mali, the European Union Mission in Niger, and the regional reporting and Coordination Group.

2.2.1 Supporting the establishment of the Joint Forces

In 2017, with the support and facilitation of the European Union and its member states, the Sahel G5 established a regional defence force, the Sahel coalition force, the force is made up of Malian, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chadian forces to deal with growing security threats such as terrorism. The EU has made a series of efforts to improve Sahel's G5 joint forces.

First, expressing concerns about the concept of human rights protection. In order to safeguard the basic Human Rights of civilians, the European Union, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Rights Commission, has adopted the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Compliance Framework, and tried to embed it into the Sahel coalition system. The framework sets out a range of norms of conduct for the joint forces in dealing with civilian incidents, including detention, arrest, transfer and release.[5] Within this framework, states conduct operations against violations of the human rights of civilians committed within the coalition forces. For example, the Mauritania authorities called for an investigation into the accidental killing of civilians by soldiers of the Mauritanian contingent of the joint forces. In 2018,

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[5] United Unions, "Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel-Report of the Secretary-General," May 6, 2019, https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/joint-force-group-five-sahel-report-secretary-general-s2019371, 2023-01-19.

the Malian authorities said that, an investigation was conducted into the criminal killing of 12 civilians by soldiers of the Malian armed forces.[6]

Second, guaranteeing the joint forces in the Sahel foreign aid channel is unimpeded. The European Union has set up a Coordination Hub to support the coalition forces in order to secure their arms assistance. The mechanism is intended to provide a platform for the G5 Sahel and donor countries to coordinate information on the military claims of Sahel's coalition forces and the military assistance of the European Union or other potential donors.[7] This will help clarify the "needs and supplies" of both sides, reduce the duplication or lack of assistance caused by unequal information reception, and thus improve the efficiency of military assistance. The move comes as the EU attempts to bring the centre into the Sahel G5.

2.2.2 Providing Military Assistance for the Joint Forces

In response to the relative inadequacies of Sahel's security forces, the EU established the EUCAP Sahel Niger mission in 2012, the EUTM Mali mission in 2013, the EUCAP Sahel Mali mission in 2015 and the Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell in the framework of the Common Security and defence policy. The EU's capacity building and assistance program in Sahel aims to integrate the operational capabilities of Sahel's national security agencies, improve human resources, personnel management, and fight organized crime and terrorism, and strengthening regional coordination on counter-terrorism. At the same time, the European Union seeks to enhance local border control capabilities through projects such as the mission in Mali and the mission in the Niger as a means of preventing and combating terrorism, radicalization and organized crime, which is important to limit migration flows and border controls. In practice, the EU has taken two main steps to strengthen the capacity of Sahel's security forces.

First, paying attention to the operational training of the security forces and police in Sahel's countries, and promote the capacity-building of the army. Military training for Sahel's security forces can build their capacity to work collaboratively, investigate crimes and so on, while also optimizing the sustainability of the military's operations. The ability of Sahel's security services to counter terrorism has long faced significant challenges due to structural flaws and strategic uncertainties, which have seriously

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[6] United Unions. Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel-Report of the Secretary-General. May 6, 2019, https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/joint-force-group-five-sahel-report-secretary-general-s2019371.

[7] European Commission. Sahel: EU takes further steps to better support the security of the region. February 18, 2019. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/02/18/sahel-eu-takes-further-steps-to-better-support-the-security-of-the-region/

hindered progress in the fight against terrorism. As an object of security co-operation for Sahel states, the EU has done much to strengthen Sahel's military. In military training, the EU offers a range of courses for Sahel's national forces. In addition, a team of experts selected by the European Union Mission in the Niger trained 12 Niger police officers in criminal analysis to strengthen their investigative capacity.[8] In 2019, some 60 Niger soldiers received instruction and training in policing investigations in Madama with the support of the mission, which enabled them to acquire basic knowledge in the investigation of criminal incidents.[9] The European Union Military Training Mission in Mali has trained Malian soldiers in heavy weapons such as machine guns and mortars.[10] In 2017, the Malian military Training mission established the Combined Mobile Advisory Training Team in the city of Mariga, which included training on how to dismantle improvised explosive device,[11] which gives the Malian armed forces the means to respond to current security threats. In 2020, Malian military training mission instructors provided military training to the Malian Armed Forces. More than 8,000 officers and soldiers of the Malian army have received professional training since the implementation of the project.[12] In addition, the European Union has provided some military assistance to Sahel's Joint forces. The European Union Mission in Niger has donated 45 motorcycles to the Niger ISF as part of its "Support Border Police Service" project to strengthen border management and immigration restrictions in Niger.[13] The European Union's military training of Sahel states is aimed at reforming Sahel's security services, improving the operational capabilities of national armies and police forces, and thus strengthening the defences of national security forces themselves, and military power in the fight against terrorism and organized crime.

Second, paying attention to the coordination and training skills of Sahel's national security forces. In the area of human rights protection, EU provided human rights training to 90 gendarmerie officers to prepare them for their duties as brigade

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[8] EUCAP Sahel Niger,
https://twitter.com/EUCAPSahelNiger/status/834671334261194752?cxt=HHwWgIC47f_JrJUXAAAA.
[9] European Union External Action, "De la sécurisation des scènes de crime à la collecte d'indices : le rôle du militaire au combat dans la lutte contre le terrorisme et la criminalité transfrontalière organisée au Niger." https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/57458_en.
[10] Eutmmali, https://twitter.com/eutmmali1/status/1336607315991154690?cxt=HHwWhMC6nbbRyowlAAAA
[11] European Union Training Mission in Mali Newsletter, May 2017. http://www.eutmmali.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/EN-Newsletter-May-2017.pdf.
[12] EUTMMali, "Extensive Decentralized Training, "December 5, 2020, https://eutmmali.eu/extensive-decentralized-training/.
[13] EUCAP Sahel Niger, https://twitter.com/EUCAPSahelNiger/status/875361659551973379?cxt=HHwWhoC8-dOy9KUYAAAA.

commanders.[14]   In 2020, the European Union adopted the "Guard-check-military Justice Program", which aims to protect human rights and combat impunity. This mechanism allows cases of violence to be tried under the military justice system. In terms of finanial assistance, the European Union Mission in the Niger has established an international coordination secretariat in the Niger Security Sector, which helps to coordinate international contributions and assistance to the Niger security forces from donor countries.[15]   For regional security issues, the RACC is committed to the establishment of a "Security Cooperation Platform" to facilitate the exchange of regional Security information and ensure Sahel cross-border security coordination. At the same time, data collection is the basis of counter-terrorism work. The participation of the Niger police in data management training with the support of the mission has helped to enhance the exchange of information between the police and the intelligence services,[16]   which in turn may greatly improve the efficiency of the investigation of cases. Technology update is undoubtedly an important factor in determining the success of anti-terrorism operations. In the area of logistical assistance to the force, EUCAP Mali and EUCAP Niger used part of the funds for the provision of appliances, including digital cameras, printing products and office supplies.[17]   In 2016, the mission requested support for the policy development and technological upgrading of the authorities and security forces of the Niger in order to better equip them with weapons to control and combat illegal migration,[18]   In addition, a permanent mission was also set up in the Niger Agadez to prevent the inflow of migrants. (Lebovich, 2018) In 2020, the European Union Mission in Mali established a Mobile Unit in central Mali to assist the security forces in re-establishing government authority and protecting civilians. In general, the European Union, through the integration of national and international forces, police and security forces, on the basis of improving the quality of government, strengthening the comprehensive counter-terrorism capabilities and ensuring financial stability, to prepare for the fight against terrorism and organized crime. Overall, the establishment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the implementation of a range of

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[14]   EUCAP Sahel Niger,
https://twitter.com/EUCAPSahelNiger/status/895637247730438144?cxt=HHwWgMCm6ZvV-O0YAAAA
[15]   Common Security and Defense Policy.(2016). The RUCAP Sahel Niger civilian mission.
[16]   EUCAP Sahel Niger,
https://twitter.com/EUCAPSahelNiger/status/840175786527186944?cxt=HHwWgICzjaXb86gXAAAA
[17]   European Union External Action, Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union: Missions and Operations Annual Report, 2016.
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/e_CSDP_Annual%20Report.pdf.
[18]   European Union External Action, Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union: Missions and Operations Annual Report, 2016.
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/e_CSDP_Annual%20Report.pdf.

military guidance and assistance have demonstrated the EU's operational commitment to counter-terrorism and deepened the EU's counter-terrorism presence in the Sahel.

2.3 EU's Development Cooperation with the G5 Sahel

"Development" is seen as an important component of the EU's successful security governance in Sahel and a key component of Sahel's security and development strategy. The Neven Mimica of the EU Commissioner for International Co-operation and development has identified building resilience as a priority for EU development co-operation.[19] Development strategy is an important foundation to solve regional extremism and terrorist threat from the governance level and ensure regional security. To this end, the EU has developed a series of co-operative programmes to support Sahel social development.

2.3.1 Promoting Employment for the Vulnerable and Focusing on Gender Equality

Youth are the driving force of a country's social and economic development, and the use of youth is an important reason for the lack of development in the region. For a long time, African fertility growth spurt, resulting in the African population age structure imbalance, to the direction of the trend of youth. At the same time, most countries in the Sahel face the plight of underdeveloped economies, undereducated children and increasing numbers of displaced people. The EU sees a youth bulge and a weak economy as the main causes of unemployment among the Sahel youth groups targeted by the militants. In short, the deterioration of youth employment is a potential source of social instability.

To address these issues, the EU's Sahel strategy provides concrete measures to create equal employment opportunities for young people, including equal access to education and skills training for men and women, and the development of youth resilience, and held a population-related political dialogue and other programs.[20] Therefore, the EU has launched a series of development cooperation projects. In 2016, the European Union launched the Sahel project for the socio-economic integration of women and youth at the Burkina Faso of the European Union. The project has two objectives,

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[19] EU boosts assistance for the Sahel to increase resilience. 2015.
https://www.parlement.com/id/vju4fbmssqx8/nieuws/eu_boosts_assistance_for_the_sahel_to.
[20] Council of the European Union. *Council conclusions on the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020.* April 20, 2015.

emphasizing the leadership of female, and income generating activities have been introduced to increase the income of women and youth. Besides, agricultural and livestock production has been increased to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable households, while ensuring local resource governance and land security.[21] The project aims to strengthen regional stability by protecting the economic and political rights of vulnerable groups. In the same year, the European Commission adopted the Ethnical Fashion Initiative (Job creation and micro enterprise development) , which plans to invest ten million euros in support of development of entrepreneurship and employment for women and youth, this will improve the income and social status of local vulnerable groups and craftsmen, thereby reducing local poverty and migration problems.[22] In addition, in 2019, the EU also launched the non-european vocational training initiative to enhance the professional skills and capabilities of civilians to obtain better levels of employment.[23] This shows that the EU tries to establish a perfect employment system and support the employment of vulnerable groups on the basis of protecting the status of women, which may help to alleviate the region's extremely high fertility rate, one of the main causes leading to poverty. While the poverty is the breeding ground for radicalisation.

2.3.2 Offering Humanitarian Aid

The EU is one of Sahel's main humanitarian donors. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU and its member states provided humanitarian aid to African Sahel worth about 8bn euros through the EU Emergency Trust Fund,[24] providing emergency protection to vulnerable groups in the region in terms of accommodation assistance, food assistance, basic social services assistance and child assistance, which include building shelters, providing emergency food and nutrition assistance, providing assistance including health assistance, drinking water and sanitation, treating malnourished children, and improving the preparedness of Sahel vulnerable societies to respond to crises such as

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[21] European Union External Action, "Socio-economic integration project for youth and women in the Sahel," https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/projects/socio-economic-integration-project-youth-and-women-sahel_en.

[22] The European Council, "Ethnical Fashion Initiative: Job creation and micro enterprise development, " December 1, 2018, https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/projects/ethical-fashion-initiative-job-creation-and-micro-enterprises-development_en

[23] The European Council, "Archipelago-An African-European vocational training initiative," January 11, 2019, https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/projects/archipelago-african-european-vocational-training-initiative_en.

[24] The European Union's Partnership with the G5 Sahel Countries, 2019.

food or climate, provide effective security measures for civilians in the area.[25] in 2015, the European Union and the United Kingdom signed a joint project on humanitarian emergency assistance in the Sahel, which explicitly aims to help the region address long-standing challenges and build social resilience. The project puts forward three priority plans: first, to respond to the emergency needs of nutrition and food insecurity, so as to guarantee food security and achieve the goal of "Zero Hunger"; The second is to provide assistance to those affected by violent conflicts (refugees, etc.) and the third is to strengthen disaster early warning and response mechanisms to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by disasters.[26] In the same year, the EU also provided 34m Euro worth of food aid to vulnerable groups in Sahel, mainly in the form of currency, vouchers and food.[27] The Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and crisis management, Stylianides, has also said that the EU's aid programme provides emergency food aid to more than one million per cent of vulnerable people, some 6.5 million malnourished children were also treated.[28]

2.3.3 Improving Local Governance

Countries in the Sahel have struggled to achieve social stability and development due to inadequate governance, lack of rule of law, corruption and various social problems, which has seriously hindered the smooth implementation of the european-african counter-terrorism program. To this end, the EU has made many efforts in recent years to strengthen social governance in the region, including measures to promote the modernisation of the Sahel public sector, safeguard democracy and human rights, and combat corruption. Hoping to achieve good social governance for the region's economic development to create a relatively favorable social environment, with a view to achieve a virtuous circle of social development. Since 2014, in response to the daunting and complex global security challenges, the EU has launched The EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), which sets out projects for conflict prevention and crisis response. Of these, there are 79 aid projects in the Sahel, with a total amount of about 180 million euros. With regard to public sector

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[25] European Commission, "Sahel and Central Africa: 210 million in EU humanitarian aid," May 11 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_2421.

[26] UNCHR, "Providing Humanitarian Assistance to Sahel Emergencies, " 2015. https://data.unchr.org.

[27] "EU boosts assistance for the Sahel to increase resilience," 2015. https://www.parlement.com/id/vju4fbmssqx8/nieuws/eu_boosts_assistance_for_the_sahel_to

[28] North Africa Post, "Sahel: European Commission Announces a 191.3 million Humanitarian Aid Package," July 10, 2018. https://northafricapost.com/24505-sahel-european-commission-announces-a-e191-3-million-humanitarian-aid-package.html

transformation, in 2017, the European Union supported the reform of the Malian security sector in order to rebuild trust between the security forces and the Malian people through the coordination of information and the actions of Malian security institutions.[29] In terms of safeguarding democracy and human rights, in 2018, the European Union established "Monitoring mechanisms for electoral violence"[30] in many countries in Sahel to try to reduce the occurrence of electoral violence and thus ensure the normal functioning of democratic institutions in the region.

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[29] European Commission. Project contributing to security sector reform efforts (crisis management) in Mali. https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20220823091937/https:/instrument-for-peace-map.ec.europa.eu/

[30] European Commission. Electoral violence Monitoring, Analysis and Mitigation. https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20220805200421/https://instrument-for-peace-map.ec.europa.eu/pdf/?format=single&contract_number=400843.

Chapter 3
Evaluating EU's Counter-Terrorism Cooperation in the Sahel

Looking back at the EU's counter-terrorism cooperation with the Sahel states from 2011 to 2020, we can see that a series of anti-terrorism assistance and initiatives undertaken by the EU have achieved some results, however, due to the lack of anti-terrorism assistance, miscellaneous institution, the failure of military strike, border control lax and other reasons, the EU anti-terrorism cooperation is into trouble, which then lead to reduction of the effectiveness of the EU's counter-terrorism cooperation.

3.1 Results of EU's Counter-Terrorism Cooperation in the Sahel

Since the implementation of the EU strategy for the Sahel, the EU's anti-terrorism cooperation in general in the "increasing terrorism" state. Using the changes in terrorist activity in African Sahel from 2011 to 2020 as an evaluation indicator, the EU's counter-terrorism co-operation can be demonstrated more directly: if the number of terrorist attacks will decrease, the policy will be effective; If the frequency of terrorist attacks remains the same or climbs to a higher level, then the effectiveness of the policy is in question.

The annual condition of terrorist attacks in the Sahel (2011–2020)
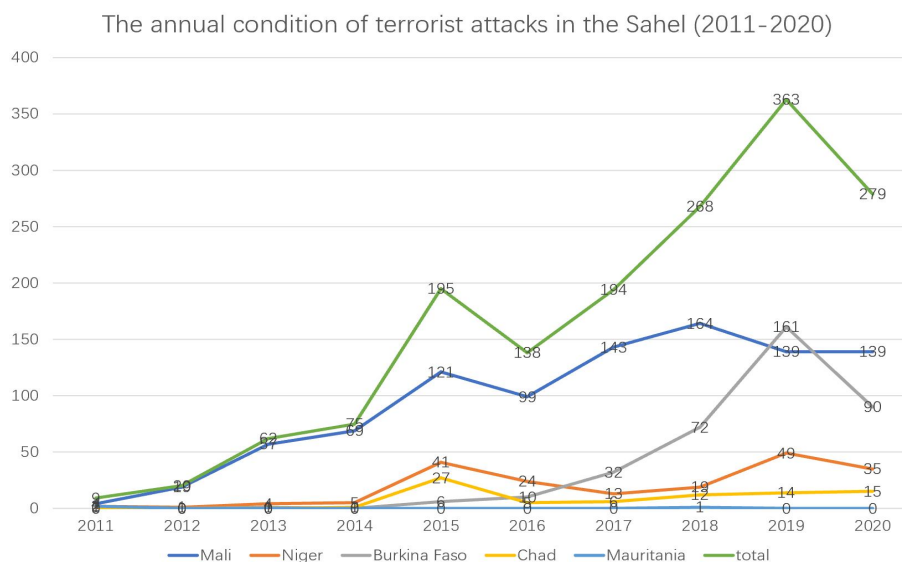
An analysis of the global terrorism database[31] provides a visual indication of the overall rise in terrorist activity in African Sahel between 2011 and 2020. From 2011 to

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[31] Data collected from Global Terrorism Database.
https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?expanded=no&search=Burkina+Faso&ob=GTDID&od=desc&page=21&count=20#results-table.

2015, the number of terrorist attacks in Niger increased significantly, although there is a downward trend in the next three years, but the overall showed a fluctuating rise. In addition, Mali is the region's most volatile and most frequent terrorist state, with the number of attacks climbing from four in 2011 to 139 in 2020. In 2018, the United Nations Security Report also noted a sharp deterioration in the security environment in central and northern Mali, with a 200 percent increase in attacks.[32] The number of Burkina Faso attacks peaked in 2019, with both Mauritania and Chadian attacks remaining at low levels. This fully shows that from 2011 to 2020 decade, the EU Sahel counter-terrorism cooperation effectiveness of doubt, anti-terrorism operations into the"More anti-vietnam terrorism" predicament. It is therefore worth considering why EU counter-terrorism cooperation has failed to reduce the number of terrorist activities.

3.2 Dilemma Faced by EU's Counter-Terrorism Cooperation in the Sahel

The chapters I and II shows that, despite the relatively sound policies of the EU counter-terrorism strategy for the Sahel, there are still inconsistencies in the implementation of specific projects, this has largely limited the effectiveness of EU counter-terrorism co-operation, leading to a worsening security situation for Sahel. In view of this, this section analyses and summarizes the four major dilemmas faced by the EU in Sahel counter-terrorism cooperation.

First, through the analysis of Chapter II, it can be found that the EU counter-terrorism assistance is extremely unbalanced, which is concentrated in the two aspects of security assistance and development assistance. The imbalance of counter-terrorism assistance has undoubtedly affected the effectiveness of EU counter-terrorism cooperation. In security cooperation, the EU attaches great importance to military technical assistance. Even if Sahel's governments need more strategic advice from the EU, the mission's focus remains on building military technological capacity. As can be seen in Chapter II, the assistance project of the EUTM Mali focuses on the military skills training of the force as well as on technical assistance, including cooperative projects such as military training, military coordination and Human Rights Coordination, but it has partly ignored the strategic advice and security sector reform assistance that Sahel's governments need. The improvement of strategic deployment and mechanism is undoubtedly the key to the improvement of military capability. An

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[32] United Nation Security Council. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. 29 March 2018.

effective response to terrorist activities requires coordinated development across multiple policy areas, and inadequate cooperation in any one area can affect overall effectiveness, the unbalanced content of the policy makes the effectiveness of EU anti-terrorism cooperation greatly compromised.

In development cooperation, the EU has neglected aid to the education sector. As can be seen from the cases in section III of Chapter II, a number of development assistance projects launched by the European Union mostly support youth employment and skills training, which to a certain extent can promote employment and reduce the probability of local people being radicalized. However, employment and education levels are often closely linked. EU policy in Sahel has failed to articulate policies and measures for assistance to the education sector, including assistance to school infrastructure, school supplies and teacher training. The lack of security and political instability in the Sahel has had a huge impact on the young, who are still being basic education, as evidenced by the increasing number of school closures following years of war, this makes continuity in education difficult and makes it difficult for local children to acquire the knowledge or skills needed for employment through schools. In 2019, only 29% and 10% of Niger's junior and senior high school enrolments were recorded, while Mali's dropout rate was 50% , with more than 2.6 m children and adolescents Burkina Faso out of school. The failure of the European Union to give priority to assistance to the education sector in West African countries could lead to more young people dropping out of school and being misled into extremist organizations, making counter-terrorism cooperation even more challenging.

Second, while acknowledging the continuous improvement of the EU's Sahel counter-terrorism institution, it should also be noted that there are some problems with the consistency and effectiveness of the counter-terrorism institution. There is no doubt that the effectiveness of the EU's Sahel counter-terrorism cooperation will be affected by the overlapping functions of counter-terrorism agencies or departments. Some of the EU's Sahel counter-terrorism cooperation bodies have overlapping functions, which inevitably leaves some agencies or departments with limited mandates. A more obvious example of military assistance is the EU's Sahel counter-terrorism assistance coordination unit. The European Union has not only set up a coordination centre for Sahel's Joint Forces, but has also set up a branch of the Niger's security services, the International Coordination Secretariat, both agencies manage

and coordinate donor and recipient assistance, with the former focusing on G5 Sahel security forces and the latter coordinating member states' security sector assistance. On development assistance, in 2017, France, Germany and Sahel jointly established the Sahel Alliance, which, among other things, brings together major international donors, to coordinate Sahel development assistance and other financial support. However, the presence of multiple independent bodies not only reduces the level of expertise within the Department, but also increases inter-departmental boundaries and increases administrative and coordination costs. In addition, the more departments involved in the same work, the less division of labor each department receives. The overlapping of the functions of the counter-terrorism cooperation agency will greatly increase the coordination burden of the EU and the Sahel countries on the counter-terrorism agency.

Third, objectively speaking, due to the network of terrorism and the adjustment of its operational methods, it is difficult for Sahel counter-terrorism cooperation to completely eliminate terrorist organizations in the short term. On the one hand, as Sahel terrorism becomes more international and technologically advanced, the spread of terrorist organizations and radical ideas is no longer limited by geographical and personnel conditions. It is undeniable that the facilities provided by the means of online communication can enable a person to radicalize even without direct contact with terrorists, learn the knowledge needed for a terrorist attack, and so on. Therefore, even though the EU has made a series of efforts to develop the counter-terrorism capabilities of the security forces, to promote local social development and to enhance the governance capacity of the government, however, it is more difficult to prevent and combat such extremist organizations or terrorist activities. On the other hand, with the increasing Sahel of counter-terrorism, the operational methods of terrorist organizations are constantly adjusting and changing. There are terrorist groups that set up branches in Sahel, and there are terrorist groups that form smaller groups or act alone (Lone Wolf attacks). The Way of terrorism has become more and more accidental and random, the future direction of development of terrorist organizations or targeted is unpredictable, the phenomenon of unpredictable changes in the act of prevention can not be foolproof. As a result, while the EU and the G5 will continue to spare no effort to prevent and combat terrorist attacks, traditional counter-terrorism military operations can not quickly adapt to the changing patterns of terrorist

organizations' conduct. The EU and the G5 will continue to work together to prevent and combat terrorist attacks. Terrorist forces may exist in the African Sahel Sahel.

Forth, in addition to the difficulties in counter-terrorism assistance, institutional set-up and the effectiveness of force, the EU's counter-terrorism co-operation with the Sahel group of five countries faces obstacles on immigration and border management. The most typical is the dilemma of inconsistency between the border management policy of the EU Sahel strategy and the objectives of the EU migration partnership framework[33], this is mainly reflected in the strategic changes in border control, from the original"Migration-development nexus" policy to the security of the migration policy.

As was noted previously, the European Union's Border Management Policy for the Sahel emphasizes the fight against illegal transnational crime, including trafficking, the protection of legal inter-regional movements of people and the promotion of development. However, since the outbreak of the European refugee crisis, the focus of eu-africa cooperation has shifted to migration issues, and the EU's policy focus on migration and border management has changed significantly. In response to the pressures of the refugee crisis, the European Union expressed concern at the Valletta Summit in Valletta in 2015 about the security dimension of migration, with the intention of strengthening migration controls. Subsequently, the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa defined the transition to safe migration.[34] In 2016, the European Union's short-term goal of repatriating migrants and refugees from many African countries, including Mali and the Niger, to their home or transit countries, as well as temporarily banning migrants from travelling to Europe, has been clearly articulated in the new EU migration partnership framework. At the same time, the European Union Mission in the Niger has also joined the directive restricting the movement of migrants.

Admittedly, the prevention of the importation of immigrants contributes to a certain extent to the maintenance of border security and social stability in Europe and the Sahel in Africa, strict border control not only fails to solve security problems, it could also exacerbate border conflicts and expand the reach of terrorist groups. First, tightening border policies have made cross-border activity or trade difficult for some

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[33]   European Commission. (2016). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council and the European Investment Bank on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration. COM (2016) 385 final.
[34] European Commission, *A European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa*, November 12 2015, Download from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_15_6056.

African people, at the same time, the lack of aid funds makes it difficult to guarantee the survival, development and human rights protection of civilians, which may lead to more serious conflict in the border area of Sahel. (Lebovich and Ambition, 2018) This measure is contrary to the Sahel strategy's policy of protecting legal immigration and promoting development, and has a major negative effect on the effectiveness of the EU's counter-terrorism cooperation with the Sahel five countries. Second, people in the border region of Sahel joined extremist groups out of necessity. Ethnic groups along the border have been marginalised by the Sahel administration's weak governance and lax border controls. This not only exacerbates their dissatisfaction with the government, but may also prompt them to join terrorist groups active in remote and border areas. The initiative has made counter-terrorism operations more difficult and placed counter-terrorism cooperation in a difficult position.

The Conclusion

Over the years, the existence of Islamic extremist terrorism has become a source of continued instability in the Sahel regions, due to weak governance, extreme poverty and the spread of extremist thoughts, etc. At the same time, in 21st century, a new form of terrorism has been presented, which is networked and internationalized. African terrorist organizations have been strengthening their presence in the Sahel by decentralizing, engaging in illegal economic activities, and inviting ethnic minorities joining their groups, which undoubtedly added difficulty as well as deteroriated the security and stability to the countries in this region.

In face of the growing threat coming from terrorism in West Africa, the EU and Sahel countries shared common security interests. For the Sahel countires, the governments are aware that the threat of terrorism can not be dealt with effectively on its own because of the weakness of their military forces and poor economy, it might be better to seek the assistance and support of international communities; Beside, the European Union has made it clear in its global external strategy that, because of the transnational feature of terrorism, both terrorist activities in Europe and the globe are one of the main threats to the stability of European society and the security of its people. The conceptual consensus provides an important precondition and basis for the EU Strategy for security and development in the Sahel and for counter-terrorism co-operation with Sahel states.

In general, the EU's cooperation with Sahel has been made possible by the establishment of counter-terrorism agencies and assistance programs. The two sides have undertaken a series of actions in the political, security and development areas. First, set up a platform for information sharing through holding a series of dialogues and meetings to clarify bilateral strategic intentions and directions; Support the establishment of a Sahel five-nation force, military training, skills development and security coordination for national security forces to enhance their ability to combat terrorist forces; The root causes of terrorism were prevented through the promotion of social governance, the provision of humanitarian assistance and the provision of vocational training and employment opportunities for civilians. However, the development of anything can not be smooth sailing, from this perspective, the EU and the Sahel group of five anti-terrorism cooperation facing difficulties and challenges is an essential part of the development process. The EU's Sahel strategy undoubtedly

plays an important role in the fight against terrorism. However, it can be seen from the statistical data that terrorist activities have not decreased, and the EU's counter-terrorism cooperation in the Sahel has not been smooth and even faces many difficulties, the main challenges faced by the EU in its counter-terrorism cooperation are: the overlapping of functions of the counter-terrorism agencies; the changing and innovative forms of terrorist organizations; the intensification of contradictions in the security of border policies; and the imbalance in counter-terrorism assistance. These difficulties to varying degrees affect the effectiveness of EU counter-terrorism co-operation, and hindered the progress of Sahel's counter-terrorism process. These difficulties and challenges are likely to continue to plague EU Sahel cooperation in the African Sahel for a long time to come, and as the situation in Sahel continues to change, new problems and challenges are likely to arise in the future, in 2022, for example, the Malian transitional government announced it would withdraw from the G5 and its coalition forces in Sahel. As a result, the EU has a long way to go in Sahel counter-terrorism Co-operation.

It is worth noting, however, that the overall development direction of the Eu-sahel counter-terrorism cooperation is forward, and timely adjustment of counter-terrorism policies and policies in the light of changes in reality. For example, the EU 2021 an "EU Integrated Approach in the Sahel", which refines and refocuses Sahel's original security and development strategy, to make the EU's Sahel counter-terrorism policy framework more comprehensive, which will help the EU better counter-terrorism cooperation and assistance.

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Summary

The African Sahel is a semi-arid zone between the southern and Central Sudanese steppes of the Sahara. The region faces the problems of poor natural environment, backward economy and extreme poverty. The security situation in the Sahel has become more volatile in recent years because of the frequency of regional conflicts, such as coups d'état in the north. At the same time, the 2011 upheaval in the Middle East provided an opportunity for the growth and spread of terrorism and extremism, resulting in the spread of Islamic extremism and a significant increase in violence in West Africa. At the same time, because of resource scarcity, corrupt and weak governments and rapidly growing populations, this region faces one of the most volatile security in the globe. Currently, the Sahel has two of the most secure areas. The Lake Chad region and the Mali-niger-burkina Faso border region. The continued growth of terrorist organizations through decentralization, illegal economic activities and the incorporation of minorities into their organizations has a negative impact on peace and stability in the Sahel.

What is the situation of EU counter-terrorism policy and cooperation in the Sahel? How effective is the EU in preventing the threat of terrorism? Has EU counter-terrorism action and cooperation met expectations? These are a question worth thinking about. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the following three research questions based on the Sahel security policy documents of the European Union:

1. What is the situation of terrorism faced by African Sahel?

2. What are the EU's policies and implementation plans for Sahel counter-terrorism cooperation?

3. What have been the results of the cooperation　What are the possible dilemmas and challenges　And what causes counter-terrorism cooperation into trouble.

In the face of the growing terrorist threat in West Africa, the EU and Sahel countries share security interests. For the Sahel countries, the governments are aware that the threat of terrorism can not be dealt with effectively on its own because of the weakness of its military and poor economy. For the European Union, due to Sahel

population growth and instability, the proliferation of large numbers of African refugees and the spillover of terrorism may therefore be a better option, this has a negative impact on the security of European countries. The surge in illegal immigration and human trafficking has made migration management more difficult, and the internationalization of terrorism has brought great social security risks to EU member states. Participation in the maintenance of a Sahel security situation, based on historical connections and realistic interests, has an important impact on the maintenance of the security and interests of European countries. At the same time, the EU has made it clear in its global external strategy that due to the transnational nature of terrorism, whether it is continental terrorist activities or international terrorism, are among the main threats to the stability and security of European societies. The conceptual consensus provides an important precondition and basis for the EU Strategy for security and development in the Sahel and for counter-terrorism co-operation with Sahel states.

EU's Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the Sahel

The EU considers security to be holistic. A country's internal security and external security are interdependent and closely related. Without a stable external environment, internal security can not be realized. Since terrorist attacks bring great social panic and security threat to Europe, it is necessary for EU to participate in international anti-terrorism cooperation, which is an important external precondition for EU internal security. Therefore, the EU has established a policy framework for EU participation in Global counter-terrorism action through the EU counter-terrorism Strategy 2005, the EU Security Agenda and the European Union Global Strategy 2016. The importance of international counter-terrorism assistance and cooperation was emphasized, considering counter-terrorism as an important element in the maintenance of peace and security in the EU.

To prevent the spread of Sahel terrorism and ensure the security of the international community and EU Member States, the EU has issued a number of counter-terrorism policies and measures, trying to build a comprehensive counter-terrorism policy

framework. In 2011, the European Union adopted the Sahel Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, and in 2014 developed the framework for Action for the Strategy, the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020. The strategy establishes the overall framework for EU strategic action in the Sahel, with security and development as its two main objectives.

In the strategy, the EU identifies four strategic priority areas: security, development, migration and governance, trying to provide assistance in promoting peace and security in the Sahel, both in terms of "Support" and "Participation.". On the security front, the EU plans to support Sahel's security and action initiatives at the national, regional and international levels. On immigration, we will crack down on illegal immigrants and strengthen border management. On development and governance, to promote Sahel economic development and social governance, and to provide financial support accordingly.

EU'Counter-Terrorism Cooperation in the Sahel

The EU and the Sahel group of five have engaged in political co-operation to co-ordinate counter-terrorism issues through high-level political dialogue, with security and governance issues at the same time. The EU has held a series of high-level political meetings with Sahel's G5 Group, efforts have been made to maintain regional stability, strengthen bilateral political coordination, reshape the capacity of the government to govern and rebuild basic services and facilities in vulnerable areas. Political meetings between the EU and Sahel are conducive to the exchange of strategic ideas and the sharing of information.

On the security front, the EU's security co-operation with the Sahel G5 seeks above all to strengthen the operational capabilities of the military in order to strengthen the G5's hard power in counter-terrorism operations and border controls. Specifically, it supports the establishment of a five-nation joint force with Sahel and provides military assistance to Sahel's national security forces, including military training and skills training for the troops. By establishing Sahel's joint forces and implementing a

range of military guidance and assistance, the EU has demonstrated its commitment to counter-terrorism in action and deepened its Sahel counter-terrorism presence.

In addition, the EU has set up a series of cooperation programmes to support the social development of the Sahel, including raising the employment and income levels of vulnerable groups such as women and youth, and providing humanitarian assistance, including emergency assistance such as accommodation, food, basic social services and child assistance, improving social governance, modernizing the Sahel public sector, safeguarding democracy and human rights, and fighting corruption, to build a resilient society, which is from the governance level to address regional extremism, the threat of terrorism, to ensure the important basis for regional security.

Challenges in the EU'Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

An analysis of the global terrorism database shows that, over the period 2011-2020, overall terrorist activity in African Sahel is on the rise. The EU's anti-terrorism cooperation is in a state of"More anti-terrorism". Although the EU counter-terrorism strategy for the Sahel has introduced a more comprehensive policy, there are still inconsistencies in the implementation of specific projects, which to a large extent limit the effectiveness of EU counter-terrorism cooperation.

Firstly, the EU's counter-terrorism assistance is highly uneven and is concentrated on both security and development assistance. In security cooperation, the EU attaches great importance to military technical assistance. Even if Sahel's governments need more strategic advice from the EU, the mission's focus remains on building military technological capacity. In development cooperation, the EU has neglected aid to the education sector. Many of the development assistance projects launched by the European Union are aimed at supporting youth employment and skills training, and the failure of the European Union to give priority to assistance to the education sector in West African countries may lead to more young people dropping out of school and being misled into extremist organizations, to make counter-terrorism cooperation face greater challenges.

Secondly, Due to the network of terrorism and the adjustment of its operational methods, it is difficult for Sahel counter-terrorism cooperation to completely eliminate terrorist organizations in the short term. With the development of science and Technology of terrorism, the spread of radical thought is not limited by the region and personnel. At the same time, the EU has found it more difficult to prevent and combat such extremist organizations or terrorist activities owing to rapid changes in the way they operate and the unpredictability of their targeting.

Thirdly, due to the outbreak of European refugee crisis, the EU border control policy has changed from the original"Migration-development hub" policy to the security of the migration policy. This has helped to some extent to prevent the entry of immigrants, thus maintaining security and social stability at the European and African Sahel borders, but has been tightening border policies, there are many adverse effects on the lives of people in border areas, such as the reduction of cross-border trade. The initiative has made counter-terrorism operations more difficult and placed counter-terrorism cooperation in a difficult position.

Forthly, the effectiveness of the EU's Sahel's counter-terrorism co-operation will no doubt be undermined by the overlapping functions of counter-terrorism agencies or departments. Some of the EU's Sahel counter-terrorism co-operation bodies have overlapping functions, and the presence of multiple independent bodies not only reduces the level of expertise within the department, it has also increased inter-departmental boundaries and increased administrative and coordination costs.

The Significance of Analysing EU'Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

Firstly, it is of theoretical and academic significance to study the EU's counter-terrorism cooperation in West Africa, which helps to deepen the understanding of global governance theory. The increasing interdependence of the international community as a result of the development of globalization has reduced the likelihood of traditional security threats such as military conflicts between states, terrorism, climate change and other non-traditional security issues are increasingly prominent, so global governance needs to pay attention to. A study of the EU's security

governance of Sahel can deepen understanding of the objects and subjects of global governance theory, as well as its theoretical utility and universal values. In addition, by combing the domestic and foreign literature on the EU's anti-terrorism cooperation in West Africa, we find that compared with the foreign research, the domestic research on this issue is less. Therefore, this paper attempts to provide an in-depth analysis of this research issue through an analysis of the EU's official documents and reports on Sahel counter-terrorism policy and practice, with a view to contributing to domestic research in this area.

Secondly, from a practical point of view, the study of other regions and countries to counter-terrorism cooperation has a certain reference. This paper attempts to summarize the history and experience of the EU's counter-terrorism cooperation with the Sahel states in order to explore the effectiveness and development trend of its policies, which will not only help to guide the EU's counter-terrorism practice and assistance in the region, but also help to enhance the EU's anti-terrorism cooperation in the region, it also has important reference function to the anti-terrorism cooperation and security governance of other regions and countries in the world. At the same time, Africa is becoming an increasingly important trade partner for China, given its expanding investment in infrastructure in western Africa. Therefore, promoting peace-building in the region is conducive to effectively safeguarding the economic interests of chinese-funded enterprises and the personal safety of Chinese employees.