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STUDY GUIDE

# UNSC

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# Topic B: Peace and Security in West Africa

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## INTRODUCTION

*Érico Vanzan Fasolo*

The image of West Africa may figure between the worst among all other regions nowadays. *“The cities of West Africa at night are some of the unsafest places in the world. Streets are unlit; the police often lack gasoline for their vehicles; armed burglars, carjackers, and muggers proliferate”* (KAPLAN, 1994).

Many of the descriptions of the region would be about civil disorder, starvation, refugees, drought, illiteracy, plagues, corruption, and dictatorships maintained at the expense of citizens who live in the poorest conditions. Rebellions and belligerent groups often threaten West African governments, which makes the area a reference of inconstancy in matters of politics. Not only are such countries instable, civil wars happening in one of them directly affect the nearest others, creating a massive problem of disorder and chaos that can't be solved without any kind of help from international organizations, such as ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and the United Nations.

Another widespread problem for West African countries is poverty, which paired with high population growth rates is a barrier to innovation and progress in the region. Because of poverty and inefficient State apparatus, diseases already treated in other parts of the world remain disregarded or undiagnosed, tuberculosis and malaria being an example of it (BROWN, 1999).

Some countries in the region possess huge amounts of natural sources, such as Sierra Leone with its gold and diamonds mines and Nigeria with a wide group of mineral resources. However, the income from the utilization of these does not reach the population, that is, most part of the money stays with big exploitation companies and the countries' elites.

The United Nations Security Council, with the help of international community, has been trying to help this part of the world for years, and although some countries in West Africa are lowering their high indexes of problems, the situation is not that simple.

There is still a huge way to go, the problems are far from being solved and civil wars, piracy, poverty, *inter alia*, are still there.

## 1. BACKGROUND

### GUINEA-BISSAU

*Vitória Gonçalves Pereira*

#### Historical Context

The Republic of Guinea-Bissau is a West-African country, bordered by Senegal to the north, Guinea to the south and east and the Atlantic Ocean to its west, with an estimated population of 1,600,000. The population of Guinea-Bissau is ethnically diverse and has many distinct languages, customs, and social structures. It can be divided into the following ethnic groups: Fula and the Mandingo-speaking people, who comprise the largest portion of the population and are concentrated in the north and northeast; the Balanta and Papel people, who live in the southern coastal regions; and the Manjaco and Mancanha, who occupy the central and northern coastal areas. Most of the remainders are mestizos of mixed Portuguese and African descent, including a Cape Verdean minority (GUINEA-BISSAU, 2013).

Formerly Portuguese Guinea, Guinea-Bissau won independence from Portugal, declared in 1973 and recognized in 1974, after a long struggle headed by the left-wing African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC). For the next six years post-independence leader Luis Cabral, co-founder of PAIGC, presided over a command economy. In 1980, a military coup established authoritarian dictator Joao Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira as president. Despite setting a path to a market economy and multiparty system, Viera's regime was characterized by the suppression of political opposition and the purging of political rivals. Several coup attempts through the 1980s and early 1990s failed to unseat him. In 1994 he was elected president in the country's first free elections. Four years later he was ousted after he dismissed his army chief, thereby triggering a crippling civil war (CIA, 2013).

In 1998 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1216 was unanimously adopted, after expressing concern at the crisis and humanitarian situation in Guinea-Bissau, the Council called for the immediate establishment of a national unity

government in the National People's Assembly and the holding of elections by the end of March 1999. The following year it was established the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) by the UNSC in its Resolution 1233 to facilitate the general election and implementation of the Abuja Accord, a ceasefire agreement with the promise of elections. The mandate of UNOGBIS was extended until 2009, when it was replaced by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, UNIOGBIS (IRIN, 2013).

After the civil war ended, free elections were held on January 2000, and KumbaIalá was elected president. On September 2003, after only three years in office, Ialá was overthrown in a bloodless military coup, and businessman Henrique Rosa was sworn in as interim president. A mutiny of military factions on October 2004 resulted in the head of the armed forces death and caused widespread unrest. In 2005, former President Vieira was re-elected president pledging to pursue economic development and national reconciliation; he was assassinated on March 2009. The UN reacted to this *coup d'état* with Resolution 1876 of June 26<sup>th</sup>, extending the UNOGBIS mandate, promising support for national reconciliation and reconstruction, as well as encouraging cooperation with regional international organizations (UNSC, 2009). The National Assembly Speaker Raimundo Pereira was appointed as an interim president until a nationwide election on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009, which was won by Malam Bacai Sanhá. Sanhá passed away on January 2012 from an existing illness (BBC, 2012).

### **Recent threats and the UNSC Resolutions**

The history of Guinea-Bissau has been perturbed by periodic riots and unrest spilling over into neighboring countries in the region since its independence, for instance, none of its presidents has ever served their term until the end.

A military coup on April 2012 prevented Guinea-Bissau's second-round presidential election from taking place, to determine Sanha's successor. The junta, the so-called "Military Command" led by General Antonio Indjai, overthrew the constitutional civilian government and arrested the interim president and a leading presidential candidate. Former vice chief of staff, General Mamadu Ture Kuruma has taken care of the country in the transitional period and started negotiations with opposition parties. Though the military was deeply unsatisfied with irregular and scarce

salaries, the formal reason announced was the government's signing of an agreement with Angola, also a former colony of Portugal, whose military mission was seen as bound to "remove" the Guinea-Bissau head of staff. Significantly, electoral violence is extremely widespread in the region.

The UNSC condemned the coup and called for immediate release of interim President Raimundo Pereira, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior and all senior officials detained, by Resolution 2374. In May, the UNSC released another resolution (2386) that threatened to impose an arms embargo and financial sanctions if the military junta did not step down to return the country to civilian rule. This resolution also welcomed the mediation efforts by ECOWAS. Later, in July, it called upon the international community to recognize the transitional government of Guinea-Bissau with Resolution 2423 (UNSC, 2013).

## **MALI**

*Ananda Soares Gralewski*

### **Historical Context**

Mali is located in the interior of West Africa, more precisely in the southwest of Algeria, north of Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and west of Niger. Its territory size is slightly less than twice the size of Texas, having a total area of 1,240,192 sq km. It is divided in three natural zones: the southern, cultivated Sudanese; the central, semiarid Sahelian; and the northern, arid Saharan. The country has suffered impact from the climate change and therefore characteristics such as deforestation, soil erosion, desertification and inadequate supplies of potable water are part of Mali's routine (CIA, 2013).

Mali has a population of 15,968,882 which is divided in six different ethnic groups: Mande 50% (Bambara, Malinke, Soninke), Peul 17%, Voltaic 12%, Songhai 6%, Tuareg and Moor 10%, other 5%. The official language is French although many other native languages are still spoken in the territory. Islamism is the predominant religion (CIA, 2013).

Mali is not an exception among the African countries; its background is similar to the other countries in the continent. The territory used to be a French colony since the

19<sup>th</sup> century and only became independent in 1960, during the Cold War. Since then its history is marked by separatist conflicts as in many other African countries.

The independence of Mali started to be shaped in 1958 when the territory, then called Sudanese Republic, obtained from France an internal autonomy and joined the French community. Until 1959 Mali's territory had the borders changed several times being twice renamed as French Sudan and Upper Senegal and Niger (OPERA MUNDI, 2013).

In 1959 the Sudanese Republic and Senegal formed the Federation of Mali and a year later the country, composed also by the territories of Senegal, Dahomy (current Benin) and Upper Volta (current Burkina Faso), conquered its independence and withdrew from French community (GLOBAL EDGE, 2012). On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1960 the Federation of Mali became an independent country and had Modibo Keita elected as president (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 1960). A few months later the federation collapsed and Senegal seceded, remaining only Sudanese Republic, renamed Mali.

After independence, under the command of Modibo Keita, the country had eight years of a socialist regime with one party and strong ties with Soviet Union. The government's attempts to land reform were not well received by the Tuareg tribe that claimed they would not give lands to a government in which they were not invited to be part of. The situation led to a riot against the government and resulted in a bloody repression that defeated the Tuaregs in 1964 (OPERA MUNDI, 2013).

In 1968 a military coup set up a 14- member Military Committee for National Liberation (CMLN), with Moussa Traoré as President. This period was marked by oppression and political instability, coup attempts, a severe drought (1968 – 1974), students' riots across the country and growing dissatisfaction in the northern region of Mali (OPERA MUNDI, 2013).

Mali underwent a political opening process in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From 1990 to 1995, the Tuaregs from Mali and Niger (where they are more populous, around 800,000) organized other riots, intending to obtain independence. One of the insurgents' claims was that they did not have access to high positions in the army. A rebellion between 2006 and 2008 ended after a new peace treaty. Mali and Niger accused Libya of financing the insurgents.

Many insurgents from MNLA (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad – name given to Mali’s northern area) fought on both sides in the Lybian civil war in 2011, which ended with the fall of Gaddafi’s regime (1969 – 2011). The rebels returned to Mali unemployed but heavily armed. The group was officially formed on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, three days after Gaddafi’s death (OPERA MUNDI, 2013).

## **STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE**

On January 2012 an insurgency led by the MNLA began in Mali that claims the Northern area of Mali. From January to April 2012 the insurgent group attacked military bases in the North of the country, mainly in the regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, gaining some northern territory without facing any opposition from the government, that was passing through a deep political crisis (OPERA MUNDI, 2013).

On March 2012, a military coup led by the captain AmadouHayaSanogo ousted the democratically elected AmadouToumaniTouré claiming that the government was incapable of managing the conflict. The coup group was strongly reprimanded by the UN Security Council and the African Union (AU).

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 the insurgent group MNLA took control of the whole Northern Mali. The insurgent group received help from religious groups, such as Ansar Dine (Defenders of the Faith), AQIM (abbreviation of Al Qaeda in Magre Islamic) and Mujao (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa). Six days later, MNLA proclaimed the independence of Azawad. The independence was not recognized by the international community (OPERA MUNDI, 2013). On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 a transitional government led by Touré was formed and recognized by the international community, with the purpose of restoring sovereignty over the entire territory of Mali and organizing fair and transparent national elections (CIA, 2013).

### **Conflict in the insurgent alliance**

The population of Gao, a city located in the West of Mali, protested against the imposition of Sharia Law on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012. In response, the population was violently repulsed by the group Ansar Dine. Two days later, the insurgents groups, MNLA and Ansar Dine, started an armed confrontation due to their distinct visions for an intended new state (BBC, 2012). Following the conflict, Ansar Dine declared to be against the

independence of Azawad and that their only intention was to establish the Sharia Law in the whole country.

In the following month, clashes between the separatists and fundamentalists were intensified, the MNLA lost control of the cities Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu and consequently the North fell under control of the Islamic coalition. In Timbuktu medieval documents and buildings considered World Heritage by the United Nations were destroyed and the regional Malian music was banned (OPERA MUNDI, 2013).

### **UNSC and the International Community**

On October 2012 the authorities of Mali requested an international military force at the Security Council meeting in order to support the defense and the security forces of Mali in restoring territorial integrity, fighting terrorism and transnational organized crime, and restoring human rights in the northern regions under occupation. Mali also reinforced in the meeting the assistance importance received from the ECOWAS, the AU, the European Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UNSC, 2012). The population of Mali also claimed for help, in the same month the population in Bamako went to the streets asking for an international intervention.

Responding to that appeal, the Security Council on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012 adopted the Resolution 2071 that gave the ECOWAS and the AU leaders 45 days to provide specific plans for an international military intervention to oust Islamist extremist groups from the north of Mali, assisted by other bilateral partners and international organizations. In the resolution, the Security Council urged Mali Interim Government, the various Malian rebel groups and the representatives of the local population in the north of Mali to engage in a negotiation process in order to end the crisis (UNHCR, 2012a).

Despite the efforts made by the international community the insurgent groups continued to advance in Mali's territory. On January 2013 the city of Konan was taken by the insurgents and other rebels' activities were in progress in the territory (OPERA MUNDI, 2013).

Attending a request made by the Malian government, France intervened in the conflict sending to the northern region some fighter aircrafts and 4,000 soldiers on

January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013. This intervention, named Operation Serval, raised some questions as it was not seen as free of interest. According to Aljazeera's article:

“There is, however, another logical reading for the real causes of French intervention in Mali. It is more related to the protection of French interests in the region and is an attempt to promote France's presence in an area that was traditionally considered a centre of special influence due to its former colonial presence. The importance of the region to France increases when one considers the wealth in the country's interior: large oil, gas and mineral resources located close to the Algerian oil fields which are much coveted by the French and within walking distance of locations that have displayed positive exploration indicators in Mauritania. (Al Jazeera Center for Studies, 2013)”

Anyway, the intervention was recognized as legitimate in the strict sense of international law and it was supported by the UN Security Council Resolutions 2017, 2056 and 2085 (THINK AFRICA PRESS, 2013). Not only that, French authorities justified the intervention stating that the country's only interest was to fight terrorism.

Mali also received on January 2013 a military mission from ECOWAS. The African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) was sent to support Mali against Islamist rebels in the northern region. The mission was authorized by the UN Security Council Resolution 2085 and was supposed to start a year later, on September 2013, but due to the insurgents advance and the French intervention, ECOWAS decided to deploy immediately AFISMA forces (UNSC, 2012). On January 31<sup>st</sup>, the United States Department of State estimated that there were about 1,400 AFISMA troops from Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Chad fighting in Mali (US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2013).

The most recent resolution (2100) approved by the UN Security Council, dated April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013, has settled some important steps to be taken. The document requests from the transitional authorities of Mali to organize presidential elections on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and legislative elections on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013, if possible, and also decides to establish the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) that will take over AFISMA on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 (MINUSMA, 2013).

## **Humanitarian Crisis**

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) more than 350,000 people have fled their homes in Mali since fighting between Tuareg rebel movement and

Malian government forces erupted in the north on January 2012. Tens of thousands of them have found refuge in neighboring Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. Some have also fled to Guinea and Togo and around 200,000 have sought shelter within Mali (UNHCR, 2013b).

## **NIGERIA**

### **Historical Context**

Nigeria is recognized as the most populous African country, having a total population of 174,507,539. The territory used to be a British colony, whose influence and control over what would become Nigeria grew through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The country only conquered its independence in 1960, same year of Mali's.

The colonial period left a very negative legacy in the African continent in consequence of the artificial borders that were established during it. As many other African countries, Nigeria's territory is marked by tensions between ethnic and religious groups. The territory houses more than 250 ethnic groups, being the most populous and politically influential Hausa and Fulani. The predominant religion is Muslim, representing 50% of the population, followed by Catholics that are 40% (CIA, 2013).

After its independence, Nigeria went through a series of military coups that resulted in 16 years of military rule. During this period the country witnessed a bloody civil war that lasted three years. The war was motivated by ethnic and political causes and was known by the genocide of the Igbos, a predominant ethnic group in the south-eastern region. A new constitution was adopted in 1999 which secured the dictatorship's end and a parliamentary and presidential election (BBC, 2013).

### **STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE**

The following years after the first presidential election have not been characterized as peaceful and prosperous. The country has faced year by year massive killings all around the territory, motivated by different reasons. A concern has risen as most of the attacks are articulated by terrorists groups such as Boko Haram and al-Qaeda. Those attacks represent an enormous risk to the wished stability in Nigeria (ALJAZEERA, 2013).

Boko Haram is a jihad militant group that has been operating in Nigeria since 2002. The group is based on Nigeria's northwestern states of Yobe and Borno, where most of the population is Muslim, unlike the south where the Catholic population is predominant, in consequence of British colonialism. The group has imposed Sharia Law to the northern region and it is against any form of non-Islamic education. The group has been attacking Nigerian's militaries, polices, politics, teachers, Catholics, banks, markets, beer drinkers, card-players and also targets assassinations as the suicide attack in Baghdad against the United Nations on August 2003 (Combating Terrorism Center, 2011).

The government has been trying to dismantle the group sending troops to the north to fight against Boko Haram militants but the scenery seems far from ending. Since 2010, it is estimated that more than 2,000 people have died in violence in Nigeria and most of the deaths are blamed on Boko Haram. The government of Nigeria is also blamed to take part in the massive violence; Amnesty International has accused the security forces of carrying out widespread abuses in their campaign against Boko Haram, including extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances and torture (BBC, 2013).

Apart from ethnic and religious reasons for the current conflict in Nigeria, the country also faces a problem with its oil production. Nigeria is known as Africa's leading oil producer and so its economy is based on this resource, which has the United States as main consumer. Since 2008 the government has been trying to implement an economic reform in order to better control the oil production, diversify the economy and also to develop the infra-structure of the country (NIGERIA OFFICIAL WEBSITE, 2013).

Part of the oil production in Nigeria has been stolen by gangs in South Nigeria; this illegal activity is also part of the ongoing conflict in the country. Nigeria's President Umaru Yar'Adua said that *"this is 'blood oil', akin to the trade in 'blood diamonds' that fuelled bloody civil wars in West African neighbors Liberia and Sierra Leone."* and have asked the international community to help end this illegal trade. However, the illegal activity is accused to be articulated by Nigerian politics that have massive political influence and so are part of the corruption in the country (BBC, 2008).

Other current issues in Nigeria are drug trafficking and money laundering. The country is known to be an access for heroin and cocaine intended for European,

East Asian, and North American markets and a major money laundering-center (CIA, 2013).

The Security Council has been discussing the issue in Nigeria together with the whole situation in West Africa, addressing problems as terrorism, poverty, hunger, drug and sex trafficking among others. Some resolutions have already been issued with the purpose to eradicate those problems from Africa.

## **SIERRA LEONE**

*Arthur Palma Fabeni*

Sierra Leone is situated on the southern edge of what used to be the Great Empire of Mali (which covered a vast part of West Africa), incorporating parts of modern day Ivory Coast, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Niger, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia. The Empire prospered from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century, covering an area of over 24,000 sq. kilometers and influencing the ethnic diversity of contemporary Sierra Leone. Today it borders Guinea to the North and East, Liberia to the South East and the Atlantic Ocean to the West. Sierra Leone occupies an area of 71, 749 sq. kilometers and has an estimated population of around 6 million people (AFRICAN UNION, 2013).

At first, the country was a Portuguese colony with the role of supplying its *metropolis* with slaves, ivory and camwood, but with the end of slavery Portugal lost its interest in Sierra Leone. On the other hand, with the growth in the number of freed slaves, Great Britain decided to use the former Portugal's colony as a settlement for them until the end of World War II, when Sierra Leone got its independence from it (AFRICAN UNION, 2013).

After becoming an independent country, Sierra Leone had a short period of political stability. However, after a period of approximately seven years, high indexes of corruption and bad administration surged, because of the innumerable amount of coups occurred in the country. Since then the country until the last century was in a political instability (CIA, 2013).

On October 22<sup>th</sup>, 1999, the United Nations created a mission for Sierra Leone in order to stop the civil war in the country and support a transition to a democratic form of government. During the mission, the UN disarmed more than 75,000 ex fighters, including 7,000 child soldiers; assisted in holding national and local government

elections, which enabled people to participate in decisions that affected their daily lives; helped to rebuild the country's police force and also helped with the infrastructure in the country, so all the population could have at least basic supplies reaching them (UN, 2005).

Democracy is slowly being rebuilt after the civil war from 1991 to 2002 that resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the dislocation of more than 2 million people (about a third of the population). The military, which took over full responsibility for security following the departure of UN peacekeepers at the end of 2005, is increasingly developing as a guarantor of the country's stability. The armed forces remained on the sideline during the 2007 and 2012 national elections but still look to the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) - a civilian UN mission - to support efforts to consolidate peace. The new government's priorities include furthering development, creating jobs, and stamping out endemic corruption (CIA, 2013).

## **LIBERIA**

Liberia, along with Ethiopia, is one of the only two modern countries in Sub-Saharan Africa without roots in the European colonization of Africa. The country was created by freed slaves from the United States, with the help of an organization called American Colonization Society (private organization which believed former slaves would have greater freedom and opportunity in Africa). Liberia was a founding member of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and used to have the United States as a model (CIA, 2013).

The country was performing well, until a coup took place in the 80's. Thousands of people were killed and the economy was devastated. A peace agreement in 2003 led to democratic elections in 2005. Today, Liberia is recovering from the lingering effects of the civil wars and their consequent economic upheaval, although about 85% of the population continues to live below the international poverty line (Department of State, 2012).

Another problem, present in the roots of Liberian history, is corruption. The country has high indexes of frauds and according to its president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the responsible and the reason for it are not the Africans, but the multinationals. The great leaders of markets in the world are the master minds behind corruption not just in Liberia, but all over the continent. During the G8 meeting in June of 2013, Liberia, as

an invited country, asked the group's members to help countries in Africa solve this problem (ALLAFRICA, 2013).

## **2. ECOWAS**

*Érico Vanzan Fasolo*

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), despite its mainly economic aim, has been playing an important role when it comes to re-establishment of order in governments which are often taken by belligerent groups in West Africa. It was founded by the 1975 Treaty of Lagos (Nigeria) and is composed of fifteen (15) Member States: The Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, The Republic of Cape Verde, The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, The Republic of Gambia, The Republic of Ghana, The Republic of Guinea, The Republic of Guinea-Bissau, The Republic of Liberia, The Republic of Mali, The Republic of Niger, The Federal Republic of Nigeria, The Republic of Senegal, The Republic of Sierra Leone and Togolese Republic. Mauritania was part of the organization, but in 1999 due to disagreements between the policies adopted, decided to withdraw from the organization (ECOWAS, 2013).

Its objective is to endorse collaboration and integration in economic, social and cultural activity, eventually leading to the establishment of an economic and monetary union in the course of an entire cooperation of the Member States' economies. It also aims to increase the living standards of its population, keep and improve economic steadiness, encourage relations among Member States and supply to the growth and improvement of the African Continent (AFRICAN UNION, 2013).

In order to accomplish its goal of economic, political and social cooperation, ECOWAS established mechanisms aimed at ensuring peace and stability both within Member States and between them as well. Thus, it was created the ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group), which aims to assist in the process of ceasefire conflicts that may occur within Member States, and the ECOWAS Mechanism for Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts and Security, adopted by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Member States in 1999, establishing a Mediation and Security Council on the bloc in order to prevent violent conflicts in the region and deal with those that may occur (AFRICAN UNION, 2013).

ECOMOG's greatest success was the restoring of peace and stability in the Liberian civil war. Although by then some Member States raised objections, ECOWAS created and deployed an armed force to Liberia. At the beginning with a five-nation 3,500-person force in 1990, by 1996 it became more than 10,000, representing the majority of the Community. Upon its 1998 departure, ECOMOG had negotiated peace accords and cease-fires, disarmed rebels, evacuated expatriates, and created conditions for transparent elections (BROWN, 1999).

Another success by ECOMOG was the restoration of a democratic government in Sierra Leone, which held in 2012 the first post-war elections in a peaceful way. Both cases in Liberia and Sierra Leone are seen in many quarters as a boost to the growth of democracy in West Africa and the triumph of the will of the peoples over dictatorships and *coup d'états*. Supporters of ECOMOG see the mechanism as a vindication of their stance for a peace force in the region (UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, 2013). However, some would say that ECOWAS is violating the principles of non-intervention under international law, despite its success restoring peace in those countries, recalling the same debate towards the UNSC interventions, unfortunately not to be discussed in this study guide.

### **ECOWAS in Guinea-Bissau**

Nowadays, ECOWAS has extreme importance when it comes to dealing with the conflicts happening mainly in Guinea-Bissau and Mali. Since the last *coup d'état* in Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS is the main international organization that has maintained relations with the country and trying to push it forward (MUSAH, 2013).

The organization assisted in the establishment of a Transition period between the coup and the still-to-be-held new elections, helping the governmental institutions to pay salaries of federal employees. Numerous representatives of the Bissau-Guinean authorities and some members of the diplomatic community considered important the role played by the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB). Other stakeholders, particularly civil society organizations, called for the strengthening of ECOMIB, so as to facilitate it to supply more actively to confidence-building, the holding of free, fair and credible elections, and to carry the reform of the defense, security and justice sectors (AFRICAN UNION, 2013).

ECOWAS also urged the African Union to suspend the sanctions imposed on Guinea-Bissau as an encouragement to the transitional authorities and in recognition of the progress the country continues to make towards forging a more inclusive transitional government to pave the way for the peaceful restoration of full constitutional order in the country (ECOWAS, 2013).

### **ECOWAS in Mali**

France, in collaboration with ECOWAS, is in a military intervention for the liberation of the north of the country, vulnerable to Islamic militants and a conduit of terrorism (ALLAFRICA, 2013). Regarding this political crisis and armed intervention, ECOWAS affirms that the preferred resolution remains on dialogue, although it states that recourse to force may be an option to dismantle terrorist and transnational criminal networks in Mali. It also supports the UNSC resolutions towards the country (ECOWAS, 2013).

ECOWAS also urges the Government of Mali to ensure the scrupulous implementations of a roadmap of the transitional process, with a view to ensuring the restoration of full state control throughout the territory and the holding of free, fair and transparent elections in the course of the transition (ECOWAS, 2013). The organization agreed to support the interim government in its quest to hold elections by July, once it has been demonstrating the willingness of returning the country to civilian rule (ALLAFRICA, 2013).

In a *communiqué*, ECOWAS reiterated its preoccupation with the flagrant violation of human rights and humanitarian laws in the occupied territory of Mali, as well as its humanitarian consequences. It appeals to the international community and international humanitarian agencies to continue providing assistance to Mali and the other affected countries in the region and also commends the role being played by neighboring countries in matters of facilitating the resolution of the crisis (ECOWAS, 2013).

## COMMON GROUND

*Ananda G., Arthur F., Érico F., Vitória P.*

Although each West African country has its peculiarities, it is easily noticed that all of them share common uniqueness such as the abundance of natural resources. Unfortunately, there are also negative characteristics as they face similar issues: human rights violation, poverty, drugs' traffic, among others. All these problems are part of the international agenda and therefore have been frequently addressed in the UNSC meetings.

### Piracy

One of the raising common problems amongst West African countries is piracy, which started in Nigeria and has been growing mainly in the Gulf of Guinea region. Fortunately, there's a meeting initiative for discussing a new anti-piracy code to be held in Cameroon, attended by West African heads of State. The code of conduct, based on the code adopted by East African and Arab Peninsula nations in 2009 to fight piracy in the Indian Ocean, would ask governments to detain and take legal action against supposed pirates, take hold of any vessels believed to have been used in acts of piracy and enhance local assistance (ALLAFRICA, 2013).

### Natural Resources

The region is also an important natural wealth source, such as rubber, cocoa, gold, diamonds, oil, *inter alia*. Oil largest producer in the continent is Nigeria and another part of West Africa bringing the world's attention on it is the Gulf of Guinea, with its recent oil reserves discoveries. However, most part of the income from West African natural resources doesn't reach the population. A proof of it is the relevant oil multinational corporations' presence like Shell and Chevron. The United States also declared its intention to derive 25% of its oil needs from the Gulf of Guinea by 2015. Regarding solid minerals extraction, the corporation De Bears and Lebanese businessmen are in charge of the production (ALAO, 2011).

West African governments have nowadays the chance of not making the wrong choices again and enjoy the high prices of commodities in the international market, which offers a rare opportunity for resource-rich countries in the region to transform their economies and society (WARW, 2009).

## Colonization

Both the United Kingdom and France colonized areas in Africa, such as Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Mali which ended up transmitting bad impressions to the international sphere. There are still some relations between these nations and their former colonizers i.e. British and French troops in Sierra Leone and Mali, respectively.

The United States as well as the United Kingdom and France, are strengthening their relations with Liberia. Even though it was never an US' colony, Liberia was created by former American slaves, in a way that economic programs are held between them. Regarding the relation between Guinea-Bissau and its former *metropolis*, Portugal, the political situation is instable since Guinea-Bissau has accused Portugal of supporting a coup against the country.

## Islamism

Another common point amongst West African nations is the Islamism. Africa was the first continent into which Islam expanded and it has become an integral part of many African cultures, remaining the predominant religion in much of the West African region. The presence of Islam in West Africa dates back to eighth century, but the spread of the faith in regions that are now the modern states of Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria was currently a gradual and complex process.

Specialists have used several models to explain why Africans converted to Islam, such as economic motivations, the Islam's spiritual message or even the influence of Arabic literacy in facilitating state building. The apparent fact is that the early presence of Islam in West Africa was linked to trade and commerce with North Africa, in other words, North African traders were major actors in introducing Islam into West Africa (STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 2009).

The history of Islam in West Africa can be explained in three stages: containment, mixing, and reform. In the first stage, African kings contained Muslim influence by segregating Muslim communities, in the second one African rulers blended Islam with local traditions as the population selectively appropriated Islamic practices, and finally in the third stage, African Muslims pressed for reforms in an effort to rid their societies of mixed practices and implement Shariah. This three-phase framework sheds light on the historical development of the medieval empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay and the 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads that led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in Hausaland and the Umarian state in Senegambia (STANFORD

UNIVERSITY, 2009). In Guinea-Bissau and in Nigeria, Islam is currently practiced by 50% of the country's population. In Sierra Leone, Muslims are estimated to comprise 60% of the population, whereas in Mali an estimated 90% of Malians are Muslim. The only country that differs from the ones presented above is Liberia, with 12.2% of the population (CIA, 2013).

Political instability and low indexes of life quality are other similarity factors. Since independence, many West African nations have been submerged under political instability, with notable civil wars and a succession of military coups in several countries. Since the end of colonialism, the region has been the stage of some of the most brutal conflicts ever to erupt. Among the latter are: Nigerian civil war, first and second Liberian civil war, Guinea-Bissau civil war and Sierra Leone rebel war.

According to the UN's annual Human Development Index, a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and income indices used to rank countries into four tiers of human development based on economic and quality-of-life indicators, West Africa is the poorest region on Earth. Mali's Human Development Index (HDI), is one of the lowest of the ranking (182 of 186), only behind Burkina Faso, Chad, Mozambique, Congo and Niger, respectively. Sierra Leone (177), Guinea-Bissau (176), Liberia (174) and Nigeria (173) hold better, but not much different positions (UNDP, 2013).

## **Humanitarian Crisis**

Humanitarian Crisis has been a major problem in West Africa, the countries in the region experience a huge influx of refugees, food crises, women rape and many others human rights violations. Unfortunately, the efforts by the international community and the Government to improve security have met limited success and so sporadic attacks on civilians, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the military, allegedly by anti-government rebels, are still being reported (UNHCR, 2012).

In Mali, for example, the Tuareg-led uprising that occurred in January has displaced around 205,000 people. There are an estimated 175,076 Malian refugees in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. This includes 37,530 people who fled since January. Among reported reasons for fleeing are insecurity, confiscation of goods, fear of arbitrary arrests or detention and other human rights violations (ALLAFRICA, 2013). An escalation of the conflict in Northern Mali, which is mainly controlled by Islamic rebels, may trigger more displacement in the sub region.

Another example is Guinea-Bissau, the establishment of a transitional Government to end the stalemate has not made the political situation any less confusing. The country faces food crises and it is registered that there are around 1,123 refugees from Guinea- Bissau in the neighbor countries and 502 asylum seekers that sum a total of 1,625 displaced people.

Although West Africa is benefiting from robust economic growth, high rates of unemployment and poverty continue to foster mixed-migration movements within the subregion, as well as externally. The UN Refugee Agency has been working in those countries in order to assist the population in need. The agency has already set some operations for 2013, in Nigeria, for example, the UNHCR will provide partial care and maintenance for 2,000 Cameroonian refugees in Benue and Cross River States. In addition, the Office will implement livelihood activities, such as agricultural and vocational-skills projects, for Cameroonian and Chadian refugees living in rural areas and support the voluntary repatriation of Cameroonian refugees (UNHCR, 2012).

### **3. BLOC POSITIONS**

**Morocco:** the country submitted the last draft resolution upon the Security Council on Guinea-Bissau, thus being in favor on the developments on Guinea-Bissau and so in the rest of West Africa, including efforts towards the restoration of constitutional order and on the activities of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in the region. It also states its categorical rejection to any connection between organized crime and terrorism with any religion, faith or ethnic group, considering those phenomena by nature a rejection of all religious, ethnical and human values. Morocco reiterates its support for all of the initiatives designed to foster dialogue and understanding among civilizations and cultures, respecting the characteristics of each one as a positive response to attempts to fuel radicalization, hatred, exclusion and racism. At the humanitarian level, the country has taken initiatives to increase the level of humanitarian assistance to Malian refugees in neighboring States and internally displaced persons in Mali.

**United States:** the country has stated to be determined to eradicate global terrorism and therefore has supported the international community efforts to combat it. The country admits that the terrorist groups continue to threaten peace, security and stability across Africa as stated by Mr. Rice on a Security Council meeting but also recognizes that the work that has been done by Security Council, African Union, ECOWAS and other international entities has helped to mitigate the situation in West Africa. The country has intensified capacity-building assistance to African partners.

US Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and the Partnership for Regional East African Counter Terrorism programs have helped African States to tighten border security, promote economic development, disrupt terrorist networks, prevent attacks and prosecute perpetrators. Over the past year, the United States have trained over 2,320 officials in 18 African countries, conducting law enforcement and rule of law activities. The country legal ambassadors and advisers are working with host country Governments in Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia, Senegal and Algeria to strengthen justice-sector capacity to address terrorism. The United States acknowledges that it is necessary to fight poverty and corruption in order to end terrorism and make Africa a prosperous territory.

**Guatemala:** the country affirms that is not possible to combat terrorism exclusively through military forces and highlights the importance of focus on topics such as transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and piracy in order to combat terrorism. Guatemala believes that terrorism is in some cases the product of basic conditions such as oppression, social injustice, the lack of economic opportunities and weak State institutions. The country has been supporting Security Council's resolutions on West Africa and affirms that is not possible to defeat terrorism alone. Guatemala also says that all States must work together and defends that cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations as well as cooperation within the United Nations system are a must.

**Australia:** the country is keen on combating terrorism as an investigation led by the country showed that African terrorism groups have influenced Australian youths through radicalization. The country has attended the Security Council meetings related to this topic and has supported the sanctions and resolutions adopted by this council. However, the country points that there are areas where the United Nations and the

Security Council could be doing more on coordination and also highlights the importance of the Council and the African States working together to target terrorists, their leaders and their enablers that provide arms, funds and recruits. Australia is supporting the creation of an Eastern African regional counter-terrorism center, as well as Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate workshops for police and prosecutors in East Africa and Nigeria on effectively bringing terrorists to justice. Not only that, the country has developed a handbook for the African Union on criminalizing terrorism, to assist African policymakers in developing effective criminal laws to combat terrorism.

**Togo:** the country has been paying great attention to the situation in Africa. Lately the country has called for a Security Council meeting in order to discuss terrorism in Africa, as it believes the subject represents one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Togo affirms the activities of terrorist groups are a serious threat to the efforts of international missions for peacebuilding and peacekeeping, for example in Mali. The country has recently suggested that the Security Council should review the discussions and responses to the situation in Africa as it has worsened. The country believes a briefing on the threat of terrorism, focused on Africa, will thus take into account its specific characteristics in order to promote appropriate attention and the necessary awareness to rectify its vulnerability to terrorism.

**Republic of Korea:** the country supports the UNSC resolutions on West African countries and has been actively participating in global efforts to prevent and combat terrorism in West Africa. Its government has formulated an Action Plan for the Third Korea-Africa Forum for 2013-2015, which includes a whole range of assistance including human resources.

**China:** the country supports the UNSC resolutions on West African countries and states that efforts should be made to assist West Africa in realizing regional peace and security. It urges the international community to support West African countries and encourage the resolution of African issues by Africans in the African way, and help West African countries devise their own development path consistent with their own situations. China also states that will do what it can to support and provide assistance to West African countries to jointly address the threat that civil wars and terrorism have brought to the area.

## 4. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Considering West Africa has been suffering several *coup d'états* since its decolonization, how to guarantee the institutional steadiness in those countries?
2. Given the importance of ECOWAS in the region, in which ways can other regional and international organizations, together with ECOWAS, enhance its role?
3. Under the principle of non-intervention, which measures could be taken to assure the legitimacy of peacebuilding actions in West Africa?
4. How to improve cooperation in West Africa by diminishing sanction impositions in order to harm the least its peoples?
5. Taking into consideration that every country suffering by civil wars has different levels of humanitarian and economic crises, how can the international community assist in West African impasses, such as refugees and piracy?

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